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

Июль

JULY

Book VII

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Built November 2026.

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THE FIRST DAY OF JULY

July 1

1 ИЮЛЯ

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

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Cosmas and Damian

Страдание святых мучеников Космы и Дамиана

After the bodily glorification upon earth of our Lord and God Jesus Christ, the exploits of the holy martyrs of Christ became known everywhere as a most marvelous thing; for in them the power of the Savior was made manifest. The courageous resistance which the saints offered to their tormentors, and their invincible endurance, were a wonder to all. Among such martyrs were also these, the brothers according to the flesh, the holy passion-bearers Cosmas and Damian, of whom our word now treats. They were born in ancient Rome of one father and mother, and were brought up in the rules of Christian piety.

Having learned the medical art, these holy brothers successfully healed all manner of diseases, and the grace of God Himself assisted them in everything. Upon whatever sick men or beasts they laid their hands, these were at once made perfectly whole. These skillful healers took no payment from anyone for their cures, and for this they were called "the unmercenary physicians." From those whom they healed they required only one most precious reward: faith in Christ. Indeed, not only in Rome itself but also in the surrounding cities and villages, which they visited for the purpose of healing the sick, they converted many to Christ. Besides the grace of healing, they also benefited people by generous almsgiving. They had a large estate, gathered by their ancestors and passed down to them from their parents, and this they sold and distributed to the poor and needy: they fed the hungry, clothed the naked; in a word, they showed mercy to all the poor and destitute. When they healed the sick, they usually spoke to them thus:

"We only lay our hands upon you, and we can do nothing by our own strength; all is accomplished by the almighty power of the one true God and the Lord Jesus Christ. If you believe in Him and do not doubt, you shall at once become whole."

And indeed those who believed received recovery.

Thus daily many, turning away from the impiety of idol-worship, joined themselves to Christ.

The dwelling of these holy physicians was in a Roman village (where their parents' estate was located). Having their abode here, they enlightened all the surrounding region with the holy faith.

Meanwhile the devil, envying the life of the saints, which shone with virtues, stirred up some of his servants to go to the emperor and slander the innocent before him. At that time Carinus[1] reigned in Rome. He, having listened to the slanderers, immediately sent soldiers to the village in which the saints dwelt, with the command to seize the unmercenary physicians Cosmas and Damian and bring them to him for interrogation.

When the imperial soldiers arrived at the village where the saints lived and began to inquire there about Cosmas and Damian, the faithful gathered around the saints and begged them to hide somewhere for a short time, until the emperor's wrath had passed. But the saints not only did not heed this counsel, but on the contrary intended of their own accord to go out to the soldiers who were seeking them, desiring to suffer gladly for the name of Christ. When, however, many of the faithful gathered around them and with tearful entreaties urged them to preserve their lives not for their own sake but for the salvation of others, the saints, though against their will, obeyed them. Then the faithful, taking the saints, concealed them in a certain cave.

Meanwhile the soldiers, searching diligently everywhere for the saints and not finding them, in anger and vexation seized some pious men of that village, put fetters upon them, and led them to Rome.

1. The Emperor Carinus reigned from 283 A.D. to 284 A.D.

Learning of this, the holy Cosmas and Damian immediately came out of the cave and hastened after the soldiers; overtaking them on the road, they said to them:

"Release the innocent and take us, for we are the very ones whom you have been commanded to seize."

Thus the soldiers, releasing those men, put fetters upon the holy Cosmas and Damian and led them to Rome. Here the saints were shut up in fetters in a prison, where they remained until morning. At daybreak the emperor sat before the people on the customary tribunal, which was situated on the place set apart for spectacles; having the holy prisoners Cosmas and Damian brought before him, the emperor said to them in a loud voice:

"Is it you who oppose the gods of our fathers, and by some magical cunning heal diseases in men and beasts without payment, seducing simple people to turn away from the gods and laws of our fathers? But now, at least, abandon your error and heed my good counsel; come forward and offer sacrifice to the gods, who until now have long borne with you. The gods, though wronged by you, have not repaid you evil for evil, though they could have done so, but have patiently waited for your turning to them."

The holy servants of Christ, as with one voice, answered the emperor thus:

"We have not seduced a single person; we know no magical cunning, and we have done no harm to anyone, but we heal diseases by the power of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, as He commanded, saying: 'Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers' (Mt. 10:8). We do this without payment, because the Savior so bade, who said: 'Freely you have received, freely give' (Mt. 10:8). For we demand no possessions, but seek the salvation of human souls, and we serve the poor and the infirm as Christ Himself, for He appropriates to Himself the cares which are performed for the sake of the first, saying to His benefactors: 'For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed Me; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me' (Mt. 25:35–36). These His commandments we strive to fulfill, hoping to re-

ceive from Him the reward of the endless life of the heavenly Kingdom. But to worship the gods you acknowledge we shall never consent. Worship them yourself, you and those who agree with you! We well know that they are not gods. If you, O emperor, desire it, we shall offer you good counsel, that you may know the one true God, the Creator of all, 'for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust' (Mt. 5:45), for our needs, to the glory of His exceedingly great name: turn away from the insensible and lifeless idols, and serve Him!"

The emperor Carinus answered the saints thus:

"I did not summon you to make speeches, but to offer sacrifice to the gods."

"We do offer," answered the saints, "a bloodless sacrifice, our souls, to our one God, who has delivered us from the snare of the devil and given His Only-begotten Son for the salvation of the whole world. This our God is not created, but is the Creator of all; but your gods are human inventions and the works of craftsmen's hands, and if there were not among men a craft that makes gods for you, you would have no one to worship!"

"Do not provoke the eternal gods," said Carinus, "but rather offer sacrifices and worship them, if you do not wish to undergo the torments already prepared for you."

"Be put to shame, Carinus, with your gods," said the servants of Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit. "Since your mind turns away from the God who always is and lives for ever, and turns to insensible idols that never existed, then, for your shame, and so that you may understand by your own experience that our God is almighty, let your face be changed upon your body, and let it be turned from its place!"

While the saints were speaking these words, suddenly the face of Carinus changed, and his neck was twisted in such a way that his face came to rest upon his shoulders, and he could not turn his neck; nor could anyone help him. Thus he sat upon his throne with his neck and face distorted. Meanwhile the people who beheld this cried out with a loud voice:

"Great is the Christian God, and there is no other God besides Him!"

At that time many believed in Christ and begged the holy physicians to heal the emperor. The emperor himself also begged them for the same, saying:

"Now I truly know that you are servants of the true God. I therefore beseech you, since you have already healed many, heal me also, that I too may believe that there is no other God besides the one you preach, who created heaven and earth."

"If you," the saints said to him in reply, "acknowledge the God who gave you life and kingdom, and believe in Him with all your heart, He will heal you."

"I believe in You," said the emperor in a loud voice, "O Lord Jesus Christ, true God, have mercy on me, and remember not my first ignorance!"

While the emperor was uttering these words, his neck straightened, and his face returned to its place as it had been at first; and rising from his seat, he lifted his eyes to heaven and, raising his hands, with all the people gave thanks to God, saying thus:

"Blessed art Thou, O Christ, true God, who through these holy servants of Thine hast led me from darkness to light."

Having thus received healing, the emperor honored the holy servants Cosmas and Damian with gifts, and dismissed them in peace.

Having departed from Rome, the saints set out for their village. The inhabitants of this village and of the neighboring villages, hearing all that the saints had done in Rome, went out to meet the servants of God and welcomed them with joy, rejoicing and glorifying the Lord Christ. Meanwhile, the saints, according to their custom, again went about the neighboring cities and villages, healing infirmities and enlightening all with the holy faith, and then returned once more to their village. But the hater of mankind, the devil, having failed to harm the saints by his first machinations and being unable to remove them from among the living, devised another means. In that land there was a very famous physician, from whom these saints Cosmas and Damian had first learned the art of healing. The enemy of mankind, who could not endure the glory of the servants of God, taught this physician to envy the saints. He deceitfully summoned them to him and led them up a moun-

tain, ostensibly to gather medicinal plants, while concealing in his heart a thought like Cain's.[2] Having led the saints far away, he arranged for each of them to gather plants separately. Then, attacking one first, he stoned him to death, and in the same manner destroyed the other. Finally, taking the bodies of the saints, he hid them beside a well that stood there.[3]

Thus the holy Passion-bearers of Christ, the Unmercenary physicians Cosmas and Damian, received the end of their lives and were deemed worthy of the crowns of martyrdom from Christ the Lord, our Savior, to Whom be honor and glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and unto the ages without end. Amen.

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Father Peter

Память преподобного отца нашего Петра

Venerable Peter was born and brought up in Constantinople. He was descended from noble and wealthy parents. His father, whose name was Constantine, held the rank of patrician[4] and served as a military commander. From his youth Peter diligently pursued his studies; he became especially well versed in philosophy and also studied all the secular sciences. When he had reached manhood, he married, and after his father's death inherited his honorable patrician rank. He was appointed patrician during the reign of the pious Empress Irene and her son Constantine.[5] When Nicephorus ascended the imperial throne[6] and war broke out between the Greeks and the Bulgarians, Peter was appointed by the emperor as chief commander over all the regiments and set out with the soldiers against the Bulgarians. In the

2. Cain is the name of the firstborn son of Adam and Eve. As the first fruit of childbearing in a sinful state, Cain was morose and malicious, and out of envy he killed his meek brother Abel (Gen. 4:1–16). This event is what is meant in the Life.

3. The repose of the holy unmercenary physicians Cosmas and Damian took place in 284 A.D.

4. Among the Romans, the patricians were the full-rights, freeborn children of native Roman citizens. There were considered to be about one hundred patrician families in Rome. Ordinarily the patricians occupied the highest state offices.

5. Constantine VI (VII) Porphyrogenitus reigned from 780 A.D. to 797 A.D. His mother Irene reigned from 797 A.D. to 802 A.D.

6. Nicephorus I reigned from 802 A.D. to 811 A.D.

great war that followed, the Greeks at first defeated the Bulgarians; then, by divine permission, the Bulgarians recovered from the defeat they had suffered, utterly routed the Greeks, and killed their emperor, Nicephorus.

At that very time the blessed Peter was captured by the Bulgarians along with fifty Greek princes and, condemned to torture and death, was held in prison. As he fervently prayed to God for his deliverance, St. John the Theologian, who had reclined upon Christ's breast, appeared to him in the middle of the night, released him from imprisonment, and brought him to Rome. From that time Peter devoted himself wholly to the service of God; having recognized the nothingness of all earthly things, he withdrew to Mount Olympus;[7] and, having received the angelic habit there, he struggled alongside Joannicius the Great, advancing in every virtue.

After living there for thirty-four years, Peter came to Constantinople, his wife and son having already died. There he first lived for some time by a church he had founded, called Evandrian. Then, withdrawing to a solitary and quiet place, he built himself a small cell there, where he lived for eight years, wearing a prickly hairshirt upon his body and going without shoes throughout all the years of his ascetic life. He grievously afflicted himself with fasting, vigils, and the other monastic labors.

Having thus struggled in virtue and in a manner pleasing to God, Venerable Peter reposed in the Lord and was numbered among the choir of the venerable, who glorify the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit unto the ages. Amen.[8]

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Potitus

Страдание святого мученика Потита

In the reign of the emperor Antoninus,[9] when persecution of Christians had been raised everywhere, there lived in Sardinia[10] a man

7. Mount Olympus was located in Asia Minor, on the borders of Phrygia and Bithynia.
8. The repose of St. Peter took place around 865 A.D.

named Hylas, who adhered to the impiety of idol-worship. He had an only son, a boy of thirteen, named Potitus. Potitus was instructed by the wisdom of God, Who brings forth praise "out of the mouths of babes" (Ps. 8:3), and was so enlightened by the grace of the Holy Spirit that he came to know his Creator and offered his prayers and worship to Him alone, while loathing soulless idols. Knowing how to read, Potitus found the divine Christian Scriptures, and, having read them, was filled with spiritual wisdom and understanding. Secretly leaving his father and going to the Christians, he received holy Baptism and turned away from the abominable sacrifices to idols. Hylas, Potitus's father, noticed that his son did not worship the idols, and was deeply grieved; he began tenderly to urge him to offer sacrifice to the gods together with him.

"Father," the holy boy replied to Hylas's entreaties, "you speak no good words to me, commanding me to offer sacrifice to demons! If you truly love me, your son, with a father's love, then counsel me to do what saves, not what destroys the soul. I desire that you, too, should come to know the truth, turn away from your foul delusion, and serve the one God Who dwells in the heavens and upholds all things, the Creator of all creation!"

His father, enraged, shut him in a separate room and ordered that no one of his household dare give the boy either bread or water.

"Let us see," he threatened, "whether your God, Whom you honor, will provide you with food and drink!"

Meanwhile, the holy boy Potitus knelt and prayed to God, saying:

"Take up, O Lord, my cause against those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me" (Ps. 34:1). I desire to serve Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, Who didst deign to descend from heaven to earth for the salvation of mankind. Look upon the prayer of Thy humble servant and strengthen me in my hunger, as Thou didst strengthen Daniel, Thy prophet, when he was cast into the lions' den. Thou hast said in Thy holy Gospel: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled ... Blessed are

9. The Emperor Antoninus Pius reigned from 138 A.D. to 161 A.D.

they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:6, 10). Therefore, forsake me not, shut up here and tormented with hunger and thirst for Thy righteousness!

The saint remained in that confinement for many days, tormented by his father with hunger and thirst, yet strengthened by God with spiritual food and refreshed by the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that his face shone like the sun. Rejoicing in the Lord, he said: "I thank Thee, O Master, that Thou hast deigned to satisfy me, Thy unworthy servant, with Thy spiritual blessings, which are desired all the more as they are received. I also beseech Thee, O good and merciful God, God of Angels and Archangels, Who desirest not the death of a sinner, but that he should turn and live: hear me as I cry unto Thee with all my heart for my parent. Grant him knowledge of Thy truth and understanding of the faith; open his mind, that he may know Thee, his Creator, and serve Thee alone, and not the polytheism of the Greeks. Let not the enemy of the Christian race, the devil, rejoice over him, but let Thy almighty power, which guides the erring unto salvation, be glorified in him."

As the saint prayed in these words, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him, strengthened him, and said:

"You shall receive what you ask! The God in Whom you believe with all your heart is always with you, and you shall receive what you ask of Him. But know also that the destroyer of human souls, the devil, has laid plots against you. Therefore, you must take up 'the whole armor of God' (Eph. 6:11), that you may be able to resist his schemes."

Having spoken these words, the Angel of light departed.

Meanwhile, the saint continued to pray to God, saying:

"Hear, O Lord, my voice, with which I cry; have mercy on me and hearken unto me" (Ps. 26:11).

After some time had passed, the Angel of darkness suddenly appeared to Potitus in a radiance of false light and said to him:

"Behold, I have come to you, O guileless youth, so that your body and soul may not grow faint with hunger and thirst, but that you may obey your father and feast with him. I am Christ, Who have had mercy upon you; seeing your tears, I have come to visit you."

"Depart from me, Satan" (Mt. 16:23), enemy of the truth, replied the holy boy Potitus to the deceiver. "You shall not deceive the servant of God: you are not Christ, but Antichrist."

Having said this, the saint began to pray, saying:

"O Lord Jesus Christ! Drive this foul enemy away from me and cast him into the abyss, where he is condemned together with his servants!"

Then the devil, changing his feigned angelic likeness, became an enormous giant, fifteen cubits tall, and afterward was transformed once more into a huge ox, bellowing with a terrible voice. But the saint, signing himself with the sign of the Cross, said to him:

"Cease, evil spirit, tempting the soldiers of Christ! You cannot frighten one redeemed by the power of the Cross!"

And the devil vanished at once, but his voice was heard from afar, saying:

"What a young boy it is who overcomes me! Woe is me, where shall I rest now? Upon whom shall I loose my arrows? When I approach an old man, even then I am not so easily overcome by him as by this boy. But I shall go and enter the only daughter of the emperor Antoninus, and show my power upon her! As for you, Potitus, I shall stir up the emperor against you, and teach him to destroy you with dreadful torments!"

"Enemy," answered St. Potitus, "whatever torments you subject me to, I shall gain the victory over you everywhere; it is not I who shall gain the victory, but my Lord Jesus Christ!"

Then the devil fled, crying out:

"Woe is me, for I have been vanquished by a youth!"

After this, his father Gilas, bringing him out of confinement, said to him:

"Child, offer sacrifice to the gods, for the emperor has commanded that everyone who does not offer sacrifice to the gods shall be put to death after dreadful torments, or shall be given over to be devoured by beasts. I suffer for you, for you are my only son; I do not wish to lose my heir."

"To what gods," asked the saint, "must I offer sacrifice, that I may know them by name?"

"Do you not know," said the father, "the god Zeus[11], Ares[12] and Minerva[13]?"

"From the day of my birth," answered the youth, "I have never heard that these are gods, but idols. O father, if you knew how great is the Christian God, who, humbling Himself, saved us, you would believe in Him, for He is the One true God who created heaven and earth; all the other gods are pagan demons."

"Whence come these words that you speak?" asked Gilas.

"It is He whom I serve who speaks through my lips," answered the saint, "for He said in His Gospel: 'Take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak' (Mt. 10:19)."

"Do you not fear torments, child?" asked Gilas. "What will you do when you are brought before the governor, who will hand you over to cruel torments?"

"O father," answered the holy youth with a smile, "you have spoken a foolish word! The Redeemer of our souls, my Lord Jesus Christ, He will strengthen me, His servant. Do you not know, father, that by the name of the Lord, David, an unarmed youth, slew the mighty Goliath[14] with a stone, and, taking his sword, beheaded him?"

"Are you ready to endure all sufferings in hope in your God?" asked Gilas.

The saint answered:

"I believe that my Creator, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God in the Trinity, will give me strength not only to endure all torments manfully, but also to die for Him without fear. And you, father, believe in the God of whom I speak to you, and then you will be saved. For those gods to whom you now bow are nothing, and they have never saved anyone nor been able to accomplish anything. What profit is there in bowing down to lifeless bronze, stone, and

11. Zeus was the supreme god of the ancient Greek religion, regarded as the progenitor of the other gods and of men.

12. Ares, or Mars, was the god of war.

13. Minerva, or Athena, was the goddess of wisdom.

14. The reference is to David's famous exploit in his single combat with the Philistine giant Goliath (see 1 Kgdms. 17:32–51 for more detail).

wood, which, when they fall to the earth, cannot rise again, but are broken into pieces, and when they are broken do not give out a sound, for they are mute and insensible? By the names by which you call your idols, in antiquity were called the most vile and lawless men, who practised demonic sorcery and gave themselves over to all manner of wickedness, deserving every punishment. The laws of the state condemn such persons and hand them over to capital punishment, and so it is at the present time. The wretched souls of those gods of yours are at this present time unceasingly tormented in the eternal, never-quenched fire of hell. In that same fire will be tormented without end also those who now serve the idols of those gods. But our God, who lives forever, directs all things to a good end, governs all visible and invisible creatures, and holds dominion over the heavenly and the earthly. He will indeed glorify in His Heavenly Kingdom those who believe in Him and serve Him faithfully. Moreover, even on earth He makes their names glorious, enriching them with miraculous grace, by the power of which they work signs and wonders. For He says: 'And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover' (Mk. 16:17–18)."

Hearing such words, Gilas was amazed and said:

"I now know that the Christian God, who speaks through the lips of this youth, is the true God, and that He says things I had never heard before. If there were not some Divine power in the youth, he could not speak these words from his heart. But, as I see, God Himself speaks through the lips of my son."

Sighing and weeping, Gilas said:

"Woe is me, a sinner! My young son is far wiser than I, an old man. Though still of tender age he has known the true God, while I, having grown old in years, have not known Him until now. But now I believe in my heart and confess with my lips that there is no other God but the Christian God, and there is no one like Him!"

Thus Gilas, believing in Christ under the guidance of his son, the holy youth Potitus, received holy baptism. St. Potitus, imitating the

apostolic labors, after the baptism of his father, departed from his homeland, Sardinia, came into the region called Epirus[15], and there preached the name of Christ. From there he then came to the city of Valeria. Here there was a certain woman named Cyriacia, the wife of the senator Agathon, who was grievously afflicted with leprosy, and no physician could heal her of the disease. Coming to the door of her house, St. Potitus sat there as a beggar. By chance a eunuch came out of that house; St. Potitus addressed him with a request to give him water to drink.

"Have you come here to ask for water?" said the eunuch to the saint.

"I thirst," answered the saint, "not so much for water from this house as for the salvation of souls, that upon this house may be revealed the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ."

The eunuch, astonished at the saint's words, asked him:

"Whence are you, youth, and what is your name?"

"I, like you," answered St. Potitus, "was born of the earth; my name is Potitus; I am a servant of my Master, my Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human souls that believe in Him and the Healer of bodily infirmities. He cleansed lepers, raised the paralytics from their beds, gave sight to the blind, and with a single word resurrected the dead."

"If you are His servant," asked the eunuch, "can you heal lepers?"

"Where there is faith," answered the saint, "there also is healing, for my Master, Christ the Lord, grants according to faith to everyone who asks of Him."

"Can you heal our mistress of leprosy?" asked the eunuch.

"If she believes in Christ, my God, she will be healthy," answered the saint.

"If you heal her," remarked the eunuch, "you will be master of all her possessions."

"I do not desire," answered the saint to this, "silver, gold, or her property, but I desire only to turn her soul to Christ, my God."

15. The word Epirus among the ancient Greeks originally designated the mainland in general, as opposed to the islands; later the Greeks used the name Epirus to designate a region bordering on Illyria to the north, on Thessaly to the east, and on Aetolia and Acarnania to the south. Epirus now belongs to the Turks.

After this the eunuch reported everything to his mistress, and St. Potitus was brought in to her. Entering her bedchamber, the saint said:

"Peace be to this house from my Lord Jesus Christ!"

"I beg you, heal me," said Cyriacia to the saint, "if only you can heal."

"Believe in the God whom I preach, and receive holy baptism," answered the saint, "and then you will be healed."

"Teach me how to believe," said the woman.

After this the saint instructed her concerning Christ God, pointing out to her the true path of salvation. Having listened to him, the woman said to the saint:

"I believe that there is no other God but Him of whom you speak to me, and I hope that He will heal me; do you act as you desire."

Then St. Potitus, bending his knees, began to pray with tears:

"Lord Jesus Christ, King of Angels, Savior of human souls! Thou saidst to Thy disciples: 'Cleanse the lepers, raise the dead' (Mt. 10:8). Hear, O Master, me also, Thy servant, and heal this woman; let Thy grace be manifested upon her, that the pagans may know that Thou art the true God and that there is no God besides Thee."

Having prayed in such words, the saint appointed a day for the baptism.

And so, when the woman entered the font and was baptized, she was at once cleansed of her leprosy and came out of the font perfectly healthy, having a body like that of a young man[16]. Seeing this, Cyriacia's husband Agathon and all his household believed in Christ and were baptized. And many citizens, almost half the city, looking upon them, embraced the holy faith and blessed God, saying:

"Truly through this youth, who has led us out of the darkness of idol-worship, we have seen a great light."

16. It should be noted that leprosy, from which Cyriacia was healed by St. Potitus, is an extremely malignant disease. It is widespread in hot climates, especially in Egypt, then in Palestine, Syria, Arabia, India and elsewhere; the disease manifests itself in the whole body of the sufferer being covered with malignant swellings that increase every day; at the same time the body of the sufferer grows numb and decays. Leprosy is considered an incurable disease. By God's permission the Old Testament righteous man Job suffered from it. His memory is celebrated by the holy Church on May 6.

"Behold, you have seen the greatness of God," St. Potitus said to them in reply, "so now keep His commandments and you will receive eternal salvation!"

Then, departing from that city, St. Potitus went to a desert mountain called Gargara, and there he lived with the wild beasts as with sheep, for by Divine command the beasts obeyed him and followed him.

At that time a demon entered into the daughter of the emperor Antoninus, Agnia, and tormented her severely. The emperor, greatly grieved, prayed to his gods for his daughter, making vows to them and saying thus:

"O gods: Apollo[17], Zeus, Arphan, heal my daughter and I will bring you as a sacrifice oxen with gilded horns!"

But the demon, through the lips of the girl, cried out, saying:

"I will not depart from here until Potitus, who lives on the mountain Gargara, comes here."

Then the emperor immediately sent one of his dignitaries named Gelasius with forty soldiers to that mountain to seek out Potitus.

Setting out there, and coming into the Gargarian wilderness, the messengers found the servant of Christ sitting on the mountain, and they saw a multitude of beasts surrounding the saint. The soldiers fell into great fear and wished to flee, for the beasts turned toward them, intending to rush upon them. But the saint forbade the beasts, saying:

"Disperse to your places, and do harm to no one."

And at once the beasts dispersed.

Then the saint said to Gelasius:

"Why have you come against me with such a host?"

"Are you Potitus?" Gelasius asked the saint.

"I am the sinful servant of my Lord Jesus Christ," answered the saint.

"The Emperor Antoninus demands you," Gelasius continued. "Come with us to him."

"What could an impious emperor require of a Christian?" the saint replied.

17. Apollo was regarded by the ancient Greeks as the foreteller of the future, the god of destiny, of oracles and of poetry.

But the soldiers took the saint and brought him to Rome before the emperor, who asked him:

"Of what family are you?"

"I am a Christian," the saint answered, "and my parents are Christians."

"Do you not know our imperial decrees," asked Antoninus, "by which everyone who does not worship our gods is put to death?"

"I desire nothing else, that I may die for Christ my God," the saint answered.

"A report has reached me about you," the emperor continued, "that you can heal my daughter. If you do this, I will bestow many honors upon you."

"Why then do your gods not heal her?" the saint replied to the emperor.

"How do you dare to speak to me with such boldness?" asked the emperor.

"If I heal your daughter," Potitus answered Antoninus, "will you believe in the God in whom I believe?"

The emperor promised to believe.

"I know," the saint then said, "that your heart is hardened in impiety and that you will not believe. But I will do this by the power of my God, before the assembled people, that they may see, believe, and glorify the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

After this the emperor's daughter was brought and set before the saint.

"Well, Potitus," the devil then said to the saint through the lips of the demoniac girl, "did I not tell you that you would come to the emperor even against your will?"

The saint, breathing into the girl's face, said to the demon:

"My Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, to Whom every creature in heaven, on earth, and under the earth is subject, forbids you, unclean spirit, and commands you to come out of this creature of His. You have no more power over her."

With these words the saint struck the girl on the face with his right hand; and at once everyone saw a terrible serpent coming out of her

mouth. When it had come out of her, the serpent vanished. Seeing this, those present were filled with terror and said:

"Truly great is the God of this youth!"

And many of those there believed in Christ. The emperor himself, seeing this, marveled and said:

"O what great power the Christian sorcery has!"

"Mad emperor," the saint said to him in reply, "woe to you, for though you have seen the greatness of God, you do not believe in God!"

"I give thanks," said the emperor, "to my gods, who have healed my daughter."

"You lie, emperor," the saint answered. "It was not your gods, but my Lord Jesus Christ who healed your daughter!"

"Leave off your words," the emperor continued, "offer sacrifice to my gods, and I will make you important and honored among my servants. I will give you gold, silver, and wealth."

To this St. Potitus replied:

"There will be no prosperity for you, emperor. You promise me all that I regard as the dust of earthly things. I possess an incorruptible and inexpressible wealth in heaven, which my Lord Jesus Christ has prepared for all who love Him. But your gold, silver, and all your riches will be burned with fire!"

"Are you beginning again to speak to me with boldness?" the emperor objected.

"Yes, I do not fear you," the saint answered, "for my Lord Jesus Christ is able to deliver me out of your hands."

"You insult and disgrace me," the emperor continued, "but sparing your youth, I am ready to forgive this and advise you to offer sacrifice to the gods, lest I proceed at once to torments."

"Spare yourself," the saint answered, "for a dreadful hell is being prepared for you, and you will perish together with your kingdom; you will burn in unquenchable fire together with your father, the devil."

After this the emperor, filled with wrath and fury, ordered that St. Potitus be stripped and cruelly beaten with rods.

The saint, enduring the blows, said:

"I thank You, my Lord, that You have deemed me worthy to suffer for Your name!"

"What do you wish, Potitus," the emperor asked the martyr, "to die, or to offer sacrifice to the gods so that you may remain whole and unharmed?"

"To which gods do you command me," asked Potitus, "to offer sacrifice?"

Then the emperor, ordering the torments to cease, asked Potitus:

"Do you not know the great god Zeus, Arphan, and Minerva?"

Smiling, St. Potitus said:

"Let us see what gods these are, and then I will do as you command."

Then the emperor, with joy, led the saint to an idol temple; but at once, as the saint prayed here to the Most High God, the idols fell and broke into small pieces. Then the saint said:

"If they are true gods, why did they fall, and why do they not rise after falling and help themselves?... Know then, emperor, how great is the power of my God!"

The emperor, filled with shame and anger, ordered the martyr to be bound in heavy iron and cast into prison.

While the saint, shut up in prison, prayed to God, a luminous Angel appeared to him, strengthening and comforting him. The heavy iron fetters upon him melted like wax; at midnight the prison was filled with light, and an inexpressible fragrance spread through it. The guards, perceiving the fragrance, were greatly astonished and asked one another whence it came. Then, looking through the prison window, they noticed a wondrous light; seeing that the saint was freed from his fetters, rejoicing, praising God, and conversing with the Angel, they were filled with fear and dread. At daybreak they went to the emperor to report everything to him. Then the emperor ordered a place for a spectacle to be prepared, and commanded the heralds to proclaim that the people should gather at that place. When a great crowd had thus assembled, the emperor came, seated himself in the usual judgment seat, and ordered the martyr to be brought out of the prison and presented to him for judgment. Brought to that place, the martyr signed himself

with the sign of the Cross and stood before the king with a bright countenance. Meanwhile Antoninus, burning with anger and looking sternly upon the saint, asked:

"Potitus, where, in your opinion, are you now?"

"I am in the land of my God," Potitus answered.

"Now your destruction will come," the emperor continued, "and what god will deliver you from my hand?"

"Let your face be filled with shame, emperor, for a dog has more understanding. For a dog, receiving bread from someone's hand, fawns upon that person; but you, having received healing for your daughter from my God, utter blasphemy against Him!"

Then the emperor ordered the saint to be hung naked on a tree and scorched with candles, and then his body to be scraped with iron claws. Enduring the sufferings calmly, as though it were not his body being subjected to torment, the saint reviled the emperor, saying:

"Where are your threats, emperor? You boasted that you would overcome me by torments, but during the torments I feel no sufferings at all. Therefore look and understand that it is not my body but your heart that these torments distress, since I overcome them by my endurance and rejoice in them all the more."

The shamed emperor blazed up with even greater anger and ordered the martyr taken down from the tree and given to the beasts to be devoured. But the beasts, let loose upon the saint, approached him, fell down before him, and licked his feet, while the saint cried out to the king:

"What will you say now, vile tormentor? Do you still not see the power of Christ, my God?"

Then the emperor, ordering the beasts to be taken back, said to the executioners:

"Cut this wretch into pieces and scatter them to be devoured by the dogs!"

And so, when the executioners took up axes and began to hack at the saint, then, by the operation of the wondrous power of God, the saint's flesh became as hard as firm stone or iron, so that the axes could do it no harm, but the executioners wounded themselves with them.

The people watching this, seeing what was happening, were amazed, and many, about two thousand, then believed in Christ the Lord and cried out, saying:

"Truly in this youth acts the same God Who formerly acted in the martyrs Peter and Paul in this city!"

Seeing this and hearing the voice of the people, the tormentor trembled and, with a groan from his heart, said:

"O how great is the sorcery of this vile Christian!"

He then ordered an iron frying pan to be prepared, oil to be melted in it, the martyr to be placed in the pan and burned; he also ordered tin to be melted and poured over the martyr's body. But the saint, as if he were in some cool place, rejoiced, glorified God, and said to the emperor:

"I adjure you by your royal honor, add yet more of this melted tin to me, for I feel from it a very great coolness!"

The emperor was at a loss as to what still more terrible torment he could inflict upon Potitus. And so, taking the saint down from the pan, he ordered a long iron nail to be brought and, heated red-hot, driven into the martyr's head. While this command was being carried out, by divine power it came about that the martyr, who received the red-hot nail in his head, remained alive, well, and without pain; while the sufferings that the martyr should have felt fell upon the head of the emperor, and the latter, grievously ailing in his head, cried out to the martyr, saying:

"Servant of Christ, have mercy on me and deliver me from this sickness. Now I know the power of your God!"

"Let your gods heal you," the saint answered.

Meanwhile the emperor ceaselessly begged the martyr for his healing.

"Until your daughter, whom my Christ made whole, comes here," the martyr then said, "you will not receive healing."

The emperor's daughter was summoned at once. Falling down at the martyr's feet, she said:

"I beg you, servant of God, baptize me in the name of your Almighty God, whom you preach!"

The Saint at once ordered a baptismal font to be prepared, and in the presence of the whole people he himself baptized the Emperor's daughter, for at that time it was difficult to find a priest, since, owing to the persecution, the priests were in hiding. Then, after the baptism of the Emperor's daughter, the martyr, raising his hands, offered a prayer to God for the healing of the Emperor, and the latter at once became well. But, alas, the blindness and madness of idolatry! Instead of coming to know the true God and giving Him thanks, the impious Emperor began to render thanksgiving to his foul gods, saying:

"I thank you, god Apollo, god Mars and goddess Minerva, for having healed me!"

Then the Saint began to rebuke the Emperor severely, exposing him, who had wholly given himself over to demonic seduction, for his madness and obstinacy. The Emperor, however, raged like a demoniac and commanded that the Saint's tongue be cut out and his eyes put out. But the martyr of Christ continued to speak even after his tongue had been cut out, and he glorified God:

"I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Ps. 33:2); I will bless Him who put a new song into my mouth, and I will "sing unto the Lord, who hath dealt bountifully with me" (Ps. 12:6), in gladness and joy.

At the same time he said to the Emperor:

"What have you gained, impious one, by cutting out my tongue? You hoped with the tongue to take away the words from my mouth, but behold, you see and hear that I speak by the grace of Christ my God, who will overcome you as of old He overcame Pharaoh (Ex. 14:1–32)."

Then the Emperor, seeing that he was defeated and put to shame, was at a loss as to what else to do with the martyr. Wishing to free himself from reproaches on the part of the people, he at last ordered the martyr to be beheaded with the sword.

In this manner the holy martyr of Christ Potitus laid down his soul for Christ in his youthful years[18], and now he reigns with Him in immortal life in the heavens. By the prayers of the holy martyr Potitus

18. The repose of the holy martyr Potitus took place in the middle of the II century.

may we also be granted this blessed life, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit glory is offered now and unto endless ages. Amen.

* * *



THE SECOND DAY OF JULY

July 2

2 июля

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

Tale of the Placing of the Precious Robe of the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos in the Church of Blachernae[1]

Сказание о положении честной ризы Пречистой Девы Богородицы во Влахернской церкви

In the reign of the pious Byzantine emperor Leo the Great[2] and of his consort Verina, there lived in Constantinople two pious men, brothers by birth and senators by rank, Galbius and Candidus. Having consulted together, they asked the emperor to release them to go to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places, and, receiving leave, they set out on their way. Having reached Palestine, they went on to Galilee, desiring to visit Nazareth,[3] to see the holy house of the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos, in which, by the Archangel's annunciation and by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, she ineffably conceived God the Word. Arriving there and making their prostrations, they stayed for the night in a small village nearby, since the day was already drawing toward evening. By divine providence they stopped at the house of an unmarried woman, advanced in years, of Jewish descent, who led a chaste life. While an evening meal was being prepared for them there, they noticed in the dwelling a separate room in which many candles were burning, incense was being offered, and a fragrant perfume issued forth (for there was hidden the precious robe of the Most Pure Mother of God).

1. Blachernae – a place in Constantinople on the shore of the sea near the ship landing. It received its name from a certain well-known Scythian voivode, surnamed Blachernes, who was killed on the spot where a most beautiful church in the name of the Mother of God was afterwards built.
2. Leo I (the Great) reigned from 457 to 474.
3. Nazareth – a small city in Galilee, dear to Christians for its sacred memories (in this city our Lord Jesus Christ spent His childhood).

Near that room also lay not a few sick people. Seeing this, Galbius and Candidus were astonished at this strange circumstance, supposing that some Old Testament rite was being performed there. Then, having persuaded that pious woman to share their evening meal with them, they asked her about what was in the room lit by candles and perfumed with censers, and why sick people lay near it? At first the woman kept silent about the object that she was concealing, but she could not be silent about the miracles that proceeded from it, and she said to her questioners:

"Honorable men! All these sick people whom you see lying here are awaiting healing of their infirmities; for in this place the blind receive their sight, the lame are made whole, demons are cast out of men, the deaf receive hearing, the tongues of the dumb are loosed for speech, and here all incurable diseases are quickly healed."

Hearing this, Galvin and Candidus began to question the woman more carefully as to why such grace and power of working miracles had been bestowed upon this place? The woman, still continuing to conceal the truth, answered:

"Among our Jewish race there is preserved a tradition that God appeared in this place to one of our ancient fathers, and from that time this place has been filled with divine grace and miracles are wrought upon it."

Listening to the woman's words, Galvin and Candidus were kindled all the more with a heartfelt desire to know the truth, like the ancient Luke and Cleopas, who said: "Did not our heart burn within us?" (Lk. 24:32), and they said to the woman:

"Pious woman! We adjure you by the God of the living to reveal the truth to us! For we undertook from Constantinople so distant a journey for no other reason than to see all the holy places in Palestine and to offer our prayers to God at them. And since we hear that in your house too there is a holy and wonderworking place, we wish to learn more about it: how it became sanctified, and for what reason miracles are wrought in it?"

Then, adjured in the name of God, the woman sighed from the depths of her soul, and, shedding tears from her eyes, said to Galvin and Candidus:

"Most illustrious men! The divine mystery about which you now compel me to speak has until this day been known to no one. But since I see that you are pious and God-loving men, I will tell you of the hidden mystery, hoping that what you hear from me you will keep within yourselves, telling it to no one. Here I keep the robe of the Most Pure Virgin Mary, who bore Christ God. When She was departing from earth to heaven, at Her burial there was present one of my forebears, a widow; by the testament of the Most Pure Theotokos herself that precious robe was given to her; she, receiving that robe, kept it with reverence all the days of her life; dying, she gave the robe for keeping to a maiden of her family, charging her under oath to preserve in purity, for the honor of the Theotokos Herself, not only that honorable robe of the Most Holy Theotokos but also her own virginity. That maiden too kept that robe in great honor throughout her whole life; and when she drew near to death, she gave the robe to another pure and honorable maiden of her family. Thus over many years that holy robe, passing from one maiden to another, came also into my humble hands, and fell to me, who have grown old in pure unmarried life. And since in my family there is no longer any maiden to whom I could entrust that secret, I tell you about it so that you may know that, for the sake of that honorable robe kept in my inner chamber, miracles are wrought here. I beg you not to tell this secret to anyone in Jerusalem or anywhere else, wherever you may be."

Hearing of the robe of the Most Pure Mother of God, Galvin and Candidus were filled with awe and inexpressible joy; with tears they promised to keep the secret that had been told them concerning the robe. After this they begged that woman to allow them to remain by the holy robe in that room in prayer the whole night, and the woman did not forbid it.

Then, entering the room, they noticed an ark standing in an honorable place, in which the holy robe was kept; they also saw lamps burning around it and perceived a strong fragrant perfume. Then, prostrat-

ing themselves diligently, they began with tears to send up fervent prayers to God and to the Theotokos. Both of them had one thought: that this priceless treasure should come to the royal city. After this, having agreed together, they measured the ark in width, length, and height, and kept the whole appearance of it in their memory, and likewise also of what kind of wood it was made. At daybreak they completed their prayers and went out of that holy chamber, thanking the woman for allowing them to remain the whole night by the honorable robe. They gave abundant alms to the beggars there and set out, accompanied by that woman, on their journey toward Jerusalem. They promised the woman that on their return journey they would come to her again to venerate the honorable robe of the Most Holy Theotokos.

Then, having visited Jerusalem, venerated the life-giving Cross and the Tomb of the Lord, and visited all the holy places in the vicinity of Jerusalem, Galvin and Candidus summoned a carpenter and ordered him to make, from old wood, an ark in exact form and size as they indicated to him. When the ark was made, Galvin and Candidus bought a cloth of gold to cover it, and returned by their way, making for the woman.

When they arrived at the woman's house, they showed her the cloth of gold, begging her to cover with it the ark of the honorable robe of the Most Pure Mother of God. Then they again begged the woman to allow them, as on the first occasion, to perform an all-night vigil with prayer beside the ark. Receiving permission, they fell face down before the ark and wet the ground with tears, fervently praying to the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos that She would not forbid them to touch Her ark with the robe, with the aim of taking it with them. When midnight had come and everyone was asleep, they fearfully took the ark, carried it out of the house and hid it in their chariot. In its place they brought into the room another ark, which, like the first, they had made of old wood in Jerusalem; setting it in the same place, they covered it with the cloth of gold and remained in prayer until dawn. With the coming of day they thanked that pious woman, took leave of her, gave alms to the beggars, and set out on their way.

Returning home, they hastened on with inexpressible joy. On arriving at Constantinople, they at first told no one of the robe of the Most Holy Theotokos that they had brought, wishing to keep that priceless treasure to themselves. Then, having established a small church in their house in the name of the holy Apostles Peter and Mark, they placed in it, not in an open but in a hidden place, that ark with the holy robe. But when they noticed that they could not conceal the robe of the Mother of God on account of the miracles that proceeded from it, they went to the emperor Leo the Great and his consort Empress Verina, and told them, and likewise also the most holy Patriarch of Constantinople Gennadius,[4] of everything that had happened.

These, filled with inexpressible joy, went to the house of Galvin and Candidus and to their church. Here, opening the honorable ark, they saw in it the holy robe of the Most Pure Mother of God, not decayed through so many years, and with reverence and awe they touched it, tenderly kissing it with lips and heart. Then, taking it from there, they bore it with glory, in a public triumphal procession, to the Church of the Most Pure Theotokos at Blachernae, and placed it there in an ark adorned with gold, silver, and precious stones. After this they ordained that every year on the second day of the month of July the placing of the robe of the Most Holy Theotokos should be celebrated, to the honor and glory of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and of Christ God, born of Her, our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.[4332]

Troparion, Tone 8:

O Ever-Virgin Theotokos, protection of mankind, thou didst bestow upon Thy city the robe and girdle of Thy most pure body, a mighty covering for Thy city; by Thy seedless Nativity thou didst remain incorrupt, for through thee both nature and time are renewed. Wherefore we beseech thee to grant peace to Thy city and great mercy to our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

4. Gennadius was patriarch from 468 to 471.

Thou didst bestow upon all the faithful the garment of incorruption, O pure one, blessed by God, Thy holy robe, wherewith thou didst cover Thy holy body, O Protectress of all mankind. We keep the feast of its laying up with love, and cry to thee in fear: Rejoice, O Virgin, praise of Christians.

* * *

Memory of our holy father Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Память святого отца нашего Ювеналия, патриарха Иерусалимского

St. Juvenal received the throne of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the reign of the pious Emperor Theodosius the Younger[5]. During his patriarchate there lived in Palestine great luminaries, holy fathers: Euthymius, Theodosius, Gerasimus of the Jordan, whom a lion served, and many others. However, at that time there were disturbances in the Church caused by heretics. Then arose the Nestorian heresy[6], which uttered blasphemies against the Most Pure Virgin, the Mother of God, and in the city of Ephesus[7] there was convened the third Ecumenical Council of the holy fathers, at which Juvenal, together with St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria[8], and the other holy fathers, anathematized Nestorius and his heresy. After the death of Emperor Theodosius, when Marcian with Pulcheria ascended the throne[9], there arose a new heresy, that of Dioscorus and Eutyches[10], which blasphem-

5. Theodosius II (the Younger) reigned from 408 to 450.

6. The Nestorian heresy was founded by Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, who wrongly taught that from the Virgin Mary was born not God but the man Jesus, in whom humanity was united with divinity in a gracious manner during His earthly life. For this reason he called the Mother of God Christotokos rather than Theotokos. The heresy of Nestorius was condemned at the Third Ecumenical Council, convened in 431 at Ephesus.

7. Ephesus was a city of Asia Minor, lying between Smyrna and Miletus. In the history of the Christian Church, Ephesus is known as the place of the preaching activity of St. Apostle Paul during his third missionary journey.

8. Cyril (I) was patriarch from 412 to 444.

9. Emperor Marcian reigned from 450 to 457.

10. Eutyches, archimandrite of Constantinople, is known as the founder of the Eutychian or Monophysite heresy. In contrast to the Nestorian division of divinity and humanity in the Person of Jesus Christ, Eutyches taught that the human nature in Jesus Christ was completely absorbed by the divinity, and therefore in Him one nature only, the Divine, must be acknowledged.

ously asserted that in Christ there was one nature. Then in the city of Chalcedon[11] there took place the fourth Ecumenical Council of the holy fathers[12], and St. Juvenal shone at this council with piety among the fathers, like the morning star among the stars, dispelling the darkness of heretical error. When, however, after the close of the council, Juvenal was returning to his patriarchal see in Palestine, there arrived in the guise of a monk a certain heretic of Eutychian impiety, named Theodosius, a man of very crafty disposition. This man reproached the holy Council of Chalcedon, claiming that it had rejected the dogma of the Orthodox faith and renewed the teaching of Nestorius, and he told many other lies against the Church. This heretic, as Evagrius relates[13], having been expelled for his unbelief and evil deeds from his monastery in Alexandria[14], joined himself to the impious Dioscorus. But for his cunning and malice Theodosius was punished with severe beatings, and afterwards, as a rebel, was set upon a camel and led through the city in dishonor. Coming afterwards to Palestine, he began to trouble the Church, scattering his blasphemous heresy. At that time the Empress Eudocia, wife of the pious Emperor Theodosius the Younger, who after her husband's death had gone on pilgrimage to the holy places, was in Palestine.

This heretic Theodosius first of all persuaded the Empress Eudocia to reject the Council of Chalcedon, and then, by his heresy, did harm to many inexperienced monks, making them his fellow-thinkers. With a multitude of monks whom he had beguiled he raised a disturbance against Patriarch Juvenal, demanding that he pronounce condemnation upon the Council of Chalcedon. But since Juvenal would not consent to

11. Chalcedon or Kalkhedon was originally a Megarian colony on the shore of the Propontis (Sea of Marmara); later it became the capital of Bithynia, a province of Asia Minor.
12. The Fourth Ecumenical Council was in 451.
13. Evagrius was an Antiochene lawyer and author of the "Ecclesiastical History," which embraces the period from 431 to 494. He lived from 537 to 594.
14. Alexandria was a city famous in antiquity, founded by Alexander the Great on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, at the mouth of the Nile River. In antiquity Alexandria was the first city in the world after Rome, and it served as a center of trade, industry, and especially of pagan learning, while in the first centuries of Christianity it was a nursery of Christian enlightenment. At present Alexandria is one of the most fortified port cities and among the most important trading points on the Mediterranean.

this, he was deposed from the throne, and withdrew to Constantinople to the Emperor Marcian. Meanwhile the heretic Theodosius, having as his accomplice the Empress Eudocia and relying also on the monks blinded by heresy, ascended the patriarchal throne and inflicted many calamities upon the Orthodox[15]. As for the bishops and clergy who were unwilling to have fellowship with him, some he cast down, others he delivered to torments and death, plundering their property and ruining their houses.

So he dealt with Severian, bishop of Scythopolis, who would not accept his heretical teaching. Having deposed Severian from his see, Theodosius delivered him to death.

As a consequence of this the whole of Palestine was in terrible confusion, and the holy city of Jerusalem was as it were seized and laid waste by barbarians. Then the holy fathers of Palestine, grieving over such persecution and ruin of the Church, and moreover fearing the hands of the tormentor, withdrew into the most remote deserts, praying tearfully to God for the uprooting of the heresy and the speedy coming of peace to the Church.

Among the clergy of the Jerusalem church there was at that time a deacon of great skill in speech and a zealot of piety, named Athanasius. Seeing that in the Church, in the patriarchal place, the heretic false-patriarch Theodosius stood as an abomination of desolation in the holy place (Mt. 24:15), Athanasius came to him and cried out in a loud voice, saying:

"Cease, Theodosius, from filling the holy city with so many murders! Cease from waging war against Christ, and from driving His flock out of the divine fold in robber fashion!"

No sooner had Athanasius spoken these words than he was immediately seized by Theodosius' armour-bearers, dragged out of the church, and after various tortures and countless beatings, ended his life, being put to death by the axe. His body was dragged through the whole city by a rope tied to his feet, and at last thrown to be torn by dogs.

Meanwhile the voivode Dorotheus, appointed by the emperor to govern Palestine, was at that time not in Jerusalem, since he was engaged

in war against the Moabites[16]. Learning of all that had happened in the holy city, Dorotheus hastily returned with his army to Jerusalem. But the armour-bearers of the false-patriarch Theodosius and of the Empress Eudocia, by order of the latter, shut the city gates before the voivode, not permitting him to enter the city; they admitted him only after he had promised to be of one mind with them in the faith. Thus this false-patriarch Theodosius, troubling the Church, remained on the throne of the patriarchate of Jerusalem for twenty months, until there came from the emperor to the military commander an order to seize him and send him as a rebel and murderer to judgment in Constantinople. But having learned of this command of the emperor beforehand, Theodosius secretly fled to Mount Sinai[17], where he hid himself in obscurity.

Then the most holy Patriarch Juvenal, who enjoyed great respect in Constantinople for his virtue with the Emperor Marcian, Pulcheria and the most holy Patriarch of Constantinople, with the consent of the emperor set out for Jerusalem, regained the patriarchal throne, and began to set in order and correct all that had been disturbed. The desert fathers, learning of his return, were filled with great joy and each returned to his own monastery. The Empress Eudocia, seduced into the Eutychian heresy by the aforementioned Theodosius, wavered in mind, not knowing which confession to hold. Then she sent a special messenger to Antioch to the Venerable Simeon the Stylite, asking him for useful counsel and instruction. He wrote a letter to the empress, bidding her be reconciled with the most holy Orthodox Patriarch Juvenal and follow his pious teaching. The empress at once did so, and, publicly renouncing the heresy, became a partaker of the Catholic Church. Seeing this, an innumerable multitude of people, laity and monastics, who had earli-

15. Theodosius (unlawfully) was patriarch for 20 months (from December 451 to August 453).
16. The Moabites dwelt in Palestine to the east of the Dead Sea, on both sides of the river Arnon. This name was taken from Moab, son of Lot, from his elder daughter (Gen. 19:30–37).
17. Mount Sinai was located in the deserts of Stony Arabia; here the Israelites came in the third month after their departure from Egypt. Here God gave the law, expressed in the ten commandments. In the Christian era many monks lived as ascetics on this mountain. In the fifth century the whole desert region of Sinai, despite the poverty of its nature, was dotted with sketes. The mountain of Sinai is now called by the Arabs Jebel Tur Sina.

er been beguiled by the heretic Theodosius, turned to Orthodoxy after the example of the empress.

After this St. Juvenal spent the rest of his life in peace, adorning the holy Church by word, by life, and by pastoral vigilance. The Prologue also records the following concerning him.

When Marcian and Pulcheria built a church in Blachernae in the name of the Most Pure Virgin, the Mother of God, they wrote to St. Juvenal, asking him whether he knew where the body of the Mother of God had been laid. The patriarch answered that he did not know, but recalled the ancient true account of how the body of the Mother of God was buried, how the holy Apostles heard Angelic singing for three days, and how after three days they opened the tomb of the Mother of God, for the sake of one disciple who had not been present at the burial, and found the body of the Mother of God not there, but only the burial cloths.

Having heard this, the emperor and empress again wrote to the patriarch, entreating him to send them at least the sealed tomb of the Mother of God with the cloths, which the patriarch did.

St. Juvenal, having labored thirty-eight years in the holy priesthood[18], reposed in peace, and now stands with the heavenly hierarchs before the throne of the glory of our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom glory is offered forever. Amen.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day, the repose of St. Photius, Metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia, in the year 1431.

NOTES

4332. According to the testimony of the Byzantine historian Nicephorus (lived from 1295 to 1360), the Church of the Blachernae did not keep only one garment of the Mother of God in a golden reliquary, but also her maphorion and a part of her girdle. Russian pilgrims bear witness to the same. Stephen of Novgorod, who lived in the four-

18. Juvenal was patriarch from 420 to 458.

teenth century, says: "We went to Blachernae, where lie the robe and the girdle and the cap upon the head of Her (the Mother of God), and they lie in the sanctuary upon the Holy Table, sealed in a reliquary." The deacon Alexander and the deacon Ignatius, who lived in the second half of the fourteenth century, confirm the same. The Blachernae church burned down on January 19, 1434; now only small remnants of it can be seen. Parts of the Mother of God's garments are now in various places: one part is in the Dormition Cathedral in Moscow (this part was brought here by Prince Basil Golitsyn), another is in the Annunciation Church, acquired in the fourteenth century by Dionysius, Archbishop of Suzdal; besides this, a part of the Mother of God's robe is shown in the Lateran Basilica in Rome. The feast in honor of the laying of the robe of the Most Holy Theotokos at Blachernae was established, as the narrative relates, in the time of the Emperor Leo I, that is, in the middle of the fifth century, but it was made more solemn in 860, under Patriarch Photius (857–867; 877–886) and Emperor Michael III (855–867), on the occasion of the conclusion of peace with Askold and Dir and the withdrawal of the Rus' from Constantinople. They withdrew from Constantinople on June 25, and on July 2, a Tuesday, after a solemn service at Blachernae, the patriarch with the emperor decreed that on this day a festal celebration in honor of the laying of the robe of the Most Holy Theotokos should be observed; at that time the venerable robe of the Mother of God was transferred from the church built by the Emperor Marcian and renewed by the Emperor Leo I into the so-called Great Church.



THE THIRD DAY OF JULY

July 3

3 июля

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

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Hyacinth

Страдание святого мученика Иакинфа

In the reign of the emperor Trajan[1], a cruel persecution of Christians took place in Rome. At that time an edict was issued by which all who were under the rule of the Roman emperor were obliged to offer sacrifices to the gods, and those who were unwilling to do so were delivered to torments.

At this time there lived in the imperial palace an exceedingly excellent youth named Hyacinth, a native of Caesarea in Cappadocia[2], twenty years of age. Holding the office of imperial chamberlain, Hyacinth was always near the emperor. Being by faith and by a chaste life a true Christian, Hyacinth secretly served Christ God, adorned with purity, self-restraint, meekness and all good works.

Once a certain festival in honor of the impious idols occurred, and on this occasion the emperor Trajan offered sacrifices to the idols before the whole people. But the most beautiful youth Hyacinth did not go with the emperor to the pagan shrines; he remained in the palace, withdrew into a small separate room, and here fervently prayed to the one true God. This was noticed by a peer of Hyacinth, who held the same rank of imperial chamberlain, a youth named Urivikius. Having overheard the prayer of Hyacinth, Urivikius went and informed the emperor that Hyacinth, violating the emperor's edict, prays to a certain Jesus Christ and calls Him God.

At this time the emperor Trajan was partaking of food at an abominable feast in the presence of the whole people. He ordered Hyacinth

1. Emperor Trajan reigned from 98 A.D. to 117 A.D.

to be brought before him, and gave him meat sacrificed to idols, commanding him to eat it.

The valiant warrior of Christ, Hyacinth, having signed himself with the sign of the Cross, said to the emperor:

"As a Christian, it is unseemly for me to eat what has been defiled. I greatly desire that you too, forsaking the worship of idols, the demonic festival and your foul sacrifices, would come to know the true God and serve Him alone."

All who were partaking of the viands with the emperor, as well as those standing before him, were astonished at such boldness in the youth Hyacinth and flared up in anger against him. The emperor said to him:

"Hyacinth, your youth makes you a boaster, and you, unworthy as you are, dare to teach me not to serve the gods of our fathers, but to worship some Christ, whom neither we know nor our fathers knew!"

"You do not know Him because you are not worthy to know Him, the true God, who created heaven, earth, the sea and all that is in them, who gave to men the heavenly luminaries and formed man in His own image. You rightly say of yourself that you do not know Him whom your fathers too, being children of wrath, did not know. But I was born and raised by pious and Christ-loving parents, and I have been taught to worship and serve my God."

The emperor was angered by this answer of the saint and ordered his servants to strike him on the mouth.

Rushing hastily upon the martyr of Christ, the servants began to beat him cruelly, not only on the mouth but on the cheeks; and when he fell to the ground, they trampled him hard with their feet, saying:

"How dare you answer the emperor with insolence?"

Then the emperor ordered the beating of the martyr to cease. The saint, being unable to rise because of the cruel blows and the trampling, lay on the ground. Meanwhile Trajan ordered that the sacrificial viands be forcibly thrust into the mouth of the saint. But the holy martyr of Christ, clenching his lips and teeth tightly, did not accept the defilement

2. Cappadocia – a region of Asia Minor.

of meat sacrificed to idols. Then the emperor ordered the saint to be bound in iron chains, his feet to be placed in stocks, and him to be cast into prison.

On the following morning the emperor, continuing with the people to observe the same abominable festival, ordered all the instruments of torture to be set out in a conspicuous place, and the martyr Hyacinth to be brought from prison for interrogation. When the latter had been brought, Trajan asked him:

"Youth! Are you submitting to our command, or are you still persisting obstinately? I foresee that your proud mind will bring you to the most cruel torments; it is better that you listen to me and offer a sacrifice to the gods, if you do not wish to perish in cruel torments!"

But the servant of Christ, firm in soul and body as adamant and relying on the help of God, said to Trajan:

"I am a Christian; I honor Christ, I worship Him and offer Him a living sacrifice, myself. To your demons I will not offer sacrifice, and I do not fear your threats, for I disdain torments, and you will not compel me, the servant of Christ, to accept your impiety; you will not entice me, for the sake of this short-lived life, to forsake the life everlasting! Do with me what you will!"

Then the emperor, filled with wrath, first ordered the holy youth, stretched on the ground, to be beaten without mercy for a long time, and then, hanging him up on the place of torment, ordered his flesh to be torn with iron claws. The sufferer, bravely enduring the torments, cried out to the emperor:

"I am a Christian, I am the servant of Christ, and I will not turn away from Him. You, by subjecting me to torments for Christ, bestow a benefit upon me. Devise yet more cruel torments, for I desire to suffer still more for Christ, my Lord, until—with the help of my Master Christ, who helps all who call upon His most holy name—I overcome your cruelty by my endurance!"

Meanwhile the seventh hour arrived. The people present at the spectacle greatly marveled at the martyr's endurance. Then the emperor ordered the saint to be taken down from the shameful post and, bound, led back to prison, strictly commanding the guards not to give him any

food or drink other than what was sacrificed to idols, so that, compelled by hunger and thirst, he might partake of them. The guards strictly carried out the emperor's command: bringing food and drink daily from the idol sacrifices, they offered them to the saint in prison. But coming the next morning, they found everything intact, since the holy martyr would not even look at those idol-sacrificed viands, regarding them as a vile abomination, and for many days he remained without food or drink, unceasingly praying to God; the saint rejoiced in spirit, as if he were partaking of some rich banquet, for he was nourished by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Meanwhile Trajan, sending servants, asked the guards whether Hyacinth was eating the food and drink brought to him from the sacrifices or not. The guards answered:

"He does not even touch with his finger what is brought to him, but remaining without food or drink, he rejoices and offers prayers to his God."

Having heard this, Trajan was angered at the guards, supposing that someone was bringing Hyacinth other food, and he threatened the guards with death. But the latter swore that no outsider had entered to the saint; they assured that they had watched the prison vigilantly, not permitting anyone even to approach it.

When the thirty-eighth day of the martyr's stay in prison came, one of the guards, as was his custom, entered the prison, carrying with him the idol-sacrificed food to offer to the martyr. And behold, he saw in the prison an indescribable light and two Angels standing near the holy martyr, one of whom covered the saint's body with a radiant garment, while the other placed a wondrous crown upon his head. Seeing this, the guard was greatly frightened, and casting down what he was carrying, ran to the emperor and reported what he had seen. The emperor did not believe the account, and supposing that all this was some illusion wrought by sorcery, resolved to subject the sufferer for Christ to still more cruel torments.

After two days had passed, Trajan, seating himself on the public tribunal, ordered the prisoner to be brought out of the prison for torment, saying:

"Let us see how Christ will help him, whether He will deliver him out of my hands?"

But when the emperor's servants entered the prison, they found that the youth had fallen asleep in the Lord[3]; they also saw the most radiant Angels, having taken the form of youths, standing around the body; they held candles in their hands, while the prison was filled with an indescribable light and fragrance. Seized with fear, the servants ran out of the prison and reported what they had seen to the emperor.

Filled with shame and anger, the emperor sent a multitude of servants to carry the body of the deceased out of the prison. The latter, entering the prison, saw nothing here but the dead body, which they carried out of the prison. Then the emperor ordered the honorable body of the martyr to be carried outside the city and cast in an empty place to be devoured by beasts, dogs and birds; in doing so he ordered the guards to remain nearby, so that Christians might not secretly take the body of the saint from there.

Thus the body of the holy martyr lay for a long time, suffering no harm, for it was guarded by an Angel of God.

One night an Angel appeared to a worthy presbyter, a relative of the martyr, named Timothy, and commanded him to take the body of the martyr. The latter, together with some of the faithful from his household, at nightfall went to that desert place. Since no one hindered him, he took the holy body of the martyr, placed it in the inner chamber of his house, wrapping it in a pure shroud with aromatics. Then the presbyter daily lit a little lamp before the reliquary with the body of the saint and burned incense.

After this, the presbyter Timothy, having lived some years and drawing near to his end, entrusted the relics of the holy martyr to a certain honorable widow, holy in her life and venerable in her age. She, receiving that priceless treasure with joy, kept it in her house with honor, likewise lighting the censer and performing incense-offering daily; and from the holy relics a strong fragrance issued and filled that chamber. This woman told no one anything concerning the saint's rel-

3. The repose of the holy martyr Hyacinthus took place at the beginning of the 2nd century.

ics, since the whole city was serving idols; she herself alone, day and night, with tears prayed at the relics of Christ's martyr.

After a long time had passed, when the widow drew near her end, it happened that one of the noble men lost his sight through a headache. The sick man saw no light for a whole year and could receive no help from physicians. The holy martyr Hyacinth appeared to him in a dream and said:

"Man! Dost thou desire to be healed of thy sickness and to be cured of thy blindness?"

"Who art thou that sayest this to me?" asked the sick man of the one who appeared.

"I," answered the saint, "am a physician of every infirmity, the servant of Christ Hyacinth."

"I beseech thee," continued the sick man, "take all my possessions which I own, only grant me to see the light, for sitting in darkness I suffer and grieve greatly."

"Thou shalt be healed freely," answered him the holy Hyacinth, "by my God, only do what I command thee, namely: send to my homeland, the Cappadocian city of Caesarea, my body, which is laid in the earth with that widow who lives near thee; and anoint thine eyes with oil from the lamp burning before my reliquary, and then thou shalt regain thy sight."

That man, believing what he had seen in the dream, rose from his bed, went with a guide to the house of the widow, and told her of the martyr's appearance and command. Then the widow, bringing this man into the inner chamber in which the body of the saint lay, gave him oil from the lamp; when the man anointed his blind eyes with that oil, he immediately regained his sight, but he delayed in carrying out the saint's command.

After some time had passed, darkness again covered his eyes, and he became blind. Then he again went with a guide to the relics of the holy martyr, seeking healing from him. As he entered the chamber where the relics of the saint rested, he heard a voice speaking to him from on high:

"He who mocked has now himself been mocked."

Then he, falling before the relics of the saint, said:

"Grant me now sight, O servant of God, and I shall immediately do what thou hast commanded me!"

Then, rising, he again anointed his eyes with oil from the lamp, and again regained his sight fully and completely, for opened were not only his bodily eyes but also the eyes of his soul: believing in Christ, he was enlightened by holy Baptism.

The aforementioned widow had by that time already died; then the newly enlightened Christian, taking the reliquary with the relics of the saint and sealing it, sent it with trustworthy men to Caesarea in Cappadocia; he also commanded the men sent with the reliquary to let the mules (which carried it) go alone when they approached the city; wherever they stopped, the relics were to be laid, for so the saint had commanded.

When the faithful men sent with the relics approached the city of Caesarea and were near the gate called Sebastian, they let the mules go without guides. Unguided by anyone, the mules came to the house in which the martyr had been born. But by this time his parents had already died. Then all the believers in that city, gathering together, were filled with great joy at the arrival of the martyr's relics among them; then they placed the holy relics with honor in a marble reliquary in that house, glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ. The martyr of Christ Hyacinth died in Rome on the third day of July, tormented by hunger and thirst, yet sustained by faith, prayer and the grace of the Holy Spirit, in the time when Trajan held sway over the impious and our Lord Jesus Christ reigned over Christians, to Whom glory is offered with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 6:

The tree of life in the midst of his soul, having gained Thy faith, O Christ, Thy martyr became more honorable than the paradise of Eden; having boldly destroyed in spirit the tree of the serpent's deceit, he was crowned with Thy glory, O Thou who art abundant in mercy.

* * *

Life of our Venerable Father Alexander, Founder of the Monastery of the Sleepless

Житие преподобного отца нашего Александра, первоначальника обители неусыпающих

Our holy Venerable Father Alexander was born in Asia. While still in his youth, he came to Constantinople for his education, where, having studied well enough, he acquired considerable knowledge in the sciences. When he reached mature age, he entered military service and was afterward a commander. In his leisure from his official duties he loved to read the books of Holy Scripture, for he was virtuous, honest, steadfast, God-fearing, and adorned with chastity and abstinence. Having read the Old and New Testaments, he dwelt in thought upon the Gospel words spoken by the most pure lips of Christ: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell that thou hast and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow Me" (Mt. 19:21). Pondering this and firmly believing in the word of Christ, he began to sell his estates, which he had in abundance by reason of his high official position, and to give what he received for them to the needy and the poor; and he had already formed the firm intention to renounce the world and all worldly things and to be an imitator of Christ. He heard that in Syria there dwelt holy men who lived a God-pleasing life in cenobitic monasteries, and he desired to go there. Laying aside the rank of commander and leaving his friends, his house and his servants, and setting aside all care for worldly things, he went to Syria. Having reached the cenobium whose abbot was the Venerable Elias, he entreated this father to receive him among the brethren of the monastic life. Having been enrolled in the order of monks, he spent four years in this cenobium, zealously fulfilling all the obediences laid upon him and exercising himself, besides this, in fasting, unceasing prayer, and reading of books. Above all he desired to penetrate the understanding of the Psalms of David, desiring to comprehend the force of each verse in the Psalms. In cases of perplexity he asked the experienced about what he did not understand, and he zealously prayed to God that He would enlighten his mind to the understanding of the Divine Scriptures, which he received by the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that afterward, when

reading the word of God, he already found complete delight and tenderness in his heart. Seeing that in all the cenobia the brethren had an excessive care for food and clothing, he recalled the Gospel words of Christ which forbid excessive care for food, drink and clothing, and do not even bid us be anxious about the morrow. He was firmly and unshakably convinced that the Lord, the all-providing One, who feeds the birds and clothes the grass of the field, will all the more not leave without His care the people who labor for Him, that He is powerful both to nourish and to clothe them, if they seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Inspired by such thoughts, the Venerable Alexander, taking the Gospel he had, came with it to Abba Elias and said to him:

"Father, is everything written in the Gospel true?"

Hearing such a question, the Venerable Elias was astonished, and in perplexity he thought that the one questioning him had been beguiled by some unbelief from the devil. Answering nothing to the question, he sat down and bowed his head, and at that time the brethren came to him.

"Brethren," said the Venerable Elias to them, "let us pray for our brother Alexander, who has become entangled in the snares of the enemy."

And rising, he offered prayer with tears, and then, turning to Alexander, he said to him:

"Whence has come to thee such a doubtful thought, that thou dost not believe what is written in the holy Gospel?"

"I do not disbelieve, Father," answered him Alexander, "but only ask whether everything written in the holy Gospel is true?"

"Truly, everything is true," answered him all the brethren, "and there can be no doubt about this."

Then Alexander said to them:

"If everything written is true, why then do we not fulfill it?"

"It is impossible for a weak man to fulfill everything," answered him the brethren.

After such an answer, Alexander, kindled in his spirit and counting his former life, which had been spent without perfect fulfillment of the

Gospel words, as nothing, resolved to depart into the desert, so that there he might live more conveniently according to the Gospel word. Having asked the blessing of the Venerable Elias and taken leave of the brethren with love, he went forth, trusting in the Lord, with nothing at all with him except the holy Gospel. He spent seven years in the desert, having no care for any earthly thing. How he was nourished, by God's providence, in the desert, will be made clear from the following account.

After seven years of sojourn in the desert, the Venerable Alexander learned that not far from the place where he was there was a village whose inhabitants were idolaters who served demons. Kindled with zeal for God, he went into that village and set fire to the pagan temple there. Seeing this, the inhabitants ran together to the blazing shrine and found the Venerable Alexander there. He did not withdraw from the shrine he had set on fire, but deliberately waited for the idolatrous inhabitants to gather, for he did not wish to conceal from them what he had done. When they began to question him about the burning of the temple, he confessed and said that he had set it on fire. Hearing this, they rushed upon him and wished to kill him, but God preserved His servant. Some of the inhabitants did not agree to the slaying of Alexander, and therefore they did not allow those who had rushed at him to proceed, and insisted that the one guilty of the arson be handed over to the city court. After this, when all had calmed down from their heat, the saint raised his voice and said:

"O people! Understand your error, know the truth, deliver yourselves from eternal condemnation; I proclaim to you the Kingdom of Heaven."

And he began to preach to them, as an Apostle, the word of salvation. Some listened to his teaching, but others did not wish to heed his words and led him to the city court. The governor of that city at the time was Ravul. Hearing from the lips of the Venerable Man the divine teaching he preached, he long contradicted him, seeking to refute this teaching from his pagan books, and he threatened the saint with the terrors of torture. At last, convinced that the Venerable Alexander was gentle in disposition and wise in his answers, and that the teaching he

preached was invincible, Ravul did him no harm. On the contrary, the Lord so arranged that this governor invited Alexander alone, in order to hold a conversation with him in private, and first of all asked:

"Tell me the truth: on what grounds do you Christians so despise your life?"

To this question the Venerable Man answered Ravul:

"You do not speak rightly. We do not despise our life, but strive to preserve ourselves immortal forever. True life consists in living eternally, and to live only temporarily is not life but death. It is this temporal, mortal life that we despise for the sake of the future eternal, immortal life, because it is written to us: 'he who loses his soul in this age will keep it unto life eternal' (Mt. 10:39)."

Ravul said to him in reply:

"And where do you hope to be after the cessation of this earthly life?"

The saint began to preach to him about the Kingdom of Heaven and about the eternal blessings prepared for the righteous. The tales of the saint appeared to the unbelieving pagan as a fable, yet, despite this, he desired all the more to hear the new teaching for him, and he asked further about the beginning of the holy faith. Then the Venerable Man, instructing him in the knowledge of God and revealing the loving-kindness of God toward men, began to recount the deeds of the Lord from the very creation of the world, to the Cross and Christ's voluntary death, to the Resurrection and the glorious Ascension into heaven. The conversation continued day and night. The interlocutors partook of neither food nor drink, and even sleep did not overcome them. When there was talk of the holy prophet Elijah, how by his word the heavens were shut, and how by his prayer fire fell upon the sacrifices, such as the priests of Baal could not obtain from their idols, Ravul, hearing this, laughed and said:

"All these Christian fables of yours are inventions. I advise you to something useful: bring with us sacrifices to our gods; they are merciful and will forgive you for having, in ignorance, angered and offended them by burning their temple."

The saint said:

"If indeed those are gods whom you call gods, why did they not hearken to their priests when, all day long, these called upon them, and did not bring fire down from heaven upon the sacrifices? But the servant of God Elijah alone, and only once, prayed to our one God who dwells in the heavens (3 Kgdms. 18:23–39), and immediately fire fell from heaven and consumed not only the wood and the sacrifice, but also the water and the stones, and burned even the very earth; and afterwards fire fell from on high upon those captains of fifty who wished to seize the prophet, and burned them with their soldiers (4 Kgdms. 1:1–18)."

Ravul laughed and said:

"If that indeed happened, then you too, who call yourself a servant of your God, do the same. Here before us is a multitude of mats and brushwood; pray to your God, as Elijah did, that fire may come down from heaven and burn this. Then I too will say that there is no other God than the God in whom the Christians believe."

The saint said:

"First you pray to your gods, let them do it."

Ravul replied to this:

"I have neither strength nor boldness before my gods. You pray to your God."

Then the holy Alexander, remembering that, according to the word of the Gospel, all things are possible to him who believes (Mk. 9:23), with firm faith and hope in God, stood up to pray; and as soon as he, lifting up his hands, began to pray, immediately fire fell from heaven upon the mats and the brushwood and burned them. Seeing this, Ravul was seized with great terror and feared lest the fire fall upon him too and burn him, as it had the captains of fifty at the time of the prophet Elijah. Ravul cried out in a loud voice and said:

"Truly great is the Christian God!"

He wished to tell the people about this miracle, but the saint strictly forbade him to tell anyone. Ravul kept silent, holding it within himself, as long as the Venerable Alexander lived. After the saint's repose, he made known this miracle before bishops and monks, confirming the truth of his account in the name of God.

After the miracle wrought by the Venerable Alexander, the governor Ravul for a whole week was constantly with the holy Alexander for instruction in the truths of the faith and for guidance onto the true path of salvation; then he asked to be enlightened also by holy Baptism, since the bright day of holy Pascha was drawing near. But the enemy of human salvation, the devil, wished to hinder the accomplishment of this holy work, and put into Ravul's mind the thought that he should receive holy Baptism not in the city, but in a church which was outside the city. They went there, accompanied by many of the citizens with their wives and children. When they came to this church, they saw there a girl in a terrible state of demonic frenzy. Ravul was frightened and said:

"I do not wish to be a Christian. This girl is being punished by the gods for having accepted the Christian faith. I fear that something similar may happen to me as well."

Saying this, he withdrew from the church and wished to return back. But the saint restrained him and said:

"Why do you yield to the diabolical temptation? This girl is being punished for her sins, by the permission of God. She promised before God to keep the purity of virginity, but did not keep her promise, and for this she suffers from demons, being given over to Satan so that her soul might be saved. That this is true, go yourself to the girl and ask her."

Ravul approached the demoniac and from her own lips heard a loud confession of the sins for which God had permitted Satan to enter into her and torment her. After this Ravul put aside all doubt and asked for holy Baptism for himself. When he was baptized and came out of the holy font, the white garment which, according to Christian custom, had been prepared for him for baptism was found to be entirely, from top to bottom, marked with crosses drawn in red within circles, as if painted with cinnabar. All marveled at such a miracle, and the men and women who had come there with Ravul asked to receive holy Baptism as well. The holy Alexander, wishing to be assured that they truly believed in Christ, said to them:

"You must demonstrate your faith. Let us go into the city, and if any of you has idols in his house, let him bring them out into the middle of the city and smash them into pieces with his own hands; then he may be deemed worthy of holy Baptism."

All agreed to do this, and coming into the city they brought out from their houses a great multitude of idols and smashed them in the middle of the city; after which the whole city was enlightened with holy Baptism. The Venerable Man remained for some time in the city and confirmed the newly baptized in the holy faith. When he saw that they were established in piety and gave thanks to God for it, he said to Ravul:

"Until now you have been nourished with milk, but now you should nourish yourselves with solid food. If any of you wishes to be perfect in the Christian life, let him hear the words of Christ. He says: 'Sell your possessions and give alms. Provide yourselves a treasure unfailing in the heavens' (Lk. 12:33); 'seek the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you' (Lk. 12:31; Mt. 6:33)."

Ravul, hearing this, said:

"I cannot be such a perfect Christian. If I sell everything and distribute it, who will provide for my many household members, and how can what is needed for life be acquired without care? If you wish to convince me of this, show me in deed, so that for even one day you may feed me and all my household without our taking thought for it. I do not know how you could do this, when you yourself are a beggar and have nothing even for a single day's sustenance. But if you cannot do this in the city, what will you do in the desert, when we have left everything and go after you?"

The saint, having firm hope in God, resolutely said:

"Take your household and, if you wish, your friends whom you know, and lead them for a whole day into whatever desert you like, far from people; I too shall be with you. Let none of you have bread, not even the smallest piece, nor any other food. If God does not feed you, as He fed the Israelites in the desert before, then you need not believe my words."

Ravul agreed. When morning came, he took with him his household and friends and set out for an impassable desert, together with the Venerable Alexander, wishing to see the fulfilment of his words in deed. They walked the whole day, and it was already the eleventh hour when they halted in a place between two mountains, where there was no trace of any path. The holy Alexander began, as was his custom, to chant the evening office, while Ravul and his companions, already worn down by hunger, thought that they would now eat. When the saint had finished his prayer, they saw coming toward them a simple peasant leading livestock heavily laden with large sacks hanging on both sides, in which were clean, warm loaves and fruits from garden and field. And the Venerable said to Ravul:

"Receive this food, and be not faithless, but faithful."

They received what had been brought with joy, and Ravul, marvelling together with his friends, said:

"Whence in this desert has a man appeared with such food? We walked the whole day and could scarcely reach this place. Yet this man, if he had set out from home only at midnight, could have come to this spot at this hour. But if he set out even at midnight, why are these loaves still warm, as though they had just been taken from the oven?"

Marvelling thus, they asked the man who had come to them:

"Whence and by whom were you sent here?"

"My Master sent me to you, that you should not be hungry," the man answered them.

When they were about to say something more to this man, he at once became invisible, together with all the animals that had come with him, for he was an Angel of God in the form of a simple man. Fear seized them all, and then they all believed the words of the Venerable, and still more the words of Christ, that those who labour for the Lord should be anxious about nothing, but in all things rely upon the Providence of God. Then, giving thanks to God, they ate and spent the night there, and on the next day returned to the city. After this miracle one could understand how the Venerable Alexander had been sustained for seven years during his stay in the desert, without any care for worldly needs. By this miracle the city governor Ravul was greatly

strengthened, and without any further hesitation he desired to practise contemplation of God. First of all he resigned his office, and then began to sell his estate and, by agreement with his wife and daughters (he had no son), to distribute the proceeds to the poor, keeping only a portion for their sustenance. His wife with their daughters founded a monastery and, serving God therein with all their heart, pleased Him; and Ravul, having given away all he had and set free his slaves, went off into the desert, from which after some years he was brought forth and made bishop of the city of Edessa.[4] He lived many years in the episcopal rank and, like a light, enlightened his flock. But let us return to the narrative concerning the Venerable Alexander.

The Venerable Alexander, seeing that city, which he had enlightened with holy faith, flourishing by the grace of God and prospering, rejoiced in his soul, but his heart drew him back again to the desert. The citizens wished to have him with them as their bishop and implored him to accept. When he would not consent and wished secretly to leave them, they kept watch day and night at the city gates, so as not to lose their father and teacher. But the Venerable, as once the holy Apostle Paul, was lowered through the wall in a basket by some of his disciples (cf. 2 Cor. 11:32), and withdrew into the desert for the silence he loved. He walked two days through the desert, and on his way he came upon the dwelling of robbers. The robbers seized him and brought him before their chief. The Venerable, by his God-inspired words, not only subdued the fierce and savage leader of the robber band, but also brought his cruel heart to contrition, so that he believed in Christ and within a few days was enlightened by holy baptism. When he had baptized him, the Venerable asked him:

"What did you ask of God in your heart before the baptism?"

"I asked," the newly baptized man answered him, "that the Lord, once my sins were cleansed in the font of baptism, would quickly take my soul from me."

"What you asked for shall be fulfilled," the saint said to him.

On the eighth day, when the newly baptized man, after his cleansing in the holy font, had washed away his sins also with many tears of true

repentance, he reposed in the Lord. Seeing this, the other robbers too joined the holy faith and, after receiving baptism, began to live their lives in heartfelt repentance; and a little time later the very dwelling of the robbers was turned into a monastery, in which the former robbers, renouncing the world, lived as zealous monks. The Venerable lived with them for some time, and having established monastic rules and set over them an experienced superior, withdrew into a deeper desert, rejoicing in the salvation of human souls. He walked two days and reached the Euphrates. Having crossed the river, he found a tree with a very large hollow within, and chose this hollow in the tree as the place of his dwelling. By day he walked in the mountains and in the wild thickets of the desert, and at night he returned to the place of his abode. How he was fed need not be asked, when in the desert he had, as has been said, obtained bread from God for Ravul and his companions. He dwelt in this place for a long time. By God's inspiration, brethren began to come to him and settle near him, desiring to imitate his angelic life. The Venerable remained here for twenty years. During this time a great coenobium was established at the Euphrates, to which a multitude of brethren gathered. There were as many as four hundred brethren here from various lands: from Greece, from Rome, from Syria and from Egypt. God gathered such a flock and entrusted it to the good shepherd, the Venerable Alexander. But what is more astonishing? Such a multitude of brethren, with little care for food and clothing, had every day complete abundance in all things. And they left nothing over for the next day, but gave away everything to the poor and strangers who came to them. The Providence of God sent food each day to His servants. In this coenobium, the first of its kind, was instituted a new order, unknown anywhere before, of the Sleepless Ones. The Venerable Alexander first ordained that the brethren should go to church for the praise of God seven times in the day, according to the word of the prophet who said: "Seven times a day do I praise Thee for the judgments of Thy righteousness" (Ps. 118:164). Then, giving heed to the other words of the same prophet: "Blessed is the man... in His law doth

4. A city in northern Mesopotamia, on the river Euphrates.

he meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:1–2), the Venerable pondered whether it was in truth possible for man to fulfil the prophetic word, so as to be unceasingly instructed in the law of God's praise both by day and by night. If this were not possible, he said to himself, the Holy Spirit would not have spoken it through the prophetic lips. And he desired to establish in his coenobium such an order that in the church, both by day and by night, there might be uninterrupted and unsleeping psalmody. If, he said, this is impossible for one man in his cell because of the weakness of the flesh, it is possible for many in the church, taking turns by hours. Thus he reasoned with himself, but he did not dare to begin such a work without a revelation from God. And recalling the word of Christ: "Ask, and it shall be given you; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Mt. 7:7), he began earnestly to beseech the Lord to reveal to him whether His purpose was pleasing to Him, and whether such an order would be acceptable to Him, that as the Angels in heaven always praise God, so also men on earth, dwelling in his coenobium in the angelic order of monks, in the church which is the earthly heaven, might glorify God with psalmody both by day and by night. For this the Venerable prayed for three years, through all the nights, afflicting himself with frequent fasting.

At last the Lord appeared to him in person and said:

"Begin what you desire; it is pleasing to Me."

The Venerable Alexander told some of the most spiritual among his brethren of the Lord's appearance, yet he related it to them without speaking in his own name, imitating in this the holy Apostle Paul, who said of himself: "I know a man in Christ ... caught up to the third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:2). After this the Venerable Father proceeded to establish the order desired and blessed by God. According to the number of the hours of day and night, he divided the brethren into twenty-four groups, so that each, knowing the hour of his group, would present himself at that time in the place of singing. For the singing the Psalms of David were appointed; they were to be sung by verses, in two choirs, without haste, except at the times when the ordinary services of the Church were being celebrated. During the celebration of these services the newly established order of psalmody was interrupted. Thus in the

church of the cenobium God was praised without ceasing, both by day and by night, whereby the cenobium itself came to be called the monastery of the Sleepless Ones. At the psalmody the Venerable Father also established the number of prostrations for each day, according to the number of those forgivings by which the Lord commands us to forgive the one who has sinned: seventy times seven, which made four hundred and ninety. Besides this, he ordained that at the conclusion of each Church and monastic service, and after every undertaking, they should say: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Having established such an order in his monastery, the Venerable Father considered what else was needful for pleasing God. And recalling the word of the Psalmist: "I will teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee" (Ps. 50:15), he resolved that one must be concerned not only for one's own salvation but also for others, especially for those who remained in impiety. And since in those lands at that time there was much idolatry, he planned to send some of the brethren to preach Christ. For this task he chose seventy of the most learned and especially zealous for the holy faith, according to the number of those disciples of Christ of whom the holy evangelist Luke writes: "The Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come" (Lk. 10:1). Having chosen this number of disciples for the preaching of Christ, and having prayed over them, Alexander, the imitator of Christ, sent them two by two into the surrounding idolatrous villages. The grace of God aided them through the prayers of the Venerable Father. Their labors were not in vain: they converted many of the pagans to Christ.

After twenty years of his stay by the river Euphrates, the Venerable Alexander, seeing his cenobium fully well ordered, and the order of the Sleepless Ones and all the rules concerning the ascetic life firmly established in it, rejoiced in spirit and gave much thanks to the Lord. After this, moved by great zeal for the salvation of human souls, he wished to go to the land of Persia, where pagan impiety was deeply rooted. Choosing from among the brethren one hundred and fifty men to go with him, and entrusting the rest to the experienced elder Trophimus,

whom he appointed abbot, and giving the brethren his peace and blessing, he crossed the river Euphrates with the brethren set apart for him and set out through the desert toward the borders of Persia, taking nothing with him except the sacred books. And on the way he never ceased with the brethren the unceasing psalmody in two choirs, as in the church, with changes by the hours, by day and by night. Wishing to test the patience of the brethren accompanying him, he led them through the desert, where no food could be obtained except wild berries, which he allowed them to eat at the permitted times. Some of the impatient began to murmur, as the Israelites of old murmured against Moses. They said to the Venerable Father:

"You have led us into this desert to starve us to death."

And they already planned secretly to return to the monastery. Such were thirty men. Foreseeing their thoughts through divine revelation, the Venerable Father rebuked them for little faith and bade them return, and he said to the rest in a loud voice:

"Believe me, brethren, that this very day the Lord will send us abundant food and put unbelief to shame." At last they drew near the borders of the land of Persia, where the Greco-Roman emperors had built cities, not large but fortified, in which there were troops to defend against the unbelievers. When the Venerable Father with the brethren was walking through the desert not far from these cities, by God's command there came out to meet them unexpectedly the military commanders of those cities, called tribunes, with a sufficient quantity of bread and various other food, and they besought the saint to visit their cities and enlighten them, since many servants of the demons dwelt in them. Having partaken with thanksgiving of the food brought, and having sent back to the monastery those who had proved to be of little faith and impatient, the saint went into those cities and, by the aid of God's grace, in a short time converted them all to Christ through the preaching of the Gospel. In one of these cities they did not wish to receive his teaching, especially when they heard his teaching about almsgiving and generous charity. The rich then said to him:

"You have come to make us beggars."

For this reason the Venerable Father left them, and God punished them with drought. For three years they had no rain, until they recognized their sin. They began to seek the Venerable Father; finding him already in Antioch, they implored him to forgive them their sin. After this repentance, in the fourth year a heavy rain watered the earth, and there was great abundance of the fruits of the earth and the conversion of souls to the Lord. Continuing his journey through the desert, the Venerable Father came to a city called Palmyra, built in that desert as long ago as Solomon. In this city the inhabitants, although they were called Christians, were of Jewish origin and still adhered to the old law. Seeing Alexander and the brethren approaching them, they shut the city gates against him.

"Who," they said, "can feed such a multitude of monks?" And they did not admit them.

But the Venerable Father gave thanks to God and said:

"'It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man' (Ps. 117:8). Brethren, do not be faint-hearted! Unexpectedly God has visited us."

And indeed, when they had gone some distance from the city, the unbelievers who dwelt not far from there, their hearts disposed by the Lord, came out to meet them with bread and all manner of earthly goods, and entertained them and refreshed them. From there the Venerable Father went on to Antioch. Thus God directed his path for the benefit of many. And when he drew near to Antioch, observing the customary rule of unceasing psalmody, the bishop of that city, Theodotus, learned of his arrival, and the name of Alexander was already glorified and honored everywhere. But the devil stirred up certain evil and envious people, who slandered the Venerable Father and his brethren to the bishop, saying that everything they observed—their fasts and their prayers—they did hypocritically, for vain glory, to show themselves to people. The bishop, not discerning the falsehood of the slander, sent many of his servants along with those slanderers to drive Alexander and all who were with him out of the city in disgrace. But, led by the Venerable Alexander, the honorable choir of earthly angels had already entered the city with its customary psalmody, so that the men sent by

the bishop met them already within the city. They fell upon them like robbers, seized each of them, beat them much and grievously, and dragged them out of the city; and upon the Venerable Alexander, as their leader, they inflicted still more wounds and dishonor. The Venerable Father and his brethren, however, rejoiced that they had been counted worthy to suffer innocently. The Venerable Father knew that this had happened at the devil's instigation, in order to hinder the good work and the benefit it brought to many. He was kindled in spirit, and again secretly at night entered the city with the brethren; finding there old, empty bathhouses, he performed his psalmody in them. On the next day the bishop learned of this. Although his anger had not yet passed, he was already inclining toward mercy, fearing not only God but also the people, for all the citizens of Antioch rejoiced at Alexander's coming among them, whom all revered as a great prophet, and they were very angry with the bishop for the dishonor and injury he had inflicted upon the Venerable Father and his brethren. At last the bishop himself was moved to compassion and blessed Alexander and his brethren to remain in the city. And the empty bathhouses became their dwelling. But after a short time, the citizens, with the bishop's blessing and consent, built a church for the Venerable Father and established a monastery. After this many of the people, ceasing to attend their own churches, gathered for church singing to the Venerable Alexander, to hear from him also his honey-sweet instruction, with which he taught those who came to him. The soul of each burned with love for the Venerable Father. All that he and his brethren needed was brought every day. But they ate only once a day, after the ninth hour, and gave everything else to the poor, leaving nothing for the next day. God constantly sent them food and all that was needful through merciful lovers of the poor. After some time the Venerable Father wished to have a hospital and a hospice at his monastery, and, having obtained the bishop's blessing, established them as he desired. Although he himself, being poor, had nothing, the rich placed all their treasures at his disposal: everyone gladly gave him whatever he asked, and always eagerly did whatever he urged them to do. The Venerable Father himself tended the sick, himself cared for the strangers, providing them with all they

needed from the alms received from God-loving people whom God disposed to beneficence. He gave healing to the sick through the laying on of his hands, which manifested great power. And they glorified God, who worked wonders through him. The Venerable Father observed that the bishop did not act in his affairs in accordance with his rank; he saw that the city voivode and other important dignitaries acted unjustly, and, filled with the zeal of Elias and at the same time with meekness, fearlessly and boldly reproved them, teaching them righteousness from the word of God. He was a teacher and mentor to all. But such zeal was not pleasing to everyone, especially to those in authority. Some even among the clergy, though they marveled at his virtuous life, hated him greatly and stirred up the bishop against him. Therefore the bishop sent to the Venerable Father the most malicious subdeacon, named Malchus, with many servants, to drive him out of the city. Malchus came and struck the saint violently in the face, with fury, and said:

– Get out of this city, impious one!

The Venerable Father, however, like a meek lamb, answered him gently, with only the words of the Gospel:

– "The servant's name was Malchus" (Jn. 18:10).

And when the subdeacon Malchus and the servants who came with him wished to inflict still greater insult upon the Venerable Father and drive him from the city, at that moment the people gathered and a great tumult arose, for all defended the holy father and his brethren, so that Malchus and those with him could scarcely escape the popular uproar. The bishop was kindled with still greater anger and took counsel with the voivode, who was also angry with the saint. After this they took the Venerable Father secretly from the monastery at night, away from the people, and drove him to Chalcis; they also dispersed his brethren, and all departed wherever each could. After some time, however, Venerable Alexander was returned again to Antioch, because all the citizens of Antioch grieved for him and murmured against the bishop and the voivode. But the Venerable Father, not finding his brethren, did not himself wish to live there and intended to depart. Learning of this, the citizens kept watch at the gates, fearing lest he should go out, for they had great love for him and wished him to remain among them. The

Venerable Father, however, having resolved to leave Antioch, changed his monastic garb and, putting on a tattered garment, under the appearance of a beggar, went out of the city at night. He walked for several days and came to the Kyrinthinian cenobium. In this cenobium he found the whole order which he had established in his own monastery on the river Euphrates, and, marveling and supposing that some of his disciples had brought this order here, he thanked God that even in this land He had shown him the fruits of his labors. When the brethren learned that it was Alexander, they rejoiced greatly at his coming to them, for his name was glorified everywhere, and they had long desired to see him.

Having spent some time in this cenobium, the Venerable Father went from here to Constantinople. God was calling him there for the salvation of many. Twenty-four brethren went with him from this cenobium. Coming to Constantinople, he settled beside the church of Saint Menas, and brethren began to gather to him. In a few years as many as three hundred brethren had assembled, from different peoples – Greek, Roman and Syrian. Thus a vast monastery was established here, and in it was instituted the order of the Sleepless Ones. All that was needful, by God's providence, was supplied for the monastery, as will be seen from what follows. Some men of rank, hearing of and seeing this poor and at the same time care-free life of monks, who labored only, by day and by night, in glorifying God and took no thought of anything earthly, not even of the morrow, purposely sent men to this monastery to stay there several days and observe from where the monks received their food each day. Venerable Alexander, perceiving this intention, said in the presence of the men who had been sent to one of his disciples:

– Go and bring in the man who is standing at the monastery doors.

The brother went and saw a man with a large basket filled with fresh, warm loaves, and brought him with the loaves to the Father. The Venerable Father, in the presence of all, began to ask him who he was and whence he had brought the loaves. He asked not because he himself did not know—for nothing was hidden from him by God—but in order

to shame the fainthearted, who had come to investigate their manner of life and sustenance. The man who was questioned began to say:

– I am a baker. When I was taking the loaves out of the oven today, there appeared to me a certain radiant man, tall of stature and beautiful in appearance, who commandingly said: carry all these loaves to the servants of the Most High. In terror I said to him: I do not know the place to carry them. And he said: follow me, and I followed him. When he had brought me to the gates of this monastery, he became invisible.

The Venerable Father rose and gave thanks to God, and his faith in God and God's great providence concerning him became known to all. The Venerable Father was so far-seeing that he knew everything the brethren did, and even their thoughts. When occasion arose, he reproved sins privately and corrected sinners as a father. He also had care for the sick and appointed four of the brethren to serve them, and bade them prepare a warm drink each day for those who needed it in their illnesses. And the servers fulfilled this. It happened one day, or by God's will, in order to show the Venerable Father's firm faith in God, that the servers forgot to prepare the warm drink for the sick. Perceiving this, the Venerable Father called one of the servers and asked why the drink had not been warmed, but he, intending to conceal his lapse from the far-seeing father, told him that they had no firewood. The Venerable Father said to him:

– Why did you not speak to me about the firewood in the morning? Are you testing me? However, go: the drink has already been warmed.

Coming into the hospital, the brother indeed found the kettle full and boiling and bubbling without fire. And all marveled at this miracle and at the faith of the Venerable Father.

At that time the Church of Christ was troubled by the heresy of Nestorius[5], and the enemy spread a rumor among the people that Venerable Alexander was a heretic. For in those days what was piety was

5. The heresy of Nestorius consisted in the assertion that the Most Holy Virgin Mary bore not God but only a man, with whom, apart from her, the Word of God, eternally begotten of the Father, was united; and this union was only moral. The heresy of Nestorius was condemned at the Ecumenical Council in Ephesus in 431, at which the question of the union in Christ Jesus of the two natures was resolved as follows: "The two natures – the divine and the human – are united in Christ inseparably and unconfusedly."

regarded as heresy, and heresy was counted as piety, since many were then in heresy, and Patriarch Nestorius himself among them. Venerable Alexander was brought before a court of the impious, and when he was questioned about a heresy of which he was innocent, he answered them with words from the psalm:

"Princes sit and conspire against me, but Thy servant meditates upon Thy statutes. Thy testimonies are my delight; they are my counsellors" (Ps. 118:23–24).

As he spoke, a demon appeared and cried out, "Why do you torment me before the time?" and then it vanished. After the words he had quoted from the psalm, the saint answered those who examined him no further, but, bowing his eyes downward, remained silent like a lamb before its shearer. The judges were enraged and drove him out from before them. When, in the midst of the people, the servants of Satan sought to lay their hands upon him and do him harm, he, shielded by the protection of God, passed through their midst unharmed and reached his monastery, where many prayers were offered for him by the brethren. Then the enemy rose up against him again and stirred up the heretics against him, who tormented not only him but also many of the brethren, with chains, with prison, and with beatings. But all this prepared for the Venerable a glorious crown, and for the enemy shame. When the heretical storm had passed, the Venerable spent the rest of his life in peace, and, having pleased God and brought the souls of many to salvation, he departed to the Lord[6] in deep old age, having labored in monasticism for fifty years, and he was buried with honor. At his tomb miracles took place: in all manner of sicknesses, healings were granted to people through the prayers of Venerable Alexander, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor, glory, thanksgiving and worship, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

6. Around the year 430.

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Mokius and Mark

Страдание святых мучеников Мокия и Марка

These holy martyrs were seized and delivered to the eparch[7] Maximian, who first urged them to offer sacrifice to the idols, and then began to threaten them with death. When they were led to the altar, a small child walked before them and hindered them from going forward. For this the pagans took him upon their shoulders and beat him with a girth strap[8], inflicting on him one hundred and ten cruel blows. Then the child said to the eparch:

"Eparch! You teach me something bad."

The holy martyrs refused to offer sacrifice to the idols, remaining steadfast in the faith in Christ and in its confession, and they were beheaded with the sword. Following St. Mokius to the place of execution went his wife and children, and they wept; but he bade them not to weep. The head of St. Mark was received by his wife when he, standing at the place of execution, was beheaded[9].

* * *

7. The title eparch was borne in the Greco-Roman Empire by the rulers of provinces.
8. A girth strap – a strap or band for tightening a saddle.
9. The time of the repose of the holy martyrs Mokius and Mark is unknown.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day, the memory of Venerable Anatolius of the Kiev Caves, in the 12th century.

On this same day, the memory of our Holy Father Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who reposed in the year 458.

On this same day, the memory of the Right-believing Princes Basil and Constantine of Yaroslavl, in the 13th century.

On this same day, the memory of the Holy Martyrs Diomedes, Eulampius, Asclepiodotus and Golinduch, who suffered under Trajan in the 2nd century.

On this same day, the memory of the Venerable John and Longinus, Wonderworkers of Yarenga, who drowned in the White Sea and were found by the sea about the years 1544–1545.

On this same day, the repose of Blessed John, Fool-for-Christ of Moscow, in the year 1589.

On this same day, the repose of Venerable Nicodemus of Kozheozero (Khozyugsky), who reposed in the year 1640.

On this same day, the translation of the relics of St. Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow



THE FOURTH DAY OF JULY

July 4

4 июля

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

Memory of our Father among the Saints Andrew, Archbishop of Crete[1]

Память святого отца нашего Андрея, архиепископа Критского

St. Andrew was born in the city of Damascus[2] and was mute from birth until he was seven years old. When, however, he together with his parents partook in church of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, his muteness was loosed during the holy Communion, and he began to speak. Christ, the true Son of God, who brought praise to Himself through the lips of this mute child, showed how great is the power hidden in the most pure Mysteries. Having received the gift of speech through holy Communion, the blessed Andrew was given over to instruction in the Divine Books, and in the fourteenth year of his life he was brought to the holy city of Jerusalem to serve God. Receiving him, the most holy Patriarch of Jerusalem enrolled him in the clergy and in time appointed him notary[3], since he was a man of understanding. St. Andrew led a most virtuous life, labouring in chastity, abstinence and meekness, so that even the Patriarch himself marveled at him; he was pleasing to God and beloved of all.

After many years had passed, the Sixth Ecumenical Council of the holy Fathers[4] was convened in Constantinople, in the reign of the Em-

1. Crete (or Candia) is the largest of the islands of the Mediterranean Sea; it lies in the eastern part of that sea, south of the Aegean Sea. It now belongs to Turkey.
2. 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 at the eastern foot of Anti-Lebanon. In the history of the Christian Church, Damascus is remarkable as the place of the miraculous conversion to Christ of Saul (Acts 9:1–22). It was conquered by the Arabs in 634; from 1516 it was annexed to the Turkish empire.
3. As secretary.

peror Constantine Pogonatus[5], against the impious heresy of the Monothelites[6], concerning which heresy one may read more fully in the Life of the Venerable Maximus the Confessor. To this Council the then most holy Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theodore, sent this same blessed Andrew, who at that time held the rank of archdeacon, for the Patriarch himself could not travel to the Council in Constantinople, since Jerusalem was at that time under Muslim rule. By the grace of the Holy Spirit with which he was filled, the blessed Andrew at this time became known to the holy Fathers and to the Emperor himself. They perceived in him not only bookish wisdom and a profound knowledge of the dogmas of the Orthodox Church, but also a holy and God-pleasing life. Against the heretics he showed himself a valiant warrior of Christ, and, zealously contending for piety, he greatly assisted the council of the holy Fathers.

After the conclusion of the Council, St. Andrew returned to Jerusalem and remained there in his customary God-pleasing labours, caring, at the Patriarch's commission, for orphans, feeding strangers and serving the sick. In all of this he was so diligent and zealous, as though he were serving Christ Himself. After this, in the reign of the Emperor Justinian II[7], Andrew was appointed Archbishop of Crete. Here he was a light to the world, illumining the Church of Christ by his God-inspired teaching and his virtuous life. As an invincible ascetic, whom the demons feared (for he cast them out), Andrew was a scourge to heretics. Not only invisible but also visible enemies were driven off by his prayers.

Once, Saracens arriving by ship attacked the island of Crete and besieged the city called Drumeos, where the Christians had shut themselves in with their shepherd, St. Andrew. But the Saracens fought without success and withdrew in shame, being driven off not by weapons but by prayers far stronger than any weapon, which the hierarch poured out to God with tears, and by which, as with arrows, he

4. In 680.
5. Constantine IV (Pogonatus) reigned from 668 to 685.
6. The heresy of the Monothelites consisted in this: although they acknowledged two natures in Jesus Christ, they admitted in Him only one will.
7. Justinian II reigned from 685 to 695.

wounded the enemies. His prayers had great power: by them, in a time without rain and of drought, he brought down rain, which watered the region of Crete and gave it fertility.

Christ's hierarch Andrew wrote many God-inspired writings, and the great canon which is sung on Thursday of the fifth week of Great Lent, and other canons. He adorned the Church with hymns and honoured the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos with many praises[8]. On some church business he once journeyed to Constantinople and here proved useful to many people. Everyone delighted in beholding him and in his honey-sweet words, and was perfected in soul. Therefore all who sought salvation for their souls flocked to him. Intending, however, to return from Constantinople to Crete, the saint foresaw his death and told his dear friends in Christ that he would no more see Crete. Bidding them farewell with a last kiss, he boarded a ship and set out on the voyage. Sailing to the island of Mytilene, he fell ill, and in a place called Ieris he committed his soul into the hands of God[9].

The blessed Andrew tended with honor the flock of rational sheep entrusted to him, and he is numbered with the choir of the holy hierarchs who stand before the throne of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God in the Trinity, to Whom glory is offered forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having clearly sounded the divine sweet-singing, thou didst appear as the brightest light of the world, shining with the light of the Trinity, O Venerable Andrew. Wherefore we all cry to thee: Cease not to pray for us all.

* * *

Life of St. Martha the Righteous[10]

Житие святой праведной Марфы

8. To St. Andrew, Archbishop of Crete, belong some twenty homilies of a church-instructive character. Among the church hymns composed by him, the most important should be considered the Great Penitential Canon, which is sung in parts at the Compline of the first week of the Great Fast, and in full at Matins on Thursday of the fifth week.

9. The repose of St. Andrew, Archbishop of Crete, took place in 712.

St. Martha the Righteous was born in the city of Antioch. Her parents were pious Christians. They urged her to enter into marriage, but she, desiring to lead a virgin life, did not consent to this; nevertheless, a certain Divine vision in the church of the holy Forerunner caused her to submit to her parents and marry. By the Divine gift of which she had been forewarned (as is described in detail in the Life of Symeon of the Wonderful Mountain), through an appearance of St. John the Forerunner, Martha conceived a son, St. Symeon. Having lived a few years with her husband, she was widowed, and she reared the child with all care, strictly following his upbringing according to the command of the holy Forerunner. Martha always prayed to God for her son, that He would accept him into His service, as once He accepted Samuel from the prophetess Anna.

Once, while Martha was pondering the child, what would befall him when he came to manhood, she saw the following vision in a dream. It seemed to her that she had wings and was rising on high, holding a child in her hands and offering him as a gift to the Lord, saying:

"Such is thy ascent, child; this I desired to see!

May my Creator dismiss me in peace, for I, having been granted to dedicate to Him the fruit of my womb, have found grace before Him!"

This vision, as well as the revelations she had received earlier, the blessed Martha kept in her heart, and she gave thanks to God. She constantly remained in the house of God, never neglecting the church rule, and for this reason she lived near the church; she came to the church earliest of all to hear the singing and left last of all. She had the pious custom of coming to the festal services in the holy churches wherever they were celebrated; with great attention and contrition of heart she stood through the All-night Vigils, shedding tears, and she often received the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. How worthily she communed was witnessed by the fact that after receiving Divine Communion her face was illumined with a wondrous light, as once

10. It should be noted that the holy righteous Martha, mother of St. Simeon of the Mountain of Wonders, reposed on the fifth day of this month; but since the service for her is appointed in the Menaion on this fourth day, and likewise the synaxarion of this day is read in the Prologue, for this reason her life is also placed under the fourth day of the month of July.

the face of Moses. Every night in her house, rising before midnight, Martha stood in prayer, which she performed with fervour of soul, bathing her face with tears; her whole mind was absorbed in God, whom she loved with all the strength of her soul. She was unspeakably merciful to the poor, fed the hungry and clothed the naked. Frequently visiting the hospitals, she served the sick with her own hands, and for the dying she gave, from her labours, garments needed for burial. Likewise she gave the white garments of her handiwork to those being baptized. She was so gentle, humble and free of malice that no one ever saw her angry, quarrelling, or sorrowful. Moreover, she guarded her lips against much speaking, speaking only of what was necessary. She greatly loved silence, since it accustoms the mind to godly contemplation; no idle word, nor false, nor any displeasing to God was heard from her lips, but out of the good treasure of her heart she brought forth good things with her mouth. Saint Martha was also a peacemaker among the angry, an admonisher of those who lived badly, and a model of chaste, reverent and God-pleasing life for all, not only for women but also for men. She was filled with many other virtues, which cannot be recounted in detail. Sufficient testimony to her righteous life is the great holiness of the Venerable Symeon whom she bore, for it was fitting that such a woman should be the mother of such a son.

When the Venerable Symeon was already ascetically struggling on the pillar of the Wonderful Mountain[11], Martha, after her midnight prayer, during a light slumber, had the following vision. St. John the Baptist appeared to her together with the holy Apostle Timothy; to him, after God and the Most Holy Theotokos, Martha had a special devotion, and she prayed to him daily with faith; and he said to her:

"At all times I intercede for thee before God, and I will never forsake thee."

Then Martha, filled with awe and joy, awoke from this vision, with fear glorified God, and told of it to her son, the Venerable Symeon, whom she sometimes came to visit. Coming and seeing at the pillar of the Venerable a multitude of the possessed and those afflicted with all

11. The Wondrous Mountain, on which St. Simeon the Stylite labored, was situated near Antioch in Syria and Seleucia.

manner of infirmities, gathered there in hope of healing, and the many miracles wrought through the prayers of the Venerable, Martha did not exalt herself in mind, but regarded this with especial fear, lest in some way the enemy of our salvation set snares before her son; therefore she prayed to God with tears that He would deliver her son from the cunning of the enemy. At the same time she said to the Venerable:

"My child! For all this it is fitting to glorify God, who works through thee. But do thou remember thy weakness and with great attention guard thy heart!"

The Venerable Symeon listened to his mother's exhortations with joy, and rejoicing in spirit over her God-pleasing life, he offered up thanksgiving to God.

When the blessed Martha had lived for many years in the practice of many virtues and at last pleased God, then a year before her death, during her fervent midnight prayers to God, she fell into an ecstatic state and saw a multitude of heavenly orders rejoicing, holding candles in their hands, who said to her:

"After the passing of a year we shall take thee, freed from the flesh, into the place of rest prepared for thee by the Lord."

The same was revealed to the Venerable Symeon. At the same time one of his brethren had the following vision:

He saw the Most Holy Mother of God, the Pure Virgin Mary, sitting in glory upon a throne, while the blessed Martha, with her hands raised to Her in the form of a cross, transformed into a golden cross and shining with light like the rays of the sun, stood before Her. She appeared entirely as a most bright cross; only her face could be discerned above the cross. This vision was reported to the Venerable Symeon, and he said that it was a sign of the approaching death of his blessed mother.

When the last year of St. Martha's God-pleasing life was drawing to its close, she came to visit her son, the Venerable Symeon, and Symeon said to her:

"Bless me, my mother, as Abraham blessed Isaac!"

"For this very purpose I have come here," replied the saint, "that I might be granted to receive your blessing and prayers. Only three months remain of my life, and I shall depart to the Lord my God, who

brought you forth from my womb. May He bestow upon you His blessing and His grace, that you may bring to a successful end the valiant ascetic labor you have begun, and that God may vouchsafe you His Kingdom."

As she spoke these words, the blessed Martha wept in heartfelt tenderness. The brethren gathered there also wept, for they were greatly grieved to hear that in three months they would no longer see the face of Martha. The brethren said:

"May your soul live and praise the Lord!"

She, confirming her words, repeated:

"If it does not come to pass as I have said, then count me, your servant, a liar."

"We now ask for your blessing," said the Venerable Symeon to her, "but these words of yours are painful to our hearts."

"Blessed are you of the Lord," replied the saint, "blessed are also those who bless you."

At these words all present bowed down to her. And she in turn, bowing to them, returned to her house in Antioch.

On the following day, after the departure of his mother, the Venerable Symeon, calling together the most experienced of the brethren, said to them:

"Truly the time of the departure from earth of my lady and mother is drawing near. In the night just past I saw in a vision a throne set before me, and upon it my mother seated, while we all stood around her, and she, instructing us, spoke to us the first words of the psalm: 'Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly' (Ps. 1:1), and the rest of that psalm. In doing so she uttered, as a mother to her children, many other words of exhortation. Then she rose and went before us into the church, holding in her hands a most bright cross, and we, singing touching psalms, followed her."

After this, only a few days before her death, Martha came again to the Venerable Symeon for a final farewell. She related to him all the divine revelations she had received during her life, and told him also of her labors and ascetic feats, which she had performed in secret for the glorification of God's name. She spent that night there. In a dream-vis-

ion she seemed to be caught up to a heavenly height, and she saw a wondrous and most bright hall, the beauty of which no one is able to describe in words. As she walked in that hall, marveling at the building not made by hands, she saw the Most Pure Virgin Mother of God with two radiant Angels, and the Mother of God asked her:

"Why are you marveling?"

She, bowing reverently to the Mother of God with fear and joy, replied:

"I marvel, O Sovereign Lady, that in all the days of my life I have never seen on earth so wondrous a hall."

"For whom, do you think," asked the Most Pure One, "is that hall prepared?"

"I know not, Lady," replied Martha.

Then the Mother of God said to her:

"Do you not know that this place of rest, which your son has built, and in which from now on you will dwell forever, has been prepared for you?"

Having said this, the Most Pure One gave a command to the Angels, and they set in the midst of the hall a wondrous throne; then she said to the saint:

"This glory is given to you, since you have lived God-pleasingly in the fear of the Lord. Do you wish to see something even more glorious?" the Mother of God then asked Martha.

With these words She commanded her to follow Her. Ascending to the highest heavenly places, the Mother of God showed her a hall more wondrous and incomparably brighter than the first, filled with heavenly glory, whose beauty the human mind cannot grasp and the tongue cannot express.

"This hall too," said the Most Pure One, "was built by your son, and he has already begun the foundation of a third hall."

With these words She led her to the east of the sun and showed her from a height the paradisal dwellings and the multitude of choirs of men and women rejoicing in them.

"These places," said the Sovereign Lady at this point, "My Son has given to those who, having lived chastely and righteously in keeping

the commandments of the Lord, with zeal distributed abundant alms, and for that reason themselves were vouchsafed mercy from the Lord: 'for blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy' (Mt. 5:7)."

Such was the vision granted to St. Martha, of which she told her son.

At that time it was a Sunday, and Martha partook of the Most Pure Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, and her face shone from the grace of God and the ineffable spiritual joy with which she was filled, having received the revelation of her death and her salvation. All that day and the night that followed, the blessed Martha spent partly in many God-inspired and dear conversations with her venerable son, and partly in fervent tearful prayers to God. On Monday, having given peace, blessing, and a last farewell to her son and to all his disciples, she parted from them amid their bitter weeping, and departed to the village called Tivirint, which lay three stadia from the Wonderful Mountain, and in which there was a church of St. John the Baptist. Here she offered abundant prayers, and afterwards began to weaken in body. The inhabitants of that village greatly honored the blessed Martha, and therefore they asked her to rest among them from her labors. And indeed she rested with them that day and the night that followed, and grew still weaker in body. Then on Tuesday she was carried in a cart to Antioch, to her house, which was located in the suburb of Daphne. Praying fervently to God in her heart, shedding abundant tears, and having an unshakable hope of her salvation, she gave her holy soul into the hands of God on the fifth day of the month of July[12]. In dying she bequeathed that her body should be buried in the place where strangers and the poor are buried. But her venerable son Symeon, having received a revelation from God concerning his mother's repose, sent some of his disciples and carried her body to himself on the Wonderful Mountain, that he might bury it by his pillar. Concerning St. Martha they also relate that when her holy soul had departed to the Lord, some who were standing near her honored body saw her face smiling joyfully, and words were heard from her lips:

12. The repose of St. Martha took place in the year 551.

"I have received great grace from God and I abide in unspeakable light and joy."

Those around her, struck with fear, thought that the saint had received this mercy from the Lord on account of her son. But to these thoughts the saint said that she had been glorified not so much for the sake of her son as for her virtuous life, because for the sake of the Lord she had shown great patience in abstinence and in the labors of fasting, had zealously walked the path of His commandments, and had loved with all her heart the Mother of God, who bore the Lord.

The honored body of St. Martha was carried with great honor from the Antiochian suburb of Daphne to the Wonderful Mountain on Friday. A multitude of the people of Antioch, and clergy with censers, candles, and psalmody, accompanied her as a great servant of God. Those who carried the coffin with her body testified that they felt no weight while bearing it. Whereas the bodies of the dead have a natural weight, this honored body was in some way unusually light, and seemed to move through the air of its own accord. One young man in the crowd, named Sergius, the son of Antonius, an honorable citizen, seeing that glorious escort and the people pressing around the coffin, some zealously bending their shoulders beneath it, others wishing to touch the honored body, mocked in himself, reasoning:

"What profit is there in touching a dead body?"

And he withdrew from there. And he was immediately seized by a grievous illness, so that he even lost the use of his tongue; this affliction lasted for thirty days, and only at the saint's tomb did he receive healing, of which more will be said below.

When the honored body was brought to the monastery of the Venerable Symeon, situated at his pillar, they began to perform the All-night Vigil. On that same night Martha appeared to two of the brethren, Symeon's disciples, in bright clothing and with a shining face. The disciples were greatly terrified, knowing that she had died. And she said to them:

"Do not be afraid, for the Lord has counted me not among the dead but among the living. I have come to help you against the devil, so that, having conquered him, you may receive eternal life."

Having said this, she became invisible. When Saturday came, a great multitude gathered for the burial of the saint, from the surrounding villages and hamlets, together with clergy and clerics. They observed that the face of the saint in the coffin had not taken on deathly pallor, but was youthful, blooming in beauty and shining with grace. Neither did there rise from her body the ordinary odor of the dead, although the fourth day had already come since her repose. With the singing of the appointed hymns, her body was honorably buried before the pillar of St. Symeon, at his command, so that he might always be able to see the tomb of his mother. When, after the Sabbath had passed, the Sunday service was being celebrated, one of the crowd, named John, a church reader by office, fell asleep and saw St. Martha, her face shining, ascending the ladder to the pillar toward the Venerable Symeon, and above her tomb he saw a Cherubic chariot drawn by six-winged living creatures. Afterward he related this vision to the Venerable with an oath.

"Give glory to God, child," answered the Venerable to John, "who has granted you to see the Cherubic chariot. My mother and I were conceived and born in sins, and we stand in need of the mercy of God."

After this, to the Venerable Symeon came the father and mother of the above-mentioned Sergius, who had mocked the funeral procession of the body of St. Martha and for this had been stricken with a sudden sickness; with weeping and prayer they asked him to heal their son, as he heals many others of their ailments.

"Go," the saint said to them in reply, "ask your son the cause of his sickness: he can already speak, for he is somewhat better at present."

The parents, returning home after this, asked their son about his illness.

He answered:

"This grievous sickness has visited me because I mocked the honorable funeral of the body of St. Martha, turned my gaze away from her, and would not bear her coffin upon my shoulders."

Then the parents, seating their son in a cart, drove him to the Wonderful Mountain to the Venerable. The latter bade them seek healing at the tomb of his mother. And so, when they had prayed with tears be-

fore her honorable tomb, the sick man at once rose completely healthy, as though he had never been ill.

After the burial of the Venerable, the brethren established the custom of kindling a lamp over her tomb, so that it might burn day and night out of reverence for the saint. After some time the brethren, through negligence, ceased to kindle the lamp. Noticing this, the Venerable Symeon remained silent and gave no order concerning the lamp, lest his disciples think that he excessively honored his mother after her death.

At that time the steward of the monastery fell grievously ill, so that he was nearly at the point of death. At midnight there appeared to the sick man St. Martha, saying:

"Why do you not kindle my lamp? Know that I have no need of candles to be lit for me, since I have been granted by my heavenly God the eternal light; yet nonetheless, when you kindle a lamp at my tomb, you do it for your own salvation, for you thereby stir me to intercede for you before the Lord."

With these words the saint held in her right hand, as it were, a most bright pearl, a particle of the life-giving Body of Christ; touching the sick man with this particle, she said:

"Be alive and well from this."

Having said this, she became invisible. The sick man at once rose healthy and went to the tomb of the saint; falling down before it, he watered the earth with his tears, on the one hand asking forgiveness for his negligence, and on the other giving thanks for his healing. After this he arranged that an unquenchable lamp should burn before the tomb of the saint. Many other wonders also took place at the tomb of the saint: the blind received sight, demons were cast out of people, and swift healings from every infirmity were granted through the prayers of the holy righteous Martha and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom glory is offered with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Standing before the Lord in prayer, offering song and praise to the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos, O honorable Martha, thou didst bring forth a sacred child, the wondrous Simeon, the light of the whole world; with him pray ever for us all.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Theodotus and Theodotia

Страдание святых мучеников Феодота и Феодотии

The holy martyrs of Christ, Theodotus and Theodotia, were seized for their confession of Christ by order of the impious Emperor Trajan[13]. They were compelled to renounce the true God and to offer sacrifice to the idols, but they did not submit. For this they were subjected to various tortures, after which they were shut up in the very prison where the holy martyr of Christ Hyacinth had been confined. The saint instructed and strengthened them in the Christian faith, and the prison guards reported this to Emperor Trajan. When St. Hyacinth died, Sts. Theodotus and Theodotia were brought out of the prison and stood before the emperor. He began to compel them to eat food sacrificed to idols, but instead of fulfilling his demand, they exposed the impious idolatrous error. After this they were hanged and their bodies were burned with candles, and then, taken down from the tree, their heads were severed with the sword. After their death the holy martyrs received eternal life and blessed rest, and their honorable bodies were buried in the place where they had received their martyric death[14].

* * *

Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Theodore, Bishop of Cyrene

Страдание святого священномученика Феодора, епископа Киринейского

The holy hieromartyr Theodore lived in the reign of Emperor Diocletian[15] in the city of Cyrene[16], which was in Libya[17] and from

13. Emperor Trajan reigned in the Roman Empire from 98 to 117.
14. The year of the death of the holy martyrs Theodotus and Theodotia is unknown, and the place of their sufferings was the city of Rome.

which came Simon of Cyrene[18]. He was well skilled in writing compositions, and having attained high perfection in this art, he left to the churches many books written with his own hand. Therefore his own son Leus made an accusation against him to the governor[19] Divilianus, that he, having books, was turning many away from the service of the gods to faith in Christ. As a result of this accusation, the holy Theodore was brought before the governor, and many Christians followed him, among them the holy Lucia and Hieroia. He was required to surrender his books, but he did not comply with this demand, and did not submit when he was ordered to renounce Christ. For this he was severely beaten with tin rods. After this he went and destroyed the pagan altars. Then he was hanged upon a tree and his whole body was scraped, and the wounds were rubbed with vinegar, salt, and sharp potsherds; and finally, having cut out his tongue with a razor, they led him to prison. Taking his severed tongue from the venerable women[20], the holy Theodore laid it upon his breast, and all observed how a dove, flying in through the prison window, touched the saint. Seeing this, a certain pagan named Lucius believed in Christ, and the holy martyr became healthy; but after living a short time he died[21], his soul departing from his body together with the dove.

Meanwhile the governor, learning that Lucius had believed in Christ, ordered that Sts. Lucia, Hieroia, and Cyprilla be put to death, as well as all those who had been baptized by the holy Theodore. After this Lucius received baptism and converted to faith in Christ the governor himself, Dignianus. Then the two of them sailed together from Crete to the island of Cyprus, to another governor who was tormenting

15. Emperor Diocletian governed the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.
16. The city of Cyrene or Cyrena was situated in the ancient Roman African province of Cyrenaica, near the northern shores of the Mediterranean Sea.
17. Libya is a country in Africa, lying to the west of Egypt.
18. Simon of Cyrene is known from the Gospel history of the Savior's sufferings. When Jesus Christ, on the way to Golgotha, fell from exhaustion under the weight of the cross, the latter was laid upon Simon, who carried it to the place of crucifixion (Mt. 27:32; Mk. 15:21; Lk. 23:26).
19. Hegemon: the ruler of a province.
20. By the venerable women are meant here the holy martyrs Lucia and Heroia.
21. The repose of the holy hieromartyr Theodore, according to the Acts of the Saints, took place in the year 310.

Christians, and Lucius, secretly from Dignianus, gave himself up to the tormentors. He went and destroyed the pagan altars, for which his head was severed with the sword. Dignianus took his body and gave it burial. The memory of these holy martyrs is celebrated in the church of St. Theodore at Pergia[22].

The holy martyr Cyprilla was of the same city where St. Theodore lived. Having married, she lived with her husband about two years, and after his death she remained a widow for 28 years. Suffering from severe headaches, and grieving for her parents, she came for healing of her ailment to the holy bishop Theodore, already imprisoned for his confession of faith in Christ. Having received healing from him, she together with the above-named women Lucia and Hieroia served him until his death, and when he died, an accusation was made against her to the governor. Standing before him, she confessed Christ and did not submit when she was compelled to offer sacrifice to the idols, saying:

"Such a sacrifice will not be a sacrifice offered by my will."

Then the executioners burned her hand, holding it over the fire, and afterward hanged her upon a tree and scraped her body, so that blood flowed from the wounds and milk from her breasts. Amid these torments the holy martyr gave up her spirit to God.

* * *

Uncovering of the Relics of Our Venerable Father Euthymius, Wonderworker of Suzdal

Обретение мощей преподобного отца нашего Евфимия, Суздальского чудотворца

After the repose of the Venerable Archimandrite Euthymius, the wonderworker, and of many other superiors in his monastery, dedicated to the honorable Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ, located in the city of Suzdal[23], there was an archimandrite from among the monks of this same monastery, named Constantine. In his time, in 1501, by the permission of God, a fire occurred, and the mon-

22. According to the Greek Prologue, the commemoration of the holy martyrs is celebrated in Regia, not in Pergia. Regia or Regium, now Redonio, is situated in Italy at the southwestern tip of the Apennine peninsula, on the shores of the Strait of Messina.

astery was burned. After this a thought began to trouble Constantine: had he perhaps offended the blessed Euthymius in some way, had he violated his commandments or the customs established by him in the monastery, and was the fire in the monastery perhaps on account of this? But the blessed Euthymius appeared in a dream to one of the monks and said to him:

"Brother! Tell Archimandrite Constantine that I hold nothing against him."

Rising from sleep, this monk went to the Archimandrite Constantine and told him what he had seen in his dream. Having heard the account, Constantine rejoiced that forgiveness had been granted, and gave thanks to God, who works wonderful deeds through His saint, the Venerable Euthymius. Some time after this, certain pious people gave to the monastery what was needed to rebuild the burned cells, and Archimandrite Constantine rebuilt them according to the same plan on which they had been built before.

When Archimandrite Constantine died, his place in the monastery was taken by an archimandrite named Cyril, from among the brethren of this same monastery, who afterwards became Archbishop of the city of Rostov. Being a man wise both in spiritual and in worldly matters, Cyril took every care, as far as it was possible, that nothing of the rule of common life and the customs of the monastery should be violated. A good thought came into his heart concerning a church, and he began to take counsel with the brethren about building a new church, larger than the former one; for although the monastery had a stone church, it was small and moreover had fallen into disrepair, since it had been built by the Blessed Euthymius himself[24]. All this was the work of the providence of almighty God, so that His word in the Gospels might be fulfilled: "a city set on a hill cannot be hid" (Mt. 5:14), and: "No one,

23. Here is meant the Monastery of the Savior and Euthymius, founded by the Venerable Euthymius at the desire and with the means of the Suzdal Prince Boris Constantinovich, about 1352, on the bank of the river Kamennitsa, or Kamenni, near the city of Suzdal. The founding of the monastery is recounted in the Life of the Venerable Euthymius, placed under the 1st day of the month of April.

24. This church was consecrated about 1352; consequently, more than 150 years had passed from the time of its construction.

when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel, or puts it under a bed" (Lk. 8:16; Mt. 5:15). Thus this lamp, the Venerable Euthymius, could not for so many years remain hidden under the earth. When the work on the great church had already begun and the workmen were digging a trench on its right side, they found a coffin, enclosed by three stones[25] and covered with boards. Perplexed by this discovery, the workmen went and told Archimandrite Cyril about it. Then he ordered the simandron to be struck[26]. Immediately the brethren gathered at the coffin, rejoicing with very great joy. After this the archimandrite took some of the brethren with him, went to Bishop Simeon, and told him of the wondrous miracle. Having heard the account, Bishop Simeon glorified God for this miracle, saying the following words.

"Lord! Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes" (Mt. 11:25).

Soon after this he came to the monastery with all the clergy and venerated the coffin of the Blessed Euthymius, giving thanks to God, who glorifies His venerable saints. Then they opened the coffin and saw that the face of the Venerable One was bright and that the vestments upon him were as if they had been put on only yesterday. A marvelous miracle! So many years had passed[27], and not only had the body of the Venerable One not decayed, but corruption had not touched even his garments! After kissing the relics of the Venerable Father, and while the funeral psalms and hymns were being sung, they placed them in the wall of the church of the God-befitting Transfiguration of the Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ, where they remain even now. This took place on the 4th day of the month of July, in the year 1507. To our God be glory now, always, and forever.

* * *

25. These three stones, when the Church of the Transfiguration was founded, the Venerable Euthymius himself hewed and arranged from them a place for his coffin by the northern doors of the future sanctuary, near the holy table of oblation, where he was afterwards buried.

26. In the monasteries a board was called a *bilo*, which was struck to summon the monks to church or to the refectory.

27. The Venerable Euthymius reposed on 1 April 1405; consequently, more than a hundred years passed from the day of his death until the uncovering of his relics.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day, the commemoration of the Right-believing Great Prince Andrew Bogolyubsky, slain in the year 1174.

THE FIFTH DAY OF JULY

July 5

5 июля

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

Life of our Venerable Father Athanasius of Athos

Житие преподобного отца нашего Афанасия Афонского

The city of Trebizond[1] brought forth the Venerable Athanasius,[2] worthy of immortal praises for mortal human life. Byzantium (Constantinople[3]) nurtured him in the study of books, while the monastery of Kyminas[4] and Mount Athos[4387] brought him forth as a fruit pleasing to God. The parents of Athanasius were noble and pious people. His father was from Antioch,[5] and his mother from Colchis.[6] They lived in Trebizond. Athanasius's father died before his birth, and his mother, having given birth to Athanasius and regenerated him through holy Baptism, departed to God after her husband. At holy Baptism the child was given the name Abraham. After the death of his parents, the child, still in swaddling clothes and left a complete orphan, was taken in and raised by a certain noble nun. Even in boyhood, Abraham displayed signs foretelling the manner of life he would follow when

1. He was in the northeastern region of Pontus in Asia Minor, on the seacoast, west of the river Gissa.
2. Athanasius, translated from the Greek, means "immortality."
3. Byzantium was a Megarian colony founded in 658 B.C. on the European side of the Bosphorus; the bay of the Golden Horn, notable for its convenience, and its dominant position on the narrow strait connecting the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara secured for it an important commercial and industrial significance. Emperor Constantine the Great, appreciating the advantages of Byzantium's position, transferred here (in 330) the capital of the Roman Empire, as a result of which Byzantium acquired world-historical significance; it broke its connection with the past and came to be called Constantinople, the New Rome.
4. See below, the Life of the Venerable Michael Maleinus.
5. Probably from Antioch of Pisidia, so named from the region of Asia Minor, Pisidia, where this city was located.
6. Colchis was a country lying south of the Pontus Euxinus (the Black Sea), between the Caucasus, Iberia and Armenia.

he came of age. As a little child he behaved like a sensible and well-mannered man, so that even when he played childish games with his companions, they did not appoint Abraham king or voivode, but abbot. Indeed, from childhood he was growing accustomed to the monastic life; seeing the nun who raised him constantly given to prayer and fasting, he too, as far as a boy could, strove to imitate her, fasting and praying. He also surpassed his companions in his progress through the elementary school of that time. Thus, as he grew in body and understanding, Abraham passed out of boyhood. At that time the nun who had taken the place of his mother died. The boy Abraham, orphaned for a second time, mourned her death as the death of his own mother. Then he desired to go to Byzantium for further education. God, who cares for orphans, brought his wish to fulfillment in the following manner. At that time the pious Emperor Romanus[7] reigned in Greece. He sent one of the palace eunuchs[8] to Trebizond to collect the customs duties on trade. Having made the acquaintance of the handsome and intelligent boy Abraham, the eunuch took him with him to Byzantium and entrusted his philosophical education to an eminent teacher named Athanasius. In a short time the pupil equaled his teacher in learning. In those years a voivode named Zephinazer lived in Byzantium, and he betrothed a kinswoman of Abraham to his son; becoming acquainted with Abraham, he took him into his household. Although the youth Abraham lived in a wealthy house abounding in delicacies, he did not abandon the ascetic abstinence to which he had become accustomed under the nun who had raised him. Avoiding the pleasure of food, Abraham would not eat at the voivode's table, but satisfied his hunger—only when necessity required—with uncooked herbs and vegetables. He always strove to remain alert; therefore, wishing to overcome natural sleep and banish drowsiness, he would fill a basin with water and plunge his face into it. In every way he afflicted himself, mortifying his flesh and bringing it into subjection to the spirit. For such a virtuous life, and also for his

7. Romanus II, 957–963.

8. In antiquity, eunuchs were persons who served at royal courts as keepers of treasures, of the royal treasury, and especially as guards of the bedchambers of the emperor, empresses and princesses. For the most part the eunuchs were castrated men. At the Byzantine court the office of eunuch was very honorable.

outstanding intelligence, Abraham was loved by all and became known to the people and even to the emperor himself. The latter appointed Abraham a teacher in the state school, on equal terms with his former instructor, Athanasius. But since Abraham's teaching was more pleasing than Athanasius's, and more pupils gathered to him than to Athanasius, the latter, envious of his former pupil, began to hate him. Learning of this, the blessed Abraham soon left his teaching post, unwilling to grieve his teacher; he lived in the house of the aforementioned voivode, devoting himself to his customary ascetic struggles. After this, the emperor ordered the voivode to set out for the Aegean Sea,[9] as the needs of the state required. The voivode, who loved Abraham dearly, took him with him when he departed on the voyage by the emperor's command. They sailed as far as Abydos, and from there reached Limen. Here Abraham noticed Mount Athos, loved it greatly, and began to contemplate settling there. When they had carried out the emperor's commission and returned home, by Divine providence the Venerable Michael, surnamed Maleinus, arrived in Constantinople from the monastery of Kyminas, situated near Athos. When Abraham, who had heard of the God-pleasing life of the venerable father, learned of his arrival, he was exceedingly glad and went to him. He took great delight in conversing with the elder; and after his God-inspired instruction, Abraham was seized by an even more ardent desire to renounce the world and serve God in the monastic order. He disclosed his intention and desire to the Venerable Michael, telling him also about himself—where he came from, who his parents were, how he had been raised, and why he lived in the house of the commander. Perceiving that Abraham would become a vessel of the Holy Spirit, the Venerable Michael loved him greatly and instructed him at length concerning salvation, sowing the seeds of the words of God in his heart as in fertile soil, that he might bear a hundredfold fruit of virtues. While they were engaged in spiritual conversation, the Venerable Michael's nephew Nikephoros, commander of the East, who later became the Greek emperor,[10] came to visit him. As he conversed with his venerable uncle, he noticed the

9. Or the Archipelago.
10. Nicephorus II Phocas, emperor 963–969.

youth Abraham and asked the elder who he was. The saint told him all that concerned Abraham, as well as that he desired to become a monk; from that time Abraham became known to Nikephoros. Some days later the Venerable Michael returned from Constantinople to his monastery; but Abraham could no longer remain amid the tumult of worldly life. Despising all things worldly, drawn by his desire for the monastic life and his love for the venerable father, he hastened to him. Arriving at the monastery of Kyminas, he fell at the feet of the holy elder Michael, tearfully imploring him to clothe him in the monastic habit and thereby join him to the chosen flock of Christ's rational sheep. The Venerable Michael warmly welcomed Abraham: without delaying the fulfillment of his request or sending him among those under probation, the Venerable Michael immediately tonsured Abraham, giving him the name Athanasius, as one already experienced in ascetic struggle, for he observed in him a fervent love for God. Although it was not the custom in that monastery for monks to wear a hair shirt after their tonsure, the blessed Michael nevertheless clothed Athanasius in one, as though arming Christ's valiant warrior with armor against his adversaries. Athanasius implored the holy elder to impose upon him the obedience of eating only once throughout the week. But the wise instructor, cutting off the will of his disciple, ordered him to take food every third day. Athanasius diligently fulfilled all the monastic and church obediences assigned to him, remaining tireless in his monastic struggles as well. The time free from the monastery's labors he devoted, at the command of his spiritual father, to copying sacred books. For such diligence Athanasius was loved by all the brethren; thus, in the course of four years he showed himself perfected in the monastic life. Then the venerable father commanded him to live in stillness in a cell in the wilderness, a stade[11] from the monastery; and the elder gave him the following rule concerning fasting: he was not to eat every third day, as had been his custom until then, but every second day, eating dry bread and drinking a little water. On all the feasts of the Lord and of the Theotokos, and

11. A *poprishche* was a measure of distance, approximately 690 sazhens.

on Sundays, he commanded him to remain without sleep from evening until the third hour, in prayer and the glorification of God.

After some time, the aforementioned commander of the East, Nikephoros, the nephew of the Venerable Michael, while carrying out the emperor's service and passing by the monastery, visited his venerable uncle Michael. As he conversed with him, he remembered Abraham and asked:

"Father, where is the youth Abraham whom I saw with you in the imperial city?"

"He is praying to God for your salvation," the elder replied. "At present he is already a monk, and his name has been changed from Abraham to Athanasius."

It happened that Nikephoros was accompanied by his brother, the patrician[12] Leo. Having heard about Athanasius's virtuous life, both asked permission to meet him; and since the elder did not oppose this, they set out for the place where Athanasius dwelt in stillness. When he met them, Athanasius spoke with them on matters full of spiritual wisdom, for his lips were filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit. They were so delighted by his words that they expressed a desire to remain with him forever, if only it were possible for them to be freed from their offices and worldly cares. Then, returning to the Venerable Michael, they said to him:

"We thank you, Father, for showing us the treasure you have hidden in the field of your flock."

Meanwhile, the elder summoned Athanasius and commanded him once more to offer the visitors an instructive discourse on the salvation of the soul. And the grace of the Lord worked through the saint's lips in such a way that those who heard his words were moved to compunction, their hearts were broken, and they wept. The elder himself, too, marveled at the grace of instruction that proceeded from Athanasius's lips. From that time the commander Nikephoros and the patrician Leo

12. Until the time of the emperor Constantine the Great, the title was granted only to persons of noble origin, chiefly to descendants of senators; patricians, by virtue of their origin, enjoyed various privileges in the use of public land and in private legal relations; but Emperor Constantine made the patriciate a personal dignity, bestowed upon higher officials and not passing by inheritance.

loved the blessed Athanasius greatly. Then, withdrawing apart with him, Nikephoros disclosed his intention to him, saying:

"Father, I desire to withdraw from the storm of the world and, having escaped the cares of this life, to serve God in monastic stillness. This desire and resolve have grown strong in me chiefly under the influence of your God-inspired words, and I hope, with the help of your holy prayers, to obtain what I desire." Blessed Athanasius answered him:

"Master! Place your hope in God, and He will order matters concerning you as you desire."

Thus, after lengthy conversations, Nicephorus and Leo returned to their way with great benefit to their souls.

The Venerable Michael intended to appoint Athanasius as hegumen after himself, for he was already old and approaching his end. Learning of this, Athanasius, although he did not wish to part from his beloved father, nevertheless fled from there, fearing the burden of authority and considering himself unworthy of the pastoral dignity. He wandered over Mount Athos, visiting the desert fathers, and was stirred by the example of their virtuous lives to higher labors. Finding in the clefts of the rocks several brethren living not far from one another, he settled among them and began to imitate their austere manner of life. They had no concern for the body; they had neither shelter, nor food, nor possessions, but for God's sake they bore cold and heat and hunger willingly and with joy.

They satisfied the latter with the wild herbs that grew in that wilderness, eating them sparingly at the appointed hour. At that time the Venerable Michael Maleinus reposed. Learning of his death, Athanasius wept for him as a son for a father. He also learned that the commander Nicephorus, with his brother, the patrician Leo, would again have to pass by that place, and he feared that they would once more seek him out. He therefore left the hermits, for they were known to the rest of the brethren and were often visited; fearing that those who came to them would recognize him, Athanasius went to a distant monastery, called in Greek "Tuziga." Finding there an elder who lived in stillness outside the monastery, he asked the latter to receive him, and, so as not

to be recognized by name, he renamed himself Barnabas in place of Athanasius.

Meanwhile the elder questioned him, saying:

"Who are you, brother, where are you from, and for what reason have you come here?"

"I was a ship's man," answered Athanasius, "and, having fallen into misfortune, I vowed to God to renounce the world and to mourn my sins. For this reason I have put on the holy monastic habit and, guided by God, have come here to your holiness, desiring to dwell with you and to receive from you guidance on the path of salvation. My name is Barnabas."

Believing Athanasius's account, the elder received him, and for the rest of the time Barnabas lived with the elder, obeying him in all things as a father. After some time he said to the elder:

"Father, begin to teach me letters, so that I may be able at least a little to read the Psalter. When I lived in the world I knew nothing but sailing a ship."

Blessed Athanasius then pretended to be illiterate, so that he would not be recognized and identified by those who might seek him. Then the elder wrote an alphabet for him and taught him as one who had never learned anything, a simple man. Barnabas, meanwhile, pretended that he could not grasp or understand the alphabet. He did this for a long time, and the elder grieved over him, and at times, growing vexed, he drove him away from himself in anger. But the so-called Barnabas said humbly:

"Father, do not drive me away, foolish and wicked as I am, but for God's sake be patient, and help me by your prayers, that the Lord may grant me understanding."

After this the disciple seemed, as it were, gradually to grasp written syllables, and he gave the elder hope regarding the disciple's future acquisition of book learning. At that time the most renowned eastern commander Nicephorus, learning that Athanasius had fled from the Kimenas monastery, was very grieved and considered how he might find him. He wrote to the judge of Thessalonica[13] that he should, on

reaching Mount Athos, precisely inquire about Athanasius. Having read the letter, the judge at once hastened to the holy mountain, and, summoning the protos, the head over all the hegumens of the Athonite monasteries, he questioned him about the monk Athanasius, describing to him the features of his face and his age and his skill in letters, as Nicephorus had communicated to him. The protos asserted with confidence:

"The man whom you seek has not come to this mountain; however," he added, "I do not know this for certain. Before long a council will gather in our midst, at which those dwelling on this mountain must be present. And so, if the monk you seek is somewhere on this mountain, he will surely appear at the council among the others, and at that time we shall recognize him."

The judge returned to Thessalonica.

At that time on Athos there existed a custom that the brethren gathered three times a year at the so-called Karyes Lavra on three special feasts: the Nativity of Christ, Pascha, and the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. Gathering at these times, the monks celebrated together, communing of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ and partaking of a common meal. When the feast of the Nativity of Christ arrived and the fathers and brethren had gathered from the monasteries and the cells of the hermits, the elder who was the teacher of the one called Barnabas came with his disciple. The protos looked intently at the brethren, seeking among them a monk who would correspond to the features described by Nicephorus. Noticing such a one, he asked his name, and when he heard that he was called Barnabas, he doubted, for the man sought was named Athanasius. Nevertheless the protos resolved to determine the man's identity by his skill in letters. And so, when the time for the reading came and a book was presented, the protos ordered the monk who called himself Barnabas to read the appointed lesson before the council. But Barnabas refused, asserting that he was unlearned and illiterate. His elder, noticing this, smiled, and, laughing quietly, said to the one giving the order:

13. Thessalonica, or Salonica, a city of Macedonia.

"Father[14], leave off: the brother is unskilled, and at present he is learning only to join the letters and syllables of the first psalm."

But the protos insisted on his demand, ordering him to read under threat. Then blessed Athanasius, seeing that he could no longer remain hidden, and moreover compelled by the threat, obeyed the authority established by God and began to read as well as he could, displaying a resonant voice and unusual expressiveness, so that all who listened were astonished. The elder, too, was astonished and at the same time alarmed, noticing and hearing what he had not expected and being ashamed of his own teaching; yet at the same time he rejoiced, offering thanks to God with tears that he had been granted to be the teacher of so learned a man. Then Athanasius was recognized, and all treated him with respect; and one of the most honored fathers, named Paul, from the district of Xeropotamou, spoke prophetically to the brethren about Athanasius:

"This brother, who came to this mountain after us, has outstripped us in virtue, and in glory he will be the first among us in the Kingdom of Heaven. He will be a father and teacher to many on the path of salvation."

After this the protos informed Athanasius that Nicephorus and his brother Leo were seeking him. Athanasius implored the protos not to disclose him, lest he lose the holy mountain. Then the protos, understanding that to lose such a man would be a loss for Athos, promised not to reveal him to those who sought him. He ordered Athanasius to remain in stillness in solitude, in a desert cell distant three stadia from the lavra[15]. Here, laboring for God in solitude, the Venerable Athanasius had his sustenance from the work of his hands. He copied books, for he was a calligrapher and a swift scribe; over the course of six days,

14. *Abba* — father.

15. *Lavra* — from the Greek, a lane, properly a row of cells arranged around the dwelling of the superior in the form of lanes in a city, enclosed by a fence or wall. The monks in the lavras led a hermit's manner of life and labored each in his own cell, gathering together for divine services on the first and last day of the week, and on the other days kept strict silence; life in the lavras was much harder than in other monasteries. From ancient times the name *lavra* has been applied to large and important monasteries. It first appeared in Egypt and later in Palestine. At the present time the name *lavra* is used among us exclusively as an honorary title.

without abandoning his customary monastic rule, he copied the entire Psalter, and for the copying of books the fathers supplied him with bread.

While the Venerable Athanasius was dwelling in stillness, the aforementioned Leo, brother of Nicephorus, then already a commander in the West, returning from war after a victory over the savage Scythians, won with the help of God and the Most Pure Mother of God, stopped on Mount Athos to offer thanksgiving to Christ God and His Most Pure Mother for the victory over their enemies. After the thanksgiving prayer, Leo diligently inquired about Athanasius, and, learning of his whereabouts, went to him in his cell of stillness. Seeing Athanasius, Leo rejoiced greatly, embracing him warmly, and from joy even wept. He spent day and night in conversation with Athanasius, delighting in his God-wise words. Noticing the commander's strong love for Athanasius, the monks asked the latter to request Leo to build for the monks at the Karyes Lavra a new, spacious church, since the old one was small and could not hold all the brethren. Athanasius informed the commander of this. The Christ-loving voivode at once gladly gave them a great quantity of silver and gold for the construction of the church. Then, taking leave of Athanasius and the other fathers, Leo went on his way to Constantinople, where he told his brother Nicephorus about Athanasius. From this time the Athonite fathers began to regard Athanasius with special respect, praising him; many began to come to him also for the benefit of their souls.

Meanwhile the Venerable Athanasius, loving solitude and fleeing human glory on every side, withdrew from the place of his settlement and wandered through the inner parts of the mountain wilderness; guided by God, he came to the very edge of Athos, to a locality called Melana, which had a vast wilderness and lay far from the other dwellings of the ascetics. Having set up a hut on a hill with a level space at its summit, Athanasius began here to labor, striving toward the higher ascetic struggles. At first the crafty enemy, the devil, wishing to drive the Venerable Father away, sought to make this new place of settlement hateful to him, stirring up in him a persistent thought of withdrawing,

a thought hard to overcome. But the good ascetic conquered his doubts with this reflection:

"I will endure here this whole year, and when the year is over I will do as God ordains."

When the appointed time had passed, on the last day of the year the thoughts drawing him away from there seized the ascetic with particular force, so that he said to himself:

"In the morning I will leave and return to the Lavra of Karyes."

Then he rose to pray, performing the chanting of the third hour, and suddenly a heavenly light appeared and shone upon him, and the cloud of thoughts was at once dispelled. With a feeling of unspeakable joy and rapture, the saint poured forth tears of gladness from a heart filled with Divine love. From that time the Venerable Athanasius received the gift of compunction and wept whenever he wished. That place he came to love as much as previously it had been hateful to him, and he lived there glorifying God. At this time the military commander Nicephorus was sent by the emperor with an army to the island of Crete [16], which at that time had been seized by the Muslims. Not trusting in the strength of the Greek army, but seeking the help of prayer from the holy fathers, Nicephorus sent one of his trusted men by ship to Athos, writing to the whole council of the Athonite fathers a request that they pray to God that help from on high be granted him against the Muslims. He also asked that Athanasius be sent to him, since he had heard from his brother Leo that Athanasius was living on Athos. Having read the commander's letter, the Athonite fathers offered unceasing prayers on his behalf; then, finding Athanasius in the wilderness and summoning him to the council, they ordered him to go to the commander. At first Athanasius did not wish to go at all and obeyed only with difficulty, being urged on by the threats of the elders. Together with him they sent also one of the respected elders, whom Athanasius honored as his teacher, following him as a disciple. Having boarded a ship, they sailed for Crete. When they came to the pious commander Nicephorus, the latter, as soon as he saw Athanasius, ran up, threw

16. Crete, or Candia, the largest of the Greek islands in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, south of the Aegean Sea.

himself on his neck, kissed him, and wept for joy, honoring him as his spiritual father. Noticing, however, that Athanasius related to his companion, the elder, as a disciple to a teacher, Nicephorus marveled at his humility, and, leaving aside the management of external affairs, spent his time in spiritual conversation with the Venerable Athanasius. He recalled at this time his long-standing promise to renounce the world and become a monk, and he begged the Venerable Father first to establish, in the wilderness where he himself lived, cells for silent ones. Nicephorus gave Athanasius silver and gold for the building of these cells, but Athanasius, loving a carefree and silent life, declined the cares about the cells, did not accept the silver and gold, and thereby greatly grieved the commander. Having stayed together only a few days and enjoyed mutual gazing and friendly conversations, they parted. Athanasius returned to Athos, and the commander went to war and, by the prayers of the holy fathers, defeated the Muslims and again joined Crete to Greece. Soon afterward the commander Nicephorus again sent to Athos one of his attendants named Methodius (who later was hegumen of the Kimina monastery) with gold for the Venerable Athanasius, for the building of the cells. There were sent six litra [17] of gold.

The blessed Athanasius, seeing Nicephorus' warm love for God and his good intention, and recognizing that it was the matter of God's good pleasure, accepted the gold and began to attend to the construction. Having cleared the said place, he first of all set up cells for Nicephorus' silence, built a church in the name of St. John the Forerunner, and then at the foot of the mountain erected a most beautiful church in the name of the Most Pure Virgin, the Mother of God. When they set about building the churches, the envious enemy began to hinder it: the hands of the men building the church grew numb and became completely immobile, so that they could not be brought to their mouths. Perceiving that this was the work of demons, the Venerable Father fervently prayed to God, drove away the wiles of the wicked one, and thereby freed the workers' hands from their numbness. Such was the beginning

17. *Litra* — a unit of weight equal to 72 zolotniks (1 zolotnik ≈ 4.265 grams).

of the great Father's miracles. Having finished the church in honor of the Most Holy Theotokos, the Venerable Father began to build cells around it, in a word, to create a splendid monastery; he built a refectory and an infirmary, a hospice, and then for the sick and the wayfarers a bath house, wisely arranging also all the other buildings necessary for the monastery; then he gathered a multitude of brethren, giving them as a guide a strictly cenobitic rule, composed after the pattern of the most ancient Palestinian monasteries. For the newly gathered verbal flock the Venerable Athanasius appeared as hegumen, one who was pleasing to God and to whom the Most Holy Theotokos showed favor: for one of the monks saw Her visiting the monastery and church created by the Venerable Father, and the monk Matthew, who was granted this vision, was an ascetic who had passed the path of monastic life without blame and therefore had pure and enlightened eyes of the heart. Standing in the church assembly with reverent attention and fear during the morning chanting, he beheld the Most Radiant Virgin entering the church with two radiant Angels. One of them walked before Her with a candle, and the other behind; She Herself, going around the brethren, distributed gifts. To the brethren chanting on the kliros She gave one gold coin each, and to those who stood within the church in other places She gave twelve tsata each, while to those standing on the porch She gave six. Matthew, who saw this, was himself granted by Her Most Pure hands to receive six tsata. After this appearance Matthew came to the Venerable Father and begged him to give him a place among the singers, and he told the saint what he had seen. Perceiving that it was a visitation of the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos, the Venerable Father was filled with great spiritual joy. As for the distribution of the gold coins to the brethren, he concluded that these were the various blessings bestowed by Her on each according to his worth: those who stood during the chanting with most ardent prayer and attention received a greater reward, and those who attended less received less. And the one who saw the vision was counted among the lesser ones, so that, on the one hand, being grieved at the loss of the greater, he would tell of the vision, and on the other, so that he would not grow proud by equating himself with the more worthy, but would remain in humility

among the lesser. Through this appearance it was clearly revealed what was the good pleasure of the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos toward the Venerable Athanasius and his monastery. As for the organization of the Venerable Father's monastery, its order, rules, and regulations, all of this is described in detail in a separate book of his Life [18]; let the one who desires read it there. We, relating in brief, gather only the particular deeds (although they are all extraordinary).

The Venerable Athanasius, hearing that the military commander Nicephorus, after the death of Emperor Roman [19], had been made emperor in Greece for his repeated victories over the Muslims, was greatly grieved, because, in view of Nicephorus' promise to become a monk, Athanasius had taken upon himself the cares of the monastery. (Let it be known that this Emperor Nicephorus was also called Phocas. But this is not the Phocas who killed Emperor Maurice, nor the Nicephorus who ascended the throne after Empress Irene and was killed in the war with the Bulgarians, but another Nicephorus Phocas, later in time.) The Venerable Father, grieving over Nicephorus' failure to fulfill his vow, intended to leave everything and flee. Preparing for flight, he told the brethren that he wished to go to the emperor to arrange monastery affairs. Taking with him some of the brethren, he indeed set out on the road, and, having reached Avida, he kept three brothers with him and sent the rest back to the monastery, saying:

"It is enough for me to go to Constantinople with these three."

When they had departed, Athanasius wrote letters to the emperor, reminding him of his promises to God and reproaching him for the vain change of his most excellent intention, and informing him of his sorrow, namely, that because of him he had taken upon himself so many cares. At the end of the letter he added the following:

"Before Christ the Lord I am not guilty of your deceit. I leave you the newly gathered flock of God; entrust it to whomever you wish. For my part I think that Euthymius is worthy to be the superior, a monk outstanding in life and teaching."

18. A detailed Greek biography of St. Athanasius is known; the great Menaion-Chetii also recount his life at length.
19. Romanus II, 957–963.

Having written thus, Athanasius did not tell his disciples what he had written. Instead, he sealed the letter, chose one of the three brethren, handed the letter to him, and sent him to the emperor. After a short time he also sent away from himself to the monastery another disciple, named Theodotus, under the pretext of visiting the brethren and seeing to order in the monastery. He himself remained with one disciple, named Antony. With him Athanasius set out for Cyprus, where, having visited a certain monastery called the monastery of "the Holy Ones," he besought the abbot to permit them to live in the wilderness nearest to that monastery. Having obtained what he asked, he began to live in silence for God, procuring his food by the labour of his hands, namely by copying books as before. When the brother who had been sent to Constantinople with the letter delivered it into the hands of the emperor, the emperor took it and rejoiced. But when he unsealed and read the letter, he was greatly grieved: on the one hand because of his own wrongdoing before God, and on the other because the Venerable Athanasius had left the monastery and had vanished, no one knowing where. And the brother, learning the contents of the letter, began to weep and lament, as one who had lost his father. The emperor at once wrote to the monastery that Euthymius should take charge of it until further order. At the same time the emperor sent out a command throughout all the lands of his dominions to search for the Venerable Athanasius. This command of the emperor reached the island of Cyprus and was near to being carried out. But the Venerable, learning of it, at once took his disciple and withdrew to the seashore, and there, by Divine providence, he met a ship, embarked on it, and with a favourable wind quickly came ashore on the other coast. The Venerable Elder was at a loss as to which way to turn. He had intended to go to the holy places in Jerusalem, but the way thither was unsafe because of the Muslim invasion. He did not wish to turn toward the regions of Greece, because of the search being made for him by the emperor. Thus he did not know which way to direct his path. At nightfall the Venerable stood in prayer, asking God for counsel and guidance. And he received a Divine revelation and command that he should return to his monastery on Athos, for by his labours it was to be brought to its final completion,

both outward and inward, and many would be saved through his instructions. Having received such a revelation from God, the Venerable told it to Antony, and they at once set out, returning by land to the former place. From the long journey of many days, Antony's feet became sore and swollen. They burned intensely, and he could not walk at all. Then the Venerable, gathering a little of the grass growing round about and crushing it in his hand, applied it to the disciple's feet, wrapped them with tree leaves, and bound them with his head-cloth; then he took the sick man by the hand, raised him up, and Antony at once cried out:

"Glory to Thee, O Christ God, for Thou hast relieved me of my sickness!"

Further he walked as before, his feet now sound. The aforementioned brother Theodotus, whom the Venerable Father had sent to visit the brethren, on coming to the monastery found all the brethren wavering because of the Father's departure, and he grieved over this in his heart. Unable to bear the loss of his father, he set out for Cyprus, seeking him everywhere. Being in Attalia,[20] by Divine providence he met him on the road; on seeing each other they rejoiced greatly. The Father, hearing of the disturbances among the brethren in the monastery, exchanged his joy for sorrow. He at once sent Theodotus back to the Lavra, that he might inform the brethren of his coming, while he himself went to pray at a monastery situated in Lampidia. There, seeing a brother who had lost his reason and was raging, Athanasius laid his hand upon him and healed him. Having taught there for a short time, he set out for Athos and reached his monastery. When the brethren saw him they thought they beheld the sun, and from joy they cried out:

"Glory to Thee, O God!"

All came forward and kissed, some his hands, some his feet, some his coarse garment. After this the Venerable again took charge of everything in the monastery, for its building up.

In the course of time the Venerable Father found it necessary to go in person to the emperor concerning the affairs of the monastery. So he

20. Attalia — a city of Pamphylia, the narrow coastal strip of Asia Minor between Lycia and Cilicia.

set out and arrived at Constantinople. Learning of this, the emperor rejoiced, and at the same time felt shame: he rejoiced, because he desired to see the Venerable, and he felt shame, because he would have to appear before him in imperial dignity; therefore he met him not as an emperor but as one of the ordinary, simple people. Taking him by the right hand and kissing it, he led him into the inner chamber of his palace, and sitting alone together, they conversed affectionately with tears of joy.

"I know, Father," said the emperor, "that I am the cause of all your labours and sorrows, for having disregarded the fear of God and not fulfilled my promise. But I beg you: bear with me, waiting for my repentance, until God grants me the opportunity to 'render unto Him my vows.'"

Meanwhile the Venerable exhorted him to be God-loving, pious, not proud, merciful, and generous, and, recalling the future recompense in eternal life, he taught him all the good works befitting a Christian emperor. The Venerable stayed in Constantinople for many days, often conversing in friendship with the emperor. On dismissing him, the emperor gave the monastery everything necessary. Then he confirmed by decree that there should be given to the monastery each year from the island of Lemnos two hundred and forty-four gold coins. The Venerable returned to the brethren with the generous royal favour.

While the Venerable was successfully struggling and guiding a multitude of brethren on the path of salvation, the enemy of good, the devil, rose up against him with all his might and armed himself for war against the valiant Warrior of Christ. This was revealed openly to one of the ascetic elders, who, falling into ecstasy, saw a host of demons approaching Mount Athos; in this host there was one commander, like a chiliarch, terrible and dreadful, displaying great power. He divided the said host: he sent a hundred demons to go round the whole mountain and ensnare the monks, while he himself, with nine hundred, set out with terrible hatred against the Lavra of Athanasius. Before this vision was disclosed to the Venerable, the following sickness befell him. When, as was his custom, he was labouring with other workmen on the seashore wharf, a huge tree fell by chance upon his feet and broke his joints and shins, so that the saint lay on a sickbed for three years. Yet

even during his illness he did not wish to remain idle, but wrote books, finishing the Paterikon in forty days. And lying there, he armed himself against the invisible adversary, and, gaining victory, he repulsed his snares. Then the enemy, having no success in the Lavra, went and stirred up the old simple monks who dwelt in the other monasteries of the Holy Mountain and lived the life of hermits; he put into their minds the following disapproving thoughts about the Venerable's actions:

"Why does Athanasius do violence to the holy mountain and overthrow the ancient laws? He has raised costly buildings, constructed new wharves, dug new cisterns, bought oxen, sown fields, planted vineyards; in a word, he has made the mountain into a worldly settlement."

Having consulted among themselves, these elders set out for Constantinople to the emperor John, successor of the deceased Nicephorus;[21] slandering Athanasius, they besought the emperor to expel him from the Holy Mountain. The emperor summoned Athanasius through a messenger. Athanasius had by then recovered from his illness. On seeing him and perceiving the grace of God resting upon him, the emperor, instead of being angered at the ascetic, felt favour toward him; he greatly loved the God-inspired Father, showed him honour, and showered him with royal benefactions. He confirmed also the former decree issued by the emperor Nicephorus, that tribute be given to the monastery from the island of Lemnos in the amount of two hundred and forty-four gold coins, and dismissed Athanasius back with honour. Then those old simple elders, filled with shame, repented of their designs, and coming to the Venerable, asked his forgiveness. The adversary devil too was put to shame, and, kindled with greater anger, again attacked the Lavra of the Holy Father with his legion. This assault was seen by the honourable elder Thomas, who had pure eyes of the soul. After performing the prayers of the third hour, he fell into ecstasy and saw all the mountains and hills, trees and brushwood, filled with small Ethiopians, who, angry and burning with enmity, called one another to war and battle, shouting with malice and fierceness:

“How long shall we endure this, friends? Why do we not tear to pieces with our teeth those who have settled here? Why do we not des-

troy them here at once? And how long shall we endure their leader, our enemy? Do you not see how he has cast us out from here and taken possession of our places?!"

As they were speaking thus, the Venerable Athanasius came out of his cell. Seeing him, the Ethiopians shuddered and were thrown into confusion. He, however, fell upon them, beat them, wounded them and drove them off; he did not cease dealing them blows until he had chased them all far away from the Lavra. When Elder Thomas reported the vision to the Venerable Father, the latter at once rose to pray, and with tears implored God to preserve His flock from the teeth of the enemy. And indeed, by his prayer the Venerable Father, as it were with an iron rod, struck down and drove away the invisible beasts. These, though they fled, nevertheless, returning little by little again, did not cease to stir up enmity by their snares. In one of the monks they kindled such hatred for the Venerable Father that he did not wish even to look upon him, and through the working of the demons the malice in him grew so strong that he even attempted murder. Having prepared and sharpened a sword, he sought a suitable occasion to kill the Venerable Father. One night, when everyone was asleep and the Venerable Father was in his cell, keeping vigil in prayer, the murderer approached the saint's cell under the pretext that he had a most necessary word for him; at the same time he held a bared sword beneath his hand. He knocked boldly at the door, saying:

"Bless me, Father!"

And his voice was the voice of Jacob, but his hands were the hands of Esau[22]. The Venerable Father, being righteous as Abel, did not know that outside stood Cain, summoning him to his murder[23]; he asked from the cell:

"Who are you?"

And he opened the door a little.

The murderer, frightened by the fatherly voice, fell trembling to the ground. God, who guards His faithful servant, struck the murderer

21. John Tzimiskes, 969–976.
22. That is, this monk acted hypocritically. Cf. Gen. 27:21–23.
23. Cf. Gen. 4:8.

with sudden terror: his hands grew weak, the sword fell to the ground, and he himself lay prostrate on the earth before the Father's feet like a dead man. Seeing this, the Venerable Father was amazed and horrified, and he raised the one lying on the ground. Scarcely coming to himself, the latter said to the Father in a voice full of emotion:

"Have mercy on me, Father, your would-be slayer! Forgive my malice, which I plotted against you, and forgive the impiety of my heart!"

Lighting a candle and seeing on the ground a sword sharpened like a razor, Athanasius understood the monk's design:

"Child," he said, "how is it that you came at me with this sword as at a robber?! But cease weeping, stop your mouth, hide this thing, tell no one of what has happened, and come to me, that I may kiss you; and may God forgive you your sin!"

Such was the guilelessness of the Venerable Father! From that time on he showed great love to that brother. The latter, always recalling his sin and observing the guilelessness and love of the Father toward him, wept unceasingly and could not conceal the incident, condemning his own sin and glorifying the virtue of the Venerable Father. He died in the most sincere repentance, and the Venerable Father wept for him as he had for no other. And another brother, like the first, hated the Father and sought an occasion to destroy him from among the living. Not knowing how to bring this about, he gave himself over to demonic sorceries and charms; having wrought many deadly spells and incantations against the Father, he had, to his astonishment, no success whatever. By chance he asked a certain brother:

"Can sorceries cause a man's death?"

The brother answered that no charm or sorcery can harm a pious man who lives in a godly way. Hearing this, the sorcerer cursed himself in his conscience. Learning then how the Father had forgiven the brother who had intended to kill him, he was amazed at his guilelessness, was moved, came into the fear of God, and, going to the Father, fell at his feet, confessing his sin with great weeping and asking forgiveness, which he received from the guileless Father. Such was the Venerable Athanasius toward those who sinned against him. For this

God glorified him everywhere. Into his flock there gathered a multitude of brethren from various lands, not only from Greece but also from Italy, from ancient Rome itself, from Calabria[24], Amalfi[25], Iberia[26], and not only from among the common folk, but from among the rich and noble. Even hegumens of many monasteries, abandoning their rule, came under the direction of the Venerable Father. Not only hegumens but also hierarchs, leaving their sees and flocks, came into the flock of the holy Father and desired to be his sheep. Among such were the great patriarch Nicholas, that is, Charitón, Andrew Chrysopolites, and Acacius, who shone for many years in asceticism. Likewise ascetics who had grown old in impassable deserts, coming to the Father by divine disposition, settled in his Lavra, desiring to be edified by the example of his virtuous life. Among these last was the Venerable Nicephorus, who had labored together with St. Phantinus in the mountains of Calabria. To them there was a divine vision, bidding Phantinus go to Thessalonica and Nicephorus to Athos to the Venerable Athanasius; there he lived a long time and reposed and was buried. Afterward, when, on some occasion, his relics were taken out of the earth and carried to another place, from his dry bones there flowed a spring of the most fragrant myrrh, incomparable with any aromas of the world. Such holy fathers were sent by God under the direction of the Venerable Father Athanasius, from which it is clearly seen how God-pleasing his life was in comparison with others. Just as the root is known from the branches and the tree from its fruit, so too an experienced teacher is known by his successful disciples, and a good shepherd by his good sheep. But now it is time, having briefly recalled the miracles of Athanasius, to bring my account of him to an end. God, who glorifies His saints with miracles, did not deprive this great servant of His of the gift of working wonders. First of all let us speak of his clairvoyance.

24. Calabria — a low peninsula extending from Taranto to the Iapygian promontory. In the Middle Ages the name Calabria was transferred by Byzantine writers to the western peninsula of southern Italy, formerly Bruttium.
25. Amalfi — a seaside city on the Gulf of Salerno in the Italian province of Salerno; probably founded in the 4th century by Constantine the Great.
26. Iberia — Spain.

Once a cruel frost set in. The Venerable called to him one of the novices named Theodore and said to him:

"Brother, taking food, hasten to Kesarion (so one place on Athos was called). When, going in the direction of the sea, you are opposite Trochal, you will meet three men, exhausted from the frost and hunger and at the point of death, one of whom is a monk. Strengthen them with bread, so that their strength may return and they may warm themselves, and bring them here."

Going forth, Theodore found everything really as the Father had prophetically said, and all marveled at the saint's clairvoyance. Once the Venerable had occasion, on monastery business, to sail by ship to an island with some of the brethren. By God's permission the invisible enemy, wishing to drown the Father with the brethren, raised a terrible wind, a storm and a surge; he overturned the ship in the midst of the deep, so that water at once flooded everyone. But the right hand of God, swiftly delivering His servant from misfortune, at that very moment set the ship upright again, calmed the storm, and the saint found himself sitting at the stern and calling the brethren to him. The water bore them up to the ship as if on hands. The Venerable Father, drawing them out of the water one by one, gathered them all alive. Only Peter of Cyprus was missing; not seeing him, the Father was troubled in heart and cried out loudly:

"Child Peter! Where are you?"

And at the Father's cry Peter rose from the depths and was borne by the water to the ship, where he was taken up by the Venerable's hands. Thus the Venerable himself and his brethren were saved from drowning; and the malicious enemy not only did not rejoice but was even more put to shame. The blessed Father everywhere put the enemy to shame, gaining victory over him and driving him off. He cast a demon out of the monk Matthew, who was cruelly tormented by an unclean spirit. By the saint's prayers the invisible tormentors were also driven out of others who suffered destructive torments. The Venerable also possessed the power of healing, and in ministering to the sick he with his own hands rendered wondrous help to many. He healed a leprous brother; another who suffered from an ulcer he also made whole.

A third, who had a cancerous sore, he cured by making the sign of the holy cross three times with his hand over the sore. By his prayer he drove off locusts that had flown onto the island and were devouring every green thing without exception. Once, when he was sailing with the brethren by sea, there was a shortage of drinking water, so that the brethren were faint with thirst; Saint Athanasius commanded that sea water be drawn up, and having blessed it, he turned it into fresh water, and the brethren quenched their thirst with it. One brother named Gerasimus, working in a vineyard, wished, since he possessed great bodily strength, to pull up by hand a strong and tall vine. Shaking the vine with his hands two and three times, he nevertheless could not pull it up, and he terribly injured himself. His belly burst, his entrails came out, and he suffered greatly from pain. But by the prayer and the sign of the holy cross on the part of the Venerable Father he received healing. This same Gerasimus, calling God to witness, also related the following miracle:

"When I," said Gerasimus, "was performing the obedience of cutting bread, I had need to go to the Father and ask about a certain matter. It happened that at that time he was alone in prayer in the church of the Holy Apostles. I went to the church and, looking through the window, saw that the Venerable Father was praying, and his face was like a fiery flame. I was terrified and drew back a little. Waiting a while, I looked again and noticed that his face, surrounded by a semblance of fire, shone like the face of an Angel. From fear I cried out and said:

"O Father!"

He, noticing that I was frightened and understanding why, forbade me to tell anyone what I had seen.

Concerning this, Gerasimus related to the brethren after the repose of the Venerable Father. A certain brother, having been sent by the Father on obedience to a secular village, was enticed by the temptation of the enemy into the sin of the flesh and committed fornication. Then, coming to a sense of the gravity of his sin, he despaired in his thoughts, and returning to the monastery, he fell at the feet of the Saint with tears and sobbing, and confessed to him his sin and his despair. The Venerable Father, instructing him with many profitable admonitions

and persuading him not to despair of the loving-kindness of God, commanded him to remain among the brethren in his former obedience. Meanwhile one of the elders, named Paul, learning of the brother's fall and of the father's compassionate mercy, murmured against both the first and the second: he reproached the brother for daring to commit so vile a deed, having broken the vow of chastity, and he said to the Father to his face that it was not just to forgive such a sinner, but that he ought to undergo many and grievous punishments. Then the meek Father, looking sternly at the murmurer, said:

"Paul! Look what you are doing! Keep watch over yourself, and do not examine the sins of the brethren, for it is written: 'Let him who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall' (1 Cor. 10:12)."

From that time, by the permission of God, the unseen tempter began to wound the heart of Paul with the arrows of foul thoughts and to kindle his flesh with the fire of lust, and Paul had no rest for three days and three nights, being wholly inflamed with desire for carnal sin, so that he even began to despair of his salvation. And what was worst of all, he was ashamed even to reveal his struggle to the Father. Knowing this in spirit, the Venerable Father, calling Paul to himself, conversed with him privately about certain matters of the monastery. By means of this conversation he gradually drew Paul on to confess his carnal passion. Then Paul, falling at the Father's feet, told him of his affliction and asked him for relief. The Venerable Father, giving Paul instruction not to condemn the brother who had sinned, sent him back to his obedience. He was the cellarer. But he himself, standing in prayer, fervently besought God for him with tears, and in that same hour Paul was freed from the passion. He felt a certain coldness pour over his head and pass through his whole body down to his feet, and by this the lustful excitement of the flesh was extinguished in him. Another brother, named Mark, a native of Lampsacus, was grievously assailed by the same sinful carnal lust; coming to the Father, he confessed his passion before him and asked for his prayerful help. After some days, he saw the Father in a dream, who asked him:

"How do you feel, brother?"

"I am suffering very grievously, Father," he answered.

"Stretch yourself face down upon the ground," said the Father.

When he had stretched himself out on the ground, the Father set his foot upon his loins. Rising under the pressure of the foot, he felt that he was healed of the passion, and from that hour he had peace, no longer experiencing any carnal agitation. Having briefly set forth these few of the many miracles of our Venerable Father, performed by him during his lifetime, let us now relate his repose.

Since, as was mentioned earlier, a multitude of brethren gathered to the Venerable Father from everywhere, there arose a need to enlarge the church so as to accommodate the whole assembly of brethren; therefore porticoes and side-chapels were built onto the church walls. When the construction of one side-sanctuary had not been completed, it happened that the Father himself had to go there and look at the work being done, before setting out on the journey that lay ahead of him then to Constantinople; he intended to go to the emperor on monastery business. So first, calling the brethren together, he delivered to them an instruction of the Blessed Theodore the Studite[4410], adding profitable exhortations from his own eloquent lips. Then, shutting himself in his cell, he prayed for a long time. After this he came out of the cell clothed in a mantle, having upon his head the sacred koukoul (klobuk) of his blessed father Michael Maleinus, which he was accustomed to put on only on the great feasts and at the reception of the Divine Mysteries of Christ; and on that day he truly kept a festival, and his face was bright as that of an Angel of God. Then, taking with him six brethren, he went with them to the works. When they were already at the top of the building, by the unknown judgments of God the upper part of it gave way and cast them all down, burying them under earth and stones. Five of them immediately yielded up their souls to God, but the Father and with him one builder, named Daniel, remained alive among the stones. Then all heard the voice of the Venerable Father, crying out for three hours or even more:

"Lord Jesus Christ, help me! Glory to Thee, O God!"

The brethren who ran up, with weeping and lamentation, tore apart the stones and the earth with whatever implements came to hand, or with their hands and feet. They dug out the Father already reposed in

the Lord, his body undamaged; only his right leg was wounded. And near him they dug out the builder Daniel alive, all broken, and carried both of them out from there. Such was the death of our Venerable Father Athanasius, which may perhaps seem to some to be dishonorable, for he did not die on a sickbed, but "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints!" (Ps. 115:6). For the servant of God, his death, which was not unknown to him, became the cause of the crown of martyrdom. Foreseeing it in spirit, he foretold it some time before to his closest disciple Antony:

"I beg you," he said, "to make the journey that lies before us on monastery business to Constantinople. As it pleases God, I shall no longer see an earthly emperor."

After his death[27], the Venerable Father lay unburied for three days, until the Fathers from all the monasteries of Mount Athos gathered and arranged an honorable funeral for him. His honorable body did not change, did not swell, did not darken, and his face was as that of a living person asleep; the usual odor of a dead man was not perceived. Everyone wept greatly over him. And when the funeral chants were being sung over him, blood flowed from the wound on his leg, contrary to nature. Who has ever seen blood flow from the wound of a man dead three days? Noticing this, some of the venerable elders collected this blood in towels and anointed themselves with it as with a great holy relic, for a blessing. Thus was the honorable body of the Venerable Father buried. The bodies of the five brethren found among the fallen stones had been honorably buried earlier. The badly injured Daniel remained alive for several days and, with a sigh, related the vision that had come to him on the night before the Venerable Father's death:

"I saw," Daniel related, "that a bright envoy had come from the emperor, who called the Father to him. And indeed the Father, going out of the lavra with six brethren, among whom I also was, followed the envoy. And when we came to the most beautiful imperial palace and approached the doors, the Venerable Father with five brethren went into

27. The one that followed in 1000–1001.

the imperial hall, while I was left outside and wept greatly. Then from within I heard someone saying to me:

"You weep in vain, man. You cannot enter inside unless the Father with whom you came permits you."

Hearing this, I began to weep more loudly and called upon the Father with a tender voice. After a little time, the Father came out, took me by the right hand and led me into the palace, and I was granted to see the emperor and bowed down to him."

With these words Daniel yielded up his soul into the hands of God.

Let us also recall some further miracles of the Venerable Athanasius, which occurred after his repose. The aforementioned Antony, the constant disciple of the Venerable Father, happened to be in the district of Gagra with some of the brethren on monastery business. Journeying here, toward evening they met a shepherd tending sheep, who had an only son bitten by a wild beast and already at the point of death. The father wept bitterly over his son. Seeing the wandering monks passing by, he urged them to turn aside to his dwelling, and, showing them hospitality, offered them what food he had, bread and milk. The monks marvelled at his virtue, that he did not abandon the love of strangers even when he was in such grief, and they sympathized with him in his sorrow. Among the monks was one brother, named Simeon, who had with him a towel moistened with the blood of the Venerable Father. With this towel Simeon bound the child's wound, and the child immediately fell into a deep sleep and slept until morning. The monks also spent the night there. In the morning the child rose up healthy, healed of his wound, and asked for food. Then all glorified God. Another time, when one of the brethren was again sent on monastery obedience, it happened that he entered the house of a certain lover of Christ, where a woman lay on a sickbed, who had long suffered from a flow of blood. All the men of the household were grieving over her. Learning the cause of their sorrow, the monk said:

"I have on a towel the blood of Saint Athanasius, and if you wish, let us moisten the bloodied towel in water, wring it out, and let the sick woman drink that water, and she will be well."

The sick woman, hearing the monk's words, began to beg him tearfully that he would fulfill his proposal as quickly as possible. Then the monk, having prepared such water with the blood of the Saint, gave it to her. The woman, taking the water, said:

"Saint Athanasius, help me!"

And she drank it all. Immediately after this her bleeding ceased, and she became healthy. Again, at another time, the monk Simeon and the monk George were sent by ship on certain monastery errands. They sailed to the harbor of Pevki, where they found a certain shipman dying, no longer speaking for eight days, mourned by his friends and despairing of his recovery; they laid upon him the holy towel stained with blood. The sick shipman at once, as if awakening from sleep, rose up healthy. Various miracles also took place at the saint's tomb: unclean spirits were cast out of people, and those who came in faith and were anointed with oil from the lamp burning at his tomb were healed of various infirmities. Let us also recall what happened to the virtuous monk Eustratius. His inner organs had somehow been injured, so that the natural and necessary urine flowed from him not as water but as blood. He suffered this affliction for seven years, and although he applied to many physicians, they were unable to help him. Renouncing physicians, he placed his trust in God, praying for the intercession of the Venerable Father Athanasius before Him. As soon as he had taken refuge in this healer who grants cures, he received healing from him in the following manner. In a dream it seemed to him that he was at a meal and saw: in the customary place of the abbot sat the Venerable Father, and before him a full flask of water and a dish of grapes. The Venerable Father, taking several grapes, put them into the water, which he gave Eustratius to drink. Eustratius, supposing this to be an ordinary medicinal remedy (which he had renounced), did not wish to accept it. Then the Father said to him:

"Fear not; drink it, and it will be for your health."

Then Eustratius, receiving and drinking it, awoke from the dream, and from that hour he felt himself completely healed of this infirmity.

But it is now fitting to conclude the account of the life, labors and miracles of the Venerable Father, given in abridged form on the basis of the book that recounts the holy man in detail.

To God, wondrous in His saints, who manifested His marvelous mercy and power upon the Venerable Athanasius, be endless glory and honor, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 3:

The angelic orders marveled at thy life in the flesh, how with thy body thou didst go forth to the wrestlings with the invisible ones, O most glorious one, and didst wound the ranks of the demons; wherefore, O Athanasius, Christ rewarded thee with rich gifts: therefore, O Father, pray that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As an excellent beholder of incorporeal beings and a most truthful narrator of deeds, thy flock cries to thee, O God-speaking one: cease not to pray for thy servants, that they be delivered from calamities and afflictions, as they cry to thee: Rejoice, O Father Athanasius.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day, the memory of the Venerable Lampad, Wonderworker of Irinopolis.

On this same day, the uncovering of the relics of the Venerable Sergius, Hegumen of Radonezh, Wonderworker, in 1422.

NOTES

4387. Mount Athos, in Greek Agion Oros, "Holy Mountain," is a narrow, mountainous peninsula jutting into the Archipelago (the Aegean Sea), known as the center of monastic life for the Greek East. Monasticism arose here in ancient times, though somewhat later than in Syria and Palestine. For the Russian Church, almost from the very appearance of Christianity in Rus' and until the seventeenth century, Athos had greater significance: here the father of Russian monasticism, St. Anthony, was tonsured; here, in the

large monastic libraries, our monks who went to Athos received the broadest religious education of their time (for example, St. Nilus of Sora, †1508). Here were special translators and copyists, who supplied Orthodox Rus' with translated manuscript works of a churchly and edifying character. As one of the most venerated holy places of the Orthodox East, Athos is visited each year by thousands of pilgrims exclusively of the male sex (entrance to the monastery is forbidden to women) from Russia, the Balkan peninsula, and the Asian possessions of Turkey. Almost the whole mountain, with the exception of deep gorges and cliffs, is covered with rich vegetation: lemon, orange and pear trees grow here interspersed with walnut, olive and chestnut trees; whole fields are planted with many varieties of grapes; there are up to twenty rich monasteries, several sketes and a multitude (hundreds) of individual cells, Greek, Russian, Moldavian, Bulgarian and others.

4410. The Venerable Theodore the Studite, while still in his youth, entered upon the path of the monastic life, at first laboring under the guidance of his uncle, the Venerable Plato (commemorated April 5), who defended the veneration of icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Afterward the Venerable Theodore became abbot of the Studion Monastery in Constantinople; under his governance the monastery attained an unprecedented height. The Venerable Theodore was twice exiled from Constantinople for rebuking Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, who had unlawfully divorced his wife Maria and aggravated the gravity of his crime by an unlawful marriage with Theodote. On his return from exile to the Studion Monastery, when a persecution against the holy icons broke out, the Venerable Theodore, paying no heed to the threats of the iconoclasts, openly conducted processions of the Cross. Then Emperor Leo the Armenian sent him into imprisonment, where he was held in damp and stifling dungeons, repeatedly subjected to cruel beatings. Under Michael the Stammerer, St. Theodore was released from imprisonment, but he lived only a short time, worn out by his confinement. He reposed at the age of 67 in the year 826, on November 11 (the day on which his memory is also celebrated). At the moment of St. Theodore's death, the Venerable Hilarion of Dalmatia saw a host of Angels descending from heaven and heard a voice: "Behold the soul of Theodore, abbot of Studion, ascending in triumph on high, and the heavenly powers meet it." – St. Theodore left behind numerous writings in the form of homilies, catechetical instructions, letters, canons, stichera, epigrams and biographies. The most complete edition of the Venerable Theodore's works in Russian has been undertaken by the editors of the journal *Khristianskoe Chtenie* as a supplement to that journal for 1907 and subsequent years.

THE SIXTH DAY OF JULY

July 6

6 июля

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

Memory of Our Venerable Father Sisoes the Great

Память преподобного отца нашего Сисоя Великого

From his youth, having loved God, the Venerable Sisoes took upon himself the yoke of the Cross and with zeal followed Christ, labouring in the deserts of Egypt by the ascetic feats of fasting. He lived an angelic life, overcoming the hosts of invisible enemies by humility and prayer. The place of his labours was the desert mountain in which the Venerable Antony the Great had laboured, and the blessed Sisoes himself was an imitator of the life of Antony. For his humility he received such grace from God that he even raised the dead, as is evident from the Paterikon[1], where the following is related concerning St. Sisoes.

A certain layman set out for Abba Sisoes on the mountain of Antony, seeking his blessing, taking with him his son, a young child. It happened that on the road this child fell ill and died; but his father was not dismayed, and in faith carried the dead body to the elder. Entering the cell of the Venerable, he fell at his feet, laying his dead son at the Venerable's feet, as though the child were asking for a blessing and prayer. After the elder had offered prayer and given the blessing, the layman went out, leaving the child lying dead at the elder's feet. The elder did not notice that the child was dead, and supposing that he was waiting for a blessing, he said to him:

"Rise, child, and go away from here."

And the dead man immediately rose up and went after the father.

1. *Paterikon* or *Otechnik*: a book of the Fathers, or about the Fathers. These are the names given to collections made up of brief accounts of the lives of ascetics, or of their edifying sayings.

Then that man, seeing his son alive, returned with him to the elder and, bowing down, gave him thanks. The elder, perceiving that he had raised the dead, was greatly grieved, for he did not desire the glory of a wonderworker, and he forbade the man to tell of what had happened until his own repose.

Once the brethren asked this God-inspired father:

"If a brother falls into sin, is one year enough for him for repentance?"

"Harsh is that word," answered the elder to this question.

Then the brethren said:

"So then, should the one who has sinned repent only six months?"

"Much," answered the elder.

"Perhaps," the brethren asked again, "forty days are sufficient for his repentance?"

"Much," again answered the elder.

Then he said:

"I believe in the mercy of God, the Lover of mankind, and if a man repents with all his soul, God will accept his repentance within three days."

One brother again asked the elder, saying:

"What should I do, Father, since I have fallen into sin?"

"Amend yourself, child," answered the elder, "and you will be saved."

"But having amended myself, I fell again," answered the brother.

"Amend yourself again," said the elder.

"Until when, then," asked the brother, "will my falling and rising continue?"

"Until your end comes and finds you either in good or in evil; therefore one must always remain in amendment, so that death may overtake one in it."

This Venerable father had a disciple, Apollos. Through the cunning of the enemy, among other desires and temptations there arose in him a desire for the priestly rank. In dreams demons appeared to him in the form of hierarchs, ordaining him bishop. Awakening from sleep, he began to beg the elder to command him to go to the city to the bishop

to receive ordination as priest. But the elder forbade him this and, teaching him, admonished him not to seek a rank above his worth. Grieved by the constant teaching and instruction of the elder, Apollos secretly fled from him and withdrew to relatives in Alexandria, so that with their help he might more quickly obtain the presbyteral rank.

As Apollos was walking along the road, there met him a demon in the form of an immeasurably tall man. He was naked and black, with a repulsive face, thick lips, and iron claws. Having the likeness of a beast, he at the same time resembled both a man and a woman. Spreading a stench, the demon displayed before Apollos' eyes such shamelessness that it is impossible even to set it down in writing. Throwing himself on Apollos' neck, the demon embraced him with his arms and kissed him often. Apollos protected himself with the sign of the Cross and tore himself from his arms. But the demon said to him:

"Why do you run away from me? Know that you are mine, and I love you, for you fulfil my desires. I came to you precisely in order to accompany you until I bring to completion all your desires."

Being unable to endure his stench and shamelessness, Apollos raised his eyes to heaven and cried out with a loud voice:

"O God, by the prayers of my father Sisoes, help me and deliver me from this calamity!"

And behold, the demon, withdrawing from him a short distance, transformed himself into a beautiful naked woman and said to him:

"Come and satisfy your desire, for you have greatly soothed me with the thoughts in your heart."

"I wanted to make you," said the demon afterwards, "a priest and bishop, but the prayers of Sisoes, a lustful old man, drive me away from you."

With these words the demon became invisible.

Seized with great fear, Apollos returned to the elder, and falling at his feet, confessed before him all that had happened and asked forgiveness. He also told the brethren what sufferings he had endured from the diabolical seduction and how the prayers of the Venerable father Sisoes had helped him.

Truly his prayer was powerful for driving out demons. It also drove away the unclean spirit that tormented another disciple of the elder Sisoes, named Abraham. All evil spirits fled from him, not daring to approach the brave and invincible soldier of Christ.

The Venerable Sisoes lived in the desert sixty years. When he was already at the point of death (and the brethren were with him at that time), his face shone like light, and he said to the brethren:

"Behold, Abba Antony has come."

Then, after being silent a little, he said again:

"Behold, the choir of the Prophets has come."

And again he shone even more and said:

"Behold, the choir of the Apostles has come."

And his face shone doubly, and he conversed with invisible persons.

The brethren besought him, saying:

"Father, tell us: with whom are you conversing?"

And he said to them:

"These are Angels who have come to take me, but I pray to them that they leave me for a short time, so that I may repent."

"You have no need of repentance, Father," said the brethren to him.

To this the elder answered:

"Truly I do not know whether I have made even a beginning of my repentance."

But all the brethren knew that he was perfected in the virtues. After this he shone yet more strongly, and his face became like the sun, and all were afraid of it. Then the elder said:

"Behold, the Lord is coming; look, all of you. He says: Bring Me the chosen vessel out of the desert!"

With these words the Venerable gave up his spirit to the Lord[2]. At that moment lightning appeared and the cell was filled with fragrance.

Having concluded his temporal life with such a blessed end, the Venerable Sisoes passed over into life everlasting. And now he dwells with Christ and enjoys the beholding of Him together with those choirs of saints whom he saw at his death.

2. The repose of the Venerable Sisoes the Great took place about 429.

By the prayers of our Venerable Father Sisoes, may we too be made worthy of this joy by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory unto ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

Dweller in the desert, and in the flesh an Angel, and a wonderworker didst thou appear, God-bearing Father of ours Sisoes; by fasting, vigil and prayer thou didst receive heavenly gifts, and thou healest the infirm, and the souls of those who come to thee in faith. Glory to Him who gave thee strength; glory to Him who crowned thee; glory to Him who through thee works healings for all.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Ascetically labouring, thou wast seen on earth as an Angel, illumining, Venerable, the thoughts of the faithful always with signs of God; wherefore we honour thee, Sisoes, with faith.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Lucia the Virgin, and with her Rix and Others

Страдание святой мученицы Лукии девицы и с нею Рикса и других

The holy martyr Lucia was of Sicily[3], from the land of Cappadocia[4]. She was taken captive by the vicarius Rix[5], who began to compel her to offer sacrifice to the idols, but she did not consent to this and expressed a firm desire to remain a slave of Christ. The vicarius was moved by her steadfastness, released her and her maidservants,

3. The holy martyr Lucia is here brought in from Sicily through confusion with another Lucia, whose memory is celebrated on 13 December. The account of the first, in the menology of Emperor Basil, begins thus: "The martyr of Christ Lucia, distinct from the Sicilian Lucia," and so on.

4. No such country exists in Sicily. Evidently the country is here called Cappadocian instead of Campania, which lay on the Apennine peninsula to the southwest of Samnium, on the shores of the Tyrrhenian Sea, between Latium and Lucania.

5. According to the Acts of the saints this was the barbarian king Avcius. In the Greek prologues, as in our Slavonic one, he is named Rix, from the Latin word *rex*, king. It is thought that the common noun *rex* became the proper name Rix.

gave her a separate dwelling, and permitted her to devote herself to prayer in solitude. Once, setting out to war, he asked her to pray to God for him, and by her prayer he returned from war victorious. Twenty years after this, St. Lucia asked the vicarius to release her to Campania, that there she might receive torments for Christ. But he did not wish to let her go alone, and, leaving his kingdom, wealth, wife and children, he went with her himself. When they arrived in Campania, they were seized there by the then governor[6], and by his command their heads were cut off. Together with them other holy martyrs were also tormented, namely: Antony, Lucian, Isidore, Dion, Diorus, Cutonius, Aronus, Papicus and Saturn[7], and they died amid these torments[8].

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Quintus

Страдание святого мученика Коинта

This holy martyr was born in Phrygia[9] and was instructed in Christian piety there. Afterwards he came to Neolida[10], where he gave alms to the poor and healed those possessed by unclean spirits. The governor of the province, Rufus, tried to compel him to offer sacrifice to the idols, but he was at once seized by a demonic frenzy, and the saint healed him. For this Rufus rewarded him with gifts and dismissed him with honour. Then, going on the road toward Pergamum[11], St. Quintus was seized by pagans from the city of Cyme[12],

6. This was the prefect of the city of Rome, Aelius Dionysius. The place of the martyrdom of Sts. Lucia and Rix was the city of Rome, as is stated in the Acts of the saints.
7. The Acts of the saints name the following holy martyrs beheaded after Lucia and Rix: Antonius, Irenaeus, Theodore, Dionysius, Apollonius, Apomius, Pronicus, Coteus, Orion, Papicus, Saturus, Victor, and nine who are not named, so that, apart from Lucia and Rix, twenty-one were martyred; while in the synaxarion of Nicodemus fifteen persons are listed as suffering with Lucia, besides Rix, by name.
8. These holy martyrs suffered in the reign of Diocletian, in the year 301.
9. Phrygia was the name of a Roman province in Asia Minor. It bordered on Bithynia to the north, on Galatia and Lycaonia to the east, on Pisidia and Caria to the south, and on Lydia and Mysia to the west.
10. Neolida, more correctly Aeolida, was the name of a region in Asia Minor between Ionia and Mysia, bordering on Lydia to the east.
11. The city of Pergamum lay near the shores of the Aegean Sea on the river Caicus, in the northwestern Asia Minor province of Mysia.

who subjected him to torments; but at that moment an earthquake suddenly occurred, by which the temples of the idols were destroyed and the idols fell to the ground. Then the tormentors, ceasing their torments, bound the saint and left him in that condition. Soon after this a certain Clearchus, newly appointed ruler of the city, arrived at Cyme and ordered that St. Quintus be seized and his shins broken; but the saint recovered, lived after this for ten more years, and, having performed many miracles, departed to the Lord[13].

* * *

Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs Marinus, Martha, Abdiphax, Habakkuk, Quiricus, Valentine the Presbyter, Asterius, and Many Others

Страдание святых мучеников Марина, Марфы, Авдифакса, Аввакума, Кирика, Валентина пресвитера, Астерия и многих других

In the reign of the Roman emperor Claudius[14] there came to Rome from Persia a man of noble birth, wealthy and a Christian in faith, named Marinus, with his wife Martha and two sons, Abdiphax and Habakkuk, to venerate the tombs of the holy Apostles[15] and of other saints. While in Rome they began to visit the Christians held in chains, and to bury the bodies of those who had been put to death for faith in Christ. Crossing the river Tiber[16], they found there in another city the holy martyr Quiricus, who had been cast into prison and who had already endured much suffering for Christ. Coming to him, they fell at his feet, asking him to pray to the Lord for them; then they began to serve him and the other prisoners of Christ confined with him, providing for them from their means, washing their feet, and sprinkling them-

12. The city of Cyme was situated on the sea coast in the northern part of the Asia Minor province of Lydia.
13. The holy martyr Cointhus suffered in the reign of Emperor Aurelian (270–275), and his peaceful repose took place about the year 283.
14. Here is meant the emperor Claudius II, who reigned in Rome from 268 to 284.
15. In Rome the holy Apostles Peter and Paul died a martyr's death and were buried.
16. The Tiber is one of the most considerable rivers of central Italy; on its banks, not far from where it empties into the sea, lies the ancient capital of the Roman Empire, the city of Rome.

selves with this water. Serving the saints in this way, they remained there for eight days.

At this time the Emperor Claudius commanded that all who were found to belong to the Christian faith be put to death without trial. Shortly before this, 260 Christians had been seized, who by the emperor's judicial sentence were condemned to dig the earth; their place of confinement was outside the city, by the road called the Salarian Way[17], where pottery was made. The emperor ordered the soldiers to shoot all these Christians with arrows at the place of public spectacles, and to burn their bodies with fire. When Marinus and Martha with their sons learned of this, they were greatly grieved, and, going with St. John the Presbyter to the place of the holy martyrs' execution, they secretly took from the fire whatever bodies could be taken out, wrapped them in clean linen, and buried them in a cave[18] situated beside the Salarian Way on the slope of the mountain called Kekumer. Together with the bodies of these holy martyrs they also buried the body of an imperial tribune[19], named Vlastus, who had been slain for Christ, and they remained there for many days with the Presbyter John, passing the time in fasting and prayer. Learning of this, the Emperor Claudius commanded that Marinus and his companions be sought out, but they were not found, because they were in hiding.

Then, returning from this cave and coming to the prison where the holy martyr Quiricus had been confined, they did not find him there, for on the night before their arrival he had been slain with a sword and

17. The Salarian Way lay in the northeastern part of the city of Rome and led north into Italy.
18. By "cave" are meant here the Roman underground cemeteries called catacombs. These were corridors dug beneath the earth, in whose walls recesses were made into which the bodies of the dead were laid without coffins; they were then sealed with stones and covered with marble slabs. For lighting the corridors, lamps were hung near the tombs, and openings were made in the ceiling which served at the same time to freshen the air. Here, in times of persecution, the persecuted Christians buried the holy martyrs and gathered to celebrate the days of their memory. Here too they assembled for the celebration of worship, and especially of the sacrament of the Eucharist, the marble slabs above the tombs of the holy martyrs serving as Holy Tables.
19. *Tribunes* were originally the chiefs of the tribes, or divisions of the Roman population; later this title came to be applied to persons holding many state offices, chiefly to commanders of military units, who stood in rank between our colonel and company commander. The holy martyr Vlastes mentioned here was one of such commanders. He is called "imperial," probably because he belonged to the so-called Praetorian guard, which was bound to serve the emperor himself.

thrown into the river Tiber. Learning the place where the body of the saint had been cast, they waited for night, and when darkness came they sought him out and, having found him, buried him in a cave, in the tomb of Pontianus[20].

When after this they were passing along that side of the Tiber, in the night darkness not yet dispersed, they heard the voices of singers from the upper room of a certain house. These were Christians who had gathered together with the bishop Callistus and were celebrating the all-night service, glorifying God. Hearing the voices of the singing Christians, Marinus and his companions rejoiced greatly, and approaching the doors of this house, they began to knock; but the Christians within the house did not wish to open the doors to them, for they feared the pagans, lest they should fall upon them. Then the holy bishop Callistus, turning to those with him, said:

"Be courageous, do not fear. Christ is knocking at our doors. Let us open to Him, since He is calling us to this."

Having said these words, the bishop himself went and opened the door. When Marinus, Martha, and their two sons saw the bishop, they fell at his feet, asking his blessing. The bishop and all the Christians rejoiced over them, and bringing them into the upper room, greeted them with love, and then began to pray together with them. Marinus with his wife and sons remained in this place for two months, hiding by day and gathering for prayer by night.

At this time the emperor Claudius ordered that a certain honourable man, by rank a presbyter, named Valentine, who had been taken for confessing Christ and bound in heavy chains, be brought before him to the palace, situated near the places of public spectacles, for judgment and interrogation; and he said to him:

20. By "tomb in a cave" is probably meant here a chamber in the catacombs. Ordinarily the Romans buried their dead in niches along the underground corridors, but wealthy people, such as Pontianus here mentioned presumably was, sometimes built, off to the side of the passages, whole chambers, often very spacious, where all the members of the family were buried. Wealthy people who had embraced Christianity often, during persecutions, buried in these family tombs the bodies of the holy martyrs who had suffered for Christ, considering this a great honor and happiness for themselves.

"Why, living among our people, do you not agree with us? I hear enough about your Christian teaching, and I marvel how you, being a sensible man, are seduced by the empty tales of your faith?"

"If you knew the gift of God contained in our faith," the blessed presbyter Valentine replied, "you would gladly accept our faith, you yourself and your people, would reject the false gods and the idols made by human hands, and would confess the one almighty God, the Father, and Jesus Christ, His Son, the Creator of all that exists, who made both heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them."

After this one of those attending the emperor, a guardian of the law, said loudly to the holy presbyter:

"And what do you think of the god Zeus[4432] and of Mercury[21]?"

"I think nothing else," said the holy Valentine, "than that they were wretched and impious men, who spent the time of their lives impiously, in vices and pleasures. Indeed, if you tell me of their origin and their deeds, you yourself will see to what extent they were impious."

After these words of the saint, the guardian of the law cried out loudly:

"This man reviles the gods, the rulers of the Roman state!"

The emperor Claudius, having listened patiently to this conversation, then said to Valentine:

"If Christ is God, why do you not set out for me the whole truth about Him?"

To this the holy presbyter said to the emperor:

"O Emperor! Listen to me, and your soul will be saved, your kingdom will be enlarged, and your enemies will vanish. You will conquer all, and here you will enjoy a temporal kingdom, and in the life to come an eternal one. Only do this: repent of the blood of the saints that you have shed, believe in Christ, and receive holy baptism."

Having heard these words, Claudius said to those present:

21. Mercury, otherwise Hermias or Hermes, son of Jupiter and of his sister Hera; he was revered by the Greeks and Romans as the messenger of the gods, the executor of the will of Zeus, the intermediary between gods and men, the god of eloquence, and also the god of various discoveries, inventions and crafts, the god of industry and trade, which, it was held, bring wealth only when united with cunning, deceit and even theft. Hence Hermes was the patron of theft and deceit, approving every kind of lie and perjury.

"Hear, citizens of Rome and all people, what a sound teaching this man proclaims to us."

But the eparch[22], named Calpurnius, said loudly in reply:

"O Emperor, you are being seduced by this man's empty teaching. Judge for yourselves whether it is right for us to abandon those gods whom we have been taught to worship from our childhood."

After the eparch had said these words, the emperor's heart was changed, and he handed the holy presbyter Valentine over to Calpurnius, and said to him with sorrow:

"Listen to him patiently, and if the teaching he preaches should prove unfounded, then deal with him according to the law by which the thieves of sacred objects are judged; but if you find his counsel well-founded and true, why should we not listen to him?"

The eparch Calpurnius, taking the holy Valentine, entrusted him to one of the chief officials under his authority, named Asterius, a man known for his wisdom, and said to him:

"If you can by your words persuade this man to agree with us, I will report your wisdom to the emperor, and you will be his friend."

After this Asterius took the presbyter Valentine to himself and brought him into his house. When the holy Valentine entered the house of Asterius, he knelt in prayer and prayed thus:

"God of all visible and invisible creatures, Creator of the human race, who for our deliverance from diabolical deception and for leading us from darkness to light didst send Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who also called us to Himself, saying: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Mt. 11:28), turn Thou to Thyself this house, and after darkness give it light, that it may know Thee, God and Christ, in unity with the Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen."

When the saint finished this prayer, Asterius, who had heard his words, said to him:

"I am surprised that you call your Christ light."

22. In the Greco-Roman empire the title *eparch* properly belonged to the rulers of provinces, but this name was sometimes also borne by the heads of cities.

"Indeed," answered the holy Valentine, "our Lord Jesus Christ, born of the Holy Spirit and the Most Pure Virgin Mary, is the true light, which enlightens every man coming into the world (Jn. 1:9)."

"If He enlightens every man," said Asterius in reply, "then I will test now whether what you say is true. I have a daughter who went blind before the age of two; if you, in the name of your Christ, restore her sight, I will do whatever you command."

"Bring her to me," said the holy presbyter.

Asterius quickly went and brought the blind maiden. Then St. Valentine, raising his hands and lifting his eyes to heaven, prayed for a long time and with tears, and then laid his hand upon the blind girl's eyes and said:

– Lord Jesus Christ! Enlighten Thy servant, for Thou art the true Light.

After these words the maiden immediately received her sight. Seeing this, Asterius and his wife fell at the feet of the saint and said:

– We beseech you, do with us whatever you desire, that we may become servants of Christ and our souls may be saved.

– Then do what I command you, said St. Valentine in reply. If you believe in Christ with all your heart, destroy all the idols that are in your house, fast, forgive the debts of all your debtors, and receive holy baptism; then you will be saved.

Asterius and his wife gladly agreed to do all this, and St. Valentine, imposing a three-day fast upon them, began to teach them the truths of the holy faith. And since many prisoners were under the authority of Asterius, he freed them all from their chains and released them from prison to liberty. After the three-day fast the Sunday came, and Asterius was baptized with his whole household, forty-six men and women in all; after this he invited the holy bishop Callistus into his house and received his blessing.

Hearing of the baptism of Asterius, the blessed Marinus, his wife Martha, and their sons Abdiphax and Abbacum came with great joy to his house, gave thanks to God, and lived there thirty-two days.

Meanwhile the emperor, learning that Asterius had been turned to faith in Christ through the teaching of the presbyter Valentine and had

received baptism with his whole household, immediately sent soldiers to seize him and all his household. The soldiers, coming unexpectedly, seized all who were in the house of Asterius, among whom were St. Marinus with his wife and sons, and brought them to the emperor. The latter ordered that the presbyter Valentine, Marinus, his wife and sons be separated from the others, and he sent Asterius and his household, bound, to the city called Ostia[23], so that there they might be brought to trial and punished.

St. Asterius and all who were with him were brought to the city of Ostia and delivered to a judge named Gelasius, who, seeing them, ordered that all be cast into prison. After twenty days he commanded that they be brought to trial and said to them:

– Do you know what the emperor and all his counselors[24] have commanded?

– We do not know, the saints replied.

– It has been commanded, said the judge, that those who worship the gods shall live and be free, and those who do not wish to worship them shall be put to death after various tortures.

To this St. Asterius said to the judge:

– Let those who are like them worship the gods and perish with them; but we bow down to the one true, almighty God who dwells in heaven, and to Him we offer ourselves as a sacrifice.

At these words the judge fell into a rage and immediately ordered St. Asterius to be hanged and tortured, and all the others to be beaten mercilessly with rods. Having subjected the holy martyrs to these torments that day, the judge ordered them cast back into prison again, and said:

– Still more cruel torments must be prepared for them.

After this he gave orders that a spectacle be prepared for the next day and that all the people be assembled. When morning came, Gelasius arrived at the spectacle, sat in a special place of judgment, and, or-

23. The city of Ostia lay southwest of Rome, at the mouth of the river Tiber, on the shore of the Tyrrhenian Sea. Here was the largest and most secure harbor, built by the emperor Claudius I.
24. These counselors of the emperor were called senators, or more often *synklitikoi*. They were the foremost imperial dignitaries and formed the *synklitos*, that is, the imperial council.

dering St. Asterius with the other martyrs to be brought before him, said to him:

– Abandon your vain madness and promise to offer sacrifice to the gods, so that you and those who are with you may not perish in torments.

– We all desire to die for Christ, St. Asterius replied, just as He died for us sinners, so that, cleansed from the defilements of this world, we may be counted worthy to pass into the Kingdom of heaven, which is our desire.

At such an answer Gelasius fell into a violent rage and ordered Asterius and all who were with him to be given over to be torn by beasts. After this the holy martyrs were led to a place near the golden idol-temple, called the beast-pit, since beasts were kept there. When the saints entered the pit, the partition behind which the beasts were kept was opened, and the beasts were let loose upon them. Then St. Asterius cried out loudly, saying:

– Lord God Almighty, who saved Thy servant Daniel in the lions' den and through the prophet Habakkuk visited and strengthened him[25], visit us also, Thy servants, through Thy holy Angel.

The beasts that came out from behind the partition did no harm whatever to any of the holy martyrs; on the contrary, they bowed down to St. Asterius and those with him. Seeing this, Gelasius turned to the people and said:

– See how these people have tamed the beasts by their magical art.

But many of the people said:

– The God whom they serve preserves them.

After this the judge ordered the holy martyrs to be brought out of the pit, a great pyre to be prepared, and them to be cast into it for burning. When the huge pyre was kindled, St. Asterius said to the other holy martyrs:

– Be bold, do not fear, for He who was seen in the Babylonian furnace with the three youths now stands among us.

25. The account of Daniel's six-day stay in the lions' den is found in Dan. 14:28–42, and of his visit by the prophet Habakkuk is related in the Life of the latter, placed under the second day of the month of December.

And when the holy martyrs were cast into the fire, the flames immediately went out, the heat turned into coolness, and the saints remained unharmed. Then the judge, seeing himself defeated and put to shame, ordered the holy martyrs to be led outside the city and there subjected to a special execution: some were beheaded and others stoned. Thus ended the martyric struggle of these holy martyrs.

As for the holy martyrs Marinus, Martha, Abdiphax, and Abbacum, who had been left in Rome together with the blessed presbyter Valentine, the emperor Claudius commanded that they be brought before him for trial. First he ordered St. Valentine to be beaten without mercy with rods and then his head to be cut off with a sword; then he turned to St. Marinus and those with him and said to them:

– Where are you from?

– From Persia, the saints replied.

– Why, he asked them, did you leave your homeland and come here?

– We desired, the saints replied, to bow down before the tombs of the holy apostles and at those tombs to offer our prayers to the Lord.

After this the emperor said:

– Where did you obtain the gold and silver? For I have heard that you are rich.

– We acquired them, replied the saints Marinus and Martha, from our property, which we had in great abundance in Persia and which we sold. We distributed part of the proceeds to the poor, and part we brought with us here, and that not for ourselves but so that they might serve the holy ones. And to what degree we were rich in Persia you may understand from the nobility of our birth. My father Maromeus was the first after the Persian king; this wife of mine is the daughter of Cusinitus, a prince famous in Persia.

– Why, he asked them, did you abandon the ancestral gods worshipped in Persia and come here to seek dead men?

– We are servants of Christ, Marinus replied, and we have come to bow down before the holy apostles, whose immortal souls live with God, that they may be intercessors for us before Christ our God.

– And where is the gold and silver that you brought from Persia? asked Claudius.

– We have given it to God, replied St. Marinus, who gave it to us for a time.

At these words the emperor fell into a rage and gave the holy martyrs over to his governor, named Muscian, and said to him:

– If they do not offer sacrifice to the gods, put them to death after various tortures.

Muscian, taking the saints, sat in the place of judgment in the temple of the Roman goddess Tellus[4438], and, condemning them to torments, had all the instruments of torture laid out before them and began to threaten them with cruel pains, striving thereby to compel them to offer sacrifice to the idols. But the saints did not submit to his will, and he proceeded to the tortures. First he commanded that St. Marinus be laid on the ground and beaten for a long time with rods. Being beaten, the holy martyr uttered loudly nothing other than the following words:

– Glory to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ!

Then Abdiphax and Abbacum were likewise beaten with rods. At this time the mother, the saint Martha, looking upon the sufferings of her children, strengthened them with maternal exhortations, that they might bear their sufferings bravely for Christ, who endured great sufferings for us. After this the tormentor commanded that these three martyrs, the father with his sons, be hanged upon the instrument of torture, and that their flesh be torn from them with iron claws and their ribs scorched with fire. In the midst of this the holy martyrs, with joyful faces, cried out:

– We thank Thee, Christ our God, that Thou hast deemed us worthy to endure these sufferings for Thy name.

Muscian then commanded that the saints be taken down from the instrument of torture and their hands cut off, – whereupon Martha gathered up their blood and anointed herself with it in joy – and afterward that their severed hands be hung about their necks and they be led through the whole city of Rome. When the holy martyrs were led through the city, a herald cried out to them, saying:

– Do not blaspheme the gods, for because of this you bear punishment.

In answer to this the saints said loudly:

– They are not gods but demons, who will destroy you together with your emperor.

After such sufferings the holy martyrs were led thirteen miles from the city to a place called Nymphe Catabassi; St. Marinus with Abdiphax and Abbacum had their heads cut off, and St. Martha was drowned in the river[26]. A certain Christian woman named Philicita secretly took the bodies of the beheaded holy martyrs, and also found the body of St. Martha in the water, and buried them on her own field, glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day is the commemoration of the holy martyrs Isaurus the deacon, Innocent, Felix, Hermias, Basil and Peregrinus, who were natives of the city of Athens and suffered for the Name of Christ at the hands of the military commander Trypontius in the Macedonian city of Apollonia, under the emperor Numerian (283–284). Together with them were also beheaded two city governors, Rufus and Rufinus.

On this same day is the uncovering of the venerable relics of St. Juliana, the maiden, Princess of Olshansk.

NOTES

4432. Dias, or Zeus, otherwise Jupiter, according to the account of Greek mythology, was the son of the younger Titan Saturn, who first reigned on the island of Crete and then appropriated dominion over the whole world, and of his sister Rhea. Saturn had several sons and daughters by Rhea, but swallowed them immediately after their birth, since his mother Gaea had foretold to him that he would be cast down from his throne by his children. Of all Saturn's children, only Zeus was saved from this fate by Rhea, and he afterward indeed overthrew Saturn. Zeus was revered by the Greeks and Romans as father of gods and men, the mighty and terrible ruler of heaven and of the whole universe, who sends thunder and lightning upon the earth, and was their chief

26. The holy martyrs Marinus, Martha and their sons died in the year 269. Their relics are now in the church of St. John the Hut-Dweller in Rome, and the relics of St. Valentine are in the church of Praxedes.

deity. Greek myths ascribe to him fleshly union with many lesser goddesses and even with mortal women, and attribute to him, as to the other gods and goddesses, various human passions and vices.

4438. Telluda, or Tellus, was an ancient Italic deity, the mother earth, who was invoked in prayers together with Ceres. As representative of the earth, Tellus was set in contrast to Jupiter, the deity of heaven. Personifying the maternal womb of the earth, which receives the seed and gives new life, Tellus was regarded as the creatress of all that exists, and was preferentially invoked, above other goddesses, as mother. Besides this, Tellus was held to be the establisher of world order, the giver of prosperity, and the protectress of marriages, like the Greek Demeter. As a goddess of the earth, Tellus was also invoked in earthquakes. On the occasion of an earthquake that occurred in the midst of a battle in 168, during the war with the Picentes, the consul P. Sempronius vowed to erect a temple in honor of Tellus, and this was built on the western slope of the Esquiline hill. But a temple to the Eleusinian triad, Demeter (Tellus), Dionysus and Kore, had already been established in Rome as early as 486 B.C., after the Greek model and by Greek artists.



THE SEVENTH DAY OF JULY

July 7

7 июля

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

Memory of Our Venerable Father Thomas Maleinos

Память преподобного отца нашего Фомы Малеина

Before taking the monastic habit, Venerable Thomas served in the army and was known for his wealth and his courage. Distinguished by his bodily strength, he performed many feats in battle, and many times through him his fellow countrymen gained victory over their enemies. But out of love for Christ, Thomas left the world and its worldly vanity and took upon himself the easy yoke of Christ[1], the monastic estate. He strove to be like Christ his Lord, vowing himself to poverty and cultivating humility in himself, and for this purpose he sought instruction from God-pleasing ascetics, known for their ascetic life, who dwelt in various monasteries. When Thomas, desiring complete tranquillity for his ascetic labors, resolved to go into the wilderness, a pillar of fire appeared to him in the sky at night, and the holy prophet Elijah himself appeared to him to show him the way into the depths of the wilderness.

Under the guidance of such guides, Thomas came to a mountain called Maleas[2], which became for him what Mount Carmel[3] was for Eli-

1. Mt. 11:30.

2. It is not known with precision where the mountain Maleia was located, on which the Venerable Thomas labored and from which he received his nickname. Some seek it in the Peloponnese, in Laconia, where there is a Cape Maleia; others understand here the mountain Maleon, located on the eastern side of Mount Athos; finally, some seek this mountain on the island of Lesbos, where there is also a Cape Maleia.

3. Mount Carmel lay within the territories of the tribes of Asher and Manasseh; with its upper or northern end it projected into the Mediterranean Sea, and with its southern end it abutted on the mountains of Samaria. This mountain served as the dwelling place of the prophets Elijah and Elisha (3 Kgdms. 18:1–46; 4 Kgdms. 2:25, 4:25).

jah. Here he began to live in solitude, abiding in communion with God alone and being granted divine revelations and visions.

As formerly, living in the world, he bravely overcame visible enemies, so now, withdrawn from the world and dwelling in the wilderness, by his unceasing prayer he struck down and drove away the invisible hosts of evil spirits as with a sharp sword. And since a city set on a hill cannot be hidden from human eyes, nor a star shining in the firmament of heaven, neither could the Venerable Thomas hide himself from people on the wilderness mountain of Maleas, where he shone with his holiness like a brilliant star and illumined the earth.

When people learned of the ascetic, he became an enlightener to those darkened in mind and a helper to those who needed his aid, for he received from God the power of working wonders and the grace of healing. He miraculously healed every kind of sickness, restored sight to the blind, gave the lame the ability to walk correctly and easily, and once, through his prayer, a spring of water was opened in a waterless place. But Thomas performed numerous miracles not only during his earthly life; after his repose in God, miracles also took place at his honorable relics. Believing people received unusually swift healing from all infirmities, even from incurable diseases, and also from demonic possession, both through the prayers of the saint and through the grace of Christ our God[4].

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou didst manfully show forth a great victory, being kindled with divine love; thou didst overcome the corruptible king and all his fair things, establishing thy dwelling on the mountain of Maleas, whence thou didst ascend to the heavenly things, to the King of kings. O Thomas, pray unceasingly for us all.

* * *

4. The time of the life of the Venerable Thomas Maleinus is not known with precision. It is thought that he lived no later than the 10th century.

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Peregrinus, Lucian, Pompeius, Hesychius, Papias, Saturninus and Herman

Страдание святых мучеников Перегрина, Лукиана, Помпея, Исихия, Папия, Саторнина и Германа

These holy martyrs were natives of Italy and suffered in the reign of the emperor Trajan[5]. When persecution of Christians began, they boarded a ship and arrived at a city named Dyrrhachium[6]. Being in this city and seeing how the holy bishop Astius[7] hung crucified on a cross smeared with honey, and how hornets and flies stung him, they glorified him for his confession of Christ. For this they were recognized as Christians, and the soldiers immediately seized them. At their interrogation they confessed their faith in Christ, and by the command of the anthypatos[8] Agricolaus they were placed on a ship and sunk in a deep place in the sea. Thus the holy martyrs died[9]. Their bodies were afterwards cast up by the waves onto the shore and were buried there in the sand. Ninety years after this, the holy martyrs appeared to the bishop of Alexandria and said to him: "Take our bodies."

Then the bishop buried the bodies of the saints with honor, and at the place of their burial he built a small church.

* * *

Life and Passion of the Holy Venerable Martyrs Epictetus the Presbyter and Astion the Monk

Житие и страдание святых преподобномучеников Епиктета пресвитера и Астиона монаха

In the reign of the impious Roman emperor Diocletian[10], in one of the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire there lived a virtuous

5. Trajan reigned in the Roman Empire from 98 to 117. In 99 he renewed the law forbidding secret societies. And since the pagans had already formed the opinion of Christians as people belonging to a secret society, and since the worship assemblies of the Christians took place at night and in secret, he raised persecution against them as violators of the aforementioned law.

6. The city of Dyrrhachium, otherwise Epiphamnus, now Durrës, was located in present-day Albania on the shore of the Adriatic Sea.

7. The memory of the holy Hieromartyr Astius is celebrated on June 4.

8. In the Roman Empire the *anthypatoi* were the heads of provinces.

9. The time of death of these holy martyrs is not known with precision.

10. The Emperor Diocletian governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.

man leading the monastic life, named Epictetus. He was a presbyter who from his very youth had begun to serve Christ. He possessed the gift of working miracles, bestowed on him by God for his pure life. He healed all kinds of sicknesses; restored sight to the blind, cured lepers, raised paralytics from the bed of sickness, and cast out demons. Of these miracles, which attested his holiness, the following deserve particular attention.

Once, when Epictetus was in his cell, standing not far from a village, and was occupied with prayers and devout meditations, a certain comes[11] brought to him his daughter, a fifteen-year-old maiden, completely paralyzed. Desiring healing for his daughter, the comes fell at the feet of Epictetus and implored him thus:

"Man of God! Have mercy upon me and do not repel me. For the merciful God whom you serve does not reject anyone who comes to Him[12]. Behold, my only daughter has been ill for three years and cannot move a single limb of her body. She is barely alive, but I firmly believe that He who healed the woman who suffered a flow of blood for twelve years[13] can heal my daughter too. Only pray for us, have mercy on us; for we are children of the Church of Christ and enlightened by holy baptism."

Then the servant of God Epictetus, having prayed fervently to God, anointed the paralyzed maiden with holy oil. She immediately recovered and stood on her feet, and all who surrounded her offered thanks to God. The venerable man said to the comes:

"Beloved! If you wish that no one in your house be ill, partake with all your household every Sunday of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, having first properly cleansed your heart."

After this he dismissed them in peace.

On another occasion a demoniac was brought to him. The venerable man kept him with himself for three days, subjecting the demon to ter-

11. Among the ancient Romans the *comites* were originally the companions of the highest official in a province, and later the companions of the emperors, who made up their most intimate retinue. From the time of Constantine the Great (306–337) this designation became the title of all court and state officials, even if they did not belong to the imperial retinue.
12. Mt. 7.
13. Mt. 9:20–22.

rible torments by his prayers, and the demon expressed his condition in such words:

"Woe! Torment! Why do I endure this? Would it not have been better for me to remain in Phrygia[14], in the idol temple, and to receive worship and sacrifices daily from a multitude of senseless people? Now I am forced here, without any fault, to suffer torments from this one man."

On the third day the holy presbyter laid a prohibition upon the demon and cast him out of that man.

Again, at another time, they brought to the saint a noble and wealthy woman, a pagan, who, having lost her sight, had vainly sought healing from various physicians. She implored the man of God to touch her blinded eyes with his right hand, since she had heard that many miracles were performed by his honorable hands and healings were granted to the sick. The saint, out of regard for her fervent entreaties, in which her faith was manifested, laid his right hand upon her eyes, invoking the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the woman immediately regained her sight, crying out at this:

"Glory to Thee, God of the Christians!"

From this time she turned to Christ together with her whole household. But too much would have to be said of the miracles of this servant of God, and yet what has been said is enough to see his holiness; therefore it is time to turn to other accounts.

From a neighboring city there came, apparently by chance, while walking with servants, to the place where the venerable man dwelt, a youth of about eighteen, named Astion. He was the son of a wealthy nobleman and a pagan. In truth, the providence of God had led him to the venerable man's cell. He wished to learn who lived here, and entering the cell, he saw a man of venerable appearance, who received him kindly and, seating him beside himself, asked:

"Whence are you, child? And who are your parents?"

The youth answered:

14. Phrygia was a region of Asia Minor.

"My father is the city governor, and my mother is the daughter of the senator Julian.

I am their only one, and they delight in me as in their most precious pearl."

The saint said to him:

You have spoken rightly, child, when you said that your parents admire you as a most precious pearl. Yes, they only look upon you, but they do not possess you. For your blessed soul is dearer than any pearl, and it is pleasing to our Savior Christ, who, as I see, has chosen it for His service. Obey me then, beloved child! Renounce everything that this visible, temporal, vain world possesses, that you may receive with all the saints the invisible, eternal blessings of the life to come. For all that we see in the world passes by and quickly ends, but what God has prepared for those who love Him and serve Him abides forever, as God Himself is eternal. The gold and silver that we can see are not anything true, but only a certain delusion for men. I will tell you what that true gold is which is worth acquiring. In our Christian books there is this exhortation: "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed," and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear[15]. This pure gold is Christ our Lord, who kindles the hearts of men with divine love. If you, child, will have Him in your heart, then heavenly riches will at once be prepared for you, and you will be clothed in white garments; and these garments are faith, hope and love. Clothed in them as in armor, you will be exalted not only above this visible world, but you will also conquer the devil, whom you worship as a god, together with all his servants. Furthermore, beloved, you must know also that the father who begot you according to the flesh is not your true father, for he gave you only a corruptible flesh that soon dies. Your true Father is Almighty God. He, having created your immortal soul, sent it into your body, conceived by His own will. Thus you have one father who is visible and another who is invisible. Your visible father is mortal, subject to the conditions of time, to calamities and sufferings, and he is powerless. But your invis-

15. Rev. 3.

ible Father is immortal, eternal, subject to no suffering; He is almighty and holds all things in His hands. He spoke, and you were formed in your mother's womb. He commanded, and you came forth from your mother's womb. By His will you came to the age of youth. And if children must honor their earthly parent, then all the more must they honor Him who created us in His own image and likeness, gave us mind and reason, and set us to rule over the works of His hands. By His goodness He has made us from slaves His sons, brethren and friends. Therefore we must know, love, honor and always worship Him, our true Father, who has bestowed upon us so many blessings. In the same way our true mother is not she who bears us according to the flesh for this world, but she who bears us spiritually to eternal life. She is betrothed to our Savior, honored by the Angels, adorned by the prophets, glorified by the Apostles and martyrs, and exalted by the confessors, for whom Christ our Lord has prepared a heavenly chamber. This holy mother is called by men the Church. Her voice is the voice of the turtledove caring for its young; her lips distil the myrrh of apostolic teaching; her eyes are true faith and firm hope in God; from her hands drips the myrrh of good deeds done out of compassion and love; her two vessels are the two covenants: the Old, in which the prophets taught, and the New, in which the Apostles preached. And through holy baptism she begets her children for immortal life. Come then, dear child! Nourish yourself at the breasts of this true Mother; obey my counsel: disdain the temporal riches of your parents, that you may become an heir of the eternal treasures prepared for the sons of God. Hear how your true Father speaks to you through me: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, [and go] unto a land that I will shew thee" (Gen. 12:1), "unto a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. 3:8, 17), by the teachings of the prophets, Apostles and holy fathers. And when you have fulfilled all that is commanded you, then the paradisal inheritance will be given you, the heavenly treasures will be opened to you, the glory of the heavenly Kingdom will be bestowed upon you, you will behold the orders of Angels and the choirs of all the saints, and you will live with them as a loving and beloved brother, while at the same time being near to God as a son.

The prudent youth, having heard this lofty speech of the man of God and having believed in its truth, was moved in his heart, but at that time he said nothing to him, fearing the servants who were with him, who might report his words to his parents. Therefore he withdrew, bowing to that venerable man.

The following morning, very early, young Astion went hastily alone to that Venerable elder, like a wise bee that flies back to the place where the day before it gathered sweet honey. Entering the cell of the priest of the Lord, he greeted him with these words:

"Greetings, Apostle of Christ, minister of the New Covenant!"

The holy man answered him:

"Greetings to you too, fair youth! I see you wearing the garment of a martyr and a crown of precious stones."

When they began to converse, seated, the elder said:

"Tell me, child, has the seed which yesterday, by God's goodness, we sowed in your heart sprouted? Will it bring forth fruit? Or does your heart still remain in the darkness of unbelief?"

Astion said:

"Yesterday I told you, holy father, that I am the only son of my parents and am very dear to them. I fear to grieve them; for if I openly accept the Christian faith, then from excessive sorrow they will either throw themselves into the sea, or lose their reason, or in some other way take their own lives. But I do not wish that what would bring me salvation should become for my parents the cause of death and eternal perdition. Therefore, if you will deign to accept my counsel, father, make me a Christian in secret, and now prepare me to receive baptism. When you have done for me all that is prescribed by the Christian rite, then, I beg you, grant me this mercy: take me with you to some distant land to which the Lord shows you the way, so that my eyes may not see my parents' tears, that my conscience may not be shaken at the sight of their grief, and that out of love for them I may not harm the work of my salvation."

Hearing such words from the youth, the holy elder rejoiced in spirit and commanded him to fast all his days and to beware of defiling himself with food sacrificed to idols, and at the same time he enjoined him

to offer prayers to Christ the Savior, the true God. Young Astion diligently fulfilled these commands. Secretly from his household, he came every day to the elder and learned the holy faith from him. And when he had come to know Christ well and had firmly believed in Him, then the holy elder baptized him.

After a little time, at night, the two of them departed from there, Astion having taken with him a little money for the journey. Approaching the seaport, they found there a ship which was sailing to the Scythian lands, and having taken places on that ship, they embarked. After a fairly long voyage, they went ashore and entered a city called Almiris[16], which stood within the Scythian borders on the river Danube. Near this city they found a secluded place suitable for dwelling, and there, having built themselves a small house, they settled.

The parents of Astion, not seeing their beloved son, began to search for him everywhere, and not finding him, they wept and sobbed much, calling their son by name in vain. The father cried out:

"Astion, my dear child, where are you now? Astion, my most beloved, only son! What has become of you? Has some beast unexpectedly devoured you, or has the depth of the waters received you? O support of my old age and light of my eyes! Where now to seek you I know not, and to what country to send my servants after you I am at a loss!"

Likewise the mother of Astion, tearing her garments and striking her breast with her hand, wept and said:

"Who has separated me from you, my dear child Astion! I think it was the Christian God who, sending someone, by deception turned you away from us. Woe is me, unhappy one! Woe is me; I am full of endless sorrow. All my labors and sufferings in bearing and raising you have been lost in vain! The fruit of my womb is lost, my hope and my glory have perished! I sit like a deserted city. Until now I was a mother, but now I am no longer a mother, for I have lost my only beloved child!"

Thus the parents of Astion wept inconsolably all the while. But Epictetus and Astion, servants of Christ, passed their life near the city of Almiris in ascetic labors of fasting. Their holy, virtuous life did not

16. Now Ramsin, on the southern arm of the Danube.

remain hidden, for through the holy priest Epictetus many healings were wrought, and people began to flock to them, bringing the sick.

Once a noble woman came to them with her son, whom her servants carried, for he was mute, deaf and paralyzed. He was about fifteen years old. Laying her son at the feet of the holy elder, the woman said to him:

"I do not know where you have come from, but I believe that if you wish, you can heal my son. Evidently you are a disciple of the Nazarene, of whom we have heard many wondrous and marvelous things. If you are indeed His disciple, help us and teach us to know Him, that we too may become His servants."

The holy man said to her:

"If you, woman, believe with all your heart that there is one true God, who created for us heaven and earth and all that is visible, then your request will be fulfilled."

Having said this, he ordered the boy lifted up from the ground, and, spitting three times into his dumb mouth, asked:

"Tell us, child, in what God must one believe? In the idols that men make, or in Jesus Christ crucified, who now heals you?"

The boy cried out with a loud voice:

"One must believe, honorable father, in Jesus Christ, who always bestows such great benefits upon men!"

Seeing this miracle, the citizens of Almiris glorified God, and on that day more than a thousand souls of both sexes believed in Christ our Savior. And the grace of God wrought miracles not only through St. Epictetus but also through St. Astion.

Thus once, when he went out to draw water at the river Danube, he was met by a demoniac. Astion made the sign of the Cross over the demoniac, and the demon immediately fled from that man, crying out:

"O Astion! Your faith and the purity of your heart have, by the will of God, gained great power over us!"

On another occasion, being sent somewhere by the elder, Astion during his journey saw a man who had fallen from a high building to the ground and lay there as one dead, while his parents wept over him.

Moved with compassion for them, the blessed Astion secretly prayed in such words:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Once through Thine Apostle Paul Thou didst restore Eutychus, who had fallen from the third-story window, from the gates of death to life (Acts 20:9–12); and through Thine Apostle Peter Thou didst raise Aeneas from an eight-year paralysis (Acts 9:33–34); and through the same St. Peter Thou didst strengthen the feet and ankles of a man born lame and didst give him strength to walk (Acts 3:2–8). So now, through me, Thy unworthy servant, set this man up living and well!"

Having prayed in this way, Astion approached the one lying there and uttered the Apostolic word:

"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" (Acts 3:6)

And taking him by the right hand, he raised him up living and well. The one who was healed, together with his parents, immediately went to the cell of the saints, crying out and saying:

"There is one God alone: the God of Epictetus and Astion! Truly, there is only one God: the Christian God! I will not depart from here; now make me and my parents Christians!"

The priest of the Lord, Epictetus, after catechizing and instructing them, ordered them to fast and prepare themselves to receive that holy gift, and after some time he enlightened them with holy Baptism. The devil, seeing that he was being put to shame not only by the elder but also by the youth, and that he was being deprived of human souls which had formerly been his prey, was consumed with envy and armed himself against them in every way with his cunning, though without success. Nevertheless, he found an occasion to harm the youth.

Once, without the elder's blessing, Astion went out to the river to draw water. The enemy, seeing Astion unprotected by the elder's blessing, immediately, by God's permission, put some sinful thoughts into him and troubled the youth's soul. Astion, returning to the cell, was ashamed to confess these thoughts to his spiritual father, and for three days he yielded to them, being unable to overcome them. He fasted, prayed with tears, and wore out his flesh with labors, but the impure

thoughts still did not leave him, as though some invisible archer were wounding him with them as with arrows. The elder, noticing his troubled and sorrowful appearance, said to him:

"What does this mean, child, that I see you unusually troubled? For the sorrow I see in you is not the sorrow of saints who are concerned for their salvation, and who therefore reflect on their faces some inner lamentation. It seems to me that this is a deadly sorrow, like that which destroyed Ahithophel, the counselor of Absalom,[17] and Judas, the betrayer of Christ."

Then Astion confessed to the elder in these words:

"About three days ago, when you were conversing with honorable men about heavenly mysteries, I needed to go for water. I was ashamed to receive your blessing in the presence of those men, and besides I did not want to interrupt your conversation. So, without your knowledge, without your blessing, I went for water, and at that time a dark cloud of evil thoughts enveloped me on the way. Now three days have passed since I began struggling with them and cannot drive them out of myself; that is why I remain in confusion."

The holy elder looked at him sternly and said:

"Why did you go out of the doors of the cell without my command? Why did you walk without the blessing of the priest of Christ? Do you not know that the blessing of a superior is for youths an impregnable wall, a strong armor, and an invincible weapon against the devil?"

Having said this, the elder ordered Astion to prostrate himself on the ground in the form of a cross for prayer, and did the same himself, and both together, with tears, began to pray to God. Having prayed long enough, they rose from the ground, and at that time Astion saw a certain black youth with a burning candle, who fled from him saying:

"Your confession, Astion, has now put my great power to shame, and your prayer has made me unarmed."

17. Ahithophel was originally a close friend and counselor of David; but during Absalom's rebellion he went over to his side and advised him to pursue David at once in order to put him to death; but since the consequence of this counsel was the ruin of Absalom, Ahithophel, leaving the army, returned to his native city and hanged himself there (2 Kgdms. 17:1–20). Equally shameful was the end of Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Lord to the Jews (Mt. 27:3–5).

Thus the Venerable Fathers lived there, and they converted many human souls to Christ God from the seduction of idols.

At that time the ruler of that country, named Latronian, came to the city of Almiris. While he was deciding various state and public affairs, the idolaters denounced these two holy men, saying that they were sorcerers, that they enticed many people by their magic, and turned men away from offering sacrifice to the gods. The ruler immediately ordered them seized and cast into prison. Being in chains, the saints unceasingly prayed and sang the Psalms of David.

Once the elder said to his disciple:

"My beloved child! If we are brought out for interrogation and asked about our name, lineage, and homeland, we shall answer them nothing except that we are Christians, that this is our name, lineage, and homeland, and that we are servants of the true God."

The next morning the ruler ordered a place prepared in the middle of the city for holding court, and ordered the people gathered here through heralds. He himself came here at the third hour of the day, sat on his seat, and sent to the prison for the saints. When they appeared before him, he looked at them and was struck with awe, for he saw a wondrous light of divine grace illuminating their faces, and both of them in general inspired reverence by their outward appearance. St. Epictetus was at that time sixty years old. He was tall and had a long beard adorned with gray hairs. Likewise St. Astion was tall and beautiful of face, especially shining with the beauty of chastity. He was thirty-five years old from birth. Gazing at them, the ruler remained silent for nearly an hour, finding nothing to say; then at last he asked them:

"Tell us, what are your names, of what lineage are you, and from what country have you come here?"

The saints answered:

"We are Christians!"

But the ruler said:

"I know that you belong to the accursed Christian faith; but tell us of your lineage and homeland."

The saints again answered him:

"We are Christians! We know the one God, our Lord Jesus Christ, and worship Him alone, and we loathe idolatrous abominations and keep away from those who bow down to them, saying with the psalmist: 'Let those who make them be like them, and all who trust in them!' (Ps. 113:16)."

Hearing this, the ruler became greatly enraged and ordered them stripped and beaten without mercy for a long time. The saints, enduring the blows, said:

"Lord Jesus Christ, our Teacher! Let Thy will be done over us!"

The ruler, seeing their steadfastness, grew even more furious and said:

"Where is your Christ, whom you unceasingly call upon? Let Him now come to help you, let Him snatch you from my hands!"

But the saints repeated:

"We are Christians! Let the will of our God be over us!"

Then the ruler was inflamed with still greater anger and ordered them hung on the racks where they were tormented, and commanded their bodies to be scraped with iron claws while at the same time burning them with fire. They only cried out:

"We are Christians! Let the will of our God be over us!"

The saints were tormented in this way until the end of the seventh hour of the day, and then the ruler ordered them taken down from the torture and led back to prison. One of the executioner's assistants, named Vigilantius, hearing the words which the saints constantly repeated during their torments, and supposing that these words contained a special magical power that removed bodily pain during torments, memorized them exactly and pondered them day and night. After three days he began to cry out loudly before everyone:

"I am a Christian; let the will of our God be over us!"

After this he went to the saints in prison, learned the holy faith from them, and within a few days, together with his entire household, was granted to receive holy Baptism. The saints, after the first torture, spent five days in prison and then were again summoned for interrogation. The ruler, even now, could not by any persuasion turn them to his impious faith, and therefore began to torment them again. First he

ordered the scars of the former wounds rubbed with vinegar and salt, and then cast the martyrs into a large cauldron filled with boiling pitch. The saints, however, remained unharmed in that cauldron of boiling pitch as though in a baptismal font, and repeated their former words:

"We are Christians! Let the will of our God be over us!"

The ruler marveled, seeing that they remained alive and unharmed in the boiling cauldron, and said:

"O how great is the power of Christian sorcery!"

After this he ordered them taken out of the cauldron and cast back into prison, forbidding any access to them and any supply of bread and water, so that they would perish of hunger and thirst. The holy ones, however, remained in the prison for thirty days, nourished only by the word of God and strengthened by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

While the holy martyrs were being examined and judged at the place of public execution, in the presence of all the people, there came by chance into that city, by the providence of God, a man from the eastern lands. He recognized Astion, for he knew his parents well, and so, returning to his homeland, he came to Astion's parents and said to them:

"I saw your son in the Scythian city of Almiris with an elder, Epictetus, at the time when both of them were subjected to torment for Christ."

The parents, hearing this, begged the man with tears to tell them the truth, and he confirmed his report with an oath. Then Astion's father said:

"If I am granted to see my beloved son, I will at once do all that he commands me and all that he teaches me!"

The mother also said:

"If in this life I see my dear child again, I will leave everything and follow after him. If he bids me become a Christian, I will not refuse; and together with him I will fear neither torments nor death for Christ!"

After this they entrusted their house and property to their faithful friends, and themselves, with several male and female slaves, set sail for Scythia. But before they arrived at the city of Almiris, the holy

martyrs Epictetus and Astion had already brought their ascetic struggle of suffering to its end.

After thirty days, during which they had been tormented in prison by hunger and thirst, the governor summoned them again to judgment and said to them:

"Many times I have asked you your names, your lineage and your homeland, and you have not told me the truth. I think you are none other than demons incarnate, for they too have neither name nor lineage. So tell me, incarnate devils, for so I may call you: will you offer sacrifice to our gods or not? If not, I will have your heads cut off this very day."

The holy ones answered:

"We are Christians, not devils, and by the name of Christ we cast out devils from the bodies of men. Oh, if you too would desire to be freed from the demon dwelling in you! We would cast him out of you by the power of Christ, our God!"

Then the governor flew into a rage and commanded that the holy martyrs be struck on the mouth with stones; then, having subjected them to punishment with blows of rods, he condemned them to beheading by the sword.

When the holy ones were led outside the city to the place of execution, they asked their executioners for time to pray, and, standing facing east, they raised their hands to heaven, lifted up their eyes and prayed to God for a long while. After this St. Epictetus asked that Astion be executed first, but the latter said to him:

"Father, you should first receive this honor, to be crowned with the crown of martyrdom, for you are a presbyter of the Lord, my father and teacher, and I will follow you!"

St. Epictetus answered:

"For seventeen years, child, by the grace of God, I have kept you in purity and blamelessness. Shall I now resolve to destroy the labor of so many years and leave you alone, without me? Do you not know that the treachery of enemies is very cunning and hidden in appearance? I fear that you, seeing my death, will become frightened and become a laughingstock for the enemy. No, child! Let me be likened to Abraham offer-

ing Isaac in sacrifice. Go before me and first receive the crown of martyrdom. I believe that St. Michael with the other Angels, Abel with the prophets, Peter with the Apostles, and Daniel with the confessors have come out to meet you, waiting to receive you and to lead you with solemn songs to the throne of Christ our Savior."

St. Astion said:

"Let it be, holy father, the will of the Lord and yours!"

After this he signed himself with the sign of the Cross and said:

"You, O Lord, are my defender! Into Thy hands I commend my spirit!"

With these words he bowed his head under the sword and died.[18] St. Epictetus, falling upon the body of his disciple, begged the executioners to kill him in that position. And so he died from a sword-blow for Christ. All the pagans and Christians present saw that their honorable bodies began to shine as if with rays of the sun, and a wondrous fragrance spread there.

Late in the evening, the aforementioned Vigilantius, with his household and the other Christians, secretly took the bodies of the martyrs and, wrapping them in clean shrouds and anointing them with aromatics, buried them with honor in a chosen place.

That same night an evil demon entered the governor Latronianus, and the governor, rising early in the morning and, as was his custom, appearing in the hall where affairs of state were settled, began to speak all kinds of absurdities like a madman; then, seizing a sword, he rushed upon those present with him and began to hack at them and inflict wounds upon them. They, seeing him in such a frenzy, seized him, took the sword out of his hands and began to beat him; then they bound his hands and feet and locked him in a small room, where, two days later, he died a terrible death, being strangled by the demon.

After the death of the holy martyrs, Astion's parents by water drew near the city of Almiris. At this time St. Astion appeared to Vigilantius and said:

"My father and my mother are now coming here to seek me. Show me your love, brother: go out to the wharf, take them into your house,

comfort and console them, for they have been worn down by great sorrow on account of me. Besides this, teach them the saving faith and open before them the greatness of the true God."

Vigilantius at once went to the wharf and there saw a ship moored to the shore, from which Astion's parents were disembarking. They were asking the people they met there whether anyone had seen a young man named Astion. Vigilantius approached them and said:

"I have seen him and am well acquainted with him. Come first to my house, rest in my home, and I will tell you about him."

With great joy Astion's parents went with Vigilantius, who in every way took care to comfort them. And when they begged him to tell them about their son, Vigilantius told them that Astion had recently been in this city and only a few days before had left it with a venerable elder for a very distant country, having been summoned with honor by the most glorious king to take part in his glorious reign. Thus little by little Vigilantius opened before them the teaching about another, eternal life, about the heavenly abodes, about the Kingdom of Heaven and the Immortal King, Christ the Lord, about the Angels and the choirs of saints who reign together with Christ, among whom their son Astion was now also numbered. Astion's parents, hearing words they had never heard before, were amazed, were moved to tenderness, and felt in their hearts a certain spiritual joy, and they desired even more strongly to know where their beloved son had gone. Vigilantius then led them first to the cell of the holy martyrs and showed them the holy cross and the Gospel that had been left after them; then he began to converse with them about the evangelical teaching and turned them to faith in Christ. After this he told them about the sufferings of the holy martyrs Epictetus and Astion, how they had laid down their lives for Christ, and he led them to the place where the bodies of the saints had been buried. When they had wept there for no small time, he commanded them to stand in prayer from evening and to pray the whole night together with him to Christ God. Midnight had already passed, and the dawn was beginning to shine, when suddenly a bright light like lightning flashed be-

18. The death of the holy Astion (and also of Epictetus) took place around 290.

fore them and a wondrous fragrance was felt in the air: this was the holy martyrs appearing before them in ineffable beauty. St. Astion, embracing his mother, kissed her lovingly, saying:

"It is well that you have come here, disciple of Christ and my mother, Marcellina!" (such was her name).

Also St. Epictetus, embracing the head of Astion's father, kissed him, saying:

"Rejoice in the Lord, beloved brother Alexander (such was his name)! You have been granted to be counted among the number of the faithful and have proved worthy of eternal blessedness."

Then both said to Vigilantius:

"Rejoice also, beloved brother, for the word of Scripture has been fulfilled in you: 'He who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins' (Jas. 5:20)."

They said many other consoling things to them, and all of it was full of spiritual sweetness; and then after some time they became invisible. Astion's parents were filled with great joy from the vision they had had and from the sweet conversation with the saints, and they poured out their feelings in prayer and gave thanks to God that they had been granted to see in heavenly glory the son whom they had so long sought with sorrow in their hearts.

At that time there was a Christian bishop, Evangelus, in the Scythian land. During the persecution he had been hiding, but, learning of the destruction of the governor Latronianus, he now came without fear into the city of Almiris to visit and strengthen the Christians in the faith. To this hierarch Vigilantius brought Astion's parents and told him in detail everything about them and about the holy martyrs. The bishop, having offered glorification to the holy martyrs, received with joy Astion's parents, who had turned to Christ, and baptized them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. After this Alexander and Marcellina remained for quite a long time at the tomb of the martyrs, in fasting and prayer; then they returned home and, having sold all their large property, distributed the money to the poor, keeping only a little for their sustenance. Thus they led a God-pleasing life until their death.

Thus the holy Venerable Martyrs Epictetus, presbyter and monk, and Astion were adorned in heaven with the crown of martyrdom. When Alexander and Marcellina, who had departed from the earth, joined them, they too were granted to share in the blessedness of the saints, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit belong honor and glory, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Cyriaca

Страдание святой мученицы Кириакии

In the reign of the Emperor Diocletian[19] a certain Christian named Dorotheus and his wife Eusebia, being childless, prayed to God that He would grant them children, promising to dedicate to Him whatever child should be born to them. By their prayer, on a certain Sunday a female infant was born to them, whom they named Cyriaca[20] and baptized with holy Baptism. Raising their daughter in Christian teaching and good admonition, they kept her in purity, so that in accordance with their intention they might give her to the service of God. At this time a persecution was raised against the Christians[21], and the pious parents together with their daughter were delivered up to the Emperor Diocletian, who, having conducted their trial, first ordered them to be beaten for a long time, and then sent Dorotheus and Eusebia to the governor Justus in the land of Mytilene[22], and Cyriaca to Nicomedia[23] to the Caesar Maximian[24]. The latter, having questioned the saint and seeing that she was firm and unshaken in the faith, ordered her to be laid on the ground and beaten mercilessly for a long

19. Diocletian governed the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.

20. Cyriaca in Greek means "of the Lord," belonging to the Lord.

21. This persecution began in 303. It was instigated by Diocletian's co-ruler, the Caesar Galerius, who persuaded Diocletian to issue a general law against the Christians. The law prescribed destroying Christian churches, burning the books of Holy Scripture, and depriving Christians of all civil rights and offices. The persecution under Diocletian was distinguished, first, by the cruelty of its tortures, and second, by the large number of martyrs put to death, from 10 to 1000 and more at a time in a single day.

22. The "Mytilene land" here means the island of Lesbos, located in the Aegean Sea near the western Mysian coast of Asia Minor, later named after its main city, Mytilene.

time. During this torture Cyriaca gave herself to prayer, and this threw Maximian into terrible anger, but the holy martyr said to him:

"Do not deceive yourself, Maximian! You will never force me to submit to your will, for God helps me."

After this Maximian sent the holy Cyriaca to the governor of Bithynia, Hilarion, who, having questioned her, ordered her brought into an idol temple; but the saint prayed, and by her prayer a strong earthquake occurred, and all the idols that were in the temple fell to the ground and crumbled to dust; a whirlwind burst into the temple and raised this dust into the air, and then a fiery lightning flashed and scorched the face of the governor Hilarion, after which he, falling from his seat, died on the spot. Then another prince of the region, co-ruler with the first, came, and upon learning of all that had happened, condemned Cyriaca to be burned with fire. By his command a large pan was heated, and the saint was thrown onto it. Here, lifting up her hands in prayer, she prayed for a long time, and at this moment, under a clear summer sky, a cloud descended from heaven and quenched the whole heat of the fire, so that Cyriaca remained completely unharmed. After this the governor ordered the holy Cyriaca brought to the place of judgment and wild beasts released upon her, but here too she remained unharmed, for the beasts, instead of rushing upon her, lay at her feet. Seeing this, many of the pagans present believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, and the saint was cast into prison. Some time after this the governor came to the place of judgment and, seating himself on his judgment seat, condemned her to death. The holy Cyriaca asked him for permission to pray; she prayed for a long time, and having given instruction to the Christians who accompanied her, she bowed to the ground and died peacefully. When the soldiers came to carry out the

23. Nicomedia was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, the residence of the Emperor Diocletian, a splendid city in the region of Bithynia on the shore of the Propontis (Sea of Marmara) in the northeastern part of Asia Minor.

24. The time of the death of the holy martyr Cyriaca, as some believe, was 303; but according to the opinion of Bishop Philaret (Lives of the Saints, July, p. 60) she died in 289. Yet, taking into account that the judge of St. Cyriaca was Maximian Galerius and that her sufferings took place in Nicomedia, it is more likely to think that she died in 303, at the very beginning of the persecution raised by Diocletian.

sentence of the court, they found her already dead and were amazed at this. At that time a voice was heard from heaven, saying to them:

"Brethren! Go and tell of all the great works of God."

The soldiers then returned, glorifying God.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day is the repose of the Venerable Euphrosyne, in the world Eudocia, Grand Princess of Moscow, in the year 1407.



THE EIGHTH DAY OF JULY

July 8

8 июля

New Calendar July 8 · Old Calendar July 21 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Great Martyr Procopius

Страдание святого великомученика Прокопия

The holy city of Jerusalem reared the glorious Great Martyr Procopius, who by his parents was named not Procopius but Neanias; the name Procopius he received afterwards, from Christ the Lord Himself, at his baptism, as will be seen from what follows. Likewise, at that time Jerusalem was called by the impious pagans not Jerusalem but Aelia. After the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus[1], son of Vespasian[2], when a good many years had passed, the Roman emperor Hadrian[3], who at his birth had been given the name Aelius, desiring to rebuild the city on the site of the ruined Jerusalem, named it after himself, Aelia, and forbade that this Aelia be called Jerusalem. He was exceedingly hostile to Christianity and sought not only to wipe the most holy name of Christ from the earth, but wished that even the very place where Christ suffered be consigned to complete oblivion. For this reason he named Jerusalem Aelia.

In that city there lived a certain glorious man of senatorial family, by name Christopher. He himself was a Christian, but his wife, Theodosia, remained in paganism. Of them was born Neanias, after whose birth Christopher shortly departed to the Lord.

Theodosia, remaining a widow, reared the youth in the pagan faith and taught him to serve idols, since she herself was a zealous servant of demons. The youth was distinguished by quickness of understanding,

1. Emperor Titus reigned from A.D. 79 to A.D. 81.
2. Vespasian governed the Roman Empire from A.D. 70 to A.D. 79.
3. Hadrian reigned from A.D. 117 to A.D. 138.

and, being given by his mother to Hellenic teachers, he soon completed all the secular sciences.

When he reached youthful age and was already passing into manhood, his mother wished to give him to the emperor for military service. At this time the impious Roman emperor Diocletian[4] arrived at Antioch of Syria, on the river Orontes. Theodosia, learning of this, came with her son to Antioch and gave him into the emperor's service. The emperor, seeing the youth handsome and tall of stature, and moreover learning of the education he had received, greatly loved him and ordered him to remain in the imperial palace near himself, together with others like him. Soon afterwards the emperor made him a voivode and sent him with an army to the Egyptian city of Alexandria[5], to pursue, torment and slaughter Christians there, and to seize their property for the imperial treasury. Neanias said to the emperor:

"I have heard of those people, sovereign, that they honor some Son of God named Christ, and that they are very steadfast of spirit, unyielding and bold, ready to stand for their faith to the end. They would sooner die than abandon their Christ, and by no means will they offer sacrifice to our gods. Therefore I think we shall not succeed in turning them to our faith."

Then the emperor was enraged beyond measure and began to revile Christ the Savior thus:

"Their God, as they themselves affirm, had no wife. How then could He beget a Son? And He in whom the Christians believe was born of a woman, and was condemned to death by the Jewish people as a criminal, was beaten, crowned with thorns, mocked, crucified on a cross, given vinegar and gall to drink, and died in terrible sufferings. If He was God, why did He not save Himself from the hands of the Jews? And if He did not help Himself in trouble, can He lend aid to anyone else?"

Such and worse blasphemies did the son of perdition utter! "For the word of the cross," as the divine Paul writes, "is to them that perish

4. Diocletian ruled from A.D. 284 to A.D. 305.

5. Alexandria – a city famed in antiquity, founded by the emperor Alexander the Macedonian (336 B.C. – 323 B.C.) in Egypt, on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea; in the pre-Christian era it was renowned as a center of learning and commerce; from the beginning of the fourth century it became one of the most important centers of Christian life and the residence of the patriarch.

foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). Neanias, however, persuaded by the emperor's words, set out with two detachments of soldiers on the road indicated to him. But since at that time the sun burned exceedingly hot, and the soldiers and their horses were exhausted by the heat, they had to travel by night and rest by day. When they passed by the Syrian city of Apamea[6], at the third hour of the night an earthquake occurred, lightning flashed, and loud thunder rolled, so that all the soldiers were as though dead from fear. The voivode then heard a voice from heaven saying to him:

"Neanias! Are you too going against Me?"

Neanias said:

"Who are You, Lord? I cannot recognize You!"

As soon as he said this, a cross gleaming like crystal appeared in the air, and from the cross a voice was heard:

"I am Jesus crucified, the Son of God!"

Trembling, Neanias said:

"The emperor told me that the God whom the Christians honor had no wife; how then are You the Son of God? And if You truly are the Son of God, how did the Jews dare to mock You, crucify You and put You to death?"

And the voice from the cross answered him:

"I suffered this for men of My own will, to deliver sinners from the power of the devil, to seek out the lost and to quicken the dead. And if I were not the Son of God, how would I, after death, have remained alive and spoken with you?"

After this the cross rose into heaven, and immediately a voice came from heaven:

"By this sign which you have seen, conquer your enemies, and My peace shall be with you!"

Thus Neanias, as once Saul[7], through the Lord's appearance to him on the road, from a persecutor became a chosen vessel of the Lord Jesus Christ; and from that wondrous vision and from the sweet converse

6. The city of Apamea was situated in the south-western part of Syria, on the river Orontes.

7. The account of the conversion of Saul (afterwards the great Apostle Paul) may be read in Acts 9:1–20. – The memory of the holy Apostle Paul is celebrated on June 29.

with the Lord Himself he felt in his heart unspeakable joy and spiritual gladness.

After this Neanias with his army came to Scythopolis[8], and calling to him a goldsmith he ordered him to make a cross like the one he had seen at night. The craftsman refused, saying:

"I cannot do this, for it is a sign for the Galileans called Christians. If the emperor learns of it, I shall perish a dreadful death."

Neanias demanded that he make the cross secretly, swearing to him that he would tell neither the emperor nor anyone else of it. Then the goldsmith, taking from the voivode enough gold and silver for the purpose, secretly made a cross of the form and size the voivode had indicated. As soon as the cross was made, there suddenly appeared upon it images of three persons, painted by an invisible hand, with a Hebrew inscription: on the upper part, Emmanuel[9], and on the two sides, Michael and Gabriel[10]. Seeing this, the craftsman was perplexed as to who had painted it, for in the room there was no one but himself. He wished to erase the image with a special tool, but could not do so, for his hand would not move and was as if dried up. The voivode, seeing the cross, asked the craftsman whose faces these were and why they had been drawn. The craftsman assured him with an oath:

"When I finished the work, these faces appeared of themselves, and I do not know whose they are. I wished to wipe them away, but I could not, my hand was numbed."

Then Neanias understood that some divine power was contained in the cross; he bowed down to it, kissed it, and, wrapping it in purple cloth, kept it with himself, guarding it with reverence. Now he armed himself not against the Christians but against the barbarians, and conquered them by the power of Christ, subduing their lands. He even went out to battle against the invisible enemy, the devil, and vanquished him by his manly sufferings undertaken for Christ.

His suffering began thus. When he was in his city of Jerusalem, at that time called Aelia, the citizens asked him to avenge them on the

8. The city of Scythopolis was situated in Asia Minor.
9. Emmanuel, in Hebrew, means "God with us." This name was applied by the holy Prophet Isaiah to the Lord Jesus Christ (Is. 7:14).

Agarenes[11] for the injuries they inflicted. These Agarenes attacked that land and, roving about the city, seized those who happened to be outside it, and most of all they oppressed the women, whom they took as wives. The same they did in the surrounding villages. The valiant warrior of Christ, armed with the power of the holy Cross, boldly went out with his army and pursued the Agarenes, praying in his heart thus:

"Help me, my hope, O Christ God!"

And a voice came to him from heaven:

"Hope, Neanias, for I, the Lord your God, am with you!"

Hearing this voice, the voivode became still bolder and inflicted a severe defeat on the enemies, and took from them all the captives; in that battle six thousand Agarenes perished, while of Neanias' soldiers not one was either wounded or slain. And Neanias sent messengers ahead to his mother with the news of victory over the enemies, which greatly gladdened her. She met him joyfully when he returned to the city in triumph with the spoils, and when he entered the house she said to him:

"O dear child of mine! When you went out to battle, I took a censer and incense, went to the gods and prayed to them for you, that they would help you. And now you have, with their help, proved victorious! Therefore go in and give thanks to them, that they may help you also in time to come."

Neanias answered her:

"You did well, mother, to pray for me, but my God helped me."

Then the mother said:

"Do not speak, child, of one God, lest the other gods be angered and turn away from you."

But Neanias said to her:

"Do not be deceived, mother, by idolatrous polytheism. How could they render me any help, being themselves lifeless? But if they did help me, let us ask them—let them tell us of it, and then we shall be convinced of their power."

10. Michael and Gabriel – Archangels.

11. Agarenes – Muslims, Arabs, so called after Hagar, the concubine of Abraham, mother of Ishmael, from whom the tribe of the Arabs descended.

Having said this, he entered his mother's bedchamber, where there were golden and silver idols, and said, addressing them:

"I speak to you, imaginary gods; tell us: who helped me in the battle?"

But the idols were silent, and how could they answer, being mute? Then Neanias said to his mother:

"There, mother, you see what your gods are. If they cannot say even a single word, how can they help anyone?"

But the mother said:

"The gods do not answer you because you ask them with mockery."

But Neanias said:

"Then you ask them yourself—they ought to answer you, as their zealous servant."

She, approaching them with great reverence and kneeling, said:

"O almighty gods! Great Zeus[12] and you, Queen Hera[13], and Poseidon, lord of the sea, and sun-like Apollo[14], and you, Pallas[15], protectress of the city, and all the other gods! I beseech you, tell us: was it you who helped your servant, my son, in the battle?"

But there was no answer from them.

Then the blessed Neanias, holding the cross in his hand and filled with divine zeal, took off his outer garment, pushed his mother away from the idols, and began to smash them, striking them against the ground and trampling them underfoot. Then, breaking them into pieces, he distributed the gold and silver to the poor. His mother, seeing this, was exceedingly angry, and forgetting her natural love for her son, hurried to Antioch to the emperor Diocletian and, in tears, complained to him of her son, who had broken her gods and had not shown her the honor due to her, having kept her away from the gods. The emperor

12. Zeus – the supreme god of the ancient Greek religion, regarded as the progenitor of the other gods and of men.
13. Hera – the eldest daughter of Cronus and Rhea, one of the principal figures of ancient Greek mythology. She was considered the consort of Zeus and queen of the gods.
14. Apollo, from the Greek – "destroyer." This god was depicted by the Greeks usually with a bow, quiver and arrows, as the enemy and victor of the dark powers.
15. Pallas or Athena was regarded by the ancient Greeks as a goddess, patroness of marriages and of domestic well-being.

consoled her, giving her hope that either by flattery or by threats they could turn her son back to the former faith in the gods.

"If, however," said the emperor, "he does not turn back, he will perish a cruel death for his crimes, and you may choose whomever you wish from my retinue to be your son."

And immediately the emperor wrote to the governor of Palestine, Justus, who was a native of Italy, a cruel man, that in the presence of nobles from the surrounding cities he should admonish the voivode Neanias, son of Theodosia, who had turned to the Christian faith, with exhortations, now friendly and now stern, to return to the gods; and if he would not obey, he ordered that he be tortured without mercy. This letter contained blasphemies against Christ.

The governor Justus, having received the imperial decree, gathered men chosen from the cities of Palestine and himself went to Aelia to the voivode, to whom, after greeting him, he handed the imperial letter. The voivode, however, when he read the letter and the blasphemies written in it against our Lord, could not endure it, and tearing the letter into small pieces, he threw them into the air, saying:

"I am a Christian; you carry out what has been commanded you."

Then the governor said:

"I fear the emperor, and I take counsel with you as a friend and pity you! I do not know what to think! But listen to me and to these honorable men, and in our presence offer sacrifice to the gods. If, however, you do not do this, I shall have to carry out the order against my will."

Then Neanias said to the governor:

"You did mention sacrifice in connection with the matter: behold, I offer myself as a sacrifice to Christ, my God."

With these words he took off the belt given to him by his rank and threw it into the governor's face, renouncing the imperial service so that he might be a soldier of the King of heaven, and exposing the pagan unbelief. The governor and the men who had come with him, in anger, seized him and led him to Caesarea in Palestine[16], which was called Philippi, also Sebaste Paneas, in which once had been set up an image

16. This Caesarea was situated at the source of the Jordan. It should be distinguished from another Caesarea, also in Palestine, but situated on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

representing Christ, made at the request of the woman with the issue of blood who had been healed by touching the garment of the Lord[17]. There the governor, seated in a place open to the whole people, set Neanias for interrogation. Seeing him, the townspeople, whose minds were darkened by pagan impiety, as if drunk or demon-possessed, began to shout to the governor:

"This is the enemy and destroyer of our gods, one who scorns the emperor's commands!"

The governor, already a very savage man himself, became even more cruel at the cries of the crowd. At once he ordered Neanias to be stripped, hung up at the place of torture, and then his body to be scraped with iron claws. As a result, pieces of flesh fell from Neanias' body, and his bare bones became visible. Some of the spectators, seeing such sufferings, grieved over the martyr's youth and wept for him. The martyr, seeing their tears, said to them:

"Do not weep for me, but for the perdition of your souls; for one should mourn for him who is destined to suffer endlessly in hell."

Then, lifting his eyes to heaven, he prayed thus:

"O God! Strengthen me, Thy servant, to the shame of the enemy and to the glory of Thy most holy name!"

When the executioners grew weary, the martyr was taken down from the torture, by order of the governor, and thrown into prison. The jailer, named Terentius, remembering a kindness once shown to him by Neanias, took pity on him, spread hay beneath him and covered him with a cloth, and the martyr lay in the prison barely alive.

At midnight an earthquake began in the city: this was God coming with His Angels to visit His servant. In the prison an extraordinary light shone, the prison doors opened, and the chains fell from all the prisoners there. Then two Angels appeared in the form of beautiful youths and said to the martyr:

"Look upon us."

The martyr, turning his gaze to them, said:

"Who are you?"

17. Mt. 9:20–22.

They answered:

"We are Angels sent to you from the Lord."

The martyr then said to them:

"If you are Angels of the Lord, then bow before the Lord in my presence and cross yourselves, that I may believe you."

The Angels at once fulfilled his wish and said:

"Believe, then, that the Lord has sent us to you."

The martyr said:

"I know that when the three youths were cast into the Babylonian furnace, an Angel[18] was sent to them from the Lord to cool the heat of the fire. But what have I done? Or am I cast into the fire, that I am deemed worthy of an Angelic visit?"

While the martyr was speaking these words in humility, suddenly the Lord Jesus Christ Himself appeared to him in ineffable glory, and touching the martyr, healed him of his wounds and set him on his feet, fully well. Then He baptized him with water and said:

"Now you shall no longer be called Neanias, but Procopius[19]. Take courage and be strong, for you shall accomplish great deeds and bring a great flock to My Father."

Procopius, rejoicing and trembling, fell to the ground, worshipped the Lord, and prayed that He would strengthen him in his sufferings, so that he would not fear the cruel tortures. The Lord said to him:

"Fear not, for I am with you!"

Having said this, He ascended into heaven.

From the day the Lord appeared to him, the holy Procopius had in his heart an unspeakable spiritual joy and was filled with heavenly rapture. And his body became so healthy that not a trace of the former wounds remained upon it. He "trusted" in the Lord, and "He helped" him, "and his heart rejoiced" ("and his flesh flourished") (Ps. 27:7).

On the day after this apparition, early in the morning, the governor sent one of the soldiers to the prison to learn whether the martyr was alive. He thought that he had already died from the cruel torments of the day before. The jailer Terentius told the soldier that he had not

18. Dan. 3:1–100

19. Procopius – from the Greek, "prospering."

slept all night, and that at midnight something extraordinarily terrifying had taken place in the prison: namely, an earthquake had occurred, a wondrous light had shone, the doors had opened, the chains had fallen from the prisoners, and certain men shining with an extraordinary light had conversed with Neanias. The soldier, bending down to the prison, shouted to the martyr:

"Are you alive, Neanias?"

The saint answered:

"Alive and well, by the grace of my God."

The soldier said:

"I cannot see you."

The saint answered:

"Everyone who flees from the light of God and serves demons is blind and walks in darkness, not knowing where he is going."

The soldier then went to the governor and reported what he had heard. The governor then sat down in the judgment seat and again summoned Christ's martyr for interrogation. Everyone gazed at him and saw his bright face and his healthy and white body, as if it had never borne wounds. Many of those present at the trial exclaimed in amazement:

"The God of Neanias! Help us!"

The governor, rising from his judicial seat and making a sign to the people for silence, cried out in a loud voice:

"Brethren! Why do you marvel at seeing Neanias healthy? The gods have had mercy on him and healed their servant."

The saint then said to him:

"You have spoken well that I was healed by the mercy of God; but if you suppose that this miraculous healing was accomplished by the power of your gods, let us go to their temple, that we may learn which god it was that healed me."

The governor, thinking that the martyr wished to worship the gods, was very glad and ordered the way from the court to the pagan shrine to be strewn with flowers and fine coverings set along the road. A herald from an elevated place cried out:

"Neanias, son of the noblewoman Theodosia, has repented, turned to the gods, and is going to offer them sacrifice."

The pagans, hearing this, rejoiced; those who secretly confessed Christ grieved. A multitude of people, with their wives and children, gathered to watch the spectacle.

The governor walked solemnly with the holy Procopius and all the noblemen to the pagan temple. Having entered there, the saint secretly prayed to Christ God, made the sign of the cross in the air before the idols, and said:

"I speak to you, unclean idols: fear the name of my God and the power of the holy Cross: depart from your places and be broken, dissolve like water!"

And at once all the idols fell, and from their fall there arose a great noise. They were shattered into pieces, and, what is even more wondrous, all the material of which they had been made turned, by God's command, into plain water, and the whole shrine was filled with water, which poured out in a torrent through the doors of the shrine.

This miracle greatly astonished everyone, and many cried out:

"The Christian God! Help us!"

The governor, astonished at what had happened, did not know what to do in his terror; but afterward, coming to himself, he ordered the martyr to be led back to the prison, and himself went home in great sorrow.

Late in the evening, two companies of soldiers came to the prison where the saint was confined, together with their two commanders, Nicostratus and Antiochus, and they begged the saint to enroll them in the host of Christ, the Heavenly King. Saint Procopius then asked the jailer, Terentius, to allow him to leave the prison for a short while. The jailer consented, knowing well that one who himself desires to suffer for Christ will not run away. Once at liberty, the saint led those soldiers to Leontius, the bishop of that city, who was hiding in a certain place out of fear of persecution. Finding him, Procopius asked him to baptize the soldiers, and he himself returned again to the prison. That same night the bishop conducted the catechumenal instruction[4483] over those companies of soldiers, baptized them, and admitted them to the

Holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. When they afterwards came to the prison, the holy martyr taught them the truths of the holy faith and the confession of the name of Jesus Christ, and so strengthened them that they could endure their sufferings fearlessly and bravely.

When day came and the governor, as was his custom, went to the place where public trials were held, those soldiers appeared before him. They loudly glorified Christ, declaring themselves to be Christians and expressing their readiness to go to suffering and death for Christ. The governor, seeing so many soldiers boldly going to death for Christ, was struck with astonishment and dread, and for a long time he tried to persuade them to renounce Christ and turn again to the gods. When he saw that they remained steadfast, he sentenced them to death by the sword. They were led out of the city to the place of execution, where a large number of executioners had been assembled to carry out the sentence. Saint Procopius was also brought there, in chains, so that by the sight of such a great number of soldiers being executed he might be terrified. But he, looking upon their exploit, rejoiced in spirit and prayed to Christ God for them, that He would strengthen them to the end and receive their souls into His Heavenly Kingdom. Then the executioners, together with other impious soldiers, surrounded the two companies of those who had believed in Christ and hacked them down with their swords; both commanders of those companies, Nicostratus and Antiochus, also perished. Thus the new soldiers of Christ the King, having laid down their lives for Him, passed in triumph from earth to heaven. A certain distinguished benefactor named Eulalius, by night, with a multitude of believers, gathered the bodies of the martyrs and committed them to burial; Saint Procopius, meanwhile, remained in chains.

While the martyr of Christ was in prison, twelve noble women came to him and said through the little window to the saint:

"We are the handmaids of Christ!"

This was reported to the governor, and the governor at once ordered that they be put in prison. Entering it, they said joyfully:

"Receive us, O Lord, into Thy heavenly chamber!"

Once inside the prison, they bowed to Saint Procopius, who began to teach them the holy faith, the divine love for Christ, and warm prayer to God.

Some time later the governor, seated in his customary place for conducting trials, ordered those honorable women to be brought from the prison and presented to him for judgment. To the place of interrogation there also came the mother of Procopius, Theodosia, wishing to see how those women would conduct themselves under questioning. When they were brought before the tribunal, the governor said to them:

"Will you agree to offer sacrifice to the gods, so as to be held in honor by us, or, remaining in your obstinacy, will you choose to expose yourselves to a cruel death?"

The holy women answered:

"Let the honor you promise us destroy you yourself, for we are the handmaids of the crucified Christ, who has led us out of perdition. He is our honor and our glory!"

The enraged governor ordered each of these women to be stretched upon the ground and beaten mercilessly with rods. Then they were hung up naked at the place of torment, and their ribs were burned with fire, while they prayed to Christ God, calling upon Him for help. Afterwards the governor ordered their breasts to be cut off, saying:

"Will the Crucified, in whom you hope, help you?"

The women answered:

"He has already helped us, as you yourself see, O man-hating tormentor! Behold, we women are overcoming you, a powerful governor, by disregarding the torments you appoint for us."

The tormentor was kindled to even greater anger and ordered their loins to be burned with iron heated red-hot. He said:

"Do you feel how the fire burns, or not?"

The holy women answered:

"You will feel the pain of fire when you are cast into the unquenchable fire of hell. But with us here stands our Helper, the Lord, whom you do not see, as the blind do not see the sun."

While the holy women suffered thus, Theodosia, the mother of Saint Procopius, standing in the midst of the people and beholding the

courage and endurance of those women, wept bitterly. Then, when the light of true knowledge shone in her soul, she was filled with zeal for God and, approaching the governor, cried out:

"I too am a servant of the crucified Christ God!"

This turning of hers came about through the prayers of the holy great martyr Procopius, who had prayed to God for it all the time.

The governor, all who stood around him, and the whole people, hearing how the noble Theodosia, mother of Neanias, boldly confessed Christ, were exceedingly astonished at the change that had come over her, that she could disregard her high station, her wealth and her nobility, and fearlessly go forward to torments. The governor said to her:

"Lady Theodosia! Who has beguiled you into forsaking the gods of your fathers and speaking such words?"

She answered:

"I do not at all feel beguiled or deceived. Formerly I was indeed in error, being beguiled by demons, when, instead of the true God who created heaven and earth, I bowed down to loathsome idols, the works of human hands."

The governor, pointing his finger at the women being tortured, said to Theodosia:

"Have these deceivers, it seems, beguiled you?"

She answered:

"They have not beguiled me, but by their sufferings they have taught me to know the truth. For how could they have remained steadfast in such torments, had not He who strengthens them been the true God? Therefore they are not the deceivers; rather you yourself are the deceiver, leading men into darkness and error and drawing them to perdition!"

The governor said:

"Come to your senses, Theodosia, and ask the gods for forgiveness. And we will pray to them on your behalf, that they may forgive you this sin."

She answered:

"I ask forgiveness of the crucified Christ for my former foolishness and for the evil deeds I have done."

The enraged governor ordered her to be put in prison together with those women who had undergone torture.

When Theodosia entered the prison, her son, Saint Procopius, saw her and rejoiced greatly, for he already knew in spirit of her conversion to Christ, and he said to her joyfully:

"Lady, my mother! Why have you come here, and for what reason have you forsaken your gods?"

She said to him:

"My dear child! Now I know the truth. I looked upon the holy women sufferers and reflected: how could it be possible for weak women to bear such grievous tortures, had they not been strengthened by that Christ for whom they suffer? And if Christ were not almighty God, how could He strengthen those who suffer for Him? As I reflected thus, my heart was filled with deep tenderness, and a certain ray shone in my mind. I understood the nothingness of the gods, and I believed that the true God is one, the God whom you confess, and the holy women, and the other martyrs."

Then Saint Procopius said to her:

"Blessed are you, Lady, my mother, for you have been granted from God such enlightenment, and because you have come here, into this prison!"

And the holy Theodosia remained in the prison, ministering to the holy women. With clean linen she wiped their bloody wounds and applied healing plasters to their sores, for she had been trained in the healing art. And Saint Procopius taught his mother the holy faith. That same night he took her and led her to the bishop Leontius, who baptized her in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Then he returned again to the prison, rejoicing and glorifying God for her enlightenment.

After this the holy women, together with Theodosia, were brought out of the prison and presented at the impious tribunal. The governor said to Theodosia:

"Know, noble woman, that I spare you and do not wish to deliver you to shame and torment. Come to your senses, then, and call upon the

merciful gods, that you may obtain from them forgiveness, and from us greater honor!"

The saint answered:

"Mad and senseless man! Are you not ashamed to call carved idols gods? If it is a great dignity for a man, to the extent of his powers, to become like God by good deeds, then you too ought to become like your gods, the idols, that is, to be blind, deaf, dumb, moving neither hands nor feet, which is what your gods are."

At these words the governor was enraged and ordered her to be struck on the mouth, then stretched upon the ground and subjected to blows with rods, and afterwards her body was scraped with iron claws. The other holy women, beholding her sufferings, prayed to God for her, that He would strengthen her, and they sang the following verses from the psalm, which Saint Procopius had taught them:

"Come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us shout aloud to the rock of our salvation" (Ps. 94:1); "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 45:2).

The governor, hearing this, ordered the jaws of the holy women to be crushed with pewter rods, and then the martyrs, together with the holy Theodosia, to be bound together with a single iron chain, led out of the city, and put to death by the sword.

The women went to their deaths with gladness and joy, as to a marriage feast; they laid down their lives for Christ God and were deemed worthy of the heavenly bridal chamber.

After their death, St. Procopius was again brought to trial, and the governor said to the martyr, roaring like a lion:

“Are you satisfied, impious man, with the destruction of so many souls?”

The saint replied:

“I did not destroy them, but delivered them from destruction and brought them from death to life.”

Then the governor ordered him to be beaten on the mouth with an iron gauntlet and his face torn with iron claws, so that blood flowed from him, staining the ground. Afterward they beat the martyr on the

neck with leaden rods, but despite such tortures he stood unmoving, like a pillar.

After this the governor ordered the martyr to be thrown into prison and went home in vexation: he was ashamed and angered that he had not been able to overcome Christ's Passion-bearer. In his grief he spoke not a single word to anyone that day; afterward he fell ill with a fever, took to his bed, and died that same night, surrendering his soul to the demons whom he had served with such zeal.

The preaching of Christ, however, spread more and more, and every day many men and women joined the Christian faith, through the teaching and miracles of St. Procopius. While he was in prison, many brought the sick to him, and he healed them by the grace of Christ and drove unclean spirits from people; through this, the pagans turned to the true Christian faith.

After the death of the governor Justus, another governor, named Flavian, arrived in Palestine from the Emperor Diocletian. He too was a native of Italy, but even more savage than the first. Having arrived in Caesarea of Palestine and learned of the martyr Procopius, he immediately summoned him to trial and questioned him about his name, lineage, and faith. Uttering blasphemies against Christ our God, this impious man said to the martyr:

"I am amazed that you Christians, acknowledging that your God was born of a woman and crucified by men, worship Him. Is this not madness?"

Christ's martyr replied:

"If you are willing to hear me patiently, governor, I shall show you that your own books bear witness to our God. First of all, I shall say that there is one true God, immutable by nature, impassible, pre-eternal, and eternal; but those many beings whom you call gods are no gods: they are subject to suffering and change, appeared at a certain time, and, as may be said of some of them, have already ended their wretched existence. Are you not acquainted with your Hermes[20], surnamed Trismegistus, that is, thrice-great, and also with Socrates[21], who affirm

20. Hermes Trismegistus – a semi-mythical figure of ancient Greek history.
21. Socrates – the most famous ancient Greek philosopher, who lived in the fifth century B.C.

that God is one and not many gods? First, hear what Hermes writes to the physician Asclepiades[22]: 'The Lord and Creator of all—He whom we call God—made this visible and sensible world. And since the first and only world created by Him seemed to Him beautiful and full of every good thing, He delighted in it and loved it as His own offspring.' Consider, then, governor: your Hermes acknowledges the existence of one God alone, and not many! And if there were many gods, there would not be one pre-eternal Divine nature, but many natures, appearing at appointed times. For you say that some of the gods existed earlier, and others appeared later; one among you is the god of heaven, another the god of the sea, and, in general, all visible things have their own guardian gods. Was it not for denying many gods that your Socrates was sentenced by the Athenians to drink poison? And these immortal gods of yours—above all Zeus, father of the gods, a parricide and husband to his own sister by the same mother—did he not live in Crete[23]? Do they not still show his tomb there? And was not your Poseidon a leader of robbers, a plunderer and destroyer? Is not his tomb in Calabria[24]? How, then, do you call your gods immortal, when they died like ordinary men, when their tombs are shown, and when all their evil deeds are well known to Roman and Greek writers? Such are your gods, whom not only Christians but even their own worshippers expose and revile! And if you have said of Christ the Savior, our God, that He was born of a woman and afterward crucified, then hear of the mysterious revelations concerning Him found in your own books. For your prophetess, called the Sibyl[25]—the very one whose books the Roman

22. Asclepiades – a famous ancient Greek physician.

23. The island of Crete (or Candia) is situated in the central part of the Mediterranean Sea, south of the Aegean Sea.

24. Calabria – a wild mountainous country situated in the south-western part of Italy.

25. The Sibyls of ancient Greece were wandering prophetesses who offered to anyone who wished to foretell the future and predict one's fate. The activity of the Sibyls flourished especially in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., the time of a strong cultural flowering of Greece. Greek historians mention the Erythraean, Phrygian, Hellespontine and other Sibyls. The most information exists about the Cumaean Sibyl, who, according to the tradition of the ancient Greeks, lived a thousand years and was a contemporary of Tarquin the Proud (who lived six centuries B.C.). It is this very Sibyl that is meant in the Life. According to the ancient Greek tradition, the Cumaean Sibyl offered Tarquin to buy her books, nine in number. Three of them were bought by the king and placed as sacred books in the Capitoline temple.

king Tarquinius[26] bought at a great price—wrote so clearly of the Incarnation of Christ in her second book: 'When the Virgin shall give birth to the Word of God, and in broad daylight a star shall appear from the east, herald of a great wonder for mortals, then the Son of the great God shall come to them, clothed in flesh like that of men. The Magi shall bring Him gifts—gold, myrrh, and frankincense—and these shall be pleasing to Him.' The same Sibyl also speaks of Christ's Cross: 'O blessed tree, upon which Christ shall be stretched out! It is fitting that thou be not on earth, but in heaven.' Then she speaks of His Second Coming: 'From heaven shall come the great King, Lord of all the ages, who shall judge all men and the whole world. Him, as the true God, believers and unbelievers alike shall see seated upon a lofty throne and rendering to each according to his deeds.' And if you would hear yet more prophecies of the Pythian Apollo[27], Ammon of Libya[28], Dodona[29], and Pergamum[30], read their books carefully, and you will learn of Christ, the Most High God, whom they foretold and who was to come for the salvation and renewal of the human race. When Jason, leader of the Argonauts[31], asked the Delphic Apollo about the shrine

26. See the preceding note.

27. The Life has in view the oracle of Apollo, which was located at Delphi (this city was situated in southwestern Phocis, at the foot of Mount Parnassus). According to the account of Greek mythology, Apollo himself chose Delphi as the place for his sanctuary, having first slain the dragon Python that dwelt here. Prophecies were made here by the so-called Pythias.

28. Libya is the most ancient name of Africa. Libya consisted properly of two principal parts: Marmarica and Cyrenaica; in the first, in the oasis of Siwa, was built the oracle (oracular shrine) mentioned in the Life, in honor of the Theban deity Ammon.

29. Dodona was the most ancient sanctuary of Zeus, with an oracle and a sacred oak. It was situated within the Greek region of Thessaly, near the city of Scotussa. According to the ancient Greek writers, here old women interpreted, as the voice of the supposed god, the rustling of the oak leaves, the murmur of a stream flowing from beneath the oak, and the sounds of bronze vessels struck by a wire set swaying by the wind. This oracle existed until the third century B.C., when the sacred oak was felled.

30. The city of Pergamum stood in the Asia Minor region of Mysia, on the rivers Selinus and Ketheios (today the Bergama Çayı). The Life has in view the colossal altar that stood here, built by the emperor Eumenes II (196–157 B.C.) and dedicated to Zeus in memory of the victory the aforementioned emperor won over the Galatians. In the late 1870s of the last (19th) century, excavations were carried out here by the German government, thanks to which the altar was restored. According to the excavations, the altar was an extensive square structure, each side of which was up to 30 sazhens in length.

31. The Argonauts, according to the account of ancient Greek mythology, were seafarers who set out on the ship Argo on the first voyage by sea to foreign lands.

considered the oldest in Athens, 'Tell us, prophet, sun-like Apollo, to whom shall this temple belong in the very last times?' Apollo answered: 'You may perform the rites by which you show reverence to the gods, but I confess the One God who reigns in the heavens, whose eternal Word shall be conceived by a pure Virgin. And like an arrow shot from a fiery bow, He shall pass through the whole universe, gathering all and bringing them as a gift to the Father. This temple shall belong to His Mother, and her name shall be Mary.' Again, when Battus[32] asked that same Apollo about God, he answered: 'One alone shall bring grief upon me—the Man from heaven, who, being God, shall nevertheless suffer, though the Godhead shall not suffer. In His Godhead and His humanity He shall possess from the Father immortality, life, and power; from His Mother He shall possess death, the Cross, and the tomb. Warm tears shall flow from His eyes, and He shall feed five thousand men with five loaves. Everyone shall say of Him: Christ is my God, crucified, dead, risen from the tomb, and ascended into heaven.'"

While the saint cited testimonies to Christ God from Greek books, the governor sat like a deaf asp, unwilling to hear or understand the truth. He mockingly said to the saint:

"You explain divine matters to us splendidly, as though you possessed the keys and seals of heaven! Yet before I begin to torture you, I advise you to cease your empty words; renounce your senseless Christianity and be pleased to believe with us as of old, as the emperor has commanded. If you will not do this, then as punishment for your obstinacy you shall be subjected to cruel torments. Then you will be compelled to do what you are commanded!"

The holy martyr replied:

"If you will not know the true God, whom you can behold with the eyes of the spirit, then kill and destroy human bodies, cut us and tear us to pieces for the sake of your gods, while I shall offer my God a sacrifice of praise. You call us mad, though we know the one living and true God. Are you not, rather, yourself mad, since you offer sacrifices to the dead and worship senseless stones? If the stone that you worship as

32. Probably an ancient Greek commander.

a god is a good thing, why do you cut and divide it, and then, having divided it into many pieces, call one part, which bears some likeness to a man, a god, and offer sacrifices to it? The other pieces of that same stone you put to some baser use, or strew in a marshy place and trample underfoot. You do the same with wood. Having cut off a piece and carved an idol from it, you worship it, while you put the remaining wood to some baser use or cast it into the fire. If stone or wood is a god, then every stone and every piece of wood must be worshipped as a god. But if neither wood nor stone is God, why do you ask health and salvation of rotten wood and senseless stone? And if you call iron a god, iron too is subject to the power of fire; when heated, it loses its natural hardness and becomes soft, so that it may be beaten with hammers. Can a god be beaten with hammers? Will you call fire a god? Yet it is strong only so long as it has something to consume; if you do not add wood, its strength vanishes, and water extinguishes it altogether. How can such things be gods, when one destroys another?"

The governor, unable to endure the saint's words, ordered one of those standing by, a certain Archelaus, to strike the martyr on the neck with a sword. At once the saint bent his neck beneath the sword, ready to die for his Lord. But when Archelaus raised the sword high with both hands and was about to strike the saint's neck with all his strength, he suddenly grew weak in his hands and throughout his body; he fell to the ground and breathed his last.

The governor, seeing this, was struck with terror and commanded that the martyr be led away in iron chains to a dungeon. On the sixth day after this the governor again brought the martyr before the court and commanded that he be beaten with ox sinews with all possible force, that his body be tormented with red-hot iron nails, that his wounds be set on fire, and that they be rubbed with vinegar and salt.

Then a bronze altar with hot coals was brought. They placed incense in the saint's right hand and held it outstretched over the hot coals, supposing that from the pain he would turn his hand, and the incense would then fall into the fire. In that case it could be said that he had offered sacrifice to the gods by casting incense upon the fire. In this position they held the saint's hand for about two hours, but he, ab-

sorbed in thought upon God, paid no heed to the burning hand, and the altar with its fire stood in vain. The spectators marvelled at this and glorified Christ, while the governor and his master, the devil, felt themselves put to shame. The saint, lifting his eyes to heaven, said:

"Thou hast holden me by my right hand; thou shalt guide me with thy counsel" (Ps. 72:23–24). Thy right hand, O Lord, has been glorified in strength; Thy right hand, O Lord, has dashed in pieces the enemy; the right hand of the Lord has shown forth power; the right hand of the Lord has exalted me!

After this the tormentor commanded that the martyr's hands be bound and that he be hung up, and that two heavy stones be tied to his feet. The saint hung in this position for a long time, and from the weight of the stones the joints of his body were wrenched from their places. Then the tormentor commanded that the martyr be taken down from the torture, released from the stones, and that the Passion-bearer be cast into a fiery furnace, into the fiercest flames. The saint, entering the furnace, signed himself with the sign of the Cross and offered a prayer to God. Immediately a flame came forth from the furnace which scorched all the impious men standing near, while the saint remained unharmed: for him the fire was changed into coolness.

This marvellous miracle greatly astonished everyone, and the governor, frightened, fled into the praetorium. Some of the citizens then began to cry out to the governor:

"Put this sorcerer to death quickly, for if you do not, the whole city will be led astray by his sorcery."

And the governor then issued the final sentence of death, by which it was ordered that the saint's head be severed with the sword. When he was brought to the place of execution, the saint asked for time for prayer, and standing facing the east, with his hands raised to heaven and his eyes turned upward, he prayed for the city, for the people, for those in distress, for the sick, the orphans and the widows, that all might be guarded by Divine Providence. Above all he prayed that pagan impiety might as quickly as possible be replaced by Christian piety, and that the holy Church of Christ might grow, multiply and shine with the true faith until the end of the age. When he was finishing his pray-

er, a voice was heard from heaven which promised to fulfil what had been asked and called the martyr to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Then the holy martyr Procopius joyfully bowed his honorable head beneath the sword and was beheaded, laying down his life for his Lord on the 8th day of the month of July[33]. Some of the Christians, however, at night took his honorable body, wrapped it in clean linen and anointed it with fragrant spices, and buried it with honor in a chosen place, glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one God in Trinity, to whom is due every honor and glory now and unto endless ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Kindled with the divine zeal for Christ, and protected by the strength of the Cross, thou didst overthrow the wavering and boldness of the enemies, O Procopius, and didst exalt the honorable Church, prospering in faith and enlightening us.

* * *

Feast of the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos in Honor of the Appearance of Her Kazan Icon

Празднество Пресвятой Деве Богородице в честь явления Ее иконы Казанской

In 1579, in the reign of John Vasilyevich the Terrible, who, with God's help, conquered the city of Kazan, capital of the Tatar kingdom, the Mother of God appeared in a dream to the maiden Matrona in that city. She said that at the place where their house stood, Her icon lay hidden in the earth, and she commanded that this be made known to the spiritual and secular authorities of the city. This vision was repeated more than once. Matrona told her mother about it. But the mother paid no heed to the words of her young daughter. At last the maiden saw the icon of the Mother of God in rays of fire, and a terrible voice was heard: "If you do not declare My words, I shall appear in another place, but you will perish!" This time the mother heeded the entreaty of her daughter, who was terrified by the last vision, and went

33. The repose of the Great Martyr Procopius took place in 303 A.D.

with her to the archbishop and the voivodes. But they did not wish to believe them. Then, returning home, the mother herself began to dig the earth in the indicated place. Others joined her, but they could find nothing. At last, when the maiden Matrona herself began to dig, the image of the Most Pure Mother of God was found and taken out of the earth. The icon was carried with great honor into the church and became renowned for its wonderworking[34].

Troparion, Tone 4:

O zealous Intercessor, Mother of the Most High Lord, thou dost ever intercede with thy Son Christ our God for all, and thou dost cause all to be saved who take refuge under thy sovereign protection. Intercede for us all, O Lady and Sovereign Queen, for those who are in calamities, in sorrows and in sicknesses, burdened with many sins, who stand before thy most pure icon and pray to thee with tender soul and contrite heart, with tears, and who have hope in thee that cannot be turned away: grant deliverance from all evils and what is profitable to all, and save all, O Virgin Theotokos: for thou art the divine protection of thy servants.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Let us the people hasten to this quiet and good refuge, swift helper, ready and warm salvation, the Virgin's protection; let us hasten to prayer and strive unto repentance: for the Most Pure Theotokos pours forth upon us her inexhaustible mercies, comes before us with her help, and delivers from great woes and evils her gracious and God-fearing servants.

* * *

34. For detailed information about this icon, see the book *The Glory of the Mother of God*, Moscow, 1907.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day, the memory of the Righteous Procopius of Ustyansky.

On this same day, the repose of the Righteous Procopius of Ustyug, Fool-for-Christ, in the year 1303.

NOTES

4483. Catechumenate – oral instruction in the truths of the Christian faith, given in the ancient Church to all who wished to approach the sacrament of holy Baptism. Having the right to enter the church to hear the Holy Scripture and the teachings, and even to be present at the first and second parts of the liturgy ("proskomedia" and the "liturgy of the catechumens"), the catechumens, before the beginning of the third, most important part of the liturgy ("liturgy of the faithful"), had to leave the church at once, which was announced by the deacon with an exclamation still preserved in the Orthodox Church in the celebration of the liturgy. The term of the catechumenate was not uniform; many remained catechumens for their whole life. In case of necessity the term of the catechumenate was shortened to several days or even to a few hours. – The church rite of the catechumenate is still performed in the Orthodox Church; it consists in the reading of certain prayers over the one approaching baptism and the pronouncing of an exorcism against the devil; at this the one approaching baptism renounces Satan, is united to Christ and confesses his faith by the reading of the Creed (at the baptism of infants this is done by the sponsors).

THE NINTH DAY OF JULY

July 9

9 июля

New Calendar July 9 · Old Calendar July 22 (civil dates)

Commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyr Pancratius, Bishop of Taormina

Память святого священномученика Панкратия, епископа Тавроменийского

St. Pancratius was a native of Antioch. He was born at the time when our Lord Jesus Christ "appeared on earth and conversed with men" (Bar. 3:38), working miracles in Jerusalem and in all the surrounding lands and cities.

The father of Pancratius, who lived in Antioch, heard of His glorious miracles and went to Jerusalem with some friends and with his son, the youth Pancratius, to see the Lord. Seeing Him teach the people, heal every infirmity, and work many signs and wonders, he believed in Him as the Son of God, and became acquainted with some of the holy Apostles of Christ, most of all with the holy chief Apostle Peter. From that time the youth Pancratius also became known to St. Peter.

After staying in Jerusalem for a fairly long time, delighting in the sight of Christ and in hearing His sweet words, Pancratius's father returned with his friends to Antioch. Then, after the voluntary sufferings and death of Christ the Savior, followed by His Resurrection and Ascension, one of the Apostles came to Antioch — this was before St. Peter arrived there and baptized Pancratius's father with all his household. After some time both his father and mother departed to the Lord, and Pancratius, renouncing the property he had inherited from his parents, went off to the mountains of Pontus[1].

1. Pontus: a country occupying in antiquity the north-eastern part of Asia Minor. Today the site of ancient Pontus contains two Turkish vilayets (provinces): Trebizond and Sivas.

Here, in one of the caves, Pancratius dwelt in solitude, fasting and prayer, given over to self-knowledge and in communion with God alone. When the holy Apostle Peter, leaving Jerusalem, was passing through those lands preaching about Christ, he met Pancratius in Pontus, and recognizing him, took him with him to Antioch, and afterward went with him into Cilicia, where he met the holy Apostle Paul. There the two Apostles, Peter and Paul, by mutual agreement, ordained bishops: Crescentius for Galatia, Marcian for Syracuse[2], and Pancratius for Taormina, a city in Sicily[3].

Setting out for the place of his service, the blessed Pancratius boarded a ship sailing to Sicily. On this ship with Pancratius were also two ship's captains, Licaonides and Romil, to whom he proclaimed the Word of God, preaching about the Kingdom of God and the mysteries of our salvation. He turned them to faith in Christ and enlightened them with holy Baptism.

When they arrived at the city of Taormina, the demons dwelling in the idols there were thrown into confusion, and the idols, struck by the arrival of Pancratius, began to fall and were shattered to pieces. There were gods held in great honor among the pagans there: Falcon, Lysippus, and Scamandron[4], to whom a temple was dedicated, standing on a high hill on the very shore of the sea.

As soon as the holy Pancratius approached this temple, it immediately cracked, and as if from a terrible shock, fell into the sea together with all the idols. A great commotion then arose among the people.

The governor of the city, Boniface, also arrived there, and seeing St. Pancratius and hearing his teaching, believed in Christ and was baptized. By his labors, undertaken for the glory of the name of Christ, a church was built within a month, in which the servant of God, the bishop, began to serve, teaching and enlightening the people who gathered to him and brought their sick with them. The saint confirmed his teach-

2. Syracuse: one of the first ancient Greek colonies on the eastern coast of the island of Sicily, founded, according to tradition, by Corinthians about 753 B.C.; later the largest and richest city of the island.

3. Sicily: one of the large islands of the Mediterranean Sea, forming today part of the Kingdom of Italy.

4. Falcon, Lysippus (or Liss) and Scamandron: minor deities of the ancient Greek religion.

ing with signs and wonders, healing every disease and casting out demons.

As the number of believers grew day by day, and nearly the whole city was enlightened by holy Faith, so that the glory of the name of Christ spread throughout that whole land, the devil stirred up against the Christians a certain impious persecutor, Aquilinus. Out of enmity toward Christ and the Christians, he set out against Taormina with a large detachment of soldiers, to destroy it and put to slaughter all the Christians living there.

When the citizens were struck with terror at this news, the holy hierarch of God comforted them, assuring them that they would suffer no harm from their enemies. And when the enemies approached the city, St. Pancratius went out against them as a spiritual warrior with his clergy, bearing invincible weapons: the honorable Cross of Christ and two holy icons, of Christ the Savior and of His Most Pure Mother. Immediately a strong fear fell upon the enemies; they were as if enveloped in darkness; by the power of God they were thrown into confusion, their minds were darkened, and they began to hack at and kill one another, and some pierced themselves with their swords. Then, as soon as they came to their senses and came out of the enveloping darkness and saw that they were killing one another, they understood that God was thus punishing them for their hostile actions against the Christian city. Those who survived this fratricidal battle threw down their weapons and came to the invincible, brave warrior of Christ, St. Pancratius. They fell at his honorable feet, begging forgiveness, and entreated him to make them Christians. And the citizens of the city had a twofold joy: first, they were delivered from the dreadful invasion of their enemies, and second, their enemies became their friends in the faith. Therefore the saint's words were thenceforth received with still greater reverence, and all his commands were carried out. And not only this city, but the other surrounding cities as well were enlightened by holy Faith.

But after many years, during which St. Pancratius governed the newly enlightened flock of Christ, some of the pagans who remained there, especially malicious and obstinate in their error, agreed with

their leader Artagastus, chose a suitable time, and secretly attacked the servant of God and stoned him. Thus St. Pancratius, eyewitness of Christ and one appointed by the Apostles, struggled with a good struggle, ended his life as a martyr[5], and with the holy Apostles stood before Christ his Lord, to contemplate Him face to face for endless ages.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou didst appear as a bright star to Taormina, O Pancratius, and didst become a hieromartyr for Christ. Standing now before Him, pray to Him for those who honor thee, O blessed one.

* * *

Life and Passion of the Venerable Fathers Patermuthius and Copris, and with them Alexander the Layman

Житие и страдание преподобных отцов Патермуфия и Коприя и с ними Александра мирянина

Emperor Julian[6], who at first believed in Christ and then, under the influence of the devil, turned back to paganism and became a son of Satan, set out on a campaign against the Persians. On his way to Persia he shed much holy blood, and while in Antioch he seized two Antiochene presbyters, Eugenius and Macarius, who, after prolonged torture, he exiled to Mauretania, to imprisonment. At that time two venerable men, Patermuthius and Copris, lived in the Egyptian deserts; they were in complete unanimity and served God together. Patermuthius was older in years, more experienced in monastic exploits, and strong in virtue; Copris, younger than the first in years, was not yet fully established in the monastic life and had in Patermuthius his teacher and spiritual father. Before they were subjected to torments, Copris told Patermuthius the following vision he had seen in a dream at night.

5. The repose of the holy Hieromartyr Pancratius took place at the end of the 1st century or the beginning of the 2nd century. His relics rest today in Rome, in a church outside the city built in honor of St. Pancratius (whose memory is celebrated in the Western Church on 12 May).
6. Emperor Julian the Apostate reigned from 361 to 363.

"I saw," he said, "the heavens opened, and a certain bright man, who, with a staff in his hand, was coming toward me. Then I saw someone dark coming toward him from the other side, who kindled a fire and spread smoke around him. This dark one stretched out his hand and seized me; finding myself in the smoke, I was in an extremely perilous state, and dangers threatened me on every side, while that radiant man went far away from me. At that moment a voice came from heaven: 'The fruit of this man will be torn apart, but afterward it will again be used for a good work.' After this vision I awoke in confusion."

"This dream is not a good one!" said Patermuthius. "I fear you may fall away from the living God. Behold, the wicked Emperor Julian has renounced Christ and raised a persecution against the Church of God. I think we too will be subjected to torments. Take care, child, not to renounce Christ out of fear of torments, being seduced by promises of rewards. Fear God, remember His commandments, and be courageous."

Not long after this vision, Emperor Julian arrived in Egypt with a great army. Hearing that many hermits lived in the Egyptian deserts, he sent soldiers there to seize whomever they found. Then the aforementioned fathers, Patermuthius and Copris, were taken and brought before the tyrant for interrogation. And Julian asked the Venerable Patermuthius:

"How old are you, elder?"

He answered:

"Seventy-five years of my temporal life on earth have passed."

Glancing at Copris, the emperor said:

"Now you, younger one, tell me how old you are."

Copris answered: "I am forty-five years old by birth."

Then the emperor ordered the elder Patermuthius to be led off to prison, and leaving Copris, he began to speak with him thus:

"Man, offer sacrifices to the gods, so as to escape the torments awaiting you. Abandon the deceptive Christian faith, which brings you no benefit. I too once believed in Christ, but I saw no benefit from it at all. Now, believing in the immortal gods, I have been granted by them to receive many great benefits. I advise you too to renounce Christ and

offer sacrifice to the gods; then I will bring you near to me, and you will receive many favors from me."

Copris listened to the emperor with bated breath. He fell into forgetfulness of himself, and, carried away by his destructive promises, said to Julian:

"You teach me good things, sovereign! It is well that I have found in you a teacher and a good guide."

Then he cried out loudly:

Henceforth I am a disciple of Julian, and no longer a Christian; and as I once went astray, remaining in the deceptive Christian faith, so now I will strive to amend everything: I will bow down to the gods and offer sacrifice.

Hearing these words, the emperor was exceedingly glad, and said:

"Happier than all others is this man, in that he has come to know the ancient ancestral gods, who give eternal life to the world!"

After these words, Copris bowed down and offered sacrifice to the idol of Apollo; and, falling away from God, he received the devil into himself.

The holy Angels withdrew from him; but the demons surrounded him and rejoiced.

Learning that Copris had fallen away from Christ, the Venerable Patermuthius was exceedingly grieved; he wept and lamented over him, and, kneeling, prayed thus:

"Lord, God of hosts! Do not destroy the sinner who has transgressed Thy commandment! Remember the labors which he accomplished in his youth out of love for Thee; do not cast him away from Thy face, since he has been seduced by the words of the transgressor of the law. Have mercy on Thy creature, and seek out the work of Thy hands!"

In the morning the emperor sat upon his throne, and Copris stood beside him on the right side. He wore a purple cloak. When Patermuthius, by the emperor's command, was brought in for interrogation, Copris, seeing him, said:

"Here comes the deceiver who has robbed me of my happiness."

When the elder approached the judgment seat, Copris cried out to him:

"Well, Patermuthius? You see, I rejoice, while you must weep. I am no longer a Christian, but a follower of Julian."

Patermuthius answered:

"Yes, I see that you rejoice, and therefore I weep for you."

The emperor then said to the elder:

"Do not weep, but offer sacrifice to the gods, and rejoice together with him."

Patermuthius answered:

"His joy is temporary. Now he rejoices, but in the future life he will weep, if he does not repent. I weep now, but I shall rejoice in the life to come. He here boasts in purple raiment, but there he will be found naked; now he is satisfied, but in the future life he will hunger. I hunger now, but in the future life I shall be filled, when the glory of my God appears. Now he stands before you, earthly king, among your servants, in glory; but there, before the face of the heavenly King, he will be cast out and thrown into the fiery gehenna among the demons."

Having said this, the elder looked into Copris's face and prophesied:

"Now you are pus, in which the demons joyfully exult. For the Angels have withdrawn from you. You have banished God from yourself and clothed yourself in the devil. The true, eternal life you have hated, and the temporal, false life you have loved. But remember the deeds of your youth, come to yourself, abandon the error into which, to your misfortune, you have been drawn, and come to me, child! Love God again, and repent before Him against whom you have sinned; and He, in His mercy, will receive you and forgive you your sins."

When the elder had spoken these words, Copris was moved in heart, and, repenting, cried out loudly:

"Woe to me, woe to me, woe to me!"

Then he began to sway now to one side, now to the other. Afterwards, taking heart and looking up to heaven, he said:

"Now I am no longer Julian's, but once more Christ's! I have sinned, transgressing God's commandment; I have committed lawlessness, renouncing my Lord. But in this is Thy grace made known, O Master,

that Thou hast mercy upon me, who have committed so grievous a sin. Be merciful to me, O Lover of mankind. I am now like a dry tree, which has no fruit and whose leaves have withered. The words of the lawless have led me into error, and the diabolical storm has drowned me. The serpent mocks me, and the hosts of demons rejoice over me. The stars of heaven have been thrown into confusion; the sun and moon have hidden their light because of my great sin, by which I have grieved God. But you, Angels of God, and the hosts of the righteous, and the inhabitants of the whole world, gather together and weep over my fall and the darkening of my mind. For I have lost Christ, the Sun of righteousness, and in me the light of faith has been extinguished; all spiritual beauty has been taken from me."

Then, turning to the emperor, Copris said:

"Why, devil, did you seduce me? Why, lawbreaker, did you also draw me into your perdition?"

And taking off the purple garment, he threw it down before him, saying:

"Take for yourself that glory which you gave me, and I shall take again what I have lost. My God is good, and He will make me, even as one of His 'hired servants' (Lk. 15:19)."

The emperor, seeing that Copris had turned again to Christ, grew angry and commanded that a large iron pan be heated at once. Copris, hearing this command, said:

"You do well, emperor! Burn me, cut me into pieces, so that by many torments I may atone for my fall. But first of all, punish my tongue, for it sinned first of all, by renouncing Christ."

Then the emperor commanded that a small iron spoon be heated and placed upon Copris's tongue. Copris, seeing the spoon glowing like a coal, said to the holy Patermuthius:

"Pray to God for me, Father, for I am horrified at the thought of the torment awaiting me."

The elder said to him:

"Endure, child, with joy, and the Lord will help you!"

And so, when the spoon touched Copris's tongue, it seemed to him as cold as ice, and Copris's tongue received no burn at all. The emperor then said:

"These men are sorcerers; lead them to the heated pan."

When they were being led away, Copris said to the elder:

"Pray for me, my teacher, for I greatly dread the torment."

The elder said:

"Do not fear, child! Be courageous; remember your ascetic exploits and labors, which you took upon yourself from your childhood in the desert, and which you bravely undertook for the glory of God. Do you remember how you passed thirty-five days without food? Do you remember also how, co-crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:19), you stood motionless for twelve days with your arms outstretched in the form of a cross? Have you forgotten how you lay down upon hard stones and sharp shards? If all this you endured willingly throughout your life for Christ, why do you now fear this torment, which lasts only one hour?"

Copris, strengthened by these words, with a radiant face and without fear, went with the elder to the pan. As they were mounting it, Patermuthius said:

"Brother Copris, lift up your eyes on high!"

Copris, looking up to heaven, said:

"I see Angels approaching, whose heads are covered with dew. I beg you, Father, tell them not to be angry with me for having renounced Christ."

And so both of them entered the pan and walked upon it as upon a meadow, mocking the tormentor, for the pan at once became perfectly cool. Seeing this, the tormentor grew even more enraged and commanded that the furnace be stoked as strongly as possible, to cast the martyrs into it for burning. When the furnace was being kindled, one of the imperial soldiers, named Alexander, approached Copris and said:

"Copris! At first you offered sacrifice to the gods, and now you do not wish to. Turn again to us, that you may be spared destruction by fire."

Holy Copris answered him:

"Oh, if only my first sin, which I committed before Christ, were forgotten before the face of God! Even if one were to gather all the sea water and all the rivers and springs, and every drop that falls from heaven, all this would be too little to wash away the defilement of my sin. Yet I do not despair of the mercy of my loving Master."

Alexander, moved by Copris's words, said:

"I too would like to become a soldier of that King whom you serve!"

Then Copris taught him the true faith and turned him to Christ.

When the furnace had been heated to a bright flame and the venerable martyrs went into it, Alexander followed after them, saying:

"I will go with you, blessed fathers! Take me, for Christ's sake, into the furnace!"

They took him by the arms and went together; but afterwards Alexander broke free from their hands and went alone in front. When they drew near the entrance of the furnace, a great tongue of flame burst out of the furnace toward Alexander, but did not scorch him; and Alexander, addressing this flame, said:

"If you have come out by God's command in order to burn me, then burn the sinner!"

At these words the flame divided into two parts and became two walls, as once the water of the Red Sea (Ex. 14), opening a path for him through the midst. And Alexander entered within the furnace, untouched by the flame; and seeing there the Angels of God, he said to them:

"I beseech you, my lords, save me, a sinner!"

The Angels answered:

"For this very purpose we have been sent here by God, that we might save you."

And they took his soul to the Lord, while his dead body remained entirely whole in the fire. After him entered also the venerable fathers Patermuthius and Copris, likewise unharmed by the fire, and they remained near the body of Alexander, singing praise to God.

When the furnace went out, the saints were brought out alive and unhurt before the emperor, in no way suffering from the fire; and the body of the holy Alexander was also carried out, undamaged by the

fire, and a great fragrance came from it. The emperor then said with astonishment:

"Our gods are great, and Christ is nothing!"

Then he again began to compel the saints to worship the idols. But the Venerable Patermuthius said to him:

"Since you are going into battle not for the glorifying of God's name, you will not return back, but will be wounded mortally and will die a dreadful death."

Then the emperor, greatly enraged, commanded that they be beheaded with the sword.

And the saints were led out of the city to the place of execution. There, before their death, they turned to God in prayer, and behold, a voice sounded from heaven, which praised Patermuphius, forgave Copreus, and called both of them to eternal rest.

Then, with joy, they bowed their heads under the sword, and died, laying down their lives for the Lord.

The impious Julian, who had set out to make war against the Persians, was defeated by the Persian army, and, as St. Patermuthius had foretold, did not return to his land.

The repose of the holy Venerable Martyrs Patermuthius and Copres, and with them St. Alexander, took place in the month of June, on the ninth day[7]. At that time Julian the lawbreaker reigned over the Romans, and over the Christians reigned our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit belong honor, glory and dominion, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Patermuthius

Память преподобного Патермуфия

Patermuthius, as Copres reports of him, was at first an idolater. He headed a band of robbers, stole, and even stripped the garments from the buried, and committed all manner of other crimes and

7. The repose of the holy Venerable Martyrs Patermuthius and Coprius took place in the second half of the 4th century.

abominations, and the report of his wickedness spread through all the lands of Egypt. His turning to God came about for the following reason.

Once at night he climbed onto the roof of a house in which there lived a maiden dedicated to God. He meant to break through the roof and, entering the house by that way, to commit the crime he had planned. However, however hard he tried, he could not break through the roof, and, weary, he fell asleep there.

In his sleep he saw a certain radiant man, clothed in royal raiment, who said to him:

"Cease henceforth from your evil deeds, cease shedding human blood, stealing and committing other lawless acts! Repent and begin God-pleasing labors, take upon yourself the Angelic service and spend the rest of your life in virtue; and I shall make you a leader and prince over My armies."

Patermuthius promised that he would at once begin with zeal to fulfill these commands. The one who appeared then showed him a whole host of monks and bade him take command over them.

While this dream lasted, the night passed and the light of day shone forth. The maiden went up onto the roof of the house and, seeing a man sleeping there, was seized with great fear. Patermuthius, awakening from sleep and seeing the maiden standing before him, was in a kind of stupor and frenzy. When the maiden began to ask him who he was, whence he came and with what purpose he had come there, he gave no answer to her questions, but only asked her to show him where a Christian church was. The maiden, seeing the work of God in what was happening before her, led him to the church and presented him to the presbyters.

On seeing the presbyters, he fell at their feet, with tears begging them to make him a Christian and to set him on the path of repentance. The presbyters, however, knowing him, were amazed and did not believe his words, seeing in his entreaties only treachery and deceit. But when he began to weep and continued unceasingly with his supplications, they said to him:

"If you utterly give up your evil deeds and lead a good life and do good, we shall receive you into the Christian community."

He promised to fulfill everything they commanded him, and then the presbyters instructed him as a catechumen[8], and after some days baptized him. Having received baptism, Patermuthius asked the presbyters to give him some commandment by fulfilling which he would be established on the way to salvation, and they taught him to read by heart the first three verses of the first Psalm. Pondering these verses, he said:

"This is enough for my salvation."

Three days after receiving baptism, he went out into the wilderness and spent much time there, dwelling day and night in prayer and tears, and feeding on the roots of the herbs that grew there. Then he returned to the church, having learned those three verses not only by heart, but also to keep them in deed. The presbyters, marveling at such a change for the better that had come over him, as well as at his extraordinary abstinence, wished to keep him with them in order to teach him to read; but he, having lived with them one week, again withdrew into the wilderness and remained there seven years, feeding no longer on roots and herbs but on bread that was sent to him by God once a week. Every Sunday he found before him pure bread, brought by an unseen hand, and having partaken of this bread with thanksgiving, he remained again without food until the next Sunday, and did not feel weakness from hunger. God also granted him the gift of understanding books, and he knew all of Divine Scripture by memory.

After seven years, by the command of God, the Venerable Patermuthius again returned from the wilderness to an inhabited place for the benefit of many, and by his ascetic life he drew many to himself. His disciples imitated his virtues in everything.

A young man also came to him, desiring to be his disciple. The Venerable, receiving him, clothed him in the monastic garment, which consisted of a hair shirt, a cowl and a goatskin, which among monks is usually called a *milot* or *milotar*, and taught him the God-pleasing monastic life.

8. For a remark concerning catechumenate, see in the Life of the Great Martyr Procopius, 8 July.

Now it was the custom of the Venerable Patermuthius to visit the sick and to be present at their deaths, and to bury the dead, and he himself took care to clothe them in burial garments. Seeing the elder's zeal in the burial of the dead, that young man said to him:

"Father! I should like, when I die, that you clothe me and bury me."

The father answered:

"I shall do so, child, and shall keep clothing you until you yourself say: enough."

Soon that young monk reposed, and the elder, wrapping him, according to custom, in burial garments and covering his face, said:

"Is this enough for your burial, child, or shall I add something more?"

Then the dead man, so that all could hear, answered:

"Enough, Father!"

All who were present at this marveled at such a miracle and began to glorify the elder as a wonderworker. He, not enduring their glorification, at once after the burial of the dead man withdrew secretly from everyone into the wilderness.

After some time, however, the elder again returned to visit the brethren, for whom he was the guide in the monastic life. It was revealed to him at this time by God that a certain brother, who lived in a separate hermit's cell near a village, had fallen gravely ill, and the Venerable hastened to visit him. Since the way there was rather long, the Venerable was delayed on the road. The sun was already setting, and the saint did not wish to go to that village at this hour, at night, observing the word of the Lord: "Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you" (Jn. 12:35), and also: "He who walks in the day does not stumble" (Jn. 11:9). Then, moved by the power of faith, the saint addressed the sun, already half set, with these words:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, stand, O sun, in your path, and wait until I enter the village."

And the sun stood still, already half hidden, and went on shining with only one half, waiting until the saint entered the village. The inhabitants of that village marveled, seeing that the sun did not set for so long, and, gathering in the middle of the village, they looked upon that

wonder. Some time passed, and they saw the Venerable Patermuthius coming from the wilderness to their village, and meeting him, they asked the cause of the miraculous standing still of the sun. He said to them:

"Do you not remember the words of the Lord, contained in the Gospel and teaching us to have faith? 'If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed,' you can also move mountains (Mt. 17:20). He who by faith can move mountains can by the same faith also stop the sun in its course."

When he said this, everyone understood that the sun had stood still for his sake, and that it had hidden itself precisely when he entered the village. Then all, in fear, bowed down before the elder and followed him when he went to the sick brother. Entering his cell, the Venerable found him already dead in the Lord. He offered prayer, approached him, kissed his body and said:

"What is more pleasing to you, brother: to live with Christ after departing from us, or to remain with us a while longer, in the body?"

The dead man at once came to life, opened his eyes, raised himself on the bed and said:

"Why have you restored me to life, Father? It is better for me to depart to Christ and be with Him, and I no longer wish to live in the flesh!"

Then the elder said to him:

"Rest in peace, and pray for me!"

And he lay down and fell asleep again.

All who were present at this were struck with terror and said:

"Truly, this is a man of God."

The Venerable, having prepared the body of the deceased for burial, spent the whole night in singing psalms, and in the morning, having committed it with honor to the earth, he departed from there.

On another occasion the Venerable visited another brother, who had also fallen mortally ill. Seeing that the sick man feared death because of his sins, he said to him:

"Why, child, are you not ready for departure? It seems to me that your conscience, your accuser, wishes to go there together with you."

The sick man said:

"I beg you, Father, pray to God for me, that He give me a little time for repentance."

The elder answered:

"Now you seek time for repentance, but where are the past times? What did you accomplish in the days of your monastic life? You not only did not manage to heal your former wounds, but kept adding new and new ones to them."

The sick man, however, did not cease beseeching the elder with tears that he would pray to the Lord for him. And the elder then said:

"If henceforth you do not add one evil to another, we shall pray for you. The Lord, the Lover of mankind, is good and long-suffering, and will give you a certain term for cleansing your sins."

Having said this, he bent his knees in prayer, and after the prayer he rose and said to the sick man:

"The Lord grants you to live three years more on earth, only bring true repentance!"

And taking him by the hand, the Venerable raised him up healthy and led him away with himself into the wilderness.

After three years he came again with him to the brethren and presented him to them as an Angel of God. Many of the brethren gathered to hear the sweet words of the Venerable, and he delivered there a discourse on the fruits of repentance. The conversation continued until Matins, and during this conversation the brother who had completed his three-year penance dozed off, as it were, and committed his soul into the hands of God, without sickness or fear, as one who falls asleep in a sweet slumber.

It is further reported of the Venerable Patermuthius that he many times crossed the river Nile walking upon the surface of the water. And once, when several of the brethren had gathered in one cell and were conversing with closed doors about the salvation of the soul, the Saint stood in their midst, as once the Lord Christ stood in the midst of the Apostles. So great was the Venerable Patermuthius in the working of miracles, filled with the grace of God. He reposed in the Lord, having spent many years in pleasing God[9].

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Copreus

Память преподобного Коприя

St. Copreus, eyewitness of St. Patermuthius and narrator of his miracles, was a presbyter by rank, and he too had from God the grace of working miracles. He lived in the same Egyptian lands, healing various diseases in people and casting out evil spirits. Once, when he was recounting to the brethren who had gathered to him, for the benefit of their souls, the life of the Venerable Patermuthius and of other saints, one brother, not believing his accounts, did not listen to him and dozed off. But during his sleep he saw in the hands of St. Copreus a book written in golden letters, from which he was telling the brethren something. Beside him stood a radiant man of venerable appearance, adorned with gray hair. This man, looking sternly upon the one who dozed, said:

"Why do you not believe what is being said, and, not listening, doze off!"

The brother, starting up in terror from his sleep, at once told the others what he had seen, and from then on he began to listen with faith and attention to all the discourses of St. Copreus.

Once there were wandering monks with the Venerable Father who had come to him to hear his discourses on the salvation of the soul. At this time a peasant came to the door of the cell with a vessel filled with

9. The repose of Venerable Patermuthius took place in the 4th century.

sand and waited for the elder to finish his discourse. The brethren, seeing the man and the sand, asked the elder:

"Why has this sand been brought?"

The elder answered:

"It would not be fitting for me, children, to tell you about this, lest I seem to boast of the works of God and lose the reward for my labors. But since I see that you have undertaken a long and difficult journey to us, I will not hide that from you, and for your benefit I will relate to you the works of God, which God has been pleased to accomplish through us sinners. The land of the village which is near us was very unfruitful, and from the grain sown in the fields barely enough came back to match what had been sown. Some worm devoured the sprouts and gnawed the ears before they ripened. The inhabitants of that village were all idolaters, but by the grace of God we converted them all to the holy faith and baptized them. Having become Christians, they came to us and began to beseech us to pray for them to Christ God, that He might send fertility to their land. We said to them:

"We will pray, but you must have unwavering faith in God."

Then they promised to keep firm faith, and, taking into their bosoms sand from that land on which our sinful feet walk, they asked me to bless this sand in the name of the Lord as seed. I said to them:

"Be it unto you according to your faith!"

They, returning home, mixed that sand with the grain seed and sowed it all in their fields. And then so much grain grew as is not produced in any region of Egypt. From that time on, every year the farmers come to us and bring us sand for blessing. Their faith does not deceive them, and they always have a harvest.

The Venerable Copreus, once entering into a dispute about the faith before the people with a heretic Manichaean[10], and seeing that he could not overcome the boastful speaker with his humble and gentle words, wished to show the rightness of his faith by a deed. He ordered a great fire to be kindled and called the heretic with him there, so that it might be made clear whose faith is right: whoever does not burn, said the Saint, he is believing rightly. But the Manichaean said to him:

"You enter first!"

The Saint entered the fire, but the flame parted before him on both sides, and for half an hour he stood upon the embers as on grass, without any harm to himself; he came out of the flame unharmed, and not even his garments were touched by the fire. Seeing this, the people were greatly amazed and glorified Christ God. The heretic, however, did not want to enter, but the people threw him into the flame, and he at once began to burn there. Nevertheless, all scorched, he managed to leap out of the fire and ran. The people, seizing him, cried out:

"Let the heretic be burned!"

The Venerable Copreus calmed the popular uproar and let the heretic go alive, burned like a brand.

Near his cell the elder had a small garden; in this garden he grew grain and fruits, which went to the sustenance of the wanderers who came to him. Now one idolater, entering this garden by night, stole as much fruit as he could carry, and part of it, coming home, he began to boil in a pot over the fire. But more than three hours passed, much firewood was burned by him, and the fruit not only did not cook, but even the water in the pot did not grow warm. This extraordinary circumstance brought the thief into great astonishment, and he, recognizing his sin and understanding the power of Christ operating in Christians, took everything he had stolen, even what was already in the pot, and brought it to the feet of the elder, confessing the theft he had committed. In doing so he asked the elder's forgiveness and begged him to make him a Christian. It happened that at that time many wanderers were with the elder; all of them rejoiced over the miraculous conversion of that man to Christ, tasted of those fruits, and gave thanks to God. Besides these miracles, the Venerable Copreus, by the grace of Christ,

10. Manichaeism: a heretical false teaching representing a mixture of Christianity with the principles of the Persian religion of Zoroaster. The founder of Manichaeism was Manes, a Persian magus. Manes taught that from eternity there exist two independent kingdoms, of good and of evil, which are in constant struggle with each other. Man, according to the teaching of Manes, also consists of a combination of two elements, light and darkness, and has as it were two souls, a good and an evil, which constantly struggle with each other. In life the Manichaeans were very abstinent: they preached celibacy and constant fasting. Manichaeism was rather widely spread in the 3rd and 4th centuries.

performed many others and fell asleep in peace[11]. He was granted an equal portion with the Venerable Patermuthius in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom belong honor and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

* * *

Life of our holy father Theodore, Bishop of Edessa

Житие святого отца нашего Феодора, епископа Едесского

In the city of Edessa[12] there was a man named Symeon, who had a wife, Mary. Both were pious, feared God, and holily kept His commandments. Since they were rich, they performed great almsgiving. They had only one daughter, and they very much wished to have a male child. Therefore they traveled to various churches of God, fasted and prayed, asking God for a son.

Once, in the holy Forty Days, namely on the Saturday of the first week of Great Lent, when the memory of the holy Great Martyr Theodore Tiro is celebrated, both of them came with offerings to the church of the holy Apostles for Matins. During the service a certain drowsiness came over both of them at the same time, and each separately was granted such a vision. They saw standing in the church the holy Apostle Paul together with the holy Great Martyr Theodore Tiro. The holy Great Martyr, pointing with his finger at Symeon and Mary, said to the holy Apostle:

"Here are these people, disciple of the Lord, who fervently pray God for the granting of a male child. Obtain from God for them that their petition be fulfilled, and that their offerings for churches and their almsgiving find their recompense."

And they saw that the Apostle laid a male infant in their hands, saying:

11. The repose of Venerable Coprius took place in the 4th century.

12. The city of Edessa (today Urfa) was located in the northern part of Mesopotamia, on the river Euphrates. In the 4th century a theological school was founded here by St. Ephraim the Syrian. In 641 Edessa was conquered by the Arabs; in 1098 it was seized by Count Baldwin, who made it the chief city of the Principality of Edessa; in 1144 it was conquered by the Turks, and from this time passed from hand to hand, until in 1637 it finally fell under the power of Turkey.

"Behold, you already have a son!"

The Great Martyr said:

"Let his name be Theodore, for, truly, this infant will be a gift of God[13]."

After this vision, and at the end of Matins, they told each other their visions and marveled that both had been shown the same thing. They gave thanks to God, seeing in this a foretelling of the conception of a son, and returned home with joy. When Mary conceived, she kept herself in complete abstinence, as one bearing within herself the one who was to become a vessel of the Holy Spirit.

When the time was fulfilled, they had a son, whom they named Theodore, in accordance with the will of the Great Martyr, and whom they enlightened with holy baptism. The child grew up, and his parents gave the lad to be taught. But the lad, it turned out, was unfit for learning: his memory was weak, and he memorized his lessons slowly. In this, however, there was a special action of the Providence of God, Who wished that wisdom be imparted to the lad not by men but by the grace of the Lord. The lad often received reproofs both from his parents and from his teachers, and his peers mocked him, and after some time he came to the thought of asking God for enlightenment. He began to go often to church and to pray diligently.

One day, by the prompting of Divine inspiration, on a Sunday before the Divine Liturgy, he came into the church and, entering the sanctuary, hid himself beneath the Holy Table. No one noticed him. The hierarch began to celebrate the Holy Service, and the youth Theodore fell asleep there and slept until the end of the Liturgy. And in his sleep he had the following vision. He saw a youth, apparently his own age, shining like the sun, who fed him with honeyed juice and, placing a pastoral staff in his hands, blessed him. After this vision Theodore awoke from his sleep and came out from beneath the Table. The hierarch and those with him in the sanctuary, seeing him, were astonished and asked him how he had come to be there. He told them everything about himself and about the vision he had had. The hierarch was seized with fear and

13. Theodore, from the Greek, "gift of God."

at once enrolled the youth in his clergy, appointing him to the office of reader. From that time Theodore became quick-witted and apt for learning, surpassing in understanding not only his peers but also those older than himself.

He made progress in both spiritual and secular learning, which he studied under a teacher of philosophy known at that time in Edessa, named Sophronius; in a short time Theodore went through all the sciences with him.

When Theodore had reached the age of eighteen, his father Symeon reposed in the Lord, and a year later Mary, Theodore's mother, also passed to the Lord. Theodore distributed the large estate he had received from his parents to the poor, setting aside only one portion for his married sister. This sister had a son, Basil, who was granted the rank of bishop in the city of Emesa and was the writer of this Life of the Venerable Theodore.

After the death of his parents, at the age of twenty, the blessed Theodore set out for Jerusalem. Having venerated the Tomb of the Lord and visited all the holy places, he arrived at the Lavra of the Venerable Sabbas, which at that time was governed by Abba John, and, receiving the angelic habit there, he engaged in ascetic labors and undertook every toil of monastic obedience, participating without negligence for twelve years in all the services of the monastery. Then he asked the superior to allow him to remain alone in silence, in a separate cell; and having received such a cell, he spent his time in silence, serving God. His food consisted of a small piece of bread after sunset and a little water, and even that not every day. Sometimes he went two or three days without food; many times, for long periods, he withdrew into the Jordan desert, where without bread and without water he spent days and nights, praying all the while as though bodiless, and afterwards he returned again to his cell. He spent twenty-four years in such ascetic labors. Now a relative of his, a youth from the city of Edessa named Michael, heard of this ascetic life and came to Theodore, desiring to imitate his virtues. Theodore received him, tonsured him, and kept him with himself as a disciple, fellow-faster, and fellow-laborer. Michael learned to weave baskets, dishes and other articles, which, at the teach-

er's command, he carried to sell in the holy city of Jerusalem; and the money received from the sale he brought to his spiritual father Theodore, who sent it to the Lavra, so that they would not take food from the monastery without payment.

In those times Palestine and Phoenicia were no longer subject to the Greek emperors but to the Saracens[14]; for by God's permission, because of the sins of the local inhabitants, they had been placed under Saracen rulers. The Christians preserved their lives and freedom of faith only by paying large tributes. Yet the Lord at the same time comforted the believers, working signs and wonders at the holy Tomb, by which the mouths of the blasphemers of Christ, the Agarenes, were stopped. Many Arab elders came from afar to Jerusalem to see the Tomb of Christ, and there they paid honor to the Christian patriarch and the other hierarchs, and showed various kindnesses to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. At that time the Saracen king Adramelech, together with his wife Seida, set out from Babylon[15] to Jerusalem to see the Tomb of Christ and the wonders wrought there. Adramelech was a gentle man, who did not wish to wrong the Christians, although he took tribute from them. He loved to converse about the faith with learned men, and spoke in accordance with the notions of his people. While he was still in the holy city, the blessed Michael, disciple and kinsman of the Venerable Theodore, came to the holy city at his command to sell his handiwork, and lodged in the hostel of the monastery of the Venerable Sabbas that stood in the city. First he went to venerate the Tomb of Christ and the holy Golgotha[16], and then went out to the market with his handiwork. There he was met by a eunuch of Queen Seida. Seeing the

14. Saracens: inhabitants of Arabia. Originally this name was applied to a nomadic predatory tribe, but later Christian writers transferred the name to all Muslims in general.

15. Babylon: one of the most ancient cities of the world, built by Nimrod, son of Cush, a descendant of Ham (Gen. 10:6–10). Babylon was situated on both sides of the river Euphrates, not far from the Persian Gulf. Babylon stood on a great trade route between India and Phoenicia and therefore carried on the most extensive maritime and land trade.

16. Golgotha: a hill situated not far from Jerusalem (to the north-west of it). On this hill our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. "Golgotha" is a Hebrew word and in translation into our language means "skull," "the Place of the Skull." This name was given to the hill either because it had the form of a skull, or because it served among the Jews as a place of execution. Today on this site stands the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

fine baskets and dishes, he marveled at such beautiful workmanship and said to him:

"Come, youth, follow me, and you will receive a good price for all your wares."

Michael followed him like a meek lamb to the doors of the house of the new Egyptian woman[17]. The eunuch reported to the queen that a monk was selling very beautiful things, and the queen at once ordered the monk to be brought in to her. When the blessed Michael entered her presence, the wicked woman felt impure passion for the young monk. He was indeed handsome of face and well-proportioned; his beard was just beginning to show, he was slender and pale from constant fasting, and moreover in his outward comeliness was reflected the inner beauty of his virtuous soul. Fixing her gaze upon him, the queen kindled with passion and began to ask him who he was and whence he came. He answered:

"I am a poor monk from the Lavra of Saint Sabbas."

The queen said to him:

"I see, youth, that you are pale and thin; I pity you, and I would wish to do you good. If you are someone's slave, I will free you; if a captive, I will ransom you; if sick, I will heal you; if poor, I will enrich you."

The chaste Michael, hearing her flattering words, understood her treacherous intentions, and, turning his heart to God and raising the eyes of his soul to Him, prayed in his mind with such words:

"O Master who lovest mankind, Savior of captives and hope of the despairing! Thou who delivered Thy prophet Daniel from the jaws of lions (Dan. 14:37–52), deliver me also at this hour from this evil lioness, who desires to devour my soul and bring it down alive into hell!"

Then he said to the queen:

"I was once held captive by love of the world, but my Master Christ freed me from this by His grace. I was a slave to sin, but my Lord, who took upon Himself the form of a servant, set me free. He found me sick, and took my infirmities and made me entirely whole. I was poor and

17. An allusion to a similar event in Biblical history (Gen. 39:1–23).

destitute, but the Son of God, who has boundless riches, for my sake became poor and inexpressibly enriched me, so that I now lack nothing and do not need anything of yours. I have riches, health and freedom in myself, and by the mercy of my Savior I have many good things."

"Youth, if you will be my friend, you will enjoy many blessings; many will envy you, and you will be lord over many."

Saint Michael answered:

"I love my Master Christ, who loved me and gave up His life for me, and I wish to love Him with my whole soul. My friends are the ranks of the heavenly Angels and the choirs of all the saints who lived on earth an angelic life. They shine with inexpressible beauty and splendor, and I do not wish to have fellowship with you."

Then Queen Seida began to threaten him:

"If you do not fulfill my desire, I will hand your body over to torments and have it covered with wounds."

The monk answered:

"I strive to fulfill the will of my Lord; I will in no way submit to your will. And if you hand my body over to torments and tortures, you will only secure eternal blessedness for my soul. Know that you will not compel me to fulfill your desire by promises, nor frighten me by tortures."

The queen said:

"Wretch! How many blessings you deprive yourself of! Why do you not fulfill my desire? Am I not beautiful? Am I not pleasing to you, and do I not arouse passion in you?"

The Venerable one answered:

"You are not only not beautiful, but extremely repulsive, ugly and vile. You are worthy not of love, but of hatred!"

Then the impious queen, filled with extreme fury, ordered the chaste monk to be stretched out on the ground and beaten without mercy with sticks. For a long time she tormented him, and then sent him in chains to the king with this letter:

"This vile monk has dared to humiliate me with coarse abuse. If you let him live, you will see me dead."

The king, having read her letter, resolved to fulfill her desire so as not to grieve her, but first he himself wished to see the monk and ordered him to be brought before him.

When the Venerable one was brought before the king, he did not wish to bow down before him, as was customary when presenting oneself to the king and the nobles, but stood upright, bravely displaying his inner courage and defiance of his enemies. The king, looking at him with fury, said:

"Proud monk! What have you to say concerning the insolence you have committed? But I think you have nothing to say!"

The passion-bearer answered:

"A king must above all have three virtues: the fear of God, justice, and merciful long-suffering toward the guilty."

Hearing such words, the king grew calm, and, ordering Michael to be unbound, asked him whence he was. He said:

"I am by birth from the city of Edessa, and now I am a monk of the Lavra of Saint Sabbas."

When the king asked about the offense of which he was accused, the saint said:

It came to pass in his case as in the well-known parable: a man, by chance, came upon the basilisk, a serpent that kills people with a single glance. Fleeing from it, he met a lion, and it seemed better to him to remain with the lion than with the venomous basilisk that slays by its eyes alone.

The emperor understood the meaning of the parable and the innocence of the youth. The young man pleased him both by his beauty and by his prudence, and he wished to persuade him to abandon the Christian faith and turn to his own.

He had with him a Jew, learned and eloquent, whom he summoned, and in his presence he began to speak to the monk the following words:

"I pity you and spare your youth, seeing your understanding. Heed, then, my counsel, or even my command: turn away from the teaching of Christ, renounce the Christian faith, and join mine. Then you shall be to me as a son, and I will set you above all princes and rulers and make you steward of all my possessions."

The Venerable Michael, lifting his eyes to heaven and sighing from the depth of his heart, said:

"Let it not be, O Christ, my King, that I should turn away from Thee, my God, even though I should have to endure manifold torments."

To Adramelech he said:

"O King! I am a servant of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one indivisible Godhead. Thus do I confess, and from my confession I will not turn aside, but will abide in it always!"

The king said to him:

"What then? You are pleased, it seems, to remain in the humble station in which you find yourself?"

The saint answered:

"This monastic garb adorns me far more than your royal robes adorn you."

The king said:

"I have studied well my books, and I have also read your Christian writings, which you call the Gospel. But neither there nor here have I found commandments that bid us abhor marriage and meat."

The saint answered:

"The Christian life has two forms: the life of monks and the life of laymen. To laymen it is permitted to enter into marriage and to eat meat; for them there is no sin in this, provided they faithfully keep the other commandments of Christ. But we, who have renounced the world and vowed to remain in virginity, ought not to enter into marriage, for the teacher of the Gentiles, the Apostle Paul, said: 'He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife' (1 Cor. 7:32–33); and again, he who marries 'doeth well,' but he who does not marry 'doeth better' (1 Cor. 7:38). Therefore we, desiring to please our one Lord Jesus Christ, have chosen the better way of life, that of celibacy. We do not eat meat either, not because we consider it defiling, but for the sake of abstinence. Paul says: 'The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but right-

eousness, and peace' (Rom. 14:17), and other good works, as also fasting with holiness."

The king said:

"Paul deceived you!"

But the saint answered:

"He did not deceive us, but freed us from error and pointed the way to those blessings: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him' (1 Cor. 2:9). If, however, you, O king, truly wish to know the deceiver and forerunner of antichrist, it is Muhammad, who led astray the whole Saracen tribe and poured the poison of his impiety even upon Persia."

The Jew, who stood near the king, said to Saint Michael:

"And was not your Paul also a Jew?"

The saint answered:

"Although he was a Jew, yet by the Lord's command he set aside the shadow of the Old Testament and proclaimed the true grace, of which the prophets foretold in the Old Testament."

The Jew said:

"How could you have learned from Paul, whom you have not seen at all? Rather learn from me; for you both see me and hear me."

Michael said:

"If you teach as he did, I will listen to you. But if you bring in what is contrary to his teaching, then I flee from you as from a serpent, for Paul said: 'Whoever preaches to you what you did not receive, let him be accursed' (Gal. 1:9)."

The king said:

"Why do you refuse to acknowledge the prophet Muhammad? Did he not preach about God to the Saracens, the Arabs and the Persians? Did he not break down idols and teach a virtuous life?"

The saint answered:

"If someone should lead a man out of a prison and shut him up in another dark prison, has he thereby done that man a kindness? Has he not deceived him, by transferring him from one darkness to another? So has your Muhammad dealt with you. But we know that only one

true and sure path leads to the light: I speak of the right faith in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God in three Persons."

The king said:

"You think yourself wise and eloquent, but there are two of us and you are alone, and the victory will surely remain with us."

The saint answered:

"There are not two of you but three, and you will all be overcome by one, by the power of Christ."

The king asked:

"We two are conversing with you, I and the Jew. How then do you call the two of us three? Who is the third among us?"

The saint answered:

"In the midst of you, invisibly, is your teacher, the devil."

The king was angered at such words, yet he restrained his fury, hoping to overcome the soldier of Christ by words, and said to him:

"Cease your much speaking and submit to me. Confess that Muhammad is the prophet and envoy of God, and you shall be to me as a son and will have the opportunity to enjoy various pleasures."

The saint said:

"Do you, O king, acknowledge God and the Word of God?"

The king answered:

"Yes, I acknowledge it!"

The saint said to the Jew:

"Do you acknowledge that 'by the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth' (Ps. 32:6)?"

The Jew answered:

"Yes, it is so!"

Then, filled with the Spirit of Christ, the preacher of Christ said to them:

"Behold, you yourselves bear witness to the truth, though you do not believe as you ought. As for me, I will in no case listen to false teachings, but I abide by what I have said: Muhammad is neither a prophet nor an envoy of God, but a deceiver, a liar, and the forerunner of antichrist. And you, O Jew, know this firmly: Christ has already

come into the world, through the sinless birth from the Most Pure Virgin, and therefore you have nothing more to expect of His birth in the flesh. He whom you await will be the abominable antichrist, who will trouble the whole universe, and Muhammad is the deceiver, the forerunner of that antichrist!"

The Persians and Saracens present at this dispute were enraged at the saint's words, while the Christians rejoiced, saying to one another:

"By the grace of Christ, the monk has conquered!"

The king, angered at the Jew, said to him:

"In vain did I take you as my helper; I have received no help from you at all!"

He drove him away from himself, saying:

"I alone will overcome the monk and win him over to my side."

And Saint Michael, full of joy, said:

"Here is one already, by the power of my Christ, defeated, and he has fled in shame; two remain, but soon they too will be overcome, for my Defender is invincible and unconquerable!"

After this the king said to the passion-bearer:

"Of two things one remains for you, monk: either submit to me and accept our faith, or else die in the flower of your years by a dreadful death."

The saint said:

"O king! I ask of you one of three things: either release me to my elder, or send me to my Christ by whatever death you please, or become a Christian and be in communion with us!"

The king, unable to bear his bold words, was exceedingly angered and commanded that the martyr be set barefoot upon hot coals. The passion-bearer, however, stood unmoved upon the hot coals, supported by no one, bravely enduring the heat of the fire for the love of Christ, and even singing the psalms of David. He stood in this condition for a long time, and at last the king commanded that he be taken off the coals and given a cup of poison. The martyr took the cup, recited the Symbol of Faith, "I believe in one God," to the end, signed himself with the sign of the Cross, and drank the poison without any harm to himself. The king was amazed and commanded that one of the criminals

condemned to death be brought from the prison and given the same poison. When the criminal drank the cup of poison, he at once gave up the spirit with a terrible cry, and his body immediately decomposed, while Saint Michael remained whole and unharmed. Then all the Christians present were filled with great joy and with one voice glorified God.

The Saracens, however, feeling deep shame and considering all that had happened an insult to their faith, cried out to the king that he should either put that monk to death or give orders for the destruction of all the Christians. The king, to please the Saracens, commanded that the martyr be led outside the city and his head struck off with a sword. The martyr was led out to death, and crowds of Saracens and Christians followed him to the place of execution. Arriving at the appointed place, the martyr turned his face to the east, and, raising his eyes and hands to heaven, prayed thus:

"Lord Almighty, Most High, Without Beginning, Ever-Existing, Creator of every creature, King of kings and Lord of lords! I thank Thee that Thou hast granted me to finish my ascetic labor. And now I beseech Thy goodness: let not the hand of the devil touch me, nor let him cast me into the depth of perdition, but through Thy holy Angels take my soul and bring me into the mansions of repose. Thee, O Lord, I have loved, and Thee I sing and glorify, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one Godhead and Kingdom, for to Thee belongs glory forever. Amen."

Having prayed thus and bidden farewell to the faithful, he bowed his head beneath the sword and died, struck off by the blade.[18] The Christians offered glory to God, who had strengthened His martyr.

The monks who dwelt in the monastery hostel of St. Sabbas in Jerusalem wished to take the body of the martyr and carry it to the Lavra, but the Christians living in Jerusalem opposed this, saying: "Here he suffered, and here he must be laid, so that his body may be a holy relic and convey a blessing to the faithful." The monks, on the contrary, said that he had been brought up in the desert, that he was a child of the

18. The repose of St. Michael took place at the beginning of the 8th century.

Venerable Father Sabbas, and that he should not be buried anywhere but in the Lavra. They disputed long among themselves, and word of their dispute reached the emperor himself, who decreed that the body of the martyr should be taken by the monks; they then took it and brought it to the hostel.

On that same day the Venerable Theodore received a revelation concerning St. Michael, and, coming into the church, said to the abbot and the brethren:

"Today our brother Michael has accomplished his martyr's contest in the city."

The abbot at once sent the brethren to bring the body of the martyr with honor to the Lavra. They went and brought it from there by night, so that the Saracens might not inflict any outrage upon the body of the martyr. The Lord, however, manifested a miracle over the relics of His servant: a pillar of fire descended from heaven and went before those who bore the body of the martyr, illuminating them. Some of the townspeople who did not sleep that night also saw this pillar go in the direction of the Lavra and light up that region.

The Venerable Theodore went out to meet the martyr, shedding abundant tears, which were caused partly by sorrow and partly by joy. He wept for St. Michael as for a disciple and kinsman, and rejoiced that his beloved companion had been granted the crown of martyrdom. The abbot of the Lavra also went out with the whole brotherhood to meet him, with candles and censers, chanting hymns in honor of the martyrs. Thus they carried the body of St. Michael into the church.

At that time there was in the Lavra a sick monk named George, who had lain ill for three years and whom the Venerable Michael had often visited. This paralytic heard of Michael's death and began to beg the brethren going to the church that he too might be carried there, so that he could see the martyr, who had been a beloved brother to him. But no one paid heed to him, and all passed by. Then the sick man, in great grief, shed tears and said:

"Brother Michael! If you have found grace with God and received boldness to intercede before Christ, remember me too, your friend, and

ask for me, the paralytic, strength, so that I too may come and see you and give you the kiss in the Lord."

No sooner had he said this than he suddenly felt himself strong, and he who could not turn over while lying on his bed rose from it in health. He came into the church, fell down before the body of the martyr, and kissed it with tears, saying:

"Truly, my beloved brother, you have great boldness before Christ; truly you have shown perfect love to me, a sufferer: you served me, unworthy as I am, much even during your life, and, having departed to Christ, you suddenly granted me unexpected health."

The brethren, having chanted the customary funeral hymns, laid the martyr in the tomb of the holy fathers who had suffered before.

Thus did the holy Venerable Martyr Michael end his life on the 9th day of the month of July. Afterwards he often appeared to the Venerable Theodore in nocturnal visions, adorned with the martyr's garment and crown and illumined with ineffable light. He said:

"Do not grieve for me, Father, for I have received mercy from Christ my God, from Whom a recompense is also prepared for you for the instructions you gave me."

Here ends the account of the holy martyr Michael, and we turn again to the life of the Venerable Theodore.

The Lord, who orders all things for good, would no longer hide under a bushel such a lamp as the blessed Theodore, who had dwelt in the desert and could by his virtuous life benefit many and shine as a light to the world. Therefore He set him in a high episcopal ministry.

During the holy Great Lent, the most holy Patriarch of Antioch came to Jerusalem to venerate the life-giving tomb of Christ and on business of his Church. At that time, when there were two patriarchs in Jerusalem, many bishops of the Jerusalem and Antiochian eparchies were also there. Certain respected representatives of the clergy and laity came from the city of Edessa to Jerusalem to ask for a bishop for the city of Edessa, since its bishop had died. They began to seek a man worthy of that rank and throne, and the most holy Patriarch of Jerusalem, being guided by the Spirit of God, remembered the blessed Theodore and said:

"In my opinion no one leads such an angel-like life and at the same time is so capable of governing church affairs as the wondrous silent one Theodore, a monk of the Lavra of the Venerable Sabbas."

The Palestinian fathers fully agreed with the patriarch's judgment of St. Theodore, for all in Palestine knew well of Theodore's ascetic life. The whole council rejoiced, and at once the patriarchs sent for Theodore and named him bishop, although he tearfully refused this rank. They commanded him to pass through the customary church degrees and receive ordination to the priesthood. The envoys from Edessa also rejoiced at the bishop chosen for them, for they had heard of his God-pleasing life and knew that he was a native of their city.

When Maundy Thursday, the day of the Lord's Last Supper, arrived, both patriarchs served with a multitude of bishops and at that time consecrated the Venerable Theodore as bishop. During the consecration a great miracle took place before all. A dove, whiter than snow, began to hover at the top of the church and then descended onto the head of the bishop being ordained. The patriarchs, bishops and priests who saw this marveled and glorified God and said:

"Truly this man is worthy of the episcopal rank!"

After the consecration was completed, the Venerable Theodore shone wholly with grace like an Angel of God, and his whole outward appearance showed him to be the most perfect God-bearer. On the holy and Great Saturday, and also on the bright feast of the Resurrection of Christ, he served together with both patriarchs; on the Monday of bright week he set out for the Lavra to take leave of the holy fathers. They both rejoiced and wept: they rejoiced that their brother had been granted the episcopal rank, and wept that they were losing close fellowship with so great a father. St. Theodore also wept much, leaving his dear friends, his hermit's cell and the silence he desired, and, having bidden farewell to all, returned to the holy city with tears. Afterwards, after Thomas Sunday, at the request of the Edessenes, he set out for Edessa without further delay. With him was Basil, the writer of his life, who was his nephew through his sister. When they reached the river Euphrates and made camp for the night in tents pitched on its

bank, the Venerable Theodore, grieving that he had to leave the holy city and the holy Lavra, uttered the words of the psalmist:

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion" (Ps. 136:1).

Having said these words, he wept and resolved to flee, but the Edessenes, perceiving his intention, posted guards so as not to lose their shepherd. And that night the Venerable Theodore had a vision. Someone appeared to him and said:

"Do not be like the slothful servant who hid in the earth the talent given him by the Lord (Mt. 25:18), but be like the servant who received five talents and gained ten, for which he received authority over ten cities (Lk. 19:16–17). Do not refuse to bear the yoke of Christ laid upon you!"

After this vision St. Theodore said:

"May the will of the Lord be done!"

And he set out with the Edessenes, resolved no longer to abandon his new ministry and no longer grieving over the lot that had fallen to him.

When they drew near to Edessa, the whole city came out to meet the new archpastor, and the Orthodox received him with ineffable joy. St. Theodore also rejoiced in spirit when he saw the building of the cathedral church in Edessa, which in size and beauty was scarcely inferior to the Church of the Resurrection of Christ in Jerusalem. Having blessed everyone, he fell down before the honorable reliquary of the holy martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Abibus, and wept. Thus the hierarch of Christ took up his throne (at that time in the Greek empire Michael reigned with his mother Theodora[19]), and he zealously tended the flock entrusted to him by God, nourishing it with God-inspired teachings in word and deed, and guiding it on the path of salvation by the example of his virtuous life. And since in that city there were not a few heresies—Nestorian[20], Severian[21], Eutychian[22] and Manichaean[23]—he grieved over this and expended no small labor in the struggle against the heretics, seeing in them ravening beasts. The hierarch of Christ

19. The Empress Theodora governed the Greek Empire from 842 to 855; her son Michael (III) reigned from 855 to 867.

stirred joy in the Orthodox and vexation in the heretics; the Orthodox rejoiced that they had such a God-wise shepherd and teacher, while the heretics mourned and devised evil against him. But he was firm as adamant, and no assaults could deprive him of courage. It was bitter for him to see sinners abandoning the true faith, but on the other hand he rejoiced at the sight of virtuous men firmly established in piety, and he loved often to converse with them in friendly fashion in private.

At that time, near Edessa, beside the monastery of St. George the Great Martyr, where nuns also lived lives of fasting, there lived a Stylite held in high regard by all, named Theodosius, a man of exalted life, advanced in years (he was already more than a hundred years old), who possessed from God a special gift of foresight. The Venerable Bishop Theodore often visited him, and in conversing with him as with a sincere friend he found consolation. The Stylite said to him:

"Do not grow weary, servant of the Lord, in your labors, and let not the yoke of the Lord seem heavy to you. All will end well for you, and

20. Nestorianism was founded by Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople (bishop from 428 to 431), who taught that Jesus Christ is not the true God, but only a man, the son of Joseph and Mary, who was granted, for the sanctity of His life, a special grace of God, and who saves us not by His redemptive merits, but only by the teaching and example of His life. Nestorianism was condemned at the III Ecumenical Council held at Ephesus (in 431). Despite the conciliar condemnation, the Nestorian heresy existed in some places, especially in Persia, India and China, until the 8th century.

21. Severus, Patriarch of Antioch (from 512 to 518), was the founder of the Severian heresy. Severianism represents a modified Monophysite heresy (see the following note). The Severians, although, like the Monophysite heretics, they acknowledged only one nature in Jesus Christ, the divine, admitted in it a difference of divine and human properties; thus they asserted that the flesh of Christ before the Resurrection was corruptible, like ours.

22. The Eutychian heresy, founded by Eutyches, archimandrite of Constantinople, wrongly taught that Jesus Christ had only one divine nature, 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-natured"). This heresy was condemned at the IV Ecumenical Council, held at Chalcedon in 451, but continued to exist in weakened form for several centuries after the conciliar condemnation.

23. Manichaeism: a heretical false teaching representing a mixture of Christianity with the principles of the Persian religion of Zoroaster. The founder of Manichaeism was Manes, a Persian magus. Manes taught that from eternity there exist two independent kingdoms, of good and of evil, which are in constant struggle with each other. Man, according to the teaching of Manes, also consists of a combination of two elements, light and darkness, and has as it were two souls, a good and an evil, which constantly struggle with each other. In life the Manichaeans were very abstinent: they preached celibacy and constant fasting. Manichaeism was rather widely spread in the 3rd and 4th centuries.

though many of the heretics devise evil against you, they will not succeed in their intentions. The Lord will confound their plans, and they will be vanquished, put to shame, and driven from the courts of the church." These words of the Stylite were fulfilled in due time, as will be told hereafter. Here, however, we must speak also of the frequent spiritual conversations of the bishop with the Stylite, in which the Stylite communicated much that was profitable to the bishop. Once he related to him the following.

"There was," said the Stylite, "in this city many years ago a man named Ader, noble and distinguished and very wealthy, like the righteous Job of old. He was merciful to all, gave alms to the poor without stint, made offerings to the monastic communities, and often came to me to converse about spiritual matters. He had a wife and three children, and he was a righteous man, guileless, gentle, meek, young in years and of sound health. Once he came to me, as was his custom, and I saw that he was very sorrowful. I said to him:

"Why are you sorrowful, my spiritual child?"

He, shedding tears, answered:

"Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked I must go down into the grave. I shall take nothing with me of temporal wealth or vain glory. David said: 'He heaps up riches and knows not who shall gather them' (Ps. 38:7), 'his glory shall not descend after him' (Ps. 48:18). A man leaves his wealth to others, and it cannot be otherwise. And the Apostle says: 'the fashion of this world passeth away' (1 Cor. 7:31). I hear also how Christ our Savior cries out: 'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple' (Lk. 14:33), and again: 'He that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me' (Mt. 10:38). Therefore, Father, I wish to leave everything for love of God, both wife and children and property, and to live for the One Lord who brought me from non-being into being. And you, give me your fatherly blessing and one loaf from your cell, and pray for me!"

I marveled at his words and said to him:

"Good is your intention, I see, but you take upon yourself a great labor. He that endureth to the end shall be saved (Mt. 24:13), so take

heed, my child, lest at the last you repent. It is better not to make a vow at all than, having made one, not to fulfill it. But if you fulfill it, you will surely be blessed, having exchanged the temporal for the eternal."

He said:

"Let the will of the Lord be done!"

After this I prayed over him, and giving him one loaf, I dismissed him. He, fleeing from the turbulent world as from a prison, arrived at Jerusalem, and after praying fervently at the tomb of Christ and visiting all the holy places, went to the Lavra of St. Sabbas and took monastic tonsure, being renamed from Ader to Athanasius. He led the life of a true monk, pleased God, and departed to Him. His virtuous wife, after his departure, mourned her solitude for a long time, and often, as if seeing him before her, addressed him:

"O my lord," she said, "you strove to save your soul, and upon me alone you laid the care of your children. Let the All-Seeing God see this, and let Him judge between me and you!"

After some time, one night, her husband appeared to her in a dream, with a radiant face and in white shining raiment, and said to her:

"Cease weeping and complaining against me. Behold, I take the children to myself; you, strive to save your soul." And to me the same man appeared in the same form and said:

"In the monastery near you, the oldest anchoress will depart to the Lord in three days; put my wife there in her place, that she may live in her cell, fasting and in complete solitude. Let the youngest child also remain with her until he grows up. He will follow in my steps and will ascend the apostolic throne in Jerusalem."

After this vision, on the third day the old anchoress in that monastery departed, and afterwards two of Ader's children also died. Only one remained, the youngest child, who was also sick unto death. The mother, grieving both for the loss of her husband and the death of two children, and seeing that her last child was also dying, wept bitterly in her great sorrow; then, taking the infant in her arms, she ran to me, unworthy as I am. Halfway along the road the infant died in the mother's arms, and the mother did not know what to do in so sorrowful a

plight. By chance, or rather by divine providence, a harlot met her, and the mother, at once placing the dead child in her arms, threw herself at her feet, begging her with tears to pray to God for the child. The harlot, astonished at such a request, said that she was an open sinner, guilty of many criminal and filthy deeds, and therefore did not dare to approach God with intercession, and could not even lift her eyes to heaven or open her lips in prayer. The mother, as if out of her mind with grief, continued, embracing her feet, to beseech her. Then the harlot, turning her face to the east, sighed from the depths of her heart, and striking her breast and weeping, began to pray thus:

"I am unworthy, O Lord, because of the multitude of my sins, to look up to the heights of heaven and with my filthy lips to name Thy holy name; but like the ancient harlot who wept at Thy feet (Lk. 7:36–50), I implore Thy loving-kindness: pour out now upon us from Thy tender mercy Thy compassion! That sinner begged forgiveness of her sins, and I, not daring to ask forgiveness for my countless transgressions, pray for this innocent infant, as this chaste servant of Thine urgently begs me. O Giver of life, Savior of all! Grant life to this child. If I, a woman of hard and unmerciful heart, grieve for him, how much more Thou, who by Thy very nature art merciful and loving to man, hast compassion on Thy creature!"

O ineffable tenderness of God! When the sinner prayed in this way, the child came to life. God heard the openly sinful woman who prayed with contrite heart and humbly confessed her sins, and at her prayers He raised up the dead, foreseeing her future conversion and her holy life to come. The mother, seeing the child alive, rejoiced exceedingly and gave thanks to God, while the harlot, at the sight of such a miracle, was struck with awe, and, being unable to say a single word, fell prostrate on the ground, pouring forth streams of tears. So wondrous is God in His works! He raised up the child, comforted the grieving mother, inclined the harlot to sincere repentance, and prepared for Himself a worthy servant for the office of bishop. This child, raised from the dead, afterwards became Patriarch of Jerusalem.

While all this was taking place on the road, I was looking down from my pillar, and by divine revelation I saw a bright light descend

from heaven and illumine the praying harlot, the dead child, and the weeping mother. Calling my disciple, I sent him for both women, and they came and told me, in answer to my questions, everything in detail, in agreement with what the Lord had revealed to me. The wife of Ader said:

"Judge, honorable father, between me and my husband, your spiritual son. I married him as a virgin, became the mother of three children, and he, without any fault on my part, went away no one knows where. When I had spent much time in tears, he once appeared to me in a dream, clothed in a bright garment, and said:

"Behold, I take the infants to myself, and you, if you wish, save your soul!"

After this vision my two children died, and now he wishes to take the last also, and leave me to die of anguish and grief. If he does this at your bidding, then let God judge between you and me!"

I said to her:

"Daughter, do not grieve; your son will not die but will remain alive and will be granted great glory. As for you, following the counsel of your husband, take care for the salvation of your soul. Behold, a solitary cell has been prepared for you in the monastery near me. A God-pleasing servant of Christ, grown old in fasting, has departed; be her successor and imitate her life."

The woman agreed to my proposal at once, and afterwards the sinful woman too, with tears, begged that she be received as one repentant and counted among the holy ascetics.

After some time both women, having distributed all their possessions to the poor, entered the monastery of the holy ascetics, became most diligent nuns, and by their labors pleased God. The child who had been raised, having come of age, set out for Palestine, and being at the Lavra of St. Sabbas learned that his father had lived the monastic life there. He himself received tonsure there and, requesting his father's cell, through long ascetic labors won respect among the Palestinian fathers. By God's providence he was raised to the Patriarchal throne of Jerusalem, governed the Church of Christ wisely for seven years, and

then, having completed his course in purity, passed over into the eternal mansions.

This account from the wondrous stylite gave great consolation to St. Theodore, Hierarch of Christ, and he asked the stylite:

"Tell me, spiritual father, how long you have lived on this pillar, and in general, I beg you, for the Lord's sake, tell me everything about your life, hiding nothing."

The elder, sighing from the depths of his heart and shedding tears, said:

"For the sake of the Lord's name and out of true love, I will tell you everything, good shepherd of Christ's rational flock; but keep this in secret until the Lord takes me from this life. In the days of my youth, I and my elder brother John renounced the world. For three years we labored in a monastery, and then a desire arose in us to live a solitary life in the desert. On the counsel of our spiritual father, we went out into the desert lying near Babylon, and finding there two caves not far from one another, we began to live in them in solitude, each in his own cave. Our food consisted of greens and the fruits of trees, such as can be found in the desert; on Saturday and Sunday we together performed prayers and sang psalms; having eaten together the customary desert fare, we again went off to our caves, praying and meditating on God in solitude. As we walked about the desert, we also took care not to meet one another, and only the Angel of the Lord often visited and comforted us in our solitude. Once, when we were walking in the desert separately, gathering plants, I saw my brother in the distance; he, walking, suddenly stopped in amazement, and then, standing still for a little while, made the sign of the Cross over himself, leaped over a place lying before him as though over some kind of net, and quickly ran off to his cave. I too was astonished at my brother's action and went to see what had made my brother take flight. Approaching that place, I saw a great quantity of spilled gold; and, having offered a prayer and taken off my mantle, I gathered the spilled gold into it and barely carried it to the cave, saying nothing about it to my brother. Then I went to the city and bought a good, sturdy house, with large rooms and a spring of clean water. There I set up a church and a monastery, gathered forty monks,

established a guesthouse and an infirmary for the comfort of travelers and the sick, and bought a considerable amount of land for the monastery. Having arranged everything, I found a wise man whom I appointed abbot of that monastery. After covering all the expenses of setting up the monastery, I still had two thousand gold coins left, of which I gave one thousand to the abbot for the needs of the monastery, and distributed the other thousand to the poor, keeping not a single coin for myself. Then, taking leave of the abbot and the brotherhood, I returned again to the desert to seek out my brother. As I was going to the desert, a proud thought arose in my heart: here my brother was unable to make use of the gold he had found for a good deed, while I have accomplished something great and pleasing to God. Thinking thus, I drew near the place where my brother lived, and the proud thought of my superiority over my brother did not leave me. And then the Angel of the Lord, who had visited me before, came out to meet me, and, looking at me sternly, said angrily:

"Why do you vaunt yourself and exalt yourself above your brother? I tell you truly that all your long labor, all your concern for the establishment of the monastery, is not to be compared with what your brother did in leaping over the heap of gold he had found. He did not leap over gold, but over a great chasm which lies between the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:26–31); he flew on light wings, and the bosom of Abraham awaits him. He strove to please God, you to please men. Therefore, without doubt your brother is higher than you before God, and you will in no way be equal to him, although you consider yourself better than he. For this vanity you will not see either him or me during this life, and you will have to shed many tears in order to propitiate God."

Having said this, the Angel vanished from my eyes, and I hastened to the cave where my brother had lived, but I no longer found him there. I wept loudly, to the point of losing my strength; and then, after seven days, I heard from afar the voice of the Angel, saying to me:

"You must go to the city of Edessa, and there, near the church of St. George, climb onto a pillar and remain in repentance until the Lord has mercy upon you."

So I went weeping out of the desert, and, coming here, I ascended this pillar. Here I spent forty-nine years, struggling with various thoughts that surrounded me like a dark cloud, and inconsolable sorrow filled my heart. In the fiftieth year, on one of the Saturdays, late in the evening, I felt in my inner being a certain sweet illumination, with which the dark cloud of the thoughts that oppressed me also dispersed. All that night I spent without sleep, sending up prayers to God with heartfelt tenderness and watering my face with tears of consolation. When Sunday came and I was singing the usual psalms of the third hour, suddenly a holy Angel appeared before me and said:

"Peace to you and salvation!"

Comforted by this appearance, I fell to the ground and said with tears:

"Why have you cast me from your face and separated me from my brother? Now I am subjected to many temptations!"

The Angel, taking me by the hand, raised me up and said to me:

"Because of the pride with which you belittled your brother in your thoughts, I hid from your eyes, but I did not altogether leave you; I remained invisibly with you, keeping you as God commanded me. Now, however, for your humility the Lord has remembered you and sent me, that I might be openly with you both in this life and in the life to come. The Lord now grants you the gracious gift of clairvoyance, that you may recognize righteous and sinful people, rejoice over the righteous, and pray for sinners, that they may turn from a sinful life to repentance. And your brother is alive and all the time prays to the Lord for you, but you will see him only in the life to come."

"That is all I could tell you, hierarch of God, about my life!"

Then St. Theodore asked him how he recognized the righteous and the sinners. The stylite answered:

"If a righteous and God-fearing man passes by this place, I see the grace of God shining over him; around him on both sides walk holy and most radiant Angels, and in the distance demons walk, not daring to approach him. But if a sinner passes by me, I see around him a host of exulting demons, and in the distance an Angel walks, lamenting and weeping over the sinner's perdition. And when the demons wish utterly

to destroy that man, the Angel, with a fiery weapon in his hands, drives them away."

St. Theodore was much consoled by such soul-profitable conversations with the Venerable stylite, giving thanks to God that it had befallen him to find among his flock such a man, a God-inspired servant of the Lord and a far-seeing father. From then on he often visited him and held spiritual conversations with him.

Thus wisely did St. Theodore shepherd Christ's flock, striving to uproot the heresies that had multiplied. The heretics, however, were filled with fury and began openly to plot against the holy pastor. They resolved to burst into the church during divine service with an armed mob, to kill the pastor and scatter the sheep; but this did not succeed for them, and the word of Scripture was fulfilled upon them: "they devised plans, but could not [carry them out]" (Ps. 20:12). Every time they approached the church, the power of God prevented them from entering: at times their hands grew numb, and at times a fiery flame suddenly burst out of the church toward them and drove them back. For a long time they were at a loss as to what to do, but then they decided to act differently. They stirred up against the Church of God and against the hierarch the rulers of that region, the Agarenes (Edessa was under the dominion of the Saracens), giving them great gifts; and, with their permission and with their assistance, they seized from the Church many properties, villages, fields, gardens, and everything else from which the bishop's household and the rest of the clergy received their means of livelihood. They, and chiefly the wealthy Manichaeans, did much injury and violence also to the other Orthodox Christians.

It fell to St. Theodore to go to Babylon, to the Saracen king named Mavias, successor of Adramelech, to complain to him of the injuries inflicted upon the Church, and to ask for the cessation of these injuries and a just investigation of the whole affair. First St. Theodore went to seek counsel from the Venerable stylite. The stylite approved his intention and foretold to him all that was to befall him. He said that the hierarch would successfully accomplish the task he had set himself, and that he would not only obtain satisfaction for all the needs of the Church, but would also convert the king himself to the Christian faith.

The stylite advised him to seek out also his brother, John, who was to be somewhere higher than Babylon, in the desert, and he even wrote a letter to his brother. The hierarch, however, after taking leave of the stylite, returned to the episcopal residence, and within a few days prepared for the journey; and, having prayed to God for his flock and for himself, he set out on the road he had chosen.

Having reached Babylon, St. Theodore went to the Christian church and presented himself to the metropolitan there, who received the saint with joy and gave him lodging in his own house. When he began to ask Theodore about the purpose of his journey, Theodore related in detail all the attacks of the heretics upon the Church, the plundering of church property, and the sufferings of the Orthodox people. At that time two courtiers happened to be with the metropolitan: one was the chief of the royal scribes, the other the chief of the physicians. Both were Orthodox Christians. Hearing the bishop's account, they sympathized with him from the depths of their hearts. Then the metropolitan told the courtiers to remind the tsar of the arrival of the bishop from Edessa, but they answered:

"This is not the time. The tsar is gravely ill; his sight has been dulled by the sickness, and there are sores upon his eyes. Moreover, his liver is inflamed, and in our judgment this is an incurable disease. Can one approach him now with any matter of business?"

But St. Theodore said to them:

"Who knows, my lords? Perhaps the Lord will heal him for the sake of my humility?"

They answered him:

"If you are skilled in healing, or if you have from God the grace of cures, then this is precisely the time for you to obtain a favorable decision."

In the morning the chief of the physicians went to the tsar to render him his customary medical care, and told him that the bishop who had come from Edessa healed diseases most successfully. The tsar at once ordered that he be summoned, and the bishop went to the tsar, praying and singing in his heart the psalm of David: "He that dwelleth under

the shelter of the Most High" (Ps. 90:1–16). As he entered the royal bedchamber, the sick tsar said in a barely audible voice:

"Bishop! If you can, help me. I am suffering terribly and am already drawing near to death."

The hierarch of Christ, lifting the eyes of his heart to God and, with firm faith, calling upon the Lord Christ, the swift Physician, commanded that a clean vessel and clean water be brought. Having with him a little earth from the life-giving tomb of Christ, he dissolved this earth in the water, and had the tsar drink part of this water, and with the remainder anointed his head, brow, eyelids, eyes, heart and shoulders. After this he asked that the tsar be allowed to fall into a peaceful sleep, while he himself withdrew to the inn. The sick tsar fell into a deep sleep, and during his sleep every sickness left him, and by the grace of Christ and through the prayers of St. Theodore the bishop he was returned from the gates of death. Awakening, the tsar felt himself completely healthy, and his eyes saw clearly. He greatly marveled at so swift and unexpected a full healing, and in his joy he at once ordered that this holy bishop, so skilled in healing, be summoned to him, and he thanked and praised him at length. The saint then bade the tsar take food, and the tsar ate and drank like a man in perfect health.

On the following morning the tsar assembled all his highest nobles and, seated upon his lofty throne, showed everyone clearly that he had recovered. All rejoiced at the tsar's healing, and the tsar that day held a great feast for all the nobles, city governors, the army, and the whole people. A joyful banquet began, and the tsar honored St. Theodore the bishop before the whole assembly, showered him with great gifts, and called him the light of his eyes. On the third day the tsar summoned him, and St. Theodore was shown special honor, and the tsar said:

"Man of God, light of my eyes! Tell me, for what cause have you come here? Whatever you ask of me, I will fulfill."

Then the hierarch of Christ began to relate to the tsar in every detail all the wrongs inflicted upon the holy Church and the Orthodox Christians, the plundering of church estates, and oppression and attacks of every kind. After this the tsar at once ordered that letters be written to the governors of Cilicia, Syria and Mesopotamia[24], that they should hasten to restore to the Church of Edessa all its possessions, and that the guilty be brought to trial for the wrongs done to the Christians. The tsar further commanded that the heretics join the Catholic Church; and if they would not obey this order, he commanded that the tongues of the Manichaeans be cut out, and that the Nestorians, Severians and Eutychians be expelled from the city, and their places of assembly be destroyed. When this royal decree had been written down, the tsar said to the saint:

"Father, remain here with us for some time, and I will send the voivode with my decree, that he may carry it out exactly. Send with him one of your disciples, and take no further care about anything: everything will be done according to your wish!"

Thus a voivode was sent from the tsar, and three clerics from the bishop, and soon word came from Edessa that everything there had been put in order. Many of the heretics, frightened by the tsar's threats, joined the Orthodox Church; others, who continued to persist in their impiety, suffered bodily punishments or were exiled.

While staying in Babylon, the holy bishop Theodore was often invited to the tsar as a physician, and in this way he gradually sowed the seeds of the teaching of Christ. These seeds fell on the good soil of the tsar's heart, and the tsar was already in part beginning to be enlightened by the light of true knowledge. Afterwards the hierarch asked the tsar's permission to go for a short time into the desert, to find the desert-dweller who had been pointed out to him by the stylite. When permission was given, he went with two of his disciples, and, having left the city about a hundred poprishche, by the help of God he found, in the desert, in a scarcely accessible dark cave, the Venerable John, brother of the stylite. The venerable man himself came out to meet the

24. Mesopotamia: a stony and sandy land lying between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, extending from Armenia in the north to the Persian Gulf in the south.

bishop and called the hierarch and his disciples by name. Having offered prayer and greeted one another, they sat down and entered into spiritual conversation. The Venerable John greatly resembled his brother, the stylite Theodosius. He asked the hierarch that he would celebrate the Divine Liturgy in his cave and commune him with the Most Pure Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, and the bishop fulfilled his desire: he celebrated the liturgy and communed him. After receiving the holy Communion, the hermit was filled with spiritual joy and offered his guests a desert meal, which seemed to them unusually delicious. Having eaten, they gave thanks to God and again took up spiritual conversation. The elder said to the bishop:

"Father! Where is the letter which my brother, the stylite, wrote to me?"

The bishop, marveling at the elder's clairvoyance, said to him:

"Who told you, abba, that I have a letter to you from your brother?"

The Venerable elder answered:

"At the very hour when the letter was written, it was read to me, and at once, on the reverse side of the letter, I gave my brother an answer."

The bishop took the letter from his bag, still sealed, and wished to give it to the hermit, but he asked the bishop to break the seal and read it. When the bishop had done as he wished, he found on the reverse side of the letter the following words:

"John, the last among monks, from the caves of Babylon, to Theodosius the stylite of Syria, my own brother, wishes to rejoice in the Lord! I read your letter at the very time it was written, and at that same time I wrote you an answer, for if we are far from one another in body, yet my soul constantly abides with you, and what God reveals to you is known to me also. Everything you have written about the holy bishop is coming to pass, through the cooperation of Divine Providence. The holy Church is being strengthened, the heretics are being put to shame and will be driven out, and the unbelieving tsar, together with the enlightenment of his bodily eyes, is receiving the enlightenment of his spiritual eyes also. Be well in the Lord, brother, and pray to the

Lord Christ for me, that in the life to come we may see one another and abide together inseparably."

Having read with wonder such a marvelous answer, the bishop recalled the prophet Habakkuk, who was carried by an Angel from Judea to Babylon to Daniel, and returned at that same hour to Judea, and he said to himself:

"Almighty God, who in ancient times worked such a miracle, could also work a similar one now: He is wonderful in His saints" (Ps. 67:36).

The holy bishop spent a day and a night with the venerable hermit, and in the morning, after the completion of prayer, he took leave of him and returned to Babylon, to the tsar. The tsar said to him:

"I would wish, most beloved father, never to part from you either in this life or in the life to come, so closely has my soul been joined to you in the bond of love!"

The bishop answered:

"I see that the doors between you and me are open. I have no need to go out, and you have no need to come in to me. But when the doors are closed, we shall be separated from one another, and about this I grieve greatly in my soul."

The tsar said:

"What are these doors, and what does their closing mean? I beg you, tell me, that I may understand it!"

Then the hierarch, taking the Holy Gospel from his bosom, explained it in a language understandable to the tsar. The tsar, listening attentively, was moved in his heart and kindled with love for Christ.

At this time there were with him only three most faithful servants, natives of Arabia, who also listened with tenderness to the Holy Gospel, the reading of which the bishop continued until evening. On the following morning the king, free from affairs of state, again summoned the holy hierarch, as if to ask his counsel as a physician, but in truth in order to receive through him a remedy for his soul; and again for the whole day he attentively listened to the narratives of the Gospel and the teachings of the Savior, and afterwards he himself and his three servants believed in Christ. The holy hierarch told them to prepare them-

selves for receiving holy Baptism. He appointed for them a certain period of fasting, and taught them to pray to God, writing out for them in their language the Trisagion, the Our Father and other prayers, as well as the Symbol of Faith, "I believe in one God." All this was done in secret, so that the Saracens, whom the king feared, should not learn of it. Each day the bishop visited the king as a physician and in private taught the king, and afterwards also his three servants, the mysteries of the holy faith. After some time he secretly baptized the king and his three servants, and named the king John. In the royal bedchamber he celebrated the holy Liturgy and gave the newly baptized Communion of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, and all of them together rejoiced with great joy. The holy Angels also rejoiced at the conversion of sinners, and within the inner royal chambers the rejoicing was accomplished with the invisible participation of the heavenly powers.

The newly enlightened King John, out of love for Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the human race, who suffered on the cross, very much desired to have a particle of the venerable and Life-giving Wood of the Cross of the Lord, on which our Lord had been nailed. But since the Cross-Tree at that time was not in Jerusalem, having been carried away by the Greek emperors to Constantinople,[25] the holy hierarch of Christ, Theodore, had to set out for Constantinople with a royal letter, which read as follows:

"To the most exalted and pious autocrat of the Greek kingdom, Emperor Michael, with his pious and God-wise mother, Theodora, John, Emperor of the Saracens, wishes to rejoice in the Lord! I give thanks to the most merciful God, who delivered me from error and granted me to know the truth of the holy Gospel and to confess the Christian faith, and I beg Your Imperial Piety to bestow upon me a portion of the life-giving and venerable Wood of the Cross, on which my Christ was crucified. I wish to have it with me as my protector."

25. The Precious Wood of the Cross of the Lord was taken from Jerusalem by the Persian king Chosroes II Parviz (reigned from 590 to 628) in 614, during the war with the Greek emperor Phocas. The Cross was returned to the Greeks in 628 by Chosroes II's successor Siroes, after the conclusion of peace with the Greek emperor Heraclius.

With such a letter and great gifts, the Tsar of the Saracens sent the holy bishop Theodore to the Greek emperor, and when he arrived at Constantinople and gave the emperor the letter with the gifts, he was received with honor by the emperor and the most holy patriarch.

It happened at that time that the mother of the tsar, Theodora, fell ill in her eyes, upon which white films had appeared that clouded her sight; and so the holy hierarch of Christ, taking earth from the Lord's Tomb and mixing it with pure water, anointed her eyes and healed her. And not only the empress, but also other sick persons he often granted healing.

The emperor then ordered a golden casket adorned with precious stones and pearls to be made, and placed within it a particle of the venerable Wood of the Life-giving Cross of the Lord. At the same time he wrote the following to the king of the Saracens:

"Michael, who piously believes in Christ God, Autocrat over all the Greeks, to John, beloved of our meekness, emperor of the Saracens, wishes to rejoice in the Lord! We have received your letters, filled with all piety, and we rejoiced greatly and gave thanks to God, who has led you "out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9) and called you to inherit eternal life and an endless kingdom. Behold, you have become a son of Abraham, not of Ishmael, a child of Sarah, not of Hagar.[26] We praise your wisdom, for you have come to know the True King. Remain, then, to the end in the faith of Christ and in the commandments of our Savior. We gladly fulfill your request. May the venerable Wood of the Life-giving Cross of the Lord be for you a protection against all visible and invisible enemies, and a blessed hope of the life to come!"

Having entrusted this letter to the Saracen king through St. Theodore, Bishop of Edessa, together with a particle of the Life-giving Wood of the Cross and, in addition, an icon of the Savior, and having rewarded the holy hierarch with gifts, the Greek tsar dismissed him in peace. On the way to Babylon, the holy hierarch called in at his capital

26. Sarah was the wife of Abraham; Hagar was his concubine. Through Sarah, by way of Isaac, the people of God arose; from Ishmael, however, came the Ishmaelites, who were also called Saracens and Hagarenes.

city of Edessa and gave great consolation to his spiritual flock, and also visited the pillar-saint, the Venerable Theodosius, who was dear to his heart. Having spent a short time in Edessa, he set out for Babylon, healing various sicknesses everywhere along the way, sometimes by laying upon them the Life-giving Wood of the Cross and the earth from the Lord's Tomb, sometimes by his holy prayers. When he came to King John, the king received him with the greatest joy, bowed down to the earth before the Wood of the Cross and the icon of the Savior, kissed them with tears of joy, and placed them in his bedchamber, setting up with his own hands an unquenchable lamp before this holy object; he read the Greek tsar's letter with great love.

Saint Theodore remained in Babylon, worked many healings and cast out demons from people. The Christians rejoiced exceedingly at this, while the Saracens and Jews wasted away with great envy. Among the latter there was one Jew, the head of the Jewish community and a teacher of the Law. He persuaded the Persian and Saracen nobles to propose to the king that he issue a decree appointing a public disputation about the faith between the Christians and the Jews. The king, knowing that the servants of Christ would not be defeated, agreed to their proposal. A day was appointed for the disputation, and a great multitude of Persians, Saracens, Jews and Christians gathered, and afterwards the king himself came to the assembly with all his council. When the king had seated himself in a high place, the Jewish teacher of the Law came forward as representative of all the Jews, alone against the Christian teachers and hierarchs, the metropolitan of Babylon and the bishop of Edessa: so eloquent was that Jew, and so proud was he of his learning! But when he began to speak not from Scripture but to invent various absurdities and blasphemies against Christ our Lord, Saint Theodore, filled with divine zeal and making a sign with his hand for silence, said to the Jew:

"If you had put before our attention anything from the Law of Moses or from the other holy prophets, we would have answered you. But since you have opened your eloquent mouth for blasphemy and falsehood, and speak not what was proclaimed by the holy prophets but what has been inspired in you by your father, Satan, 'O full of all deceit

and all villainy, son of the devil, enemy of all righteousness' (Acts 13:10), then against all your blasphemous and false words I shall say to you only one word of David: 'Let the lying lips be struck dumb, which speak arrogantly and contemptuously against the righteous' (Ps. 30:19)."

And at once that eloquent Jew fell silent, and his blaspheming tongue was struck dumb, so that he could say nothing. Then the Jews were put to shame, the Christians rejoiced, while the Persians and Saracens were astonished, and the king rejoiced in his soul that the Christians had prevailed and the power of Jesus Christ was glorified.

Afterwards the king commanded that the Jewish teacher of the Law, stricken dumb by God, be beaten mercilessly with ox-sinews and then cast into prison. The other Jewish leaders were likewise punished and driven shamefully from the assembly. But three days later that Jew who had been thrown into prison, unable to speak, sent a written petition to the holy bishop Theodore, begging his mercy and promising to accept Christianity. The hierarch, having informed the king of this, released the Jew from prison, and the Jew, falling at the feet of the hierarch, asked by signs for baptism, since his tongue remained mute. The bishop then performed the catechumenate over him,[4525] and afterwards, when he led him into the font of holy Baptism and invoked over him the name of the All-Holy Trinity, his tongue was at once loosed from its dumbness and he began to glorify the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit with a loud voice, and confessed that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of the Living God, foretold by the Law and the Prophets.

Thus the Jew became a Christian, receiving in holy Baptism, in place of his former name, a new name, Samon; and following his example some other Jews also embraced the holy faith and were baptized. Many of the Persians and Saracens also believed in Christ, but they kept their faith in secret, fearing to suffer persecution and execution at the hands of their rulers.

After this, some days later, the holy Theodore prepared to go to the hermit, the Venerable John, and informed the king of it; the king said that he too would like to see that servant of God and hear his teaching. The saint said to this:

"I approve your desire, for if you see him, you will receive great benefit from it. He is a man of lofty soul and has the gift of foresight, so that he can speak of the future as of the present."

Thus they agreed together to go to the hermit. The king, for his part, pretended that he was setting out for a hunt, and wished to spend several days in the wilderness hunting wild beasts. So he set out with a multitude of servants and soldiers, having with him also the bishop as his constant physician.

They went through the mountains and the desert valleys and took much booty. When they drew near to the place where the hermit dwelt in his cave, the emperor sent his servants away in various directions and remained himself with a small retinue. Then, approaching still nearer to the cave, he left this retinue also and went forward, taking with him only the three most faithful servants who had become Christians, while the hierarch took with him his disciple Basil, who afterwards wrote his Life. The Venerable John, perceiving in spirit that the emperor and the bishop were coming to him, went out to meet them, carrying fire and incense in his hands. He greeted them with a bow and led them into his cave, where they all sat and conversed about what was profitable for the soul. And the hermit said to the emperor:

"Blessed art thou, for having renounced the vain and the false, thou hast loved the truth which leads thee into life. Blessed art thou, for thou shalt be crowned with the crown of martyrdom, and instead of an earthly kingdom for a time, thou shalt reign for ever in heaven with Christ. Glory be to God, One in Trinity, for He has drawn thee out of the pit of the passions and out of the depth of defilement, has set thy feet upon a rock, and has put a new song into thy mouth!"

After this the venerable elder offered those who had come such food as could be found in the desert, and water to drink; and they partook and gave thanks to God. The emperor said:

"To speak the truth, never in all the days of my reign have I partaken of food and drink with such pleasure as today! Truly, spiritual father, thou art the king, and I am poor and needy!"

And the elder said:

"The Lord will soon vouchsafe thee to receive the true kingdom, for thou hast come to visit me, a poor man."

The emperor offered the elder much gold, but he did not take it, saying:

"A dweller in the desert has no need of gold. Give it to the poor who live in the city, and thou shalt receive a reward a hundredfold in heaven!"

And the emperor marvelled at the angelic life of the venerable elder. Then, after a lengthy conversation, all took leave of the elder, who saw them off with blessings and prayers. They departed, and, meeting the servants and the soldiers, they returned to the city. The emperor said to St. Theodore:

"How I ought to thank thee, most honorable father, for granting me the opportunity to see a truly heavenly man, who stands above all in the world!"

Meanwhile the good shepherd was thinking of returning to his flock. He feared that without him the heretics, those evil wolves, would fall upon his flock and do harm to his spiritual sheep. Therefore he asked the emperor to let him go to Edessa. The emperor, with tears, said:

"After thy departure, it seems to me, father, I shall not live much longer. I do not wish to remain a secret worshipper of God and secretly bear the name of a Christian. Go, then, in peace to thy home, and take with thee a particle of the venerable and Life-giving Wood of the Lord's Cross, so that after my death it may not be trodden underfoot by unbelievers. And if after a year thou hearest that I am still alive, come again to visit me and bring with thee this holy relic. But if thou hearest of my death, pray for the repose of my soul."

The emperor gave St. Bishop Theodore a multitude of gold and silver and all manner of precious objects, both for the adornment of God's churches and for distribution to the poor and needy. Having taken leave of one another, they parted with tears. At his departure the hierarch left in Babylon one of his servants, to observe what should happen there after his going. And departing from Babylon, he returned safely to Edessa, to his spiritual sheep.

Some time after St. Theodore's departure, the pious Emperor John, who dwelt in Babylon, no longer wishing to keep his faith in Christ and his love for Him secret, but intending to show himself a Christian in deed before all, summoned to himself all the princes, voivodes and city governors, and said to them:

"I wish to disclose a great secret to you, and let no one doubt my words! It has been revealed to me by God that my death is near and that in a few days I shall depart from this life. Therefore I command you and all the people to assemble tomorrow morning in the field (the emperor named which field). I wish to announce my testament to you."

Having said this, he dismissed them, and they went away troubled. Then the emperor ordered the heralds to proclaim loudly throughout the city that all the people should gather in that field in the morning, while he himself spent the whole night in prayer. Early in the morning he summoned the metropolitan, informed him of his intention, and asked him to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in the inner oratory. At the end of the Liturgy he communed with compunction, from the hands of the hierarch, of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, and, handing the hierarch precious gifts, dismissed him. Then he put on bright royal garments, mounted his horse, and rode with a great retinue to the appointed place, where innumerable crowds of people had already gathered: Persians, Ishmaelites, Jews and Christians, and all the chiefs and rulers. A high platform had been prepared, and on it a lofty royal throne was set, so that the emperor might be seen by all. Everyone wondered why the emperor had gathered them, and they asked one another what the emperor would speak about. The emperor, having arrived at the place, sat down on his throne, and after a while, giving a sign for silence, rose from the throne and began to speak in a loud voice:

"Hear all of you, Persians and Agarenes and Jews and honorable Christians! I am a Christian, my name is John. I believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, in the threefold yet single being of the Godhead, and there is no other right faith under heaven except the Christian. And since my Lord Jesus Christ said in the Gospel: 'Whoever confesses Me before men, him will I also confess before My Heav-

enly Father' (Mt. 10:32), behold, I confess Him before heaven and earth, before the Angels and men!"

With these words he drew from his bosom a golden cross adorned with precious stones, and raised it with both hands on high, so that all might see it. Then, making the sign of the cross over himself and bowing to the earth toward the east, he kissed the venerable Cross and said:

"I worship Thy venerable Cross, O Christ, and I acknowledge Thee as God and my Savior, and I offer praise to Thee with Thy unbeginning Father and with Thy most holy and good Life-giving Spirit, for ever, Amen!"

Hearing this, all marvelled and stood as if struck dumb. Then the princes and voivodes, together with the other chiefs, cried out in fury:

"Let the blasphemer of our faith be put to death!"

And they fell upon the emperor and pierced him to death with swords and spears, and together with him they also slew his three believing servants, who had likewise confessed the Name of Christ[27].

Thus the pious emperor John, with his three servants, received a martyr's death in Babylon on the third day of the month of May. Then all the Christians who had been witnesses of this event were seized with extreme fear before the fury of the Agarenes, and, fleeing from that field, they hid themselves; the body of the emperor was left there unburied.

During the night of that same day the holy passion-bearer appeared in dread form to the elders and rulers and said:

"Quickly give my body to the Christian metropolitan, that he may bury it. If you do not do this, I shall at once destroy every one of you."

When they awoke from sleep, they gathered together early in the morning, telling one another of the dream they had all had, and they were filled with terror. Immediately they sent word to the Christian metropolitan, commanding him to take the body of the emperor and bury it. The metropolitan at once went, took the body of the holy martyr Emperor John and the bodies of his three holy servants, and

27. The repose of St. Theodore, as well as of the other saints mentioned in his Life, took place in the 9th century.

brought them into the church, where he gave them an honorable burial. From their common tomb various miracles took place, and healing from all manner of sicknesses was often granted not only to Christians but also to Agarenes, who as a result began to incline toward accepting Christianity.

On the night after his death, the holy Emperor John appeared in a dream to St. Theodore, Bishop of Edessa. He was in white, exceedingly radiant raiment, and on his head was a wondrous crown, whose beauty cannot be described in words. He said to the bishop:

"Behold, honorable father, Christ the Lord has glorified me with great glory and has numbered me among the company of martyrs! Yesterday I confessed His most holy Name before all, and for this I was slain by the Persians and the Saracens. My soul, having gone out from the bodily prison, has received the blessings of which thou didst speak to me. May God bless thee for having become my intercessor for salvation, and I pray our common Lord that He may command thee to come to me soon, so that together we may enjoy the blessed life by the grace of the Holy Trinity."

Awaking from sleep, the holy bishop Theodore went to the Venerable Theodosius the Stylite and told him of the vision he had had. The Stylite told him that it had indeed been a vision, for he himself had received a revelation from God about the same matter. A few days later a servant who had been left in Babylon came from there and reported in all details how the pious emperor John, with three youths, had suffered for Christ. And St. Theodore rejoiced with all his heart, giving thanks to God that his labor had not been in vain, but had borne so fair a fruit for the Heavenly Kingdom.

Some time after this, the stylite saw in a vision that his brother, the Venerable John the Hermit, had gone to the Lord; and after a brief illness the stylite himself, the Venerable Theodosius, also reposed. The Hierarch buried him in the church of the holy Great Martyr George, in the monastery of the Holy Ascetic Women. Three years after the murder of the holy Emperor John, this passion-bearer appeared again to St. Theodore in the same form as the first time, and said:

"Go forth, beloved father—Christ calls thee! He has been pleased that we should live together with thee in His Kingdom and rejoice in His wondrous Light."

From this vision the Hierarch of Christ, Theodore, concluded that his departure to God was drawing near. Therefore, having made the necessary arrangements concerning the affairs of the Church of Edessa, and having given his blessing and peace to his spiritual sheep, he left his flock and withdrew to Jerusalem. After venerating the Life-giving Tomb of Christ, he came to the Lavra of St. Sabbas, where his monastic life had begun, and settled in his former monastic cell. He lived there for three weeks and passed over to the mansions not made with hands, commending his holy soul into the hands of God on the 9th day of the month of July. The Patriarch of Jerusalem, together with the bishops, buried with honor in the same Lavra the body of the Saint of God, in which the latter had accomplished so many labors, glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God in Trinity, to Whom likewise from us sinners be honor, glory, worship and thanksgiving, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day is the memory of the holy Hieromartyr Cyril (see concerning him on 6 September

NOTES

4525. Catechumenate: oral instruction in the truths of the Christian faith, given in the ancient Church to all who wished to approach the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Having the right to enter the church to hear the Holy Scripture and the sermons, and even to be present at the first and second parts of the Liturgy ("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"), had to leave the church immediately, of which they were notified by the deacon with an exclamation which has remained to this day in the Orthodox Church during the celebration of the Liturgy. The term of the catechumenate was not uniform; many remained catechumens throughout their whole life. In case of necessity the term of the catechumenate was shortened to several days or even to a few hours. The church rite of the catechumenate is still per-

formed in the Orthodox Church; it consists in the reading of certain prayers over the one approaching baptism and the pronouncing of an exorcism against the devil; at this the one approaching baptism renounces Satan, unites himself with Christ and confesses his faith by reciting the Creed (at the baptism of infants this is done by the sponsors).



THE TENTH DAY OF JULY

July 10

10 июля

New Calendar July 10 · Old Calendar July 23 (civil dates)

Memory of Our Venerable Father Anthony of the Caves

Память преподобного отца нашего Антония Печерского

In the days of the right-believing and holy Prince Vladimir[1] the Lord was pleased to show to His Church a lamp, and to those who live in monasticism a teacher: the ever-memorable man, our Venerable and God-bearing Father Anthony.

Venerable Anthony was born in the city of Lyubech[2]. Filled with the fear of God from his early years, he desired to be clothed in the monastic habit. When the human-loving God put into his heart the intention to go to the Greek land and be tonsured there, Anthony at once carried it out, journeying after the example of the Lord, who wandered and labored for our salvation. Having reached Constantinople[3], Venerable Anthony went from there to the holy Mount Athos[4530]. Going round its monasteries, he marveled at the life of the holy fathers who dwelt in them, who, while in the flesh, rose above human nature, imitating in their ascetic labors the incorporeal Angels. And the love of Christ burned in Anthony's heart more strongly than

1. St. Vladimir the Equal-to-the-Apostles, enlightener and baptizer of Rus', is meant; he reigned 978–1015. His memory is on July 15.
2. Lyubech, located in the Chernigov region, was one of the prehistoric cities of Ancient Rus', existing even before the arrival of the Varangians. Under Oleg it was among the principal cities where his "great princes" resided; afterwards Lyubech lost its important political significance. In history Lyubech is known for 1) the battle of Yaroslav with Svyatopolk in 1016, and 2) the great congress of princes in 1097 "for the establishing of peace" between them. At present Lyubech is a minor town or township of the Chernigov province on the Moscow, or left, side of the Dnieper, 120 versts from Kiev.
3. Constantinople.

before. Desiring to become like those fathers in his manner of life, he went to one of the monasteries of Athos and begged the abbot to bestow upon him the angelic habit of the monastic order. Foreseeing the future ascetic life of the Venerable, the abbot did not refuse his request, and tonsured him[4], instructing him in the precepts of perfect monasticism. The newly tonsured monk pleased God in all things, struggling on the path of virtue; but Venerable Anthony especially progressed in obedience and submission, so that all rejoiced, looking upon his life. Venerable Anthony remained on the holy mountain, at the place of his tonsure, for no small length of time, becoming a teacher unto salvation for many and himself attaining to higher degrees of perfection, when the abbot received an inspiration from God to release the Venerable to the Russian land. Calling him to himself, the abbot said:

"Anthony! Go back to the Russian land; let those who live there also through you progress and be established in the Christian faith; may the blessing of the holy mountain be with you!"

Receiving this blessing as proceeding from the mouth of God, Venerable Anthony set out for the Russian land. Coming to the city of Kiev[5], he pondered where he should settle, and began to go round the monasteries which had begun to be founded by Greek monks who had come with Metropolitan Michael for the baptism of Rus; yet these monasteries did not maintain the order and rule of perfect common life. By God's providence, none of the monasteries was pleasing to Venerable Anthony for dwelling. Therefore he began to walk about the environs of Kiev, through forests and mountains, and thus reached even Berestovo. Finding here a cave, once dug out by the Varangians[6], Ven-

4. With the name of Anthony, perhaps expressing the wish that Anthony should be for Rus' what Anthony the Great, father of Eastern monasticism, was for Egypt. The secular name of Venerable Anthony is unknown. There survives, however, a not wholly reliable tradition according to which Venerable Anthony bore the secular name Antipas.

5. Venerable Antony settled in Kiev and did not go back to his homeland of Lyubech, probably because in Kiev, "which had most advanced in Christianity and already had monks," he could more readily find companions in the ascetic struggle of the hermit life.

6. It may be supposed that the grand princes kept a detachment of Varangians in their village of Berestovo; the latter dug the caves in order to keep in them, as in a safe place, their military booty.

erable Anthony, having offered prayer, settled in it, passing his life in great abstinence.

After the repose of the right-believing Prince Vladimir, the godless and accursed Sviatopolk[7] seized power, sitting on the Grand-Princely throne in Kiev. Desiring to destroy his brothers from the face of the earth[8], he slew Boris and Gleb, who thus received a martyr's death[9]. Seeing such bloodshed, Venerable Anthony again withdrew to the holy mountain.

But now the right-believing Prince Yaroslav, having vanquished Sviatopolk, sat in Kiev[10]. Yaroslav loved Berestovo[11] with its church in the name of the Holy Apostles; at it there was a priest named Hilarion, a pious man, a great faster, and learned in the Divine Scripture. (Many years later, Yaroslav, who loved to surround himself with the spiritual order[12]), by the will of God and with the agreement of the bishops he had gathered, chose Hilarion as metropolitan, and he was ordained in the Kievan church of Holy Sophia[13]. The priest Hilarion at times withdrew from Berestovo to the Dnieper, to a hill covered with an age-old forest, where now stand the distant or Theodosius Caves of the monastery; in this hill Hilarion dug out for himself a cave of about two

7. The third son of St. Vladimir.

8. The chronicler puts into the mouth of the criminal prince such words: "I will slay all my brothers, and take all power in Rus' into my own hands alone."

9. The memory of the holy martyr-princes is observed by the Orthodox Russian Church twice: on May 2 and July 24.

10. Grand prince from 1019.

11. It is difficult to determine, in the present Pecherskaya part of Kiev, where precisely the village of Berestovo was; it may be supposed that it lay not less than one verst from the Pechersk Monastery in a westerly direction.

12. According to the testimony of the chronicle, Yaroslav loved church statutes, loved priests and especially monks. He read books day and night; he gathered many scribes, who copied the already finished Slavonic translations, and he also found translators, who translated books from Greek into Slavonic. Of this church-enlightening activity of Yaroslav the chronicler remarks: "For as one plows the land and another sows it, so did he: his father Vladimir ploughed and softened it, that is, enlightened it by baptism; but he sowed in the hearts of the faithful people the words of learning."

13. In 1051 there survives from Metropolitan Hilarion a single work which, in the full and exact sense of the word, is a brilliant oratorical composition. It bears the following title: "On the Law Given by Moses, and on the Grace and Truth Which Came by Jesus Christ, and How the Law Departed, While Grace and Truth Filled the Whole Earth, and Faith Spread to All Nations, Even to Our Russian Tongue; and a Eulogy of Our Khagan Vladimir, by Whom We Were Baptized; and a Prayer to God from All Our Land."

sazhens, where he prayed to God in secret, chanting psalms and making prostrations.

Venerable Anthony at this time was on the holy mountain, in the monastery of his tonsure, and again the abbot had a revelation from God:

"Send," said the Lord, "Anthony again to the Russian land, for I have need of him there."

The abbot, calling the Venerable, disclosed to him:

"Anthony! By the will of God go again to the Russian land, and may the blessing of the holy mountain be with you!"

At the same time the abbot foretold to the Venerable that in the Russian land he would become the father of many monks; then, blessing Anthony, the abbot dismissed him with this admonition:

"Go in peace!"

With this blessing Venerable Anthony came again to Kiev. Ascending the hill where Hilarion had dug out the aforementioned small cave, Venerable Anthony loved this place. Praying to God with tears, he said:

"Lord! May the blessing of the holy Athonite mountain and the prayer of my father who tonsured me be upon this place; establish, O God, my dwelling here!"

After this he chose the cave as the place of his dwelling. And the Venerable lived here in unceasing prayer, eating dry bread and quenching his thirst with a moderate quantity of water, and that only every other day, sometimes only once every two days; and at times he ate nothing for a whole week, remaining day and night in prayerful vigil and zealously digging with his own hands a large cave.

Learning of the Venerable's settling in the cave, some Christ-lovers came to him here, bringing what was needful for sustaining the body and asking for his blessing; there were also those newcomers who expressed the desire to live with the Venerable; among these last was the blessed Nikon[14].

14. He came to the Venerable Antony already a presbyter, and he tonsured those who remained in the cave with the Venerable, to dwell with him. Later the Blessed Nikon was abbot of the Caves Monastery, second after the Venerable Theodosius.

It was at this very time that Venerable Theodosius, then a youth of twenty, came[15] to Venerable Anthony; Venerable Anthony bade the blessed Nikon, a priest and an experienced monk, tonsure Theodosius.

After many years had passed, when the right-believing Prince Yaroslav reposed[16], the power was taken by his eldest son Izyaslav, who sat on the Grand-Princely throne in Kiev[17]. Venerable Anthony of the Caves at this time had already become famous throughout the whole Russian land for his life rich in virtues, just as in antiquity Anthony the Great became famous in Egypt. Learning of the ascetic life of Venerable Anthony, the Christ-loving Prince Izyaslav came to him with his retinue, asking for prayers and blessing; and the fame of the Venerable, honored by all, grew still greater. And Christ-lovers began to flock to him, desiring tonsure, and he received them and tonsured them.

Among these Christ-lovers there came to Venerable Anthony: first the blessed Barlaam, son of the noble Kievan boyar John[18], and then Ephraim, a eunuch of the prince's household[19]. In accordance with their expressed desire, Venerable Anthony bade the blessed Nikon tonsure both of them, which brought the Venerable and the brotherhood much trouble. Not only did the boyar John, enraged, come to the cave with a multitude of servants, drive off the God-chosen flock of our Venerable Father Anthony, and drag his son, the blessed Barlaam, out of the caves, and, replacing his monastic garments with bright boyar clothing, forcibly led him home; but also the Grand Prince Izyaslav himself, learning of the tonsure of the boyar's son and of his own favorite eunuch, was greatly enraged against the flock gathered in the name of Christ by Venerable Anthony; he gave orders to seize the blessed Nikon, who tonsured the monks, holding a particular ill-will against him for this; he commanded Nikon to persuade Barlaam and Ephraim

15. Approximately in 1055–1056.
16. In 1054.
17. Grand Prince, 1054–1068.
18. The first who was afterwards abbot of the Caves Monastery.
19. The eunuch Ephraim was chief steward to Grand Prince Iziaslav; afterwards he withdrew from the Caves Monastery to Constantinople, where he lived in one of the monasteries, and from there he was raised to the see of Pereiaslavl. It is not known when he died; the last mention of him in the chronicles refers to 1091. As a bishop, Ephraim became famous for church building.

to live again in the world, threatening him with imprisonment together with his teacher Anthony and all who were in the cave; and the prince intended to dig out the cave itself.

Such great wrath of the prince, stirred up by the snares of the "prince of darkness," compelled Venerable Anthony with the remaining brotherhood to withdraw from the cave to another land. But the princess, learning of this, earnestly begged the prince not to expel the servants of God from his domain by his wrath, lest he bring upon himself the same wrath of God which had struck, likewise after the expulsion of the monks, her fatherland, the land of the Lyakhs. (The princess, daughter of the King of Poland Boleslaus the Brave, was of Polish origin; she reminded the prince of the following incident from her father's life: for the tonsure of the Venerable Moses the Hungarian, Boleslaus expelled the monks from Poland; the Lord was angered by this act of the king: the latter died suddenly, and in the civil strife that arose afterward many bishops and boyars were slain.) At length, having with difficulty yielded to the princess's entreaties, the prince came to his senses and feared God: he sent to the elder a request to return to the abandoned place; Venerable Anthony was barely found after three days of searching and was persuaded to return.

Thus our Venerable Father Anthony again returned to his cave. He ceaselessly implored God to grant him strength to bear manfully the afflictions inflicted by the enemy, the hater of good, and not to deliver to the beasts the souls of those who confess Him, nor to forget His poor ones forever[20]. The Lord heard the Venerable's prayer: not only did the dispersed sheep return in peace to their shepherd, but to him in the cave came a multitude of others, begging to be delivered from the darkness of the path leading to perdition and to be turned to the light of the saving way. Venerable Anthony received them all with love: after instructions on how one must follow Christ, he bade the blessed Nikon tonsure those who desired it. And there gathered around the Venerable twelve brethren; by their common effort a large cave was dug out, and in it a church and cells were arranged, which exist to this day.

20. Cf. Ps. 73:19.

Once Venerable Anthony said to the brotherhood united under his guidance:

"God has gathered you together, brethren, and I have tonsured you by the blessing of the Holy Mountain, by which I myself was tonsured by its abbot. May the blessing of God and of the Most Holy Theotokos rest upon you first of all, and also the blessing of the Holy Mountain."

Then the Venerable Father addressed the brethren:

"Live by yourselves. I will appoint you an abbot; but I wish to live alone, as I have been accustomed to do in former years."

And he appointed the Blessed Barlaam as their abbot. Himself, avoiding disturbance and rumor, he first secluded himself in a cell, also in a cave, and afterwards moved to another hill, where he began to dig a new cave, which lies beneath the present great Kiev Caves Monastery.[21]

The Blessed Abbot Barlaam and the brethren, having received the blessing of the Venerable Antony, remained to dwell in the former cave. But when the number of brethren grew so great that the cave could no longer hold them all during the common prayer, they resolved to build a small church outside the cave. The abbot and the brethren came to the Venerable Antony in his new cave and said to him:

"Father! The brethren are multiplying, and we can no longer fit in the cave for the common prayer. By the command of the Lord and the Most Holy Theotokos, and by your holy prayer, bless us to set up a small church outside the cave."

The Venerable gave his blessing. They, bowing to the ground before him, withdrew and began to build a small church over the cave, in the name of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos.

After the small church above the cave was completed, Prince Izyaslav, who in holy baptism was named Demetrius, built a stone church in honour of the saint whose Christian name he bore, that is, in honour

21. The second cave of the Venerable Antony is the present near or Antonine caves. The hill of this cave is separated from the hill of the first by a deep ravine; at present, from the near caves to the far caves, by a gallery thrown across that ravine, the distance is 91 sazhens. The Venerable Antony withdrew to the second cave with a small number of disciples who wished to devote themselves to strict solitary life, and afterwards he received into it those who wished to labor with him.

of the Great Martyr Demetrius, and at this church he established a monastery. For the abbacy of this monastery Prince Izyaslav took the Blessed Barlaam, abbot of the brethren living in the cave; trusting in wealth, he wished to make his monastery surpass the Kiev Caves monastery. But although there are many monasteries founded by the wealth of tsars and boyars, they cannot be compared with those established by the prayers, tears, fasting and vigils of the saints. Thus the Venerable Antony, who had no gold, nourished by his tears a monastery incomparable to others. Moreover, the Blessed Barlaam had been taken into the monastery of the Great Martyr Demetrius at the time when the Kiev Caves monastery had only just been established. After the departure of the abbot, and following a general council, the brethren who were in the cave resolved to go to the Venerable Antony.

"Father," said the monks to him, "appoint us an abbot."

"Whom do you wish?" asked the Venerable.

"Whom God wills, the Most Holy Theotokos, and you, honourable father," answered those who had come.

"Let him among you," decided the Venerable Antony, "who is distinguished by obedience, meekness and humility be your abbot."[22]

Then the brethren began to beg the Venerable Antony to bless the Venerable Theodosius for the abbacy, as one like-minded with him and skilled in all good works; and the Venerable Antony blessed him for the abbacy. All the brethren, twelve in number, bowed down to the ground before the Venerable Antony, rejoicing that they had received such a guide.

Having become abbot, the Venerable Theodosius began with great diligence to care for the monastery, adding to these cares great fasting and tearful prayers; the prayers and blessing of his superior, our Venerable Father Antony, who dwelt in silent solitude, gave him great assistance. And the Lord began to increase the number of monks, so that soon there were up to a hundred under the leadership of the Venerable

22. The chronicler's exact words give a somewhat different sense: the Venerable Antony, in answer to the brethren who asked him to appoint an abbot, gave a reply that pointed directly to the Venerable Theodosius: "Whoever among you is greater, as is Theodosius, obedient, meek, humble, let him be your abbot."

Theodosius. The Venerable Theodosius, seeing such an increase of brethren, after counsel with them came to the resolve to establish a monastery. And again they all went to the Venerable Antony and said to him:

"Father! The brethren are increasing more and more in number; we wish to establish a monastery."

The Venerable Antony rejoiced greatly.

"Blessed be God for all things," he exclaimed. "May the prayer of the Most Holy Theotokos and of the fathers of the Holy Mountain be with you and aid you."

Then he sent one of the brethren to say to Prince Izyaslav:

"Christ-loving prince! God is multiplying the brethren, and the place where we have settled is cramped. We beg you: be pleased to give us the mountain that lies above the cave."

Prince Izyaslav was exceedingly glad on hearing this; he sent his boyar to give the monks the mountain above the cave as their possession. The Venerable Theodosius and the brethren laid the foundations of a large[23] wooden church upon it, and when they had built it they adorned it with icons; they also set up cells, and fenced the monastery with palisades, and moved here from the cave. From this time the monastery, which had its beginning through the blessing of the Holy Mountain, came to be called the Kiev Caves monastery, because the monks had formerly lived in the cave.[4551]

After this the Venerable Abbot Theodosius resolved to establish his monastery also by a spiritual enclosure, that is, by a rule defining the life of monks not in seclusion but in the monastery; he began to seek a suitable monastic rule for this purpose. In this matter too the prayer and blessing of our Venerable Father Antony helped him: by his blessing and prayer the Lord so arranged that just at this time there was found an honourable monk of the Stoudios monastery, named Michael, who had come from Greece with Metropolitan George.[24] He had the rule of the Stoudite monastery.[25] Having copied this rule, of course in translation from the Greek, the Venerable Theodosius, resolving to in-

23. Larger in comparison with the preceding little church; in fact it was not of great dimensions.
24. The chronicle mentions him under 1072–1073.

troduce it into his monastery, established the whole "order of the Church": how to perform the liturgical chanting and reading, and the prostrations accompanying them; how to stand in church and how to spend time at table; what to eat there and on which days. The other monasteries also adopted the Stoudite rule from the Kiev Caves monastery; thanks to this, the Kiev Caves monastery holds the precedence of primacy and honour before all other Russian monasteries.

In the days of the abbacy of the Venerable Theodosius, who by means of the new rule, and with the help of the prayers and blessing of our Venerable Father Antony, directed the life of the Kiev Caves monastery along the path of virtue, there came to the monastery, being a youth of seventeen, our Venerable Father Nestor, the writer of the life of the Venerable Theodosius and of others. The Venerable Theodosius, who received with love those who came to him, gladly received him too, on the counsel and blessing of the Venerable Antony. Inquiring why the monastery was called the Kiev Caves monastery, Nestor, for the edification of the faithful, related briefly in his chronicle the exploits of the founder of the monastery, the Venerable Antony.[26]

But let us say something about the miracles, though not all of them, and also about the honourable death of Saint Antony, drawing the information from the Blessed Bishop Simon and the monk of the Kiev Caves, Polycarp, who was close to him;[4555] and for the present we leave aside the chronicler's testimony about the exploits themselves and the trials endured by the Venerable Father.

Our Venerable Father Antony, who had withdrawn into another cave, seeing the increase and good order of the chosen flock, gave thanks to God, himself advancing in virtue from strength to strength.

25. This Typikon is strictly cenobitic, not permitting a monk to have anything of his own, not even a needle. In the Life of the Venerable Theodosius, Venerable Nestor indicates another source from which the latter obtained the Studite Typikon: "Theodosius," he writes, "sent one of the brethren to Constantinople to the eunuch Ephraim (see above, note 21), that he might copy out and send him the entire Typikon of the Studite monastery (which was in Constantinople); and he immediately fulfilled the command of our Venerable Father, and having copied out the whole monastic Typikon he sent it to our blessed father Theodosius."

26. Later scholarly investigations lead us to assume with certainty that the author of the "Primary Chronicle" was not Venerable Nestor but some other monk of the Caves Monastery, probably Sylvester, afterwards abbot of the monastery of St. Michael in Kiev.

For this the Lord also glorified him: the name of the Venerable Antony shone in the land of Rus' through various miracles, and especially through the gift of healing and of prophecy.

The gift of miraculous healing the Venerable Antony manifested in this manner. The elder himself served the sick and healed them by his prayer; but, concealing these healings in humility, he gave the sick, with his blessing, as a remedy the greens on which he himself fed; the infirm, having tasted them, became well, whatever illness they were afflicted with. Later the Blessed Agapitus became an imitator of the Venerable Antony, healing diseases in the same way.[27]

Concerning the gift of foresight of Saint Antony, besides other examples, the following also bear witness.

Three princes, the sons of Yaroslav, Izyaslav, prince of Kiev, Sviatoslav of Chernigov, and Vsevolod of Pereyaslavl, setting out to war against the Polovtsians,[28] came to the Venerable Antony asking for his blessing. He, foreseeing the wrath of God that was about to overtake them, said to them:

"For your sins you will be defeated by the barbarians and put to flight; many of your warriors will drown in the river, others will be taken captive, and the rest will fall by the sword."

And this came to pass after the battle on the river Alta,[29] when the princes, barely saving their lives, fled: Izyaslav and Vsevolod to Kiev, and Sviatoslav to Chernigov; the Polovtsians, however, scattered over the south-eastern borders of the Russian land, taking captives and destroying its inhabitants.

Together with this prophecy to the princes, the Venerable Antony foretold to Shimon, son of the Varangian prince Afrikan, that Shimon, by the grace of God, would in the said battle not only escape death, though he was already lying among the corpses, but that many years

27. The memory of the Blessed Agapitus, "the unmercenary physician," who died in 1095, is observed on June 1.

28. The Polovtsy or Cumans were a Turkic nomadic tribe who lived in the 10th–13th centuries in the south of Russia and from there made raids on the border cities and villages of the Russian land.

29. This battle took place in 1066 on the river Alta; the Alta is a tributary of the Trubezh, which flows into the Dnieper below Kiev on its left, Muscovite side.

later he would be the first to be laid in the stone church of the Kiev Caves, which the Venerable also foretold would be built in a wonderful manner. Shimon himself, returning from the battle, told the Venerable Antony:

"I lay," he related, "wounded among the slain, and then some Divine power snatched me from their midst and healed my wounds; I also found all my kinsmen and warriors unharmed." "And the likeness of a church that was to be built, which would be the place of my repose, I saw twice in the air: once at the river Alta, when I was among the slain, and another time earlier, at sea, when I fled to the land of Rus' to Prince Yaroslav from my uncle Yakun, who had expelled me from the Varangian principality."

Then Shimon, in very deed, confirmed his words concerning the good pleasure of God manifested to him for the building of the church foretold by the Venerable Antony. He handed him a girdle and a golden crown, with these words:

"This I took down from an icon, the crucifixion of Christ the Savior, when I departed from my fatherland. You foretold that I would be buried here. But I had a voice from God commanding that with this girdle should be measured the foundation of the church where I shall be laid, and whose likeness was shown to me in the air. The crown, by the same command of God, is to be fixed above the holy altar."

Thus it became plainly manifest that the prediction of the Venerable Antony was wholly in accord with the will of God. Afterwards the event itself confirmed it: many years after what has just been related, Simon was the first to be laid in the God-built stone church of the Caves.

Now, returning once more to the chronicler, let us speak of the next considerable affliction endured by the Venerable Antony. The prince of darkness, the devil, unable to bear the light of good deeds, once again sought, through Prince Iziaslav, to deprive the capital Kiev of the great luminary, our Venerable Father Antony, who shone in his dark cave, as though under a bushel, with miracles and virtues.

After the victory won by the Polovtsians in the aforementioned battle, as Antony had foretold, the people of Kiev urged Prince Iziaslav

to go out once more against the enemies who had scattered over the Russian land. The prince would not agree. A rising[30] broke out, during which Prince Vseslav of Polotsk, held captive in Kiev, was freed from prison.[31] The insurgent people proclaimed Vseslav prince of Kiev, and Iziaslav was compelled to flee to Poland. Seven months later he returned from there to Kiev with Boleslaw the Brave. Vseslav, who had at first gone out to meet them with an army, fled secretly to Polotsk. Then Iziaslav entered Kiev.[32] At the instigation of the devil he began to be angry with the Venerable Antony, who had been slandered before him: it was said that Antony loved Vseslav and gave him counsel, and that he was even the chief instigator of all the disorder that had occurred in Kiev.[33] The Venerable Antony at this time was serving in the cave the sick recluse Isaac, whom the devil had seduced, appearing in the form of Jesus Christ, and had left barely alive, drawing him into a dance with demons.[34] This ministry of the Venerable Antony was especially hateful to the seducer, who feared lest Isaac should soon be healed in soul and body from the satanic temptation. Therefore the devil sought in every way to rouse anger in Prince Iziaslav, so that he would drive the Venerable Antony out of the bounds of Kiev. And for a time he succeeded. Prince Sviatoslav of Chernigov, learning that his brother Iziaslav was greatly angered against the Venerable Antony, sent for the saint by night, and secretly[35] took him to himself at Chernigov. The Venerable Antony came to love a place near Chernigov, in the Boldin hills: here he dug himself a cave and lived in it; afterwards a monastery arose on this site.[36] Soon Prince Iziaslav, having looked carefully and impartially into the matter, became convinced of the

30. In 1068.
31. From 1067.
32. In early May 1069.
33. Vseslav was captured by violating the oath of the cross. Perhaps the Venerable Antony openly denounced Iziaslav for this, and the latter may have seen in these denunciations the cause of the rising of the Kievans.
34. The memory of the Venerable Isaac is on February 14.
35. In order to conceal the whereabouts of the Venerable Antony from Iziaslav, who might have demanded his surrender.
36. The Dormition on the Boldin Hills, or the Boldin, now the Elets Dormition. The chronicler does not directly name the Venerable Antony as the founder of this monastery, and it may be thought that it was built by the Venerable's disciples at his cave.

saint's guilelessness and learned of the tempter's snares. Grieving over what had happened, he sent into the Chernigov lands to the Venerable Antony, beseeching him to return once more to the Kiev region to his God-chosen flock. The Venerable Antony, a meek and humble-hearted ascetic, yielded to these entreaties: he returned to the brethren of the Caves, who were in confusion and neglect like sheep without a shepherd. God did not will that such a lamp, the radiant sun of the Russian land, our Venerable Father Antony, should lay the foundation of an orderly monastic life in any other city than God-preserved Kiev, the capital: for whence, through the faithful Prince Vladimir, the light of the Orthodox faith shone out over the whole Russian land, thence the Lord was pleased that through the Venerable Antony there should also shine the ray of the perfect law of ascetic life.

And after such afflictions our Venerable Father Antony did not weaken, but, ascending the steps of ever greater and greater labors, toiled in the cave until he gained complete victory over the power of the devil, which was feeble before him. According to the word of the Gospel he cast out the kind of seducers by prayer and fasting,[37] as well as by other laborious exploits: vigil, standing, and countless prostrations in prayer. Until his death he did not leave his dark cave, though his life in it was a constant struggle with the rulers of the darkness of this age.

Once again settled in the cave, the Venerable Antony again began to manifest the gift of wonder-working, and even in a stronger degree. He began with great care to attend to the stone church of the Caves, whose building he himself had foretold, having moreover received from Shimon a testimony of God's good pleasure in this work. The Venerable Antony took counsel with the Venerable Hegumen Theodosius, while at the same time praying zealously to the Most High Builder[38] that He would bless with His most pure hands and assist the building of the house of His Most Pure Mother, our Lady the Theotokos; for, said the Venerable, in the words of David: "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Ps. 126:1). While the Venerable Antony was engaged in such prayer, a wondrous miracle took place:

37. Mk. 9:29.
38. That is, to God the Builder.

without leaving the Caves monastery, as once the glorious wonderworker, Hierarch Nicholas of Myra, so he, together with his like-minded friend the Venerable Theodosius, appeared at Constantinople, standing before the Queen of Heaven, the Most Holy Theotokos. Receiving gold from Her, together with the Venerable Theodosius, he gave it to the master masons, so that, by the command of the Queen of Heaven, they might go into the Russian land to build the church of the Caves.

The stonemasons came from Greece and proclaimed this miracle. And our Venerable Father Antony showed yet other wondrous signs, such as belonged to the ancient prophets Gideon and Elijah.

When the master builders began to ask the Venerable Antony about the place on which he wished to raise the temple commanded by the Most Holy Theotokos, the Venerable Father prayed for three days, that the Lord, Trinity in Persons, would Himself point out by a sign from heaven a place worthy to be the dwelling of the Queen of Heaven. When they gathered to choose such a place, then, by God's prompting, Prince Sviatoslav came and gave as a gift for the church a field belonging to him, adjoining the cave. But this was not all. The King of Glory, the Lord Jesus Christ, appeared to the Venerable Antony while he stood in the aforementioned prayer on the first night.

"Antony," said the Lord, "thou hast found grace before Me."

Hearing this, the Venerable Antony besought the Lord that on that night there should be dew over the whole earth and dry ground on the intended site of the church; on another night he besought the Lord for dry ground everywhere and dew on the place pleasing to Him for the temple.[39] On the third day the Venerable Father blessed the place foreordained and ordered it measured with the golden girdle taken from the icon of the Savior and received from Shimon: thirty girdle-lengths in length and twenty in breadth, as had been commanded Shimon from on high. Then the Venerable Antony by his prayer brought down fire,[40] which consumed the growth of that place, which, after being enclosed

39. This prayer of the Venerable Antony was like the prayer of the Israelite judge Gideon (Judg. 6:36–40).

40. As once the holy prophet Elijah (3 Kgdms. 18:36–39).

by a ditch, became entirely ready; here was set up the wonderworking church of the Caves, "like unto heaven," in the phrase of the account concerning it.[41]

Thus our Venerable Father Antony, by such great wonders, prepared the place for the church of his monastery and blessed the very beginning of its building. After this he began to prepare himself for departure to the eternal Church, not made with hands, in the mansions of heaven; of this Church the holy Apostle John writes in the Revelation: "And I saw no temple therein,"[42] for "the Lord Almighty is its temple" (Rev. 21:10, 22). So the Queen of Heaven also foretold, when, during Her appearance at Blachernae,[43] She revealed to the builders of the church:

"This Antony will only bless you in the work, for he himself departs to eternal rest; after him, in the second year, Theodosius too shall follow."[44]

But what preparation for a blessed end did the Venerable Antony need, who, leading a virtuous life in the cave, could say with the Apostle: "I die daily" (1 Cor. 15:31)? Who in all his days rightly applied to himself the words of the prophet: "I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments" (Ps. 118:50)? The Venerable Antony was ready in his soul (for passage into eternal life), and was troubled not for himself but for his God-chosen flock, lest he leave it in confusion. Thus the Apostolic word was fulfilled in the Venerable: "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better (for the Apostle himself); nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Phil. 1:23–24).

Seeing that the time of his departure and of laying aside the body had now come, the Venerable Antony comforted his children with the promise that, even after his departure, he would not forsake the holy place where he had labored, but, caring for the monastery, would always visit and watch over it, help those who dwelt in it and those who

41. This narrative is placed in the Menaion-Chetyi under the 14th.
42. That is, the holy Jerusalem, the great city that came down from heaven (Rev. 21:10).
43. Blachernae is a locality in Constantinople.
44. More details about this appearance of the Mother of God are given under the 14th, in the narrative about the creation of the Caves church.

came to it in faith. Yet especially precious, surpassing every inheritance, is the following gracious promise of the Venerable Antony concerning the place of his labors: he promised by his prayers to intercede that, just as he himself departs from the body with repentance and assurance of mercy, so too those who remain here and have love for him should be granted the same: that they too should die in repentance and be shown mercy.

After his transfer into the second cave, the Venerable Antony spent some fourteen or sixteen years in it; there he brought his temporal life to an end and exchanged it for the eternal on the 10th day of the month of July, in the year of the world 6581, of the Nativity of Christ 1073, and in the ninetieth year of his life, in the reign of Prince Svyatoslav Yaroslavich[45] and in the days of the Greek emperor Romanus Diogenes[46]. The honorable relics of the venerable founder were laid at that time in the same cave in which he had reposed, that is, in the cave beneath the great monastery. But as the venerable father himself, during his life, withdrew from human eyes, praying secretly in solitude to God, so he also asked for the same gift for his relics: that they should be removed from human gaze. It was fitting that our Russian lawgiver should share the same lot as the Israelite. The Israelites could not look upon the face of Moses because of the great radiance that came from him, from the time he brought them the Law from Mount Sinai[47]; so too none could see our venerable father Antony, who, in the light of good deeds, lived in the cave after he had brought to the Russian land the Law from Mount Athos. The body of the Israelite lawgiver Moses was hidden from sight[48], and the body of the Venerable Antony, the Russian lawgiver, God, wondrous in His saints, miraculously forbids us to see even to this day: many who dared to dig up the place where the honorable remains of the Venerable Antony were laid were punished by burning with fire; they suffered severe torments from their burns until they repented of their presumption. But although the relics of the Venerable

45. Prince of Kiev, 1073–1075.
46. More likely in the reign of his successor Michael VII Doukas, whose reign falls in 1074–1078.
47. Ex. 34:29–35.
48. Deut. 34:6.

Antony are removed from our sight, yet by their help they are always with us and near all who fervently call upon the Saint of God: they unfailingly work miracles, helping all who come in faith to the honorable tomb of the venerable one.

Like a light shining in the darkness of a dark tomb, they with especial power drive away from men the darkness of the demons; this darkness cannot embrace this light, but usually vanishes at its radiance. The relics of our venerable father Antony also deliver from various infirmities that assail not the body alone but the soul as well. This was fully experienced by St. John the Much-Suffering: after a three-year struggle with impure passions, which caused him much torment through the kindling of carnal lust, he came to the tomb of the Venerable Antony and remained there in prayer day and night. And then he heard the voice of the venerable one addressed to him:

"John! John! It behooves you to shut yourself up in this cave, so that, with God's help, the battle may cease, conquered by solitude and silence."

John did so. And by the grace of God, through the prayers of our venerable father Antony, he was saved: the impure bodily passions, though they armed themselves against him together with the unclean spirits for nearly thirty years, nevertheless, as we see from his life, did not gain victory over him[49].

The Venerable Antony did not abandon, as he had promised, his holy place. Caring for it, after his repose, just as earlier during his life, he appeared together with the Venerable Theodosius in Constantinople, and there agreed with Greek icon-painters concerning their making honorable icons for the Church of the Caves; at this he handed them a considerable sum of gold, as earlier to the church-founders together with the same Venerable Theodosius. The Venerable Antony sent the icon-painters to Kiev, to the Monastery of the Caves, to the blessed Nikon, who was then abbot; this is reported by the narrative about the adornment of the Church of the Caves[50].

Our venerable father Antony also proved not false in his gracious promise, after his departure, to assist those who loved him, so that they

might end their lives, spent in his holy place, in repentance and be granted mercy from the Lord. This word of his promise was miraculously fulfilled in deed upon the blessed Erasmus, a Monk of the Caves. Lamenting the squandering of the gold he had spent on the adornment of the Church of the Caves[51], he fell into a grievous illness; for seven days he lay without consciousness and seemed already to be near death, but could in no way depart, for the Lord did not will that he should die in that holy place without repentance. And on the eighth day the Venerable Antony appeared to the blessed Erasmus together with the Venerable Theodosius and said:

"We have prayed to God for you, and He has granted you time for repentance."

Erasmus immediately recovered, brought repentance for his sins, and, forgiven by God, he reposed on the third day. He was granted, as his life reports, to be numbered among the saints[52].

Let us glorify, then, the all-bountiful Lover of mankind for granting so great a wonderworker as the venerable Antony, the founder of monasticism in our Russian land. It is not possible for any man to describe all his deeds, especially those done before his repose, for he passed his life in secret, in the silence of cave solitude; this is accessible only to the Searcher of hearts Himself, Who knows the unknown and the hidden; He, Whose tongue is the pen of a swift scribe (Ps. 44:2), He Himself has written the extended life of our venerable father Antony in the books of eternal life. As for us, who have not found many books, lost during many wars, having gathered only some information, we should fervently pray to this wonderworking founder, that we too, becoming partakers of his trustworthy promise, may by his intercession be granted to end our lives in repentance and mercy from God, that we may find our names written in the book of eternal life together with the name of St. Antony, as the names of children and father, by the grace

49. His memory is celebrated by the Church on July 18.
50. See this narrative in the Menaion-Chetyi under the 14th.
51. The Blessed Erasmus thought it would have been better to distribute this gold to the poor. Tormented by such doubts he fell into despair and began to live carelessly; it was in such a life that a cruel mortal illness overtook him.
52. The memory of the Blessed Erasmus is February 24.

and loving-kindness of our Supreme Leader of salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom, with His Father without beginning and the Consubstantial Spirit, be honor, glory, praise, and dominion now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Having departed from worldly turmoil, and renouncing the world, thou didst follow Christ according to the Gospel; having lived a life equal to the angels, thou didst attain the quiet haven of the Holy Mountain of Athos; then, by the blessing of the fathers, thou didst come to the Mountain of Kiev and there, having accomplished thy life in labor, thou didst enlighten thy fatherland, and having shown to the multitude of monastics the path leading to the heavenly kingdom, thou didst bring them to Christ. Pray to Him, O Venerable Antony, that He may save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Having dedicated thyself to God, whom thou didst love above all from thy youth, O Venerable One, thou didst follow Him with all thy soul's love; and counting the corruptible things of the world as nothing, thou didst make for thyself a cave in the earth, and therein, striving well against the snares of the invisible foe, thou didst shine forth like a radiant sun to all the ends of the earth. Thence, rejoicing, thou didst depart to the heavenly chambers, and now, standing with the Angels before the Lord's throne, remember us who honor thy memory, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, Antony, our father!

* * *

Passion of St. Apollonius the Martyr

Страдание святого мученика Аполлония

St. Apollonius, the holy martyr of Christ, was from the city of Sardis[53], which was in Lydia[54]. Once, when he was going to the city of Iconium[55], he was seized and brought before the governor of that

city, Perennius. At the interrogation he declared himself a Christian, and the governor began to compel him to swear by the name of the emperor. To this St. Apollonius said to him:

"One ought not to swear by the name of a mortal emperor, but one must swear only by the name of the Creator and Maker of every creature."

Put to shame by these words of the saint, Perennius grew angry and commanded that he be hanged on a tree, after which he was subjected to prolonged torments, during which, with fervent prayer for the faithful and supplication for the salvation of all men, he committed his soul into the hands of God[56].

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Vianor and Silvanus

Страдание святых мучеников Вианора и Силуана

St. Vianor the martyr was from the region of Pisidia[57]. For confessing faith in Christ he was seized, by order of the governor of the city of Isauria[58], Severianus, who began to compel him to renounce Christ; but he did not submit to such a demand, and for this he was first cruelly pierced with knives, then hanged and scraped and burned with red-hot iron mallets, then his teeth were knocked out, and after all this his ears were cut off. Present at these torments was a certain Silvanus, and seeing the patience of the holy martyr, he believed in Christ; for this his tongue was immediately cut out, and afterward his head

53. The city of Sardis was in Lydia on the left bank of the river Hermus. It is mentioned in the Apocalypse among the seven Asia Minor cities, for which the holy Apostle John the Theologian, living in Ephesus, had particular care.

54. Lydia, a Roman province in Asia Minor, was situated on the shore of the Aegean Sea and bordered on the east on Phrygia, on the north on Mysia, and on the south on Caria.

55. The city of Iconium was in the Asia Minor Roman province of Lycaonia.

56. The death of the holy martyr Apollonius is placed by Mueller in the reign of the emperor Valerian, who ruled the Roman Empire from 253 to 259.

57. The Pisidian Roman region was in the southern part of Asia Minor and bordered on the north on Phrygia, on the east on Lycaonia, on the south on Pamphylia and Lycia, and on the west on Caria. It is known because the holy Apostle Paul preached in it during his first missionary journey, and he founded the first Christian churches in Asia Minor in some of its cities.

58. The city of Isauria was in the Asia Minor Roman province of Lycaonia, near its border with Pisidia, at the headwaters of the river Calycadnus.

was severed. St. Vianor, moreover, had his heels pierced, his right eye gouged out, the skin of his head torn off, and finally his head was cut off. The holy martyrs Vianor and Silvanus died together and committed their souls into the hands of God[59].

* * *

Passion of the Forty-Five Holy Martyrs Who Suffered at Nicopolis in Armenia

Страдание святых сорока пяти мучеников, пострадавших в Никополе Армянском

The impious Emperor Licinius[60], who had been received by Constantine the Great and governed the eastern lands, issued throughout his realm a decree that Christians who would not worship the idols were to be given over to various tortures and to death, and that their property was to be confiscated for the rebuilding of the cities. When this decree reached Armenian Nicopolis, the pagans began to prepare torments and various instruments of torture for the Christians, and they began to seize many of the faithful and lead them away to torment. Then more than forty servants of Christ gathered together and resolved, rather than wait until the impious should seize them, to go of their own will to the court, to confess the name of Christ and to offer themselves to torment. The chief among them were Leontius, Mauricius, Daniel, Antonius and Alexander, men distinguished both by birth and by education and by their virtuous lives. They all went together to the governor of the Armenian province and declared that they were Christians. The governor was astonished at the unanimous resolve of so many people and at the courage with which they went of their own will to torments, and he asked them:

"Where are you from? And who taught you not to worship our gods?"

St. Alexander answered:

"We are natives here, some from the city, others from the villages; this land is our homeland, and our Father is Christ in heaven. He

59. It is supposed (Mueller and Bishop Sergius) that the holy martyrs Vianor and Silvanus died during the persecution of Christians under Diocletian, at the beginning of the 4th century.

taught us not to worship false gods, deaf and blind, the work of human hands." The governor said:

"And where is your Christ? Was He not crucified and did He not die?"

St. Leontius answered:

"Do you know that Christ died? Then learn that He also rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. He died for us of His own will, but He rose again as the Son of God."

The governor said:

"Is Christ alive now?"

Leontius answered:

"Governor! Your gods do not live after death, but our Lord lives forever, though He died for a time for our salvation. By His death He delivered us from eternal death, gave us life, and taught us to die for His sake, that we might live with Him an endless life."

The governor then began to praise his gods, Zeus, Apollo, Asclepius[61] and others. To this Leontius said:

"Is Zeus a great god?"

"He rules the heavens," the governor answered, "he is the father of all the gods."

Leontius objected:

"God ought to be righteous, pure and sinless. What do you say of your god Zeus?"

"I call him righteous, pure and sinless," said the governor.

To this St. Leontius said:

"Zeus is righteous? Did he not cast down his father Cronus from his throne? He is pure and sinless? Did he not take as his wife his own sister Hera and defile many other men's wives? He destroyed not only women but also men, and committed the most abominable lawlessness[62].

60. Emperor Licinius ruled the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 307 to 324.

61. Asclepius was the god of healing.

62. It should be noted that the ancient Greeks endowed their gods not only with positive but also with negative qualities. Ancient Greek mythology attributed to many gods a passion for crimes of various kinds, especially against morality. This is what St. Leontius has in mind in reasoning with the hegemon.

How could such a sinner be a god? If your god is a sinner, then for his correction he needs another god, one who is sinless."

The governor Lysias was enraged and said furiously:

"Who gave you the right to judge our gods, evil man! They are gods to me. I will not spare you, but will cruelly destroy you all!"

St. Leontius said:

"Do not be angry, governor, if you hear the truth. Have not laws been given to men that no one shall have another's wife, take his own sister as wife, wrong anyone, or kill anyone? And if anyone dares to act against the laws in anything, he is called a criminal and is subject to judgment and the death penalty. But your gods are men, and full of every evil and lawlessness. They were fornicators, adulterers, murderers, and as lawbreakers, how many times were they subject to dread judgment and the death penalty! Therefore your lawless gods ought to submit to human laws and imitate men who strictly observe the laws. And you, be judges of your gods; be gods and executioners yourselves, until you correct them."

The governor said:

"O madman! Was not your God crucified as a criminal? And which of our gods was ever crucified?"

St. Leontius answered:

"Christ our God was crucified for us, and we glory in His cross, but your gods tremble and fear our crucified God and flee far from the power of the cross. Our God suffered on the cross of His own will, but your gods perished unwillingly in a bitter death. Our God is the Savior of the human race, but your gods are destroyers of men. Our God is the true God, but your gods are false and are not gods but demons and ruinous seducers. They themselves have perished, and they lead those who worship them to eternal perdition."

Enraged by these words of St. Leontius, the governor ordered that the confessors of Christ be struck on the mouth with stones.

"Let them strike them," he said, "on the mouths by which blasphemy against our gods is uttered."

The saints were struck, and they said:

"May God strike you, servant of Satan! You have heard the truth and judge unjustly. You are beside yourself, impious man!"

Then the tormentor ordered them all to be bound with iron chains and cast into prison. In the prison the saints rejoiced, as in a palace, in God their Savior, and sang the Psalms of David; some of them had been well-read in books from childhood. St. Leontius encouraged them all with such words:

"Honorable brethren and servants of Christ! Let us endure everything patiently! You know from Holy Scripture how much the righteous Job suffered, and what the sufferings of our Lord were, and how some of His holy servants died. John the Forerunner was beheaded, Stephen was stoned, Peter was crucified head downward, Thomas was pierced with a spear, and others died for their Lord by other martyr's deaths. How many saints suffered in the reigns of Hadrian[63], Decius, Maximian and other earlier impious emperors, not only men but also women, as we hear of St. Thecla, Euphemia, Capitolina, Julitta and other holy martyrs whose names are written in the books of life in heaven. How courageously they struggled and conquered the devil! And if women were so courageous, we men ought to be still stronger and invincible, and to lay down our souls for Christ our God, who laid down His soul for us on the cross."

With such words St. Leontius encouraged the brethren, and all of them were ready to endure every torment for Christ. It was hot, and the saints suffered from fierce thirst. A noble and pious woman named Vlasiana came to the prison to visit them; she freely brought cold water from a nearby spring and gave them to drink.

The saints spent the coming night in prayer and in singing psalms. Governor Lysias did not sleep that night either; he was devising what torments to subject the servants of Christ held in prison to. Toward morning he fell asleep, and a demon appeared to him in a dream and said:

63. The emperors mentioned reigned: Hadrian from 117 to 138, Decius from 249 to 251, and Maximian (Galerius) from 305 to 311. All these emperors were very cruel persecutors of Christianity. Besides them, Nero (54–68), Trajan (98–117) and Diocletian (284–305) also stained their names in history with especially cruel persecution of Christianity.

"Be firm, Lysias; I am the god Asclepius. Torment without mercy the Christians who blaspheme us. They have said many absurd things about us in the prison. Quickly destroy them with every kind of torment."

The governor awoke, and at the coming of day he began the trial, and setting the saints bound before him, he said to them:

"Worship the gods, and you will be friends of the emperors and of us. Each of you will be given two hundred gold coins, new fine garments and belts, boys will be brought, we will offer sacrifice, hold a feast, and make merry together. But if you do not heed me, you will be cruelly tormented. I beg you, do not forfeit this pleasant life, do not part from your wives, children and friends; offer sacrifice at least to one of our gods."

The saints answered as though with one voice:

"Be accursed, tormentor, with your gods! We will not offer sacrifices to unclean demons. We have no need of your gold, your garments, your feast or your friendship. Christ is for us both Father and most dear Friend, and for Him we are ready to endure everything and to die."

Then the tormentor ordered them all to be hung up naked and their bodies scraped with iron hooks. The holy martyrs were scraped for a long time, until midday itself, until the sun began to burn strongly, and the governor went home from the spectacle. The saints, scraped to the bone, were by the tormentor's order again confined in the prison. The aforementioned pious woman Vlasiana came again to visit them and through the window gave water to them, exhausted from their wounds and from the heat. The saints were refreshed; they blessed this woman, prayed for her and for her children, and gave thanks to God that they had been counted worthy to suffer for Him.

While the saints sat in the prison, St. Leontius saw that some of the brethren were suffering grievously from their wounds, and he was much troubled for them, lest in extreme weakness they should fall away from the faith. He therefore prayed God to send them the end of their struggle quickly.

There was in the city a well-known citizen named Herod, a pagan, who enjoyed honor with the governor as an adviser. This citizen had a

secretary, Philinus, who was loved by St. Leontius for his good disposition. The saint sent for him, and when he came to the prison window, said to him:

"Brother Philinus, tell your master Herod that if he should happen to have business with the governor, he should remember us and advise that we be sentenced to death tomorrow."

Philinus went away and passed this on to Herod. At this time Herod was summoned by the governor to supper; he did not go at once, and the governor waited for him. They sent for him again, and he came late, saying:

"I cannot eat. I have seen the condemned being scraped, and much blood flowed, and I am sickened by it. My stomach cannot take food. I am nauseated."

The governor asked:

"How would you advise me to deal with them?"

Herod answered:

"Let them die tomorrow. They are transgressors of the imperial command and deserve death. So why not execute them at once?"

To this the governor gave a sworn promise to put them to death the next day. At once Philinus hastened to the prison and reported what he had heard to St. Leontius. All the brethren learned of it and rejoiced that they would die for Christ the next day. They blessed Philinus for his labor and began to pray, preparing for death. In their prayer they said:

O Lord God of our fathers, glorify Thy holy Name in us. With a contrite soul and a humble spirit we pray to Thee; receive us, who offer ourselves to Thee as a living sacrifice, as burnt offerings of sheep and lambs, and as myriads of fat lambs; so let our sacrifice be before Thee now, and let it be pleasing to Thee, for there is no shame for those who trust in Thee. Thou knowest, O Lord, that we have loved Thee and for Thy sake have given ourselves up to death. Strengthen us all, that not one of us may fall away from this company, lest our enemy mock and rejoice over him.

Thus the saints prayed and encouraged one another. At midnight they sang the great psalm for their own burial, namely: Blessed are the

undefiled, etc. (Ps. 118). When the psalm was finished, an Angel of the Lord came, filled the prison with light, and said to them:

"Rejoice, servants of Christ, your end is near; your names are written in heaven. Take heart, God is with you."

With these words the Angel departed. They, bowing down, gave thanks to God. At this time two prison guards, Meneus and Virilad, Egyptians by birth, were not sleeping; they saw a light that shone in the prison and heard the voice of the Angel, but did not see the Angel himself. Meneus said to Virilad:

"Do you see, brother, what kind of king these soldiers serve? From the very beginning I have sympathized with the Christians. They walk not by a lawless path but by a righteous one, and they keep faith in their God; day and night they wrong no one, they do not seek another's property, but even distribute their own; they love everyone and do good to all. You yourself know this. And what of the life of those who wander in the Egyptian deserts? Is it not strange and wonderful? They work miracles. I think I will go into their prison and ask them to accept me among them. And you, brother, what do you think?"

Virilad answered:

"Just as you do. Behold, we unworthy ones too have been granted to see the light with which God has illumined them, for whose sake they die with joy. If someone were to try to compel the governor to die for Zeus, or for Apollo, or for Asclepius, or for any other of the gods, would he be willing to die? By no means: life is dear to him. But these people do not spare themselves; without fear they go to death for their God, and from Him they receive such glory as the gods have never shown to any of their worshippers. Why should we not turn to these righteous men and to the true God?"

Having thus taken counsel, both guards entered inside the prison and fell down before the saints, saying:

"Our lords, servants of Christ, the true God, receive us also into your number. We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved you, and we ask you to pray to Him that He may grant us a lot the same as yours."

The saints rejoiced at their turning to God and greeted them, saying:

"You are our brothers, since our Lord has called you to confess His most holy Name, and He will give you the same reward as us, as to those who came into His vineyard at the eleventh hour [64]."

The next morning the governor Lysias went out with the soldiers beyond the city to the place where he intended to put the holy martyrs to death, not far from the river called Lykos. There he set up a tribunal and ordered the holy martyrs to be brought and set before him. Seeing that the two prison guards had joined the holy prisoners, he said to his first counselor Apian:

"Here are these madmen who wish to die! Is not life better than death?"

Apian replied:

"Order them to be tortured with the most cruel torments."

"No," said the governor, "they will fear the torments and turn again to the gods, and will remain alive. But I do not want to leave them alive; let them die. I will pass one death sentence on them all."

When the holy martyrs were set before him for judgment, he asked them nothing about their faith and appointed no torture, but at once condemned them to death and wrote the following sentence:

"These forty-five persons of the Christian faith brought before me for judgment, who disobeyed the imperial command and reviled the gods of their fathers, I appoint a punishment worthy of their deeds: first to cut off their hands and feet with an axe, then to cast them into fire to be burned, and to throw into the river the bones that remain after the burning."

Immediately the servants seated the martyrs on the ground and began to hack off their hands and feet. There was a strong blaze of the sun, and the holy martyrs suffered from thirst, some from the pain of their wounds, others from the sun's heat; some died in these sufferings, some barely breathed, and others endured manfully. One of them, named Ianicetus, looking at his severed hands and feet, smiled and said:

64. See the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Mt. 20:1–16).

“Look, how the sickle of the harvest has reaped my limbs as though they were ears of grain!”

But the holy Sisinnius, lying in his blood, leaned against a stone that happened to be nearby, opened his lips, and prayed to God thus:

"Lord, Giver of all good things, who once brought water out of a rock in the desert and gave drink to thirsting Israel (Ex. 17:1–7), now open this stone, pour forth water, and give me a little to drink. Thou seest our thirst, by which we are perishing."

At his prayer the stone suddenly moved, split apart, and poured forth a spring of fresh water. The holy Sisinnius drank the water and blessed the Lord, saying:

"I glorify Thee, my God, that Thou hast given drink to me, who thirsted, as a mother gives milk to her child. I praise Thee, my King, that Thou hast not despised me, Thy servant! But I beseech Thee, despise not my beloved brethren, Thy servants either; cool them who languish with thirst, pouring out invisibly upon them the dew of Thy grace; and grant us all steadfastness to die together in Thy hope. And to this spring, brought forth by Thy power, by which Thou hast again shown an ancient miracle, command that it flow until the end of the world, and grant this water healing grace and power, to the glory of Thee, O Christ, and of Thy Father and the Holy Spirit, in memory of us forty-five martyrs, Thy servants, who suffered for Thee."

At this time the servants kindled the great prepared pyre and began to take the bodies of the martyrs and cast them into the fire; some of the saints were still alive, others were already dead; the dead were delivered to the burning together with the living. As they cast the martyrs into the fire, the servants counted them and found one missing; they were amazed and began to search. And the holy Sisinnius, lying beside the stone that had poured forth the water, answered:

"Here I am! Take me, carry me into the fire!"

They took him and carried him into the fire. The holy martyrs were burned; the fire went out, and the servants began to search among the ashes for the martyrs' bones, and gathered as many as they found in cloths, carried them, and emptied them into the river Lykos [65]. The

river received the bones of the saints as a precious treasure and kept them in one shallow place near the bank, gathering them all together with its currents. Later pious people came to seek them and found them without difficulty; they gathered every one of them and kept them in an honorable place, until the impious Emperor Licinius, co-ruler with Emperor Constantine, who governed the eastern half of the realm, perished, and Constantine alone reigned. When freedom was granted to the Church of Christ throughout the whole world, then the bones of these holy martyrs were shown to all, and a church was built in their name. Healings were given from the holy bones, and also from that spring which the holy Sisinnius brought forth by his prayer. The holy forty-five martyrs suffered on the tenth of July, in Armenian Nicopolis, under the governor Lysias, when Licinius reigned over the East; but over us reigns our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit honor and glory are offered, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

For Christ's sake, O martyrs, ye endured many torments, and overthrew all idolatrous polytheism, and destroyed every seduction of godlessness, trampling it down by the power of Christ; ye teach us all faithfully to cry aloud: Alleluia.

* * *

Narrative on the Translation of the Honorable Robe of Our Lord Jesus Christ from Persia to the Royal City of Moscow

Сказание о перенесении честной ризы Господа нашего Иисуса Христа из Персии в царствующий град Москву

In the days of the right-believing Tsar and Grand Prince, Autocrat of all Russia, Michael Feodorovich [66], during the patriarchate of His Holiness Philaret [67], father of the Tsar in the flesh and in the spirit,

65. The deaths of the holy martyrs took place about 319.
66. Michael Feodorovich reigned from 1613 to 1645.
67. He was Patriarch from 1619 to 1633.

Shah Abbas [68] reigned in Persia. Bearing love and goodwill toward the right-believing Tsar Michael, Abbas often sent ambassadors with gifts to him [69]; likewise the Russian Tsar sent ambassadors with gifts to him. In the year 7133 from the creation of the world (in the year 1625 from the Nativity of Christ), in the month of March, there arrived in Moscow, to the right-believing Tsar Michael, from the Shah, a certain distinguished ambassador named Urusambek; this ambassador had been sent by the aforementioned Shah Abbas. Urusambek brought with him a letter and many precious gifts for the right-believing Tsar Michael. Besides this, he brought with him a letter and a precious gift for His Holiness Patriarch Philaret, namely: the robe of our Lord Jesus Christ, laid in a golden reliquary adorned with precious stones. In this letter the Persian Shah reported that the robe of Christ had been found, during the conquest of the land of Iveria [70], in the metropolitan's sacristy, where it had been sealed up in one of the crosses; the Shah, taking this robe, sent it as a gift to His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow. In the same letter the Persian Shah glorified the great name of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ in these words:

"Whoever will not honor Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) as God, let him be burned in fire without any mercy; and worthy of all honor and glory shall be he who kindles the fire for such a blasphemer."

68. Shah Abbas I, called the Great, ruled Persia from 1586 to 1628. Abbas I was one of the most remarkable sovereigns of Persia. He carried out many useful reforms for the country, reorganized the military structure of the country, built roads and bridges, took care of the restoration and adornment of cities, and tried to revive trade with India and Europe. He treated Christians with favor.

69. Shah Abbas maintained friendly relations with Michael Feodorovich for commercial and political purposes. He also frequently sent envoys to other European countries: France, England, Spain and the Netherlands.

70. Iberia is modern Georgia. It was conquered (not in its entirety, but in its greater part) by Shah Abbas in 1613. Christianity was first established in Georgia through the preaching of St. Nina, Equal-to-the-Apostles, at the beginning of the 4th century (her memory is January 14 (323–340) founded an archbishopric in the principal Iberian city of Mtskheta, which was at first subject to the Patriarch of Antioch and afterward to the Patriarch of Constantinople. Under Peter, Patriarch of Antioch (493–495), a conciliar decision was made that the Iberian Church should be autocephalous (independent). In 1783, when the Georgian King Irakli acknowledged the supreme authority of Russia over himself, the Iberian primates were by the Highest favor granted the rank of Members of the Holy Synod, and in 1811 the Georgian Exarchate was established for the governance of the Georgian Church.[1*]

His Holiness Patriarch Philaret received this great gift with joy, a gift more precious than all earthly gifts, however costly. Then Patriarch Philaret summoned the experienced Greek elders who were then in Moscow. Some of these elders had come to Moscow from Jerusalem, others from the Greek lands. Among them was Nectarius, later Archbishop of Vologda and Great Perm, and also Ioannicius, who had recently arrived in Moscow with His Holiness Theophanes, Patriarch of Jerusalem. His Holiness Patriarch Philaret asked these Greek elders whether they knew anything about the robe of the Lord, and what was said of it in the Greek lands. Each of the elders related what he knew of the robe of the Lord. Among them, Archbishop Nectarius said:

"When I was archdeacon to His Holiness the Patriarch of Constantinople, I happened to be sent by him on certain church errands to the land of Iveria. Here, by chance, I was in a church called 'Ileta.' On the right kliros, by the first pillar, I noticed many lit candles. I asked the priests who were there:

"'What is this?'

"They answered me that the robe of Christ was laid here. They said it had been brought by one of the soldiers of their land who had been in Jerusalem at the Crucifixion of the Lord. They also told me that many miracles had been wrought by this robe of Christ."

Others of the Greeks told His Holiness the Patriarch that everywhere, both in Palestine and in the Greek lands, the faithful unanimously affirm that the robe of the Lord is in Iberia. This soldier received the robe of the Lord by lot,[71] and afterwards carried it to his native land, Iberia, and there gave it, as a precious gift, to his own sister, who was a young maiden. Then the soldier related to everyone what had happened with the Lord Jesus Christ in Jerusalem. The maiden, hearing the soldier's account, loved the robe of the Lord and kept it with reverence. Some time after this, the maiden died. Dying, she requested that her body be buried, instead of in the usual funeral garments, in the robe of the Lord. This was done. Some time later, a large and very beautiful tree grew over the maiden's grave. In the reign of Constantine

71. Jn. 19:23–24

the Great, Emperor of the Greco-Romans,[72] when Iberia was enlightened by holy baptism, a fragrant and healing myrrh began to flow from this tree. All who were afflicted with any sickness or infirmity were anointed with this myrrh and received healing. The orthodox kings of Iberia, seeing such glorious miracles, built a beautiful church over that tree and appointed a bishop to serve at it. After many years, when, by God's permitting, the Persians first captured Iberia, they laid waste that church, in which the myrrh-bearing tree stood. Afterwards Iberia was freed from the Persian yoke, but the tree was no longer there, and the myrrh of healing no longer flowed from that place; only a pillar marked the spot. As for the robe of the Lord, all unanimously affirmed that it is in Iberia; many believed that it was taken, by God's providence, from that tomb during the Persian captivity by the faithful, to keep it inviolate. How it afterwards came to be in the metropolitan church, however, no record has been preserved."

His Holiness Patriarch Philaret heard all the reports about the robe of the Lord. Then he consulted with the most reverend Russian hierarchs (it was then the time of the Holy Forty Days' Fast). By their counsel a strict fast and prayer were proclaimed. Then, after celebrating the All-night Vigil on the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross, His Holiness the Patriarch ordered the robe of Christ our Savior and God to be laid upon the sick, just as in antiquity the pious Empress Helena laid the Cross of Christ upon a dead man, to confirm to all its genuineness.[73] And as then the Cross of Christ was recognized by the power by which the dead man was raised, so now in a similar way all were assured of the genuineness of the robe of the Lord; for all the sick upon whom it was laid received healing and speedy recovery.

The right-believing Tsar and His Holiness the Patriarch were filled with great joy at such grace. Then they ordered that in the great cathedral church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, on the western side, in the right corner, an honorable and especially adorned place be prepared, where there was an image of the life-giving tomb of Christ. Here the honorable robe of the Lord was laid. This robe is still

72. He governed the Roman Empire from 306 to 337.
73. See more on this under the 14th of the month.

shown and is still venerated with reverence by all; to this day healings are granted from it to all the sick who come to it in faith.[74]

The feast of the laying of the honorable robe of the Lord was established on the 10th day of the month of July,[4604] to the glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Today let us, the faithful, draw near to the Divine and healing robe of our Savior God, who was pleased to wear it in the flesh, and on the Cross to shed His holy Blood, by which He redeemed us from the enemy's bondage. Therefore, giving thanks, let us cry to Him: save our Orthodox Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich, and the hierarchs, and the city, and all the people, by Thy honorable robe protect them, and save our souls, as Thou art the Lover of mankind.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

O Master, Thou hast given to all men the garment of incorruption and of saving healing, Thy Divine treasure, the honorable robe, which is a tunic, with which Thou wast pleased to clothe Thy life-giving and holy flesh of Thy Incarnation. Receiving it with desire, we keep the feast brightly, and singing to Thee with fear and love as to the Benefactor, we call to Thee, O Christ: preserve in peace our right-believing Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich, and the hierarchs, and all the people, through Thy great mercy.

* * *

NOTES

4530. Mount Athos (Athos), in Greek Agion Oros, the Holy Mountain, is a narrow, mountainous peninsula projecting into the Archipelago (the Aegean Sea), known as a center of monastic life for the Greek East. Monasticism arose here in ancient times, though somewhat later than in Syria and Palestine. For the Russian Church, almost from the appearance of Christianity in Rus' until the seventeenth century, Athos had

74. At present, two parts of the robe of the Lord are in St. Petersburg: one in the Court Cathedral, the other in the Peter and Paul Cathedral.

greater significance: here the father of Russian monasticism, Venerable Anthony, was tonsured; here, in the large monastery libraries, our monks who went to Athos received the broadest religious education available at that time (for example, Venerable Nilus of Sora, †1508). Here were special translators and copyists, who supplied Orthodox Rus' with translated manuscript works of a churchly and edifying character. As one of the most venerated holy places of the Orthodox East, Athos is visited every year by thousands of pilgrims, exclusively male (women are forbidden entry into the monastery), from Russia, the Balkan peninsula, and the Asiatic possessions of Turkey.

4551. According to the testimony of the chronicler, the monastery was built not by the Venerable Theodosius but by his predecessor in the abbacy, Barlaam. But however that may be, it can be said that the monastery was built no later than 1062. Eleven or twelve years after the building of the monastery above the cave, the Venerable Theodosius began the construction of a new and very extensive monastery on a new site, across the ravine from the first monastery, near the second cave of the Venerable Antony. In 1073 the Venerable Theodosius did not succeed in completing the construction of the new monastery; this was done by his successors in the abbacy: Stephen, Nikon and John. The Caves Monastery has remained on this second site up to the present, which is why the (second) Antonine caves are the near ones to the monastery. The old, or former, monastery, after the transfer of the brethren to the new one, was not destroyed: the cave at which it stood was made into a burial vault for the brethren; for burial in the old monastery several of the brethren remained, among them a presbyter and a deacon for the daily celebration in the monastery church of the Liturgy of the Dead "for the dying brethren."

4555. Simon was a tonsured monk of the Caves Monastery; from there he was taken by Grand Prince Vsevolod Yuryevich as abbot of the Nativity monastery he had founded in Vladimir; then Simon was made the first bishop of the Vladimir eparchy, separated from Rostov in 1214. Simon died in 1226 after a twelve-year rule. Polycarp, also a tonsured monk of the Caves Monastery, who was twice raised to the abbacy and twice returned from it to the Caves Monastery; afterwards he was abbot of the Caves Monastery. (See his Life under the 24th of this month.) From the epistle of Bishop Simon of Vladimir to Polycarp, and from the epistle of the latter to Akindin, archimandrite of the Caves, the content of which is a series of narratives about the wonderworkers of the Caves and about miracles that occurred in the monastery itself during the building of its great church, the famous Caves Paterikon (*otechnik*, "book of the fathers," that is, a book of or about the fathers) took shape.

4604. The event of the translation of the Honorable Robe of the Lord took place in the month of March, during Great Lent; but, on account of the Lenten season, the celebration of the translation of the Honorable Robe of the Lord was transferred to July 10. This day was the eve of the solemn day of the coronation of Tsar Michael Feodorovich. The service for the Placing of the Robe of the Lord was composed by Cyprian, Metropolitan of Krutitsy. In this service, calling the faithful to venerate the Divine and healing Robe of the Savior, the Church proclaims that this robe is a tunic, precious both for the power of its healing and because the holy and life-giving flesh of the God-Man was

clothed in it. Clothed in the robe, "Thou, being perfect God in essence, wast seen as perfect Man; confirming the image of the God-Man, Thou hast granted us the robe of Thy divine flesh as a wall and covering. By the approach of Thy divine robe Thou hast sanctified us." On the day of the feast of the Robe of the Lord, the clergy carried it on the head, in the manner of a cross, into the middle of the church for veneration. Therefore in the church hymns we hear the invocation: "We venerate Thy precious Cross and Thy holy Robe, O most good One, and kiss them with love." The establishment of this feast was announced by royal and patriarchal charters. This is seen from the charter of the Archbishop of Tver to the Abbot of Kalyazin, Euthymius. "In the present year 1626," the Archbishop writes, "on the 24th day of January, charters were sent to us by the Sovereign Tsar, Grand Prince Michael Feodorovich of all Russia, and by the Great Sovereign and our Father, the Most Holy Patriarch Philaret Nikitich of Moscow and all Russia. In them it is written: in the past year 1625, on the 11th day of March, there came to Tsar Michael Feodorovich and the Most Holy Patriarch Philaret Nikitich, from Kizyl-Bash, from the sovereign Shah Abbas, an envoy, a Georgian named Urusambek, and after bowing to the Tsar and the Most Holy Patriarch he presented to the latter a golden reliquary adorned with precious stones, containing a shirt or tunic of Jesus Christ. On the same day, in his own court, the Great Sovereign and our Father, the Most Holy Patriarch Philaret, together with his concelebrants—Cyprian, Metropolitan of Sarsk and Podonsk, Nectarius, a Greek Archbishop, the archimandrites, abbots, protopriests, and the whole sacred council—examined the reliquary and saw in it a woven linen robe, reddish and of ancient date. On the 18th day of March the Most Holy Patriarch Philaret spoke with his son, the Tsar and Grand Prince Michael Feodorovich, saying that the relic called the shirt of Christ had been sent by the unbelieving Shah Abbas, and that it could not be received without true testimony: the word of unbelievers is not accepted as testimony without examination. Therefore, on March 26, the council of the patriarch, archbishops, archimandrites, abbots, and elders in the monasteries appointed a seven-day fast and prayer, and the clergy of the other churches were to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and pray that the Lord God might reveal His will concerning that relic. By the grace, love for mankind, and ineffable mercy of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, many healings were accomplished through the Robe of the Lord before the week was completed; and as to whom, on which day, and from what illness, an authentic register has been sent to us in Tver, under the seals of the Great Sovereign and Philaret Nikitich, Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia. Therefore, you, the Abbot, with the hieromonks and brethren, are to gather in the cathedral church and have the chief deacon read this our charter here, in the hearing of all the people, and after its reading offer a supplication to the Lord with the ringing of bells."

THE ELEVENTH DAY OF JULY

July 11

11 июля

New Calendar July 11 · Old Calendar July 24 (civil dates)

Commemoration of the Miracle of St. Euphemia the All-Praised, Great Martyr

Воспоминание о чуде святой великомученицы Евфимии Всехвальной

St. Euphemia, the Great Martyr, was born, brought up, and crowned with martyrdom in Chalcedon, a city of Bithynia, situated by a gulf of the Black Sea, opposite Constantinople, on the other side of the strait of the Thracian Bosporus which separates them. She suffered during the reign of Diocletian[1], on September 16, when her memory is also celebrated. Today, however, we commemorate the miracle wrought through her honored relics during the Fourth Ecumenical Council of the Holy Fathers, which took place in Chalcedon and by which the Orthodox confession of faith was revealed and confirmed. This miracle was a sign to the Holy Fathers not to enter into communion with those of false belief, and it came to pass as follows.

Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria, and Eutyches, archimandrite of Constantinople, while the Orthodox Emperor Theodosius[2] was still alive, raised up a blasphemous heresy concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, merging His two natures, divine and human, into one nature.[3] By their false belief they deceived many clergy and laymen, led many

1. He governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.
2. Theodosius II reigned from 408 to 450.
3. The reference is to the Monophysite, or Eutychian, heresy which, in opposition to the Nestorian division in the Person of Jesus Christ of the divinity and the humanity, taught that the humanity in Jesus Christ was wholly absorbed by the divinity, and that therefore in the Person of Jesus Christ only one nature, the Divine, is to be acknowledged. This heresy was condemned, as is noted further in the narrative, at the IV Ecumenical Council.

distinguished courtiers into their heresy, and enjoyed their powerful support to a great extent.

When a local council assembled at Ephesus[4] (several years after the Third Ecumenical Council held there[5]), or, rather, a robber assembly, at which the most holy Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople,[6] a Confessor of piety, was killed by the followers of Dioscorus and Eutyches, that heresy was strengthened still more and began to be accepted as Orthodox belief, while the true Orthodox faith came to be rejected as though it were some false belief. It was necessary to convene the Fourth Ecumenical Council of the Holy Fathers to destroy this heresy and confirm the Orthodox faith.

At this time the pious Emperor Theodosius departed this life unto the Lord, and after him the virtuous and God-pleasing Marcian[7] received the kingdom, together with the holy Pulcheria. These champions of Orthodox belief and piety, seeing how heresies troubled the Church and what dissensions prevailed in it, commanded the Holy Fathers from throughout the world to assemble in the glorious city of Chalcedon, that they might examine and discuss the questions of faith there.

The Holy Fathers assembled, six hundred and thirty in number,[8] among them the most holy Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople, the most holy Juvenal, and the delegates of the most holy Leo, Pope of Rome. Those of false belief were also present, headed by Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria, and Maximus of Antioch, to whom Dioscorus had given the patriarchate in place of Domnus, who had been deposed, together with other bishops of like mind, and Eutyches with his followers, so that a great multitude of heretics had gathered. All assembled with the Holy Fathers for deliberation in the church of St. Euphemia, the Great Martyr, which stood in a suburb of the city near the Bospor-

4. In 449.

5. The III Ecumenical Council, held at Ephesus in 431, was convened by the Emperor Theodosius II on account of the false teaching of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who taught that the incarnation of the Word of God was merely His dwelling in the man Christ, and not the union of divinity and humanity in one Person.

6. Flavian (I) was Patriarch from 447 to 449. He was numbered among the saints. – His memory is celebrated on 18 February.

7. The Emperor Marcian governed the East from 450 to 457.

8. In 451. – This was the IV Ecumenical Council.

us. It was the cathedral church of the Metropolis of Chalcedon, very spacious and capable of holding a great multitude of people. There also rested the relics of this Great Martyr, from which wondrous and glorious miracles were wrought; of these we shall relate but a few. On the day of her holy commemoration, when she suffered for Christ, blood flowed every year from her honored relics, as though it had just issued from her wounds. It was gathered in the following manner. The tomb was a great marble one, covered with a marble slab, and within it was a wooden reliquary containing the relics of the saint. On the left side of this marble tomb was a small opening, through which a hand could pass; it was kept tightly closed, but opened when needed. Through it the bishop himself, at the end of the All-night Vigil and before the Divine Liturgy, drew up the blood with a sponge tied to a long iron handle. He would insert the dry sponge, draw it out full of blood, and squeeze the blood from it into a vessel prepared for the purpose. At this sight the people gave great glory to God and His holy Martyr, and anointed themselves with the blood for a blessing and healing of their illnesses. This blood was most fragrant, as though mingled with precious myrrh; yet no myrrh on earth could compare with it, for this blood surpassed all fragrances beyond measure and healed every illness. And not only at her annual feast did the Great Martyr pour forth from her honored relics such blood, fragrant as myrrh and healing, but at times also on other occasions, especially when the bishop of that church was pleasing to God through his virtuous life. There were many apparitions as well: the saint often appeared to those who prayed to her with faith, whether they were lying ill, coming to the church to her tomb, or enduring various troubles and calling upon her for help. People flocked in great faith from every quarter, from all the cities, to venerate her at Chalcedon, especially those from nearby Constantinople. By the emperor's command, the Ecumenical Council of the Holy Fathers was to assemble there.

There was much discussion, debate, and disagreement at that Council between the Orthodox and the heretics, since those of false belief were in no way willing to agree with Orthodox teaching. Then the most

holy Anatolius, having consulted with the other Holy Fathers, said to the heretics:

"Write your confession of faith on a scroll, and we too shall write our confession. Let us place both scrolls, sealed, in the tomb upon the honored relics of St. Euphemia, the Great Martyr. We shall fast and pray together to God, that through this servant of His He may reveal to us which confession is right."

After these words of the most holy Anatolius, all approved his counsel and wrote two scrolls, the Orthodox their own and those of false belief theirs. They sealed them with their seals, opened the saint's tomb, placed both scrolls upon her breast, closed the tomb again, affixed the imperial seal, set a guard, and fasted and prayed for three days. At the beginning of the fourth day, the emperor and the whole Council came to the saint's honored tomb. When they removed the imperial seal and opened the tomb, they saw that the Great Martyr held the scroll of the Orthodox in her right hand, while the scroll of those of false belief lay at her feet. Most wondrous of all was that, stretching forth her hand as though alive, she gave the scroll containing the true confession to the emperor and the patriarch. Then all rejoiced exceedingly, glorified God, sang hymns of praise with thanksgiving to the Great Martyr, and bowed down with fervent love before her wonderworking relics. At once they proclaimed the Orthodox faith, as confirmed by God and wondrously declared through the Great Martyr, and consigned the heretical false belief to condemnation. Many of the heretics, seeing this miracle, turned to Orthodoxy, while those who remained obstinate were deprived of their rank and sent into exile. From that time iconographers began to depict St. Euphemia, the Great Martyr, on icons with a scroll in her right hand, in undying remembrance of this glorious miracle at the Council. Both then and afterward the holy Martyr did not cease to work miracles and to pour forth from her honored relics blood fragrant as myrrh.

Many years passed; the throne was received by Maurice[9], a pious emperor. But through his little faith he dared to doubt the miracles of

9. The Emperor Maurice governed the East from 582 to 602.

the Saint, and he began to regard the blood flowing from her relics as false rather than genuine. Desiring to test and to establish the truth, he did the following. Long before the day of the annual commemoration of the holy Great Martyr, he sealed the tomb and the opening in it with his imperial seal. When the day of her feast drew near, he himself came from Constantinople to Chalcedon, and, breaking the seal, opened the aperture; at once a wondrous fragrance spread and filled the whole church. More blood, or, better to say, myrrh resembling blood, flowed from the honorable relics of the Saint than was usual; in no year had so much flowed as in this one, so as to put to shame the little faith of the emperor and to firmly establish faith in the power of God, by which everything supernatural can be accomplished. The Lord, who in ancient times could bring forth from the bone of an animal, from the jawbone of an ass, a spring of living water for Samson[10] (Judg. 15:18–19), could He not then also cause blood and myrrh to flow from the incorrupt relics of His saint? Then the emperor, understanding his transgression, repented, and from that time on he believed firmly in the Saint.

Afterwards, in the reign of Heraclius[11], by the permission of God it came to pass that the Persians invaded the land of Bithynia and the surroundings of Chalcedon, so that the whole suburb was laid waste in the barbarian manner. The enemy entered also into the church of the holy Great Martyr and took all that they found; they wished to open the tomb of the Saint, but they could not do so in any way, and however much they labored they accomplished nothing: not only did the upper marble slab remain immovable, but not even a small opening could be made in the tomb. Then the Persians brought a great quantity of wood and brushwood, piled them about the tomb, laid upon it a whole mountain of combustible material, and set it alight in the hope that the marble would crack from the intense heat. Yet even in this way they accomplished nothing. Everything that had been laid upon it was burned to ashes, and the holy tomb remained in no way damaged. Thus won-

10. Samson was a judge of Israel, endowed by God with extraordinary strength and serving as God's instrument against the Philistines. The history of his life and deeds is set forth in Judg. 13:16.

11. Heraclius reigned from 610 to 641.

drously did God make His servant! After the Persians had departed, the Emperor took counsel with the Patriarch concerning the relics of the holy Great Martyr Euphemia, and they resolved to transfer them from Chalcedon to Constantinople, fearing a second invasion of the barbarians upon Chalcedon. In Constantinople, near the hippodrome[12], they built a church in honor of the Saint, after the likeness of the Chalcedonian one, large and beautiful, and into it they transferred with honor the holy relics together with the stone tomb; and for the greater honor of the relics they appointed the Metropolitan of Chalcedon to officiate there. The tomb was set up in the sanctuary in place of the Divine altar, and the Bloodless Sacrifice was offered upon the tomb; and within it lay the honorable relics of the Great Martyr. From them, in Constantinople as in Chalcedon, miracles were wrought, and blood, fragrant with myrrh and healing, flowed forth at the usual time.

Many years passed, many emperors changed, and the ecumenical councils of the holy Fathers, the fifth and the sixth[13], were past; and after them, for a long time afterward, there reigned, a beast in name and in disposition, the Emperor Leo the Isaurian[14]. He was the first to begin disturbing the Church of God with the iconoclastic heresy, calling the holy icons idols, and reasoning thus with his like-minded companions:

"Here are those of whom the prophet speaks: 'They have mouths, but they speak not; they have eyes, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not' (Ps. 113:13–14)."

Against him stood the most holy Patriarch Germanus[15]; the Emperor, with dishonor, cast him down from the throne, and in his place he raised up a heretic, his like-minded companion. In the same manner he also sent into exile, with dishonor, other orthodox hierarchs who op-

12. The hippodrome was a place for chariot races.

13. The V Ecumenical Council was held at Constantinople in 553 and was convened by the Emperor Justinian I (527–565) to settle the question of the orthodoxy of three bishops: Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa, who in their writings had expressed Nestorian opinions. – The VI Ecumenical Council was held in 680 at Constantinople under the Emperor Constantine IV Pogonatus (668–685); its principal task was the exposure and condemnation of the Monothelite heresy, which acknowledged only one (Divine) will in Christ.

14. Leo III the Isaurian reigned from 716 to 741.

15. Germanus was Patriarch from 715 to 730.

posed his heresy. Not only the holy icons, but also the relics of the saints he reviled like a dog with unbridled tongue, and in every way he held them in contempt. Seeing and hearing of the miracles from the honorable relics of the holy Great Martyr Euphemia, he was tormented in his soul by envy, but he did not dare to do anything evil to them, fearing a popular uprising and rebellion. He devised a crafty deed. He went by night with his companions secretly into the church of St. Euphemia and opened her tomb, which the Persians had been unable to open: Christ God permitted the hands of faithless Christians to touch the honorable relics of His Bride, which He had kept inviolate from the unbelieving pagans. The Persians had sinned in ignorance, but the Christians dared the outrage knowing what they did; God permitted them, to their greater condemnation, to commit this dishonor upon the Saint. The impious Emperor, having opened the tomb, took out from it, together with the wooden reliquary, the wonderworking and incorrupt relics of St. Euphemia, and in their place he laid some rotten, foul-smelling bones which he had prepared on purpose for this; and covering it again with the slab, he departed, carrying those honorable relics off by theft, and placed them in one of the rooms of the imperial palace. His sisters and daughters, however, came secretly to the holy relics, censed them with fragrant incense, lit them with candles, and with love venerated and worshipped them. But the impious Emperor soon learned of it, and at once took the reliquary with the relics and cast it by night into the sea. On the morning, gathering a crowd of the faithless, he began to laugh in the faces of the orthodox people, mocking and reproaching the relics of the holy Great Martyr:

"Go, you foolish ones, look upon the deception with which you are being beguiled, calling the relics of the glorious Euphemia incorrupt and wonderworking; open the tomb and see whether it is true."

And at once he sent his attendants with the people to open the tomb. They went, opened it, and saw only rotten, foul-smelling bones. Then the heretics began to laugh and mock the orthodox, calling them worshippers of rotten bones; while the orthodox marveled at such an unexpected event, were perplexed, were ashamed, and grieved. Then many thought concerning all the miracles of the Saint that it had been a

deception; they spat upon those rotten bones, cast them out, and also dragged that marble tomb out of the church, and turned the house of God into an abomination of desolation; they subjected it to great desecration, and that church became like some empty den, or a cattle stall, or even worse, for it became a place for every kind of filth and uncleanness. Then within the church the smiths set up their forges and began to practice their trade there; and where formerly the singing of divine praises had been heard, from there began to resound the blows of hammers striking iron on the anvil, and there were heard the absurd voices of cursing and the disorderly talk of men. These craftsmen lived in the empty church with their wives and children, and in the holy sanctuary, as in a closed place, they made themselves a privy; and long did God endure such deeds of men, such defilement of His sanctuary, until He destroyed the evil by evil, raised up Orthodoxy again, cleansed and sanctified His place, making it once more a dwelling of His glory.

When the honorable relics of the all-glorious martyr had been cast into the depths of the sea, by God's providence a ship was sailing from a harbor called Sophiana; on this ship were two owners, the brothers Sergius and Sergon. They, seeing near their ship a reliquary borne by the waves, took it out of the water onto the ship, thinking that it contained some earthly treasure, and, setting the sails, sailed onward. Arriving at a harbor called Avidova, they opened the reliquary and saw there the incorrupt relics; a great fragrance issued from them, and they rejoiced at this spiritual treasure, especially when in a vision they learned the holiness of those relics; for on the following night they saw in a vision above the relics great glory, burning lamps and candles, and bright men singing and glorifying God. Having received this vision, they began to beseech God to reveal to them which saint these relics belonged to; they sailed on and drew near to an island called Limnos. On this island there were also the wonderworking and myrrh-streaming relics of the holy martyr Glykeria; as they spent the night near this island, they saw in a vision the holy martyr Glykeria coming toward their ship, and a beautiful maiden coming out of the ship to meet her; the two embraced tenderly. And the maiden who had come said to the maiden who had come out of the ship:

"Hail, Christ's martyr, all-glorious Euphemia!"

The other answered her in turn:

"Hail, Christ's martyr, blessed Glykeria!"

And, greeting one another, they parted: the holy Glykeria went to her own place, and the holy Euphemia returned to the ship. This vision was the same for both brothers; they were greatly gladdened to learn whose relics these were, and in warm prayer they fervently fell down before the holy Great Martyr Euphemia, embraced the reliquary, kissed it, shedding tears of joy. They wished to carry this priceless treasure to their homeland, but it was not pleasing to God and to His holy servant. The seamen set the sails and set out on their course homeward; but when they were already far from that island, suddenly a storm and a strong swell arose, and the ship was driven by the waves back again to the same island. Again the seamen, when the sea grew calm, set out to sail, but again, by God's command, the waves suddenly rose and brought the ship to the island. And this was done not two or three times, but many times; and all on the ship were in great perplexity.

Night came, and Christ's martyr appeared to them and said:

"Why do you strive to carry me here and there? I will not depart from here; I do not wish to go where you want to take me."

And she added:

"Was it not enough for me to be transferred from Chalcedon to Byzantium (Constantinople), to be cast into the sea, to be brought hither? Why do you wish yet to carry me to distant lands? It is beyond your strength; labor no more, but build me a small house on this island, and I will rest here."

With these words she became invisible. The honorable brothers Sergius and Sergon at once gladly obeyed the command of the Saint, remained in the harbor, disembarked from the ship onto the land, went and informed the bishop of that island concerning the relics of the all-glorious Euphemia and her command. The bishop rejoiced at this, but bade them keep the holy relics in secret, since on that island too there had been received the dread command of the impious Emperor to cast out and deliver to the fire the holy icons and the honorable relics of the saints. In consequence of the impious order, the myrrh-streaming relics

of the holy martyr Glykeria too were hidden underground. Then, having chosen a suitable place, the bishop blessed Sergius and Sergon to build a small church to Euphemia, Christ's martyr, not far from the seashore. Soon the construction was completed; the bishop came, consecrated the church, and placed the honorable relics in the holy sanctuary, buried in the ground, so that the iconoclasts might not learn of them. After all this, both brothers resolved to make the following vow to the holy martyr:

"We will not forsake you," they said, "O holy Great Martyr, all-glorious Euphemia, nor will we depart from your honorable relics, but here we will serve you to the end of our lives."

Having made such a vow, they sold all the merchandise they were carrying on the ship, renounced the world, and took up residence at that church, living in fasting and prayer. Before long, pleasing God, they reposed unto life everlasting through the intercession of the holy, all-glorious Martyr Euphemia, whom they had diligently served. Before their end they laid a stone slab upon the tomb of the holy martyr, so that the place which held this exceedingly rich treasure might not be utterly forgotten, and on the slab they wrote the following:

"We, Sergius and Sergon, brothers by birth, sailing along the Hellespont (the Sea of Constantinople), took from the sea the honorable relics of the all-glorious holy Martyr of Christ, Euphemia, which the waves were bearing, and by her command we laid them here."

Afterwards the bishop of that island built a beautiful church and wished to transfer the relics of St. Euphemia into it. Coming to the small church which the brothers had built, he was performing the all-night prayers. He fell into a doze, and the saint appeared to him with these words:

"Do not begin what you have determined to do, O Venerable Father! I will not obey you in this. Go instead to my sister, the holy Martyr Glykeria, pray to her, and I will also ask her; and she will allow herself to be carried to your church. As for me, leave me to rest in this place until I return to my own place."

The bishop awoke in terror and did not dare to carry out his intention. He transferred the holy Martyr Glykeria, who was kept in another

place, to his church after prayers had been offered there, and laid her beneath a tomb-vault. Thus were the relics of the saints preserved from the wicked iconoclasts who were hostile to them. Although they lay beneath a vault, the faithful gathered to them and celebrated their feasts with honor, for by those servants of God healing was granted for every kind of sickness.

Once, on the day of the memory of the holy Great Martyr Euphemia, while the feast was being celebrated in her church, it happened that a voivode, an adherent and zealot of the iconoclastic heresy, was sailing past that island with troops on ships; he had been sent somewhere on duty. Approaching the quay, he disembarked and saw a large gathering of people near the church that stood close to the quay. Asking and learning the reason for the celebration, namely that the people were keeping the feast on account of the relics of the holy Martyr Euphemia resting there, the wicked man lost his temper, rushed with his troops against that church, and dispersed the people with shouts of:

"Do the emperors permit this? You are idolaters, servants of dead bones!"

With such abuse heaped upon the Orthodox Christians, the wretch wrecked that church almost to its foundations; the holy relics, however, remained intact beneath the vault. And that place lay desolate for a long time.

After the death of the wicked emperor Leo the Isaurian, his son Constantine succeeded to the throne, surnamed Copronymus[16], an offshoot still more evil from an evil root. He not only rejected the veneration of icons, but secretly rejected Christ God Himself, and the wretch reviled even the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos with his foul tongue, and mocked the holy servants of God. From youth he had grown accustomed to every evil, learned a wicked life, sorcery and magic, and mercilessly shed human blood. He surpassed his father in cruelty, killed many innocent and righteous people, and entirely expelled the monks from Constantinople. He reigned for a long time, by God's permission on account of men's sins, and having wrought countless evils, died a

16. Constantine V Copronymus reigned from 714 to 775.

bitter death; after himself he left the kingdom to his son Leo, who was also an iconoclast, but did not display such cruelty as his father and grandfather. After Leo's death his son Constantine came to the throne together with his mother Irene[17]—a name which means peace (in Greek)—and she truly brought peace to the Church of Christ. During the minority of her son she alone governed the Greek kingdom, and governed well and pleasingly to God; she set right everything that had been corrupted and ruined by the iconoclast emperors, and brought back from exile the holy fathers who had been banished for venerating the honorable icons. Indeed, she was pious and God-loving; she convened the Seventh Ecumenical Council[18], with the most holy Patriarch Tarasius of Constantinople[19] at its head; thus the holy churches were restored to their adornment of icons, and the iconoclastic heresy was anathematized by the holy fathers. Then also that church of the holy Great Martyr Euphemia in Constantinople, near the hippodrome, of which we have spoken above, and which had been laid waste by Leo the Isaurian, was restored by the right-believing Empress Irene; she ordered the church cleansed of filth and everything ruined repaired, adorned it in every way with beautiful icons, and supplied it with sacred vestments and precious vessels; the church was consecrated, and the Divine services began to be celebrated in it again as before, and the Metropolitan of Chalcedon again took up residence there. The Christ-loving Empress Irene zealously sought to discover the relics of the all-praised Martyr Euphemia. From the time when Leo the Isaurian secretly seized the holy relics and cast them into the sea, a rumor of this secret crime of the emperor had spread among the Orthodox, and it was told that the holy relics had been found somewhere and were being preserved by the faithful; the empress also sought to learn where they were. And the Lord, who fulfills the desire of those who fear Him, made known to the empress the whereabouts of the honorable relics of the holy Martyr in the following manner. On that island of Limnos, where the relics, as was said, had been kept beneath a vault, there lived

17. Constantine VI (Porphyrogenitus) reigned from 780 to 797, and Irene from 797 to 802.
18. In 787.
19. Tarasius was Patriarch from 784 to 806.

a certain notable man named Anastasius, of the rank of comes[20]; the place on which the two brothers, Sergius and Sergon, mentioned above, had built a church in honor of the holy Great Martyr Euphemia, and had hidden her honorable relics in the earth, placing a stone slab with an inscription on the tomb, had come to him by inheritance as his property. This Anastasius the comes, seeing that the church of the all-praised Martyr on his land had been completely ruined, rebuilt it on its former foundation and adorned it with fitting splendor. Afterwards a misfortune befell him through the unjust slander of envious people, and he was unjustly deprived of his rank. Then he set out for Constantinople to clear himself of the false slander and to regain his rank. When he was seeking there an intercessor and advocate with the empress, someone told him that the Metropolitan of Chalcedon could help him, because he had more right than others to plead for the wronged. Anastasius sought the metropolitan and found him in the palace; falling before him, he told the purpose of his coming and asked the metropolitan to help him and to intercede on his behalf. But the metropolitan refused, saying:

"I cannot do this; the matter is beyond my power."

With these words the metropolitan left the palace for his house, and Anastasius followed him as far as the episcopal residence; seeing a church unlocked, he entered it to pray. After long prayer with kneeling he sat down somewhere, for at that time there was no service. One of the church servers, on duty that week, approached him to ask who he was and where he came from. Anastasius told him everything about himself and revealed his grief to him, and then asked the server:

"Whose church is this, of which saint?"

He answered:

"This church is of the holy, all-praised Great Martyr Euphemia."

As soon as Anastasius heard this, pressing his hands to his breast, he cried out with love:

20. The comites were originally the companions of the chief official in a province, and later the companions of the emperors, who formed their most intimate retinue. From the time of Constantine the Great (306–337) this designation became the title of all court and state officials, even of those who did not belong to the imperial retinue.

"O my holy Euphemia!"

"Why do you call her yours?" asked the server.

Anastasius answered:

"In my church, in my house, I have her honorable relics; therefore I dare to call her mine."

The server said:

"How can that be? Are you speaking the truth? Take care not to lie, or it will go badly for you; for the empress is making great efforts to discover the relics of the holy Euphemia, and has commanded the metropolitan to pray to God that He would reveal where the honorable relics of His Martyr are."

Anastasius said:

"Believe me, honest man, I have the relics of Euphemia the all-praised, which were in Chalcedon."

Hearing this, the server asked him to wait a little there, and himself, rejoicing, hastened to report it to the metropolitan, the venerable Andrew. The metropolitan rejoiced, and at once summoning Anastasius, questioned him about the holy relics; he told everything in detail, as it was related among the inhabitants of that island concerning the honorable relics of Euphemia the all-praised, and how the two brothers who had taken these relics from the sea had written on the stone slab. The venerable metropolitan went at once to the most holy Patriarch Tarasius and told him of this; and the holy patriarch went with the metropolitan to the emperor and his mother, taking Anastasius with him, and told the empress about the honorable relics of the Martyr of Christ. All rejoiced and gave thanks to God, and Anastasius was richly rewarded and regained his former rank. Immediately a rich ship was equipped and sent out, bearing distinguished persons of clerical rank and courtiers, together with Anastasius the comes, to the island of Limnos, to transfer the holy relics from there to Constantinople; after a safe voyage they arrived at that island. When the local inhabitants learned that the people of Constantinople had come and wished to take the relics of Euphemia the all-praised, a very hostile multitude gathered: they wished to resist the imperial envoys and not to let them carry away from their island that priceless spiritual treasure, and they most of all

railed against Anastasius the comes, calling him a traitor. And a murmur already arose among the people, so that the bishop of Limnos could scarcely calm it, saying:

"People, do not resist such a will of God, and do not arouse the anger of the emperor: 'The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion' (Prov. 19:12)."

When the people's murmuring fell silent, they opened the holy coffin and took the honorable relics of the Bride of Christ out of the earth, like a beautiful flower; the air was filled with fragrance. They carried the relics to the ship with the singing of psalms, with candles and censers. The people, however, saw them off with tears, weeping that they were losing such a precious treasure, and stood on the seashore, following the departing ship with their eyes until it vanished from sight. When the ship arrived at Constantinople, the whole city came out with the emperor, his mother, and the Most Holy Patriarch to meet the honorable relics of the Martyr of Christ. They received them with joy and solemnity, and carried them with honor into the church from which they had once been secretly stolen by heretics, and laid them in the same place, in the same stone coffin, where they had lain before.

Thus the Holy Great Martyr Euphemia the All-Praised once again found herself in her honorable place in Constantinople. And they glorified God for her miracles, God who is glorified in His saints, to Whom honor and glory are offered also by us, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Having loved Christ thy Bridegroom, and having prepared thy lamp brightly, shining forth with virtues, O All-Praised Euphemia, thou didst therefore ascend with Him to the marriage, having received from Him the crown of suffering. But deliver us from calamities, we who with faith honor thy memory.

Kontakion, Tone 6:

Thou didst lay down labors in suffering, labors in faith, warmly for Christ thy Bridegroom. And now, as the wavering of heresies

and of enemies, pray through the Mother of God, who received from the six hundred and thirty God-bearing Fathers her boundary and keeps it, O All-Praised, to subject them beneath the feet of Orthodox emperors.

* * *

Repose of the Blessed Princess Olga, in Holy Baptism Helen

Преставление блаженной княгини Ольги, во святом крещении Елены

At the end of the dark night of idol-worship, which overshadowed the Russian land, the Blessed Olga appeared as the dawn before the coming of the bright day of the holy faith in Christ, the "Sun of Righteousness."

The Blessed Olga came from a renowned family: she was the great-granddaughter of Gostomysl, that glorious man who governed in Great Novgorod until, at his own counsel, Rurik and his brothers were summoned from the Varangians to rule the Russian land.[21] Olga's homeland was the village of Vybuty, which is now near the city of Pskov, though at that time the city did not yet exist.[22] The parents of the Blessed Olga were able to instill in their daughter the rules of an honorable and prudent life, which they themselves observed despite their idolatry. Olga was distinguished by chastity and a bright mind, as will soon be seen.

Rurik, dying,[23] left after himself his son Igor, still a young boy, and therefore Rurik entrusted both Igor and the reign itself to the care of

21. On the basis of: 1) the name of the Blessed Olga, which is a Varangian name derived from the masculine Oleg; 2) the direct testimony of certain lives of saints; and 3) the fact that Olga was the wife of Prince Igor, who, being a Varangian, would most naturally have taken a wife from his own tribe, it must be regarded as more certain that the Blessed Olga was a Varangian woman. – The Varangians, or Norsemen, inhabited the Scandinavian peninsula, and from the Novgorod Slavs they were separated only by the Finns. The chronicle dates the summoning of the Varangians to 862, but it is more probable to date it to 852.

22. So says the later tradition. The village of Vybutskaya—now the village of Vybutino or Labutino—lies twelve versts from Pskov upstream along the Velikaya River. From the Initial Chronicle (under 903) it is seen that the homeland of the Blessed Olga was Pskov, whence Oleg brought her to Igor and where she was, probably, the daughter of one of the governors or boyars.

23. He died in 879.

his kinsman Oleg until the son should come of age. The latter, gathering a considerable army and having with him the young heir Igor, set out for Kiev. Having slain Askold and Dir there, Oleg subjected Kiev to himself and became the sole ruler of the Varangian-Russian domains, preserving the reign for his nephew Igor. In matters of government Oleg had to be sometimes in Kiev and sometimes in Great Novgorod. Prince Igor, having reached youthful age, took up hunting. It happened that, while hunting in the environs of Novgorod, he came into the bounds of Pskov; tracking game near the aforementioned village of Vybuty, he saw on the other side of the river a place suitable for hunting, but could not get there for lack of a boat. Some time later Igor noticed a youth rowing in a boat; calling him to the bank, he ordered to be ferried to the other side of the river. As they sailed, Igor, looking more attentively at the face of the oarsman, saw that the rower was not a youth but a maiden; this was the Blessed Olga, who stood out for her beauty. Olga's beauty wounded Igor's heart; lust flared up in him, and he began to entice her with words, inclining her toward unclean carnal union. But the Blessed Olga, perceiving Igor's thoughts, kindled by lust, cut short his speech, addressing him like a wise elder with this admonition:

"Why, prince, are you troubled, contemplating an impossible deed? Your words reveal your shameless desire to outrage me—may it never be! I do not even wish to hear of it. I beg you, heed me and subdue within yourself these foolish and shameful thoughts, of which you should be ashamed. Remember and consider that you are a prince, and that a prince ought to be a bright example of good deeds to the people, as their ruler and judge; yet what lawlessness are you now near to committing! If you yourself, overcome by unclean lust, commit crimes, how will you restrain others from them and judge your subjects justly? Abandon such shameless desire, which honorable people abhor; they may hate you for it, despite your being a prince, and subject you to shameful mockery. And know this as well: although I am alone here and powerless compared with you, you still will not overcome me. But even if you could overcome me, the depth of this river would at once be

my protection: it is better for me to die in purity, burying myself in these waters, than for my virginity to be defiled."

Such admonitions to chastity, addressed by the Blessed Olga to Igor, brought the latter to his senses, awakening in him a sense of shame. He was silent, finding no words to reply; thus they crossed the river and then parted. And the prince marveled at the outstanding wisdom and chastity of the young maiden. Indeed, such a deed of the Blessed Olga is worthy of wonder: not knowing the true God and His commandments, she displayed such a feat in the defense of chastity; carefully guarding the purity of her virginity, she brought the young prince to reason, restraining his lust with words of wisdom worthy of the mind of a man.

Some time after what has just been described, Prince Igor, together with his kinsman Oleg, set out for Kiev with the intention of establishing his princely seat there, which they accomplished: they took up the rule in Kiev, and appointed their governors in Great Novgorod, as well as in the other cities of the Russian land that had submitted to them. When the time came for Prince Igor's marriage, many beautiful maidens were chosen, so that among them one worthy of the princely chamber might be found; but none pleased the prince. Recalling the chaste and beautiful Olga, Igor at once sent his kinsman Oleg for her. Oleg brought Olga to Kiev with great honor,[24] and Igor married her. Then Oleg, Igor's kinsman and guardian, also died,[25] and Igor began to rule independently. At the beginning of his independent reign Igor waged persistent wars with the surrounding peoples. He even marched against Constantinople: having seized many lands of the Greek realm, he returned from that campaign with booty and glory.[26] For the remaining years of his life he lived in quiet, at peace with the neighboring lands.

24. See note 2. That Oleg brought Olga to Igor from Pskov confirms the tradition of her beauty and great intelligence: Oleg could find no equal to Olga in qualities among the daughters of the Kievan boyars.

25. In 912.

26. Two campaigns of Igor against the Greeks are known, in 941 and 944; of these the first was unsuccessful. In the present place of the life the second campaign is meant, when the Greek emperor, having sent Igor a large tribute, asked him not to make war on Greece; having received the large tribute, Igor returned from the banks of the Danube to Kiev.

At this time Igor had by the Blessed Olga a son, Sviatoslav, afterward the father of the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince Vladimir. And Igor ruled prosperously from the throne of the Grand Principality in Kiev: wealth flowed to him in abundance from many places, for even distant lands sent him many gifts and tributes.

Death overtook Igor in this manner. Taking advantage of the peace that had come after many wars, Igor began to go around the cities and regions to collect the customary tribute. Coming to the Drevlians,[27] he remembered that they had broken away from him at the beginning of his reign and had submitted to him again only after a war; for this Igor doubled the tribute upon the Drevlians, which greatly burdened them. They, grieved, began to take counsel with their prince Mal:

"When a wolf takes to visiting the sheep, he can carry off the whole flock one by one, unless they kill him; so we too, if we do not kill Igor, he will destroy us all."

After this council they began to seek a suitable time. When Igor had sent the tribute he had collected from the Drevlians to Kiev, while he himself remained among them with a small retinue, the Drevlians judged this a suitable occasion: they unexpectedly attacked Igor near their city of Korosten, slew the prince's retinue and Igor himself, and buried them there. Such was the end of Prince Igor, a good ruler of the regions of the Russian land, who inspired fear in the surrounding peoples. After the death of his guardian Oleg, Igor lived for thirty-two years.[28]

The news of Igor's murder, reaching Kiev, called forth bitter tears from Olga, who, together with her son Sviatoslav, mourned her husband; all the inhabitants of Kiev also wept. The Drevlians, however, after the murder of Igor, formed the following bold plan: they wished to take Olga as a wife for their prince Mal, and secretly to put to death Igor's heir, the young Sviatoslav. In this way the Drevlians thought to increase the power of their prince. They at once sent to Olga by boat

27. During the settlement of the eastern Slavs the Drevlians occupied the wooded part along the middle course of the Dnieper, settling on its tributary, the Pripet; hence the very name of the Drevlians.
28. He was killed in 945.

twenty distinguished men, to ask Olga to become the wife of their prince; and in case of refusal on her part, they were ordered to compel her by threats—that she should become, even if by force, the wife of their lord. The envoys reached Kiev by water and put in to the shore. Hearing of the arrival of the embassy, Princess Olga summoned the Drevlian men to her and asked them:

"Have you come with a good intention, honored guests?"

"With a good one," they replied.

"Then tell me," Olga proposed, "why exactly have you come to us?"

The men answered:

"We have been sent to you by the land of the Drevlians with these words: 'Be not angry that we have slain your husband, for he, like a wolf, plundered and robbed. But our princes were good rulers who extended the land of the Drevlians. Our present prince, however, is incomparably better than Igor: he is young and handsome, and moreover he is gentle, loving, and merciful to all. Marry our prince, then; you shall be our mistress and the ruler of the land of the Drevlians.'

Princess Olga, concealing her sorrow and the sickness of her heart over her husband, said to the embassy with feigned gladness:

"Your words please me, for I cannot raise my husband up again, and to remain a widow is not without sorrow for me; being a woman, I am not able to govern such a principality as I ought, and my son is still a little child. Therefore I will gladly marry your young prince, and moreover I am not yet old. Now go, rest in your boats; in the morning I shall summon you to a solemn feast which I will prepare for you, so that all may know the reason for your coming and my consent to your proposal; and afterwards I shall go to your prince. But when the messengers come in the morning to summon you to the feast, know how you must keep, on that occasion, the honour of the prince who sent you and your own: you shall come to the feast in the same manner as you came to Kiev, that is, in boats, which the men of Kiev shall carry on their heads. Let all see your nobility and my love for your prince, for whose sake I honour you with such great honour before my people."

With joy the Drevlians withdrew to their boats. Princess Olga, avenging the murder of her husband, pondered by what death she

might destroy them. That same night she commanded that a deep pit be dug in the courtyard of the princely country palace, where there was also a splendid hall being prepared for the feast. In the morning the princess sent honourable men to summon the matchmakers to the feast; but they, like madmen, sitting in their boats, said:

"We will not go on foot, nor ride on horses, nor in chariots, but as we were sent from our prince in boats, so carry us on your heads to your princess."

The men of Kiev, laughing at their folly, answered:

"Our prince has been slain, and our princess is going to your prince; and now we, as though we were slaves, do what we are commanded."

And seating them one by one in little boats, the men of Kiev carried them, puffed up with empty pride. When they had brought the Drevlians into the aforementioned princely court, Olga, looking out from the hall, commanded them to be thrown into the deep pit prepared for this purpose. Then, coming herself to the pit and bending over it, she asked:

"Is such honour pleasing to you?"

They cried out:

"Woe to us! We slew Igor, and not only did we gain nothing good by it, but we have received an even more evil death."

And Olga commanded that they be buried alive in that pit.

Having done this, Princess Olga at once sent her messenger to the Drevlians with the words:

"If you truly wish me to go to your prince, then send for me another embassy, more numerous and more distinguished than the first; let it conduct me with honour to your prince. Send your men, your envoys, as quickly as possible, before the men of Kiev detain me."

The Drevlians, with great joy and haste, sent to Olga fifty of the most distinguished men, the chief elders of the Drevlian land after the prince. When they came to Kiev, Olga commanded that a bath be prepared for them, and sent to them with a request: let the envoys, after their wearisome journey, wash in the bath, rest, and afterwards come to her. They went gladly to the bath. When the Drevlians began to wash, the servants who had been purposely placed there at once firmly barred the doors from the outside, surrounded the bath with straw and

brushwood, and set it on fire; so the Drevlian elders were burned together with the bath and the servants. And again Olga sent a messenger to the Drevlians, announcing her imminent arrival for the marriage with their prince, and commanding them to prepare mead and every kind of drink and food in the place where her husband had been slain, so that, on coming to them, she might first perform, before her second marriage after her first husband, a funeral feast, that is, a commemorative banquet according to the pagan custom; and after that let the marriage take place. The Drevlians, in their joy, prepared everything in abundance. Princess Olga, however, in keeping with her promise, went to the Drevlians with a great army, as though preparing for war and not for a marriage. When Olga drew near to the Drevlian capital city of Korosten, the Drevlians came out to meet her in festive garments, some on foot and some on horses, and received her with rejoicing and gladness. Olga first went to the grave of her husband and wept over him bitterly; then, having performed the funeral feast according to the pagan custom, she commanded a great mound to be raised over the grave. And the Drevlians said to her:

"Lady princess! We slew your husband because he was merciless to us, like a rapacious wolf. But you are merciful, as is also our prince; now we shall live in prosperity!"

Olga answered:

"I no longer grieve for my first husband, having performed over his grave what was to be performed; the time has come to prepare with gladness for the second marriage with your prince."

The Drevlians then asked Olga about their first envoys and second envoys.

"They are following after us by another road, with all my wealth," answered the princess.

After this, Olga, taking off her mournful garments, arrayed herself in bright bridal garments, proper to a princess, showing at the same time a joyful appearance. She commanded the Drevlians to eat, drink, and make merry, and commanded her own people to serve the Drevlians, to eat with them, but not to make themselves drunk. When the Drevlians had drunk their fill, the princess commanded her people, with

weapons prepared beforehand, swords, knives and spears, to smite the Drevlians; there fell of the slain as many as five thousand and more. Thus Olga, mingling the merriment of the Drevlians with blood, and avenging by this the murder of her husband, returned to Kiev.

In the following year Olga, gathering an army, marched against the Drevlians with her son Sviatoslav, son of Igor, whom she also drew into the vengeance for his father's death. The Drevlians came out against them with no small military force; the two sides met together[29] and fought fiercely, until the men of Kiev overcame the Drevlians; and the former pursued the latter to the capital city of Korosten, putting them to death. The Drevlians shut themselves up in the city, and Olga for a whole year relentlessly besieged it. Seeing that it was difficult to take the city by storm, the wise princess devised such a stratagem. She sent to say to the Drevlians who had shut themselves up in the city:

"Why, madmen, do you wish to starve yourselves to death, not wishing to submit to me? For all your other cities have already shown submission to me; their inhabitants pay tribute and live peacefully in towns and villages, tilling their fields."

"We too would wish," answered those who had shut themselves in, "to submit to thee, but we fear lest thou shouldst again take vengeance for thy prince."

Olga then sent to them a second envoy with the words:

"I have already many times taken vengeance both upon your elders and upon your other people; and now I desire no vengeance, but I require of you tribute and submission."

The Drevlians agreed to pay her whatever tribute she should wish. Olga proposed to them:

"I know that you are now impoverished by the war and cannot pay me tribute in honey, wax, hides, or other things fit for trade; and I myself do not wish to burden you with a great tribute. Give me some small tribute as a sign of your submission: say, three doves and three spar-

29. When the two armies met, the young Svyatoslav threw a spear in the direction of the Drevlians; the spear, thrown by a child's hand, flew between the horse's ears and struck the horse in the legs. Then the leaders of the Kievan retinue said: "The prince has already begun; let the retinue follow the prince," and battle blazed up.

rows from each house. This is entirely sufficient for me to be convinced of your submission."

This tribute seemed to the Drevlians so trifling that they even mocked the womanly wisdom of Olga; they at once hastened to gather from each house three doves and three sparrows and sent them to her with a bow. Olga said to the men who came to her from the city:

"Behold, you have now submitted to me and to my son; live, then, in peace; tomorrow I shall withdraw from your city and go home."

With these words she dismissed the aforementioned men; all the inhabitants of the city rejoiced greatly on hearing the words of the princess. Olga, however, distributed the birds to her warriors with the command that late in the evening a strip of cloth soaked in sulphur be tied to each dove and each sparrow, which were to be set alight, and all the birds released into the air together. The warriors carried out this command: the birds flew into the city from which they had been taken; each dove flew into its own nest and each sparrow into its own place, and at once the city caught fire in many places. Meanwhile Olga gave her army the order to surround the city on all sides and begin the assault. The population of the city, fleeing from the fire, ran out from behind the walls and fell into the hands of the enemy; thus Korosten was taken. Many of the Drevlians perished by the sword, others with their wives and children were burned in the fire, and some drowned in the river that flowed beneath the city; at this same time the Drevlian prince also perished. Of those who remained alive, many were led into captivity, and others were left by the princess in their dwelling places, and she laid upon them a heavy tribute[30]. Thus Princess Olga avenged upon the Drevlians the murder of her husband, subjected to herself the whole land of the Drevlians, and returned to Kiev with glory and triumph.

And the Princess Olga ruled the territories of the Russian land subject to her not as a woman, but as a strong and wise man, firmly holding power in her hands and bravely defending herself against enemies. She was terrible to the latter, and beloved by her own people, as a merciful and pious ruler, as a righteous judge who wronged no one, who

30. Two-thirds of this tribute went to Kiev, and one-third to Vyshgorod, which belonged to Olga.

imposed punishment with mercy and rewarded the good; she instilled fear in the wicked, rendering to each in proportion to the worth of his deeds; in all matters of governance she showed foresight and wisdom. Moreover, Olga, merciful of soul, was generous toward the beggars, the poor and the needy; just petitions soon reached her heart, and she quickly granted them. All her deeds, despite her remaining in paganism, were pleasing to God, as worthy of Christian grace. To all this Olga joined a temperate and chaste life: she did not wish to marry a second time, but remained in pure widowhood, preserving for her son the princely power until the days of his maturity. When the latter came of age, she handed over to him all the affairs of government, and herself, withdrawing from the bustle and cares, lived apart from the concerns of rule, devoting herself to works of charity.

The time of favor arrived, in which the Lord willed to enlighten the Slavs, blinded by unbelief, with the light of the holy faith, to bring them to the knowledge of the truth and to set them on the path of salvation. The beginnings of this enlightenment the Lord was pleased, to the shame of hard-hearted men, to reveal in a frail vessel of a woman, that is, through the blessed Olga. For as formerly He made the myrrh-bearing women heralds of His resurrection (Mt. 28:9–10), and revealed to the world from the bowels of the earth His honorable Cross, on which He was crucified, through the woman-empress Helen, so also afterwards, in the Russian land, He was pleased to plant the holy faith through a wondrous woman, a new Helen – the princess Olga. The Lord chose her as an honorable vessel for His most holy name, that she might bear it through the Russian land. He kindled in her heart the dawn of His invisible grace, opened her intellectual eyes to the knowledge of the true God, Whom she did not yet know. She already perceived the seduction and error of pagan impiety, being convinced, as of a self-evident truth, that the idols revered by senseless men are not gods, but lifeless products of human hands; therefore she not only did not honor them, but even loathed them. As a merchant seeks costly pearls, so Olga with her whole soul sought the right worship of God, and found it in the following manner. By God's providence she heard from certain men that there is one true God, the Creator of heaven,

earth and all creation, in whom the Greeks also believe; beside Him there is no other God[4635]. Striving for the true knowledge of God, and not being by nature idle, Olga desired to go herself to the Greeks, that with her own eyes she might see the Christian service and be fully convinced of their teaching about the true God. Taking with her men of particularly noble rank, she set out with great wealth by water toward Constantinople, where she was received with great honor by the emperor and the patriarch, to whom Olga presented many gifts worthy of such persons. In Constantinople Olga was instructed in the Christian faith, attentively listening daily to the words of God and observing the splendor of the liturgical order and other aspects of Christian life. Her heart was kindled with love for God, in Whom she believed without doubt; therefore Olga expressed the desire to receive holy baptism. The Greek emperor, who at that time was a widower, wished to make Olga his wife: he was drawn to her by the beauty of her countenance, her prudence, courage, and renown, as well as by the vastness of the Russian lands. The emperor said to Olga:

"O Princess Olga! You are worthy to be a Christian empress and to live with us in this royal city of our realm."

And the emperor began to speak to Olga about marriage with him. She, showing that she did not reject the emperor's proposal, first asked for baptism, saying:

"I have come here for the sake of holy baptism, not for the sake of marriage; when I am baptized, then there may be talk of wedlock, for it is not permitted for an unbelieving and unbaptized wife to be joined to a Christian husband." The emperor began to hasten the baptism: the patriarch, having sufficiently instructed Olga in the truths of the holy faith, enrolled her among the catechumens for baptism. And when the font for baptism was already prepared, Olga began to ask that the emperor himself be her sponsor at the font: "I," she said, "will not be baptized if the emperor himself will not be my godfather: I shall depart from here unbaptized, and you will render an answer to God for my soul." The emperor consented to her desire, and Olga was baptized by the patriarch, and the emperor became her father, receiving her from the holy font. Olga was named Helen, as the first Christian empress,

the mother of Constantine the Great, was also named Helen. After baptism the patriarch, during the Divine Liturgy, communed Olga with the Divine Mysteries of the Most Pure Body and Blood of Christ, and blessed her with the words:

"Blessed art thou among the women of Russia, for thou, having left darkness, hast sought the true light; having abhorred idolatrous polytheism, thou hast loved the one true God; thou hast escaped eternal death, being betrothed to immortal life. Henceforth the sons of the Russian land shall call thee blessed!"

Thus the patriarch blessed her. Of the persons who had come with Olga, many, men and women, were also baptized, and there was joy in Constantinople on the occasion of the baptism of the princess Olga: the emperor, moreover, held a great feast that day, and all rejoiced, glorifying Christ God. Then the emperor again began to speak of marriage with Olga, named in holy baptism Helen. But the blessed Helen answered him:

"How can you take me, your spiritual daughter, for your wife? For not only by Christian law, but also by pagan reckoning, it is considered shameful and inadmissible for a father to have his daughter as his wife."

"You have outwitted me, Olga!" exclaimed the emperor.

"I told you before," replied the blessed Olga, "that I came here not with the aim of reigning with you – for I have enough power with my son in the Russian land – but to be betrothed to the immortal King, Christ God, Whom I have loved with my whole soul, desiring to be counted worthy of His eternal kingdom."

Then the emperor, abandoning his unrealizable intention and carnal love, loved the blessed Olga with a spiritual love as his daughter, generously gifted her and dismissed her in peace. Leaving Constantinople, the blessed Olga went to the patriarch and, asking for his parting blessing, said to him:

"Pray to God for me, holy father, as I return to my country, where my son remains in pagan error and all the people are hard as stone in their ancient impiety – that the Lord, through thy holy prayers, may deliver me there from all evil."

The patriarch answered her:

"My faithful and blessed daughter in the Holy Spirit. May Christ, in Whom thou wert clothed in holy baptism, Himself keep thee from all evil, as He kept Noah from the flood, Lot from Sodom, Moses and Israel from Pharaoh, David from Saul, Daniel from the mouths of lions, the three youths from the furnace. So may the Lord deliver thee from calamity; blessed art thou among thy people, and thy grandchildren and great-grandchildren shall call thee blessed unto the last years."

This blessing of the patriarch the blessed Olga received as a treasure, more precious than the most costly gifts; together with it she also received instructions on purity and prayer, fasting and abstinence, and on all the good works proper to a God-pleasing Christian life. Then the blessed Olga received from the patriarch the honorable cross, holy icons, books, and other objects needed for divine worship; she received from the patriarch also presbyters and clerics. And the blessed Olga departed from Constantinople to her home with great joy[4636].

It is related that the honorable cross which she received from the hand of the patriarch bore the following inscription: "The Russian land has been renewed for life in God by the holy baptism received by the blessed Olga." After the repose of the blessed Olga the faithful preserved this cross until the days of the Great Prince Yaroslav Vladimirovich; the latter, having built in Kiev a great and beautiful church of Holy Sophia, placed the aforementioned cross in its sanctuary, on the right side. Now this cross no longer exists, for during the repeated devastations of Kiev its holy churches were given over to desolation. But let us turn to the account of the blessed Olga.

Returning to Kiev, the new Helen – the princess Olga – like the sun began to drive away the darkness of idolatrous impiety, enlightening those darkened in heart. She built the first church in the name of St. Nicholas at Askold's grave, and converted many of the Kievans to Christ the Savior. But her son Svyatoslav she could in no way bring to true understanding – to the knowledge of God: wholly given over to military enterprises, he paid no attention to his mother's words. He was a brave man who loved wars, so that he spent his life more among regi-

ments and armies than at home. To his mother, who admonished him, Svyatoslav said:

"If I accept the Christian faith and am baptized, the boyars, the voivodes, and the whole retinue will turn away from me, and I shall have no one to fight with against our enemies and to defend our fatherland."

Thus answered Prince Sviatoslav; however, he did not forbid those who wished to be baptized. Yet there were few among the nobles who received holy Baptism; on the contrary, the nobles reviled such people, for to unbelievers Christianity is folly (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18). Among the common people, however, many were added to the holy Church. Saint Olga visited Great Novgorod and other cities, bringing people to the Christian faith wherever she could. In doing so she overthrew idols and set up honorable crosses in their place, and by these many signs and wonders were wrought, for the assurance of the pagans. Upon returning to her homeland, to the village of Vybutskaya, the blessed Olga proclaimed the word of Christian preaching here also to those near to her. While she was in that land, she came to the bank of the Great River, which flows from south to north, and halted opposite the place where the river Pskova, flowing from the east, empties into the Great River (at that time a great dense forest grew in these places). And there Saint Olga saw from the far bank of the river how three most bright rays descended from heaven upon the aforementioned places from the east, illuminating them. A wondrous light from these rays was seen not only by Saint Olga herself but also by her companions. The blessed woman rejoiced greatly and gave thanks to God for this vision, which foretold the enlightenment of that land by the grace of God. Turning to those who accompanied her, the blessed Olga said prophetically:

"Let it be known to you that by the will of God, on this place illumined by the three-radiant rays, there shall arise a church in the name of the Most Holy and Life-Giving Trinity, and a great and glorious city, abounding in all things, shall be built."

After these words and a rather lengthy prayer, the blessed Olga set up a cross; and to this day a prayer-house stands on the place where

the blessed Olga raised it. Having passed through many cities of the Russian land, the preacher of Christ returned to Kiev, and here she manifested good works before God. If in the days of paganism she performed good deeds, how much more now, enlightened by holy faith, was the blessed Olga adorned with every virtue, striving to please the newly known God, her Creator and Enlightener. Remembering the vision on the river Pskova, she sent much gold and silver for the building of a church in the name of the Holy Trinity; and she commanded that people be settled in that place. In a short time the city of Pskov, so named from the river Pskova, grew into a great city, and in it the name of the Most Holy Trinity was glorified.

At this time Prince Sviatoslav, leaving in Kiev his mother and his children Yaropolk, Oleg and Vladimir, marched against the Bulgars.[31] During the war with them he captured as many as eighty cities, and he was especially pleased with their capital city Pereiaslavets,[32] where he began to reside. The blessed Olga, remaining in Kiev, taught her grandchildren, Sviatoslav's sons, the Christian faith insofar as it was accessible to their childish understanding; but she did not dare to baptize them, fearing some unpleasantness on the part of her son, and she committed the matter to the will of the Lord. While Sviatoslav lingered in the land of the Bulgars, the Pechenegs[4639] unexpectedly invaded the borders of Kiev, surrounded Kiev, and began a siege; Saint Olga with her grandchildren shut herself within the city, which the Pechenegs could not take. The Lord, who guarded His faithful servant, protected the city through her prayers. News of the Pecheneg invasion of Kiev reached Sviatoslav; he hastened with his army from the land of the Bulgars, unexpectedly attacked the Pechenegs, and put them to flight. Entering Kiev, he greeted his mother, who was already ill, and again wished to leave her in order to go to the land of the Bulgars. But the blessed Olga, with tears, said to him:

"Why are you leaving me, my son, and where are you going? Seeking what belongs to another, to whom do you entrust your own? For your children are still small, and I am already old and sick; I await a

31. In 967.
32. On the Danube.

swift death, my departure to the beloved Christ, in whom I believe. I am now concerned about nothing but you: I grieve that although I have taught and persuaded you much to abandon idolatrous impiety and to believe in the true God whom I have come to know, you have disregarded this; and I know that because of your disobedience to me, an evil end awaits you on earth, and after death, the eternal torment prepared for the pagans. Fulfill at least this one request of mine: do not go anywhere until I have departed and been buried; then go wherever you wish. After my death, do nothing that the pagan custom requires in such cases; but let my priest with the clergy bury my sinful body according to the Christian rite. Do not dare to heap a burial mound over me or to hold funeral feasts; but send gold to Constantinople to the most holy patriarch, that he may offer prayer and oblation to God for my soul and distribute alms to the poor."

Hearing this, Sviatoslav wept bitterly and promised to fulfill all that she bequeathed, refusing only to accept the holy faith. After three days had passed, the blessed Olga fell into extreme weakness; she partook of the Divine Mysteries of the most pure Body and life-giving Blood of Christ our Savior. All the while she remained in fervent prayer to God and to the Most Pure Theotokos, whom she always held after God as her helper; she also called upon all the saints. With particular zeal the blessed Olga prayed for the enlightenment of the Russian land after her death; foreseeing the future, she had many times in her life prophetically foretold that God would enlighten the people of the Russian land and that many of them would be great saints; it was for the speedy fulfillment of this prophecy that the blessed Olga prayed at her death. And her prayer was still upon her lips when her honorable soul was released from the body and, as a righteous soul, was received into the hands of God. Thus she passed from earthly to heavenly things and was granted to enter the chamber of the immortal King, Christ God; and as the first saint from the Russian land she was numbered among the saints. The blessed Olga, in holy Baptism Helen, reposed on the 11th day of the month of July.[33] She lived in marriage for forty-two years, and at the

33. In 969.

time of her entering into marriage she was a maiden of full age and strength, about twenty years old. In the tenth year after her husband's death she was granted holy Baptism, and after her baptism she lived piously for fifteen years. Thus the total length of her life was about ninety years. The blessed Olga was mourned by her son Prince Sviatoslav, by the boyars, the dignitaries, and all the people; the blessed Olga was buried with honor according to the Christian rite.

After the repose of Saint Olga, her prophecy concerning her son's evil end and the good enlightenment of the Russian land was fulfilled. Her son Sviatoslav (as the chronicler reports) was killed, after a few years, in battle by the Pecheneg prince Kurya.[34] Kurya cut off Sviatoslav's head and made a cup from the skull, bound it with gold, and inscribed upon it the following:

"He who seeks what belongs to another destroys his own." During a feast with his nobles the Pecheneg prince drank from this cup. Thus Grand Prince Sviatoslav Igorevich, brave and until then unconquered in battles, met an evil end, as his mother had foretold, because he did not heed her. The prophecy of the blessed Olga concerning the Russian land was also fulfilled. Twenty years after her death, her grandson Vladimir received holy Baptism and enlightened the Russian land with holy faith.[35] Having built a stone church in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos (called the Tithe Church, because Vladimir gave a tenth part of his properties for its support), and having consulted with Leontius, Metropolitan of Kiev, Saint Vladimir took from the earth the honorable relics of his grandmother, whole, incorrupt, and filled with fragrance; with great honor he translated them to the aforementioned church of the Most Holy Theotokos and laid them openly, not beneath a covering, for the sake of those who come to it in faith and receive the fulfillment of their prayers. Many healings of various infirmities were granted through the honorable relics.[36]

Nor should the following be passed over in silence: above the tomb of the blessed Olga there was a small window in the church wall; and if

34. In 972.
35. His commemoration is on 15 July.

anyone came to the honorable relics with firm faith, the window would open of its own accord, and one standing outside could clearly see through the window the honorable wonderworking relics lying within, and particularly worthy persons also saw a certain wondrous radiance emanating from them; and whoever among those who had faith was afflicted with any infirmity immediately received healing. But for one who came with little faith the window did not open, and he could not see the honorable relics, even if he entered the church itself: he saw only the tomb and could not receive healing. Those who believed, however, received everything for the benefit of body and soul through the prayers of Saint Olga, named in holy Baptism Helen, and through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

On the wings of divine wisdom thou didst fix thy mind, and didst soar above the visible creation, seeking God the Creator of all; having found Him, thou didst receive a second birth through Baptism. Partaking of the Tree of Life, thou dost abide incorrupt forever, O Olga, most praised.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Let us sing today the praises of the God who is benefactor of all, who glorified in Russia Olga, wise in God: that by her prayers He may grant our souls the forgiveness of sins.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Kindeas

Память святого мученика Киндея

St. Kindeus was a presbyter of the village of Side in Pamphylia. During the reign of Diocletian he was seized, by order of the governor Stratonicus, and condemned to be burned. He was led to the

36. During the Mongol invasion, the relics were concealed underground in the church; by the 17th century they had again been concealed in an unknown place, for a reason that is not entirely clear.

place of torment wearing iron shoes studded with nails. On the way, the soldiers who were leading him met a woodcutter and forcibly took from him the wood for the pyre; but St. Kindeus paid the woodcutter money, placed the wood upon himself, and carried it to the place of torment. Set in the midst of the fire, the martyr remained unharmed and called upon the people to know the power of Christ. Suddenly a storm arose, and heavy rain drenched the pyre. When the storm had ceased, the saint prayed to the Lord and gave up his spirit.

NOTES

4635. Such people must have been the Varangians who were Christians, of whom there were many among the retinue of Prince Igor. "As a woman of great intelligence," writes the well-known historian E. E. Golubinsky, "Olga must have paid attention to these Varangians of the new faith; on their part, too, the Varangians, counting on the same intelligence of Olga, must naturally have dreamed of making her their proselyte. The preaching of the Christian Varangians had as its consequence that Olga resolved to become a Christian. We know that she was a woman not merely of great intelligence, but of precisely statesmanlike intelligence. This circumstance must have served to lighten by half the labour of those who undertook to convince her of the truth of Christianity. The indication that Christianity had become the faith of almost all the peoples of Europe, and in any case is the faith of the best of them, and the indication that among her own kinsmen (the Varangians) a strong movement toward it had begun, following the example of other peoples, could not but act upon Olga's mind, making it necessary for her to conclude that the faith of the best people must also be the best" (History of the Russian Church, vol. 1, first half, 2nd ed., p. 75).

4636. It is commonly supposed that the Blessed Olga was baptized in Constantinople in 957, under the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus. But this supposition is hard to accept. The fact is that the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus left a work "On the Ceremonies of the Byzantine Court." In this work he describes in detail how the Blessed Olga was received at court during her visit to Constantinople in 957, and in this the emperor does not make even a hint that Olga came to Constantinople for baptism and was in fact baptized. On the contrary, he makes it clear that Olga arrived in Constantinople already baptized: at her first reception in the palace her priest was already present. When, then, was she baptized? "It seems probable to suppose that Olga, after Igor's death, remained unbaptized for as long as she was regent of the state for the young Svyatoslav and continued to remain in the state a public figure; and that she was baptized after she, having found an opportunity to lay down the official regency, withdrew, at least formally, into private life, after which the people no longer had the right to call her to account for her actions" (E. E. Golubinsky, History of the Russian Church, vol. 1, first half, 20th ed., p. 78). The latter could have happened only when Svyatoslav at-

tained civil majority, which at that time began in any case not earlier than age 10. Svyatoslav was born in 942, and by 957 Olga was already baptized. Reckoning Svyatoslav's civil majority from age 10, we conclude that the Blessed Olga was baptized in the interval between 952 (when Svyatoslav turned ten) and 957. And there is a definite testimony placing the baptism of the Blessed Olga in one of the years of this interval. The monk James, founder and initiator of our private historiography, who wrote at the end of Yaroslav's reign and the beginning of Izyaslav's, a writer deserving of trust, says in the tale of the baptism of Olga and Vladimir that Olga lived in baptism for 15 years. Consequently, according to James, who, like the chronicler, places Olga's death in 969, Olga was baptized in 954 (969 — 15 = 954), when the emperor in Greece was Constantine Porphyrogenitus (912–957) and the patriarch was Theophylact (933–956). – At St. Olga's journey to Constantinople in 957 the patriarch was already St. Polyeuctus.

4639. The Pechenegs were a people of Turkic origin, known by this name in Russia. In ancient times the Pechenegs roamed the steppes of Central Asia, and it is not known exactly when they migrated from there to Europe. In the 9th century they already dwelt between the Volga and the Yaik (Ural); until the 60s of the 10th century the Pechenegs did not trouble Rus'. The Pecheneg attack on Kiev mentioned in the Life is also the first mention in the Chronicle (under 968) of Pecheneg raids. From this time, for more than half a century, the struggle of Rus' against the Pechenegs was ceaseless. Rus' sought to protect itself from them with fortifications and towns; such was the origin of the Zmiyev Rampart in what is now Kiev Province. St. Vladimir built fortifications along the Stugna River, and Yaroslav the Wise along the Ros River (farther south). The last Pecheneg attack on Rus' (the siege of Kiev) took place in 1034, when they were utterly defeated.

THE TWELFTH DAY OF JULY

July 12

12 июля

New Calendar July 12 · Old Calendar July 25 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Proclus and Hilarion

Страдание святых мучеников Прокла и Илария

The holy martyrs Proclus and Hilarion were natives of the district of the city of Kalipt[1], near Ancyra[2]; they suffered under the governor Maximus in the reign of Trajan[3]. The first to be seized was St. Proclus, who was brought before the emperor himself, who was then in that country; he was then bound in iron and cast into prison. The emperor, having examined the case of Proclus and finding that he did not obey the impious commands[4], handed him over to the governor Maximus for torment. Maximus, seating himself on the judgment seat, demanded that the prisoner of Christ answer, and asked him:

"Of what race are you?"

"My race is Christ's," replied St. Proclus, "and my hope is my God."

"I swear by the gods, I will not spare you!"

So said the governor, and he asked again:

"Do you know the imperial commands, proclaimed everywhere, that all Christians must offer sacrifice to the gods?"

"I have heard," answered the saint, "of these commands of the lawless; they have given them as a stumbling-block to many, and to themselves for destruction."

1. More precisely, a village.
2. There were two cities named Ancyra: one in Galatia, the other in Phrygia. It is not known with certainty near which of them the village of Kalipta lay.
3. Trajan was Roman emperor from 98 to 117 A.D.
4. Concerning the worship of idols.

"You dare," said the governor, indignant and astonished, "to reproach the emperor and revile his laws?! Do you not see what torments await you for this, wretch?"

"Do what you will," the martyr replied, "I will not offer sacrifice to your gods, and I do not fear the tortures that kill the body but not the soul; it is better to fear God than men."

"Choose for yourself," proposed the governor, "either life or death: see the torture-tree prepared for you, and the instruments of torment. We await your answer: what do you wish?"

St. Proclus answered:

"If you fear to violate the emperor's command, lest you receive brief torments, how much more do we Christians fear to transgress the commandment of God, lest we fall into the eternal torments prepared by God for those who turn away from Him and bow down to your false gods, which themselves at the future judgment will be delivered, together with those who offer sacrifice to them, to endless perdition."

"Do you dare," said the governor in astonishment, "to revile even our gods? I tell you that, against your will, I will compel you to acknowledge the power of our gods."

"And I hope," replied the martyr, "in my God, that before you persuade me to confess your gods, I shall bring it about that you, before all the soldiers and servants, against your will, will acknowledge my Lord and write with your own hand: True is the God of the sinner Proclus, and there is none other than Him."

Enraged, the governor commanded that the martyr be hung naked on a tree, that a heavy stone be tied to his feet, and that his body be scraped with iron hooks. For a long time they tormented St. Proclus in this way, and he endured everything bravely, saying nothing, only looking toward heaven; then they took him down and confined him in chains.

After this the governor set out for the city of Kalipt and ordered the martyr to be led behind him; he was compelled to keep pace on foot with the swift horses. When almost half the road had been covered, the martyr began to pray, crying aloud to God:

"O my God, Jesus Christ, for whose sake I suffer, led with dishonor by soldiers! Hearken today to Thy servant, that Thy name may be glorified forever: stretch forth Thy all-powerful hand, restrain this lawless governor, and do not allow him to continue his journey until he confesses before all men that there is no other God but Thee!"

When the saint had prayed in this way, suddenly the governor unexpectedly stopped on the road, as if bound: neither the horses nor he himself could move, held back by the invisible power of God. All the soldiers also stopped, marveling at such a wondrous deed. For a long time they strove to move the chariot; they urged on the horses, harnessed others to help, tried to lead them by hand, and could do nothing; they were not even able to take the governor himself down from the chariot: the chariot stood like an immovable mountain, and the governor upon it was as one nailed fast. Then the governor said to his companions:

"Do you see the marvelous magical power of this crafty Christian? What he has done to us: we cannot move from the spot, nor can we go back!"

Then the governor sent one of his servants, named Hermias, to say to the martyr, who was far behind:

"What have you done, stopping us in the middle of the road by your sorcery? Clearly, fearing the torments awaiting you in the city, you have resorted to this trick, so that they will not lead you there."

But St. Proclus said to the governor's servant:

"I swear by the Lord God that you will not move from the spot until the governor confesses the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, as I told him before."

"If," asked Hermias, "the governor should confess the name of your God while standing in the road, how will you hear or know of it, being far from him?"

The martyr said:

"Let him write this confession on paper and send it to me, and at once you will go on your way to the city of Kalipt."

Returning, Hermias reported the martyr's words to the governor, who, though unwilling, was compelled by the misfortune that had befallen him to take the paper and write:

"There is one true God: He whom Proclus worships, and there is no other God but Him."

Having written thus, he sent the paper to the martyr, and at once the horses and soldiers moved and set out on their way.

Arriving at the city of Kalipt, the governor took his seat on the judgment seat and, summoning St. Proclus, said to him:

"On the road you showed us the full power of your sorcery; here I will show you the power of my authority, and as you compelled me to acknowledge your God, so I will compel you to acknowledge our gods and offer sacrifice to them."

Having said this, he ordered burning candles to be brought and his belly and ribs to be scorched with them. They burned the martyr so that his whole body was seared, but he, showing no impatience, remained silent, as though he bore another's body and not his own. And the governor said to him:

"Do you scorn the torments?"

The saint answered:

"I scorn these, but I fear the eternal ones."

The governor said again:

"Will you submit to our gods?"

"I submit," he heard the answer, "to Christ, who abides forever: He is my Hope!"

The governor asked:

"Do you wish to die in torments?"

"Even if I die," replied St. Proclus, "I shall live again!"

Then the governor ordered the soldiers to lead St. Proclus out of the city and, crucifying him on a tree, to shoot at him with bows. The soldiers took the martyr and said to him:

"Listen to us and offer sacrifice to the gods: skilled physicians will at once heal your wounds, and you will be honored with a high rank."

"I," answered the passion-bearer, "have a rank in heaven, with which my Christ God will honor me. Cease, then, to beguile me, and do what you have been commanded."

As they went and spoke of this, they met on the way a man just come out of youth, named Hilarion, the nephew of St. Proclus, the son of his own brother. He drew near, bowed to his uncle, and, kissing him, cried out:

"I too am a Christian!"

The soldiers seized Hilary and cast him into prison, and they brought St. Proclus to the place of execution, crucified him on a tree, and, drawing their bows, began to shoot at him. The martyr, pierced with arrows over his whole body, prayed to God, saying:

"Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit; save me, O true God!"

And with these words, bowing his head, he gave up his spirit. The holy martyr Proclus died on the 12th day of the month of July. The faithful secretly took his relics and buried them.

Hilarion sat in prison and sang:

"I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my firmament and my refuge," and the rest of the 17th Psalm.

When he fell asleep, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision and said:

"Be of good courage and strong, I am with you; I have been sent from God to strengthen you."

On the third day after the death of Proclus, St. Hilarion was brought to torture. The governor asked him:

"Are you a Christian?"

The martyr answered:

"Yes, a Christian: my whole family was in Christianity, and all died confessing Christ."

Then the governor, in fury, ordered the martyr to be beaten long and cruelly, hanged naked on a tree. Then he condemned him to death, commanding that he be led out three stadia from the city and there have his head cut off. The soldiers bound the martyr's hands, threw him to the ground, and, hooking him by the feet, dragged him, while the martyr sang: "His foundations are upon the holy mountains. The

Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob" (Ps. 86:2).

The body of the martyr, dragged over the ground, was torn, and the earth was stained with blood; when they had gone three stadia from the city, the executioner bared his sword, and the saint prayed to God:

"Lord Jesus Christ, receive my spirit!"

And the martyr's head was cut off. St. Hilarion died on the 15th day of the month of July, on the third day after the death of St. Proclus. The body of St. Hilarion was left in the same place where he was beheaded. The faithful came by night, took it, and laid it in the earth together with the remains of St. Proclus, glorifying Christ God, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit is glorified forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

As a morning star the glorious Passion of the martyrs Proclus and Hilarion has shone forth, fore-shining upon us with the brightness of miracles; wherefore we keep your memory, entreating Christ God that He save our souls.

* * *

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Michael Maleinus

Память преподобного отца нашего Михаила Малеина

The Venerable Michael was of a noble family from the district of Harsian in Cappadocia, and in the world he was called Manuel. His kinsman, the Emperor Leo the Wise (d. 912), honored him with the rank of candidate, and he served in Constantinople. After the death of this emperor, Manuel went off into the regions of Bithynia;[4648] being 18 years old, he placed himself under the direction of the elder John Eladites on Mount Kiminas, where he was tonsured with the name Michael. After great ascetic labors of the monastic life, Michael founded a lavra on Mount Kiminas near the river Gallos in the southwest of Bithynia. Around the year 953 there came under his direction Abraham, who in monasticism was named Athanasius and afterwards

founded the famous lavra on Athos.[5] He stayed here about 6 years. The Venerable Michael reposed in his monastery in 962, after 50 years of the labors of monastic life. The Lord glorified him, even during his lifetime, with many signs and miracles. He was called Maleinos after his family name. His sister was the mother of two famous generals, Nicephorus and Leo. Nicephorus Phocas became emperor shortly after the Venerable's repose (in 963). With the means of this emperor the Venerable Athanasius established the famous lavra on Athos. The first tsar, progenitor of the house that reigned in Russia, Michael Feodorovich, was named after the Venerable Michael (Maleinos).[6]

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Thou didst refine the burden of the flesh by thy labors, and by enlightenment thou didst fix the swiftness of the soul, O Michael, and thou wast revealed as a dwelling of the Trinity. Beholding Her, O blessed one, clearly, pray unceasingly for us all.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Golinduch

Страдание святой мученицы Голиндухи

In the land of Persia,[7] in the reign of Chosroes the Elder,[8] there lived a certain young and beautiful woman, called by the Persian name Golinduch. She was of the noble lineage of great nobles, and by marriage she was likewise wed to a well-known chief of the magi.[9]

5. See his Life under the 5th of this month.

6. In the Ipatiev Monastery of Kostroma, in the Trinity Cathedral, there is a side chapel in honor of the Venerable Michael Maleinus, on account of the name-day of Tsar Michael Feodorovich, who was taken to the throne (in 1613) from the Ipatiev Monastery. The icon of the Venerable Michael, located in the chapel bearing his name, became renowned for miracles at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

7. Persia occupies the western part of the Iranian plateau. Its present boundaries are Turkey to the west, Afghanistan and Baluchistan to the east, the Indian Ocean to the south, and the Transcaspian region to the north. The founder of the Persian monarchy was Cyrus, who reigned from 558 to 529 B.C., known for his conquests (he subjugated nearly all of western Asia).

8. Chosroes (or more precisely Khosrov), from the Persian, means in general "king." This title was usually added to the personal name of one or another king. In the present case, Chosroes I Anushirvan is meant, who reigned from 531 to 579 A.D.

After three years of marriage she was brought to understanding by Divine enlightenment, and beginning to comprehend the error of Persian impiety, she sought which faith was the true one. Hearing of the Christian faith, pure and undefiled, she reflected within herself: is this faith the true one, or is there yet some other? And Golinduch desired to be instructed in it and to come to knowledge of the truth. She remained in such reflection for a rather long time, and then one night in a dream she had this vision: she saw a bright Angel of God, who, taking her, led her to a certain dark and fiery place, full of great fear and terror, where there was a multitude of people who were undergoing torment. Golinduch asked the Angel who was leading her:

"What is this dreadful place, and who are these who are suffering here?"

The Angel said to her:

"This is the place of punishment of sinners and unbelievers; in it are tormented also your forefathers, who worshipped idols and the false gods of Persia."

Golinduch grieved over the perdition of her forefathers and sighed heavily. Then the Angel led her to another place, where was the Paradise of God and the dwelling of the righteous, and through a small door he showed her the great light that was there and in it many men and women rejoicing in indescribable joy. Having shown this, the Angel entered through that door. She too wished to go after the Angel, but he did not let her, saying:

"You cannot enter here unless you are a Christian; no one enters here who has not received the holy baptism of Christ."

Golinduch awoke at once, in fear, marveling at what she had seen, and she very much desired to become a Christian, being outraged at

9. In antiquity, under the name of magi, were understood wise men who possessed wide knowledge of the hidden powers of nature and of the heavenly luminaries. They observed the phenomena of nature, interpreted dreams, and foretold the future; for the most part they were at the same time priests, and enjoyed great esteem at royal courts and among the people. The magi passed from the Assyro-Babylonians to the Persians; among the Persians they at first met with strong opposition from the native priests. Afterwards, however, magianism took root among the Persians, merging with the local priesthood, so that even the very word *magus* came among the Persians to mean priest. Zoroaster, the founder of the religion of the ancient inhabitants of Iran, is presented in many ancient monuments as the head and reformer of the class of magi.

Persian impiety and at her husband's sorcery. Anxious in her thought as to how she might be granted holy baptism, she began with tears to pray to the true Christian God about it, and soon she received what she asked. Instructed and guided by the Angel of the Lord, she secretly went out of the house and came to a certain priest who was in a hidden place. Thus Golinduch was led by the incorporeal Angel to an Angel in the flesh, by whom she was instructed in the faith and baptized; at her baptism she was given the name Mary.

After receiving baptism she returned again to the house, but she no longer obeyed the natural law of marriage, not wishing to be defiled by her impious husband, since she was betrothed as a bride to Christ. Following the instruction of the spiritual father who had baptized her, Golinduch persevered in fasting and prayer, devoting whole nights to it; she spent the day in silence, not wishing to converse with unbelievers, and she did not allow her husband even to touch her. Her husband marveled at the unexpected change in her and at her unusual conduct, was perplexed as to what had happened to her, and was troubled about her. But he grieved especially over the loss of carnal union with her, for she did not at all desire fellowship with him. For a long time he tried to break her obstinacy, now with caresses and entreaties, now with force and blows, but he could not attain his aim, since the bride of Christ was strengthened by the invisible power of God, and her husband was unable to overcome her. At last, learning that his wife had become a Christian, the husband began to weep over her as one lost, and by every means exhorted her with tears to renounce Christ and to return to conjugal fellowship with him as before; but he could not shake her, established as an immovable pillar in the faith and love of Christ. He still performed his sorceries over her, calling upon the demonic power for help, but he likewise achieved nothing, for the demons did not dare even to approach her from afar, seeing that she was illumined by the grace of Christ. Then he went to the emperor Chosroes and with great regret told him that his wife had become a Christian and shunned union with him. The emperor sent one of his courtiers to exhort her, but the nobleman returned likewise with nothing. And this happened not once but many times: the emperor sent to her now men of rank, now noble

women, with flattery and enticement, that she should return to her former faith and enter into cohabitation with her husband, but all their labor was in vain. Once the emperor sent word to Golinduch that if she renounced the Christian faith and again turned to the Persian, he would take her to himself as his wife, and she would be an empress; but the saint said to those who came to her:

"I will ask you one thing; tell me: if the emperor takes me to himself as his wife, will he not die, will he remain alive forever? If he will be immortal, then I will obey him."

"It is impossible for a man to be immortal," they answered. "The emperor is a man and without doubt will die."

Then the saint said:

"I do not wish to unite myself with a mortal and short-lived tsar, since I am united with the immortal King, living forever, Christ my God, for Whom I am ready both to suffer and to die."

The messengers, returning, reported her words to the king. He was angered, ordered her bound entirely in iron fetters and cast into prison, so that she would be forgotten by all, as one dead. And the martyr remained in prison for 18 years. Meanwhile Chosroes, the Persian king, died; after him his son Hormisdas became king, and in Greece the emperors changed: Justin the Younger,[10] Tiberius II,[11] and after them St. Maurice.[12] At this time there came to Persia from the Greeks an envoy named Aristobulus, an honorable man, God-loving and well-pleasing to God. Hearing that Mary-Golinduch was sitting in prison, he desired to see her and to receive her blessing. He asked the Persian king specially that he permit him to come to the prison without hindrance; having received permission, he came to the saint, kissed the chains with which she had been bound for Christ, and even took some portion of them for himself as a blessing. Living in Persia, this man often came to the saint and taught her the Psalms of David, so that the bride of Christ, sitting in prison as in a chamber, sang them and gave thanks to God.

After Aristobulus departed, Hormisdas handed St. Golinduch over to the magi to be tortured as they wished. Each day they led her out of

10. Justin II – emperor, 565–578.
11. Emperor, 578–582.

the prison, inflicted many wounds upon her, and tormented her without mercy; yet in the morning they found her unharmed and whole. Once her breasts were so cruelly torn by the wounds, for she had been struck severely both on the belly and on the chest, that they fell apart; but when in the morning she was again brought out for torture, her breasts and her whole body were found unharmed. Seeing this, the Persians were astonished and glorified the power of Christ, and many of them even went over to the Christian faith. The magi, however, raged like beasts against the Lamb of Christ and devised ever new torments: they set her head on fire; then they placed Golinduch in a leather sack, tied and sealed it, and cast it into a deep ditch, so that she would die there. But by the all-powerful hand of God, which preserved her life, she remained alive, though for many days she was without food and drink, and perhaps she was nourished by invisible food and invisible drink. God, where He wills, overcomes the natural order. When, by the action of a supernatural power, the martyr remained alive for many days, it was commanded that she be defiled by shameless men. For this purpose she was led into a special room; but when they entered to her, they did not find her, for God had made her invisible: their impure eyes could not see the pure Bride of Christ. When they had left, she again became visible to the servants of the tormentor, and they again took her to torments, to various sufferings. Afterwards she was cast to be devoured by a huge and terrible serpent, which was kept and fed in a deep abyss. But He who once stopped the mouths of the lions so that they would not devour Daniel cast into the pit[13], sent His Angel, and he stopped the mouth of the serpent so that it would not harm or touch the much-suffering body of the holy martyr; the fierceness of the serpent was subdued, and it became gentle before her as a lamb, lying and resting at her feet; and the saint remained in the abyss with the serpent for four months. Food was thrown to the serpent every day, while the martyr, without food or drink, remained alive as before, by the power of God, which miraculously preserved her life. Then, after many days, she de-

12. Emperor, 582–602.
13. Dan. 2:1–49.

sired to eat, and an Angel of God appeared to her, and making the sign of the Cross, touched her lips, saying:

"Henceforth you shall feel neither hunger nor thirst; and if you desire to taste anything, since you are not yet bodiless, it will be in your power to do so."

Having said this, he led her out of that cave. Seeing her, the impious men took her again, greatly amazed that she had not been eaten by the serpent and had come out of the cave, and they said that by Christian sorcery she had charmed the serpent so that it would not devour her, and that by sorcery she had also come out of the ditch. And again they declared:

"How strong is Christian sorcery! It surpasses even the Persian!"

The king, however, when he learned that she was alive, commanded that her head be struck off with the sword; but when she was being led to execution, the Angel of the Lord snatched her from the hands of the soldiers who were leading her and preserved her alive. The martyr, having departed and remaining unknown to her tormentors, dwelt among the Christians, who at that time were few in Persia: they lived in inconspicuous places, as if hiding, though the unbelievers knew of them. By the word of the Angel, the saint experienced neither hunger nor thirst, except that at times, wishing to show that she was not a phantom but had a body, she took a small piece of bread, dipped it in water, and ate it; she did this, however, not often but rarely, sometimes after ten days or even longer. Some time after the martyr had been preserved from death, the impious Persian king Ormisdas perished with a great uproar, slain by his courtiers, and his son Chosroes[14], grandson of the elder Chosroes, became king; but the nobles rose against him as well, and he fled from Persia. He pondered where to turn: to Arabia, where the Saracens already were, or to the Greek lands among the Christians; uncertain which way to take, he finally resolved to let loose the reins of his horse, and wherever it went, thither he would go. When

14. Khosrow II Parviz reigned from 590 to 628. He took the Life-giving Tree of the Cross of the Lord in Jerusalem in 614, during the war with the Greek emperor Phocas. The Cross was returned in 628 by Khosrow II's successor Siroes, upon the conclusion of peace with the Greek emperor Heraclius.

he came to the place where one road leads to Arabia and the other to the Greek lands, the horse went along the Greek road, and Chosroes, with all his courtiers, made his way into the Greek territory, where he was received with honor and kindness by the Greek emperor Maurice. Maurice gave Chosroes a large force of his army; with it Chosroes went into Persia, defeated his enemies, and again took up his throne. Joyful and free days came for the Christians living in Persia, for Chosroes regarded Maurice as his father and therefore, until Maurice's death, did no harm to the Christians. With Chosroes there came into Persia Saint Domitian, Bishop of Melitene, sent by Maurice. He, as Aristobulus had done before, saw with his own eyes the holy martyr Maria, called in Persian Golindukha, but no longer in chains, rather at liberty, preaching Christ to the Persians; he conversed with her and heard of her sufferings either directly from her lips or from others, and on returning to Greece he told many about her. Through Maria's preaching in Persia, her relatives and other notable people and a considerable number of the common folk accepted her holy faith, for many saw the miracles she worked, including many predictions of the future and their fulfillment, for she had the gift of foresight, penetrating into what was hidden and secret; through all this the glory of Christ increased in those lands. After this the saint went into the regions of the Greek territory, to Kirkisia and Daria, visited Jerusalem, and there venerated the Life-giving Tree of the Precious Cross, the Tomb of the Lord, and the other holy places. Among other places she came to a monastery where the heresy of the impious Severus prevailed, who asserted the suffering of the Divinity and therefore added to the Trisagion such words as "who wast crucified for us, have mercy upon us," saying, "O Father and Holy Spirit, who together with the Son suffered on the Cross." The saint prayed to God that He would reveal to her concerning these Severians whether their Communion should be received or not, and she saw an Angel holding two chalices [15], one full of darkness and the other filled with light, and he revealed to her that the chalice of darkness was the heretical communion, and that with light was the communion of the

15. *Potir* – the chalice.

Holy Conciliar Catholic Church [16]. Therefore the saint disdained communion with the heretics and hastened to depart from there. Guided by the Angel of God, she passed through other lands and cities, visited Hierapolis in Syria and its Bishop Stephen, who afterwards wrote her Life. When her blessed end drew near, she fell somewhat ill in the church of St. Martyr Sergius, which stood between Nisibis and the city called Dara; she prayed for the salvation of the whole world, gave thanks to God for His great mercy manifested in her, and joyfully committed her holy soul into the hands of the Lord, whom she had so loved and for whose sake she had suffered so much; she was numbered in the choir of the saints and martyrs in the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus the holy martyr Maria, also called Golindukha, ended her earthly life in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be glory forever, amen [17].

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day, the repose of the Venerable Arsenius of Novgorod (in 1570) and of the Venerable Simon of Volomsk (in 1641).

On this same day, the memory of the holy martyrs Theodore the Varangian and his son John, slain at Kiev in 983.

NOTES

4648. Bithynia is a north-western region of Asia Minor lying along the shores of the Black Sea, the Bosphorus, and the Constantinople strait. This land has been known since remote antiquity and received its name from the Bithynians, who migrated into it from Thrace. Bithynia was picturesque, fertile, and rich in livestock. In 546 B.C. the Bithynians fell under the rule of the Persians, but from 327 Bithynia again became an independent state; in 75 B.C., by the testament of King Nicomedes III, Bithynia passed to the Romans, as an independent province governed by a special proconsul. Christianity appeared in Bithynia in apostolic times (1 Pet. 1:1). In the time of Pliny the Younger, who governed Bithynia, and of the emperor Trajan (98–117), there were very many Christians there, not only in the cities but also in the villages and hamlets. Under Dio-

16. That is, ecumenical.

17. St. Golindukh, the Martyr, died in 591. According to the Constantinopolitan Typikon of the 9th–10th centuries, her Life was written by Eustratius, presbyter of the Great Church of Constantinople, a contemporary of St. Patriarch Eutychius.

cletian (284–305) there was a terrible persecution of the Christians in Bithynia. In the fourth and fifth centuries Bithynia was especially notable in the ecclesiastical respect: many church councils were held here on account of various heresies.



THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF JULY

July 13

13 июля

New Calendar July 13 · Old Calendar July 26 (civil dates)

Synaxis of the Holy Archangel Gabriel

Собор святого Архангела Гавриила

We praise in hymns the herald of our salvation, the great servant of God and joyful messenger to the Most Pure Virgin Mary (Lk. 1:26), the Archangel Gabriel, celebrating for him a second festal synaxis. His first synaxis is observed on the day after the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos, March 26, and now again this synaxis is celebrated in the holy Church, and again his wondrous appearances, by God's command, are recalled and glorified. He taught Moses, who escaped the hand of Pharaoh, the art of writing in the wilderness; he told him of the beginning of the world, the creation of the first man Adam, of his life and of the patriarchs who lived after him, of the times that followed, of the Flood and the division of tongues; he explained to him the arrangement of the heavenly planets and elements, and taught him arithmetic, geometry and all wisdom. To the prophet Daniel he explained the wondrous visions concerning kings and kingdoms that were to come, represented to him in the form of various beasts; he told him of the time of the deliverance of God's people from the Babylonian captivity, and also of the time of the first coming of Christ into the world through the incarnation from the Most Holy Virgin (Dan. 8:1–27, 9:1–27). He appeared to the holy righteous Anna, who, in her garden, grieved over her barrenness and prayed to God with tears, and said to her:

"Anna, Anna! Your prayer is heard, your sighs have passed through the clouds, and your tears have reached God: you shall conceive and bear a blessed Daughter, through Whom all the tribes of the earth shall

be blessed; salvation shall be given to the world through Her, and She shall be given the name Mary."

Saint Gabriel also appeared to the righteous Joachim, who was fasting in the wilderness, and announced to him, as to Saint Anna, that they would have a daughter, chosen from eternity to be the Mother of the Messiah who was to come for the salvation of the human race. This great Archangel was appointed by God as guardian of Mary, the God-bearing maiden born of barren parents, and when She was led into the Temple, he nourished Her, bringing Her food every day. He also appeared to the holy priest Zechariah, standing at the right side of the altar of incense, announced to him the release of his aged wife Elizabeth from barrenness and the birth of Saint John the Forerunner of the Lord; and when he did not believe, he bound his tongue with dumbness until the day of the fulfillment of his words (Lk. 1:25). This same intercessor of God, sent by God to Nazareth, appeared to the Most Holy Virgin, betrothed to the righteous Joseph, and announced to Her the conception of the Son of God by the overshadowing and action of the Holy Spirit within Her. He also appeared in a dream to Joseph, explaining to him that the maiden had remained undefiled, for that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:18–21). And when our Lord was born in Bethlehem, this Angel of the Lord Gabriel appeared to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night, and said:

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for today in the city of David there is born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

And then at once, with a multitude of the heavenly host, he sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Lk. 2:10–14).

It is thought that this Angel appeared from heaven to Christ the Savior before His Passion, when He prayed in the garden, for the name Gabriel means "the strength of God." Gabriel, who appeared, strengthened Him, since among his other services was this: the strengthening in struggles, and our Lord was then struggling in fervent prayer (Lk. 22:43; Heb. 5:7). This same Angel appeared to the myrrh-

bearing women, sitting upon the stone at the tomb, announcing to them the Resurrection of the Lord (Mt. 28:1–20; Mk. 16:1–20; Lk. 24:1–53; Jn. 20:1–31): thus, having been the herald of the conception and nativity of the Lord, he also appeared as the herald of His Resurrection. He also appeared to the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos, who was fervently praying on the Mount of Olives, announced to Her the approach of Her honorable Dormition and Her translation from earth to heaven, and gave Her a bright branch of Paradise. The holy Church, recalling his many appearances in the Old and New Testaments, and knowing his constant intercession before God for the Christian race, now celebrates his common festival, so that God's people may always and fervently with zeal take refuge in the protection and help of this intercessor and benefactor of the human race, and by his prayers receive the forgiveness of sins from Christ the Lord, our Savior.[1]

Troparion, Tone 4:

O Archistrategos of the heavenly hosts, we unworthy ever pray thee: that by thy prayers thou wouldest shelter us under the covering of the wing of thy immaterial glory, keeping us who fall down diligently and cry: deliver us from afflictions, O Commander of the powers on high.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Beholding God's glory in heaven, and bestowing grace from on high upon the earth, O Gabriel, wise Leader of the Angels, servant of God's glory and divine champion of the world, save and protect those who cry to thee; be thou thyself our helper, and let none prevail against us.

Another Kontakion, Tone 2:

O Archistrategos of God, servant of the divine glory, Leader of the Angels and Instructor of men, intercede for us for what is profitable and for great mercy, O Archistrategos of the bodiless ones.

1. This feast appeared no later than the 9th century; the occasion for its establishment was probably the consecration of a church in Constantinople, built in honor of the Archangel Gabriel.

* * *

Commemoration of Venerable Stephen the Sabaite

Память преподобного Стефана Савваита

Our Venerable Father Stephen was born in the year 725. At the age of ten he entered the Lavra of Saint Sabbas, and until his repose, which followed in the year 794, Saint Stephen spent his life either in that monastery or in the nearby wilderness, for which reason he is called "the Sabaite." Saint Stephen performed many signs and miracles, foreknowing, among other things, his own death. He is not the same person as Stephen the Sabaite, whose memory is honored on October 28.

Commemoration of Saint Serapion

Память святого Серапиона

Saint Serapion lived in the days of Emperor Severus[2] and was a pious and virtuous man. Seized by the prince Akila and questioned about his faith, Serapion confessed himself a Christian and boldly glorified the true God; for this he was subjected to various tortures, and then cast into the fire, and thus ended his life.[3]

* * *

Life of our holy father Julian

Житие святого отца нашего Иулиана

Saint Julian (whom some regard as Simon the Leper, mentioned in the Gospel (Mt. 26:6), who at his baptism changed the name Simon to Julian) was ordained bishop by the chief Apostle Peter, and was sent by him to Gaul to preach the word of God. Having come to the city of the Cenomani,[4] he became for it its first Apostle, as Saint

2. Emperor, 193–211.

3. In the Menologion of Basil it is said that St. Serapion, after confessing the name of Christ, was cruelly flogged, scraped over the whole body, and then tormented with hunger in prison; healed by Christ in prison and afterward led out of it completely well, he amazed everyone by this. His death is dated to 205; the place of his death is unknown.

Dionysius the Areopagite was for the Parisians;[5] for in one and the same year both of them laid the foundation of the holy faith in those lands and established the Church of Christ, laboring apostolically in preaching and caring for the salvation of human souls. At first the new teaching preached by the lips of Saint Julian served for some of the unbelieving Cenomani as an occasion of offense, and for others as an object of mockery and derision; but when the Cenomani saw the miracles wrought by the all-powerful name of Christ, they began gradually to believe the teaching. For by the hands of the preacher many miracles were performed concerning the true God: demons were cast out, lepers were cleansed, the eyes of the blind were opened, and every kind of sickness was healed. Saint Julian confirmed his teaching about God by wondrous works, invoking the name of Christ over the sick and signing them with the sign of the Cross. Healing their bodies in this way, he at the same time healed their souls, preaching about Christ Jesus and enlightening them with holy baptism. At first the saint lived on the outskirts of the city in a small house, and many began to come to him: the newly converted for instruction, and the unbelievers for healing from sickness; and here the latter received a twofold healing, becoming believers. The place where the saint lived was without water, so that those who came to him and remained with him suffered great need of water, which they carried from afar; therefore the man of God, with the men who were with him, went out one day into a nearby grove, planted his staff in the ground here, and prayed to God aloud:

"O Lord our God, who didst once bring forth water from the hard rock for Thy thirsting people in the wilderness (Num. 20:1–29), look upon us also, Thy servants, reveal to us the treasure of Thy compassion, and command a living (spring) water to flow from this dry earth, so that all who stand here may know that Thou art the true God, who

4. Cenomania — now Le Mans in France.

5. St. Dionysius the Areopagite, a member of the Areopagus of Athens, converted to Christ by the preaching of the Apostle Paul, who also ordained him bishop of Athens; afterward he was sent to preach in Gaul in 90, together with the presbyter Rusticus and the deacon Eleutherius, and suffered with them in 96 under the emperor Domitian. The commemoration of St. Dionysius the Areopagite is October 3.

in the last of the ages didst send into the world Thy Son, that He might lead those who believe in Thee into the true promised land."

When the saint had finished his prayer and the faithful had said "Amen," at once a spring of water gushed forth from the ground where the staff had been planted, showing men the omnipotence of God's power and the great faith and boldness toward God of the holy wonderworker. Then the faithful were strengthened in their faith, and the unbelievers fell at the feet of the man of God and asked for baptism. With the water of this spring the holy wonderworker baptized them; thus day by day the Church of Christ grew and multiplied. When the holy bishop Julian became renowned for his miracles, the prince of that city, named Defensor, desired to see him and sent to invite him to his house with honor. The saint went to the prince; as he drew near the prince's house, he noticed at the gate a blind man begging alms. Moved with pity, he invoked the name of Jesus Christ, and making the sign of the cross over the man's eyes, restored his sight. Great was the joy of him who had received his sight, and great the amazement of those present at the performance of the miracle, of which news was at once sent to the prince. The prince hastened out to meet the saint, wishing to see the man who had regained his sight; seeing both the blind man and the saint, he bowed to the divine preacher, led him into his house, and, falling at his feet, humbly begged him to teach him how to obtain eternal life. The bishop of God instructed the prince and his household sufficiently in the holy faith by apostolic preaching, that is, the knowledge of the true God, and, appointing a fast, prepared them for baptism; and a few days later the prince, with all his family, was baptized, and he gave the saint his house in the midst of the city for the establishment of a church in it, and provided for the church itself by a donation of the appropriate means. Following the prince's example, many of the prominent citizens also embraced the holy faith and were baptized, likewise making considerable donations to the bishop of God. He built a stately church, richly adorned it, and here the people began to gather, taught the faith by him, enlightened by holy baptism, and confirmed by miracles, for the holy Julian had from God such power of working wonders that he even raised the dead.

There was in the city a certain nobleman named Anastasius, who had not yet accepted the holy faith and still adhered to idolatry; he had a beloved son who fell gravely ill and died. The father, full of great pity and sorrow for his lost son, came to the bishop and, weeping, cried out to him:

"Servant of God Julian, you who teach of Christ as the true God, I adjure you by Christ God, whom you preach: return my son to me!"

The saint said:

"Anastasius, if you believe in Him whom I preach, you will receive your son alive and will yourself inherit eternal life."

Anastasius gave a solemn promise, saying:

"If I receive my son alive, I will believe in Christ, the true God, and will utterly renounce the idols."

After this the bishop, accompanied by his clergy, went with Anastasius to his house, where the dead body of the youth lay; and seeing many weeping and lamenting with cries, he ordered them to be silent. All looked at him, thinking to themselves what he intended to do with the dead body. The wonderworker, approaching the bier, took the hand of the dead youth, and, lifting his eyes to heaven, prayed with tears, saying:

"Lord Jesus Christ, who raised the son of the widow, being carried out for burial from the city of Nain (Lk. 7:11–16), and by the word of Thy power called forth Lazarus, four days dead and already decaying (Jn. 11:43–44), command that this youth also rise from the dead, for when he rises in body, many will rise in soul, believing in Thee. Let those present know that Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God, who accomplished the salvation of the world by the command of the Father, to whom through Thee we rightly render thanks forever and ever!"

The clergy said "Amen," and at once the youth, as if awakening from sleep, rose alive and well. All who saw this were struck with awe and greatly amazed; indescribable joy was in the house of Anastasius, and with the voices of all the One True God, Jesus Christ, was glorified. And Anastasius with all his household were baptized, believing in Him, as were all who had seen and heard this. After some time, Christ

the Lord worked another such miracle through His saint Julian, to the glory of His most holy name: once, going out of the city with his clergy in order to traverse the land of the Cenomani and bring to salvation perishing human souls, he saw that they were carrying out for burial in the pagan cemetery a certain youth who had died, the only son of a nobleman named Iovinian, and many people followed the corpse. The holy bishop approached them and ordered the bearers to stop, and, signaling the people to be silent with his hand, he said aloud to the father of the deceased:

"Iovinian, Christ, whom I preach, who became man for the sake of men, raised the dead, cast out demons by His word, and did all that He desired while living among men, to show the power of His Divinity. If you believe in this God with all your heart, forsaking the idols, and promise to be cleansed by holy baptism, you will rejoice both in your own salvation and in the resurrection of your son!"

Then Iovinian and the whole people, falling at the feet of the saint, began to beg for mercy: that he would raise the dead youth. Weeping, Iovinian said to the Saint:

"Great servant of God Julian, if you make alive my only son, who was the consolation and joy of my life, not only shall I believe in Christ, the true God, but this entire people, leaving their gods, will with zeal accept the faith you preach!"

Filled with wonderworking grace, the bishop of God bent his knees, lifted his eyes to heaven, raised his hands, and aloud addressed God with such a prayer:

"Almighty Lord, who didst will to become man for our salvation, who didst live among men and by the sign of Thy cross didst drive death from the human race, command that this youth rise, so that by the manifestation of such great power of Thine the faith of those who believe in Thee may be strengthened, and the hearts of unbelievers may submit to Thee, the Only-begotten Son of the Living God, whom we confess together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, reigning unto ages of ages!"

Those present said "Amen," and at once the dead youth rose from the bier on which he was being carried, and all were struck with awe

and wonder at the new miracle. The risen youth began to cry out loudly:

"Truly great is the Christian God, whom His servant Julian preaches!"

And he said to his father:

"Indeed, until now we have gone astray, not knowing the true God, for the gods we worshipped are demons: I saw them in hell, and watched how they had no rest and were unceasingly tormented in cruel torments."

Then all with a loud voice began to glorify Christ, the true God; they believed in Him and, taught by the holy bishop, were baptized together with Iovinian and his son. Thus the good shepherd found the strayed sheep and went on his appointed way, accompanied by a multitude of people who desired to delight in his God-inspired words and to see his miracles.

When St. Julian drew near to a village called Proilaiak, the day was already declining, and late in the evening they entered the village, wishing to rest there. At that very hour the lord of the village had a little son die. The saint, hearing weeping in that house, went in, remembering the words of Ecclesiastes: "It is better to go to the house of mourning for the dead, than to go to the house of feasting" (Eccl. 7:2). A separate room for sleeping had been given to him, but he ordered the dead youth to be brought to him, and, shutting himself in with him, remained in prayer until sunrise. By his prayer the youth rose again; he was returned to his parents alive and well, and their weeping was turned into joy. When day came, the report of this miracle spread through the whole village, and all gathered there to see the one who raised the dead and the one who had been raised. Seeing the wonderworker, many brought their sick to him, and he, praying over all and blessing all, healed them. The whole village, together with its lord, received the holy faith in Christ and was enlightened by Baptism. The parents, moreover, promised to dedicate the risen youth to God and to give to the Church the whole village of which he was heir, so that the youth, on coming of age, might become a church servant and the village be attached to the property of the Church. When the saint went on

from there and drew near to another village, called Ruiliak, which lies above the river named Lida, messengers from the lord of that village met him with a request that he come to them quickly, since the lord's only daughter, being possessed, was grievously tormented by an unclean spirit, causing great sorrow to her parents and kinsfolk. The hierarch of Christ went there at a quickened pace and, casting the demon out of the maiden, brought her parents to faith in Christ; the idols that were there he destroyed, and he built a church. He remained there until the whole village and its surroundings had been brought to God by holy Baptism. Then he went from there to a village called Artin, in which there was a large idol-temple, where stood the famous idol of the foul pagan god called Jupiter; a demon dwelt in the idol and beguiled deluded people with various delusions. The inhabitants of this village and its surroundings, zealous servants of demons, hearing that the Christian bishop was coming to them, gathered in great numbers and would not let him in, for they feared that he would do to their idol what he had done in other villages, casting them down to dust. When the man of God came to them, they began to shout with fury: some said that he should be killed as a destroyer of ancient ancestral customs, and others cried out that he should be burned as a sorcerer, a deceiver and an enemy of their gods. Although they raged greatly against him, they could do him no harm, for the right hand of the Most High protected him.

Armed with the armour and weapons of invisible divine power, he, like a brave warrior, boldly passed through the popular tumult, entered the idol-temple, and, calling upon the all-powerful name of Christ, commanded the idol to fall and the demon to depart from it. Immediately the idol fell to the ground and was shattered to dust, and the demon came visibly out of it in the form of a huge and terrible serpent, spewing fire from its mouth, and it rushed upon its servants, for many unbelieving people had entered the temple; the serpent began savagely to devour and destroy the people. The people, unable to flee from the serpent's rage and venom, began to cry out to St. Julian for help, asking him to deliver them from such calamity. The servant of God stretched out his hand toward the serpent and, with the sign of the Cross as with an iron club, began to strike and drive it away, and he commanded the

visible demon to cease harming people and to go down into the abyss of perdition. The serpent, running out of the temple, became invisible. After this the people, recognizing their error, cried out to the saint:

"Servant of the true God, save us who are perishing!"

The hierarch, having instructed them sufficiently, won them all to Christ, for those people with zeal received the faith, were baptized, and razed that temple to the ground; and in its place, by the hierarch's command, they built a church to the glory of Christ God; and in other places where there were idols, they destroyed them, and great joy came over that land on account of its deliverance from idol-worship's delusion. Thus the diligent shepherd went round the bounds of his flock and led the rational sheep onto the spiritual field, snatching them out of the wolf's jaws; only here and there remained a small part of those who were lost, who had not renounced their former delusion. The aforementioned prince Defensor, hearing how the man of God had enlightened the land of the Cenomani, performing many miracles by the grace of Christ, rejoiced greatly and glorified God. Then he himself went to the saint and, after a courteous greeting, began to beseech him to come to his village; the prince had a fine house and a large estate; he wished the hierarch to celebrate a spiritual festival there on account of the victory over the uprooted idol-worship, and to be present at the festive meal, so that all might rejoice to the glory of God, giving thanks for the Lord's loving-kindness toward mankind. The saint, seeking everywhere the salvation of human souls, did not refuse the prince's request and went to his village. On the way they found a youth lying on the ground; a huge serpent had coiled around him, binding his feet as with a rope and wrapping his whole body; seeing this, all were frightened. But the man of God, Julian, drawing nearer, prayed to God, saying:

"Lord Jesus Christ, who didst redeem by Thy Cross the human race that had lost Paradise through the serpent's guile, deliver also this Thy creature from the serpent that has bound him, that those present may understand that Thou art the Savior of all who hope in Thee!" And at once the serpent burst in two and became dead, and the youth was freed from it unharmed, and all glorified God. When they drew near to the village to which they were going, many people came out to meet

them; among those who met them were two demoniacs, who cried out to the saint for help. Invoking the name of Christ, the hierarch at once cast out the unclean spirit. Those who had received healing and all who were there believed in Christ, and the holy man of God was received in the village, in the prince's house, with great honour and love, and there was a great celebration, not for the body only but for the spirit as well; for all the talk of those present was of the glory and power of Christ and of the ruin of the demons, who had been defeated and put to shame in the idols. When the festival held to the glory of God was over, the prince showed the bishop all his treasures, asking him to take whatever pleased him, but the saint wished to take nothing, for not gold and silver but the salvation of human souls were for him the most precious treasure. The man of God, having instructed the prince, his whole household and the whole village with his God-inspired words for a sufficient time, and having baptized those who were found to be unbaptized and confirmed them in the faith, departed to his city. When he entered the city, prisoners who were in the dungeon near the city gate, seeing the saint through a small window, cried out to him with a loud voice, begging to be freed from their fetters. Being merciful, the loving father took pity on them and, before going home, went to the judges to whom the administration of the city had been entrusted and began to beg them to release the prisoners in honor of his return; but they, through hardness of heart, did not honour the bishop's request, and he went away from them grieved. First of all the saint came to the church and offered here a prayer of thanksgiving to God, who had helped him bring so many souls to salvation; then he entered the house where a meal had been prepared for him, but he would not eat anything, grieved over the fate of the prisoners. But the Lord, who fulfils the will of those who fear Him, sent His Angel, who opened the doors of the dungeon, broke all the fetters and set the prisoners free. Coming out of the dungeon, they made their way through the whole city toward the bishop's house, and no one hindered them or said anything to them, since everyone saw that they had been freed from their fetters and released from the dungeon not by human hand but by the power of God. The hierarch of God, seeing them coming toward him, was filled with joy, invited

them to share his meal, and, having sufficiently refreshed them with bodily and spiritual festivity, let each go home.

Holy Bishop Julian, governing the newly enlightened Church and nourishing the newly gathered flock of rational sheep with spiritual food, remained on his episcopal throne for a considerable time; and, laboring apostolically in the preaching of Christ, being already an aged elder, he drew near to his honorable end, having completely eradicated idol-worship and demonic veneration in the land of the Cenomani. A few days before his death the hierarch went away from the city to a village belonging to the Church, and there he fell ill. In the city they learned of his illness, and the clergy, the pious citizens, and all who burned with love for him gathered to the hierarch; the hierarch, after instructing them for some time, commanded that after his death they choose as his successor the presbyter Turibius, who had labored together with him for the salvation of human souls; after this, having given the final kiss and imparted the blessing of peace, he gave up his holy soul into the hands of God. The prince was not present at the saint's death: at that time he was not in the city but was delayed in his distant village; nevertheless, he learned of it in this manner: on the day the saint reposed, the prince was dining in his house with his friends, when suddenly his spiritual eyes were opened and he saw that St. Julian, clothed in episcopal vestments, with three deacons bearing lights, entered to him and gave the blessing; and the deacons set the lights on the table, and all at once they disappeared. Seeing this, the prince turned to those seated with him:

"Do you see the glory that I see?"

But they said that they had seen nothing; then the prince explained:

"Did you not see our father Julian, who showed us so much goodness and worked so many miracles? Behold, just now he entered here with three deacons and three lights, with a bright and joyful face, blessed us, leaving the lights with us, and departed; I think he has already reposed, for we heard that he had fallen ill."

Having said this, the prince immediately rose and hastily set out for the city and for the village where the saint had reposed; finding him dead in the Lord, he wept bitterly, and all the people likewise shed

tears over their father and shepherd. Placing his honorable relics upon a chariot, they conveyed them to the city. When they came to the river called the Sarta, near the city, which was very deep and had to be crossed by ferry, the horses drawing the chariot with the body of the saint, instead of going onto the ferry, rushed straight into the river and, guided by an invisible hand, went through the deep river as though over a bridge, without wetting their feet even up to the knees. Thus they crossed to the other bank, and all marveled and were struck with awe at this glorious miracle: the wondrous wonderworker St. Julian worked miracles not only during his life but also after death. When his body was being solemnly carried into the city and all hastened to meet it, one woman was washing her infant in a copper basin, under which she had set a small fire to warm the water; seeing the body of the saint and a multitude of people with candles and censers, and hearing the singing, she forgot about her infant, and leaving him, went out to watch the solemn procession of the honorable body of God's servant; she stood and gazed until they had passed the houses. Then, remembering the child, she hurried back and saw the fire blazing strongly, and the water in the basin had turned to boiling water; in terror she cried out, quickly removed the basin from the fire and poured out the hot water, but she found the child alive, healthy, and in no way harmed by the boiling water. Many who were present there saw this miracle and understood that the infant had been preserved through the prayers of the holy wonderworker. The hierarch of Christ Julian was buried in the church he had built, on the site where previously there had been a princely house, given to the saint; and at his tomb many miracles were performed: in all kinds of sicknesses healings were granted through the prayers of this saint, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory unto ages of ages. Amen.

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Passion of the Holy Martyr Marcian

Страдание святого мученика Маркиана

The holy martyr Marcian, while still of youthful age, was seized and subjected to torments in the city of Iconium, and then they brought him (into Cappadocia) before the governor Perennius. He courageously rebuked the latter for pagan impiety, and confessed Christ as God and Lord. For this they began to scrape his bones and cheeks; then the tormentor, enraged by the reproachful words of the sufferer, was not content with these torments but further commanded that he be laid upon a red-hot griddle, and after this that his tongue be lacerated. When all this had been carried out, and the holy martyr remained steadfast in the faith and continued to confess Christ, the governor condemned him to be beheaded with the sword. After this the soldiers took St. Marcian, and at the time when he was praying and giving thanks to God, they struck off his head.[6]

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6. The death of the holy martyr Marcian took place in Cappadocia about the year 258.

THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF JULY

July 14

14 июля

New Calendar July 14 · Old Calendar July 27 (civil dates)

Memory of Holy Apostle Aquila

Память святого Апостола Акилы

Holy Apostle Aquila, one of the seventy, was a disciple of Holy Apostle Paul, who ordained him bishop. He was by birth a Jew from the land of Pontus[1]; before his conversion to Christianity he lived in Italy with his wife Priscilla; when Emperor Claudius[2] commanded the Jews to leave Rome[3], Aquila went with his wife to Corinth[4]. The reason for the expulsion of the Jews from Rome was this: when the preaching of Christ began in Rome and the holy supreme Apostle Peter arrived there, many of the Jews living in Rome accepted the holy faith in Christ, but many remained in unbelief; therefore a great dispute arose among the Jews: some acknowledged Christ as the true Messiah, others rejected Him and reviled Him. The unbelieving Jews, both in Jerusalem and in other countries, and in Rome, rose up in malice against the believers: unable to bear even the name of Jesus Christ, they stirred up the pagans against those who believed in Him and everywhere incited persecution against them. Those pagans who had turned to Christ defended the believing Jews from the unbelieving, and great disputes and enmity arose between them, which was brought to the attention of Emperor Claudius. Since the believers called the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God and the King of Israel, the emperor

1. The Pontic country, or Pontus, is the northeastern region of Asia Minor on the Black Sea.
2. Emperor 41–54 A.D.
3. The chief city of Italy, lying on both banks of the river Tiber, where it flows into the sea.
4. The most ancient, famous and commercial city of Achaia, a region of Greece; the beginning of Christianity in it was laid by St. Apostle Paul during his second apostolic journey (Acts 18:1–28). Two epistles written by St. Apostle Paul to the Corinthians exist.

feared lest some disturbance should arise among the people and some new king appear who would wish to take his power away. Therefore it was ordered that all the Jews, both believers in Christ and unbelievers, be expelled from Rome and all of Italy. There was also another reason for this expulsion, namely: the unbelieving Jews had led Empress Agrippina, the wife of Claudius, into Judaism. Together with the expelled Jews Aquila was also expelled, as a Jew; he settled in Corinth and supported himself here by the labor of his hands, practicing the craft of a tentmaker. At this time Holy Apostle Paul, preaching Christ among the pagans, came from Athens to Corinth, the chief city of Achaia, and finding here Aquila with Priscilla, stayed with them; since they knew only one trade, they practiced it together; having taught Aquila and Priscilla the faith in Christ, Paul baptized them (Acts 18:1–3). Having spent a year and six months in Corinth, teaching the word of God and, with the help of Christ, overcoming both Jews and pagans, Paul sailed to Syria; Aquila and Priscilla followed him, as their teacher and the author of their salvation, being strongly bound to him by spiritual love. With them and his other followers, Paul put in at Ephesus[5]; then, wishing to be in Jerusalem for the approaching feast of Pascha, he left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus to instruct the Ephesians in the holy faith of Christ, and himself set out for Jerusalem[6], promising to return again to Ephesus. After Paul's departure there came to Ephesus a Jew, Apollos, a native of Alexandria, a man eloquent and mighty in the book learning; he had been instructed on the way in the Way of the Lord, and he preached and taught fervently about the Lord, but he had not yet received baptism into the Holy Trinity, knowing only the baptism of John. Aquila and Priscilla, hearing Apollos's bold preaching in the assembly, invited him to their home and expounded to him more fully the way of the Lord (Acts 18:24–28). After this, Holy Paul returned from

5. A maritime commercial city and chief city of the Asia Minor province of Ionia. Ephesus later became the center of the activity of St. John the Theologian; here in 431 was the Third Ecumenical Council; today Ephesus is a poor Turkish village, Ayasaluk. (Acts 18:18–21).

6. The chief city of Palestine, by 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 spread through the whole universe.

Jerusalem to Ephesus, and from there wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians who believed in Christ, concluding it with these words:

– Aquila and Priscilla salute you heartily, with the church that is in their house (1 Cor. 16:19), that is, with their servants.

After this Emperor Claudius died, and the Jews were again granted freedom to live in Rome; each of them returned to Italy to his former place, to his property, and then Aquila and Priscilla returned to Rome. When Holy Paul came again to Corinth and wrote from there his epistle to the Romans, he did not forget in it to send greetings to his beloved disciples, saying in the last chapter:

– Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who laid down their own necks for my life; to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles (Rom. 16:3–4).

Holy Aquila was not long in Rome, and with his wife he went again to Asia[7], having been appointed bishop and sent there by his teacher, Apostle Paul, to preach the word of God. Coming to Ephesus, he helped in the labors of Holy Apostle Timothy, a disciple of Apostle Paul[8], who had ordained him bishop for the Ephesians and left him here, as he says in his first epistle to him, written from Laodicea:

– As I went into Macedonia, I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3).

Afterwards, when Holy Apostle Paul, being persecuted by the Jews of Jerusalem, was brought bound in chains to Rome and wrote from there a second epistle to Timothy in Ephesus, he again remembered these beloved disciples of his, saying:

– Greet Priscilla and Aquila (2 Tim. 4:19).

Holy Aquila, preaching Christ in Asia, Achaia and Heraclea, brought to salvation a great multitude of human souls, turning pagans from idol-worship and baptizing them. He also traveled through other lands, preaching the Kingdom of God everywhere, enlightening with the holy faith, overthrowing idols, building churches and ordaining

7. That is, the western part of Asia Minor.

8. St. Timothy was the son of a Jewess (who had accepted Christianity) and a pagan, and himself a sincere Christian, approved by the brethren; with his consent St. Apostle 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, moreover, was a pagan (Acts 16:1–2).

priests. Having endured many afflictions, he was slain by the unbelievers[9] and obtained rest in heaven with the other holy Apostles, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom glory is offered unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

As a great sun, the Church, having acquired thee, O glorious Aquila, enlightens by the radiance of thy teaching those who faithfully honor thee, O Apostle of the Lord.

* * *

Memory of Venerable Hellius

Память преподобного Еллия

Venerable Hellius became renowned among the monks in the Egyptian deserts for his ascetic labors of fasting, and pleased God by a life of virtue. From childhood he was given to a monastery for the service of the Lord, was reared in abstinence and chastity, was taught meekness and humility, and was granted the grace of God, receiving from youth the gift of working miracles. Thus, when he, still a youth, was sent to bring fire, he took a glowing coal in his garment and brought it to the elder without scorching the garment. The brethren, seeing this, marveled at the miracle and desired to imitate the wondrous life of the youth, who surpassed his elders in holiness. Once the blessed Hellius, walking alone in the desert, desired to eat honey, and saw a honeycomb filled with honey lying on a stone; perceiving that this was an enemy's deceit, he began to reproach himself, saying:

– Depart from me, tempting desire, for it is written: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

At once he left that place, and, withdrawing into a remote desert, remained in fasting, wearing down and, as it were, punishing his body for its lack of self-restraint by depriving it of food. In the third week of

9. According to tradition, together with his wife, who shared with him the labors of the apostolic ministry in preaching the word of God. Most of the relics of Sts. Aquila and Priscilla are in Rome, in the church of St. Martyr Prisca. The memory of St. Priscilla is February 13.

his fasting he saw on the ground in the desert beautiful apples and other garden fruits, and again, perceiving that this was a temptation of the enemy, he said:

– I will not taste, nor even touch any of this, lest I cause my brother, that is, my soul, to stumble, for it is written: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Deut. 8:3; Mt. 4:4).

Having fasted for the fourth week, he fell somewhat asleep and saw in a vision an Angel of God standing before him, who said:

– Arise, and whatever you find set before you, eat without any doubt, and be strengthened!

Awaking, he saw a spring of fresh water and around it some greenery, of a good fragrance and very pleasant to eat; he ate of that greenery, drank from the spring, and was strengthened in body. Afterwards he told the brethren that he had never in all his life eaten food with such sweetness. Having gone a little distance from that place, he found a cave and settled in it, remaining there for some time. When his bodily nature demanded food, he prayed to God on the stones, and immediately, by an invisible hand, fresh pure bread, olives and various vegetables were brought to him.

At one time the venerable one set out to visit the brethren in the desert who were in need of the necessities, and carried them food from what God had sent him. While on the road, feeling weary from the weight of his burden, he saw donkeys walking and grazing in the desert, and addressed them, saying:

– In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, let one of you come here and carry my burden!

Immediately one donkey, the strongest of the herd, came meekly up to him; the holy one laid his burden upon it, himself sat down, and soon reached the dwelling of the brethren in the desert, gladdening them with the food he had brought, and he released the donkey back into the desert. On another occasion he also came early on a Sunday to a desert monastery, and, learning that no service was being celebrated in the church there, asked for what reason the Lord's Day was left without worship? The brethren answered that the priest, who lived on the other

bank of the river, had not come, fearing a crocodile which had appeared in the river and had already devoured many people. The saint said to them:

– If you wish, I will go and summon the priest.

But the brethren answered:

– No! And who will ferry you to the other side? Everyone fears the crocodile and dares not approach the ferry!

But Saint Hellius, trusting in God, went, and when he was on the bank of the river, he called upon the name of the Lord, and immediately the crocodile appeared. That one, which was accustomed to destroy people, by God's command became a ferryman for the righteous man: with meekness and fear it took the saint upon its back, carried him across the river and set him down on the other bank. The venerable one, having reached the dwelling of the priest, began to ask him to come to the brethren, but the presbyter, not knowing him, asked:

– Who are you and where are you from?

He answered that he had only recently come to the monastery. The presbyter, although he saw the blessed one's worn and patched clothing, recognized in him a man of God by his words and his good conduct, and said:

"Brother, you have poor bodily clothing, but good clothing of the soul!"

Then he rose and went toward the monastery. When they came to the river and could find no means of crossing it, the Venerable said to the presbyter:

"Do not trouble yourself, Father! God will prepare a boat for us!"

And with a loud voice he called a crocodile to him. The crocodile, hearing the voice of the saint, at once appeared before them and meekly offered its back for them to mount. First the Venerable climbed onto the crocodile's back, then he invited the presbyter, saying:

"Come up, Father, do not be afraid!"

But the presbyter, seeing the crocodile, was frightened and ran back. The brethren, standing on the other bank, watched that wonder, how the man of God was carried across the river on a crocodile, and marveled at it with fear. The Venerable, having swum across the river,

come out onto the bank, and drawn the crocodile out after him, said to it:

"It is better for you to die yourself than to destroy people and devour them!"

And at once the crocodile fell and died.

St. Hellius remained in the monastery for three days, instructing the brethren with God-inspired words. Being himself a seer, he knew the thoughts of each and the conscience of each brother, and to each he spoke separately of what tempted him. To one he said that he was inflamed by the spirit of impurity, to another that he was inflamed by anger, to another that he was captivated by delicacies, to another that some other passion stormed within him. He also pointed out for the benefit of all the virtues of the other monks, calling one meek, another righteous, another patient, another obedient, another possessed of some other virtue; the lives of all and all their secret deeds, good and evil, were revealed to him by God. Each of those beset by passions said of himself that what Hellius declared was truly so, and all were moved in heart and amended their lives. Once, during a spiritual conversation, the Venerable Father said:

"Prepare the table, for the brethren who are wandering will soon come here!"

And indeed, when the table was prepared, as the saint had said, brethren traveling from afar came to the monastery; having received them with honor, St. Hellius went off into the desert. One of the young brethren begged him to allow him to go with him into the desert, and the saint said to him:

"It is a hard undertaking, brother, and requires great labor, for one must stand firmly against the devil's temptations and endure much."

But the brother promised to bear everything, and the saint, receiving him, ordered him to live in another cave. And on the coming night the demons attacked him, at first invisibly, troubling his mind with foul thoughts, and then visibly, as terrible apparitions that rushed upon him and pressed him, wishing to kill him. He ran out of the cave and hastened to the saint and told him of his misfortune. The elder, comforting the brother with a few words and strengthening him in patience

and faith, again led him back to the same cave, traced with his finger the place of his dwelling, and, fencing it with the sign of the Cross, ordered him to arm himself with the Name of the Lord and not to fear. And the brother lived in that desert unharmed by the demonic assaults, and was granted food brought by an unseen hand, as his Venerable mentor was nourished by God Himself. St. Hellius attained deep old age, performed many miracles, and reposed in God, Whom he pleased, and was numbered among the Venerable Saints who stand before the throne of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in heaven, One God in the Trinity, to Whom be glory now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.[10]

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Justus

Память святого мученика Иуста

St. Justus, a Roman by birth, was a soldier. He had a miraculous vision: a crystal-like cross appeared in the air. Justus believed in Christ and distributed all his property to the poor. By the order of the governor Magnentius he was seized, endured many tortures, after which he was delivered to the fire and died without even the hair of his head being harmed.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day is the memory of the Venerable Martyr Onesimus the Wonderworker, who suffered under Diocletian and reposed in Asia Minor, at Magnesia.

On the same day is the repose of the Venerable Stephen of Makhrishche (1406), who founded the monastery on the site of Makhrishche, 12 versts from the town of Aleksandrov, Vladimir Province.

✠

10. The Venerable Hellius reposed in the 4th century.

THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF JULY

July 15

15 июля

New Calendar July 15 · Old Calendar July 28 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Cyricus and Julitta

Страдание святых мучеников Кирика и Иулитты

In the city of Iconium, in the country of Lycaonia, there lived a young woman of noble birth, descended from a line of former Roman emperors, named Julitta, who was a Christian by faith. Having lived in lawful wedlock for only a short time[1], she was widowed after giving birth to a boy. She baptized the infant and gave him the name Cyricus. At that time the impious Diocletian[4679], holding the sceptre of the Roman Empire, raised up a great persecution against Christians in all the lands subject to him. The count Domitian was appointed by Diocletian as governor of Lycaonia; he was a stern and inhuman man, beastlike in nature, who rejoiced in the shedding of Christian blood. Having come to Iconium, Domitian began fiercely to torment those who believed in Christ and diligently to seek out Christians who secretly held to their faith. The faithful handmaid of Christ, Julitta, seeing this and knowing that she could not conceal herself and her piety from the torturers, resolved to flee, for she feared that she would not endure the cruel torments and would deny Christ. Therefore she left all her possessions, of which she had many, her house, her relatives, her servants, every delight of this world, its glory and pleasure, for the love of Christ; and taking her son Cyricus, who was three years old, and two faithful

1. Iconium is a city on a high, fertile plain in the interior of Asia Minor, at the foot of Mount Taurus, not far from Lystra and Derbe; in ancient times Iconium was the chief city of the Lycaonians. In the history of the Christian Church, Iconium is notable for the visits of St. Apostle Paul during his missionary journeys (Acts 13:51; 14:1–3; 2 Tim. 3:11). Later, a bishopric was established there, and from 451 the bishops of Iconium were called metropolitans of the province of Lycaonia.

maidservants, she left the city of Iconium by night and set out as a wanderer, mindful of what is said in Scripture: "Here we have no abiding city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13:14).

She came to Seleucia[2] as a stranger and a beggar, concealing her noble station; but here, too, she found the same persecution of Christians, for a certain Alexander, who had received authority from the emperor, came to Seleucia and mercilessly slew all who confessed the name of Jesus Christ. The blessed Julitta, mindful also of what is written, "Give place unto wrath," that is, flee from wrath[3], and again, "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another" (Mt. 10:23), left Seleucia and went to Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, and lived there among the poor. After some time the same governor, Alexander, came to Tarsus[4] to torment the Christians; and the holy Julitta was recognized by some, who reported her to the governor. He immediately ordered her to be brought before him, and himself took his seat at the tribunal, which was open to the people. When the soldiers seized her together with her son, her two maidservants fled; from a distance they watched her, that they might see her suffering and her end. And the martyr was brought before the governor, holding in her arms the three-year-old child, St. Cyricus. Asked by the governor her name, lineage, and homeland, she boldly confessed the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and declared herself a Christian:

"My name," she said, "my lineage and my homeland are the Kingdom of my Christ in Heaven!"

The governor, growing angry, ordered that the child be taken from her, stripped, and beaten mercilessly with hard sinews. As the martyr was being beaten, the child watched and wept, struggling to break free

2. Seleucia was a city in Syria, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It was probably founded by the Syrian king Seleucus Nicator around 300 B.C.; during his first journey, the Apostle Paul stopped there to preach and sailed from there to Cyprus (Acts 13:4). In the 6th century A.D., the city was destroyed.

3. Actually, the text from the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 12:19) has a different meaning: "Beloved, avenge not yourselves," says the Apostle, "but give place unto wrath of God."

4. Tarsus, a city in the Asia Minor region of Cilicia, is remarkable for being the birthplace of St. Apostle Paul (Acts 22:3). Here he also prepared himself for the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, and from here he was summoned by the Apostle Barnabas to preach the Gospel (Acts 9:11, 30; 11:25). For this reason Christianity arose early in Tarsus (Acts 15:23, 41).

from the hands of those holding him so that he might go to his mother. The governor, seeing the child's beauty, ordered him brought to him; then, taking him, he seated him upon his knees and began to comfort him so that he would not weep, stroking his head, kissing him, and speaking every kind of tender word to him. But the child resisted, struggled to escape his hands, turned his head away from the governor, and would not let him stroke or kiss him with his foul lips. The child kept looking at his mother as she was beaten, weeping and crying out:

"I am a Christian! Let me go to my mother!"

Struggling with his hands against the governor, he scratched his face with his fingernails. Then the governor fell into a rage, threw the child to the floor, and kicked him in the side, casting him down from his high seat. As the child fell down the stone steps, striking his head against their sharp edges, he covered the whole place with his blood and gave his holy and immaculate soul into the hands of God. Thus the holy child Cyricus was crowned with martyrdom.

His mother, the blessed Julitta, though cruelly and for a long time tormented, suffered as though in another body and, like a lifeless pillar, felt nothing. She said nothing else but these words:

"I am a Christian, and I will not sacrifice to demons!"

When they ceased beating her and lifted her from the ground, she saw before the tribunal her beloved child, bloodied and dead. Filled with joy, Julitta said:

"I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast vouchsafed my son such grace, that he has suffered martyrdom before me for Thy holy name and received an unfading crown in Thy glory."

After this the governor ordered her to be hung up and her body torn with iron claws; then, taking boiling pitch from a cauldron, he ordered them to pour it upon her wounds. While the holy Julitta was thus tormented, the herald cried out:

"Have pity on yourself, Julitta; have pity on your youth, and bow down to the gods, that you may escape the torments and not perish a cruel death like your son."

The martyr answered:

"I will not bow down to demons and their deaf and dumb idols. I worship my Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, through Whom the Heavenly Father created all things (Col. 1:12–16), and I hasten to come to my son, that with him I may be vouchsafed the Kingdom of Heaven." Seeing the martyr's unconquerable endurance and great courage, the governor condemned her to be beheaded with the sword. The servants took her and led her outside the city to the place where those condemned to death were slain. The saint went as though to a bridal crown; when she came to the place, she asked for a little time to pray, and then, bowing her knees, prayed:

"I thank Thee, O Lord my God Jesus Christ, that Thou hast called my son before me, vouchsafing him to suffer for Thy holy name, and, having left this vain life, to be with the saints. Receive me also, Thine unworthy handmaid, and vouchsafe me grace before Thee—to be numbered among the wise virgins (cf. Mt. 25:1–13), entering into Thy incorrupt bridal chamber, that my spirit may bless Thee, my Creator, Thine unoriginate Father, and the Spirit co-eternal with Thee, unto the ages. Amen."

After the holy Julitta had prayed thus, the executioner sharpened his sword, struck her on the neck, and cut off her honorable head, leaving her body there unburied, to be devoured by dogs and wild beasts. He likewise dragged the body of St. Cyricus out of the city, cast it beside his mother's body, and departed. When night came, the two maidservants mentioned above came there, took the body of their mistress and her son, carried them far away, and buried them in the earth. One of these maidservants lived until the days of Constantine the Great,[5] the first Christian emperor, in whose time the truth shone forth and the Church of God, by the grace of Christ, became dominant. Then the maidservant showed the faithful Christians the place where the honorable relics of the holy martyrs Cyricus and Julitta had been buried and told of their sufferings. Their holy relics were taken from the depths of the earth, incorrupt and filled with fragrance, and granting healing to the sick. Their Passion was written down in memory and honor of the

5. The Emperor from 324 to 337.

holy martyrs, for the benefit of the faithful and to the glory of Christ our God, Who is glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto the ages.[6] Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

The Christ-martyr Julitta, bearing Cyricus in her arms, rejoicing manfully in the contest, cried aloud: "Christ is the praise of the martyrs."

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day, the repose of the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev (1015), who was named Basil in holy Baptism.

On this same day, the commemoration of the holy Martyr Abudemius, who suffered under Diocletian.

NOTES

4679. During the reign of Diocletian (284–305), four edicts against the Christians were issued. The first was proclaimed in February 303. This edict ordered the destruction of churches and the burning of holy books; at the same time, Christians were deprived of civil rights, the protection of the laws, and their offices. Christian slaves lost the right to freedom if, having obtained it for some reason, they remained Christians. Soon a second edict was issued, ordering that all the leaders of the churches and other clergy be imprisoned; thus the edict concerned only the clergy. The latter were accused before the emperor of having instigated the revolt in Syria and Armenia, which had unfortunately begun following the appearance of the first edict. In that same year, 303, a third edict followed: all those imprisoned under the new edict were to be compelled to offer sacrifices, under threat of torture if they resisted. Finally, in 304, the last, fourth edict was published, proclaiming persecution of Christians everywhere. More Christian blood was shed because of this edict than any other: it remained in force for eight whole years, until 311, when the emperor Galerius declared Christianity a permitted religion

6. The suffering of Sts. Cyricus and Julitta belongs to around 305 A.D. In Constantinople there was a monastery of Cyricus, and not far from Jericho in Judea there was a church, as John Moschus testifies. According to the testimony of Russian pilgrims of the 12th–15th centuries, the relics of Cyricus were in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. Amator, Bishop of Auxerre (388–418), brought part of them to Auxerre, where Antioch was.

by a special edict. The persecution of Diocletian was the last; in it, after nearly three centuries of struggle, Christianity triumphed over paganism.



THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF JULY

July 16

16 июля

New Calendar July 16 · Old Calendar July 29 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Athenogenes and His Ten Disciples

Страдание святого священномученика Афиногена и десяти учеников его

In the days of the impious Roman emperor Diocletian,[1] there was a cruel persecution of Christians. All who lived godly lives were in distress; everywhere was unrest, and many betrayed one another to death—the father his son, brother his brother, and kinsman his kinsman—for fear of the emperor. A certain hegemon named Philomarch arrived in the Armenian city of Sebaste. Gathering a great multitude of idol priests, he commanded them, with wreaths upon their heads, to offer sacrifices to their foul gods with gladness and celebration, to the sound of trumpets and cymbals and the playing of harps and pipes. He himself sat in judgment in the sight of the people and ordered a herald to cry aloud:

"Hearken, citizens and all distinguished men, to the emperor's command; go and offer sacrifices to the gods!"

And all the people, as many as were there, cried out:

"We are Christians, and we will not bow down to idols!"

Then the torturer ordered the soldiers to beat the people, and many died for Christ and received heavenly crowns. After this, the commander of a company of soldiers, Nicholas, approached the torturer and said:

"My lord hegemon! There is here a man named Athenogenes, a Christian bishop, who is leading everyone astray into his faith; he lives in the village of Pidachthoe."

At once the hegemon sent soldiers to seize him. Near that village, in a secluded place apart, St. Athenogenes had a small monastery, where he lived with his ten disciples in fasting and prayer. The soldiers came to his monastery but did not find the holy bishop himself, for he had gone away somewhere. So they bound his disciples and led them to Sebaste. The hegemon saw them and ordered them taken to prison, put in chains, and kept under strict guard; then he said to the soldiers:

"Find their teacher for me."

The soldiers went everywhere in search of Athenogenes. But when the man of God, Athenogenes, came to the monastery and did not find his brotherhood, he entered the church of prayer and, gazing with tears upon the precious Cross that stood there, said:

"Where are my brethren, whom I entrusted to Thee? Who will offer the customary prayers to God with me? Where are the fair olive branches? What has become of them? I do not know!"

And the saint grieved sorely. Coming out of the monastery, he walked around it, wondering and not knowing where the brethren had gone. Then a deer ran up to him, one that he had recently fed with his own hands; it began to caress him and lick his hands. Afterward he met a man he knew, who asked him:

"Where were you, holy vladyka, when your disciples were seized? The hegemon sent soldiers for them, ordered them bound and brought to the city to be tortured."

Hearing this, the saint rejoiced and, looking up to heaven, said:

"I thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast called Thy worthy servants into the Kingdom of Heaven!"

Sending the deer back into the wilderness, he himself hastened to the city of Sebaste to his disciples. Coming before the city judge, he began to cry aloud:

"Why have you robbed me, torturer, plundering my church? May God see the evil deed you have done, and may He bring His wrath down upon you!"

1. He governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.

At once the soldiers seized the saint and brought him before the hegemon, saying:

"Here is Athenogenes, whom you ordered us to seek; he greatly insults your excellency!"

The hegemon immediately ordered him thrown into the prison where his brethren were confined for Christ's sake. Seeing his brethren, the saint rejoiced greatly and said to them:

"Peace be with you! May the grace of Christ be with you, my children: you have proved pleasing to God, and therefore He has called you to the heavenly feast! Be steadfast; fear not the torturer's snares. God will help you tomorrow to accomplish your contest, and together with the Angels and the choirs of saints you shall enter into the joys of Paradise and, in gladness, glorify the heavenly Master for ever!"

On the following day the torturer sat in judgment and ordered Athenogenes and his ten disciples brought before him. He said to them:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, as the emperor commands; but if you will not obey, I shall torment you with cruel tortures and take your lives, as I destroyed those who stubbornly resisted before you: the wicked perished through evil."

But St. Athenogenes answered him:

"Those whom you, torturer, call perished have not perished, but rejoice in heaven together with the Angels."

The hegemon said:

"Do not detain me, Athenogenes, but obey me quickly, and offer sacrifice to the gods with your companions, lest you perish an evil death."

To this the saint said to the hegemon:

"Lawless torturer, most foul and shameless dog! Your threats will not frighten us; do as you will, for we are ready to endure all things for our God."

Then the torturer grew angry and ordered Athenogenes' ten disciples to be hung naked upon an oak, cruelly beaten, and their bodies scraped with iron combs. But as they suffered, they said:

"We are ready for wounds for the sake of Christ Immortal; we will not deny Thee, O Lord our God!"

The torturer, seeing their courage and endurance, which no tortures could overcome, ordered them beheaded with the sword. And the saints, having made a good confession, departed in glory to the dwellings of Paradise. After the slaying of the ten holy martyrs, the hegemon addressed the holy bishop Athenogenes, saying:

"Where, then, is your Christ, whom you call God? Why has He not come here and delivered your disciples from my hands?"

With these words, the hegemon ordered him also to be hung naked upon a tree and beaten. But while the saint was being beaten, he said:

"Glory to Thee, O God, that Thou hast deemed me worthy to suffer for Thy name!"

The hegemon said to him:

"Why does your God not deliver you, too, from my hands?"

The martyr answered:

"He has delivered me and will deliver me from your evil wiles, O lawless one!"

Then the hegemon ordered him taken down from the tree and cruelly beaten again upon the ribs. And the saint cried out, addressing God:

"In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted; save me by Thy mercy!"

And a divine voice came to him from above:

"Be of good courage, My chosen one! I am with you—I, your God, who preserve you!"

Not only the saint heard this voice, but also the servants who were tormenting him. Fear seized them, and they could no longer torment the man of God, for their hands had grown rigid. One of the hegemon's friends, named Philip, who sat with him, said:

"Did I not tell you before that Christians are sorcerers? Put this one to death quickly, lest those who look upon him be led astray."

The hegemon at once gave the order to put the martyr to death by the sword, and the saint said to the torturer:

"I beg you, hegemon, order that I be taken to my monastery and put to death there."

And the hegemon granted his request.

As the saint was being led to his monastery, he sang certain verses from the Psalms of David and rejoiced that he would soon be parted from the body and depart to the Lord. When he was near the monastery, the aforementioned deer came out of the wilderness to meet the saint and bowed at his feet. The saint said to it:

"You have lost the brethren, and now you are losing the one who fed you! But may God Eternal not deliver you or your offspring into the hands of hunters; may your offspring come here in remembrance of us, to be slain and become food for those who come to celebrate our commemoration, to the glory of God."

The deer, shedding tears, fell at the saint's feet. And he, having made the sign of the Cross over it, said:

"Go in peace into the wilderness!"

Entering his monastery, St. Athenogenes prayed to God thus:

"O Lord my God! Receive my soul in peace, and deem me worthy to be with my brethren, that together we may glorify Thy most holy name for ever! Grant, O Lord, Thy eternal blessing to all who lovingly honor my memory, and to all who pray to Thee with the mention of my name; show them Thy grace and grant them speedy help in every need."

While he was praying, a voice was heard from heaven:

"Today you shall be with Me and your disciples in Paradise, and all your requests shall be fulfilled!"

Hearing this voice, the martyr rejoiced greatly and gladly offered his head to the sword; he was beheaded, and thus he reposed in the Lord. The faithful buried his precious body in that same place, and gathered there each year on the day of his death for the solemn celebration of his memory.[2] And a wondrous miracle came to pass: the deer whom the saint had fed and sent into the wilderness with his blessing came, at his command, to the feast and brought its offspring with it. Leaving them there, it went back into the wilderness, and no one hindered it. The deer did this every year: it came to the feast and brought its young, which was slain and eaten in memory and honor of the holy martyr Athenogenes the bishop and his ten disciples, to the

2. The repose of Hieromartyr Athenogenes took place about 311.

glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Following the Master's saying, as an excellent shepherd thou didst lay down thy soul for Christ's sheep, O Hieromartyr Athenogenes. Therefore we praise thee, and with thee the company of ten disciples who suffered, instructed by the fear of God and by thy teaching. Wherefore the Master crowned you who pleased Him with His life-giving right hand; pray unto Him for us all.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Julia

Страдание святой мученицы Иулии

When the Persians took the famous city of Carthage[3] in Africa and led away a multitude of its inhabitants into captivity, there was taken among the other captives from that city also that little girl of whom we are speaking, the Blessed Julia, daughter of a distinguished man named Analson. She was taken to Syrian Palestine and sold into slavery to a merchant, a godless pagan. Although she was in the power of an unbelieving master, the girl nonetheless held firmly to the holy faith in Christ in which she had been born, and to the good Christian customs which she had learned from infancy; she often prayed and fasted. Having grown to be a maiden, she carefully kept herself in purity, lived chastely and in strict abstinence, and faithfully served her master, according to the word of the Apostle: "In singleness of your heart, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers" (Eph. 6:5–6), but as before the eyes of God, performing with prudence all the tasks entrusted to her, which were not contrary to God or to her chaste way of life; and whatever was contrary to these, no one could compel her to do. Her master insistently pressed her to renounce Christ and impiously inclined her to live according to their pagan customs; but by no threats could she be moved to this, for she was ready rather to die than to fall

3. About 625.

away from Christ or to lose her chastity. Her master had already intended to destroy her, but seeing that she served faithfully and worked diligently, he spared her and marveled at her good disposition, her gentleness, humility and strict asceticism; he saw that she fasted every day except Saturday and Sunday, and that her free time from work she spent not in idleness and ease but either in warm prayers to God or in reading books, which she had learned as a child; she seldom lay down to sleep even at night. In appearance she was always pale, thin, and worn from labor and abstinence. Her master marveled greatly at this, and seeing that she continued thus, he began to pity her, to love her and to respect her: it was God, fatherly protecting His servant, the holy Julia, who inclined the cruel heart of the unbelieving man toward mercy for her. She was already more than twenty years old when her master, who was a merchant, resolved to sail with many goods to Gaul. He took with him his faithful slave Julia, since he saw that his property increased under her oversight: God blessed the house of that merchant because of her (as once in Egypt the house of Potiphar was blessed for the sake of Joseph (Gen. 39:5)). Therefore, together with his rich wares he took his slave, or rather Christ's servant, who was dearer than any merchandise, and set out on the voyage. He put in at the island of Corsica[4], past which he was sailing. Although on this island there were Christian cities, there were also not a few pagans, and when this merchant put in at that island, he saw near the harbor a gathering of his fellow pagans, who were celebrating a festival and offering sacrifices to demons. He went out to them with all his servants, bought a fat ox, brought with the pagans a defiled sacrifice, and they all began to eat, drink and make merry. But the holy Julia remained on the ship and within her heart sighed and wept, grieving over the error and perdition of these people.

One of that gathering came onto the ship, saw Julia, the maiden weeping and sighing, learned that she was a Christian, went and told secretly the leader of that gathering, who had charge of the sacrifices:

4. The island of Corsica was located in the Mediterranean Sea.

"On the ship that has put in there is a girl who reviles our gods and condemns us for offering sacrifices to them."

At once the leader of this impious gathering asked the Palestinian merchant:

"Why have not all your people come from the ship to our feast and sacrifice?"

When the merchant answered that all had come, the leader objected:

"I hear that on your ship there is some girl who abuses and reviles our gods."

The merchant answered:

"Do you speak of my slave? By no means could I turn her from the Christian error and win her over to our faith, neither by kindness nor by threats; and if she were not faithful to me and so diligent in her work, long ago I would have destroyed her with various tortures."

The leader said to him:

"Make her now bow down with us to the gods and take part in the sacrifice; or I will give you four of my slave-women in her place, or take her value in money, only give her to me, and I will make her bow down to our gods."

The merchant replied:

"I have told you that it is impossible to compel her to this, for she would sooner choose to die than renounce her faith. And to sell her to you is not possible: even if you were to give me all your property for her, it would not equal her service; indeed, she is very faithful, and my estate increases in her hands; therefore I have entrusted everything to her."

But the leader of the gathering, having secretly consulted with his people, prepared for the sake of his guests an even greater feast and plied the merchant, Julia's master, heavily with wine. Having drunk, he fell into a deep sleep, and all who were with him also fell asleep from the wine. Then the impious pagans from that island hastened to the ship, brought the holy Julia ashore and led her to their leader. The leader said to her:

"Girl, offer sacrifice to the gods; I will pay your master whatever ransom he asks and set you free."

The saint answered:

"My freedom lies in serving Christ, whom I serve every day with a pure conscience; and your error I abhor!"

Then the leader ordered her to be struck on the cheeks. And the martyr said:

"If my Lord Jesus Christ suffered a blow on the cheek and spitting in His face for me, shall I not then endure the same for Him! Let them strike me on the cheeks for Him; and instead of spittle, let tears flow down my face!"

The tormentor ordered her to be dragged by the hair, stripped naked, and cruelly beaten over her whole body. And the martyr, while she was being beaten, said aloud:

"I confess Him who was beaten for my sake! My Master endured the crown of thorns and the crucifixion on the cross. So let me also, His servant, be a partaker and imitator of His sufferings, that I may be glorified with Him in His Kingdom!"

Then the tormentor ordered her maidenly breasts to be cut off; she, however, bore all these fierce tortures manfully for love of Christ. The tormentor, wishing to destroy her quickly before her master awoke, ordered a cross to be hastily made and the martyr to be crucified upon it, just as the Jews once crucified Christ. And the holy Julia, in her suffering for Christ, was made like the Crucified Christ the Lord Himself, being granted to be crucified for Him upon a cross.

When she hung on the cross and was already near death, her master awoke and, as soon as he saw her crucified, what great pity filled his heart! But nothing could be done to help: the Bride of Christ was already at her last breath. When her holy soul was freed from the bonds of the body, all saw a dove, whiter than snow, fly from her lips and soar upward toward heaven; moreover, those who tormented her saw Angels; and great fear fell upon them all; they all fled from there, and only the lifeless body of the saint remained hanging on the cross[5].

5. The repose of St. Julia the martyr took place about 640.

But Christ the Lord did not forsake it: He commanded His Angels to guard it until she was given an honorable burial, as follows.

Not far from the island of Corsica there is a small island, formerly called Margarita and now Gorgona; on it there was a men's monastery. There an Angel of the Lord appeared to the monks, told them all that had happened to the holy martyr Julia, and commanded them to sail quickly on a ship to that island, take down from the cross the much-suffering body of the holy martyr and bring it to their monastery for burial. The monks boarded a ship, raised the sails and set out; reaching the harbor, they found everything just as the Angel of the Lord had said. Taking the holy body down from the cross, they wrapped it in a clean shroud. They also found her severed breasts, thrown nearby and lying beside a stone; they took them and attached them to the body in their proper place; then they carried the body to the ship and safely returned to their monastery; there the body was laid to rest with honor in the church, glorifying Christ God, who had strengthened His servant for such a martyr's feat. At her tomb miracles began to occur, and healing of all kinds of sicknesses was granted; miracles also took place at the place where she had suffered. The Christians of that island learned of the saint's suffering and built a small church in her name on the very place where she had been crucified, since there was little room there: this place was a steep hill. And where her severed breasts had been cast, a spring of water welled up from beneath the stone, and this water was healing: all the sick who drank that water or bathed in it received recovery. Another miracle also took place: the stone which had been touched by the saint's breasts (and from beneath which the spring had flowed), in those times, each year on the day of her commemoration, released from itself as it were sweat, drops of milk and blood together, as a sign of the virginity and martyrdom of the holy Julia, who, as with milk, was whitened by virginal purity and reddened with blood shed for Christ. Such drops dripped for that entire day, from morning until evening; with them people anointed themselves and received healing.

After many years, that church dedicated to the holy martyr, built on the place of her suffering, grew old and was partly destroyed. Then they wished to build a new church dedicated to the saint on another,

more spacious site, since the old one was very cramped, but not far away and larger. When the stone, brick, lime and everything else needed for the construction had been prepared, and they were about to lay the foundation on the following day, they found in the morning all this material, the stones, the bricks and everything else, back in its former place, where the old church had stood; the builders were bewildered. Yet a little later they again carried everything to the new site, intending to build the new church there; but again during the night everything was carried back to the former place. That night the watchmen saw a radiant maiden placing all the material prepared for the building onto a cart drawn by a pair of shining oxen, and transporting it to the former place; they understood that the saint desired the church to be renewed on its former site, and they did as she wished. There were also many other miracles on both those islands, Corsica and Gorgona, until the honorable relics of the saint were taken from there and translated to Brescia[6]. And after the translation of the relics, the inhabitants of Corsica come with faith to the church of the saint, do not lose her help, and are preserved from the attacks of their enemies by her holy and unconquerable prayers and by the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

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Martyrdom of Holy Martyr Antiochus

Страдание святого мученика Антиоха

The holy martyr of Christ, Antiochus, was a native of the city of Sebaste[7]. Being by profession a physician, he went through all the cities of his country and with his skill healed those possessed by various ailments. By the command of the governor of the province, Hadrian, he was seized and, after enduring manifold tortures, was at last cast into a cauldron, but remained unharmed. Then he was con-

6. About 763.

7. The city of Sebaste, now Sivas, was located in the Roman province of Pontus in Asia Minor, at the foot of one of the western spurs of the Anti-Taurus mountain range, on the right bank of the river Halys, now the Kizil Irmak, near its upper course.

demned to fight with wild beasts, but the beasts, at the sight of him, were glad, lay down at his feet and licked them, and one beast spoke with a human voice, rebuking the tormentor. After this the holy martyr prayed to God, and at his prayer all the idols crumbled like sand. Then his head was cut off, and from the wound flowed blood mixed with milk. The soldier who cut off the head of St. Antiochus, named Cyriacus, immediately after the saint's execution boldly declared himself a Christian and pronounced a curse upon the idols. For this, by the command of Hadrian, his head was also cut off, and he was buried together with the holy martyr Antiochus[8].

* * *

Martyrdom of Holy Martyr Paul, with the Holy Martyrs Alevtina and Chionia

Страдание святого мученика Павла и с ним святых мучениц Алевтины и Хионии

These holy martyrs were natives of Egypt. Seized, they were brought to the city of Caesarea, and standing before the governor at the interrogation, they confessed Christ as the true God. For this, first their left feet were burned, then their right eyes were gouged out with knives, and finally, together with other men and women who likewise believed in Christ, they were delivered to the fire, from which they died. Before this, St. Chionia was hanged on a tree and her body was scraped; her sister Alevtina, threatening the judge, overturned the altar with her feet, for which she was subjected to merciless torments; and the holy martyr Paul stood in prayer and prayed first for the Christians, and then for all the pagans, that they might come to the knowledge of the true God and cease persecuting those who believe in Christ. By this prayer he drew tears from those present, after which his head was cut off.

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8. The holy martyr Antiochus died during the reign of Diocletian. The year of his death is unknown. His commemoration was celebrated on July 16 already in the sixth century, as is seen from the Life of the Venerable Theodore the Sikeote, commemorated by the Church on April 22; his Life is also placed under that date.

THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF JULY

July 17

17 июля

New Calendar July 17 · Old Calendar July 30 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Great Martyr Marina

Страдание святой великомученицы Марины

Saint Marina was born in Antioch of Pisidia[1] to noble parents, but not to believers; they were darkened by pagan impiety. Her father Edessius was a priest of the idols. He entrusted his daughter Marina, who had lost her mother while still in swaddling clothes, to a wet-nurse who lived in a village fifteen versts from the city. When the girl, who had been raised there, came of age, it became evident that she was beautiful in body and still more beautiful in soul, and she was distinguished by her prudence and good morals. At that time a persecution of Christians had been raised, so the priests and clerics, teachers of the Word of God, went into hiding, some in deserts and mountain caves for fear of the tormentors, others in villages among simple folk, disguised as beggars. Yet wherever they could, they taught the holy faith, though secretly, and turned many from pagan error to Christ.

It happened that Marina, a girl of twelve, heard from a man of God the word about Christ Jesus, the true God: how He became incarnate of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Most Pure Virgin and was born of her, her virginity remaining unviolated; how He performed many miracles, willingly suffered for the salvation of men, died, rose, ascended into heaven, and prepared endless life and glory and an eternal Kingdom for those who believe in Him and love Him. Hearing this, the prudent girl Marina believed in Christ, and her heart was inflamed with divine love, so that she spoke of nothing else and thought of nothing else but Christ Jesus; wherever she heard words about the true God, all

1. Pisidia: a region of Asia Minor.

her attention was there. Having believed in Him in her heart, she was not ashamed to confess Him with her lips, although she was not yet baptized, for there was no Christian priest who could baptize her. Marina desired to shed her blood for Christ and to be baptized in it as in the font of baptism, as she had heard of many holy martyrs of both sexes who had been baptized by their blood, having laid down their souls for the Lord; she wished to imitate them.

When Edessius learned that his daughter Marina had believed in Christ, he hated her and ceased to regard her as his daughter, treating her as a stranger. The maiden placed all her hope in the Heavenly Father. Grown up, at about fifteen years of age, she once went out into the field to look at her father's sheep grazing there. At that time it happened that she was met by the persecutor of Christians who was travelling to Antioch of Pisidia. Seeing the beautiful girl, the eparch was struck by her extraordinary beauty, was at once captivated by her, and resolved to take her to wife. He stopped and began to question the maiden:

"Of what family are you, girl, whose daughter are you, and what is your name? Tell me the truth about yourself. I see that you are very lovely. If you are of free parents, I will enter into a lawful marriage with you; if you are someone's slave, I will buy you and take you into my household."

The maiden, distinguished for her chastity even more than for her beauty, meekly answered whose daughter she was and what her name was. Nor did she conceal that she was a slave of Christ, that she believed in the One God who created heaven and earth, that she was joined to Him by heartfelt love, and that she desired no other bridegroom. Hearing that she was a Christian, the eparch, who had been given authority to torment Christians, ordered his soldiers to take her and lead her to the city, but respectfully. Her prudent girlish words made him love her even more, and he hoped soon to turn her from Christ by threats of torment and to persuade her to marry him. As the soldiers led her, the maiden prayed aloud to God, saying:

"Lord Jesus Christ, my God! Do not forsake me and do not give my soul over to destruction! Let not my enemies overcome me; let my hear-

ing not be defiled by their crafty speeches; let my mind not yield to their foul temptations; let my heart not be frightened by their dreadful threats! Do not allow my faith to be cast into mire and slime, lest the devil, who hates good, rejoice over me; but send me help from the height of Thy throne, give me wisdom, open my lips, that strengthened by Thy power and made wise by Thy grace, I may answer the tormentor's questions without fear! Yea, my Lord, look upon me with mercy at this hour; behold, I am now like a sheep among wolves, like a bird among fowlers, and like a fish in nets; come, then, and deliver me from the snares of the enemy!"

Thus the saint prayed along the way until they reached the city of Antioch of Pisidia.

On arriving in the city, the eparch, following his impious custom, first offered sacrifices to his foul gods and offered solemn praise to his emperors. He seized whichever Christians he could find and cast them into prison to be kept until their torments. He entrusted the maiden Marina to certain noble women to keep. On the following day, having convened a solemn court, he first ordered Saint Marina brought in for interrogation, for he kept thinking of her. The girl was brought, and he looked upon her extraordinary beauty with lust, and he burned more and more with carnal love for her. Then he began to speak to her with guile:

"All the gods know, lovely maiden, how I pity your youth and spare your young body, blooming with beauty. Therefore I beg you, obey me: offer sacrifice to the gods, and it will go well with you. You will at once receive much property, you will be rich, you will be happier than all your peers, and you will enjoy more honor than all the women in this city."

Saint Marina answered:

"I have learned to confess the heavenly Father, His Only-begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One True and Living God in the Trinity, and I am accustomed to worship Him and always offer to Him the sacrifice of praise. I will not bow down to gods whom I do not know, nor will I offer sacrifice to them: they are soulless, insensible, and do not

know themselves; they do not know whether they are honored or dishonored. I will not give them the honor that is due my Creator!"

The eparch said:

"I beg you again, Marina, obey me; obey the almost invincible gods, who well know that if you follow my counsel, you will at once, before the eyes of all the citizens, attain great honor. I will take you as my wife; everyone will respect you as my beloved spouse, and I will give you honor and glory, and you will bring me joy and sweeten my life! But if you do not obey me and reject my love for you, know that you will suffer much evil. You will compel me, though I do not wish it, to torment you and destroy such beauty, health, and sweet life; you will be subjected to cruel, unbearable tortures and will perish by fire and iron!"

The saint answered:

"Do not hope, eparch, to change my faith in Christ for your unbelief, neither by caresses nor by threats. I am the faithful slave of my Master, who suffered willingly for me. If He endured crucifixion on the cross and death for me, sparing not His most holy body received from the Most Pure Virgin Mary, then I too must suffer and die for Him in every way, sparing not my sinful body and health in the least. Do not think to frighten me with your threats; I am ready for every torment and for death. He in whom I hope will strengthen me! As for your speaking to me of marriage, honor, glory, and riches, all this is hateful and loathsome to me. Shall I forsake my Immortal Bridegroom Christ, the Heavenly King, and enter into marriage with a stinking dog, dead in soul? Never!"

Hearing such bold words of Saint Marina, the eparch was vexed, offended, and greatly enraged, and at once, changing his love into enmity and hatred, he ordered the garments stripped from the Bride of Christ, commanded that she be laid on the ground, and beaten with rods without mercy. For a long time they beat the saint without pity; her maiden body was torn by wounds, and blood flowed from them in streams, staining the earth. Seeing this, the people were moved to pity that so lovely a girl was being tortured so cruelly, and many wept. The herald cried out:

"Marina, offer sacrifice to the gods! Do not needlessly destroy your beauty, and do not deprive yourself before your time of this sweet life!"

But the martyr, lifting her spiritual eyes to God, prayed, asking for help from on high and for strengthening in her ascetic struggle of suffering. Strengthened by the grace of Christ, she felt no pain in the torment; it was as if the wounds were laid not on her but on someone else's body. Some of the people said to her:

"Girl, why do you destroy your own beauty? Why do you not submit? See how cruel the judge is; he will destroy you, and your memory will vanish from the earth. We pity you!"

But the saint answered them loudly with reproof:

"Wicked counselors, evil helpers, you are trying to seduce me! As the ancient serpent gave Eve crafty counsel in Paradise, so you now counsel me to fall away from my God. Begone from me, lawless ones; you shall not seduce me, for I am devoted to Christ with my whole soul!"

Then, when the executioners ceased beating her, the tormentor said to the sufferer:

"This is the beginning of your torments, Marina, and if you persist in disobedience, you will experience still greater torments."

The saint answered:

"Do whatever pleases you and your father the devil. I pay no heed to torments, for Christ helps me, and He will soon put to shame all your cunning."

The eparch grew still more enraged and ordered her to be nailed to a board and her body scraped with iron tridents. She, raising her eyes to heaven, said:

"Mine enemies have surrounded me, plotting evil against me. But Thou, my Lord, look upon me and have mercy on me; send me the help of Thy life-giving Spirit. May He grant me wisdom to confess Thy most holy name unto my last breath; may He give me the strength to resist the devil and his servants manfully, that I may overcome and put them to shame. Deign to make me an example for those who love Thee and keep their virginity for Thy sake, that I may stand with them at Thy right hand at the time of Thy righteous judgment!"

Thus the saint prayed. And the cruel servants of the cruel tormentor, like man-eaters, tore at the saint's body ever more fiercely with their tridents; pieces of her flesh, bloody, fell to the ground, so that her bare bones could be seen. The eparch could not bear to watch such torment; he covered his face and turned away, while all those present marveled at the saint's patience. Then the tormentor spoke to her again:

"How long will you persist, Marina? Your body is already torn to pieces; at least now consent to offer sacrifice to the gods, so that you do not perish altogether."

The martyr answered:

"Vile dog! Swine! You devour human flesh and pretend to be merciful, as though you pity me! I do not pity myself for Christ's sake, Who did not spare Himself but gave Himself for me to greater torments. If I were to heed your mad counsel and spare my body, how then would my soul be crowned in the Kingdom of Heaven?"

After this the eparch ordered the martyr taken down from the nails and shut in a special dungeon, deep and gloomy, full of all manner of demonic horrors, where those condemned to death were usually confined.

Sitting alone in this dungeon (there were no other condemned prisoners there at that time), the holy martyr prayed to God with the warmth of her soul, crying out from the depths of her heart:

"O Most High God, before Whom all the heavenly powers stand in fear, and before Whose face all beginnings and authorities tremble, and by Whose almighty power every creature is preserved, changed and renewed! Thou, O Lord, look down from the heights of heaven, from the throne of Thy glory, upon me, Thy humble, unworthy and undeserving servant. In Thee do I hope, to Thee have I fled, and for Thy name's sake I suffer. Look upon me, O Compassionate One, and heal my body, wounded like a torn garment; renew my soul and preserve it for Thy kingdom. Grant me to overcome and trample down my enemy, as sand is trodden underfoot, that I may wipe out his power by Thy invincible help, and that Thy most holy name may be glorified in me forever."

Night came, and the saint did not cease praying to God. Then the devil dared to frighten the martyr with a phantom monster; God permitted this for the greater glorification of His servant. Suddenly the dungeon shook, and a dark light appeared, as if from fire in smoke; then the devil appeared in the form of a huge, many-colored, terrible serpent, and about its body, as far as could be seen, coiled a multitude of smaller serpents and vipers. The serpent hissed terribly, and gaping with its enormous and greedy maw, it gave off an unbearable stench. It circled about the martyr, filling her with fear and horror; then it opened its loathsome jaws, fell upon the saint and seized her head, seeking to swallow it. It seemed that the martyr was swallowed by the serpent, as the prophet Jonah once was by the whale (Jon. 2:1). Yet she did not despair or doubt; but fixing her whole mind on God, she made the sign of the Cross over herself, and at once saw that the serpent's belly burst open, and she herself was freed from it, whole and unharmed. At the same moment that whole frightful demonic apparition perished: the earth opened, swallowed the serpent and all the serpents with it, and cast them into hell; and the holy martyr was illumined by a heavenly light. Looking upward, she saw that the roof of the dungeon had opened, and that rays, as of the sun, descended upon her from above. She also saw a great cross shining with an ineffable light, and above the cross a dove, white as snow, which spoke to her with a human voice:

"Rejoice, Marina, wise dove of Christ, who hast overcome the evil enemy! Rejoice and be glad, daughter of the heavenly Sion, for the day of thy joy has come, when thou shalt enter with the wise virgins into the incorruptible bridal chamber of the immortal Bridegroom, the King of Heaven!"

At these words of the dove, an ineffable joy and sweetness seized Marina; her torn body began to heal, and she herself felt her wounds closing, her sores covered with skin, pain and weakness departing, and she became again as before, healthy and beautiful in her whole body. Joyfully she gave thanks to God:

"I bless Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thee, Lord my God; I praise Thy name, that Thou hast had pity on me, visited me, healed my body,

strengthened my soul, and hast not delivered me into the hands of my enemies, but, showing me their dreadful appearance, hast cast them into the deepest abyss and driven their terror from me. And now, rejoicing and exulting in Thee, my God and Saviour, I beseech Thee, O Good Lover of mankind, deign to grant me the bath of holy baptism, that I, washed in blood and water, may become worthy to enter Thy heavenly chamber with the holy virgins, Thy brides, for Thou art blessed forever!"

In such visions and revelations, and in such triumph and joy, the holy Marina spent that whole night, until day began and the time of her final ordeal came.

At dawn the eparch Olymbrius again took his seat on his unrighteous and impious judgment seat; the whole people gathered to see the spectacle. Orders were given to bring the martyr from the dungeon for interrogation. Seeing her with a bright face, quite healthy and unharmed, without even a trace of yesterday's wounds, the eparch was greatly astonished and remained silent in amazement, puzzled how the martyr, wounded yesterday, had been entirely healed in a single night. The people, too, marveled at this miraculous healing: some extolled the power of Christ, others ascribed it to sorcery. Then the eparch, with difficulty opening his lips, began to speak to the saint:

"See, Marina, how our gods care for you! They have had pity on your youth and beauty and healed you of your wounds. In gratitude for the benefit received from them, you ought to offer sacrifices to them; and even more, you ought to imitate and succeed your father: he serves the gods in the rank of priest, and you should become a priestess and serve them all your life."

The saint answered:

"It is not fitting for me to forsake my true and living God and serve your false and dead gods. On the contrary, you must come to know the One Heavenly God and believe in Him, seeing in me such proof of His power: yesterday you tore me to pieces, and today He at once made me healthy and unharmed! He is the Almighty physician of human souls and bodies!"

The enraged eparch again ordered the saint to be tormented. Again she was hung upon a tree, lighted candles were brought, and they began to scorch her breast and sides. But she, withdrawing deep within herself, prayed to God in the depths of her heart and suffered in silence; she was burned like coal and mangled like meat for food. And when she, barely alive, was taken down from the tree, she cried out loudly:

"Lord! Thou hast granted me to pass through fire for Thy name; grant me also to pass through the water of holy baptism, and, cleansed from sins, lead me into Thy rest."

The tormentor, hearing that the martyr had mentioned water, said:

"The wretch wants to drink; we must give her something to drink!"

And he ordered a huge vat of water brought and the bound martyr thrown into it, to plunge her in and drown her. When the servants took her to throw her into the water, she cried out loudly:

"Lord Jesus Christ, who leadest out of bonds, who loosest the chains of death and hell and raisest from the tombs by the command of Thy divine power! Look upon Thy servant and break my bonds! And let this water be for me the desired holy baptism for birth into eternal life, that, having put off the old man, I may put on the new and appear before Thee in wedding garments in Thy chamber!"

While the martyr was praying thus, the servants threw her into the vat of water, began to plunge her into the water and drown her. But suddenly the earth quaked, and the cords with which the martyr was bound came loose, and the servants, seized with terror, fled from the vat; above the martyr's head rays of ineffable light shone forth, and again there appeared the white dove she had seen before, descending from above like the sun, with a golden crown in its beak; it hovered over the martyr's head, touched her with its feet, and again flew upward. This vision was seen not only by the saint but also by some of those present who were worthy of such a sight: many among the people were secret Christians and were granted to see it. The saint stood in the water without sinking, singing and glorifying and blessing the great name of the Most Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Then a pillar of fire appeared above the saint, reaching to heaven, and on the pillar a cross, as though of crystal, emitting bright rays; the dove

flew up and alighted on the top of the cross. And a voice was heard from on high, and all heard it:

"Peace to thee, bride of Christ, Marina! Now thou shalt receive from the hand of the Lord the unfading crown of virtue, and shalt rest in the Kingdom of Heaven with the saints."

Hearing this voice, and seeing that the martyr had come out of the water whole, without any trace of burns, unharmed in body and radiant, at once a great multitude of men and women believed in Christ, openly confessed themselves Christians, and seemed ready to die for Christ. The hegemon was horrified to see so great a multitude turning to Christ, and was at a loss as to what to do; then, in a rage, he brought out before the people the army that was with him, armed with swords, and ordered them to cut down all who praised the name of Christ. Then all the faithless and cowardly among the people fled, while those who truly believed went of their own accord beneath the sword. And there fell some fifteen thousand slain, of both sexes, who, baptized in their own blood and cleansed of all sins, entered into the joy of their Lord, crowned with the martyr's crown. Then the eparch ordered that the martyr also be beheaded with the sword. When the saint was led to the place of execution, she asked that those who were leading her wait a little, and, turning to the people who followed her, she exhorted them all to know the One True God, the Creator of all, and to turn away from the devilish deception and the perdition of idolatry. Then she began to pray, and prayed long for all; suddenly the earth quaked, fear fell upon all, and many fell to the ground in terror; the executioner also fell. It was our Lord Jesus Christ who appeared from heaven with the holy Angels to His bride, calling her to His rest and stretching out His hands to receive her soul. She, greatly rejoicing beyond words, urged the executioner to carry out quickly what he had been commanded. She placed her honorable head beneath the sword and was beheaded;[2] and her soul was taken by the hands of the Lord and carried into the heav-

2. The repose of St. Marina the Martyr took place at the end of the 3rd or at the beginning of the 4th century. Her honorable relics were in Constantinople, in the monastery of Pantepoptes (All-Seeing Christ), until the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204. According to other reports, in 908 her relics were transferred from Antioch to the West and placed at Monte Fiascone in Tuscany; at present a part of her relics (a hand) is in the Vatopedi Monastery on Athos.

enly mansions. Thus did the holy Great Martyr Marina complete her martyr's struggle on the seventeenth of July. Her passion was described by an eyewitness, the servant of God Theotimus, who saw the whole torment and was granted to be a spectator of the visions shown to the saint; he transmitted this for the benefit of the faithful, to the honor and memory of the beloved bride of Christ Marina, and to the glory of the Lover of Mankind, Christ our Savior, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory from us also, now and ever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 3:

O Maiden, adorned with the virtues of virginity, thou wast crowned, O Marina, with the incorruptible crowns; and, stained with the blood of martyrdom, illumined with the miracles of healings, thou didst piously receive the honor of victory in thy passion, O Martyr.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the translation of the honorable relics of the Venerable Lazarus, who fasted on Mount Galesios (his memory is celebrated on November 7).

On the same day, the repose of the Venerable Irinarchus, Abbot of Solovki.

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF JULY

July 18

18 июля

New Calendar July 18 · Old Calendar July 31 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Emilian

Страдание святого мученика Емилиана

In the reign of the impious apostate Julian,[1] a cruel persecution was raised against the Christians, which, like a whirlwind or a storm, disturbed the whole world. Throughout the Roman empire, in all its provinces and cities, an order was dispatched that Christians, of whatever tribe or people, of either sex and of every age, were to be given over without mercy to various tortures and a cruel death. By this unrighteous decree the God-hating emperor violated the just laws and stained East and West alike with Christian blood, shed without pity, burning with anger and enmity against Christ and His servants. Among the other cruel governors whom he sent into various provinces and cities to torment the Christians, he appointed to the city of Dorostolum, in the province of Moesia, a merciless tormentor named Capitolinus, a destroyer of men and a servant of idols. Arriving in that city, he first went into the temple of the idols, offered sacrifice to the demons, and bowed down before the lifeless idols. Then on the following day he came out to the court that stood in the square, sat on a high throne, proud and terrible to the Christians, and, having proclaimed the imperial command, began diligently to inquire whether there were any opponents of the gods in the city, and whether anyone there called himself a Christian. The citizens affirmed under oath that there was not a single such person among them, but that all worshipped the gods and offered them sacrifices every day. Hearing this, the governor Capit-

1. Julian the Apostate reigned from 361 to 363.

olinus was greatly pleased, and he invited all the notable citizens to dine with him, saying:

"Since I see that you diligently honor the gods of your fathers, let us today eat, drink and make merry together."

In that city there was one secret Christian, named Emilian, a slave of a respected official who was a pagan. During the governor's feast with the officials, seizing a convenient moment, he entered the temple of the idols alone (no one saw him), taking with him an iron hammer, and began to strike the idols. He broke them into pieces, overturned their altars, scattered the offerings, and smashed and shattered the huge lamps that stood before the idols; and having wrecked everything, like a brave warrior he departed, rejoicing and exulting in his soul. After him someone of the pagans entered the temple; seeing that everything had been destroyed, he was struck with horror and hastened to tell the governor and the citizens who were dining with him. At once everyone was alarmed; the governor flew into a rage and ordered an inquiry as to who had done this. The messengers hurried and soon saw some peasant walking past the temple from the fields; they seized him and dragged him to the governor, beating him as a malefactor. Many people with the priests followed them, all speaking of the outrage done to their gods and growing enraged. But the blessed Emilian, seeing this, thought to himself:

"If I conceal my deed, what profit will there be to me? I shall only burden my conscience more, or an innocent man will be killed because of me, and I shall be a murderer before God."

Having thought thus, he turned to those who were leading and beating the peasant, and tried to stop them, crying out loudly:

"Release this innocent man, take me: it was I who shattered and trampled your lifeless gods!"

They, leaving the peasant, seized St. Emilian with fury and led him to the governor with blows and insults. The governor, seated in his usual place of judgment before all the people, and seeing Emilian brought before him, asked the citizens:

"Who is this?"

The citizens answered:

"This is the malefactor who shattered the gods and trampled the offerings."

The governor, filled with wrath, addressed the citizens with reproach:

"But you said before that there was not a single opponent of the gods in your city; yet one has been found, through your negligence; for this fault you shall pay a litra of gold into the imperial treasury."[2]

Having said this to the citizens, he turned to Emilian and began to question him angrily:

"Tell us, impious one, what is your name!"

The valiant warrior of Christ answered:

"I am a Christian."

The governor, growing still more angry, said:

"Tell us your name, vile man!"

The martyr answered:

"My parents called me Emilian, but Christ, the true God, has vouchsafed me to be and to be called a Christian."

The governor asked:

"Tell me, impious man, who taught you to commit such an outrage against the immortal gods?"

The servant of Christ answered:

"God and my soul bade me shatter the lifeless idols that you call gods, so that all may see that they are lifeless, deaf and dumb, that they have no reason, but are stone and wood that feels nothing. Know, then, that I have offended not the true God, who created all things, but your false gods, which created nothing but were themselves made by you; and I have cast them to the ground, that they might perish forever!"

To this the governor said:

"Did you alone break the gods, or was there anyone with you?"

The saint answered:

"I alone, with the help of my Christ, reduced your idols to dust and trampled underfoot their offerings and their lamps; and not one of them

2. *Litra* — a unit of weight equal to 72 zolotniks; in silver it was worth about 40 rubles, in gold up to 500 rubles.

could avenge the insult to me, nor could they even escape my hands, for they are powerless and insensible. Be such also, you who make them, and all who trust in them."

In fury the governor commanded that the servant of Christ be stripped to be beaten. When the martyr's garments had been removed, the governor said to him:

"Tell us, wretch, who taught you to shatter the gods?"

The saint answered:

"I have already told you before, and I will say again, that no one but God and my soul bade me do this."

Then the governor ordered the servants:

"Strip him and beat him harder, so that he may know that his boldness will not help him, and that no one shall deliver him from my hands!"

And they began to beat him cruelly.

When they had beaten the martyr so much that the earth was stained with his blood, the governor asked the saint:

"Tell me, wretch, who taught you to commit this wickedness?"

The martyr, even amid the blows, answered:

"I have told you that God and my soul bade me do this, and still you do not believe me; and I have done no evil but good, for I have put the devil to shame and glorified God."

The governor said to the servants:

"Turn him over and beat him on the belly and the chest: he is proud, a violator of the imperial laws!"

And for a long time they mercilessly beat the martyr; then the governor ordered the saint to be beaten no more and asked him:

"Are you a slave or a freeman?"

"I am the slave of the city governor," answered the saint.

Then the governor was angry with the city governor, the master of Emilian, because he kept in his household such a slave, an opponent of the gods and a disobeyer of the imperial command; he sentenced him to pay a fine of a litra of silver into the imperial treasury, and condemned the martyr to be burned. At once the servants and a multitude of people seized the saint and led him out of the city; then, on the bank of the

river Danube, they kindled a huge fire and threw the martyr into it. The fiery flame surrounded the saint but did not touch him; then it spread out around him over a great distance and burned all the unbelievers it reached, some severely scorched, and the rest barely escaping. But the secret Christians among the people suffered no harm from the fire, though the flames reached them. The saint stood in the fire, facing east, shielding himself with the sign of the Cross and blessing God. When he had prayed as long as he wished, he said:

"Lord Jesus Christ, receive my spirit!"[3]

With these words he lay down and fell asleep in the Lord, when the fire was already dying down. His body was in no way harmed by the fire; even his hair was not singed. And those of the citizens who were secret Christians went to the wife of the governor, who also secretly professed the Christian faith, told her everything about the saint, and persuaded her to ask her husband for the body of the martyr, which had been miraculously untouched by the fire, for burial. She besought her husband, and he allowed the body of the saint to be taken without hindrance; and the faithful took it, wrapped it in a winding-sheet with spices, and buried it with honor in a place called Gizidina, three stades distant from the city.[4] The holy martyr Emilian suffered for Christ on the eighteenth of July, on a Friday, at the hands of the governor Capitolinus, in the reign over the Romans and Greeks of Julian the Apostate, and over us of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory and honor, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Kindled with divine zeal, thou didst not fear the fire that served thee; fearlessly thou didst go up of thy own will, and wast wholly burnt by the blazing flame, and as a sacrifice wast offered to the

3. The repose of Holy Martyr Emilian took place in 363.

4. Afterwards, in Constantinople, a church was built in honor of Holy Martyr Emilian, into which the honorable relics of the martyr were transferred. The district in Constantinople where this church was built was called Ravda (from the Greek word *rhabdos*, "staff"—that is, the staff of Moses, brought to Constantinople under Emperor Constantine the Great and placed in the church of the Mother of God, near which was the church of Emilian).

Lord, O glorious martyr Emilian. Pray to Christ God that He grant us great mercy.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Pambo

Житие преподобного отца нашего Памвы

The Venerable Pambo lived to old age as a fasting ascetic in the desert by Mount Nitria, in Egypt.[5] Many great fathers relate of his virtuous, God-pleasing and holy life, as will be seen from the continuation of the narrative, gathered from various sources. First of all, the Venerable Anthony the Great[6] said of him that by the fear of God (with which Pambo was filled) he had made the Spirit of God dwell in himself. The Venerable Poemen said:

"Three things we saw in Father Pambo: hunger every day, silence, and handiwork."

The Venerable Theodore the Studite[7] gives the following testimony concerning this blessed father: "Pambo, in both deed and word, is worthily to be called blessed, as one exalted."[8] Socrates Scholasticus[9] writes of him that at the beginning of his monastic life, being illiterate, he came to one of the brethren to learn the Psalms of David from him. Hearing at the very beginning the first verse of the thirty-eighth Psalm, namely, "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue," he did not wish to hear the other verses, but went away with the words:

"It is enough for me, this one verse, if I learn to put it into practice."

And after that he never came back to the teacher.

5. Egypt was the customary dwelling-place of many ascetics. Monasteries of monks were found both in Middle and Lower Egypt. The Nitrian desert, situated in Lower Egypt and lying deep within the country beyond the river Nile, was especially renowned in Egypt.

6. His memory is celebrated by the Holy Church on 17 January.

7. His memory: 11 November, 26 January.

8. Canon for the Saturday of Cheesefare, Ode 5 (this canon was written by St. Theodore the Studite).

9. Socrates Scholasticus — a Greek church historian who lived in the 5th century. He wrote the *Church History*, brought down to the reign of Emperor Theodosius II. — The place from the work of Socrates Scholasticus cited below is found in Book 4 of his *Church History* (chapter 18).

Six months later the teacher happened to see him and asked him:

"Why have you not come to me until now?"

Pambo answered:

"I have not yet learned to put that verse into practice."

Then, after many years, one of the fathers who knew him asked him:

"Have you learned that verse yet, brother?"

Pambo answered:

"For nineteen years I have been learning without ceasing, and I have only just become accustomed to putting into practice what he teaches."

Although St. Pambo was at first unlettered, he was afterwards made wise by God and knew the Holy Scripture well; he was even a skilled teacher of others (as Palladius writes of him[10]). The following four brothers, renowned in Egypt, were his disciples: Dioscorus, Ammonius, Eusebius and Euthymius, called great, who are mentioned in the Life of St. John Chrysostom[11]. The first of them, Dioscorus, was later Bishop of Hermopolis; he is not the Dioscorus who was a heretic and was condemned at the Fourth Ecumenical Council of the holy Fathers[12], but another of the same name who lived earlier. Moreover, Dracontius the Honest, mentioned in the Life of the Venerable Hilarion the Great, a bishop and confessor of Christ who suffered exile at the hands of the Arians, was also a disciple of the blessed Pambo in his youth. Pambo was the teacher of these disciples.

Among many other great virtues this Venerable Father was distinguished also by perfect contempt for gold and silver. When St. Melania the Roman, distributing all her rich possessions to the needy for Christ's sake, arrived at Alexandria, she heard of St. Pambo and came to him together with the hospitable presbyter Isidore of Alexandria.

10. His memory is celebrated by the Holy Church on the Saturday of Cheesefare.

11. His memory: 13 November.

12. The Fourth Ecumenical Council took place in 451 at Chalcedon and was convened by Emperor Theodosius II to condemn the Eutychian heresy. The founder of this heresy was Eutyches, archimandrite of Constantinople, who maintained that in Jesus Christ the human nature, at the hypostatic union, was entirely swallowed up by the divine. The Council condemned this false teacher. At this same Council Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria, who shared the false teaching of Eutyches, was also condemned.

She brought with her three hundred litrae of silver and asked Pambo to take for himself as much as he wished of the silver she had brought. But he did not even look at it, and did not stop his handiwork, for he was weaving a mat, and he only answered her:

"May the Lord reward you for your zeal which you have toward Him."

When she continued to press him to take some of it, the Venerable Father said to the brother who served him:

"Take what they give, with care, and carry it and distribute it to the brethren in Libya[13] and on the islands, for they are in great want, since their land is barren; but give nothing to the brethren of the Egyptian monasteries, for their land is fertile and they can have sufficiency from their own labor."

Then the blessed Melania gave all the silver she had brought to that brother for distribution to the poor, and said to the Venerable Pambo:

"Father, take note how much silver I give: three hundred litrae."

He answered her:

"God, to Whom you have brought the silver, daughter, does not ask you how much you have brought. Does not He who has "measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales" (Is. 40:12) know the amount of your silver? If you were giving the silver to me, you would surely tell me how much you are giving; but you are giving it to God, who did not despise even the two mites of the widow, but accepted them more gladly than many riches (Mk. 12:42). So be silent, and do not sound a trumpet before yourself (Mt. 6:2)!"

Once Father Pior came to the Venerable Pambo and brought with him a small piece of stale bread. Pambo asked him:

"Why, father, have you brought bread with you?"

Pior answered:

"So as not to burden you." (That is, so as not to put you to the expense of bread, but to eat his own.)

13. Libya was located in North Africa.

A few days later the Venerable Pambo went to Father Pior, bringing with him a piece of his own stale bread, which he had dipped in water. Seeing this, Pior asked:

"Why have you brought bread that has been soaked, father?"

He answered:

"So as to burden you not only with bread but even with water."

Once St. Athanasius of Alexandria asked Father Pambo to come to him in Alexandria. On the way the elder, with several brethren, saw seated laymen who paid no attention to the monks passing by. Pambo said to these laymen:

"Stand up and greet the monks with reverence, that you may receive a blessing from them, for they often converse with God and their lips are holy."

Then, coming into the city, he saw a public woman adorned to tempt men; and the elder wept. The brethren asked him:

"Why are you weeping, father?"

He answered:

"I weep for two reasons: for the perdition of this woman's soul, and because I do not have toward my own soul such zeal as she has for her body. She has adorned herself so as to please men, while I take no care to adorn my soul so that it may be pleasing to God."

Always filled with compunction, the Venerable Pamva never laughed; there was never even a smile on his face. Once the demons wished to make him laugh. They tied a rope to a feather and dragged it before his eyes as though it were some heavy burden, saying and crying out to one another:

"Help! Help!"

Seeing this, Father Pambo laughed. Then the demons, rejoicing, cried out:

"See, at last Pambo has laughed!"

But he answered them:

"I did not laugh; I laughed at your weakness, that you cannot lift even one feather!"

The demons fled, put to shame.

His disciples also relate of him that he was very careful in conversation and judicious in his answers. When he was asked about something from the Divine Scripture or about some matter, he did not answer at once, but first kept silent a long time and pondered within himself, and afterwards he often said:

"I do not know what to answer to this question."

And only after three days, or three weeks, and sometimes after three months, did he give an answer to the question. His answers were just and very useful, since they were put into his mind by the grace of God. Therefore everyone received the words from his mouth with fear, as from the mouth of God: God spoke through his lips.

In the time of this Venerable Father there were in the same Egyptian lands two brothers by birth, Paisius and Isaiah, children of wealthy parents; their father was a well-known merchant who traveled with costly wares as far as Spain. Having divided between themselves the great wealth that came to them after the death of their parents, they said to one another:

"What life shall we choose for ourselves? If we engage in trade as our father did, who knows to whom the fruits of our labors will fall after us? Besides, we shall have to be constantly afraid of falling into some misfortune: robbers, shipwrecks. Let us rather choose the monastic life, and place our father's estate into the heavenly treasury; by doing so we shall save our souls as well."

Having so counseled together, they both renounced the world. One at once distributed his share of the inheritance to beggars, churches and monasteries, keeping nothing for himself; he went off into the desert and learned there some small craft, by which he was fed by the labor of his hands; and he lived alone in a God-pleasing manner, fasting and laboring diligently. The other built a small monastery not far from the dwellings of the world, and, receiving a few brethren, gave shelter to travelers and fed the poor. Having built a guesthouse and a hospital, he gave lodging to all who came and served the sick most zealously; and on Saturday and Sunday he arranged two, three or four meals for the poor. After living in this way for some years, both brothers reposed in the Lord. After their death many brethren began to converse about

those brothers: some praised more the one who had at once given away his estate and gone off into the desert to silence, while others gave preference to the other, who for a long time had served travelers, the poor and the sick with his possessions. Since for a long time they did not yield to one another in this dispute, the brethren went to ask the Venerable Father Pambo about it, wishing to learn whose life was more pleasing to God and which of them would receive the greater reward. The Venerable Pambo answered their question thus:

"Both are perfect before God: the hospitable one has become like the righteous Abraham, and the desert dweller like the holy prophet Elijah, and both have equally pleased God."

Still the brethren did not agree, and contradicted one another; some, extolling the desert dweller more, said:

"He fulfilled the Gospel commandment: sell your possessions and give to the poor, and, taking up the cross, he followed Christ, enduring thirst and hunger every day; but the hospitable one, though he served the poor, nevertheless himself made use of his estate; he ate and drank with the travelers and dined with the sick."

Their opponents objected, saying that the lover of strangers too had fulfilled Christ's word spoken in the Gospel: "He came not to be served, but to serve" others (Mt. 20:28). For he had served so many, every day going out on the crowded road, seeking the traveler, the poor man, the sick and the needy, and bringing such into his house, where he gave rest to all; and if for a single cup of cold water given to one who thirsts a reward is promised by God, what reward then will the brother receive who welcomed travelers, satisfied countless numbers of the thirsty and hungry, and served every sick person as Christ?

Seeing such disagreement among the brethren, the Venerable Pambo said to them:

"Wait a little, brethren, until I receive a revelation from God; then I will tell you."

After some days the brethren came to him again for an answer to their question; then the elder said to them:

"Before God I tell you that I saw both of those brothers, Paisius and Elijah, standing together in Paradise."

Hearing this, all the brethren were pacified and glorified God.

After this revelation granted to the Venerable Father concerning the two brothers, it became clear to all how great a grace he had with God, for he was counted worthy to behold the blessedness of Paradise before his death. He himself became like the inhabitants of Paradise by reason of what he had seen, and still more by reason of the abundant grace of God that dwelt within him. While still living among men in his corruptible body, he already bore upon his face the seal of paradisal incorruption; he was luminous not only in soul but in body as well, and his face shone with glory, as once did the face of the holy Prophet Moses. Concerning this the lives of the holy Fathers tell as follows. For three years the Venerable Father prayed to God:

"O Lord, I beseech Thee, glorify me not upon the earth!"

God, who glorifies His saints, so glorified him that the brethren dared not look upon his face because of the glory he bore. Thus the saint was glorified upon the earth in his body before his glorification in heaven. When the time of his blessed end came, after seventy years of his life, he said to the brethren standing about him:

"Since I settled in this desert, built my cell and have dwelt in it, not one day has passed in which I did not labor with my hands at something until I was weary. I also do not recall ever eating bread given to me by anyone, but always bread earned by the labor of my hands. And no word has ever issued from my lips which I should now have to regret with shame. Yet I depart to the Lord as though I had not even begun to live a God-pleasing and monastic life."

With these words he committed his honorable and holy soul into the hands of God,[14] suffering no bodily illness. Such was the life and end of this servant of God, whose holy prayers may help us also to learn a God-pleasing life and to receive a good end, by the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be ascribed honor and glory, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

14. The repose of Venerable Pamva took place at the end of the 4th century.

Life of Our Venerable Father John the Much-Suffering

Житие преподобного отца нашего Иоанна Многострадального

"Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22), said the Apostle Paul.

In agreement with him, the beloved disciple of Jesus, John the Virgin, said:

"I, John, your brother and partaker in tribulation" (Rev. 1:9).

In agreement with them also is the beloved disciple of the Most Holy Theotokos from the Kiev Caves monastery, our Russian virgin John, who is surnamed the Much-Suffering; indeed he endured many sorrows for the sake of the vow of virginity given to the heavenly Bridegroom. He himself related this about his life shortly before his death, on the following occasion. To this Venerable Father, who had enclosed himself in a narrow place, in the cave of our Venerable Father Anthony, and had spent his whole life there, one of the brethren often came, whom the devil troubled with carnal desire. He asked the saint to pray to the Lord for the weakening of his passion. The Venerable John said to him:

"Brother, take courage, let your heart be strengthened; endure in the name of the Lord and keep His ways, and He will not leave you in the hands of our enemies nor allow them to ensnare you."

The one troubled by passion answered him:

"Believe me, Father, if you do not grant me relief, I shall know no peace, but will wander from place to place."

The Venerable John then said to him:

"Why do you wish to give yourself up to be torn in pieces by the enemy? You will be like a man standing at the edge of an abyss; the enemy will come to him and suddenly push him down, and such a fall will be dreadful, so that he will never rise again. But if you remain here in the holy monastery, you will be like a man standing far from the abyss, whom the enemy, however much he labors, cannot cast down. Thus the Lord, for your endurance, will deliver you from the abyss of passions

and from earthly impurity. Listen, brother, and I will tell you what happened to me in my youth."

And he began to relate his whole life in detail.

"When I came," he said, "to this holy Kiev Caves monastery and began to labor according to the rule of the holy angelic monastic image, I, being strongly inflamed by lust, suffered very much for my salvation! For two, sometimes even three days, I ate nothing; often for a whole week I took no food at all and mortified myself with thirst. Whole nights I did not sleep. I spent about three years in such suffering, yet even so I found no peace. Then I went into the cave where our Venerable Father Anthony had been laid, and I remained day and night in prayer at his tomb. And then I heard the voice of the Venerable Father speaking to me:

'John, John, you must enclose yourself here in the cave, so that, seeing nothing and abiding in silence, you may overcome the passion. The Lord will help you through the prayers of His saints.'

Therefore," he continued, "I have since then enclosed myself here in a narrow and gloomy place, where I have lived now for thirteen years; and I did not soon attain peace. For whole years I struggled with passions and bodily thoughts, living a severe life, for many years wearing down my body, at first only by fasting and vigil. Then, not knowing what to do and being unable to overcome carnal passion, I resolved to live naked. I hung heavy fetters upon my body, and so from that time until now I have worn myself down with cold and the weight of iron. Yet when even all this was not enough, I devised something else: I dug a deep pit, up to my shoulders. When the days of the holy Great Lent came, I climbed into the pit and covered myself entirely with earth, so that only my hands and head remained free, and so I remained under the weight of the earth through the whole fast, unable to move a single joint. But even this did not end my burning carnal passion. Moreover, the devil, the enemy, frightened me, wishing to drive me out of there, and I felt his treachery: at the bottom of the pit my feet caught fire, the sinews in them contracted, the bones trembled, the flame reached my belly, and my limbs began to burn. Yet I paid no attention to the cruel pain, but rejoiced in my soul, rejoiced that my soul remained pure from

defilement. I preferred to be burned in that fire for the Lord's sake rather than come out of the pit shamed by the demon. At the same time I saw a terrible and fierce serpent, which breathed flame, scorched me with sparks, and wished to devour me. He did this for several days, wishing to drive me away. From the beginning of the Bright Night of the Resurrection of Christ the fierce serpent suddenly attacked me, seized my head and hands in his jaws, and my hair on my head and beard was singed, as you now see; and while I was already in that serpent's jaws, I cried out from the depths of my heart:

'O Lord God, my Savior, why hast Thou forsaken me? Be merciful to me, O Master, for Thou alone art the Lover of mankind! Save me, a sinner, for Thou alone art sinless! Deliver me from my vile iniquity, that I may not perish forever in the snares of the wicked one; save me from this enemy: behold, he roars like a lion, desiring to swallow me. Show forth Thy power and come to save me! Flash forth Thy lightning and drive him away, that he may vanish from before Thy face!'

When I finished the prayer, immediately a divine light flashed like lightning, and that fierce serpent vanished; and by the mercy of God I have not seen him since. Then I heard the voice of the Lord speaking to me:

'John, John! Behold, help has been given you; now see to it yourself that you do not suffer again in the age to come.'

I, bowing down, said:

'Lord, why hast Thou left me to cruel torment?'

The voice answered me:

'This was sent to you in proportion to your endurance, so that you, tested by fire, might become pure as gold. God does not permit a temptation to a man beyond his strength, lest he be exhausted and put to shame by the crafty serpent. But as a wise master entrusts great and heavy work to strong and mighty slaves, and poor and easy work to the weak and feeble, so understand also the struggle against carnal lust, on account of which you pray for yourself. But pray to that dead man who lies near you, that he may heal you of the lustful passion; he did more than Joseph[15] and can help those who suffer from this passion.'

And I, not knowing the name of this dead man, began to cry out:

'Lord, have mercy on me through the prayers of this Venerable Father!'

Afterwards I learned that this was Moses, by birth a Hungarian (Ugrian). Then an inexpressible light illumined me, in which I still abide, having no need of light either by night or by day; and all the worthy who come to me are content with this light and behold with their own eyes my consolation, which illumined me that night of the Resurrection, giving hope of the future light."

Having finished this account of his much-suffering life, our Venerable Father John turned to the one who was afflicted by carnal passion and said:

"We ourselves, brother, think of carnal things with our minds, and for this God permits sufferings upon us by His righteous judgment, because we do not bring worthy fruits of repentance. But I will tell you, brother: let us pray to this Venerable Moses, and he will help you."

After this he prayed together with the one afflicted by passion; then he took one bone from the relics of the Venerable Moses and gave it to him, saying:

"Apply it to your body."

When he had done this, the brother immediately felt the heat in his body subside; the lustful passion ceased to trouble the brother and was stilled in his body; from then on he suffered no more torment from it. Then the holy one and the brother afflicted by passion together gave praise to God, who glorifies by miracles after death those who have glorified Him by the purity of their lives, cleansing men from sin.

Soon after recounting his great sufferings, the much-suffering recluse, our Venerable Father John, on 18 July yielded up his spirit into the hands of the Lord,[16] that he might reign with Him with whom he had suffered. His holy relics, dispensing an unfailing healing, stand to

15. Joseph — one of the twelve sons of the Patriarch Jacob. He was distinguished by innocence and simplicity of heart. Sold by his brothers into Egypt, he did not yield to the temptation of the wife of Potiphar, in whose house he was (Gen. 39:1–23). — For this reason the narrative of the life of John the Much-suffering recalls Joseph's special intercession for those who, being tormented by carnal passion, turned to him for help.

16. The repose of St. John took place in the middle of the 12th century.

this day, immovable, as a pillar of protection against the face of the enemy, in the very place where he first buried himself up to the shoulders while he was ascetically struggling, and afterwards, when he learned the time of his repose. By the prayers of this much-suffering recluse, our Venerable Father John (whose honorable body, having conquered bodily passion through much suffering, became a pillar in the house of God), may we also be guided, as by the light of the pillar that appeared before Moses, into that promised heavenly land, flowing with milk and honey, which is attained by nursing infants, and likewise by this virgin John, who, like John the confidant of Christ, is glorified by grace and glory in the Trinity, the God to Whom glory is offered now and ever. Amen.

* * *

Passion of Holy Martyr Hyacinth

Страдание святого мученика Иакинфа

This holy martyr was born of pious parents, Theocletus and Theophila. He was born at the time when Heraclius was bishop governing the Church in the city of Amastris,[17] and he received his name from an Angel who appeared to him. When he was three years old, invoking the name of Christ, he raised a dead boy, who afterwards struggled together with him and advanced in virtue. Having reached old age and performed many miracles, he once saw foolish idol-worshippers venerating an elm tree that was hollow within. He went and cut down this tree. For this he was seized and brought to the city of Amastris before the governor of the province, Kavstrisius, by whose command he was first cruelly beaten, so that his teeth were knocked out; then, binding ropes to him, they dragged him along the ground, and finally they shut him in prison, where he yielded up his spirit to God.[18]

17. The city of Amastris, now Amastra, was situated in the northern part of the Roman Asia Minor province of Paphlagonia, on the very shore of the Euxine, now the Black Sea.
18. The time of the repose of Holy Martyr Hyacinth is unknown.

* * *



THE NINETEENTH DAY OF JULY

July 19

19 июля

New Calendar July 19 · Old Calendar August 1 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Mother Macrina

Житие преподобной матери нашей Макрины

St. Macrina was born in Cappadocia in the reign of Constantine the Great[1]. Her parents were Basil and Emmelia; she was their first child, and was the eldest sister of St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and the other brothers and sisters. The honorable parents had ten children in all: four sons and six daughters. Before this first daughter was born, a name was given to her through a divine revelation to her mother in a dream: her name was to be Thecla. For just before the time of birth, her mother fell asleep and saw in a dream that she was carrying in her arms a child not yet born. And there seemed to approach a certain bright and honorable man, who looked kindly upon the child and called it three times "Thecla," signifying that this child would imitate the chaste life of the holy First-Martyr Thecla and be a martyr without blood by her own free will.

Awakening after this vision, Emmelia gave birth to this child and named her Thecla; but the members of the household and relatives preferred to call her Macrina, after her paternal grandmother, the holy Macrina, who in the reign of Maximian Galerius[2] suffered persecution for Christ together with her husband, and for seven years wandered in deserts, enduring extreme want, until the persecution ceased. Thus the newborn had a twofold name: Thecla by revelation, Macrina by common appellation; and not in vain, for she inherited a God-pleasing life

1. He reigned from 306 A.D. to 337 A.D.
2. Maximinus Galerius governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 305 A.D. to 311 A.D.

from both of those servants of God, burning in heart, as they had, with a fervent love for God. The habit of calling her Macrina became so firmly established among people that some did not even know her first name, and everyone called her by the other: we believe that under both of those names this bride of Christ is inscribed in heaven, in the book of life.

The girl was nursed, and when the child came of age, her mother began to bring her up and teach her letters, beginning not with pagan fables (as other mothers usually did) and not with the writings of poets, in which there is much that is unworthy of a pure maiden's hearing; she selected from the Book of Wisdom of Solomon[3] and from the Psalms of David, or from other books of Divine Scripture, suitable verses, namely such as contained either prayers and praises of God, or good moral instruction. The girl learned successfully; she was capable, and there were constantly on her lips words from the books and prayerful singing at every hour of the day: whether she rose from her bed or undertook some task, sat down to dinner or rose from the table, she did not let noon or evening pass without singing psalms, and going to sleep she performed the appointed prayer. She was taught by her mother the needlework proper to a maiden, and she was not permitted to pass her time in idleness and childish games, but was constantly occupied either with reading books or with needlework.

When the young maiden reached twelve years of age, she proved so beautiful that there was no equal girl in that whole land; even painters could not depict the beauty of her face; therefore many rich and noble men pestered her father with requests, each wishing to marry his son to her.

But Macrina's father, as a prudent man, chose from all of them one youth who was distinguished among others not only by noble birth but by intelligence and good morals, and betrothed his beautiful daughter Macrina to him; but he postponed the wedding until the girl should grow up and reach marriageable age. The youth waited and diligently pursued his studies; but God, who orders all things wisely, in His

3. The Book of Wisdom of Solomon is a book of the Old Testament, belonging to the number of the non-canonical books. Its content is the praise of the Wisdom of God.

providence cut short his temporal life and transferred him to eternal life. Then the blessed maiden, who in her young years was distinguished by the wisdom of an elder, firmly resolved to marry no one, but to keep her virginity in purity to the end of her life. Many youths besought Macrina to marry, and her own parents and relatives urged her to enter into marriage; but she, judicious beyond her years, as if not young but rather an elder, by her prudence and discernment answered:

"It is not good for a maiden betrothed to one bridegroom to go to another, to transgress unlawfully a betrothal once made; for by natural law marriage must be one, as there is one birth and one death. And he to whom I am betrothed, and whom they call dead, has not died—I believe in the hope of resurrection—but is alive and has only gone far away into another country until the time of the general resurrection. It is no small sin and shame for a wife, if after her husband has gone somewhere, she does not keep marital fidelity but joins herself to another."

Thus the prudent maiden Macrina answered everyone who spoke to her of marriage and advised her to wed, and she preserved herself in unblemished virginity; she was constantly at her mother's side, as a watchful guardian of her life, and served her diligently, in humility, not ashamed even of the labors which the maidservants performed, but working together with them, as though she were one of the servants. Especially when her father departed to the Lord, she became for her widowed mother an unfailing servant and consolation in all her sorrows and griefs; she diligently looked after the whole household, and to all her other brothers and sisters, as the eldest, she was teacher and instructress, like a second mother; especially to the last brother Peter, who was born at the time of his father's death: when he came into the world from his mother's womb, his father departed from the world. This last brother the holy Macrina herself taught letters, nurtured in prudence and good morals, and taught to live a chaste life; and he afterwards became a hierarch, not the least among the servants of God.

When her brother Basil, who was born after her, returned home after many years of study in various lands and, in his youth, began to take pride in his learning, the holy Macrina, by her gentle and God-in-

spired words, soon brought him to such humility that he soon despised all worldly things and chose the monastic life for himself. This true servant of Christ also, by her soul-profitable conversations, turned to the love of God and to a pure life another brother, named Naucratius, still young: having left everything, Naucratius went off into the wilderness, where, serving aged hermits, he ended his life while still young.

At the exhortation of this prudent maiden, her mother, the blessed Emmelia, having settled the remaining daughters in marriage and released the male and female slaves to freedom, left the cares and concerns of this vain world and went into a convent of virgins, so that both mother and daughter became brides of Christ, taking upon themselves the monastic habit. Some of the maidservants also wished to renounce the world together with them and go into the convent, and everything among them was held in common: one cell, one table, one set of garments; everything needed for life was shared equally among them. They served the Lord with one accord, in humility, meekness and love, and there was among them no anger, no envy, no hatred, no contempt, nothing that was not pleasing to God; they were wholly alien to vain desires and vainglory. Their glory was that no one knew them; their wealth was in poverty, their food in abstinence; shaking off from the body everything earthly, as dust, they sang psalms and read books day and night. Their one constant occupation and rest from labor was contemplation of God and prayer, while they regarded care and toil for the needs of the body as trivial makeshifts rather than the true business.

What tongue can tell of their God-pleasing life, passed in ascetic exploits by which they made themselves like the Angels? They were as it were a dividing line between the Angels and men, surpassing men of flesh and equaling the Angels in purity and abstinence; they did not become equal to the Angels only in this, that the Angels are bodiless, while they had bodies. If anyone had compared them with the Angels, he would not have erred; indeed, clothed in flesh, they imitated the bodiless, standing with them in heaven before God with a God-loving heart. Such a life they led for no small time, right up to old age and death.

When the venerable Emmelia, already in advanced years, was drawing near to her blessed end and had grown weak in body, her last son Peter, who led a God-pleasing life, came to her, and together with the holy Macrina tended their mother during her illness. At the very moment of her separation from the body, her children Macrina and Peter sat on either side of the dying woman's bed and named by name the other brothers and sisters, and she left to all of them, as a treasure, her maternal blessing. Then, laying one hand upon Macrina and the other upon Peter, she said, turning to the Lord:

"To Thee, O Lord, I give the firstfruits and the tithe of the fruit of my womb: the firstfruits is this firstborn daughter, the tithe is this last son! Thou didst in the Old Testament command that firstfruits[4] and the tithe of fruits[5] be brought to Thee: may they be to Thee an acceptable offering, and may Thy holiness descend upon them!"

With these words she gave up her holy soul into the hands of God. And her children buried their mother with honor, laying her body in the coffin of their father, beside the relics of her husband, as she had arranged before her death. Some time after this, St. Basil the Great was appointed Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and he ordained his brother Gregory (called of Nyssa) to the presbyterate, and also invited his other brother, Peter, and enrolled him among the clergy of the Church. Hearing of this, St. Macrina rejoiced in her soul. Nine years later she again heard of St. Basil, that he had fallen asleep in the Lord, and she grieved bitterly, mourning not so much the death of her own brother as the fact that such a light of the Church had been extinguished and such a pillar of piety had fallen. Then the time of her own

4. First-fruits: the first fruits of the harvest, the first bread baked from the new wheat, the wool from the first sheep, and the like. All of this was brought in the Old Testament to the tabernacle for the support of its ministers, the priests and Levites (Ex. 23:19; Num. 15:19–21). The quantity of the first-fruits is not specified in the law of Moses, but it is thought that it was at least a sixteenth part of all the produce of the earth.

5. Tithe, that is, the tenth part. By this name in the Old Testament (Gen. 14:20) was designated the offering to God of a tenth part of the produce of the earth, of the herds, and the like. The tithe went for the benefit of the Levites, who had no land allotments and therefore needed the means of subsistence. The Levites, in their turn, paid a tenth part of their tithe for the support of the high priest (Num. 18:21–32).

departure to God drew near, and concerning her honorable repose St. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, her brother, writes the following.

Nine months[6] after the death of Basil, a council of bishops was convened at Antioch, at which I too was present (says Gregory). After the council I resolved to visit and see our sister Macrina; for a long time we had not seen each other, because the many calamities and troubles to which I was subjected, being pursued everywhere by the Arians, had prevented it. So I set out to her. When I had already traveled a very great distance and was drawing near to my destination, on the night before my arrival at my sister's, the following vision came to me in a dream. It seemed to me that I was carrying in my arms the relics of a martyr, from which bright rays went forth, like those of a bright mirror set opposite the sun, so that my eyes could not look upon that brilliant radiance. This vision was repeated three times in one night, and I could not understand it; and in my soul there was a certain sorrow, and I set out on the journey, waiting to see how this dream would be fulfilled. When I was near the place where the blessed Macrina lived an angelic and heavenly life, and when many came out to meet me on the road and greeted me respectfully, I asked one of my acquaintances about my sister Macrina; I was told that she was gravely ill. I hastened on, grieving in my soul; on arriving at the monastery I went first to the church, where all the nuns were waiting for us. After prayer and blessing I saw that among the nuns their abbess, my sister Macrina, was not present, and my heart grew heavy. I went to her cell and found her gravely ill, lying not on a bed but on the ground, on a board covered with a sackcloth; her wooden pillow too was covered with a sackcloth. Seeing me come through the door, she bowed and fell upon her hands; she could not rise, but, as far as she could bow from her bed, she returned my bow. I quickly raised her up, laid her back in the same place, and kissed her with tears. And she stretched out her hands to God and said:

6. The council took place in 341 A.D. and was convened on the occasion of the consecration of the church begun by the Emperor Constantine (306–337 A.D.), but completed already under his son Constantius. At the council 25 canons were drawn up on questions of church administration.

"I thank Thee, O my Lord and God, that Thou hast granted me this kindness too, fulfilling my desire, sending Thy servant to visit Thy handmaid."

Then she began to converse with me, concealing her illness: she did not wish to grieve my soul, and so only now and then did she groan faintly, striving somehow to restrain her frequent sighs, and she looked upon us with a calm face. Speaking serious words, she recalled Basil the Great; I grew sorrowful in my soul at this, and I could not refrain from tears. Seeing my bitter tears, she at once ceased speaking of Basil and began on another subject: she spoke of the wondrous providence of God and His care, of the age to come, of why man was created and how he became mortal, how through temporal death he passes into eternal life. And she spoke other God-inspired words, giving us great benefit and bringing joy to her own soul: she was full of the Holy Spirit; as from some fountain grace flowed from her lips, and her whole mind was occupied with heavenly things. When the conversation ended, she said to me:

"It is time for you, Father, to rest a little from the long journey and to refresh the body with food."

Although I did not wish to leave her and to end the pleasant conversation, in which I truly found peace for my soul, I did not dare to disobey her, since she so desired it; and I went away from her. A place had been prepared for us to rest in a nearby garden, very beautiful, under the shade of trees, but nothing gave me joy; my heart ached. I saw that my sister was near death, and I waited to see how my dream would be fulfilled, which, as I now understood, was beginning to be fulfilled, and which I interpreted to myself thus: the relics of a martyr are my sister Macrina, who, indeed, wasting herself for many years by ascetic labors for love of God, mortified her body as a martyr does and died altogether to sin; the bright rays going forth from the relics signified the grace of the Holy Spirit dwelling in her.

Amid such sorrowful reflections of mine, the blessed one, perceiving this in spirit, sent word to me that her illness was lessening and that she felt better. She did this so that I should not grieve and should not lose hope of her recovery; yet she was comforting me, speaking figurat-

ively not of bodily but of spiritual health. Then, rejoicing at this good news, I took food and slept a little. Afterwards I came to her again, and she once more began a soul-profiting conversation, recalling all the benefits bestowed upon her and upon our whole family, and offering deep thanks to God for them. And I listened and delighted in her words, thinking within myself: if only this day were longer, that I might take more delight in her speech! The day was already declining toward evening, and the hour called us to the evening service in the church. The sick woman dismissed us, and herself began to pray fervently to God.

On the following day, when I came to her (says St. Gregory), I already saw that she would die: I saw that all her bodily strength had left her, and I was greatly grieved. She perceived my sorrow and began to comfort me with various God-inspired words and soul-profiting accounts, while she herself was full of spiritual joy: there was in her neither fear of death nor even any confusion, but only hope in God. By noon she had grown still weaker; she ceased speaking with us and began to converse with God in prayer, lifting up her hands to Him. She prayed in so quiet a voice that we could scarcely hear. In her prayer were the following words:

"Thou, O Lord, hast removed from us the fear of death; Thou hast so arranged that the end of this temporal life shall be for us the beginning of a better, eternal life. Thou dost lull our bodies to rest in the sleep of death, not for long, and Thou wilt wake them again with the last trumpet. Our frail body, created by Thy hands, Thou entrustest to the earth as a treasure; and what Thou givest to it, Thou wilt again require of it, transforming the mortal and unseemly into the immortal and comely. Thou hast delivered us from the curse and from sin; Thou hast crushed the head of the serpent[7] and torn from his jaws the man he had swallowed. Thou hast broken the gates of hell, and, subduing the power of him who held sway over death, Thou hast opened to us the way to resurrection; Thou hast given to those who fear Thee the sign, Thy holy Cross, for the establishment and preservation of our life. Eternal God, to whom I have given myself from my mother's womb, whom with

7. That is, the devil (cf. Gen. 3:15).

all the strength of my soul I have loved, and to whom from my youth I have offered my soul and body! Set a bright Angel to attend me, that he may lead me to a place of light and coolness, where there is the water of rest[8] and the bosom[9] of the holy fathers! Thou who didst remove the fiery sword barring the entrance to paradise from the robber crucified with Thee, who committed himself to Thy mercy, remember me too, Thy servant, in Thy Kingdom; for I too have crucified myself with Thee, nailing my body with the fear of Thee and always fulfilling Thy commandments. Let not that dreadful abyss separate me from Thy elect, nor let the envious one stop me on the way; let not my sins be before Thy eyes, which through the natural weakness of our nature I have committed before Thee, either in word, or in deed, or in thought! Forgive me, for Thou hast power to pardon sins! Dispose my soul so that, freed from the body, it may appear before Thee pure, without sin or defilement; let it be as incense before Thee."

With these words the blessed one signed her eyes, lips, and heart with the cross, and in prayer gave up her soul into the hands of God[10]. She seemed to have fallen asleep in the ordinary way: her eyes were closed, her mouth closed, her hands lay properly upon her breast, and her whole body was so well arrayed that it required no garments from human hands. I looked upon her and wept bitterly; the nuns too, who until then had restrained their tears, fearing to disturb their spiritual mother with weeping, and had hidden the sorrow of their hearts within, when they saw that she was already without breath, at once wept aloud and sobbed bitterly. It was with difficulty that they could be persuaded to cease weeping and to begin the customary chanting and prayer.

After this I asked them to go out of that room for a while, and I remained beside the deceased with a few people who had been nearest to her in life and had served her; among them was one named Vestiana. She came of a senatorial family; she had married, but lived only a short time with her husband, for he soon departed this life, and she, wid-

8. This is a figurative expression. As for a traveler crossing a sandy, scorching desert water is a precious drink restoring his strength, so for the traveler to the Kingdom of Heaven unspeakable blessings are prepared in the heavenly mansions.

9. Bosom: the breast. A figurative expression (cf. Lk. 16:23).

10. The death of Venerable Macrina took place about 380 A.D.

owed, did not wish to enter another marriage; but, despising the glory, wealth, beauty, and pleasures of this world, she came to the blessed Macrina, found in her a tender guardian of her widowhood, and remained with her for many years, successfully laboring in the monastic life. I said to this Vestiana:

"Now it is necessary to clothe this dead virgin body in clean garments."

Vestiana then addressed another nun, Lampadia:

"How did our spiritual mother arrange for her funeral?"

Lampadia, weeping, said to me:

"The end of this venerable mother of ours was adorned with a pure life, but as she never sought bodily adornment during her temporal life, so she did not prepare any for her burial. Here is her coarse hair shirt, here is her plain cassock, here is her worn mantle and head covering, here are her poor sandals. This is all her wealth. Nothing is hidden anywhere, neither in a chest nor in a sacristy. She had one sacristy and one treasure, the heavenly abode; there she placed all that was hers, and on earth she left nothing behind."

Then I (says St. Gregory) said to those nuns:

"I have with me my new garment, which I prepared for myself for burial. Would it be pleasing to her if we clothed her in this garment of mine?"

The nuns answered me:

"Even if she were alive, she would not refuse your gift, for she honored and loved you: she honored you as a hierarch and loved you as a kinsman, and in general a brother is not a stranger to his sister."

Then I sent for my funeral garment and told Vestiana and Lampadia to dress the deceased in it.

As Vestiana was dressing the honorable body of St. Macrina, she took from her neck an iron cross and an iron ring bearing the image of a cross, and said to me:

"Such were the adornments worn on the neck by the Bride of Christ!"

Then I took the ring for myself and gave the cross to Vestiana. At this she said to me:

"You have chosen a good portion for yourself, Father; in this ring there is a particle of the life-giving Tree of the Precious Cross of the Lord."

Then she said to me further:

"Look, Father, at one more wondrous thing!"

And, opening a little the breast of the deceased, she showed me a mark on the body from a wound that had once been there, and told me what she herself had heard from her personally:

"When the blessed one still lived with her mother, a painful and incurable ulcer formed on this spot. It had to be cut open, for which it was necessary to seek the help of skilled physicians; otherwise it would spread through the whole body, reach the heart and bring death. The mother urged her to show the ulcer to physicians and be treated by them, saying that the art of healing is given by God for the healing of people. But it was very hard for her to let a man look at her bared breast and allow him to touch her, and she resolved rather to endure the grievous pain, and even to die, than to show herself to physicians."

"One evening, having served her mother with her own hands as was her custom, she went into the prayer room and, shutting herself in, spent the whole night in prayer, making prostrations to the ground and watering all the earth with her tears, asking healing from God Himself, the true Physician of soul and body. Then, taking a handful of earth moistened with her tears, she applied it to the diseased place. On the following day the mother, grieving for her, again earnestly begged her to allow the physicians to treat her ulcer. But she replied:

'It will be enough for me, Mother, if you lay your hand on my ulcer and make the sign of the cross over it.'

And when the mother, putting her hand under her garment and making the sign of the cross, felt the diseased place, she found no ulcer. By the power of God she was healed: the wound and the pain disappeared, and only a small mark remained on the place of that ulcer, in memory of God's miracle."

So Vestiana related, and St. Gregory recorded it. He also described her funeral in detail, but for brevity we shall say only the following. The lifeless face of St. Macrina was so beautiful that it shone with

some wondrous rays. A multitude of people gathered at her funeral, uninvited by anyone, but gathered by God. All who assembled wept aloud; the crowd pressed forward, striving to touch the reliquary containing the saint's relics, and because of the crush they could hardly carry it to the grave. She was laid in the tomb of her parents, beside the relics of her mother; so she had ordered, that the bodies of those whose lives had passed together should rest together. Of her miracles, St. Gregory, her brother and the writer of her Life, mentions only one: how the Venerable one, during her lifetime, healed a girl who was blind in one eye (she had a cataract) by kissing the girl's diseased eye; from the kisses of her holy lips the cataract disappeared and the eye began to see well. Of her other miracles the same St. Gregory says:

"Much else that I heard from the nuns who lived with her and knew well her deeds I have not recorded in this narrative, because many people, when they are told such things, believe only those deeds which they themselves can perform, and do not believe, but regard as falsehood, what is beyond their strength. Therefore I shall not relate how, during a famine, the wheat distributed by her hands to the needy did not run out, nor the bread she gave to the hungry, nor her other not inconsiderable miracles: the swift healing of sicknesses, the expulsion of demons, her prophetic foreknowledge, her predictions of the future. Although all this truly happened and is entirely true, I shall pass it over in silence, so as not to bear the blame for the sin of unbelief in weak people, who, being given over to their flesh, do not know that God distributes His gifts according to faith: to those of little faith He gives less, to those who believe more He gives more."

We, believing in the Almighty Power of God, glorify the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

With all thy heart thou didst love the good God, O Venerable Macrina; and taking up the precious Cross upon thy shoulder, thou didst zealously follow Him. Wherefore thou hast obtained forgiveness of sins.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Dius

Житие преподобного отца нашего Дия

The homeland of the Venerable Dius was Antioch in Syria; he came of Christian parents, was reared in piety, and from his youth undertook the ascetic struggle, instructed by God-inspired men in the virtuous monastic life. He fought long against the invisible enemy, the devil, and against the nearer enemy, his own flesh, which leads the soul into temptation. He vanquished the devil by constant prayer, and subdued his flesh by fasting, vigil, and many other labors, mortifying his earthly body in every way and bringing the flesh under the spirit. He ate very little, and not every day, but every other day or every two days, and often passed whole weeks without food or sleep. Having subdued himself by such abstinence, and conquered the spiritual enemy, he attained a high degree of passionless life and became a pure dwelling of the Holy Spirit: the grace of God dwelt in him, and he became a man mighty in deed and word. He worked miracles, led many to salvation, and through him the heavenly Father was glorified. He lived for a long time in Antioch, and then God commanded him in a vision to go to Constantinople, so that he might bring still greater benefit to people. At first he did not trust the vision, and feared lest there might be some snare of the devil, for he knew that the devil too can transform himself into an "angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). But when the same appearance and command of the Lord came to him a second time, and moreover the city itself was shown to him, a city in which he had never been, namely, in the vision he saw all of Constantinople as it is, then he obeyed the will of God, who makes all things work for good, and, leaving Antioch, he arrived at Constantinople. Entering the city and seeing the holy churches of God, the palaces and the beautiful city buildings, he was amazed: he had seen all this in the revelation shown him by God, and here he was convinced that the vision he had had while in Antioch was true. Walking not only through the city but also through its surroundings, he found a desert place beyond the city where there were ancient

pagan tombs and many demons dwelt. Passers-by greatly feared this place because of the demonic apparitions and terrors. But the place pleased him, and, armed with the power of the Cross and with prayer as with weapons against the demons, he settled there, building for himself a small hut. It is impossible to describe all the disturbances the demons caused him, by day and by night. They constantly attacked him in various strange apparitions, wishing to frighten him and drive him from the place, but he, like a brave soldier of the heavenly King, calling upon the name of Christ, which is dreadful to demons, resisted them bravely without any fear, and overcame them. Wishing to know whether the Lord blessed his living in this place, he prayed about it three times to the One God in Trinity, and taking his dry staff, he thrust it into the ground, saying:

"In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit! If this staff grows here and takes root, then I too shall remain here."

God, who fulfils the desire of those who fear Him and receives their prayers, heard the prayer of His servant and granted his request: He quickened the dry staff with moisture. The staff took root, put forth shoots and branches, and began to grow little by little until, within a few years, it had become a great oak. It stood for not one hundred years, but many, after the death of the Venerable Father, for as long as Orthodoxy flourished among Christians. The Venerable Dius, seeing that the dry staff had taken root, understood from this that it was the will of his Lord that he should live in that place. He armed himself yet more firmly against the demons, cleansing the place of their foul apparitions and terrors. For a long time the demons fought against him, but they could not overcome him or drive him from the place, and they themselves fled from it as vanquished and put to flight. Having thus cleansed the place of demons by his prayers, the saint lived there in angelic fashion, glorifying God day and night and receiving his food through the Providence of God. Afterwards people came to know of him. The neighboring inhabitants, seeing that the elder had settled in so dreadful a place, past which it was dangerous even to walk, were at first astonished, and then began to come to him. Seeing that he had nothing in his cell, they began to bring him what was necessary; and he

instructed those who came to him in the way of salvation, and healed them with God-inspired words, and he entertained those who brought him gifts with what they had brought, and he also fed the poor and the passing pilgrims. His fame spread especially when, by the grace of God that dwelt in him, he began to heal human diseases, and a multitude of the sick flocked to him; and he quickly gave them not only bodily but also spiritual health: to bodily ailments he applied prayer as a healing plaster, and the wounds of the soul he bound with profitable teaching, moving them to contrition and persuading them to repent.

At that time reigned the pious and Christ-loving Emperor Theodosius the Younger,[11] grandson of Theodosius the Great. Having heard of the Venerable Dius, he himself came to visit him; he marvelled at his manner of life and his non-possessiveness, and he was moved by the grace of the soul-profiting teaching that issued from his lips. He also marvelled at the dry staff which had taken root and from which a tree had grown: at his own royal expense he ordered a church to be built there and a monastery founded, so that the Venerable Father might preside there over many and guide them on the way to salvation; and the Most Holy Patriarch Atticus persuaded the Venerable to accept the priestly rank. Thus the servant of God Dius became Abbot of the brethren who gathered about him, a glorious teacher of all who came to him, a wonderful physician of souls and bodies, and he was useful to the whole capital. And his monastery became a peaceful refuge for those who had nowhere to lay their heads. The monastery lacked water, for the place was waterless, and water was carried from afar. Therefore the brethren asked the Venerable to allow a well to be dug in the monastery, not only for the needs of the monastery but also for the benefit of those who came there. The saint agreed to their request; they dug the well for a long time, and had already dug deep, but there was still no water, for the place was hilly and stony. The brethren were in despair, and the workmen wished to stop working, since they had already ceased to expect water. Then the Venerable came to the place of the work and, taking a spade, ordered himself to be lowered into the

11. Theodosius II (the Younger) governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 408 A.D. to 450 A.D.

well; when he had been let down halfway, he ordered the basket in which he was being lowered to be stopped, and he struck the earthen wall three times with the spade, pronouncing the name of the Most Holy Trinity; and at once an abundant spring of water gushed forth from there. The workmen at the bottom of the well were barely able to be drawn out, so swiftly did the water rise and fill the well. All marvelled at this miracle and glorified God. One of the workmen, standing above and seeing the water flowing from the earthen wall, did not believe, and said secretly to another that the elder had by some sorcery caused the water to flow; for he reasoned to himself: how could it be that at the very bottom no water was found, and yet suddenly it should flow so abundantly from the walls above? At these words the judgment of God suddenly overtook him: he slipped, fell into the water and drowned. Learning of this, his wife ran quickly, weeping loudly, and began to cry out at the Venerable and reproach him with the following abusive words:

"Would that you had not come here, old man, sorcerer, seducer, destroyer! You have ruined my husband; behold, I myself will kill myself, so that the sins of us both may lie upon your soul!"

She said much more that was insulting, amid her wailing and shouting. But the Venerable comforted her with a gentle voice and said:

"Wait a little, woman, have hope, and you shall take your husband away from here!"

The woman grew angrier still and cried out:

"Lying monk! Whence will you get me my husband? Will you raise the dead?"

And rushing at the Venerable, she seized his garment, wishing to tear it from him. Then the brethren interposed, seized her, and drove her out through the monastery gates. And the saint said to the brethren:

"Leave her; it is not she who insults us, but the demon who teaches her, and he will soon be put to shame by the grace of God that helps us."

Having said this, he ordered that the drowned man be sought in the water; he was found and drawn out. He lay dead; the wonderworker,

the servant of God Dius, approached him, prayed diligently to God, took the dead man by the hand, and raised him from the ground alive; then, calling the wife, he gave her back her husband. The wife was struck with terror at seeing her husband alive, and all were seized with fear at this miracle. The wife went home with her husband. On the road, before they reached home, suddenly the knees of her husband, just raised from the dead, gave way; he fell to the ground and died again. Seeing this, the wife trembled with fear: she was afraid that God might punish her too with His wrath, and that she too might fall and die. She returned to the monastery with weeping and lamentation, threw herself at the feet of the Venerable and begged forgiveness:

"Honorable father! My husband," she said, "whom God raised up through your prayers, He has again put to death because of my sins!"

And all were seized with still greater fear at the wondrous and unknown judgments of God. The Venerable persuaded the woman to spend the rest of her life in repentance, bewailing her sins, and he sent the brethren with orders to bury her husband in the customary manner.

The Venerable performed many other miracles by the power and cooperation of Almighty God (but these remain unknown to us, because of the antiquity of the time, and because, owing to the various persecutions of the Church that often occurred and the devastations of Constantinople, many books have perished, and only the little that we relate of the Venerable Dius has come down to us). The wonderworker lived long; already in deep old age he fell ill and was at the point of death; calling the brethren together, he instructed them, and, having partaken of the Divine Mysteries, he became as if dead, without motion, not breathing. Everyone, thinking that he had died, began to lament over him and to prepare for his burial. The Most Holy Patriarch of Constantinople, Atticus, arrived, and the Patriarch of Antioch, Alexander, who happened to be in the city at that time; many other distinguished persons, both clerical and lay, gathered, wishing to bury the saint with honor. But he, as if waking and rising from his bed, said:

"God has given me yet fifteen years of life."

And he rose up in health, and all rejoiced at his return from the gates of death, for he was useful to all: with hierarchs he held spiritual

and God-wise conversation, to the emperors he was an intercessor and mediator with God, to those seeking salvation he was an example of a virtuous life, sinners he led to repentance, the sick he healed, to pilgrims he gave shelter, the poor he fed, and in every need he helped each one; the Venerable Dius was all things to all, helping each by word and deed, and to everyone he was as a true father.

Having lived the fifteen years granted him by God in the customary ascetic labors, benefiting the souls of many and shining as a light to the world, he drew near to the end of his earthly life. Once he entered the church to pray in the sanctuary, and he saw: there appeared to him a certain shining man clothed in priestly vestments, who said to him:

"The time of your life is fulfilled, and the time has come for your passage into life without end; prepare to part from your body and depart to the Lord."

The Venerable bowed to the man who had appeared to him and gave fervent thanks to God for this announcement of the hour of death. Then he called the brethren together, addressed them with a last instructive word, and concerning his burial he commanded that, if anyone should wish to take his body into the city, they should not permit it, but should bury him in his own monastery. Then, having prepared everything needful for his good Christian end, having prayed sufficiently for all and for himself, and having taken leave of all for the last time, he saw before him an Angel of God, and with joy he gave up to him his honorable soul.[12] Thus did our Venerable Father Dius repose in the Lord. The Emperor and the Patriarch wished to transfer his honorable body to the city, as a protection for the city, but the monks conveyed his testament, that his body should be placed nowhere but in the monastery tomb. Not daring to violate the elder's testament, they fulfilled his will and honorably committed him to burial in his monastery, glorifying God, wondrous in His saints, the One in Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, to Whom be honor and glory from us also, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

12. The repose of the Venerable Dius took place about 430 A.D.

Dweller in the desert, and in the flesh an Angel, and a wonderworker didst thou appear, God-bearing Father of ours Dius; by fasting, vigil, and prayer thou didst receive heavenly gifts, healing the infirm, and the souls of those who come to thee in faith. Glory to Him Who gave thee strength; glory to Him Who crowned thee; glory to Him Who through thee worketh healing for all.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Armed with divine purity of soul, and mightily taking unceasing prayer as a spear, thou didst cut down the ranks of demons, O wonderworking Father Dius. Pray unceasingly for us all.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the repose of St. Roman Olegovich, Prince of Ryazan, who was martyred in the Horde in 1270.

THE TWENTIETH DAY OF JULY

July 20

20 июля

New Calendar July 20 · Old Calendar August 2 (civil dates)

Life and Miracles of the Holy Prophet Elijah

Житие и чудеса святого пророка Илии

Setting out to recount the life of the holy Elijah, the beholder of God and glorious zealot for God, the rebuker of lawless kings, the punisher of men who had fallen away from God, the executioner of false prophets, the wondrous wonderworker to whom the elements were obedient and whom the heavens heard, the great servant of God who even now dwells in the flesh and is to come to earth before the Second Coming of Christ: in order to make more clear and forceful the proof of his zeal, with which he was zealous for the Lord God, we shall set forth in brief words the events that came before him.

From ancient times the chosen people of God, multiplied from the twelve sons of Israel into twelve tribes called tribes, formed a single kingdom, governed undividedly and under one sole authority by one leader, from Moses and Joshua the son of Nun and the other judges of Israel down to the kings David and Solomon.[4725] When, after the death of Solomon, his son Rehoboam ascended the throne, and when in governing the kingdom he, not following, out of his youth, the counsel of experienced elders but listening to young men like himself, proved burdensome to his subjects, for he oppressed them with excessive taxes and labors, punished them severely, and not infrequently sent them into exile, then ten tribes revolted from him and chose for themselves another king, named Jeroboam. Jeroboam had formerly been a servant of Solomon. Once Solomon wished to put him to death for some fault on his part, but Jeroboam fled into Egypt, where he remained until the death of Solomon.[1] After Solomon's death he returned to the land of Israel and was chosen king by the tribes of Israel that had revolted from Rehoboam. Rehoboam, son of Solomon, reigned in Jerusalem over only two tribes, Judah and Benjamin; Jeroboam, the servant of Solomon, reigned over the ten tribes of Israel, residing in the city of Shechem,[2] which he restored and rebuilt, as until that time it had been in ruins. The two tribes that remained faithful to the son of Solomon were called the kingdom of Judah; and the ten tribes that passed to the servant of Solomon formed the kingdom of Israel.

But since the tribes of Israel, although divided into two kingdoms, nevertheless all together served the one God who created heaven and earth, for they could have no other temple than the one at Jerusalem built by Solomon, nor any other priests than those appointed by God, therefore at all times great numbers of people from the kingdom of Israel went to Jerusalem to worship and to offer sacrifice to the Lord

1. Jeroboam was of the tribe of Ephraim, was one of the overseers over the workmen in the building of the temple at Jerusalem, and was greatly loved by Solomon. When many discontented men appeared in the land of Israel who rose against Solomon for his increase of taxes, Jeroboam became their leader. Learning of this, Solomon ordered Jeroboam to be put to death, but he fled into Egypt.

2. Sikim or Shechem was situated in the middle of the western part of Palestine, which afterwards formed Samaria.

their God. Seeing this, Jeroboam, king of Israel, began to be troubled, saying:

"If these people always go to Jerusalem to worship God in this way, they will desire to return again to the first king, the son of Solomon, and they will kill me."

Pondering this, he began to seek means by which he might turn the Israelites away from Jerusalem, so that they would not go to Jerusalem. And he first devised to turn them away from God.

"It is impossible," he said, "to leave them Jerusalem, unless first they leave God."

Knowing that this people, the Israelites, were easily inclined to idolatry and to every unclean lawlessness, Jeroboam devised for their apostasy such a crafty stratagem. He cast two young heifers of gold, just as the ancient Israelites, after their departure from Egypt, had fashioned for themselves in the wilderness a golden calf, which they worshipped instead of the true God (Ex. 32). Calling together the whole people of Israel and pointing to the two heifers before the assembled crowd, Jeroboam said:

"Israel! These are your gods, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. Go no more up to Jerusalem, but worship these gods."

And he set those heifers in different places: one in Bethel and the other in Dan,[3] building for them splendid temples, establishing festivals in their honor and many sacrifices, and appointing priests for them; and he himself even performed the duties of priest. To lead the sin-loving people into still greater temptation, Jeroboam commanded that at the festivals appointed in honor of those golden heifer-shaped idols, every kind of lawlessness should be practiced.

Thus the impious king, for the sake of a temporary reign, himself fell away from God, and turned away from Him all the ten tribes of Israel. After this king the other kings of Israel, together with all their subjects, held to the same impious idolatry, as they had learned and become accustomed to under Jeroboam.

But the most merciful Lord, who does not forsake even those who have forsaken Him, but in His goodness seeks their conversion, sent to

the Israelites His holy prophets, that they might rebuke their errors and admonish them, that, having escaped the devil's snares, they might return again to the pious worship of the true God. Among the prophets whom God sent to Israel at various times was also sent the greatest of the prophets, the holy Elijah, of whose life we are now to speak.

According to trustworthy accounts, the homeland of the holy prophet of God Elijah was the land of Gilead, beyond the Jordan,[4] bordering on Arabia; the city in which he was born was called Tishbe, whence Elijah was called the Tishbite.[5] Elijah was descended from the family of Aaron, from a father named Sabach. Elijah's birth was marked by a vision to his father. At the very time when Elijah's mother was giving birth to him, Sabach saw men in white who spoke with the infant, swaddled him in fire, and fed him, putting a fiery flame into his mouth. Terrified by such a vision, Sabach went to Jerusalem and told the priests about the vision. Then one of them, a man of foresight, said to Sabach:

"Do not fear the vision concerning your son, but know that the child will be a vessel of the grace of God: his word will be like fire, strong and effective; his zeal for the Lord will be great, his life will be pleasing to God, and he will judge Israel with the sword and with fire."

Such was the sign at Elijah's birth and the prophecy concerning him, indicating what he would be when he reached manhood.

Elijah, as one descended from a priestly family, received his upbringing and education among the priests; having dedicated himself to God from his earliest years, he loved virginal purity, in which he remained, like an angel of God, blameless before God, pure in soul and body. Loving to contemplate God, he often withdrew into desert places for silence, where he would converse at length alone with God in warm prayer, burning toward Him with a fervent love like the Seraphim.[6] Elijah himself was beloved of God, for God loves those who love Him. Elijah was granted a gracious converse with God, and by reason of his an-

3. The city of Bethel was situated in the southern part of Samaria, north of Jerusalem, and the city of Dan in the north of Galilee.

4. In the land beyond the Jordan, in the eastern half of Palestine.

5. The city of Phesvit or Pheswa was situated in the eastern part of the land of Gilead, which extended from Mount Hermon to the river Arnon, east of the Jordan, near the mountains of Gilead.

gelic life he acquired great boldness before Him: whatever Elijah asked of God, he received, as one who had found favor before Him. Hearing and seeing, on the one hand, the lawlessness being committed in corrupted Israel: the kings remaining in godless impiety, the judges and elders acting unjustly, the people serving abominations of idols and clinging without fear or dread of God to every kind of spiritual and bodily vice, offering their sons and daughters in sacrifice to demons; and on the other hand, the zealous worshippers of the true God enduring every oppression and persecution, even unto death, the prophet of God grieved deeply in his heart over all this: at one time he lamented the perdition of so countless a multitude of human souls, at another he bewailed the cruel persecution of the righteous; and especially he sorrowed and suffered in soul over the dishonor inflicted upon the true God by impious men, and was more and more filled with zeal for the glory of God. First of all Elijah prayed to God that He would bring sinners to repentance. But since God requires of sinful men a voluntary turning, and in the hardened-hearted Israelites there was no such inclination toward good, the prophet Elijah, greatly zealous for the glory of God and for the salvation of men, asked God to chastise the Israelites temporarily, that by this means at least He might turn them away from impiety. But knowing at the same time that the Lord, in His love for mankind and His long-suffering, is not swift to punish, Elijah, out of his great zeal for Him, dared to ask God to command him, Elijah, to punish the transgressors of the law, with the thought that perhaps they would turn to repentance when punished by a man. And Elijah ceaselessly asked God for this, until he received what he asked from the all-merciful Lord: the most merciful Lord, like a loving father, did not wish to grieve His beloved servant, who served Him as a son and had not transgressed even the least of His commandments; and since Elijah was obedient to Him in all things and had never displeased Him in anything, the Lord heeded the petitions and prayers of His faithful servant, not grieving him by refusing them.

6. Seraphim (from the Hebrew: fiery, burning beings) are the nearest to God, the highest spiritual beings, who, surrounding the throne of the Lord of glory, ceaselessly cry out: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Sabaoth (that is, the Lord of hosts), all the earth is full of His glory" (Is. 6:1–13).

In those days Ahab, an impious king, reigned over Israel, having Samaria as his royal city. (This city was already the third capital of the kingdom of Israel: the first capital was Shechem, in the tribe of Ephraim; the second, Tirzah, in the tribe of Manasseh; the third, Samaria, again in the tribe of Ephraim.) Ahab took as wife Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians. Jezebel, being a pagan, brought with her into her new homeland her idol, the Sidonian god Baal[7]. Ahab built a temple to him in Samaria and set up an altar there; he himself worshipped Baal as a god, and compelled all the Israelites to bow down to this idol. Through this he quickly developed idolatry in his kingdom to an extreme degree, and he provoked the Lord God Most High more than all the kings who had reigned over Israel before him. And it was to this king that the prophet of God Elijah came, filled with zeal for God, and he rebuked him for his error: that, having forsaken the God of Israel, he himself bowed down to demons and was leading his whole people with him to perdition. Seeing, however, that the king did not heed his admonitions, the holy prophet joined deed to word and dealt with the king, the enemy of God, and his subjects by way of punishment. He said:

"As the Lord God Almighty lives, the God of Israel, before whom I stand[8], there shall be neither dew nor rain in these years, except at my word."

Having said this, Elijah departed from Ahab, and at the prophet's word the heavens were shut and a drought came: not a single drop of rain or dew fell upon the earth. As a consequence of the drought there was a complete failure of the grain harvest, and famine set in. For when one king sins, the wrath of God comes upon all his subjects (just as, earlier, through the sin of David alone the whole kingdom suffered[9]). The prophet of God Elijah hoped that Ahab, king of Israel,

7. Baal was considered by the Canaanite peoples to be the chief god. Under the name of Baal they deified the sun, as the source of fruitful power in nature.
8. The words "As the Lord thy God liveth, and as thy soul liveth" are equivalent to our oath, "I swear by God." The ancient Jews, wishing to assure the truth of their words, commonly used precisely these words as an oath.
9. Moved by pride, David wished to count his people. For this sin the Lord sent upon his kingdom a pestilence, from which 70,000 men died in three days.

once punished, would recognize his error, turn to God in repentance, and with himself turn his corrupted people to the true path. But when the holy Elijah saw that Ahab, like Pharaoh, remained hardened, not only not intending to forsake his impiety, but on the contrary sinking ever deeper into the abyss of evil, persecuting and even killing people who pleased God by their lives, he prolonged the punishment into a second and a third year. At this time there was fulfilled the word spoken to Israel by the first beholder of God, the holy prophet Moses:

"And the heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee iron" (Deut. 28:23); for with the heavens shut, the earth had no moisture[10] and yielded no fruit.

Since the air was always hot, and every day the scorching sun brought great heat, all the trees, flowers and grass withered; the fruits perished, the gardens, fields and meadows became utterly desolate, and there was no ploughman or sower upon them. The water in the springs dried up, the small rivers and streams dried away entirely, and in the large rivers the quantity of water diminished; the whole land became waterless and dry, and people, cattle and birds were dying of hunger. Such punishment befell not only the kingdom of Israel but also the surrounding countries. For when one house in a city catches fire, the flames spread to the neighbouring houses. So it happened throughout the world: the one people of Israel drew upon itself the wrath of God, yet the whole universe suffered. But all this came about not so much from the wrath of God as from the zeal for the glory of God of the prophet Elijah. For the most merciful and loving-kindly Lord, in His boundless goodness, seeing the affliction of men and the perishing of all living creatures, was already ready to send rain upon the earth, but He refrained from this, so that the decision of Elijah might be fulfilled and the words of the prophet might not prove false:

"As the Lord lives, from this time there shall fall upon the earth neither dew nor rain, except at my word."

He who had spoken thus was so consumed with zeal for God that he spared not even himself, for he knew that when the store of food on

earth was exhausted, he too, like all men, would have to endure hunger. But he disregarded this, for he preferred rather to die of hunger than to show mercy to unrepentant sinners who were fighting against God.

What then does the all-good God do? He sends the prophet Elijah to a certain solitary place, far from human dwellings, saying:

"Go eastward and hide thyself by the brook Cherith[11], which is before Jordan. Thou shalt drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there" (3 Kgdms. 17:3–4).

The Lord did this in order to deliver Elijah from being slain by Jezebel, so that Elijah should not perish of hunger, and so that, through the ravens and the brook of Cherith, there might be awakened in Elijah compassion for men suffering and perishing from hunger and thirst. Ravens, in comparison with other birds, possess a particular characteristic (Ps. 146:9): they are very voracious and have no feeling of pity even for their own young, for the raven, as soon as it has hatched its young, abandons them in the nest, flying off to another place and condemning the nestlings to death from hunger. Only the providence of God, which cares for every creature, saves them from death: flies come of themselves flying into their mouths, which the nestlings swallow. And every time the ravens, by God's command, flew each day to the prophet and brought him food, bread in the morning and meat in the evening, the conscience in Elijah, that inner voice of God in man, cried out to his heart:

"Behold the ravens, which by nature are wild, greedy, voracious, not loving their young, how they care for thy sustenance: they themselves are hungry, yet they bring food to thee. Thou, who art a man, hast no compassion for men, and wouldst starve not only men but cattle and birds as well."

Likewise, when after some time the prophet saw the brook dried up, God said to him:

10. In Palestine, as in other hot countries, rain falls only in autumn and spring, but dew falls very abundantly upon the earth. It is so heavy, especially in summer, that the earth is moistened by it as after a strong rain.
11. In Syria, near Damascus.

"It is now time to show mercy to the tormented creature and to send it rain, lest thou thyself die of thirst."

But the zealot of God held firm; on the contrary, he prayed to God that there should be no rain until those not yet punished had been punished, and until all the enemies of God on earth had perished. Then again the Lord, wisely inclining His servant to mercy, sent him to Zarephath of Sidon[12], which was not under the rule of the king of Israel, to a poor widow, so that he might consider in himself what affliction he had brought not only upon the rich and the married, but also upon poor widows, who, not only in time of famine but even in years of abundant harvest and every earthly plenty, often lack their daily bread. The prophet, coming to the gate of this city, saw a widow carrying sticks, no more than two pieces of wood; for she had in her jar only a handful of flour and a little oil in her cruse. Since Elijah was tormented by hunger, he asked the widow for a morsel of bread. The widow, having told him of her extreme poverty in these last days, said that she wished to prepare for herself and her son, from the flour remaining to her, a final meal, after which they were to die of hunger. The man of God might have been moved by this and taken pity on all the poor widows suffering from hunger; but his great zeal for God overcame everything, and he showed no mercy to the perishing creature, desiring to glorify the Creator and to show the whole universe His almighty power. Having, through his faith, the gift of working miracles from God, Elijah so arranged that the flour and oil in the widow's house remained inexhaustible; and he was fed by the widow until the famine ceased. The prophet also raised the widow's dead son by prayer, joined with threefold breathing upon the dead child, as is written in the Word of God. There exists a tradition concerning this raised son of the widow, that his name was Jonah, and that it was he who, having come of age, was granted the gift of prophecy and was sent to Nineveh to preach repentance; and being swallowed by a whale in the sea and cast out by it after three days, he prefigured the three-day Resurrection of Christ, as is related in detail in the prophetic book and in his Life[13].

12. The city of Zarephath was situated in the west of Phoenicia, on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, near Sidon.

After three years without rain and in famine, the all-good God, seeing His creation utterly perishing on earth from hunger, took pity and said to His servant Elijah:

"Go, appear before Ahab; I wish to have mercy on My creation, and at thy word to send rain upon the parched earth, to water it and make it fruitful. Ahab is already inclining to repentance, seeks thee, and is ready to obey thee in all that thou shalt command him."

The prophet at once set out from Zarephath of Sidon for Samaria, the royal city of the kingdom of Israel. At that time there was in the service of King Ahab a steward named Obadiah, a faithful servant and a God-fearing man. He had hidden from the slaying of Jezebel a hundred prophets of the Lord, placing them in two caves, fifty in each, and fed them with bread and water. Ahab the king, having summoned this steward (even before Elijah came to him), sent him to search by the dried-up streams for grass, so that there might be something to feed the few horses and other cattle that were still alive. No sooner had Obadiah gone out of the city than he met the holy prophet Elijah, bowed to him to the ground, and said that Ahab had searched diligently for him throughout his whole kingdom. The holy Elijah answered Obadiah:

"Go, say to thy lord: Behold, Elijah is coming to him."

Obadiah refused, saying:

"I am afraid that when I leave thee, the Spirit of the Lord may carry thee away into another land, and I shall then be found a liar before my lord, and he, enraged with me, will kill me." Elijah answered:

"As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I shall show myself to Ahab this very day!"

Obadiah returned and told the king. Ahab hastened out to meet the man of God. But when he saw Elijah, he could not restrain a harsh word, for the malice hidden in his heart against the prophet, and said to Elijah:

"Is this you, troubler of Israel?"

But the prophet of God answered Ahab without fear:

13. September 22.

"I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house, who have forsaken the Lord your God and worship the unclean Baal."

After this the prophet of God, as one possessing the strength of divine help, began to command the king with authority, saying:

"Go at once and gather to me on Mount Carmel[14] all the ten tribes of Israel; bring the four hundred and fifty wicked prophets who serve other idols on the high places and in the groves[4740], who eat at Jezebel's table; let them contend with me about God, and we shall see which is the true God."

Immediately the king, sending messengers throughout all the land of Israel, gathered an innumerable multitude of people, called together all the wicked prophets and priests to Mount Carmel, and went there himself.

Then Elijah, the zealot of God, standing before the assembled people, addressed the king and all the people of Israel with these words:

"How long will you go limping on both your knees? If the Lord God, who brought you out of Egypt with a mighty hand, is God, then why do you not follow Him? But if Baal is your god, then go after him."

The people were silent and could make no answer, for every Israelite was convicted by his own conscience of error. Then Elijah continued:

“Here is what to do: that you may now know the true God, do what I command you. You see that I alone am left of all the prophets of the Lord in Israel; but you have killed all the others. You see also how many prophets of Baal there are here. Give us, then, two bullocks for a sacrifice, one for me and the other for the priests of Baal; but we need no fire. On whose sacrifice fire falls from heaven and consumes it, he is the true God, and all shall bow down to Him, and those who do not acknowledge Him shall be put to death.”

Hearing these words, the whole people approved the decision of the prophet of God and said:

14. Mount Carmel is situated in the northwest of Samaria, near the Mediterranean Sea. Elijah chose this mountain for the assembly because it was the chief place of the service of Baal in the kingdom of Israel.

"So be it; your word is good."

When the bullocks were brought into the midst of the assembly, St. Elijah said to the wicked prophets of Baal:

"Choose for yourselves one bullock, and you first prepare the sacrifice, for you are many and I am one; I will prepare mine afterwards. Lay the bullock on the wood, but do not kindle fire; pray to your god Baal, that he may send fire from heaven and burn your sacrifice."

The shameless prophets did so. Casting lots, they took the bullock, cut it into pieces, laid them on the altar upon the wood, and began to pray to their Baal that he would send fire on their sacrifice. They called upon his name from morning until noon, crying:

"Hear us, Baal, hear us!"

But there was neither voice nor answer. They began to leap around the altar, but all in vain. At noon the prophet of God mocked them:

"Cry louder," he said, "that your god may hear you; no doubt he is now not at leisure: either he is busy with something, or conversing with someone, or feasting, or asleep[15]; cry as loud as you can to wake him."

The false prophets called on Baal with a loud voice and, according to their custom, cut themselves with knives, and others lashed themselves with whips until blood came. Before evening came, St. Elijah the Tishbite said to them:

"Be silent and stop; it is already time for my sacrifice."

The worshippers of Baal ceased. Then Elijah, turning to the people, said:

"Come near to me!"

All came near to him. The prophet took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, built of them an altar to the Lord, then, laying wood on the altar, cut the bullock into pieces, laid them on the wood, dug a trench around the altar, and ordered the people to take four buckets and pour water on the sacrifice and on the wood; and so they did. Elijah ordered it repeated; they repeated it. He ordered the same done a third time, and it was done. The water flowed around the

15. The Jews had the custom of sleeping during the hottest part of the day, from ten or eleven o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon.

altar, and the trench was filled with water. And Elijah cried out to God, lifting his eyes to heaven, saying:

"Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! Hear me now, Thy servant, and send fire from heaven upon the sacrifice, that all these people may now know that Thou alone art the God of Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have offered this sacrifice to Thee! Hear me, O Lord, answer me with fire, that the hearts of these people may turn back to Thee."

And fire fell from the Lord out of heaven[16] and consumed all that was burnt offering: the wood, the stones, the ashes, and even the water which was in the trench; the fire destroyed everything. At the sight of this the whole people fell face down upon the earth[17], crying:

"Truly the Lord is the one God, and there is no other God besides Him!"

Elijah said to the people:

"Seize the prophets of Baal, that not one of them may escape."

The people carried out his command, and Elijah led them down to the brook Kishon, which empties its waters into the Great Sea[18]. There he slew them with his own hands[19], and cast their unclean corpses into the water, so that the land might not be defiled by them and the air might not be infected with their stench. After this St. Elijah told King Ahab to hasten to eat and drink and to harness the horses to the chariot, so that he might set out on his way, for soon a great rain would come which would soak everything. When Ahab sat down to eat and drink, Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. Bending down to the earth, he put his face between his knees and prayed to God for the sending of rain upon the earth. Immediately after his prayer, as though with a key, the heavens were opened and a great rain fell, which soaked

16. The descent of fire from heaven signified that God graciously accepted the sacrifice offered to Him.

17. The Jews, during prayer, fell face down upon the ground. By this they expressed their consciousness of their fall before God and the nothingness of themselves before the majesty of God, as well as their contrition for sins.

18. The stream Kishon flowed near Mount Carmel, north of it; it emptied into the Mediterranean Sea, which was called the "Great" Sea.

19. By the law of Moses, open idolaters, especially those who led others into idolatry, were to be subjected to the death penalty (Deut. 13:1–18).

everyone and abundantly watered the thirsty land. Then Ahab, recognizing his error, on the way to Samaria lamented his sins. But St. Elijah, girding up his loins, went on foot before him, rejoicing in the glory of the Lord his God.

The wicked queen, Ahab's wife Jezebel, learning of all that had happened, was terribly enraged against Elijah for the destruction of her shameless prophets, and swearing by her gods, sent word to him that on the morrow, at the very hour in which Elijah had slain the prophets of Baal, she would kill him. St. Elijah feared death, for he was a man with all the infirmities common to men, as it is said of him: "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are" (Jas. 5:17). Because of Jezebel's threats he fled to Beersheba[20], in the kingdom of Judah, and went alone into the wilderness. Having journeyed alone through the wilderness for a day, he sat down under a juniper bush to rest. Tormented by sorrow, he began to ask God for death for himself, saying:

"O Lord! It is enough for me that I have lived on earth until now; take now my soul; am I better than my fathers?!"

The prophet spoke thus not from sorrow over the persecution against him, but as a zealot of God, who could not endure human malice, the dishonor of God, and the reviling of the most holy name of the Lord: for him it was easier to die than to hear and see the lawless despising and rejecting their God. With such a prayer on his lips, Elijah lay down and fell asleep under a tree. And behold, an Angel of the Lord touched him, saying:

"Arise, eat and drink."

Rising, Elijah saw at his head a warm cake and a jar of water; he arose, ate, drank water, and again fell asleep. The Angel of the Lord touched him a second time, saying:

"Arise, eat and drink, for a long journey lies before you."

Elijah, rising, ate still more, drank water, and strengthened by this food, went forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God, Horeb[21], where he settled in a cave. Here the Lord God Himself was his compan-

20. The city of Beersheba was situated in the south of Judea.

21. Mount Horeb is situated in the southwestern part of the Arabian peninsula, north of the Red Sea, near Mount Sinai, somewhat northwest of it.

ion, appearing to him in a light wind gently blowing in the clear air. When the Lord drew near to him, terrible signs preceded His appearing: first there was a strong storm, breaking up the mountains and shattering the rocks; then came fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; after the fire a sound of a gentle breeze; there was the Lord[22]. When Elijah heard the passing of the Lord, he covered his face with his mantle, and going out of the cave, stood near it. He heard the Lord saying to him:

"What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Elijah answered:

"I have been very zealous for Thee, Lord Almighty, for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, have torn down Thine altars, and have slain Thy prophets with the sword; I alone am left, and they seek my soul to take it away."

The Lord, comforting Elijah in his sorrow, revealed to him that not the whole people of Israel had fallen away from Him, but that He had seven thousand secret servants who had not bowed their knees before Baal. At the same time the Lord announced to Elijah the approaching ruin of Ahab and Jezebel and all their house, and commanded Elijah to designate for the kingdom of Israel a certain worthy man named Jehu, who was to destroy the whole race of Ahab, and to anoint Elisha as prophet[23]. Thus, having comforted His servant, the Lord departed from him. The servant of God, by the Lord's command, left Horeb; on the way he met Elisha, son of Shaphat, plowing the earth with twelve yoke of oxen; laying his mantle upon him, St. Elijah declared to him the will of the Lord, appointed him prophet, and commanded him to follow after him. Elisha said to Elijah:

"I beg you, let me go for a short time to bid farewell to my father and mother, and then I will follow you."

22. Elijah considered it necessary that all the wicked people should perish. But the Lord appeared to Elijah neither in the tempest, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but appeared in a gentle breeze, to show that He, although He could destroy the wicked by terrible manifestations of nature, considers it better to govern men with meekness and long-suffering.

23. From this it is seen that through the anointing of kings and prophets the Holy Spirit is imparted to them, Who raises them incomparably above other men and makes them representatives and instruments of the power of God over men.

St. Elijah did not hinder this. Elisha, coming home, slaughtered the pair of oxen with which he himself had been plowing, prepared a feast for neighbors and relatives, and then, having taken leave of his parents, went to Elijah and followed him everywhere, being his servant and disciple.

At this time King Ahab, under the influence of his wicked wife Jezebel, added to his former iniquities a new one, as follows.

There was an Israelite named Naboth who had a vineyard near the estate of King Ahab in Samaria. Ahab said to Naboth:

"Give me your vineyard, that it may serve me as a garden, for it lies near my palace. In exchange I will give you another, much better than this one; and if that does not please you, I will pay you money for your vineyard."

Naboth answered:

"The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers."[24]

Ahab returned to his house troubled and offended by Naboth's answer, and from vexation he could not eat bread. Jezebel, learning the cause of his sorrow, mocked him, saying:

"Is this, O king of Israel, the extent of your power, that you cannot assert your will even over one man? Cease to grieve, eat bread and wait a little: I myself will put Naboth's vineyard into your hands."

Having said this, she wrote in the king's name an order to the elders of Israel and sealed it with the royal seal. It was written that they should bring a false accusation against Naboth, that he had blasphemed God and the king, and that, by producing false witnesses, they should stone him outside the city. And that unjust murder was carried out by the lawless order. After the execution of the innocent Naboth, Jezebel said to Ahab:

"Now inherit the vineyard without money, for Naboth is no longer alive."

Ahab, hearing of Naboth's murder, was somewhat saddened, and then went down to the vineyard to take possession of it.[25] On the way,

24. The law of Moses forbade the sale of hereditary possessions (Num. 36:7).
25. The property of those executed for crimes against the king passed to the king's benefit.

by the command of God, the holy prophet Elijah met him and said to him:

"Because you have unjustly killed the innocent Naboth and unlawfully seized his vineyard, therefore thus says the Lord: in the very place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, the dogs shall lick your blood also; and the dogs shall eat your wife Jezebel, and all your house shall be destroyed."

Ahab, hearing these words, wept, took off his royal robes, clothed himself in sackcloth and kept a fast.[26] And such slight repentance of Ahab before the Lord had such power that the execution of the appointed punishment upon his whole house was postponed until after Ahab's death. For the Lord said to His prophet Elijah:

"Since Ahab has humbled himself, I will not bring evil upon his house in his lifetime, but in the days of his son."

After this Ahab lived three years and was killed in battle.[27] From the field of battle he was carried in a chariot to Samaria, and the dogs licked his blood flowing from the chariot, as the prophet of God had foretold. And everything that had been prophesied concerning Jezebel and the whole house of Ahab was afterwards fulfilled in its time, after the taking up of the holy Elijah into heaven (4 Kgdms. 9:1–37).

After Ahab's death his son Ahaziah reigned in his place, and he proved to be the heir of his father's throne as well as of his father's impiety, for, listening to his impious mother Jezebel, he worshipped Baal and offered sacrifices to him, greatly provoking the God of Israel. Once, through carelessness, Ahaziah fell from a window of his house and fell very seriously ill. He sent messengers to the false god Baal, that is, in fact, to the demon who dwelt in the idol of Baal and gave false answers to those who consulted him. It was to that demon that he sent to ask

26. The ancients, to express grief, tore their garments, that is, rent them in front on the breast, sprinkled ashes or earth upon their heads, put on sackcloth, that is, a harsh garment of felt material, narrow, without sleeves, resembling a sack; they fasted, did not wash their bodies, did not clean or change their clothing, removed all ornaments, even shoes and sandals (boards fastened to the soles with straps), and walked barefoot, cut the hair of their heads and beards. In deep sorrow they sat or lay down on the earth in dust and ashes, muffled the chin, that is, the face below the nose, as a sign that they did not wish to speak, and even covered the whole face and head.

27. During the war with the Syrian king Ben-hadad.

about his health, whether he would recover from the illness. As Ahaziah's messengers were going to Baal, on the way, by the command of God, the prophet Elijah met them and said:

"Is there no God in Israel, that you go to inquire of Baal? Return and say to the king who sent you, thus says the Lord: you shall not rise from the bed on which you have lain down, but you shall die upon it."

The messengers returned and delivered these words to the sick king. The king asked them:

"What was the appearance of the man who said these words to you?"

They answered:

"The man was all hairy, and girded about his loins with a leather belt."

The king said:

"It is Elijah the Tishbite."

And he sent an elder captain of fifty with fifty men to take Elijah and bring him to him. They went and found Elijah on Mount Carmel, for he was accustomed to dwell chiefly on that mountain. Seeing Elijah sitting on the top of the mountain, the captain of fifty said to him:

"Man of God! Come down here; the king commands you to go to him."

The holy Elijah answered the captain of fifty:

"If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men."

And immediately fire fell from heaven and burned them. The king sent another captain of fifty with the same number of men, but the same thing happened to them: fire falling from heaven consumed them as well. The king sent a third captain of fifty with fifty men. This captain, learning what had happened to those sent before him, came to the holy Elijah in fear and humility, and falling on his knees before him, he entreated him, saying:

"Man of God! Here I am, and these your servants who have come with me, stand before you; have mercy upon us: we did not come of our own will, but were sent to you; do not destroy us with fire as you destroyed those sent before us."

And the prophet spared those who came in humility; but those who had come before he did not spare, because they came with pride and authority, wishing to take him as a prisoner and lead him away in dishonor. The Lord commanded the holy Elijah to go with these third men without fear and to say to the king the same thing he had said before. Therefore the man of God came down from the mountain and went with the captain of fifty and his men. Coming to the king, Elijah said to him:

"Thus says the Lord: since you sent to inquire of Baal about your life, as though there were no God in Israel whom you could ask, therefore you shall not rise from the bed on which you lie, but you shall die."

And Ahaziah died according to the word of God, spoken by the mouth of the prophet. After Ahaziah his brother Jehoram came to the throne, because Ahaziah had no sons. In this Jehoram the line of Ahab came to an end, being destroyed by the wrath of God in the days of the holy prophet Elisha, as is written in his life.

When the time drew near which the Lord had determined for taking Elijah to Himself alive, in the flesh, Elijah and Elisha were walking from the city of Gilgal to the city of Bethel. Knowing by divine revelation of his approaching taking up into heaven, Elijah wished to leave Elisha in Gilgal, humbly concealing from him the glorification from God that lay before him. He said to Elisha: "Stay here, for the Lord has sent me to Bethel." But the holy Elisha, who also knew by divine revelation what was about to happen, answered:

"As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you" — and the two went on to Bethel. The sons of the prophets[28] who lived in Bethel, approaching Elisha alone, said to him:

28. Among the Israelites the sons of the prophets were called the disciples of the prophets. They formed schools or societies, brought up under the direct influence of the prophets. The prophetic disciples occupied themselves with prayer, edifying conversations, pious hymns and music, and at times rose to divine inspiration. "To prophesy," according to Holy Scripture, does not always mean "to foretell the future" by divine revelation; but this word sometimes means "to speak inspired words under the influence of the Spirit of God, to deliver edifying, anointed sermons, to interpret the Word of God (1 Cor. 14:3–6), to compose prayers and hymns to God, and to utter and sing them to the sound of music." All this was the aim and purpose of the prophetic schools. Such schools existed at Ramah, Bethel, Jericho, Gilgal and other places.

"Do you know that the Lord will take your master from over your head?"

Elisha answered:

"I know it too; but be silent."

After this Elijah said to Elisha:

"Stay here, for the Lord has sent me to Jericho."

Elisha answered him:

"As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you" — and the two came to Jericho. The sons of the prophets who were in Jericho, approaching Elisha, said to him:

"Do you know that today the Lord will take your master from over your head?"

Elisha answered:

"I already know it; be silent."

The holy Elijah again said to Elisha:

"Stay here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan."

But Elisha said:

"As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you" — and they went on together. Behind them, at some distance, went fifty men of the sons of the prophets. When the two holy prophets reached the Jordan, Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up and struck the water with it; the water parted to both sides, and they both crossed the Jordan on dry ground. Having crossed the Jordan, Elijah said to Elisha:

"Ask of me what I shall do for you before I am taken from you."

Elisha answered:

"I ask that a double portion of the spirit that is in you be upon me."[29]

Elijah said:

"You have asked a hard thing; nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if you do not see me, you shall not receive it."

29. The Prophet Elisha saw that even the Prophet Elijah, who possessed a great moral spirit and the gift of prophecy, could not turn the hardened impious among the Israelites to the true God. Therefore, zealous for the glory of God and aware of his own weakness, he asked for a double portion of the prophetic and wonderworking spirit that Elijah had.

As they walked and talked thus, suddenly a chariot and horses of fire appeared[30] and separated them from one another, and Elijah was taken up into heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha looked and cried out:

"My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" (By these words he was, as it were, saying: you, father, were all the strength of Israel: by your prayer and zeal you helped the kingdom of Israel far more than a great multitude of war chariots and armed horsemen could have helped it.) Elisha no longer saw Elijah.[31] Then he took hold of his garments and tore them in grief. Soon Elijah's mantle, cast down from above, fell at Elisha's feet. Lifting it up, Elisha stood on the bank of the Jordan and, dividing the water to both sides with it as Elijah had done, crossed on dry ground and became the heir of the grace that had worked in his teacher. The holy prophet of God Elijah, taken up with his body into heaven in a fiery chariot, has until now been living in the flesh, kept by God in the paradisal dwellings. He was seen by the three holy Apostles at the Transfiguration of the Lord on Tabor (Lk. 9:30), and ordinary mortal men will see him again before the second coming of the Lord to the earth. Having escaped death by the sword of Jezebel, he will then suffer by the sword of antichrist (Rev. 11:3–12), and not only as a prophet but also as a martyr he shall be granted, among the saints, greater honor and glory than now by the righteous Rewarder God, in three Persons, the one Father and Son and Holy Spirit, to Whom be honor and glory now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.[32]

Troparion, Tone 4:

Angel in the flesh, foundation of the prophets, second forerunner of the coming of Christ, the glorious Elijah, who from on high sent

30. The power of God that took Elijah up into heaven appeared in the form of a fiery chariot and fiery horses, in order to bear witness to the fervent spirit and word of Elijah, to glorify him as a victorious zealot for the glory of God and the protector of Israel, and to show that he was caught up to the place where the spirits dwell, burning with love for God like a fiery flame.

31. In the 21st chapter of 2 Chronicles, concerning King Joram, who ruled over Judah after St. Elijah had been taken up, it is reported that "there came a letter to him from Elijah the prophet," in which the prophet rebuked his iniquities and foretold his evil end.

32. Accounts of the life of St. Elijah the Prophet are set forth in 3 Kgdms. 17:1–24, 18:1–46, 19:1–21, 21:1–29, and in 4 Kgdms. 1:1–18, 2:1–25, 3:1–27.

grace to Elisha to drive away infirmities and to cleanse the lepers. Therefore he bestows healings upon those who honor him.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

O prophet and seer of the great deeds of our God, Elijah of great name, who by thy word didst shut up the clouds that give water, intercede with the one Lover of mankind for us.

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Father Abraham of Chukhloma, Wonderworker of Galich

Память преподобного отца нашего Авраамия Чухломского, Галичского чудотворца

This our Venerable Father, from his youth kindled with love for God, came to the great Wonderworker Sergius and received from him the tonsure to the monastic life. For his virtuous life he was deemed worthy of the priestly rank, after which he gave himself with still greater zeal to the labors of monasticism. Distinguished by the greatest humility, he left the monastery of the Venerable Sergius and, withdrawing into the desert places of the land of Galich[33], founded there many monasteries[34]. He came to a certain place near a mountain and, shedding abundant tears, gave himself to prayer. At this time he heard a voice from the mountain saying to him:

"Abraham! Ascend the mountain. Here stands an icon of My Mother."

The Venerable one ascended the mountain and saw an icon of the Most Pure Mother of God with the Eternal Infant, standing upon one of

33. Here is meant the region around the towns of Galich and Chukhloma, in the present-day Kostroma Province, inhabited by Chudic tribes. It was from the latter that the Venerable Abraham received the name "of Chukhloma."

the trees growing there. Falling prostrate, he began to pray with tears, and again heard a voice saying to him:

"Arise, Abraham!"

He arose, and the icon, supported by no one, descended of itself into his hands. On this place he first built himself a cell and for a long time dwelt there in solitude; and after many years he established in this desert place a monastery, gathered a multitude of disciples, and labored with unceasing zeal in fasting and abstinence. Knowing beforehand the time of his departure to God, the Venerable one assembled the brethren of his monastery, gave them instruction for the benefit of their souls, partook of the Body and Blood of Christ, and in the year 1375, on the 20th day of the month of July, reposed into the eternal dwellings[35]. To our God be glory now, always, and forever.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the uncovering of the honorable relics of the holy Martyr Athanasius of Brest.

NOTES

4725. The Lord chose and set apart Abraham and his descendants from the other nations for the preservation and spreading among men of the true faith in God. Palestine, which God gave to Abraham and his posterity, was in the best way suited to the purpose of the people of God. It is bounded on the north by the Lebanon mountains, on the east by the Syro-Arabian desert, on the south by the stony Arabian desert, and on the west by the Mediterranean Sea. By such a firm barrier the people of God were separated and protected from the influence of the pagans, and could serve God, freely and without

34. The Venerable Abraham founded the following monasteries: the Dormition Monastery near Galich on the shore of Lake Chukhloma or Chudskoe; the Great Abraham Hermitage, thirty versts from the Dormition Monastery, on the shore of a small lake; the Vocha Monastery on the bank of the River Vocha; and the Monastery of the Protection, thirteen versts from the latter. These monasteries exerted the most beneficial influence on the surrounding inhabitants, who, though Christians by baptism, were little acquainted with the fundamental truths of the Christian faith and, having extremely coarse manners and customs, retained many ancient Chudic superstitions.

35. The Venerable Abraham reposed in the Monastery of the Protection which he had founded. His relics repose beneath the floor in a side chapel of the church dedicated to his name.

hindrance, fulfilling their purpose. No less suited to the purpose of the people of God was Palestine by its position on the border of Asia, Africa and Europe, in the midst of the ancient nations (Ezek. 5:5). The people of God could be in communion with all the mighty, educated peoples of antiquity and communicate to them the revelations of God. When the time came for the enlightenment of the nations with the light of the divine teaching, the paths to all the peoples of the world were open and near to its preachers from Palestine.

4740. Along with Baal was honored Astarte or Asherah. She was goddess of the heavens (Jer. 7:18), of the moon, and goddess of fortune, love, fertility, war and the hunt. She was depicted with a woman's head adorned with a lunar crescent or two horns. The service of Baal was performed on the heights, and that of Astarte in the valleys, in green groves. Groves in honor of Astarte always surrounded the shrines of Baal built on hills and mountains, and within them, at the foot of the hills, altars of Astarte were set up. The priests of Astarte bore the name "grove priests." Besides his meaning as god of the sun, Baal was Baal-Zebul, god of flies, because the Philistines, who lived on the low coast of the sea and suffered from the multitude of flies and other insects, prayed to him for deliverance from flies. He was also considered a healer of infirmities and a prophet. Baal-Berith was god of oaths, covenants and alliances. Baal-Peor was god of war. The Israelites were easily drawn into the service of idols, because the service of the true God requires virtues, prayer, contrition for sins, and fasting, whereas the service of idols was accompanied by dancing, feasting, drunkenness and other sensual pleasures.



THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF JULY

July 21

21 июля

New Calendar July 21 · Old Calendar August 3 (civil dates)

Life of the Holy Prophet Ezekiel

Житие святого пророка Иезекииля

The Holy Prophet Ezekiel was from the Jewish city called Sarira. He was the son of Buzi, of the tribe of Levi, and a priest of the Most High God. During the second Jerusalem captivity he was led away by Nebuchadnezzar[1] into captivity in Babylon[2], together with Jehoiakim, King of Judah, who is called Jehoiachin the Second (4 Kgdms. 24:1). Jerusalem was taken three times by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar: the first time in the days of the Jewish king Jehoiakim (who in Holy Scripture is also called Eliakim (4 Kgdms. 23:34)), son of Josiah and brother of Jehoahaz and Zedekiah, and father of the other Jehoiachin. He was the first whom Nebuchadnezzar led away in chains to Babylon; at that same time the holy prophet Daniel was also taken captive, with the three youths Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael. But soon Nebuchadnezzar released Jehoiakim to reign again in Jerusalem, making him his tributary. After Jehoiakim had reigned in Jerusalem three years under the authority of Nebuchadnezzar, at the end of those three years he rebelled against him, refusing to pay him

1. Nebuchadnezzar: the name of several Babylonian kings. Here Nebuchadnezzar II is meant, son of Nabopolassar, the great Eastern conqueror who subdued Syria, Persia and Egypt and led the Jews into captivity; he reigned from 605 B.C. to 562 B.C.

2. Babylon, capital of Chaldea, one of the most ancient and richest cities in the world; built by Nimrod, son of Cush, descendant of Ham. Lying on both sides of the river Euphrates, Babylon in its form resembled a quadrangle built on a vast plain. The circumference of the city was 400 versts; the walls were 30 arshins thick, so that six chariots could drive abreast on their tops. On the walls rose 250 towers, with a hundred gates wrought of copper. In the middle of the city, crossing the river, stretched an immense bridge, on the eastern side of which rose the royal palace and the pagan temple of Bel. Afterwards Babylon was conquered by the Persian kings Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes and by Alexander of Macedon, and was utterly laid waste.

tribute. Therefore the Babylonian army came again upon Jerusalem, the holy city was taken, King Jehoiakim was slain and cast outside the city to be devoured by dogs, and in his place, by the command of Nebuchadnezzar, his son, likewise named Jehoiakim, who was also called by his father's other name, Jehoiachin, was set up as king, and was made a second Jehoiachin, a tributary of the Babylonian king as his father had been before him. But since this second Jehoiachin also did evil in the sight of the Lord God, by God's permission, after a short time Nebuchadnezzar came again upon Jerusalem and took Jehoiachin captive with all his household, carrying away a multitude of nobles, valiant men, all who were able to bear arms, and various craftsmen, and also taking the golden vessels of the Church: this was the second Jerusalem captivity. In this captivity were taken: the holy prophet Ezekiel, Mordecai, and Jozadak, the father of Jesus, who afterwards, with Zerubbabel, restored the ruined Temple of Jerusalem. The third and last destruction and devastation of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar took place in the days of King Zedekiah[3], whom Nebuchadnezzar had set up as king in place of Jehoiachin, laying tribute upon him. But when Zedekiah also threw off the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, then the same Nebuchadnezzar, coming with the whole Chaldean army, utterly destroyed Jerusalem, consuming it with fire and sword, and led the remaining people into captivity. From that time there ceased to exist both the kingdom of Judah and the whole kingdom of Israel. This third destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar is described in detail in the Life of the holy prophet Jeremiah.

While in Babylonian captivity, the priest of God Ezekiel lived near a river called Chebar; and a wondrous vision appeared to him in the thirtieth year of his life, in the fifth year after the captivity of Jehoiachin, in the fourth month[4], on the fifth day of that month: he saw the heavens opened; a strong wind blew from the north, and out of it came a great and bright cloud; in its midst moved a fire, and all around was a shining radiance; from this cloud there appeared the likeness of four living creatures, which in appearance were like burnished bronze glowing in

3. Zedekiah reigned from 599 B.C. to 588 B.C.
4. That is, in June, counting from March.

the fire. Each creature had four faces: the face of a man, of a lion, of an ox, and of an eagle. Besides this they had four wings each, and beneath their wings were human hands; two wings were stretched out for flight, and with the other two they covered their bodies; fire blazed between the creatures, and lightning issued from the fire. There were also seen four great wheels, one beside each creature; these wheels in appearance were like a stone of Tarshish, azure in colour, like the sea, with a golden gleam produced by the rays of the sun. Within these wheels there appeared as it were other wheels; all these wheels, as though animated, had in them the power of life and were full of eyes on every side, and the four creatures seemed to be harnessed to these wheels as to a chariot; and when the creatures moved, the wheels moved with them; and when the creatures stood still, the wheels stood still. During their course there was heard from their wings a sound and noise, like the sound of many waters, like the din of a numerous host. And when they stood, their wings also were silent. So they stood and were silent when from on high came the voice of God. For above these four creatures and wheels there appeared a firmament of heaven, like crystal, and on the firmament a throne, as it were of sapphire, and on the throne a most bright image of a man, and round about him a radiance like the rainbow which shines in the clouds on a rainy day.

Such was the vision of the glory of the Lord which the holy prophet Ezekiel beheld. In it, according to the interpretation of the God-wise and God-inspired men, the most bright human image upon the sapphire-like throne prefigured the incarnation of the Son of God in the womb of the Most Pure Virgin, who was the living throne of God made man from Her, and was prefigured by this sapphire-like throne; for the precious stone sapphire, resembling in its bright colour the heavens and containing within it, as the heavens do, golden particles like stars, is an image of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, in whom there is no single blemish, just as in the heavenly nature; whose womb became wider than the heavens, containing within it the Uncontainable; and who, like the stars, is adorned with the manifold gifts of God's grace. The four creatures with four faces prefigured the four Holy Evangelists, each of whom, in describing the life of Christ with men on earth, depicted His

humanity, which is prefigured in these creatures by the human face; the Divinity of Christ, revealed by the face of the lion; the Passion of Christ, indicated by the face of the ox; the resurrection and ascension of Christ, represented by the face of the eagle[5]. The four wheels with a multitude of eyes, in which other wheels were seen, were an image of the four parts of the universe, embracing the various nations; the apostolic preaching, penetrating there, opened to many peoples the spiritual eyes for the knowledge and contemplation of God; the fire moving in the midst of the vision revealed, and the great radiance around it displayed the majesty of the inaccessible glory of God. Other spiritual mysteries too were prefigured in that wondrous and awesome vision, at the beholding of which the holy Ezekiel, from terror, fell prostrate upon the earth and heard from on high, from the One Who sat upon the throne in the likeness of a man, a voice speaking to him:

"Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee."

And an invisible power entered into him, which raised him from the earth and set him upon his feet.

When the prophet stood trembling before the glory of the Lord who had appeared to him, the Lord said to him:

"Son of man, I will send thee to the house of Israel, to men who provoke Me and have offended Me; they and their fathers have rebelled against Me even unto this very day; they are men of hardened spirit and stubborn heart: to them I send thee, and thou shalt speak My words to them; be not afraid of their faces, though they rage and surround thee like scorpions" (Ezek. 2:3–4).

While the Lord was speaking this, Ezekiel saw a hand stretched out to him, and in it a scroll of a book; that hand unrolled before him this scroll, and there was written within and without: "Lamentation, mourning and woe."

And the Lord said to him:

"Son of man, eat this scroll, and go and speak to the children of Israel what I command thee" (Ezek. 3:1).

5. Accordingly, in painting the holy Evangelists are symbolically depicted: Matthew under the image of a man, Mark under the image of a lion, Luke under the image of an ox, and John under the image of an eagle.

Ezekiel, opening his mouth, ate that scroll, and it was sweet in his mouth as honey. From that time Ezekiel was filled with the prophetic spirit and grace, and all that God afterwards spoke to him he received in his heart. When this wondrous vision began to pass from his eyes, he heard a voice, as it were the voice of a numerous crowd, saying:

"Blessed is the glory of the Lord from His place!"

At the same time the sound of the wings of the hovering creatures and of the moving wheels was like the sound of a great earthquake. Thus that awesome chariot of the glory of God went upward out of his sight, and the vision ended. After this vision the prophet spent seven days in silence, pondering what he had seen and heard. And again the word of the Lord came to him, saying:

"Son of man, I have set thee as a watchman to the house of Israel, and thou shalt hear the word from My mouth and shalt warn them from Me. When I say to the lawless man: 'Thou shalt surely die!', and thou dost not warn him nor speak to keep the lawless man from his lawless way, that he may live, that lawless man shall die in his iniquity, and I will require his blood at thy hand. But if thou hast warned the lawless man, and he has not turned from his lawlessness and from his lawless way, he shall die in his iniquity, and thou hast saved thy soul."

Then, carried by the Spirit into the field, Ezekiel again saw the glory of the Lord, as before, and he was commanded to shut himself up in his house and remain in silence until the Lord should bid him open his mouth to speak and preach the words of God. During this time of silence there was revealed to him the final siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, which was to take place some years later, and the perishing of the people, so that he should proclaim this to the people not only by word but also depict it by deed. The Lord commanded him to shave his head and beard and to divide his hair, weighing it on scales, into three parts: one part he was to burn with fire before the eyes of those people who were with him in captivity, another part of the hair he was to cut to pieces with a sword, and the third he was to scatter to the wind. By this it was indicated that the wrath of God, intending to punish in Jerusalem and throughout all Palestine the people of Israel, who would not turn to true repentance and did not for-

sake the abominations of idol worship, had divided them by His righteous judgment into three parts, so that each part should bear its own punishment: thus one part of the people would die during the siege of Jerusalem from famine and pestilence, another part would fall by the sword of the Chaldeans, and the third would be scattered throughout the world. All this came to pass afterwards, for the Hebrew people had greatly provoked God. For although in those times the Jews served the heavenly God, who had brought their forefathers out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, yet, having been accustomed since the days of Solomon to bow down to idols, they did not forsake them either, being enticed by their abominable festivals, during which no one hindered them from holding filthy feasts and committing shameful and lawless deeds, since the kings themselves, and the princes, and the judges, and the elders were the instigators of this impiety. Therefore the Jews both worshipped the heavenly God and also clung to idolatrous impiety, and they set up idols in the Temple of God; and where formerly sacrifice had been offered to the one Most High God, there at the same time impure sacrifices were offered to demons, which was very displeasing to the Lord, for it likened this people to an adulterous woman who does not keep faithfulness to her true husband but commits adultery with others. Therefore the Lord later said of this people in the Gospel: "An evil and adulterous generation" (Mt. 12:39); and earlier, in the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer. 3:1), God likened this generation to an adulterous wife and for a long time admonished it through the holy prophets to repent. But when they did not repent, He gave them over to the final ruin by the Chaldeans and delivered their land to desolation for seventy years. Yet although after the expiration of seventy years Jerusalem and the Temple were restored by Zerubbabel, they no longer had their former beauty, wealth and glory; and although the Jews, freed from Babylonian captivity, returned again to their land, they were no longer governed by their own kings but lay under a foreign and heavy yoke, serving foreign kings, first the Babylonian, then the Egyptian, then the Roman, by whom they were finally destroyed. The Lord Himself foretold this final ruin of Jerusalem, saying: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another; all shall be thrown down" (Mt. 24:2). And

of the earlier devastation by the Chaldeans the holy prophet Ezekiel (together with the other holy prophets) foretold.

In the time of the holy prophet Ezekiel, who was in captivity in Babylonia, in the land of the Chaldeans, there lived in Jerusalem the holy Jeremiah. Although these two prophets were at a great distance from one another, nevertheless they unanimously foretold the desolation of Jerusalem and much else that is disclosed in their books; for the Spirit of God worked in both prophets. Some Jerusalemites sent the prophetic words of Jeremiah to Babylon to the captive brethren, and from Babylon Ezekiel's words were sent to Jerusalem; Ezekiel bore witness in Babylon before his people that the prophecy of Jeremiah was true, and in Jerusalem Jeremiah bore witness to the truth of Ezekiel's prophecy. But neither the one nor the other was believed by the corrupt and faithless Jews, who, enticed by idolatry, wholly trusted the false prophets, and considered the holy prophets who truly prophesied by the Spirit of God to be liars. Therefore the Jerusalemites persecuted Jeremiah, and those who were in Babylonian captivity held Ezekiel in cruel fetters, as the Lord had foretold to him, saying: "Behold, they shall lay bonds upon thee and bind thee with them" (Ezek. 3:25). The holy Ezekiel was so far-sighted that he saw what took place far from him as though it were happening before his eyes: while in Babylon he saw what was taking place in Jerusalem (Ezek. 8:11, 16), and spoke of it to the people who were with him in captivity. Once he was carried by an Angel from Babylon to Jerusalem and set in the Temple of Solomon; there he saw idols standing outside and inside, "the abomination of desolation in the holy place," and the impure worship performed in their honor: he saw the elders of Israel burning incense before the idols, the priests turning their faces away from the throne of God and worshipping the sun, and women sitting and weeping for Tammuz, the Adonis invented by the Greeks,[6] who committed adultery with the impure Venus,[7] was struck down by a wild boar, was numbered among the gods by the pagans, and was accepted as a god by the corrupt Jews. He also saw the glory of God like that which he had seen earlier on the

6. Adonis was considered by the ancient Greeks to be the god of sowing and of nature in general.
7. Venus, goddess of love and beauty.

river Chebar: angered, it was preparing to depart from the Temple, leaving it empty. And he heard the Lord say to him:

"Son of man, is not the iniquity great that these people, as thou seest, are committing? They have filled the land with impiety and doubly provoke Me (as if they had conspired to provoke and irritate Me); therefore I too will take vengeance on them in My fury: Mine eye shall not spare them nor have pity, and even if they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them."

Then there sounded an even mightier voice of God, crying terribly and fearfully, speaking thus to the prophet:

"The vengeance and the destruction of the city have drawn near; let each one have destructive instruments in his hands."

When the Lord had said this, six terrible armed men came out with drawn swords; among them was a man clothed in white priestly garments, having with him an inkhorn and a scribe's reed, and the Lord said to him:

"Pass through the midst of the city of Jerusalem and set a mark upon the foreheads of (the men) My servants who grieve in their hearts, sigh and weep over the iniquities committed in this city: these My chosen ones I will deliver from punishment."

And this comely man in priestly dress went and set a mark on the foreheads of those people who faithfully served the true God. The mark was the Greek letter called Tau, resembling an honorable cross, just as in our alphabet the capital letter "Tverdo" is written. Meanwhile, as this man in the becoming priestly vestment passed through the city and marked the servants of God with the sign, the six terrible men were sent after him, prefiguring the six commanders of the Chaldean forces who were to come with Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Jerusalem; to these six men the angered Lord said:

"Go, smite, spare not, have no pity on old man, youth, woman, maiden or infant, but slay them all to death, beginning with the consecrated priests and the elders; but upon whomever there is My sign, touch them not."

And the holy prophet saw in this vision that every class and age of the people of Jerusalem, of both sexes, was being slain, as in fact was

afterwards to come to pass. And the prophet fell prostrate before the Lord, crying out:

"Woe, woe! Alas, O Lord Adonai, for Thou art destroying the remnant of Israel, pouring out Thy wrath upon Jerusalem!"

After this he again saw that comely man in priestly garments, who, returning to the Lord, said:

"I have done as Thou didst command me, O Lord."

And again the Lord commanded him to take in handfuls burning coals from between the wheels of the Cherubim and scatter them over all Jerusalem, as a sign that it would be destroyed by the Chaldeans not only by the sword but also by fire. After this rapture and vision the prophet again found himself in Chaldea in his place, and what he had seen was soon fulfilled.

The holy Ezekiel also prophesied concerning the neighboring pagans who mocked Jerusalem, which was being punished by God: concerning the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Philistines, concerning Idumea, Tyre and Egypt, announcing to them the same punishment of God that was to befall them through the Chaldeans for having rejoiced at the ruin and desolation of Jerusalem. After all this had come to pass, he then prophesied of the cessation of God's wrath upon the Jews, of their return from Babylon to their fatherland, and of the restoration and renewal of the city and the Temple; for after Jerusalem had been ruined and laid waste, he was a second time carried by the hand of the Lord into the land of Judah (Ezek. 40:5), and during this revelation he saw that the place on which Jerusalem stood was measured by God's command, the city and the Temple of the Lord were built, and the glory of God filled His Temple, as is written in detail in his prophetic book.

This whole vision was a mysterious prefiguring of our deliverance from bondage to the enemy and of the establishment of the Church of Christ: it was to be accomplished through the manifestation in the flesh of God, born of the Most Pure Virgin, whom this prophet called "the closed gate," impassable for anyone except God Himself (Ezek. 44:2). To him also was given by God a revelation concerning the resurrection of the dead (Ezek. 37:1). He saw that, by the hand of God, he was carried away and set in the midst of a field that was filled with a multitude

of human bones, very dry; and all of them, at the word of God, were clothed with flesh, and when the spirit entered into them, they lived and stood upon their feet, and they were a very great multitude. And the Lord said:

"I will open your graves and bring you up out of your graves."

Besides this, concerning many other mysteries of God, which were to be fulfilled in full clarity in the last times, revelations were given to the prophet of God; he foretold them all and recorded them in his book: whoever wishes may read them there. And we, abridging our account, mention only, on the testimony of trustworthy narrators concerning him, that he was also a great wonderworker; like Moses, he was a divider of waters. Namely, once, when a multitude of Jews had gathered to him by the river Chebar, the Chaldeans attacked them in a brigandish manner; but by his prayer he caused the river's water to part and opened a dry path for the pursued people, so that they could run over to the other side. And the Hebrew people passed over on dry ground, while the Chaldeans, who dared to follow them by the same way, were covered by the waters and perished. Being in Babylonia a judge over the tribe of Dan and of Gad, and seeing that they did not honor the Lord and persecuted those who kept the law of the Lord, he sent serpents and reptiles upon their villages, which devoured their infants and cattle. Then, having taken pity on them, he removed these serpents and reptiles from them by prayer. In a time of famine, by his prayers to God he multiplied food for the people in abundance, and those who were mortally wasted by hunger he restored to life from the gates of death; he himself afterward died a martyr's death.[8] Seeing that his Hebrew people, who were with him in captivity, were mingling with the Chaldeans in idolatrous worship and learning all their impious

8. Concerning other particulars of the life of the Prophet Ezekiel, it is known that he lived in his own house in Tel-Abib (Ezek. 3:24, 8:1), that he was married and tenderly loved his wife, and that she died suddenly (Ezek. 24:16–18). His prophetic ministry continued for 22 years. His tomb, near ancient Babylon, continues to draw the attention of pilgrims to this day. The construction of the tomb is attributed to King Jechoniah. – The prophetic Book of Ezekiel consists of 48 chapters, and its content is very rich in variety of material: it contains visions, similitudes, parables, allegories, prophecies and symbolic actions. Owing to the symbolic and mysterious character of some passages of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, the Jews counted it among the esoteric books and did not permit persons who had not reached the age of 30 to read it.

deeds, he rebuked them, exhorted them to abandon these lawless practices, and threatened them with the wrath of God. In consequence of this, a Hebrew elder who had given himself over to Chaldean impiety, filled with anger, put him to death by having him torn apart by horses. The people, gathering his mangled body, buried him in the field of Maur, in the tomb of Shem and Arphaxad, the forefathers of Abraham. And a great multitude of Jews gathered at his grave and there offered their prayers to God of Hosts, to whom glory is offered unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

O wondrous Ezekiel, thou wast seen as a prophet of God, and thou didst proclaim to all the incarnation of the Lord, the Lamb and Creator, the Son of God, who was manifested unto eternity.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Fathers Simeon, Fool-for-Christ, and John, His Companion

Житие преподобных отец наших Симеона, Христа ради юродивого и Иоанна, спостника его

In the days of the pious Emperor Justinian,[9] when Christ-loving people were gathering in the Holy City of Jerusalem[10] for the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord,[11] there came by God's providence from Syria[12] to Jerusalem, to venerate the precious Tree of the Cross, two youths. The name of one was John, and of the other Simeon; both were of noble and wealthy birth.

John at this time was twenty-four years of age; he had a young wife and lived with his aged father, his mother having already died; and

9. St. Justinian I, emperor 527–565.
10. Jerusalem, the most ancient and most famous city of the Promised Land, lies almost in the middle of the latter, on the western side of the Jordan, 12 hours' journey from the Mediterranean Sea and 8 from the Jordan, on the spurs of the three Judean hills Akra, Zion and Moriah.
11. September 14.

Simeon was still unmarried[13] and had only a widowed mother, eighty years old. These two youths, who came from the same land and had become friends in Christian love, remained together in Jerusalem for some time, visiting and venerating the holy places. When, returning home, they descended into the Jericho valley and, riding at the foot of the mountain, passed by the city, they saw monasteries on the banks of the sacred river Jordan.[14] Then John, turning to Simeon, asked:

"Do you know who lives in those monasteries?"

"And who dwells in them?" Simeon wished to know.

"The angels of God live in them," answered John.

Simeon, marveling and sighing, asked:

"And can we see them?"

"If we desire to begin a life like theirs," answered John, "then, without doubt, we shall be gladdened by beholding them and conversing with them."

They had both been riding on horseback; now they dismounted, gave their horses to their servants, and commanded:

"Go on ahead of us, without haste."

So the servants led the horses ahead, while they, following at a distance, reasoned together how they might save their souls. Walking slowly, they came to a crossroads: one road, much traveled, led to Syria, where they were to go, and another road led to the Jordan, where the monasteries were visible. Pointing with his finger to the road leading to the Jordan, John said:

"This is the road that leads to life."

And, pointing to the road lying in the direction of Syria, he added:

"This road leads to perdition. Therefore, brother, let us stand here at the parting of the ways, and pray to God that He may teach us which road we ought to take."

And, kneeling down, they began to pray fervently:

12. Syria (High), in the Hebrew text signified by the word Arat, under which is understood Syria and Mesopotamia together, – the whole expanse from the river Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea and from the Taurus Mountains to Arabia.[1*]

13. During this journey of Symeon with John through the holy places, Symeon was 31 years old.

14. The Jordan is the only full-flowing river of Palestine that does not dry up.

"O God! God! God! who desirest the salvation of the whole world! Reveal Thy will to Thy servants and show us the way by which we must go!"

After they had prayed for some time, John and Simeon cast lots, and the lot fell to go by the road leading to the Jordan. Then they were filled with great spiritual joy and with humility gave thanks to God. And at once they forgot their kinsfolk — one his father and wife, the other his mother — they despised their riches and counted everything attractive and pleasing in this world as a dream. Embracing one another, they exchanged the holy kiss, and went on the way to the Jordan, by which indeed they attained to eternal life. And they hastened with joy, like Peter and John to the life-giving tomb of Christ (Jn. 20:1–10), strengthening and exhorting one another: John feared lest regret for his aged mother should turn Simeon aside from his good purpose, and Simeon likewise feared for John, lest love for his young wife, as a magnet draws iron, should divert him from the path they had undertaken. Therefore they addressed one another with words of spiritual instruction and consolation. John said to Simeon:

"Do not grow weary or lose heart, beloved brother! For I trust in the Lord, Who has regenerated us this very day. And what profit is there for us in worldly vanity? Or what help shall we find in riches on the day of the Last Judgment? Will they not rather harm us? In the same way, are our youth and bodily beauty always with us? Will they not be changed by age and perish by death? Indeed, we do not even know whether we shall live to old age, for youths too die who do not expect death."

Simeon, for his part, persuaded John in turn:

"I have, brother, no father, no brothers, no sisters; I have only my mother, already advanced in years, and I grieve for her not so much as I fear in my soul for you, lest the thought of your beautiful and beloved wife, to whom you were so recently wed, should turn you aside from this good path."

Thus, conversing together, they went on. And they prayed to God that He would show them His will, in which monastery they should take the tonsure. And they chose for themselves this sign: in whatever

monastery they found the gates open, into that one, it would mean, God commanded them to enter. It happened that they came to the monastery of the Venerable Gerasimus, whose abbot was a God-inspired man named Nikon; to him it had been revealed by God that these two youths, kindled with divine love, were coming. For Nikon had seen in a dream that day the Lord saying to him:

"Arise, open the gates of the enclosure, that My sheep may enter here."

The abbot, rising, went and opened the monastery gates and sat down beside them, awaiting the coming of the sheep of Christ. John and Simeon, approaching the monastery, when they saw the gates open and an elder sitting by the gates, rejoiced with great joy. And John turned to Simeon:

"This is a good sign, brother: here is the monastery open, and the gatekeeper sitting, as if purposely awaiting our arrival."

When they drew near the gates, the abbot rose and said:

"You have done well to come, lambs of Christ."

And receiving them kindly, he led them into the monastery and refreshed them with bodily and spiritual food; as pilgrims he gave Simeon and John rest that night. In the morning the abbot addressed them with these words:

Beautiful and pleasing to God is the love which you unanimously bear toward Him, O children! But you must carefully guard yourselves, lest the enemy of our salvation quench it within you. Your way is good, but you must not grow weary upon it until you are crowned. Commendable is your intention, but do not be negligent, lest the spiritual warmth in your hearts grow cold. It is well that you have set the eternal above the temporal. Indeed, it is a good deed to serve one's parents according to the flesh, but without comparison it is higher to serve the Heavenly Father. Dear are brethren according to the flesh, but spiritual brethren are far more salutary. Useful are the friends you have in the world, but it is far better to acquire friends among the saints pleasing to God. Strong are your intercessors and protectors before the princes, yet they are not like the Angels, who intercede for us before God. It is good also to give alms to the poor for God's sake; but no offering is as pleasing to

God as to surrender one's soul and will to Him wholly. Pleasant is the enjoyment of this life, but it is nothing in comparison with the delights of Paradise. Beautiful and beloved of all is wealth, but it cannot be compared with those treasures: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man" (1 Cor. 2:9).

Pleasing too is the beauty of youth, but it is nothing in comparison with the excellences of the Fairest of the sons of men[15]. It is fine to become a soldier of an earthly king, but such service is brief and dangerous. To be a soldier of the King of heaven, however, means to triumph over all the power of the enemy.

With such and similar exhortations the venerable abbot addressed them, and seeing the abundant tears flowing from their eyes, he said to Simeon:

"Do not grieve, do not weep over the gray hairs of your lady mother, for for your labors God will comfort her better than you could, being with her. Even if you were constantly at her side and yet did not know for certain, you would bury her earlier, or she you. And you would die without having pleased God, having nothing that could deliver you from future evils after death: for neither a mother's tears, nor a father's love, nor wealth and glory, nor the marriage bond, nor love for children can entreat the terrible Judge, but only a virtuous life, ascetic feats and labors undertaken for God!"

Then, turning to John, he said:

"And to you, O child! Let not the enemy put such thoughts into you, that you should reason in your mind: who without me will support my aged father and feed him? Who will comfort the weeping of my wife? Indeed, if you were to entrust them to God alone, and yourselves go to labor for another, you would rightly grieve over them. But since there is One God, to Whom you have committed your parents and for love of Whom you have left them, you must know that He Himself will provide for them. Consider also that when you were in the world and labored for temporal life, the goodness of the Lord cared for you and generously filled your house; how much more will the Lord care for your

15. That is, the Son of God made Man, Christ the Savior. Cf. Ps. 44:1–18.

houses now, when you have come to labor for Him with all your heart, desiring to please Him more perfectly. Remember, O children, the answer of the Lord to the one who wished to follow Him and said: 'Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.' The Lord said: 'Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead' (Mt. 8:21–22). So you too, with unwavering will and a steadfast heart, follow after Christ. For if an earthly and mortal king were to summon you, wishing to make you his chamberlains or counselors, would you not disregard your household and go swiftly to the king, to serve him in glory and honor, and delight in beholding him and in his favor? And you would do this for the brief time that he might wish to honor you before his nobles."

John and Simeon answered:

"Truly so, Father!"

And the abbot continued:

"All the more, O children, must we with haste and zeal go at the call of the King of heaven, who summons us to an honor to which no highest worldly honor can be likened or compared. We must heed God calling us to Himself, remembering His love toward us, for which He did not spare His Only-begotten Son, but delivered Him for us to a bloody death, that He might make us His sons; and even if for this we shed all our blood, we would still not repay in any measure worthy of the goodness and love He has shown us: for royal blood cannot be equated with the blood of slaves."

Having said all this to them, and perceiving that Simeon and John, richly clothed, had grown up knowing no want, the God-inspired abbot, although he saw their fervent zeal for God, still advised them not to take upon themselves the monastic habit at once, but to wait for some time: let them first test themselves, to see whether they could bear the burden of the ascetic life. But they, falling at his feet, besought him with tears that he would tonsure them without delay and clothe them in the holy order.

After that, the elder, wishing to test them, took John aside and said to him:

"I have already persuaded your friend to remain in the world for another year."

"If it pleases him," John replied, "let him remain; but I am not able to wait so long for the tonsure. I beg you, Father, to fulfill at once for me what my soul desires."

Simeon, seeing them conversing apart, said to the elder:

"Do not delay, Father, in heeding John's arguments; my heart trembles for him, lest he grieve for his wife, to whom he was wed this year, rich and beautiful, and for her sake turn aside from love of God."

John also turned to the elder with tears (he was very inclined to tears):

"I beg you, Father, tonsure us immediately, so that I may not lose my dear brother. He has a mother who loves him so much that she cannot live without seeing him, and I fear for him, lest, remembering his mother's love for him, he draw back from love of God. Therefore I will not cease to entreat until I see him tonsured."

The elder, seeing their mutual concern for one another, and knowing from experience that God does not shame nor reject those who come to Him with all their soul and firm faith, no longer delayed, but led them into the church and tonsured them into the initial monastic habit. And while their tonsure was being performed, John wept greatly, and Simeon secretly nudged him, signaling that he should be silent—he thought that he was weeping for his father and wife. But John poured out his tears from a fervent love of heart for God.

After the tonsure, and after the Divine Liturgy had been celebrated, the abbot again addressed them at length with an instructive discourse, knowing by his far-seeing spirit that they would not remain long in his monastery, since God would call them to an even more perfect life.

That day fell on a Saturday, and the abbot intended on the morrow, Sunday, to bestow upon them the full order of the Angelic Schema.

Some of the brethren began to say to John and Simeon:

"Blessed are you, for on the morrow you will be reborn and will be pure, as though you had only just been born; you will be cleansed of your sins, as though you had only on this day received baptism."

But they, not understanding what was said to them, were astonished and dismayed, and coming to the holy abbot on Saturday evening, they entreated him in these words:

"Do not baptize us, Father, for we are Christians and children of Christian parents, reborn by the immersion of holy baptism."

The abbot, not understanding their words, asked:

"Who wishes to baptize you, O children?"

They answered:

"We heard from the brethren that on the morrow we will be baptized."

Then the abbot, perceiving that the brethren had been speaking to them of the holy Angelic habit, said:

"The fathers have explained it to you well: for on the morrow we wish to clothe you in the full order of the Angelic Schema, which will free you from all the sins you committed in the world, like a second baptism."

John and Simeon did not know what the full order of the Angelic Schema was. The abbot ordered that the brother should be summoned whom he had received into that full order the previous week, not yet seven days ago, so that the brother wore constantly, according to the monastic rule, all the vestments of the holy order. When this brother came, John and Simeon, seeing him, fell at the abbot's feet and entreated that he would clothe them in this order at once, that very evening.

"We are mortal men," they said, "we do not know whether we shall live through this night and see the morning, and we might suddenly depart from this life without receiving such a crown, joy and glory as we see on this brother."

The abbot understood that they were beholding some vision, and he sent the summoned brother back to his cell. When he had gone, John and Simeon again earnestly besought the abbot:

"Father, for God's sake, clothe us at once in the garments we saw on that brother: truly, in your monastery we have not seen anyone in such glory as that brother."

"What did you see, children, on that brother?" the abbot asked them.

They answered:

"We saw on his head a most bright crown, and around him a radiance, and some luminous faces, with candles in their hands, surrounded him with wondrous singing."

The abbot marveled at such purity of soul in them, and said:

"On the morrow you too, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, will receive such a crown and glory together with the holy Angelic order."

When the Sunday came, the abbot performed the holy rite over them, and they both saw crowns shining on each other's heads, and at night they saw each other's faces clearly, as by day; and their souls were filled with such joy that they had no desire to partake of food or drink.

After two days, following the taking of the perfect habit, they happened to meet that brother, mentioned earlier, whom they had seen in glory. He was now clothed in sackcloth and performing monastic obedience, and they saw no longer the former glory and crown above him and were astonished. Simeon said to John:

"Believe me, brother, that after seven days we shall not see upon one another the shining crown and radiance, as we do now."

John asked:

"What, then, do you still desire for yourself, brother?"

"Listen to me," Simeon replied. "I wish that, as we went out from the world, so we should leave here too for a yet more silent, desert life. For since the honorable abbot clothed us in this holy habit, my heart has been kindled with a certain wondrous desire, and my soul wishes to see no one, to speak to no one, nor to hear anyone's voice, but desires to remain in complete withdrawal from all and in deep silence."

"What shall we eat, living in the desert?" objected John.

Simeon answered:

"What do the other desert-dwellers eat, of whom we heard from the lips of our instructing abbot? He who feeds them will feed us as well. And I think the abbot spoke to us so much about the desert-dwellers out of a wish that we too should choose the desert life."

John objected again:

"But we have not yet learned to sing the psalms according to the monastic rule?"

"He who saved those who pleased Him before David," Simeon reassured him, "will save us too. And as He taught David, who pastured sheep in the desert, to compose psalms, so He will teach us. Do not disobey me, brother; but as we together dedicated ourselves to God, so let us labor for Him together."

John agreed, saying:

"As you wish, so let us do. But how shall we leave the monastery, whose gates are locked at night?"

John answered:

"He who opened to us by day will open by night."

When they had thus agreed and resolved, and when night came, the abbot saw in a dream a certain venerable man, holy in appearance, opening the monastery gates, saying:

"Go out, sheep of Christ, to your pasture."

At once he rose, hastened to the gates, and found them open. Thinking that John and Simeon had already gone out, he sat down, sorrowful, sighed, and thought:

"I was not worthy to receive the prayers of my fathers, for it was not I but they who were fathers and teachers. Oh, what precious stones (as Scripture says) lie unrecognized on the earth, seen by many but valued by few!"

As the abbot reflected thus within himself and grieved, behold, the servants of Christ came out of their cell to the gates to leave the monastery. And the abbot saw beautiful youths walking before them with brightly burning candles. John and Simeon did not see those youths, but noticing the open gates, they rejoiced greatly that they had not lost their hope. When they saw an old man at the gates, they were frightened and wished to turn back, not realizing it was the abbot. The abbot called them with the words:

"Do not be afraid, children; go in the name of the Lord!"

They, recognizing that it was the abbot, rejoiced even more and understood that God, who had earlier revealed to him their coming, had also pointed out their departure. They bowed to the elder, saying:

"We thank you, father, but how we may worthily thank God and your honorable head, we do not know. And who among us could have

hoped to be granted such gifts? What king could honor us with such a rank? What treasures could so quickly enrich us? What waters of baths could so cleanse our souls? What parents could love and save us as you do, honorable father?! In Christ you are our father and mother, lord, shepherd and teacher, and guide! Through you we have received a treasure that cannot be stolen, and have found the priceless pearl of salvation; we have truly learned the power of a second baptism, as the fathers have told us. We beg your blessedness, father, that, having prayed for us, you dismiss us, your servants, to go wherever God shows us. For with all our soul we have desired to serve Him, and remember, father, your sheep, whom you offered to God as a sacrifice."

All this they spoke with great tears. The abbot too wept from spiritual joy, seeing so great a desire of theirs to serve God. At last, placing Simeon on the right and John on the left, and raising his hands to heaven, he offered this prayer:

"O righteous and glorious God! O great and mighty God! O Eternal and Everlasting God! Incline Thine ear to me, a sinner, at this hour! Hear me, O Lord, who hast promised to hearken to all who truly serve Thee! Direct the steps of these Thy servants, and set their feet on the path of peace. Be a Helper to these guileless youths and preserve them whole, like doves. Forbid all unclean spirits to draw near them, but let them flee far from their face. Take up shield and armor and rise up to help them; draw the sword and block those who pursue them. Say to their soul: 'I am your salvation!' (cf. Ps. 34:3). Grant that every faintheartedness and terror be removed from their thoughts, and that all pride and self-conceit and all malice perish; let every kindling of the flesh, arising from nature or from diabolical temptation, be quieted; let their body and soul be sanctified, and their spirit be illumined by the light of Thy grace. May they, growing spiritually, pass into the measure of the perfect man and be granted a portion among Thy saints, glorifying Thee with the holy Angels and always worshipping Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God in the Trinity, forever. Amen!"

Then, turning to the servants of Christ, he said with tears:

"God, whom you have chosen, O good children, and to whom you have fled, may He send an Angel before your face, who will prepare for

you a fearless way and will go before you, delivering you from hostile powers, as He delivered Jacob from Laban and from Esau (Gen. 31:1–55, 32:1–32, 33:1–20), and Daniel from the lion's mouth (Dan. 6:1–28)!"

And embracing both of them, he again turned to God in prayer:

"Save them, O God, save those who love Thee with all their heart; for Thou art righteous, O Lord. Forsake not those who have left all vain things for Thy sake!"

Then he turned to them again:

"Be on your guard, children! For you are going out to a terrible battle, but do not fear! God is strong and will not send you temptations beyond your strength. Labor, children, and do not be overcome by the enemy; stand manfully, having as your armor the holy monastic order of the Angelic habit. But remember Him who said: 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God' (Lk. 9:62). Do not be lazy or despondent, beginning this path of the Lord, lest the parable of him who began to build a tower be fulfilled in you: 'This man began to build and was not able to finish' (Lk. 14:30). Take courage, children, knowing how insignificant the struggle is and how great the crown, how brief the labor and eternal the rest."

While they were occupied with such conversations, the time came to ring for Matins, and they had to go out through the monastery gates. Simeon, taking the abbot aside, said to him:

"I beg you, father, for the Lord's sake, pray zealously for my brother John, that the memory of his wife may be erased from his mind, lest through the enemy's temptation he abandon me, and I waste away from grief at parting from him. Pray also for the father who begot him, that the Lord may comfort him, so that he does not grieve over the son who has left him."

John too, taking the elder aside, besought him:

"For God's sake, father, do not forget my brother Simeon in your holy prayers, lest he withdraw from me to his mother, carried away by love for her; otherwise the harbor will become for us a place of drowning."

The elder marveled at such love between them, and promising to pray for them, he blessed them, sealing them with the sign of the Cross, and dismissed them in peace.

Having departed from the Venerable abbot, the servants of Christ, Simeon and John, prayed:

"O God! By the prayers of Thy servant, our father Nikon, lead us Thyself wherever Thou wishest; for we are wanderers and know neither the place nor the country to which to turn, but we strive toward Thee, though perhaps in the depths of the desert death awaits us."

Then John turned to Simeon:

"What shall we do now, brother? Where shall we go?"

Simeon answered:

"Let us go to the right, for all that is on the right is good."

And they went to the right side; and this was by the providence of God, for the Lord does not forsake His servants. Having walked a considerable distance, they came to the Dead Sea[16] and found near the sea and the Jordan, which flows into that sea, a suitable place and a cell where one desert-dweller had lived, who had reposed in the Lord a few days before. There were also small vessels here, and a garden with planted vegetables, on which the reposed elder had fed. Seeing this, the servants of Christ rejoiced as greatly as one who finds a considerable treasure, and gave thanks to God, and settling there, began to live. A little time later, the enemy of our souls, the devil, unable to endure the God-pleasing life of the servants of Christ, began war against them, planting in John the memory of his wife and father, and in Simeon love for his mother. And when they saw each other grieving, they at once said to one another:

16. The Dead Sea is an inland salt lake in the south-eastern part of Palestine; its length from north to south is 76 km, its width about 3.5–16 km; the peninsula of Lisan divides it into two basins, the northern basin being deeper than the southern. The water of the Dead Sea is saturated with salts (about 25%) to such a degree that fish cannot live in it. The specific gravity of the water is so high that organic bodies falling into it do not sink. Over a considerable area around the sea the earth is covered with salt. On the site of the Dead Sea was the fertile valley of Siddim with the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

"Stand, brother, let us pray together to our Master Jesus Christ, that He may keep us from the enemy's snares through the prayers of our holy elder Nikon."

And as they prayed, the help of God came to them at once, repelling the hostile snares laid against them. At times the tempter would instill in them a desire to taste meat and drink wine; at times he would show them their parents and kinsfolk in dreams, either grieving over them or feasting; now he cast them into dejection and sloth, now, intending to terrify them with apparitions, he again put into their minds the thought of returning to the monastery, as though the solitary life had become unbearable to them. And by manifold means that many-colored serpent sought to disrupt the righteous life of those praiseworthy ascetics. But they, remembering their vows and the bright crowns which they had first seen upon one another's heads, and remembering also the admonitions and tears of their elder, prevailed in the service of the Lord, and were consoled, often feeling in their hearts a certain spiritual sweetness. After their manful resistance to the temptations of the enemy, the Venerable Nikon appeared to them in a dream; he would admonish them, or offer prayer to God on their behalf, or teach them psalms and prayers. And on waking they remembered by day what they had learned from him in sleep, and this brought them great joy. In the same way the Lord lightened the sorrow arising from remembrance of their kin, after two years, by such revelations. It seemed to Simeon in a night vision that he visited his mother in her house and spoke to her in the Syriac tongue:

– Ladochrelichem, that is, do not be anxious, Mother; for we are well: I and Lord John are in health and settled in the royal palace, and behold, we wear the crowns with which the emperor has crowned us, adorned in bright garments; tell also the father of John that he should not grieve for his son, and, in general, do not be concerned for us.

This vision was repeated to Simeon many times, and from it he understood that his mother no longer grieved for him, being consoled by God. Likewise to John in a dream there appeared a certain most radiant face, with these words:

– Behold, I have made your father free of sorrow, instilling in him peace and gladness, and your wife I shall take into my kingdom in these days.

Telling one another of such visions, John and Simeon rejoiced in their souls and exulted in God their Savior. And from that time the first knew no sorrow concerning his father and wife, and the second concerning his mother; but they had one care, day and night to glorify God. For them it was no wearisome labor and no sorrowful care to offer prayers unceasingly, and in a short time they became worthy vessels of the Holy Spirit and were granted to contemplate the divine revelations. At times they lived apart from one another, but not far, no more than a stone's throw away. And if a hostile thought came to one of them, he at once, troubled, ran to the other; for they opened to one another their thoughts, and praying together, they drove away the snares of the enemy.

After some time, the blessed Simeon, sitting in a separate place, fell into ecstasy and saw himself in his homeland, in the city of Edessa,[17] visiting his sick mother, with these words:

– How are you, Mother?

And she answers:

– I am well, my son!

He again said to her:

– Go without fear to the King, for I have entreated Him on your behalf and prepared for you a good place, and when He wills, I too shall come to you.

Coming to himself after this vision, Simeon understood that at that very moment his mother had died, and hastened to John, asking him to

17. Edessa, the present-day Urfa, a city in northern Mesopotamia on the river Euphrates, from 137 B.C. the chief city of the newly formed Osroene or Edessene kingdom; in A.D. 217 Edessa was made by the Romans an eastern colony. Christianity appeared early in Edessa; in the fourth century St. Ephraim the Syrian founded here a theological school, which in the fifth century inclined toward Nestorianism, in whose favor the teacher of the Edessene school, the presbyter Ibas, exerted much influence. In 641 Edessa was conquered by the Arab caliphs; in 1098 it was seized by Count Baldwin, who made it the chief city of the Principality of Edessa; in 1144 Edessa was conquered by the Turks, and from that time passed from hand to hand, until in 1637 it finally fell under Turkish rule.

pray for the soul of his mother; and he himself, bending his knees, prayed thus with tears:

– O God, who graciously accepted the sacrifice of Abraham (Gen. 22:1–24) and did not reject the offering of Jephthah (Judg. 11:1–40) and did not despise the gifts of Abel (Gen. 4:1–26), who for the sake of thy servant Samuel didst make his mother Anna a prophetess (1 Kgdms. 1:1–28, 2:1–36), Thou, my Lord, O Lord! For my sake, Thy servant, receive the soul of my good mother; remember her infirmities and labors endured for my sake; remember her contrition and the tears which she shed when I took refuge from her with Thee. Remember the breast with which she nursed me, hoping to have from me help and consolation and not receiving what she hoped for. Forget not, O Master, her heartfelt sobs caused by me when I left her for Thy sake. Recall how many nights sleep did not come to her eyes, from her constant thought of her orphanhood and my youth. O how her heart was grieved, looking upon my garments, in which her precious treasure no longer was clothed! Remember how many joys and gladness I deprived her of by my departure from her, to serve Thee, my and her Master and God! Give her Thy strong guardian Angel, who shall deliver her soul from the crafty and merciless aerial spirits, who desire to destroy all.[4779] Command, O my God, that her soul be parted from the body without sickness and fear, and, as the Good One, forgive her all the sins which she committed in this life. Yea, O righteous God! Lead her not from sorrow into sorrow, from trouble into trouble, and from grief to grief, but instead of the sorrow with which she grieved for me, her only son, grant her joy, and instead of woe, gladness, prepared, O my God, for Thy saints.

John also prayed together with him for the soul of the departed. And rising from prayer, John consoled Simeon:

– Behold, brother, God has heard thy prayers and has taken thy mother to Himself; labor yet with me, and let us both pray to the Lord, that He may show His mercy also to my former wife, and either bring her to the monastic life, or take her from this world to Himself.

And both prayed for this.

Not much time passed, and John, being in ecstasy, saw his wife sitting in her house: Simeon's mother came to her, took her by the hands, and says:

– Rise, my sister, and let us go to my dwelling, for the King has given me an adorned house and has made my son, together with your husband, His warriors; change your garments and clothe yourself in clean ones.

And at once she rose, changed her garments, and went after her. From this vision John understood that his wife had died and, together with Simeon's mother, had settled in the place of the righteous, and he rejoiced greatly. From this time both became free of sorrow, and they remained in the desert, living together, enduring every kind of suffering for twenty-nine years, manfully wrestling with the invisible enemies and, by the grace of God, conquering and driving them away. And especially Simeon attained to such great dispassion that his body became as though an insensible tree, feeling no strong desire, since all his members had been mortified.

Once Simeon said to John:

– We have no further need, brother, to remain in the desert, but listen to me, let us go and labor for the salvation of others: here we help only ourselves, and we have no reward for helping others. Does not the Apostle say: "Let no one seek his own, but each the good of another," and again: "I try to please all men in all things, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved" (1 Cor. 10:24, 33). And again: "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22).

John answered him:

– I think, brother, that Satan, hating our solitude, has suggested this thought to thee, but resist him and remain here, that the labor which we have begun here, and to which we have been called by God, we may also complete in this desert.

Simeon replied to him:

– Believe me, brother, that I shall no longer remain here, but by the power of Christ I am going and will mock at the world.

John began to say to him:

– I have not yet attained such perfection that I could mock at the world; I fear lest it somehow put me to shame and deprive me of the grace of God. I beseech thee, my good brother, for the sake of the Lord who has joined us, do not forsake me, humble as I am, do not be separated from thy brother; thou knowest that after God I have no one but thee alone, my brother; I have renounced all and have attached myself to thee alone. And now thou wishest, as into the sea, to leave me alone in this desert. Remember the day when we cast lots and went together to serve the Lord, and promised not to be separated from one another. Remember the hour when our Venerable Father Nikon clothed us in the holy great angelic schema, and we were both as one soul, and all marveled at our love. Forget not the words of the great elder with which he consoled and admonished us at night when we went out from the monastery; do not forsake me, brother, I beg thee, lest somehow I perish alone without thee, and God require of thee my soul.

Simeon admonished him:

– Consider me as dead; indeed, if I had died, wouldst thou not have remained alone? Believe, then, that if thou goest with me, thou wilt do well; if thou goest not, it is thy will; I, however, shall not remain here in any case, but am going wherever God bids me.

John understood that this was an inspiration from God to his brother, that he should go from the desert into the world, and he no longer contradicted him. Grieving, however, at his separation from his brother, he spoke to him thus:

"Take heed, beloved Symeon, that the world does not scatter what you have gathered in the desert. What you have achieved through silence, let it not be harmed by worldly talk; let not sleep ruin your all-night vigils, nor worldly pleasures scatter the contemplation proper to a monk. Beware lest the sight of women, from whom God has kept you until this day, destroy your chastity; and let not the love of gathering possessions snatch away your desert poverty of possessions. Let not your fasts be undone by the eating of many kinds of dishes, nor your weeping be destroyed by laughter, nor your prayer by sloth. If you have indeed received from God such strength that you may remain unharmed for your salvation in the world, among men, nevertheless keep your

heart carefully from what you do in the sight of men with the body. Let the will take no part in it; let your soul not be touched by what the hand touches; let the heart take no pleasure in what the lips taste; let the inner peace not be disturbed by the feet that walk forward; let nothing done outwardly be felt within; and let your mind remain untroubled. I rejoice in your salvation. Only pray for me to God, that He may not separate us from one another in the age to come."

"Do not be afraid, my dear brother John," Symeon answered him. "What I wish to do is not by my own will but by the will of God. You will know that my work is pleasing to God from this: I shall come to you before my death, greet you, and call you with me, and within a few days you will follow me."

Having thus conversed, the two of them stood in prayer and prayed for a long time with many tears. Then, embracing one another several times and kissing each other's lips and breast, John took leave of Symeon, accompanying him a long way, for he did not wish to be parted from him. And each time Symeon said to him:

"Go back now, brother John"—these words were for him like a sharp sword, severing the soul from the body. At last, having kissed one another, they parted: Symeon went out into the world, and John returned to the desert, shedding tears from his eyes.

Having left the desert, the blessed Symeon went to the holy city of Jerusalem, for he greatly desired to see the holy places which he had not seen for so many years. When he came to the holy Golgotha[4780], he remained there three days, going to and worshipping the honorable and life-giving Cross and the holy Tomb of the Lord. He prayed diligently to God that the Lord would hide his deeds from men until he departed from this world, so that he might avoid empty glory and pride, which destroyed and cast down even the Angels from heaven; and that all would take him for a madman and a fool, and that he might receive what he asked. The Lord hears the prayers of His true servants and attends to their petitions.

After that, the servant of God performed many miracles: he cast out demons, foretold the future, healed all kinds of sicknesses, delivered from sudden death, brought unbelievers to the faith, and persuaded sin-

ners to repentance. Nevertheless, men could not know the full extent of his holiness, for God hid it from them, and even until his death they considered him a fool and a demoniac. He himself knew how to conceal his wondrous deeds, performed by the grace of God, beneath the outwardly visible foolishness, as the following account will show. Let no one be scandalized on reading of certain strange and laughter-provoking actions which the holy Symeon performed in feigned foolishness, mocking the vain and proud world; rather, let each one consider the apostolic words: "If any man among you thinks he is wise in this age, let him become a fool" (1 Cor. 3:18–19). And again: "We are fools for Christ's sake, but the foolishness of God is wiser than men" (1 Cor. 4:10; 1:25).

From Jerusalem the Venerable Symeon went to the city of Emesa, and there he began his foolishness for Christ's sake. Approaching the city, he saw a dead dog on a dunghill; taking off his belt, he tied the dog by a leg and dragged it into the city. He passed quickly through the gates and dragged it through the streets. A crowd of children gathered and ran after him shouting:

"A foolish monk! A foolish monk!"

They threw stones at him and beat him with sticks. On Sunday morning he entered the church at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, having nuts hidden in his bosom. First of all Symeon began to put out the candles, and when they wanted to drive him away, he leapt onto the ambo and threw nuts at the women, and with great difficulty they were able to expel him from the church. As he fled, he overturned the loaves offered for sale, and he was so severely beaten by the bread-sellers that he barely survived. After this, a certain tavern-keeper, a seller of prepared food and pottage, an impious man who held to the heresy of Severus[18], seeing the blessed old man and not suspecting his foolishness, addressed him:

18. Severus, Patriarch of Antioch (512–518), a prominent and zealous adherent of the Monophysite heresy, which consists in the assertion that the Lord Jesus Christ, though born of two natures, does not subsist in two, since at the incarnation of the Son of God the human nature, assumed by God the Word, became merely a property of His Divinity, lost its actual existence, and can be separated from it only mentally.

"Why do you wander about, old man? Come to me and sell pottage, beans, groats, and other food."

He at once agreed, and, sitting in that man's little room, began to distribute the provisions free of charge to the beggars who came, and ate them himself, for he had taken no food for a whole week. When he had given everything away and collected no money, the man began to beat him severely, tore out his beard, and drove him out of his house; but the old man, not going away, sat down at the gate. After an hour, hearing that the tavern-keeper's wife had asked for hot coals to kindle incense, he ran to the stove and, finding no shovel, took the hot coals in handfuls and brought them to the mistress so that she might put incense on them for censing. Seeing this, she was horrified, cried out, and shouted at him:

"What are you doing? Why are you burning your hands?"

He, transferring the fire into his garment, said:

"If it is not pleasing to you that I should cense with my hands, then I will cense with my clothing."

And, putting on the incense, he censed until the coals went out. Seeing his hands and clothing unharmed by the fire, the husband and wife were greatly amazed and afterwards joined the catholic Church, and they began to honor the old man as a saint. But he fled from that house and did not return until the miracle had been forgotten.

When he was playing the fool in the city, a certain keeper of a tavern took him into his service and kept him as a slave. He was of a cruel and merciless nature and seldom gave the old man food, although he gained much profit through him, for the townspeople said, mocking:

"Let us go drink at the tavern where the fool is."

The old man, by his foolishness, amused those who drank. Once a serpent crept in, drank wine from a vessel, and, releasing its poison into it, crept away. No one was in the room at the time, and the fool was outside the house, capering among the people and dancing to the music of a tambourine. After some time he entered the house and saw over the vessel a word visible to no one else: "Death."

Understanding what had happened, the old man took a stick and broke the vessel full of wine, and the wine was spilled. At that moment

the tavern-keeper came in and, seeing that the old man had broken the vessel, seized the same stick and beat him without mercy until he himself was tired, and drove him out of the house. The next morning the old man came back to the tavern and, as if hiding from his master, again the serpent crept in and began to drink wine from another vessel. Seeing this, the tavern-keeper seized a stick and, intending to kill the serpent, struck at the vessel; the serpent crept away, but the vessel broke and the wine was spilled. Not only that vessel but also the cups standing near it were broken. The old man, standing behind, cried out:

"You see, it is not I alone, the madman, who break vessels; you too do the same."

Then the tavern-keeper, understanding why Symeon had broken the vessel of wine the day before, repented that he had beaten Symeon cruelly and without cause, and began to honor him as a saint. But the old man, not desiring honor for himself but desiring dishonor and reproach, and wisely covering with the appearance of foolishness his angelic life in the flesh, did the following thing. One day, when the tavern-keeper's wife was resting alone in her room while her husband was selling wine, the old man came to her and began to take off his clothes, pretending that he wished to lie with her. Seeing this, she cried out, and the tavern-keeper came running, to whom his wife said:

"Drive out this accursed fool, for he wants to ravish me."

The husband struck the old man on the ears and drove him out into the cold. There was a strong frost and rain, and the old man sat outside the house, enduring the cold in a single worn and torn garment. From that time on, not only did the tavern-keeper himself not consider him a saint, but also whenever anyone said to others that Symeon was playing the fool for Christ's sake, he swore an oath and declared:

"Truly, he is possessed and deranged, and moreover a fornicator: he wanted to ravish my wife, he eats meat and does other unseemly things, like one who does not know God."

For the venerable man, many times, after a seven-day fast, ate meat in the presence of all, deliberately so that everyone would consider him not only a fool but also a sinner. To reveal still more his supposed madness, casting off human shame, he many times walked nude through

the marketplace, like an incorporeal being, a true imitator of the incorporeal ones. A deacon serving in the church of that city, named John, a virtuous and God-pleasing man, who knew well Symeon's feigned foolishness for Christ's sake, once saw the old man greatly weakened in body, whether from fasting or from the burdens borne in his foolishness, and wishing, as if in jest, to wash him, asked:

"Will you go to the bath to wash yourself, fool?"

And he, laughing, said:

"I will go, I will go."

And at once he took off his rags, rolled them up, and put them on his head. The deacon said to him:

"Dress yourself, brother, for if you go naked, I will not go with you."

The old man answered him:

"I have done the thing before the thing itself; and if you do not want to go with me, I will forewarn you."

With these words he ran ahead. There were two baths: one for men, the other for women. Leaving the men's bath aside, he went to the women's. The deacon, overtaking him, cried out:

"Wait, holy fool, do not go in there; for that is the women's bath."

Turning to him, Symeon said:

"It is all the same: there is hot water and cold water there, and here is hot water and cold water; there is nothing special either there or here."

With these words he rushed forward, and naked, entered the bath and sat down among the women. They all at once fell upon him, beat him and drove him out from among them. Afterwards the deacon asked the saint, particularly when they were alone:

"Father, how did your flesh feel when you entered naked among naked women?"

The elder answered:

"Believe me, brother, that it was all the same to me, as a tree among trees, so was I among them, not perceiving that I had a body, not thinking that I was among bodily creatures; but my whole thought was directed to the work of God."

Such dispassion of his mortified body the Blessed One revealed to that deacon, from whom he did not conceal even the whole of his life, seeing in him a true servant of God. And between the two of them there arose a friendly love in Christ, and they knew each other's God-pleasing works.

By his foolishness, the Venerable Symeon saved not only himself but others also: he led many sinners to repentance, instructing them by word and deed. One youth fell into the sin of adultery and immediately, by God's punishment, was given over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Cor. 5:5), and was tormented by an unclean spirit. Seeing this, the elder struck him on the cheek and said into his ear:

"Do not commit adultery."

And at once the demon went out of him, and the youth became well. To those who asked how he had been healed, he related:

"I saw an elder with a wooden cross in his hand, who drove away from me a black, terrible dog with blows of the cross, and I became well."

He could not reveal that Symeon the fool had healed him, because God restrained his tongue even until Symeon's death. There was one comedian, who performed amusing shows in the squares, named Psiphas. When he was performing his customary act before the people, Symeon came there and, seeing the comedian, perceived some virtue in his life, and wishing to turn him away from the manifestly unpleasing-to-God work he was doing, took a very small stone and, making the sign of the cross, threw it at him and struck him in the right hand, and at once the man's hand withered—and no one could find out who had thrown the stone. The comedian left sick and downcast. In a dream the Venerable Symeon appeared to him, saying:

"Behold, I threw a stone at you, and if you do not repent and swear to me that you will no longer engage in that ridiculous art, you will not be healed."

The man swore to him by the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos that he would no longer show those games, and, rising, he felt himself well, and his hand was healed; but he could not name his healer, and only kept repeating that some monk with a wreath of palm branches on his

head had healed him. The Venerable also foresaw the future and foretold it obscurely to others. A few days before the great earthquake in the reign of Maurice[19], by which Antioch fell[20] and many stone buildings in Emesa were destroyed, the elder, playing the fool, snatched a braided leather whip from a school and, running about the city, struck the stone columns that supported the buildings; and before some of the columns he said:

"The Lord commands you to stand firm."

And before one he said:

"You neither stand nor fall." And when the earthquake came, all the columns to which the saint, striking them, had commanded to stand remained whole and unharmed; others fell, and the houses that leaned on them were broken to dust. But the column to which the saint had said "do not stand, do not fall" split in two from top to bottom and stood, leaning somewhat. When the saint, striking the columns, commanded them to stand, many thought he was doing this in frenzy; but when they saw that after the earthquake they stood whole and unharmed, many then understood that it had been a prophetic sign of the fool concerning the earthquake. Likewise, when a plague was about to come, the saint went into the schools, kissed the children as though laughing, saying to each:

"Go, O my good one! Go, O my fair one!"

He did not kiss all the children, but only those indicated by the grace of God. And to the teacher he said:

"So, brother, for God's sake, do not beat those children whom I kiss, because they have a long journey to make."

The teacher, however, mocked him, sometimes beating him himself, sometimes ordering the children to beat him; and they tied the elder to

19. St. Maurice, emperor 582–602.

20. The city of Antioch has a particularly important significance for the Christian Church as the second great center of Christianity after Jerusalem, and as the first Christian church from among the Gentiles. Antioch was founded 300 years before the Nativity of Christ by the Syrian king Seleucus Nicator, who founded more than ten other cities named Antioch, thereby wishing to perpetuate the name of his father Antiochus. This capital Antioch, to distinguish it from the others, was called Antioch Epidaphne, that is, near the temple and grove of Daphne; it was also distinguished by the name Antioch on the Orontes, after the river on whose bank it stood about 10 versts from its confluence with the Mediterranean Sea.

a column and beat him. And when, by God's permission, the plague came upon the city, not one of those children whom the saint had kissed remained alive, but all died; and then they understood his prophecy.

The elder had the custom of entering the houses of the rich and playing the fool, and he often kissed their maidservants before everyone. It happened that a maidservant of a distinguished citizen sinned with a certain youth and conceived by him; and when it became known that she was pregnant, and her mistress asked her with whom she had sinned, the maidservant would not name her seducer, but said that the fool monk had violated her. When the elder, as was his custom, came to that house, the mistress said to him:

"Is it well done of you, Symeon, to have violated my maidservant, who is even pregnant by you?"

The elder laughed at her:

"Do not worry now, do not worry, until she gives birth, and you will have a little Symeon."

From that day the elder began to call that maidservant his wife, and constantly came to her, bringing her pure bread, meat and fish, saying:

"Eat, my wife, eat."

When the time of birth came, that woman fell ill and for three days could not give birth, and drew near to death. Her mistress turned to the saint, asking him:

"Pray to God, elder, for your wife cannot give birth."

And he, playing and clapping his hands, added:

"I swear by Jesus, I swear by Jesus, she will not bring forth the child until she confesses who its father is."

Hearing this, the woman in labor revealed the truth: that she had slandered the innocent monk, and she named her seducer with whom she had sinned. Then she gave birth to the child, and they began to regard the elder as a saint; but others said that he practiced sorcery by the action of Satan, for he was a fool and possessed.

The saint also perceived the secret thoughts of human hearts, as is clear from the following. Near the city there was a monastery where two fathers, in their conversations, were discussing Origen and why such a wise man had fallen into heresy[4784]. One maintained that Ori-

gen's wisdom was not from God, but came from learning and reading many books; and the other, that it was impossible for a man, without the grace of God, to speak and write as Origen did, so that some of his writings are still accepted by the Orthodox. Thus, after long disputes and disagreements, they agreed between themselves:

"We hear that the Jordan desert has great holy fathers, made wise by God; let us go there, and perhaps we will find someone who can resolve our doubt."

Having so decided, they first went to the holy city of Jerusalem, and, after venerating the holy places, they set out for the desert of the Dead Sea; and by God's providence, who did not disdain their labors, they found the Venerable John, who was a friend and companion of Symeon.

John had by that time also attained the full measure of holiness and possessed the gift of foresight. As soon as he saw the fathers coming to him, he said to them:

"You have done well, fathers, to leave the sea in order to draw from a dry lake."

After a lengthy spiritual conversation between them, when the dispute about Origen was also mentioned, the Venerable John said to those who had come:

"I, fathers, have not received from God the gift of reasoning about things unknown; but go to the fool Symeon who is in your city, and he will answer you on whatever you ask."

They, returning home, came to the city of Emesa and asked:

"Where is the elder Symeon, the fool?"

Some, laughing, said to them:

“What do you want to hear from a madman who leads everyone astray, mocks everything, and most of all troubles the monks?”

They, disregarding such words, sought the elder and found him in the house of a greengrocer, lying over a bean and eating a bean like a bear. And at once one of them, tempted, thought to himself with a laugh:

"Truly we have come to see a great sage! We can learn much from him!"

Approaching him, they said:

"Bless us, father!"

He, looking at them, said with anger:

"You came in vain, and he is a madman who sent you to me."

Then, rising, he struck the tempted one hard on the cheek, crying out:

"Why do you scold the bean? It has been soaked forty days; Origen did not eat such a thing; but he went into the sea, could not come out of it, and drowned in its depths. Go away from here, go away, or you will be beaten!"

They went away, marveling at the elder's foresight, for without asking them he had spoken to them about Origen, recalled the one who had sent them, and exposed the secret thought of their hearts; but they could not tell anyone about it. And what he said about the bean, that it had been soaked forty days, meant that for so many days he had remained without food, as he himself later told his friend, the deacon John.

Once, taking a pipe from the greengrocer's shop, he went out into the street to a nearby place where, in an empty house, an unclean spirit had settled, frightening many who passed by late and harming some. Sitting there, the saint played on the pipe the prayer of his Venerable Father Nikon, which he had learned from him, and by it drove the demon out of there. The demon, taking the form of a small terrible Ethiopian, ran into the greengrocer's shop, frightened everyone there, and broke all the dishes. When Symeon returned, he saw the greengrocer's wife frightened and dejected; she told him:

"Some terrible and furious Moor, of low stature, came in quickly, frightened us all, and broke all the dishes."

And the saint said to her:

"It was I who sent him against you, because you do not join the holy Church (for they held to the heresy of Severus)."

The woman wanted to seize the holy fool and beat him, but he stooped down, took a handful of earth, threw it into her face, and covered her eyes with earth, crying out to her:

"Truly, you shall not seize me until you join my Church; and if you are unwilling to join, the Moor will come to you again."

With these words he ran away from that house. On the next day, at the same hour, the demon, as on the day before, in the form of an Ethiopian, entered the same vegetable storehouse and did just as he had done the first time. Then all who lived in that house, without delay, joined the Orthodox Church. Likewise, one Jew, a blasphemer of the name of Jesus Christ, was converted to Christ by the Venerable Symeon. That Jew (for God was showing him the way to salvation) once saw the old man bathing and two Angels conversing with him; and understanding that he was a servant of God, he wished to make known among the people what he had seen. But the saint appeared to him in a dream and forbade him to tell anyone what he had seen. The Jew, however, the next morning, going out into the square, was unable to keep the secret; but when he was about to address the people with an account of Symeon, the saint immediately appeared to him and touched his lips, tracing a cross upon them, and made him mute; and he himself fled from him, leaping and playing among the people, while the Jew remained mute. Then the Jew came to the saint, bowing, and by nodding his head showed him that he must be baptized. Afterwards the old man appeared to him in a dream, saying:

"Either be baptized, or remain mute."

So the Jew was baptized, and when he came up out of the holy font, he at once regained the use of his tongue and began to glorify God. Then he brought all his household to holy Baptism.

Such purity and dispassion did the saint attain, that even while playing among the women he remained like pure gold in the fire; and many times shameless women lewdly tickled him, putting their hands into his bosom, but he remained as though dead, like an insensible tree, freed, by the grace of God, from all natural desire. He told of himself to the aforementioned deacon John:

"When I was in the desert, and at first had much disturbance from fleshly passions, and I prayed God for relief from the struggle, Saint Nikon appeared to me and asked:

'How do you live, brother?'

And I answered:

'I suffer cruelly, Father, and if you do not help me, I do not know what to do, for the flesh rises up strongly against me.'

The old man, smiling, scooped up water from the holy Jordan and, pouring it on my belly with the sign of the cross, said:

'There, you are healed.'

And from that time I ceased to feel fleshly desire, both in sleep and in waking."

Thus did the blessed one tell of himself to that deacon. Being dispassionate, he went up to women without fear; and as in ancient times the bush in Sinai remained unburnt amid the fire (Ex. 3), so he remained unscathed by the touch of women. Saint Symeon came into their company, desiring their salvation. Sometimes he would say to some harlot:

"Do you want me to take you as my companion? I will give you 100 gold coins, only do not commit sin with anyone."

With these words he showed the harlot gold, which God gave him invisibly, as much as he wished. The harlots, mocking him, promised not to sin with anyone. But he demanded an oath from them. And if one swore to keep herself pure for the rest of her time, he gave her gold; but if, failing to keep her oath, she sinned, the saint immediately learned of it, rebuked her, and sent upon her either some grievous sickness or a demon to torment her, until she gave true proof that she had truly repented. But as soon as people began to consider him a saint, he at once did something that was a clear proof not of holiness but of madness: sometimes he walked limping, and sometimes leaping; sometimes he crawled on the ground, catching the feet of passers-by; sometimes he lay on the ground, kicking with his legs. At the new moons he pretended to be possessed and fell down as one seized by a demon. And he did many other things, unpleasant to human eyes and absurd, showing himself to all as a madman, so that no one would think him a saint. Once, during the holy Fast, he went without food; but on Holy Thursday, early in the morning, he sat in the marketplace and ate. Seeing this, the passers-by said:

"Look at this madman; he does not even honor Holy Thursday, but eats early in the morning."

Seeing him, the deacon John asked:

"For how much did you buy what you are eating?"

He answered:

"For forty copper coins."

Indicating covertly that he had not eaten for forty days. Hearing of such a life of Symeon, a certain nobleman who lived near Emesa thought to himself:

"I will go and look at him and learn whether he acts the fool for Christ, or whether he is truly mad."

When he came into the city and was near the dwelling of the harlots, he saw that one harlot was carrying the old man on her shoulders, and another was beating him with a strap; and he was scandalized in his thoughts:

"Who will believe that this lying monk does not commit fornication with these unclean women?"

While he was thinking thus to himself, he was still at the distance of a thrown stone from the holy fool; the old man, leaving those women, ran to the nobleman and, striking him on the face, opened his garment and, without shame, showed him his mortified flesh; leaping before him, he asked:

"Do you think, wretch, that desire could arise here?"

The other was amazed that the old man, even from afar, knew his thoughts, and was convinced that he was a servant of God who of his own will played the fool for Christ's sake; but he could tell no one of it, though he wished to: for by some power (as with others) his tongue was restrained until the saint's death.

The demon again took possession of another empty house on a certain street in the city. Approaching it, the Venerable Symeon saw the demon, who was preparing to strike, waiting for passers-by; then the old man gathered small stones into his bosom, stood on the opposite side, and threw a stone at everyone who wished to go along that way, letting no one pass. Only one dog slipped through there, and at once, struck by the demon, began to foam at the mouth.

Then the saint said to the people:

"Now pass by; for, instead of a man, a dog has been struck."

After that, the old man had to pass by a place where a multitude of girls were making merry. Seeing him, those girls began to mock him, crying:

"Monk! Monk!"

And they called him into their gathering. But he, wishing to punish their unseemliness and make them more chaste, secretly prayed to God in his heart and made all their eyes squint, so that each became cross-eyed; and the old man went on. The girls, feeling the crookedness of their eyes, understood that the holy fool had done this, and ran after him, crying with weeping:

"Set us right, holy fool, set our eyes right!"

They thought he had done it by sorcery. Overtaking the old man, they seized him and forced him, saying:

"Undo what you have bound," they said.

And he, jesting, said:

"If any of you wishes to be healed, let her allow me to kiss her crooked eyes, and she will be healed."

Some of them, whom God wished to heal, consented to let the old man kiss them on the eyes, and from the kiss they were at once healed: their eyes became as they had been before. But those who scorned the old man and would not consent to his kissing them remained unhealed and wept. When the old man had gone not very far from them, they ran after him with cries:

"Wait, holy fool, wait, for God's sake, wait! Kiss us!"

But the old man did not heed them. Thus the old man ran, and the girls pursued him. Of those who saw this, some said:

"The girls are playing with him."

And others thought them to have become foolish; the saint said to some of the onlookers:

"If God had not twisted their eyes, they would have surpassed all the women of Syria in fornication; but now they will not be such."

Once some citizens of Emesa went to Jerusalem for the feast of Pascha. When they were returning home after the feast, one of them

separated from the others and set out into the desert to visit the holy fathers, so as to be granted their prayers and blessing. He went around the fathers' cells with gifts, giving alms from his property. By God's providence it happened that he met the Venerable John, who lived near the Dead Sea and the Jordan and was a companion of Saint Symeon; the citizen bowed to him, asking for his blessing and prayers. And the Venerable John said to him:

"Having in your city the servant of God Symeon, called a Fool-for-Christ, why do you ask prayers of me, a poor man? Not only I, but the whole world has need of his prayers."

And taking that man, he led him into his cell; and there, in his cell, was found a meal sent by God, placed there by an unseen hand, unusual for the desert: there were pure, warm loaves, good fish, wine, and a vessel. And they sat down, and having eaten and been satisfied, they gave thanks to God. After the meal the Venerable John, taking three prosphora, likewise sent by God, gave them to that man with the words:

"Take this to my brother, Symeon the Fool-for-Christ, and say to him: 'Pray for your brother John.'"

When that man, returning, entered Emesa, the Venerable Symeon met him at the gates with the words:

"Is my brother John well? Did you not eat the three prosphora which he sent me as a blessing?"

The one returning was amazed at such foresight. The elder, taking him into his poor dwelling, offered him the same meal sent by God that the Venerable John had provided for him in the wilderness; and Symeon told him everything they had spoken of with John in that wilderness, and what they had drunk and eaten. Coming out from the elder, that man, greatly amazed with dread at the elder's foresight, did not dare to tell anyone about it, partly restrained by God and partly ashamed before people, since he knew they would not believe him: for everyone considered Symeon insane—he who was wiser than all people.

Once it happened to the aforementioned Deacon John, by God's permission, that a calamity befell him: malefactors committed a murder in

the city at night and, taking the corpse of the slain man, cast it into the deacon's yard. When day came and the dead man was found in the deacon's house, there was no small stir: the judge seized the deacon and judged him as a murderer, and no witnesses to his innocence were found, and he could not clear himself. The innocent deacon was condemned to death—to be hanged from a tree. As they led him to the place of execution, he said nothing but:

"God of the fool, help me! God of Symeon, be present at this hour!"

Symeon, meanwhile, was somewhere else practicing his foolishness. The Lord willed to deliver the innocent deacon from so vain and shameful a death, and so a man came to the elder and said:

"Fool! Your friend and benefactor, Deacon John, has been condemned to death, and if he dies, you will perish of hunger, for no one else cares for you."

And with these words he told him why the deacon had been condemned to death. The saint at once went to a secret place where he was accustomed to pray in solitude, which no one knew except this deacon; there, kneeling, he began earnestly to beseech God to deliver the deacon from death. And at once the very murderers were found, and horsemen were hastily sent by the judge after those who were leading the deacon to death, to release the innocent man. They found them already at the place where the deacon was to be hanged. The released deacon went not to his own house but straight to the place where St. Symeon was praying, and found him not yet finished with his prayer, standing with his hands raised upward; the deacon, in terror, stopped not far behind St. Symeon, for he saw (which he afterward confirmed with an oath) a flame, like swords, coming out of the saint's mouth, and a fiery radiance around him; and the deacon did not dare to approach him until he had finished his prayer and the fiery radiance had ascended to heaven. Looking round, the saint said to the deacon:

"What, Brother John, did you nearly drink the cup of death? Go, pray, and give thanks to God the Deliverer: this temptation befell you because two beggars came to you and you had something to give, but you did not give it; you turned away from them and let them go empty-handed. Is what you give your own? Or do you not believe the One who

said that whoever gives to a beggar for God's sake will receive a hundredfold in this age, and in the age to come will receive eternal life? If you believe, give; if you do not give, it is clear you do not believe the Lord."

Such were the words of the fool, or rather, of the holy and venerable man: for when he was alone with that deacon, he did nothing foolish, but spoke with gentleness and heartfelt contrition about what was profitable; and many times that deacon, listening to the soul-profitable words of the saint, perceived a great fragrance issuing from his lips.

One Sunday morning, after a seven-day fast, St. Symeon, playing the fool, took in his right hand a piece of smoked meat, called in Greek *ellas* and in Latin *lucanica*, otherwise sausage; he laid it on his shoulder like a deacon's orarion, and in his left hand he held mustard, and dipping the sausage in the mustard, he ate it. To those who came to make sport of him he smeared mustard on their lips. A rough peasant with sore eyes, having a cataract in one of them, approached him, and St. Symeon suddenly smeared mustard over his eyes. The man cried out from the sharp pain in his eyes caused by the strong mustard. And the fool said to him:

"Go, madman, wash yourself with vinegar and garlic, and you will be healed at once."

But the man, not heeding the saint, went to physicians, became even more blind, and his illness grew worse. Afterward, repenting, he made a vow to himself: even if his eyes should be torn out, he would do what the elder commanded. And when he washed his eyes with vinegar and garlic, at that very moment his eyes were fully restored to health. Afterward the saint met him somewhere on the road and said:

"Now you are healthy; do not steal goats from your neighbor."

Thus the saint punished a thief, knowing the hidden deeds of men. Five hundred gold coins had been stolen from a townsman, and the man grieved over his lost gold and diligently sought to learn of it; he was cruel to his slaves and beat them mercilessly. Once the elder who played the fool met him in the street with the words:

"Do you wish your gold coins to be found?"

"Indeed, yes, I wish it," he answered.

"And what will you pay me?" asked the fool, "if you find the gold at once?"

The man promised ten gold coins.

"I do not need gold," said the saint, "but swear that you will not beat the thief, nor anyone else either."

And the townsman swore to him. Then the saint revealed to him:

"Your baker stole the gold coins, but beware: do not beat him or anyone else."

The man returned to his house, found everything as the saint had said, and took the gold from his slave the baker whole, and did not beat him. Afterward, when he wished to strike one of his slaves for some fault, his hand became painfully stiff and he could not strike. Recalling his oath, he went to the fool, pleading:

"Release me from my oath, fool, so that my hand may act freely."

But the other, as if not understanding, went on playing the fool. He came to him many times, pestering him to release him from the oath. Then the saint appeared to him in a dream-vision with the words:

"I will release you from the oath, but I will also deprive you of your gold, and I will destroy all your property. Why do you wish to beat your servants, who in the age to come will go before you?"

After that vision, the man, coming into the fear of God, was gentle with everyone.

So that people would not learn of such miracles of the saint, he feigned being possessed, and as if by a demonic influence knew what was done secretly among people; for this purpose he went about with the possessed, as one of them, and, sympathizing with them, by his prayer he drove out many demons from many; and the other possessed —or rather, the demons that had taken up residence in people—complained against him:

"O fool! You who despise the whole world, why have you come to torment us? Go away from here; you are not ours. Why do you torment and burn us all night?"

The saint, in his feigned raving (for he knew everything through the Holy Spirit), rebuked very many people for their secret sins: some for impurity, others for theft, and still others for perjury—each for every

sin he committed. He rebuked some privately and others before others; to some he pointed out their evil deeds in parables, so that they might look into their conscience; and some he openly reviled for the lawlessness they committed. And thus he restrained the whole city from mortal sins, bringing people to self-awareness and to repentance. Many, however, thought that he knew their secrets not from God but through a demon, so that they even considered him possessed. Because of this, some unrepentant sinners feared to come to him or to meet him, but fled from him, lest they be exposed.

At that time there lived in the city a certain sorceress, an enchantress, who was the cause of many misfortunes among people. Wishing to destroy her sorceries, the Venerable one began to come to her often, as if befriending her, and brought her the food given to him, copper vessels, and garments. Once he said to her:

"Do you want me to make you a thing such that, if you wear it, no one can reproach you, and no evil will come near you?"

She, supposing that the fool knew something of this kind through the aid of a demon, said:

"I want it—make it."

He took a small tablet, and wrote on it in Syriac the following:

"May God forbid you to turn people away from Him any longer."

Having written this, he gave the tablet to the woman to hang around her neck, and when she did so, at once the magical power in her was destroyed, and the sorceress ceased to harm or to help anyone whatsoever.

The elder, walking with his poor brethren, came near a furnace in which glass was prepared. A Jew was working here. Sitting by the furnace, the saint warmed himself, while the Jew was making glass flasks. The saint said to his poor friends:

"Would you like me to make you laugh?"

They turned their eyes to him, wanting to see what he would do. And when the Jew had made one flask, he signed it from afar with his right hand, and at once that flask cracked. When the Jew made another flask, it too cracked from Symeon's sign of the cross; so the third, the fourth, and up to the seventh broke apart—and the beggars began to

laugh and told the Jew what was happening. The Jew, angered, seized a firebrand and drove the fool away, striking and scorching him. The fool, retreating, cried out to him:

"O unclean one! All your flasks will be broken until you make the sign of the cross upon your forehead."

When the Jew began again to make flasks, thirteen more broke, one after another. Seeing his efforts were in vain, although he did not wish it, he crossed his brow, and the flasks ceased to break. Having come to know the power of the holy Cross, the Jew then came into the holy church, became a Christian, and received holy baptism.

At that time one of the most prominent citizens fell ill, in whose house the Venerable Fool was accustomed to come and play. When this citizen's sickness grew very severe, he had a vision: he seemed to be casting dice with some dreadful Moor, and the stake between them was this: if the sick man did not throw three sixes in a row, the victory would belong to the Moor. The sick man was in great doubt and fear. Then Symeon the Fool appeared to him, saying:

"Truly, this time the Black One will overcome you; but give me your word that from now on you will not defile your wife's bed with adultery, and I will cast for you, and he shall not overcome you."

And in the vision the sick man swore to the saint that he would not commit adultery. The saint took the dice and cast them, and three times there came up sixes, and the Moor withdrew from the sick man; the latter, awakening, felt relief from his illness. The Fool, as was his custom, came to his house and warned him:

"Fortunately you cast the dice three times, but believe me, if you break your oath, that Moor will strangle you." With these words, having also rebuked everyone in his foolish manner, he quickly departed from there.

For the sake of quiet, and especially for his nightly prayers, the Venerable had a small room, and there was nothing in it but a bundle of brushwood. There each night he remained in prayer until Matins, watering the earth with his tears; and at the coming of day he would weave for himself a wreath of olive or herbs, and placing it on his head, holding a branch in his hand, he walked through the city, crying:

"Triumph to the victorious king and to his city!"

By these words the saint called the soul "the city," and the mind that rules over the passions "the king," as he explained to his friend, the deacon John, to whom he often came in secret, explaining in detail his words and deeds, and solemnly requiring of him that he should tell no one anything until his death. Two days before his death he came to this John with these words:

"Today I went to my beloved brother John the hermit, with whom from the very beginning I renounced the world and was tonsured, and I found him greatly advanced in virtue and wholly pleasing to God, and I rejoiced over him; for I saw him wearing on his head a crown with the inscription: the crown of hermit endurance."

After that the Venerable Symeon added:

"I saw a certain glorious one, who said to me: Come, Fool, come to me, and you shall receive not one but many crowns for the salvation of many human souls."

Having said this, the saint sighed and spoke again:

"I know nothing in myself that would be worthy of heavenly reward; for a fool and one bereft of reason, what reward could he receive? Will my Lord perhaps show mercy on me freely, by His grace? But I beg you, brother, do not despise or reproach any of the poor, especially among the monks; let your love know that many of them have been purified through grievous suffering, and shine before God like the sun. So also among simple folk who live in the villages and till the earth, who live in guilelessness and uprightness of heart, who revile no one, do no wrong, but eat their bread from the labor of their hands in the sweat of their brow—among such there are many great saints; for I have seen them coming into the city, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ and shining like pure gold. Everything I tell you, my lord, do not think I say from any vainglory; but your love has compelled me not to hide from you the slothfulness of my wretched life. Know, then, that the Lord will soon take you hence as well; therefore take care, as much as you have strength, for your soul, that you may be able to pass without delay through the realm of the air-spirits and escape the cruel hand of the prince of darkness. My Lord God knows that I too grieve much and

have great fear until I pass those dreadful places, where all human deeds and words are examined in detail. Therefore I beg you, my child and brother John, strive in every way to be merciful; for in that dread hour mercy can help us more than all other virtues, as it is written: 'Blessed is he who considers the poor; in the day of trouble the Lord will deliver him' (Ps. 40:2). Observe also this: do not approach the Divine Service while you have anger against anyone, lest your sins offend the coming of the Holy Spirit."

Having conversed about this and much else with the honest deacon, the Venerable Symeon begged him to come to his refuge in two days. And having left him, he no longer showed himself in the city, but remained there without going out until the last moment of his death. What his death was like no one knows, only God and His Angels; for these are wont to be present at the death of the poor, utterly forsaken by men, as they were present at the dunghill when Lazarus died, as the Gospel says: "The beggar died and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom" (Lk. 16:22). Thus it is beyond doubt that those same holy Angels stood by at the hour of the blessed death of this Symeon, poor in spirit and truly venerable, and, quietly freeing the righteous soul from the pure body, bore it with songs of joy into the heavenly mansions.

After two days, some of those beggars who had been friends with St. Symeon, not seeing him during that time, thought: is the Fool perhaps ill? They came to his refuge and found him lying dead under the brushwood, and said:

"See, he played the fool in life, and in death he remained so: for he did not lie down on the brushwood, but died beneath it."

Two men took his body without washing, without the customary chanting, without candles or incense, and carried it to bury it in the place where strangers are buried. The saint was carried to burial past the house of that newly baptized Christian, formerly a Jew, who made glass vials; and he, hearing many singing with most sweet voices indescribable songs, leaned to the little window and saw no one except the two men carrying the Fool's body to burial, while the voices did not

cease to sing unseen. It was the Angels of God who were singing, and that Christian perceived an extraordinary fragrance filling the air:

"Blessed are you, Fool," he said, "for though you have no people performing the funeral chant over you, you have the heavenly powers, who have honored you with songs and paradisal perfumes fumigating you." And at once he went with those two men and carried the honorable body and with his own hands buried it among the graves of the strangers and the poor, and he told everyone how he had heard the Angelic singing over the dead man together with the ineffable fragrance. And the deacon John, coming to that place and not finding the saint, searched everywhere diligently for him and wept bitterly when he learned that St. Symeon had died and been buried. He went to the grave, wishing to take his body from there and bury it with honor in a place of honor; but when they opened the grave, they did not find the saint's body, for the Lord, together with His holy Angels, had transferred it to a place unknown to men. Then all the inhabitants of the city of Emesa, as if awakening, began to recall and tell one another the wondrous deeds of God's servant, and his prophecies, and his life of many sufferings. Then they understood that the Fool had not been mad, but was wiser than all the wise men of our time; and though reckoned a sinner, he was righteous and venerable, concealing before men his God-wise and God-pleasing life by the path of foolishness and seeming sinfulness. Such was the life and such were the labors of this wondrous Symeon, who played the fool for Christ's sake, who, as of old Lot, living among the Sodomites, was not defiled by their sins (Gen. 19:1–38); so this new Lot, living in the midst of the world, was not infected by worldly passions. The Venerable Symeon died on the 21st day of July, and after him the Venerable John, his companion in the Jordan desert, reposed in a blessed end[21]. And as they began together to serve the Lord, so together they stood before the throne of God in heaven. The life of both was recounted by the righteous lips of Symeon to John, deacon of the Church of Emesa; and this deacon faithfully and justly transmitted it to the great saint among the Fathers, Leontius,

21. The repose of the holy men is dated approximately to the year 590.

Bishop of Neapolis in Cyprus; and he passed on the writing for the benefit of those who read and hear it, to the glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Onuphrius the Silent of the Kiev Caves, who labored in the 12th century.

NOTES

4779. That is, will bring her mother's soul through the toll-houses unharmed. The toll-houses (*mytarstva*) are something like customs posts or checkpoints which the souls of the dead meet on their way as they ascend to the throne of the heavenly Judge. At them stand the spirits of malice, who exact from every soul guilty of some particular sin a kind of toll or ransom, consisting in setting before them a good deed opposed to that sin. The name *mytarstva* and *mytari* (toll-collectors) is borrowed from Jewish history. Among the Jews, *mytari* were persons appointed by the Romans to collect taxes. They usually purchased the farming of these dues and used every means, not shrinking even from torture, to extract the greatest profit for themselves. The *mytari* stood at special customs houses or checkpoints, collecting duties on goods being transported. These checkpoints were called *mytnitsy*, *mytarstva*. Christian writers transferred this name also to the places of aerial torments, at which the souls ascending to the throne of the heavenly Judge are detained by evil spirits who seek to convict them of every kind of sin and thereby cast them down into hell. The essence of the doctrine of the toll-houses is contained in the word of St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) on the departure of the soul, usually placed in the Following Psalter. "At the separation of the soul from the body," it says here, "there will stand before us, on one side the hosts and powers of heaven, on the other the authorities of darkness, the aerial toll-collectors, the accusers of our deeds. Seeing them, the soul will shudder and tremble, and in confusion and terror will seek protection from the Angels of God; but even when received by the Angels and passing under their shelter through the aerial space and rising on high, it will meet various toll-houses which will bar its way to the Kingdom of Heaven and will stop and hold back its striving toward it. At each of these toll-houses an account will be required for particular sins... Every passion, every sin will have its toll-collectors and tormentors. Divine powers will also be present there, and a host of unclean spirits; and as the former will point out the virtues of the soul, so the latter will expose its sins... And if it proves worthy (of reward) for its pious and God-pleasing life, then the Angels will receive it, and then it will flow boldly toward the Kingdom. On the contrary, if it proves that it

spent its life in negligence and intemperance, then it will hear a terrible voice: 'Let the wicked be taken away, that he may not see the glory of the Lord' (Is. 26:10); then the Angels of God will leave it, and terrible demons will seize it, and the soul, bound by unbreakable bonds, will be cast down into the prisons of hell." Thus the toll-houses are nothing other than a particular judgment which the Lord Himself performs over human souls through the mediation of the Angels, permitting also the evil spirits, "the accusers of our brethren" (Rev. 12:10), to take part in it – a judgment at which the soul is reminded of, and all its deeds are impartially weighed, and after which a certain lot is determined. This judgment is called particular in distinction from the general judgment, which will be performed over all men at the end of the world, when the Son of God comes again to earth, but then in His glory.

4780. Golgotha, the place of the skull or hill on which the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. The Hebrew *golgotha*, whence our "Golgotha," means skull; probably the hill was so called because of its skull-like shape. An ancient and deeply significant tradition explains the name by the fact that Adam was buried here, so that the Cross of Christ was raised above the head of the resting forefather of the human race. At the time of the death of the Lord Jesus, the hill still lay outside Jerusalem (Mt. 27:33, 28:11; Heb. 13 and following). The rebuilt Jerusalem after its destruction extended chiefly to the north and north-west, so that Golgotha found itself almost in the middle of the western part of the new Jerusalem. And even now they show a cleft in the rock of the so-called Golgotha hill, produced by the earthquake at the moment of the death of Christ the Savior (Mt. 27:51). St. Cyril of Jerusalem said (about 350): "This holy Golgotha, still visibly rising, serves to the present time as a witness that at the moment when the Lord died, the rock was split."

4784. Origen, the celebrated teacher of the Church of Alexandria, a marvel of his age for his intellect and the depth of his learning. Many of the most eminent Fathers of the Church held the theological works and merits of Origen in profound esteem; but afterwards, while he was still living, he was condemned as a heretic by two local Alexandrian councils, and after his death by the Council of Constantinople of 543. Although he did not present his non-Orthodox opinions as indisputable truths, Origen nevertheless thought wrongly about many truths of the Christian Church's doctrine, for which reason some considered the firmness of his faith in the chief Christian dogmas to be doubtful. Developing the non-Orthodox teaching on the pre-existence of souls, he thought wrongly about Christ, supposing that God created a fixed number of spiritual beings of equal dignity, capable of comprehending the Divinity and of becoming like Him; one of these created spirits was drawn toward the Divinity with such a fervent love that he became inseparably united with the Divine Word, or became His created bearer. According to Origen, this is that human soul through which God the Word could become incarnate on earth, since Origen, in a non-Orthodox sense, understood the immediate incarnation of God the Word, the creation of the world and of man, and also the death of Christ, as something spiritually repeated in the spiritual world and therefore having an effect on the liberation of the Angels; and he attributed to ordinary powers, with which our nature is endowed, too great a part in the work of salvation. Origen also thought wrongly on some points of his teaching about the resurrection and the future life: for ex-

ample, that the devil may be saved; and in interpreting Holy Scripture he understood 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 more significant and cover his errors. In his schools he trained many eminent Fathers and teachers of the Church, some of whom owed to him their conversion from paganism to the Christian faith, which he wished to reconcile with knowledge and philosophy. His labors in the study of Holy Scripture are especially remarkable: in its interpretation and, above all, in 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. During the persecution of Decius, Origen was honored with the glory of a brave confessor of Christ; he died a seventy-year-old elder in Tyre in 254.



THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF JULY

July 22

22 июля

New Calendar July 22 · Old Calendar August 4 (civil dates)

Life of the Equal-to-the-Apostles, Holy Myrrh-bearer Mary Magdalene

Жизнеописание равноапостольной святой мироносицы Марии Магдалины

The Great Equal-to-the-Apostles[1], Holy[2] Myrrh-bearer[3] Mary Magdalene,[4] especially glorified in the Christian Church for her ardent and steadfastly self-denying love for the Lord Jesus Christ, was born in the city of Magdala,[4790] then a wealthy city, situated in the Ga-

1. In the Orthodox Christian Church, those who were fellow-workers with the Apostles of Christ, and also those righteous Christians who, like the Apostles, preached and established the Christian faith with especial zeal, are called "Equal-to-the-Apostles." For such special merits they are honored equally with the Apostles. The word *apostle* means "messenger," one who is given a certain commission to fulfill. Having chosen twelve of His disciples, Jesus Christ called them "apostles" (Lk. 6:13), in order to send them out to preach (Mk. 3:14) and to heal every disease and every infirmity (Mt. 10:1–42).

2. In the Christian Church, all Christians, all believers in Christ, were originally called *saints*, as, for example, in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul. When the righteous were mentioned by name, the ancient Christians avoided applying the title "saint," because this word was often used in pagan inscriptions, and Christians did not wish to imitate this. Also in the ancient calendars, the word "saint" was used before the name of a righteous person venerated by the Church only from the third century onward. In the Gospels, holiness is presented as a quality of the Christian in all its manifestations: "Hallowed be Thy Name...," "Holy Father...," "Sanctify them in Thy truth..."

3. Mary Magdalene is called a myrrh-bearer because the Evangelists name her first among the pious women who came to the tomb of Christ to anoint His body with fragrant preparations, according to the pious custom of the Jews of that time. These preparations were made of resinous substances, myrrh of nard, or myrrh, frankincense, aloes, and other fragrant plants, mixed also with pure olive oil. By anointing or sprinkling the body of the dead with such aromatic preparations, love and honor were expressed toward the deceased.

4. The name Mary, from the Hebrew *Miriam*, means "high, exalted, steadfast, excellent, extolled"; and this Mary is called Magdalene from her origin in the city of Magdala, just as the pious member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph, is called of Arimathea, from his origin in the Palestinian city of Arimathea. The surname Magdalene is attached to this Mary's name to distinguish her from the other pious women who served Jesus Christ (Lk. 8:3) and who had the same name Mary, such as Mary the sister of Lazarus and Mary the wife of Clopas.

lilean[4791] region of Palestine, on the shore of the Lake of Gennesaret, otherwise called the Sea of Galilee,[4792] between the cities of Capernaum[4793] and Tiberias.[4794] Because she came from the city of Magdala, the Equal-to-the-Apostles, St. Mary, is called Magdalene, to distinguish her from the other pious women mentioned in the Gospel by the name of Mary.

The Equal-to-the-Apostles, St. Mary Magdalene, was truly a Galilean. And being a Galilean, whether man or woman, meant something very particular in the preaching and establishment of Christianity. Christ the Savior Himself was called a Galilean (Mt. 26:69), for from childhood He grew up and lived, and later preached much, in Galilee. Even the Greco-Roman emperor Julian the Apostate, in the fourth century, died (in 363) with these words addressed to Christ:

"Thou hast conquered me, O Galilean!"

The First-called Apostles of Christ, who ever remained closest to the Savior, were all Galileans, with the sole exception of the traitor Judas Iscariot, who was not a Galilean. When Christ the Savior appeared after His Resurrection to a great multitude of believers (more than 500) on a mountain in Galilee, most of them were Galileans who had followed the Lord during His preaching throughout Galilee, listened to His teaching, witnessed His miracles, and themselves experienced the goodness of Jesus, the merciful Healer.[5] And since the Galileans generally received and spread the teaching of Christ more zealously than the Jews of the other regions of Palestine, at the beginning all the followers of Christ the Savior were called "Galileans" (Acts 1:11). The Galileans, moreover, differed greatly and sharply from the Jews of the other regions of Palestine, just as the natural landscape of Galilee contrasted with that of southern Palestine. In Galilee nature was cheerful and the people lively and simple; in southern Palestine there was a barren desert and a people unwilling to recognize anything beyond the letter and form of the rules. The inhabitants of Galilee readily received the spirit of the law; among the Jews of Jerusalem, by contrast, a single routine outwardness prevailed. Galilee became the homeland and cradle

5. The Appearances of the Lord Jesus Christ after His Resurrection. The Lives of the Saints, Book Eight (April), p. 514.

of Christianity; Judea was withered by narrow Pharisaism and short-sighted Sadduceeism. The Galileans were ardent, responsive, impetuous, grateful, honest, and brave; they were fervently religious, loved to hear instruction about the faith and God, were frank, industrious, poetic, and loved Greek learning and wisdom.[6] And Mary Magdalene, healed by Christ the Savior, displayed in her life many of the beautiful and distinctive qualities of her Galilean kinsfolk, the first and most zealous Christians.

Concerning the first part of the life of the Equal-to-the-Apostles, St. Mary Magdalene, it is known only that she was afflicted with a grievous and incurable malady and was possessed, in the words of the Gospel, by "seven demons"[4797] (Lk. 8:2). The cause and circumstances of the onset of this misfortune are unknown. But the Holy Gospel and the Fathers of the Church of Christ teach that Divine Providence permits such exceptionally grievous sufferings so that "the works of God might be made manifest"—that is, so that God might manifest His particular works toward mankind and the particular works He performs through the Messiah, Christ, such as, in this case, healing from demons, to the glory of God and Christ, and for the spiritual enlightenment and salvation of Mary Magdalene. In accordance with Christ the Savior's teaching concerning such circumstances, it should be supposed that Mary Magdalene was possessed by demons not because of her sins or those of her parents, but that Divine Providence permitted it so that the Lord Jesus Christ might reveal the work of the glory of God: the great miracle of healing Mary Magdalene, enlightening her mind, and drawing her to faith in Christ the Savior and to eternal salvation. The cause of Mary Magdalene's grievous suffering at the hands of demons, like the

6. Even the Jerusalem Talmud bears witness that the Galileans cared more for glory, and the inhabitants of Judea for money. Among the Galileans a widow was left in the house of her deceased husband, whereas among the inhabitants of Judea the heirs drove her out. The responsiveness of the Galileans to the needs of others extended so far that, for example, their fellow villagers would diligently supply an impoverished old man daily with the same provisions he had been accustomed to eat in his prosperous days. But the Galileans did not establish schools of learning, and therefore the proud scribes and Pharisees of Judea called the Galileans ignorant and foolish; because of the Galileans' indistinct, imprecise distinguishing and pronunciation of certain Hebrew guttural letters, the Jewish rabbis did not permit them to read the prayers aloud on behalf of the assembly, and mocked them...

causes of other divine actions and permissions toward mankind that are unknown and incomprehensible to us, lies in the universal mysteries of God's wisdom, which mankind cannot fathom. Had she not suffered so grievously and incurably, Mary Magdalene might either have remained wholly apart from the work of Christ the Savior, or else regarded the miracles of Christ the God-Man with curiosity and amazement, but without a living and saving faith; and she would not have risen to that supreme, unshakable love for the Lord, for which she was consoled by the appearance of the risen Christ the Savior before even all His nearest Apostles (Mk. 16:9; Jn. 20:16). Yet, helpless in her sufferings, Mary Magdalene the Galilean could not be indifferent to the report of the Wonderworker "healing every sickness and every infirmity among the people" (Mt. 9:35). And so she hastened to find this Wonderworker, became an eyewitness of how "He healed many of their diseases and infirmities, and of evil spirits, and the deaf, and the blind, and the lame, and the lepers, and raised the dead" (Lk. 7:21–22; Mt. 11 and elsewhere); and Mary fervently believed in His almighty power, had recourse to His divine might, and sought healing for herself; and according to her faith she received what she asked. The tormenting power of the evil spirits departed from her; she was freed from bondage to the demons,[4798] and her life was sanctified by the divine radiance of her Healer, to Whom Mary Magdalene wholly devoted herself, as an ardent and grateful Galilean.

From that time the soul of Mary Magdalene burned with the most grateful and devoted love for her Savior Christ, and she joined herself forever to her Deliverer, following Him everywhere, that she might receive His saving instruction and avail herself of every opportunity to serve her divine Healer. In the earthly circumstances of that time, in which Christ had placed Himself as the Son of Man, He stood in need of material service both for Himself and for His work. For Christ was born in poverty, in a cave in Bethlehem where the livestock were driven, and His cradle there was a simple manger (Lk. 2:7, 12, 16). Because of her family's poverty, His Mother could bring to the temple of God as the offering prescribed for a newborn child only two young pigeons (Lk. 2:24). In the small Galilean town of Nazareth,[7] Christ likewise lived in poverty until He was 29, as an adopted member of a simple carpenter's family. And during His preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, so that as few obstacles as possible might hinder the fulfillment of His great mission as God-Man, Christ set aside altogether His relationship with the family of His adoptive father Joseph (Mt. 12:46–50; Mk. 3:31–35; Lk. 8:19–21), in which He had been brought up, and all care for His material well-being and personal possessions. Therefore Christ owned no property save the traveling garments of a Galilean teacher of the faith; thus, after three years of His public ministry, Christ was valued at only thirty pieces of silver—that is, about 30 rubles—which in Palestine at that time was the price of the poorest and most destitute of slaves (Mt. 26:15). On the earth He had come to save, Christ owned no plot of land, no house.

"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Mt. 8:20), Christ Himself said.

7. Nazareth (the word means offshoot, or, according to others, guard, keeper) was a little town in Galilee, situated to the south-west of Capernaum and of Mount Tabor. It was set on a hill rising 600 feet above sea level. The view from the summit, in its beauty and variety, was lovely: over the valleys, the mountains and the Mediterranean Sea. The population was poor, small, and not held in esteem by the Jews (Jn. 1:46). Nazareth became known throughout the world as the place of the Annunciation to the Most Holy Virgin concerning the birth of the Son of God, the Savior of the world. In Nazareth passed the childhood, youth and life of Jesus Christ up to His emergence into open ministry for the salvation of mankind (Lk. 2:39–51). For this reason He was called the Nazarene, the Nazorean (Jn. 19:19), and for a long time Christians in the East were even called Nazarenes.

Without a dwelling or possessions, the Savior's ordinary food, like that of the simplest poor Galilean, consisted of barley bread[8] and fish caught in the Sea of Galilee and boiled there on the shore, and at times a piece of wild honey, which the inhabitants gathered freely. The accusation of the wicked Pharisees that the Son of Man "loves to eat and drink wine" (Mt. 11:19) referred to the fact that Christ did not refuse to share the meal of those who invited Him as a teacher among the people, since teachers there enjoyed hospitality (Lk. 5:1–39, 7:1–50, 10:1–42). And although the Apostles and some of Christ's followers possessed a little property—Apostle Peter had a house in Capernaum, John had one in Jerusalem, and other admirers of Christ carried on certain trades—and they had a common money box (Jn. 12:6, 13:29) to pay for the expenses of daily needs, to assist other poor people, and to give alms to the needy, even small sums for urgent necessities were not always available to them. Thus, when the Jewish collectors of the small temple tax came to Apostle Peter and said:

"Will your Teacher not pay the didrachma?" (only about 40 kopecks), neither Christ the Teacher nor His disciples had so small a sum at hand! (Mt. 17:24–27)

Meanwhile, the report of Christ and His miracles spread throughout all Syria;[9] and they brought to Him all who were infirm, afflicted with various diseases and seizures, possessed by demons, lunatics, and paralytics, and He healed them. And a great multitude followed Him from Galilee, and the Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan" (Mt. 4:25; Lk. 6:17; Mk. 3:7–8). And among this multitude of people from many different and distant regions were many poor, in need not only of food, but even of clothing...

Thus, from all of this, many pious women who had been healed of grievous diseases by Christ and who possessed means of their own, ac-

8. Barley bread was the bread of the poor, and was given to Roman soldiers only as a punishment, for example for the loss of standards. The Jews considered barley the food of horses and asses.

companying their Benefactor in His journeys with the preaching of the Gospel, "ministered unto Him of their substance" (Lk. 8:3), that is, in cases of need, defraying the expenses for the daily necessities of the poor who accompanied their Savior, and by His direction supplying the necessary aid to those in need of material help. Among such grateful women, the Evangelist Luke names Mary Magdalene first (Lk. 8:2), because she was the first to set the others an example of such grateful service to the cause of the God-Man, or because she surpassed all the others in zeal for this holy work. Their disinterested and zealous service to Christ the Savior, at a time when "He had not where to lay His head," and when from most people He met with coldness, astonishment or enmity, was a comfort to the Lord Jesus and greatly consoled Him amid His constant labors and frequent insults.

Especially remarkable in this was the extraordinary steadfastness and the unusual courage with which Saint Mary Magdalene was devoted to her Deliverer. Despite all obstacles and terrible dangers, even in the grievous days and hours of Christ's cruel sufferings, Mary Magdalene showed herself more courageous and more devoted than the Apostles, to such a degree that, when nearly all the Apostles, despite their promises to die with the Lord, were overcome by fear of the Lord's enemies and "fled" (Mt. 26:56) and hid themselves, Mary Magdalene, by her love, conquered fear and, by her steadfast presence with the Sufferer, sought to soften the thorny path along which He walked for the salvation of the world. The cruel sufferings of the Savior, crucified on the cross,[4802] were aggravated by the provocative, brazen mockery of the Jewish chief priests, scribes, and elders, who, not content with carrying out their vile vengeance, stood near the cross of the Crucified Christ and mockingly uttered shameless and insolent reproaches to the Innocent Sufferer, saying:

"He saved others (from death), himself he cannot save. Let Him save Himself, if He is Christ, the King of Israel; let Him now come

down from the cross, that we may see and believe in Him" (Mt. 27:41–43; Mk. 15:31–32; Lk. 23:35)...

The Roman soldiers also reviled Him, and, coming near, said:

"If Thou art the King of the Jews, save Thyself" (Lk. 23:36–37)...

And the robbers crucified with Him reviled Him, and one of them, blaspheming Him, said:

"If Thou art the Christ, save Thyself and us" (Mt. 27:44; Lk. 23:39)...

And those passing by from the crowd blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying:

"Ah, Thou who destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, if Thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Mt. 27:39–40; Mk. 15:29–30)...

And thus, while the folly and savagery of the crowd, with the base malice of the Jewish elders, surrounded the Crucified Christ, His martyred gaze consolingly noted the tears of the pious women, among whom Mary Magdalene was "among the first" (Mt. 27:55–56; Mk. 15:40; Lk. 23:27). In these compassionate tears, as it were, a ray of light shone for the Son of Man amid the gloomy kingdom of sin, and this ray, from the grateful women, comforted the Innocent Sufferer with the testimony of a human nature not yet wholly corrupted.

The day of the great redemption of fallen mankind by the God-Man was bright. The time was already about noon, and according to the Hebrew reckoning of the hours of the day it was the sixth hour (Lk. 23:44; Mt. 27:45; Mk. 15:43). But at this bright noontide "the sun grew dark and darkness came over all the land"[4803] until the ninth hour, that is, by our present reckoning of the hours of the day, until three o'clock in the afternoon (Mt. 27:45; Mk. 15:33; Lk. 23:44). This fearful, majestic, awe-inspiring heavenly sign, the extinction of the sun and the darkness that enveloped all things earthly in the midst of the bright

9. The word Syria (high) in the Hebrew text is rendered by the word Aram, under which is understood Syria and Mesopotamia together. The whole expanse from the river Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the Taurus mountains to Arabia, constituted Syria. The valleys of Syria are very fertile, abounding in wheat, grapes, tobacco, olives, oranges, dates and so forth. The climate is very healthy and pleasant. No country was so well known in antiquity as Syria, even for its civilization.

light of noon, heavily pressed upon the blasphemers of the innocent Christ, filling them with terror and silence. As for the acquaintances and admirers of the Crucified, who at first stood afar off and looked on (Lk. 23:49; Mt. 27:55; Mk. 15:40), they drew near to the Sufferer and surrounded His cross; and of them the Evangelist names Mary Magdalene first once again (Mt. 27:56; Mk. 15:40). Thus Mary Magdalene was at the feet of Christ the Savior, not only of the Wonderworker who was glorified and sung of by infants, but at the feet of Jesus of Nazareth, humbled, dishonored, shamefully crucified, forsaken even by His Apostles!..

And after the death of her Healer, Mary Magdalene did not forsake Him: she accompanied the carrying of His body by Joseph[10] of Arimathea and Nicodemus[11] from the cross to the tomb,[12] was present at His burial, saw where Christ was laid (Mt. 27:61; Mk. 15:47), and when, in order to honor in accordance with the law of God the great feast of Pascha now drawing near, she left His buried body, Mary Magdalene's fervent, grateful love, in deep sorrow, opened to her a source of consolation. Love inspired in her the desire to render on her part the last honor possible to her Savior, humiliated by the Jews. She bought myrrh and spices (Lk. 23:56), so that by anointing the body of the buried Christ she might pay Him, according to Jewish custom, the honor possible for her.

This undertaking, which gave Mary Magdalene the name also of myrrh-bearer, belonged to her, since two Evangelists again place her

10. Joseph, from the city of Arimathea or Ramathaim, a rich man of firm character and blameless life, was an honored member of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin. Through timidity of disposition he had not previously dared to declare himself a worshipper of Christ, but neither had he taken part in the sentence against Jesus. Indignant at His crucifixion, he wished by an honorable burial of Christ to express his devotion to Him as to a martyr and a victim of malicious plotting.

11. Nicodemus was a famous Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin. He visited Christ the Savior in Jerusalem by night, with the aim of learning more fully and freely the teaching of Christ, and the Lord revealed to him the chief foundations of the Gospel teaching (Jn. 3:1–36). He was very rich; he honored Christ with burial, bringing 100 pounds of a compound of myrrh and aloes for the anointing of the Body of Christ. Afterwards he received baptism from the Apostles.

12. The tombs of that time were called graves: Jewish sepulchres, or caves, dug out and hewn in rocky hills, within which a bed was prepared for the one to be buried. Near the tomb which he had prepared for himself. The Jews revered their sepulchres, but Joseph, without hesitation, gave his to the Innocent Sufferer, hastening to finish the burial, since the Paschal Sabbath was drawing on.

first, among certain other women who followed her in it, while the third names only her (Mt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1; Jn. 20:1) in this noble deed.

And so, amid the still nocturnal dimness (Jn. 20:1), on the first day of the week, after the sorrowful Sabbath, amid the danger from the embittered Jews, who had already attempted to lay hands on the disciples of Christ, and at a time when the Apostles of the Crucified, with broken hearts, had shut themselves up in their dwelling, Mary Magdalene with certain pious women, disregarding the threatening danger, fearlessly went to the tomb of the Savior, carrying spices and myrrh[4807] (Lk. 23:56; Mk. 16:1), prepared for anointing the body of Christ, in order to render to the Departed the last tribute of love and reverence. Mary Magdalene knew nothing of the guard set by the Jews at the cave of Christ's tomb, or of the chief priests' sealing of its entrance, since all this had taken place after all who honored Jesus had departed from the garden of Joseph of Arimathea (Mt. 27:62–66). But now, on the way from Jerusalem to the cave of Christ's tomb, Mary Magdalene remembered that Joseph and Nicodemus had closed the entrance to that cave with such a large, heavy stone that neither she nor her companions could roll it away from the entrance. And so, perplexed by this obstacle, the myrrh-bearers say to one another:

"Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" (Mk. 16:3)

Pondering this, Mary Magdalene, outstripping the other myrrh-bearers and coming closer to the cave of the tomb, looking, suddenly sees that the stone which had troubled her was already rolled away from the entrance to the cave... (Jn. 20:1; Mk. 16:4).

Among the Jews of that time, the stone closing access to the tomb of the dead was considered inviolable, as it were hallowed. And the removal of the stone from the entrance to the cave of Christ's tomb showed that something extraordinary had happened to the body of the Buried One. What exactly? The simpler and foremost thought was that the body of Jesus had been taken by someone from this cave of Joseph of Arimathea and might have been placed in another location. And this thought, the loss of the possibility of rendering Him the last honor, so struck Mary Magdalene that she at once, without entering the cave, ran

back to Jerusalem to inform the Apostles Peter and John of what had happened at the tomb of Christ. She was convinced that, once informed by her, the Apostles would take the most active part in searching for the body of Jesus:

"They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid Him," she says to the Apostles (Jn. 20:2).

And indeed the most zealous Apostles, Peter and John, at once went to the tomb.[4808] They both ran together; but John ran faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying, but did not enter the cave of the tomb. After him Simon Peter arrived, went into the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin which had been upon the head of Jesus, not lying with the linen cloths but apart, in another place, and everything arranged in order. Then John also went in, saw, and silently believed that Christ had risen; for if anyone had transferred the body of Jesus to another place, he would have done so without unclothing it; and likewise if anyone had stolen it, he would not have troubled to take off the napkin, roll it up and lay it in another place, but would have taken the body as it lay; moreover, the myrrh and aloes which Nicodemus used at Christ's burial adhere very firmly to the linen cloths and the body, explains Saint John Chrysostom (Jn. 20:3–9). But the Apostles departed from the emptied tomb of their Teacher with different feelings: Peter, instead of believing, only wondered and "went back, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass" (Lk. 24:12)...

When the Apostles, still in such a confused and weak frame of mind, had left the emptied Tomb of Christ, Mary Magdalene returned to it. Coming to the cave of the Tomb, she began to weep, and, grieving inconsolably, stooped down (Jn. 20:11) at the low entrance of the cave, to look once more where her Savior had been buried. And there she saw two Angels[4809] sitting in white garments, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they said to her:

"Woman, why weepest thou?"

Mary answers them:

"They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him!"

Mary's grief was so great that she did not realize that she was being addressed not by men but by Angels, who had taken the form of men to ease her sorrow by their bright and solemn festal appearance at the place of Christ's sorrowful burial. She answers them with the same words she had spoken to the Apostles about the disappearance of Christ's Body from the Tomb. The Angels, preparing Mary Magdalene by their solemn and bright appearance to announce the wondrous Resurrection of Christ, do not, however, tell her as they told the other myrrh-bearing women that He whom she so zealously seeks has gloriously risen, for the Lord was pleased to number Mary Magdalene herself among the immediate heralds of Christ's Resurrection.

And at the very moment when Mary Magdalene, in her answer to the Angels, was telling them the cause of her weeping, Christ the Savior suddenly appeared behind Mary, whereupon the Angels assumed a posture of especial reverence toward Him. Mary Magdalene, noticing the change in them, turned back and saw "Jesus standing, but did not know that it was Jesus" (Jn. 20:14). The burden of sorrowful thoughts and the abundant tears prevented her from clearly seeing the One who stood behind her; and evidently it was not the pleasure of Christ the Savior Himself that she should recognize Him at once, just as He did not reveal Himself suddenly to the travelers to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13–32). Now Mary Magdalene took Him for the gardener (Jn. 20:15) of the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, in which this cave of the holy Tomb was situated.

Unrecognized by Mary Magdalene, Christ says to her:

"Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?"

Hearing in these words a compassionate sympathy for her sorrow, Mary answers with a trusting request:

"Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him" (Jn. 20:15).

How much self-sacrificing love and deepest devotion Mary Magdalene expressed in these brief and simple words! She does not call Jesus Christ by His name to the supposed gardener, but says only

"Him"... She so highly honored her Teacher that she supposes others too must know Him and be interested in Him. She implores the supposed gardener to reveal to her where the body of Jesus has been taken, since the gardener of this garden must have known the secret of the disappearance of this body from Joseph's tomb. The theft could not have taken place without his knowledge, for this garden had been entrusted to him. And if Joseph himself, the owner of the garden, had moved the body to another place, this too could not have been done without the gardener's knowledge. And Mary Magdalene asks this gardener to indicate the place where the Body of Christ is, so that she may take It:

"I will take Him," she says.

In her boundless love for the Lord, Mary altogether forgets her weak strength and hopes to take up and carry away herself the body of her Savior. Her zeal and love are so great and ardent that she considers herself exceedingly strong. And not receiving a quick answer to her lively question, Mary Magdalene, as is characteristic of a greatly distressed person, again turned toward the Angels, desiring perhaps to hear something from them about Jesus, or to learn the reason that had moved them to assume a particularly reverent posture. The Lord, however, moved by the loftiness and strength of her love, calls her by name in the gracious voice already familiar to Mary:

"Mary!" (Jn. 20:16)

Now Mary Magdalene heard that voice of her Savior, unforgettable for her whole life, by the power of which He had cast out from her a multitude of demons—that heavenly voice which penetrated and quickened every soul, that wondrous voice which delighted the souls of its hearers with heavenly blessedness. And Mary now felt the near presence of the Divine Teacher, in Whom were all her blessings, all her happiness, and an inexpressible joy filled the whole soul of Mary. From the fullness of happiness she could not speak, and turning again to the Lord, she recognized Him with an illumined gaze and, crying out with rapture only one word, “Teacher!” (Jn. 20:16), threw herself at the feet of Christ the Savior...

In joyful rapture Mary Magdalene could not yet imagine or grasp the full greatness of the Risen Christ. Therefore the Lord, in order to enlighten her thoughts and to teach her of the transformation of His flesh through the Resurrection, gently said to her:

"Do not touch Me[4810] (Jn. 20:17), for I have not yet ascended to My Father."

Mary Magdalene ecstatically expressed her worship of her Savior and Teacher in His humanity, and Christ, by forbidding her to touch Him, elevates and sanctifies her thoughts, teaches her a more reverent manner, and gives Mary Magdalene to understand that the time for closest spiritual communion with Him would come when He had altogether hidden Himself from the sensible eyes of His disciples and ascended to heaven to God His Father. And since the other disciples of Christ, on hearing of His Resurrection, might think that now He would be with them on earth forever and perhaps fulfill the popular dreams of a great earthly Jewish kingdom, Christ the Savior sends Mary Magdalene to warn them against such thoughts and dreams. Now, by attesting to the Apostles the Resurrection of Christ through her clear vision of the Risen One and His speech, she is sent by the Lord to announce to them that Christ will not be long on earth, that He must soon ascend to God the Father with His most glorified Body. But so that the news of this departure should not lead them into confusion and sorrow, the Lord commands Mary Magdalene to tell His disciples that the Father to Whom He ascends is at the same time their Father, graciously calling them His brethren:

"Go to My brethren and say to them: I ascend to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God...[13]" (Jn. 20:17)

Having thus spoken, Christ became invisible. And Mary Magdalene, rejoicing and made happy, went and told the Apostles of Christ all that

13. From such words of the Risen One the disciples ought to have understood that the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is not of the earthly world, that it must be distinguished from earthly kingdoms, and that in the risen Christ they should see not an earthly King but a heavenly one; yet the Apostles, even after this explanation and the Lord's forewarning, still did not abandon their national, unrealizable hopes, and asked Him even before the Ascension: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

had happened to her (Jn. 20:18), and with rapture she consoled their sorrow with the wondrous words:

"Christ is risen!"

For this reason, as the first herald of the accomplished Resurrection of Christ, sent by the Lord Himself, Mary Magdalene has been acknowledged by the Christian Church as "Equal-to-the-Apostles."

Here is the brightest feature of Mary Magdalene's whole wondrous service to the Church of Christ. On the morning of Christ's Resurrection she was granted to see the risen Lord first of all the disciples and women disciples of His[14] (Mk. 16:9; Jn. 20:14–17), and she was also the first, by the immediate command of the Lord, made a messenger and preacher to them of His Resurrection. The Apostles preached the Resurrection of Christ to the whole world; Mary Magdalene preached the Resurrection of Christ to the Apostles themselves—she was an Apostle to the Apostles!... The holy Fathers of the Church discern in this circumstance a special mystery and the wisdom of divine providence.

"A woman," teaches St. Gregory the Theologian, "received the first lie from the mouth of the serpent, and a woman from the mouth of the Risen Lord first heard the joyful truth; so that the hand which had mixed the deadly draught should also be the one to offer the cup of life..."

Sanctified by the contemplation of the Risen Christ, who triumphed over death, the victorious Christ, the ardent Mary Magdalene was herself, even without words, a full and decisive witness of Christ's Resurrection. But the Apostles and all who were with them in the house of John the Theologian[15] did not believe her blessed news of the Resurrection of Jesus the Teacher. They “mourned and wept, and when they

14. The Holy Evangelists are silent about the appearance of the Risen One to the Mother of God, but the Church preserves in her tradition the belief that the Mother of God was told of Christ's resurrection by an Angel before the myrrh-bearing women, and that Christ, rising from the tomb, appeared to Her before all people. The expression of this belief of the Church is found in the paschal liturgical hymns.

15. In Jerusalem the Apostle John the Theologian had his own house on Mount Zion. There also were all the other Apostles. And after the Ascension of the Savior it was there that the center of the new Christian life lay. To this new Zion all Christians turned for the resolution of their perplexities...

heard that He was alive and that she had seen Him, they did not believe" (Mk. 16:10–11; Jn. 20:18). Why, then?...

Mary Magdalene enjoyed the complete and undoubted trust of the Apostles. Moreover, among the other myrrh-bearing women, who likewise announced to the disciples of Christ the resurrection from the dead of their Teacher, as the Angels had told them at the Tomb of the Lord (Lk. 24:9–11, 4–8; Mt. 28:5–7; Mk. 16:1–20), were the mother of the Apostle John the Theologian, the mother of the Apostle James, and Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, together with other pious women, all of whom likewise enjoyed the complete trust of the Apostles. Yet they "did not believe them, deeming their account to be an idle tale" (Lk. 24:9–11; Mk. 16:11; Mt. 28:17). So great was the despondency then of the small company of Christ's disciples. After the Jewish chief priests had seized and crucified their Teacher Jesus, and the Apostles had scattered and hidden themselves, they suddenly lost everything, all their personal and national hopes. Faith in Jesus as the Messiah, in His power and glory, was darkened in them, and with the loss of faith their courage of spirit was lost as well. They were also oppressed by the consciousness of their unfulfilled duty before Christ their Teacher, whom they had cowardly left alone in the hands of His enemies and fled (Mt. 28:56; Mk. 14:50). Having no support either within themselves or outside themselves, they thought chiefly of preserving their own safety, "for fear of the Jews" (Jn. 20:19). Until the death of Christ they had continued to hope "that He, their Teacher, was the Messiah who would redeem Israel" (Lk. 24:21), who would establish the glorious earthly kingdom of Israel. But His shameful death upon the cross utterly destroyed these hopes and dreams of theirs. In the eyes of all people of that time, crucifixion was the most terrible and shameful death; it was a sign of the dread "curse" under the law of Moses (Deut. 21:23; 1 Cor. 1:23). In the souls of Jesus' disciples, after His crucifixion, there remained faith in Him only as a Prophet, "who was mighty in deed and word before God and all the people" (Lk. 24:19). In the heavily oppressed consciousness of Christ's disciples, the thought would not take hold that the true Messiah, Christ, the Son of God, could die as a man, and in the way that Jesus had truly died on

the cross. And although they had seen the miraculous raising of Jairus's daughter by Jesus (Mk. 5:41), of the widow's son of Nain (Lk. 5:11–17), and of Lazarus (Jn. 11:44), still, since Jesus Himself had died as the other prophets had, He could rise only with all men on the last day; and that wonder-working prophets should themselves rise before that time had never been seen... Peter and John, who had seen the tomb of Christ, could report nothing except that it was empty. Only the women reported the vision of Angels and of the Risen One... A wearisome and deeply heavy situation... And now the more ardent Apostle Peter again went to the holy Tomb, without giving himself an account, not knowing why he went, since he had already seen the empty place where Christ had been laid. But now he soon returned and joyfully announced to the disciples:

"Truly, Christ is risen! I have seen Him myself: He appeared to me also on the way" (Lk. 24:33–34; 1 Cor. 15:5).

Now the eyewitnesses of the Risen One seemed sufficient to assure the truth of Christ's Resurrection, and many of the disciples joyfully believed; yet still not all did.[4814] But Mary Magdalene, with the other myrrh-bearing women, radiant with happiness and disregarding all dangers from the frenzied enemies of Jesus Christ, could not remain calm in one place. Passing from house to house, from one of Christ's disciples to another, in the purity, simplicity, depth and steadfastness of love for their Healer and Teacher, they ecstatically repeated countless times the joyful good tidings:

"Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!"

And by grace, there quickly grew from the seed of the smallest of all grains the vast tree of the Church of Christ.[4815] A small handful of disciples and women disciples sincerely devoted to Christ the Savior, of whom the most zealous was the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles myrrh-bearer Mary Magdalene, triumphed over the haughty vain wisdom of paganism, governed whole kingdoms with their kings, and carried the Divine teaching of Christ from land to land, throughout the whole world (Acts 1:8), repeating the solemn words of the first good tidings of St. Mary Magdalene:

"Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!"

Here, Christians, are the most important features of the life of the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles myrrh-bearer Mary Magdalene, which are beyond any doubt, since they are attested by the Word of God itself in the Holy Gospel. Why, then, have they been preserved and set before us by the Church, and why are they read? Is it not for the glorification of St. Mary Magdalene? Oh no! The saints, who live in heavenly glory, in the high and eternal glory of God, have no need of earthly glory, of the worthless praise of men. Rather, by this remembrance of their earthly life, their labors and virtues, instruction and incitement are given to us to live a God-pleasing life and to undertake labors for the salvation of our souls. Through the holy Apostle of Christ, Paul, the Lord commands us:

"Remember your leaders, who spoke to you the word of God; and considering the outcome of their way of life, imitate their faith" (Heb. 13:7).

And so the holy Church of Christ preserves for us and sets before our attention the outlines of the lives of holy people, for our self-examination, self-perfection and salvation through imitation of the faith and spirit of these saints of God, that we may not grow slothful, but may imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises of God (Heb. 6:12). The holy Equal-to-the-Apostles myrrh-bearer Mary Magdalene selflessly fulfilled the first and chief commandment of Christ the Savior: "to love the Lord with all her heart, with all her soul, with all her mind and with all her strength" (Mk. 12:30–33; Mt. 22:37–40). Her realization, under all circumstances, of such true and whole love for the Lord serves as a living model for the love of every Christian for God our Savior. And following the example of St. Mary Magdalene, we all, as Christians, must have and show selfless love for God, with all our hearts, with all our desires, aspirations and powers of soul, and with all our mind, with all our faculties of knowing, and we must wholly cleave to the Lord our Savior. The strength of our love for God must be such that no one and nothing can separate us from this love: "neither life nor death, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come" (Rom. 8:38–39).

From the time of the appearances of the Risen Christ the Savior described by the holy Evangelists, and of the fiery preaching of St. Mary Magdalene about the Resurrection which those appearances prompted, the surviving New Testament books no longer report further details of the activity of the Equal-to-the-Apostles St. Mary Magdalene, and information about the rest of her life now forms a subject of tradition.[4816] The traditions about her later life, preserved by several local Christian churches, differ much according to the locality from which they come; in essence, however, these traditions everywhere report the zealous, Equal-to-the-Apostles labor of St. Mary Magdalene. The difference among these traditions depends on whom or which of the holy Gospel women these churches mean by the name of the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Mary Magdalene. Some Christian churches of the West, and also some Fathers of the Church and learned theologians, merge the three Gospel women into one or two persons: the sinful woman who repented in the house of Simon the Pharisee, wept at the feet of Christ the Savior, wiped them with her hair and anointed them with precious myrrh (Lk. 7:37–38; Mk. 14:1–72; Mt. 26:1–75); then Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus (Lk. 10:39; Jn. 11:28); and also Mary Magdalene, who was freed by Christ the Savior from seven demons[4817] (Jn. 11:1–57, 12:1–50, 19:1–42, 20:1–31; Mk. 16:3; Mt. 27:7). But the Eastern Greco-Russian Orthodox Church, now as before, recognizes all these three persons, with their different marks as mentioned in the Gospels, as distinct and separate, not wishing to base historical information on arbitrary, merely probable interpretations. Accordingly, the tradition of the Eastern Greco-Russian Orthodox Church reports that, after the Gospel appearances of the Risen Christ until His Ascension and after it, the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Mary Magdalene remained with the Most Holy Theotokos and the Apostles, and was an active helper in the first successes of the spread of the Christian faith, first in Jerusalem. But full of zeal, of fervent faith and of ardent love for the proclamation of God's good news, she then preached also in other lands, everywhere proclaiming heavenly grace, joy and salvation to all who believed in the Savior of the world, Christ Risen.

Having visited, among other places, Italy,[16] the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Mary Magdalene found an occasion to appear before the emperor Tiberius I,[17] who then reigned, and, according to the common Eastern custom, offered him an egg colored red, saying at the same time:

"Christ is risen!"

The poverty of the offering made by St. Mary Magdalene when she first came before the emperor did not surprise him, for he knew the ancient custom, general in the East and also among the Jews, by which one who came for the first time before a superior, or on a solemn occasion before an acquaintance or patron, presented a gift as a token of respect, a gift with some known or particular, special, symbolic meaning. Examples of this are found in the Jewish history of the Old Testament[18] (Gen. 43:11; 3 Kgdms. 10:2), and the gifts presented by the wealthy Magi[19] to Jesus Christ, born in Bethlehem of Judea[20], likewise represent it. Poor people in similar circumstances brought as a gift the various fruits of their locality or the eggs of birds. Thus, partly following this ancient custom, and with the aim of arousing the curiosity of the suspicious Emperor Tiberius by the red colour of the egg presented and by the words, hitherto unheard, "Christ is risen!", St. Mary Magdalene, the Equal-to-the-Apostles, began from an explanation of the meaning of her offering a fervent preaching concerning the Resurrection and the teaching of Christ the Savior. With great inspiration and persuasiveness she told the emperor about the life, miracles, crucifixion

16. Italy (Acts 18:1–28, 27:28; Heb. 13:1–25) — a well-known European country, with the city of Rome as the capital of the state.

17. Tiberius Caesar — Roman emperor from A.D. 14 to 37.

18. In the ancient and even the present-day East, the appearance of subordinates before a ruler, and of lower persons before a higher, without a gift is regarded as an expression of rudeness and even of disrespect. Thus, for example, it is said that at the election of Saul only "base fellows despised him and brought him no presents..." (1 Kgdms. 10:27).

19. *Magus* (volkhv) — a word of Persian origin; the magi were wise men who possessed lofty, broad and even secret knowledge, especially astronomical and medical. They enjoyed great esteem and were for the most part servants of religion, priests.

20. Bethlehem of Judea was a small town to the south, about 10 versts from Jerusalem. The word Bethlehem means "House of Bread," a name given to this place because of the extraordinary fertility of the surrounding soil. In antiquity it was called Bethlehem Ephrathah, and to distinguish it from Bethlehem in Galilee it was called Judean; and by virtue of the birth in it of the king-prophet David, it was also named "the City of David" (Lk. 2:4).

and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and by a plain, simple account of the extremely unjust and partial trial of Jesus Christ by the embittered members of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin[21], and of the connivance in this of the faint-hearted Roman governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate[22], who condemned Jesus Christ to crucifixion, she provoked the emperor's wrath against them. Tiberius handed them over to a court, by which Pilate was deprived of his authority and exiled to Gaul, to the city of Vienna[23], where, according to one tradition, overwhelmed by the pangs of conscience and despair, he took his own life. According to another tradition, Pilate, condemned to death by the court, repented, turned in prayer to Christ, and was forgiven by the Savior, in token of which, when his head was severed, it was received by an Angel[24].

Together with St. Mary Magdalene, the Equal-to-the-Apostles, according to tradition, the sisters of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, went to Italy[25]; and Pilate, learning of this and fearing the exposure of his unlawful actions by the Christians, himself sent to the Emperor Tiberius a report concerning Jesus Christ[26], in which he bore witness to the bene-

21. The Sanhedrin of Jerusalem was the supreme judicial court of the Jews; it consisted of 72 members, chiefly Pharisees and Sadducees, chosen by vote and in part by lot. The Sanhedrin met at the Jerusalem temple, but in special cases also in the house of the high priest, its president (Mt. 26:3; Jn. 18:24). All were bound to obey the decision of the Sanhedrin unconditionally. After the conquest of Judea by the Romans, the authority of the Sanhedrin was restricted, and for the execution of the death sentences it pronounced the consent of the Roman governor was required. After the destruction of Jerusalem the Sanhedrin was no longer a court, but only a school of the Jewish Law.

22. Pilate is called "of Pontus" from the marshy Italian Pontine province, in which he had earlier been governor. From A.D. 27 Pilate was governor of Judea, but he hated the freedom, customs and religion of the Jews; he did not hesitate to sell justice and to deliver innocent people to torture and death without trial, for which reason his ten-year rule was deeply unpopular with the Jews and called forth popular uprisings; once he did not scruple to put to death a whole crowd of Galileans in the very temple of Jerusalem, even during the sacrifice, so that their blood was mingled with their sacrifices (Lk. 13:1).

23. Gaul was the land of the Gauls or Franks, conquered by the Romans; this is modern France. The city of Vienne on the river Rhône, on the road to the city of Marseilles, is the district city of the Isère department of present-day France. According to tradition, Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary were placed by the Jews in a boat and sent out to sea to the mercy of the waves and wind. This boat was cast ashore in southern Gaul, and those who arrived on it converted to the Christian faith the inhabitants of the cities of Marseilles, Aix and others.

24. So it is stated in one redaction of the "Letter of Pilate to Tiberius Caesar," which forms part of the apocryphal so-called Gospel of Nicodemus, with the addition that after the beheading of Pilate, the high priests who condemned Jesus Christ, Annas was sewn into an ox-hide and hanged, and Caiaphas was killed by an arrow in the heart...

ficent life of Christ, to His healing of every kind of sickness and infirmity, even to His raising of the dead, and to His other great miracles. Pilate affirmed that, having examined the accusations of the Jews, he found no fault in Jesus Christ; he strove much to deliver Him from the hands of the rebellious Jews, but could not achieve His deliverance, and gave Jesus over to their will, out of regard for the clamour of the people and the seditious accusation of Pilate himself by the Jews... And after the crucifixion of Jesus by the Jews, terrible signs occurred in nature, and many of the dead rose, when on the third day Jesus rose; and Pilate, as a witness, seized by great fear, reported to the sovereign Caesar all that had been done with Jesus Christ, who became an object of faith as God[27]:

After such testimony from the Roman governor of Judea and from the admirers of Christ the Savior, the Emperor Tiberius, according to tradition, himself believing in Christ the Savior, proposed that Jesus Christ be enrolled among the gods of Rome; and even when the Roman

25. Martha and Mary — two sisters who lived with their celibate brother Lazarus at the foot of the Mount of Olives in Bethany. This was a pious family, with whom Christ the Saviour was on friendly terms, stopping to rest in their house when visiting Jerusalem (Lk. 10:1–42; Jn. 11:1–57, 12:1–50; Mt. 26:1–75; Mk. 14:1–72). When Lazarus died, Christ the Saviour raised him on the fourth day, manifesting His full power over death, after which the members of the Sanhedrin resolved to kill Lazarus as well. But according to tradition he lived another 30 years and was bishop on the island of Cyprus, where he also died. His memory is celebrated by the Church on 17 October.

26. Under the title "Ascension, or the Letter of Pilate to Tiberius Caesar," this report is placed in the Slavonic redactions of the so-called "Gospel of Nicodemus" immediately after the first part of this Gospel, and forms its conclusion; but in addition it occurs even more often in manuscripts, in the form of a separate and more detailed article, than the Gospel of Nicodemus itself; this report is also fully inserted into the book called "The Passion of Christ" or "The Passion of the Lord," circulated in many copies and with coloured illustrations...

27. Pilate's writing to the Emperor Tiberius about the miracles, death and resurrection of Christ the Saviour is undoubtedly attested by the most ancient writers: by Justin the philosopher, long a pagan, of the early second century; by Tertullian, Roman jurist, in the second century; and by the historian Eusebius Pamphili; these had access to the archives of state documents.

Senate[28] rejected this proposal, Tiberius threatened by imperial edict to punish anyone who dared to insult those who believed in Jesus Christ.

Thus, by the zealous and fearless preaching about Christ the Savior, St. Mary Magdalene, the Equal-to-the-Apostles, together with the other pious Christians, moved even the pagan governor of Judea to bear written witness before the pagan world to the universal event of the Resurrection of Christ, and moved the pagan emperor of the then-universal Roman Empire to acknowledge the greatness and divine power of Christ the Savior, and by all this she facilitated the spread of Christianity.

The Christians of that time, learning of the meaning and of the force of the impression produced on Emperor Tiberius by St. Mary Magdalene's offering of the red egg with the words "Christ is risen!", began to imitate her in this, and, in remembrance of the Resurrection of Christ, they began to give red eggs and to say:

"Christ is risen!" ... "Indeed, He is risen!"

Thus little by little this custom spread everywhere and became universal among the Christians of the whole world[29]. And the egg in this serves as a symbol, or visible sign, of the Resurrection of Christ and of the resurrection of the dead and of our rebirth into the future life, of which we have the pledge in the Resurrection of Christ. As from the egg a chick is born and begins to live a full life once it is freed from the shell, and a wider circle of life opens before it, so also we, at the second coming of Christ to the earth, having cast off with our earthly body all

28. The Roman Senate was held to have been instituted by Romulus, the founder of the Roman state himself. The Senate was regarded as the bearer of the people's wisdom and the guardian of state traditions; the king appointed its members, and it was therefore dependent upon him. In both the republican and the royal periods of Roman history, every decision of the people required the authoritative confirmation of the Senate, which attested that the decision accorded with the fundamental religious and political foundations of the state.

29. That this custom was received from the offering made to Tiberius by St. Mary Magdalene, Equal-to-the-Apostles, is confirmed, besides the uniformity of tradition in all Christian churches, also by the following: in an ancient Greek typikon written on parchment, preserved in the library of the monastery of St. Anastasia near Thessalonica, after the prayers for the day of holy Pascha, the following is written: "There is also read a prayer for the blessing of eggs and cheese, and the abbot, kissing the brethren, distributes eggs to them and says: 'Christ is risen.' Thus we have received it from the holy fathers, who preserved this custom from the very apostolic times, for holy Mary Magdalene, Equal-to-the-Apostles, was the first to show the faithful an example of this joyful offering..."

that is corruptible on earth, shall by the power of Christ's Resurrection rise again and be reborn into another, higher, eternal, immortal life. The red colour of the paschal egg reminds us that the redemption of mankind and our future new life were won by the outpouring of the most pure blood of Christ the Savior on the Cross. Thus the red egg serves to remind us of one of the most important dogmas of our Divine faith.

St. Mary Magdalene, the Equal-to-the-Apostles, long continued to preach the good news of the Risen Christ in Italy and in the city of Rome[30], both during the first visit of the Apostle Paul to Rome and after his departure from there two years later. Besides tradition, the testimony to this can be seen in the characteristic greeting of St. Mary by the Apostle Paul in his epistle, written from the commercial Greek city of Corinth, to the Christians then in Rome (Rom. 16:6). St. John Chrysostom teaches about this that, in praising each believer according to his merit, the Apostle Paul greets St. Mary, the Equal-to-the-Apostles, as one who has already laboured much and devoted herself to apostolic exploits. Her labours mentioned here by the Apostle were the exploits of Apostles and Evangelists, and therefore equal to the Apostles; she served, adds St. Chrysostom, both with money, and fearlessly exposed herself to dangers and undertook arduous journeys, sharing with the Apostles all the toils of preaching.

From Rome, according to the tradition of the Church, St. Mary Magdalene, the Equal-to-the-Apostles, came to the city of Ephesus[31], then especially famous in Asia Minor. In Ephesus, according to the tradition and the testimony of many holy fathers and church writers, St. Mary Magdalene, the Equal-to-the-Apostles, assisted the holy Apostle

30. Rome was the capital of the then-great Roman Empire, a city situated on the bank of the river Tiber. According to tradition it was founded by Romulus in 750 B.C. At first it occupied only one hill, then seven, and afterwards fifteen hills. Its population reached up to a million and a half, half of whom were slaves. There were 420 pagan temples; the inhabitants were very superstitious and most crude idolaters, yet in the arts and in war they decisively held dominion over the whole world. The Roman Empire numbered up to a hundred million inhabitants.

31. Ephesus was the most famous city in Asia Minor, on the river Cayster (now Küçük Menderes). It served as a center of commerce and was especially renowned for the famous temple of Artemis-Diana, the pagan goddess, whose service, performed by eunuchs, was carried out with particular splendor and magnificence.

and Evangelist John the Theologian in his labours of evangelization, remaining there until her peaceful repose, and it was in Ephesus that she was also buried.

The incorrupt and glorified relics of St. Mary Magdalene, the Equal-to-the-Apostles, were in the ninth century, under the Emperor Leo VI the Philosopher[32], solemnly translated from Ephesus to Constantinople[33] and placed in the church of the monastery of St. Lazarus. Such is the tradition of the Orthodox Eastern Christian Church.

But it cannot be firmly asserted that the relics of St. Mary Magdalene, the Equal-to-the-Apostles, remained wholly in Constantinople for ever. They could have been carried by the faithful themselves to another place out of fear of the victorious attacks of the Turks; they could easily have been taken to Rome in the West from Constantinople when the Italians with the Crusaders of the Fourth Crusade seized it at the beginning of the thirteenth century[34], since at that time the relics of saints from many south-eastern regions were carried off and divided among the various cities of the western countries of Europe.

The Roman Catholic Church maintains that the relics of St. Mary Magdalene, the Equal-to-the-Apostles, with the exception of her head[35], rest in Rome, near the Lateran Palace of the Roman popes, in the principal church of St. John Lateran[36], beneath the sanctuary

32. Leo VI was a Greek emperor (from 886 to 912), called the Philosopher, or the Wise, for his love of learning and his knowledge of astrology. He was a disciple of Patriarch Photius.

33. Constantinople, the ancient Byzantium, which in the popular Russian and Slavonic usage is Constantinople, was founded under the name of Byzantium in 658 B.C. on the European shore of the strait by Greeks from the trading city of Megara in central Greece. In 330 A.D. Constantine the Great transferred the capital to Byzantium with its temples, palaces and works of art; he drew a numerous population into the new capital and in general made it a strong center of civil and ecclesiastical life in the Graeco-Roman world.

34. The Crusades were military expeditions undertaken by the Christian peoples of Western Europe, from the end of the eleventh to the end of the thirteenth century, to wrest the Tomb of Christ and Palestine from the Mohammedans.

35. Under the name of relics, in the broad sense in the Holy Church is understood the body of every deceased Christian. Thus in the rite of burial of the departed it is said: "Taking up the relics of the departed, they go with them into the church." But properly by the holy relics are understood "the honorable remains of the holy God-pleasers." Yet here too the word "relics" has a different meaning. Relics are called first of all the "bones" of the holy God-pleasers.

36. The ancient church of St. John in the Lateran, "San Giovanni in Laterani," near the Lateran Palace of the popes in Rome, has existed since the time of the emperor Constantine the Great, and is called "the mother and head of all churches," of course of those in Rome.

which Pope[37] Honorius III[38], who himself there buried her relics, consecrated in honour of St. Mary Magdalene, the Equal-to-the-Apostles. In addition to these, since 1280 the Roman Catholic Church has venerated as publicly displayed relics of this Saint relics divided into parts in France, in Provence, near the city of Marseilles[39], where over those relics, in a secluded valley at the foot of steep mountains, a majestic church has been erected in the name of St. Mary Magdalene[4842].

The Orthodox Greco-Russian Eastern Christian Church and the Western Roman Catholic Church, as well as the Anglican Church, celebrate the memory of St. Mary Magdalene, the Equal-to-the-Apostles, on 22 July; in some local churches this is the most solemn feast.

This is all that is known up to the present concerning the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles and myrrh-bearer Mary Magdalene, which is undoubtedly true as handed down to us by the Holy Gospel, and probable according to the traditions of the local Christian churches, for which, as for all, St. Mary Magdalene was, by the direct command of Christ the Savior, the first of men to preach the saving Resurrection of Christ.

"The Resurrection of Christ," teaches the great hierarch of the Church,[40] "is for all of us a source of meditation, contemplation, wonder, joy, thanksgiving, and hope: always full, always new, however long and however often we draw from it; it is an eternal newness! And is there need to establish faith, to awaken hope, to kindle love, to enlighten wisdom, to lift up prayer on wings, to bring down grace, to destroy calamity, death, and evil, to give life to life, to make blessedness not a dream but a reality, and glory not a phantom but the eternal lightning of the eternal light, illuminating all and striking no one? For all this there is enough power in the one wondrous word: 'Christ is risen!'"

37. Pope (from the Greek "father") was a title which until the end of the fifth century was used as an honorary designation of bishops, and afterwards was applied chiefly to the Roman archbishop.

38. Honorius III, Pope of Rome in the thirteenth century.

39. Marseilles is a seaport city in the ancient extensive Provençal region of south-western France. It lies on the eastern bay of the Gulf of Lyons. In antiquity Marseilles was called Massilia and was a Greek republican colony, subdued by the Romans. From here Christianity spread over all of southern Gaul, now France.

40. Words and Discourses of Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, 1848, part 1, pp. 35, 36 and 44.

Let us, too, Christians, respond to such wondrous proclamation by the great messenger of Our Savior Himself, the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Mary Magdalene, with rapturous words: Truly, truly, Christ is risen!

Troparion, Tone 1:

Thou didst follow Christ, who for our sake was born of the Virgin, O honorable Mary Magdalene, keeping His statutes and laws. Wherefore, celebrating thy most holy memory today, we receive the remission of our sins through thy prayers.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Standing gloriously by the Cross of the Savior with many others, and sharing the sufferings of the Mother of God, and shedding tears, she offered this as her praise, saying: "What a strange wonder! He who sustains all creation has willed to suffer. Glory to Thy power!"

On the same day, the translation of the relics of the holy Hieromartyr Phocas from Pontus to Constantinople by the year 404. (His memory is celebrated on September 22.)

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NOTES

4790. Magdala, from the Hebrew word *magdalaya*, meaning "tower," was a city on the western shore of the Lake of Gennesaret, not far from the cities of Capernaum and Tiberias. Magdala was famous for its dyeing industry and for its fine woolen fabrics; besides this, a vast trade was carried on there in turtledoves and pigeons for purification offerings; tradition ascribes to Magdala three hundred pigeon shops, and near it a whole valley of "doves." The wealth of Magdala at that time was so considerable that the tax levied from the city is recorded as being so large that it was sent to Jerusalem by an entire wagon. The moral corruption of its inhabitants was also great. Of the multitude of cities and villages with which the shores of the Lake of Gennesaret were strewn, all have disappeared except Magdala alone, which is now called Medjdel and presents a group of squalid hovels built of shore stones, while on the flat roofs of the houses upper stories have been made in the form of reed and brushwood huts. But the remains of the ancient watchtower still exist, and the site remains beautiful to this day: the beauties of nature are likewise solemn and awaken holy rapture at the wonders and the preaching of Christ on the marvelous Lake of Gennesaret, or the Sea of Galilee.

4791. The Galilean region in the north of Palestine, or Galilee (from the Hebrew word *galil*, meaning "region," "district"), during the lifetime of Mary Magdalene constituted the third region of Palestine, and Galilee itself was divided into the northern, upper, "pagan" Galilee and the southern, lower Galilee. Galilee occupies a prominent place in world history as the homeland and the place of preaching of Christ the Savior. Galilee measured about 120 versts from east to west and 40 versts from north to south. On the north it bordered on Syria and the Lebanon mountains, on the west on Phoenicia, on the south on Samaria, and on the east its boundary was the river Jordan. Galilee counted more than 200 cities and large villages, and its population numbered up to four million, consisting not only of Jews but also of a mixture of Israelites with Syrians, Phoenicians, Arabs, and other foreigners, many of whom had accepted the Jewish faith. Owing to its wonderful climate, fertility, and wealth, Galilee was the best region of Palestine. A mild, life-giving climate, the most varied marvelous beauty of nature, and an inexhaustible abundance of fertile soil — all this was in Galilee. Both its geographical position and the multitude of its communication routes also favored Galilee: several Roman trade roads crossed it from east to west toward Damascus, the Phoenician shores, the Mediterranean Sea, Egypt, and Assyria; other roads cut through it from south to north. Industry and life seethed in Galilee... A great many pages of the Gospel reflect the nature and life of Galilee. Through the homeland of Christ the Savior, the city of Nazareth, His childhood, His youth, and especially His preaching there, Galilee was the cradle of the Christian faith. And His parables, miracles, and the events of the everyday earthly life of Jesus Christ — all these are images reproducing the riches and beauties of nature and the customs of Galilean life. Heaven, earth, sea, grain fields, gardens, flowers, vineyards, the grass of the meadows, fish and birds — all served the Savior there as the foundation and image of His wondrous teachings in His Divine preaching... But in our time Galilee presents only the ruins of cities and villages and complete desolation...

4792. The Sea of Galilee, Lake Gennesaret and the Sea of Tiberias are names of one and the same large lake in Palestinian Galilee. In the Book of Numbers (Num. 34:11) and in Joshua (Josh. 12:3) it is called Kinnereth from its oval outline. It is called the Sea of Tiberias after the city of Tiberias on its shore, and Gennesaret after the neighbouring shoreline city of Gennesar, or Gennesaret, from the beauty of the nature surrounding it. The lake stretched thirty versts in length and eight in breadth. At its northern end the Jordan flows in, and at its southern end it flows out. Around this lake was concentrated the wealthiest industrial centre of Palestine; along its shores, in an almost unbroken line, stretched cities and villages with a very numerous population. The water of the lake is clear, pleasant to the taste and cool; up to four thousand vessels of various kinds plied it: the warships of the Romans, the rough boats of the fishermen of Bethsaida and the gilded barges of Herod. The Lake of Gennesaret, usually quiet and calm, was at times made turbulent and dangerous by winds from the mountains. It was renowned for its extraordinary abundance of every kind of fish, so that fishing on it was permitted to all, and fish was there so favourite a dish that at the dinner given for one great rabbi three hundred different kinds of fish were served. Fish was eaten fresh, salted and dried; delicacies were prepared from it; the rabbis themselves occupied themselves with advice on how to prepare it and which kind to eat at which time, instructing

that fish be washed better with beer and wine. Very many were engaged in the catching and sale of fish; one of the gates of Jerusalem was called the "Fish Gate," because a great mass of fish was brought there from Galilee, and members of the Sanhedrin itself engaged in the fish trade, loading whole ships with fish. The occupation of the fishing trade was not only very profitable but also honourable... On the western shore of the lake lay the "land of Gennesaret" (Mt. 14:34; Mk. 6:53), which was the first and principal place of the preaching of Christ the Saviour. The very word Gennesaret means "gardens of abundance," and nowhere were there such beauties of nature and such abundance of plants and fruits of the most varied climates as in the "land of Gennesaret." Fruit was on the trees for ten months of the year. The Jewish historian of that time, Josephus Flavius, describing with rapture the beauties of the Lake of Gennesaret, its wondrous climate, palms, vineyards, figs, oranges, almond trees and pomegranates, says that the seasons there seemed to vie with one another for the honour of possessing this paradisal region... And the Jewish Talmud teaches that the awaited Messiah will one day appear from this Lake of Tiberias or Gennesaret...

4793. Capernaum, in Hebrew, means "village of Nahum," a town situated on the western shore of the Lake of Gennesaret. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament because it is of comparatively later origin and grew into a town from a fishing village, owing to the rise of commercial and industrial activity. It had a very beautiful location. The Herods had a palace in it; the Romans had a military garrison and a customs house. The Gospels speak of Capernaum as the principal place of residence of Christ the Saviour after He left Nazareth, so that Capernaum came to be called "His own city" (Mt. 9:7). In Capernaum and its environs Christ performed many miracles and uttered many parables and teachings, but, despite all His admonitions, the inhabitants remained deaf to the new good tidings, which did not accord with their commercial and industrial bustle; they did not believe, and Christ pronounced a terrible judgment over Capernaum: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell" (Mt. 11:23). Today no trace of Capernaum remains...

4794. Tiberias is a city on the same western shore of the Lake of Gennesaret, somewhat south of Capernaum; it was built in the year 17 after the Nativity of Christ by the ruler of Galilee, Herod Antipas, and named in honour of the then Roman emperor Tiberius. Herod made Tiberias his capital, built a magnificent palace, a temple, a synagogue, an amphitheatre, and surrounded the city with a wall. Near the city there was a healing warm mountain stream. Since in the building of Tiberias ancient tombs had been levelled, the Jews considered the city unclean and feared to settle in it, and in the first period it had a wholly pagan character. In the vicinity of Tiberias Christ the Saviour preached and fed five thousand listeners with five loaves (Jn. 6:1–71). After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70, the Jews established in Tiberias thirteen synagogues and a higher school, and the Tiberian Sanhedrin became the highest religious authority. The Greek Empress Helena erected in Tiberias a church with twelve Holy Tables; and from the middle of the fifth century to the middle of the sixth there was a bishopric here, later restored during the First Crusade. On the ruins of Tiberias a small town, Tabariyeh, was built, and in 1837 it was destroyed by an earthquake; today

only poor huts are to be seen, but the Jews cherish for this locality the same profound veneration as for Jerusalem.

4797. The word "bes" is a translation of the Greek words daimon, diabolos. In the Holy Scripture of the New Testament, "demon" usually means an evil spirit or the devil. Demons, although they believe and tremble, and acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God, are nonetheless servants of Satan. Among the miracles of Christ the Saviour, the healings of those possessed by demons were especially striking. People who fell under the power of demons are called demoniacs, those suffering from unclean spirits (Mt. 4:24; Lk. 6:18). The healing of demoniacs, in relation to the demons, is called casting out (Mt. 8:16), and in relation to the sufferers themselves it is called healing. The influence of demons on the people possessed by them always manifests itself through their influence on the body; the human soul at this loses its power over the body, and some alien force intrudes between body and soul, which acts destructively upon the bodily organs of the soul. The demon first strikes the nervous system of the body and acts through it, producing the same symptoms as are produced by other influences disturbing the regular life of the body. The demonic power acts not through the spiritual and moral nature but through the physical and mental nature. Into Judas Iscariot the traitor the devil entered, that is, he incited him to betrayal, but Judas was not possessed by a demon. Demonic possession manifests itself in clairvoyance, when those possessed by demons acknowledged Christ as the Son of God (Lk. 4:34), also in madness, epilepsy, muteness, contortion, blindness (Mk. 5:3; Lk. 8:27; Mt. 9, etc.). This gave occasion to the rationalists to assert that demonic possession is merely a bodily illness. But that possession is accompanied by illnesses does not in the least explain the terrible unnatural, non-physical peculiarities of possession, in which a physically weak man, for example, breaks iron chains or prophesies (Mk. 5:4). The resemblance of some signs of possession to natural bodily illnesses is only external, conditioned merely by the general laws of life, whose violations can always manifest themselves identically, whatever different causes may have produced them. And this teaching of the Gospel about possession does not in the least contradict the data of physiology and psychology. Since the human soul can be subject even to material forces through the mediation of the body, it can all the more fall under the influence of spiritual forces, when the soul is unable to resist such influences; this is clearly confirmed by numerous facts of hypnotism. And just as in hypnotism one person with a stronger will can, through suggestion, influence another to the point of complete mastery over him and deprivation of his capacity for self-determination, so by the same psychological law an evil spirit, a demon, can wholly take possession of the soul of a weak man who, through his personal sinfulness or some other cause, becomes a victim of a terrible demonic influence. And it is remarkable that demoniacs were especially numerous precisely before the coming of Christ the Saviour. This was a peculiarity of that age, and it is partly explained by the fact that by that time the spiritual unrest and weakness, which were the result of spiritual dissatisfaction and of impatiently anxious expectation of a change in this unbearably grievous condition, had reached the highest degree of tension. Such a state of soul seized at that time both the Jewish and the pagan population of the East. And the dark forces of the evil spirits

hastened to spread the nets of their malicious, destructive dominion, foreseeing and presaging their imminent defeat by Christ the Saviour.

4798. Some interpreters of Holy Scripture and compilers of the Lives of the Saints, and even Fathers of the Western Church, who identify Mary Magdalene with the well-known sinful woman who repented in the house of Simon the Pharisee and received forgiveness of her sins, suppose that the Evangelists Luke and Mark did not express exactly the condition of Mary Magdalene when they say that Christ cast out demons from Mary Magdalene. Such writers suppose that Mary Magdalene was not possessed by demons but was only a sinner, and that the words of the Evangelists, "seven demons," signify many sins and vices (so, for example, Blessed Jerome, Augustine, Gregory the Great and others). But such a reinterpretation of the plain words of two Evangelists can be grounded only in Jewish demonology, according to which the rabbis ascribe to evil spirits all the most ordinary human passions and all diseases. The Jewish Talmud also ascribes many shameless vices, speaks of the extraordinary beauty and braiding of Mary Magdalene's hair, and of her wealth... But the Orthodox Eastern Church does not confuse the sinful woman of unknown name, forgiven in the house of Simon the Pharisee, with Mary Magdalene, and does not reinterpret the plain words of the two Evangelists about the casting out of demons precisely from Mary Magdalene. And St. Demetrius, Metropolitan of Rostov, writes soundly: "If Magdalene had been that harlot, then, following Christ and His disciples, the open sinner who walked with them for a long time, what would the enemies of Christ, the Jews, have said, seeking on His part some fault, that they might revile and condemn Him? If the disciples of Christ, having once seen the Lord conversing with the Samaritan woman, marvelled that He spoke with a woman, how much more would the enemies not have held their peace, had they seen an open sinner following Him every day and serving Him..."

4802. Crucifixion on the cross, that is, the cross-execution, from ancient times, and among the Romans, served as a servile, most shameful and most cruel punishment, to which only traitors, murderers and the greatest villains were consigned to death. Among the Jews this execution was regarded as "accursed" (Deut. 21:22–23; 1 Cor. 1:23). According to Roman custom, the crime of the crucified man was written briefly on a small board fixed above the cross. Death on the cross contained everything that is most dreadful and most agonizing in torture and in death, without loss of consciousness and of feeling: the unnaturalness of a body hanging on nails made every slightest movement agonizing; the inflamed wounds, constantly tearing ever more, near the nails were eaten away by gangrene; the arteries, especially on the head and abdomen, swelled and filled with blood, producing a terrible heat and unbearable thirst. The sufferings of the crucified were so great and terrible, sometimes continuing for several days, that the Romans would commonly hasten the approach of death by blows and by piercing with a spear. The Jews, however, in virtue of the law of Moses (Deut. 21:1–23), were permitted to end the sufferings of the crucified before sunset, and it was the custom to give the crucified man to drink wine mixed with myrrh (Mk. 15:23), or with gall (Mt. 27:34), which dulled consciousness so as somewhat to lessen the sufferings; but Jesus Christ did not accept, did not drink, such a drink that lessens suffering. Wealthy women of Jerusalem provided this stupefying drink at their own expense, without regard to the per-

sons to be crucified. The outrageous execution by crucifixion was abolished in the Roman Empire only by the Emperor Constantine the Great; in the Roman Republic even children were crucified...

4803. This darkness was not an ordinary solar eclipse, in accordance with the known natural laws of the motion of the sun and moon. It was a supernatural phenomenon which, together with the subsequent special signs in nature, bore witness to the exceptional, supreme significance of the event of the Redemption. The extraordinary character and credibility of this darkness were attested by three pagan writers of that time: the Roman historian and astronomer Phlegon, Julius Africanus, the historian Phallus, and a fourth pagan historian, not named by the historian Eusebius. In their records the hours of this darkness fully coincide with the apostolic indications that stars were visible in the sky. St. John Chrysostom, Theophylact and Euthymius suppose that this darkness was produced by a massive thickening of clouds between the earth and the sun, by the action of a supernatural power, as a sign of God's wrath against the impiety of men. The civil day was reckoned from six o'clock in the evening to six o'clock in the evening of the next day. The daylight itself, however, was reckoned from six in the morning. From six to nine in the morning was counted as the first part of the day, which was called the third hour of the day; from nine to twelve was the second part of the day, which was called the sixth hour; from noon to three was the third part of the day, called the ninth hour; from three to six in the evening was counted as the fourth part, which was called the twelfth hour of the day. The night was likewise divided into four watches, each of three hours.

4807. Myrrh, smyrna, is a fragrant resin from the balsam tree, growing in Arabia, Egypt and Abyssinia. This resin partly flowed of itself from the tree, partly was obtained by cutting into the bark of the tree. It is oily; on thickening it acquired a white-yellow colour; when hardened it became reddish; its taste is sharply bitter, its fragrance especially aromatic, to the point of producing dizziness in the head and loss of consciousness. Myrrh, or this resin, by its property of resisting all decay, was used among the Jews and Egyptians for anointing and embalming the bodies of the dead (Jn. 19:39). In the Old Testament the myrrh for sacred anointing was compounded of myrrh and oil (Ex. 30:23–25). By this myrrh, at God's command, were anointed the Tabernacle of the Covenant, then Aaron and his sons for the sacred service of God, and afterwards kings and prophets were likewise anointed with myrrh. Anointing with myrrh is an outward, visible sign of the sanctification of an object and of the communication to the anointed person of the gifts and powers of the Spirit of God. And in the Orthodox Christian Church, from the time of the Apostles, there exists the sacrament of Chrismation, through which to the believer, at the anointing with sanctified myrrh of his head, breast, eyes, ears, lips, hands and feet, in the name of the Holy Spirit, are given the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which nurture and strengthen him in the spiritual life. With sacred myrrh are anointed Christian churches, and tsars at their coronation for their great royal service... Besides myrrh, the Jews in burying the dead also used aromatic powders, which they strewed upon the linen cloths and upon the very bed on which the body was laid. Such aromatic powders, besides myrrh, were prepared for Christ's tomb by the myrrh-bearing women.

4808. In the account of the siege of Jerusalem in the year 70 by Titus Flavius Vespasian, who was proclaimed Roman emperor at that same time, the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea is mentioned as built after the type of ordinary single Jewish rock-cut tombs. This also confirms, from an outside source, that the Tomb in which Christ was buried was hewn out of natural rock, within a low hill, in the form of two chambers or parts: an entrance chamber and, properly speaking, the burial chamber. The entrance to the cave was, as was customary, oriented to the east and was closed by being blocked with a large stone. The place of burial in the second part of the cave was hewn in the form of a bed, or a bench along the wall, on the right-hand side of the entrance. The height of the burial chamber was somewhat above the height of a man, and the height of the entrance about a third of a man's height. The distance of Joseph's tomb from Golgotha was about 17 sazhens (or 120 feet)... Toward the middle of the second century the Roman emperor Hadrian, resolved to Hellenize the Jews, ordered all the irregularities of the terrain and the hills of Jerusalem to be filled in, and afterwards pagan shrines to Jupiter and Venus were erected on the sites of the Christian holy places. But in the year 333, by command of the emperor Constantine the Great, these shrines were torn down, the fill was carted away, and then the cave with the Tomb of Christ was uncovered intact. A magnificent, very rich church enclosed this Christian sanctuary, but the outward appearance of the cave of the Holy Sepulchre was altered: in order to place it more conveniently within the church, the tomb itself was separated from the rock of the entrance (vestibule) part, so that only the burial part of the cave was preserved... Then, from the seventh century onward, the Persians, Jews, Arabs and Turks, defeating the Greeks, employed every means to erase from the face of the earth the burial bed of the God-man; and although a large part of the walls and the roof of the cave were destroyed, the bed itself and the lower part of the cave's walls have stood indestructibly to the present day, as authentic and indubitable monuments, hallowed by the presence within them of Christ the Savior. And until the end of the days of this sinful earth this hallowed stone bed will draw believers to itself, give them comfort and consolation, and send away with a reconciled soul those who fall before it...

4809. The word "Angel" means messenger, envoy, and in Holy Scripture it is used in many different senses. But in its proper and narrow sense, the word "Angels" in the Bible means personal, spiritual beings, more perfect than man and created by God, who announce God's will to men and carry out His commands on earth. The Angels were created by God before the creation of the visible world; they are spiritual, and if not bodiless, they have some especially light, ethereal body. Human spatial conditions do not exist for the Angels, but they are not omnipresent. They are limited in perfection and, despite the swiftness and depth of their understanding, they are not omniscient; despite their purity and holiness, the Angels can be subjected to temptations, because they were created free, and therefore could freely stand firm in good, as the bright Angels did, and fall, as the Angels who are evil spirits did. The Angels stand before the Face of God, continually glorify Him, carry out His will and enjoy blessedness. The Angels are an innumerable multitude, and among them there are various dignities and degrees of perfection... The whole history of mankind and of the people of God takes place through the ministry of the Angels, and they appear at important moments in the history of the Old

and New Covenants of God, serving Jesus Christ and His Church, for which purpose the Angels assume a visible form accessible to men. Therefore the Evangelists Mark and Luke, relating the appearance of the Angels to the myrrh-bearing women, call them "men" (Lk. 24:4) and "young man" (Mk. 16:5), according to the form, the manner of appearance in which the myrrh-bearing women beheld these Angels. The Orthodox Church venerates the Angels as servants and fulfillers of God's will, who stand close to Him.

4810. On the same day, only some time after the first appearance to Mary Magdalene, Christ the Savior did not forbid her, Mary Magdalene, together with the other myrrh-bearing women, to take hold of His feet (Mt. 28:9; Lk. 24:10); also in the evening of that same day Christ invited the disciples to touch Him and showed them the wounds in His hands and feet (Lk. 24:39). From these circumstances it should be concluded, the Fathers of the Church and the commentators hold, that the prohibition of touching at Mary's first appearance had as its basis the simplicity of her thoughts at that time, with which she rushed toward the Lord. Like the other disciples, she did not expect and did not understand the resurrection of Christ the Savior, and suddenly sees Him before her alive. What confusion of thoughts and what emotional agitation must have arisen in her at this appearance of one dead, now alive — and she rushes to Christ, to be assured by touch of what her eyes see, to hold Him, so ardently sought... But Christ, knowing what was then passing in the thoughts and soul of Mary Magdalene, gently sets aside her most sincere but in her thinking inappropriate impulse, and satisfies her lawful desire to be assured that it is He before her by the assurance of His word and by the commission to announce His resurrection to the Apostles...

4814. Even after the appearance of the Risen Christ at Emmaus, attested by two more disciples, many "did not believe" them either, until that same evening, in the very house of the Apostle John where the disciples had gathered, and despite the closed doors, Christ appeared and reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him risen (Mk. 16:13–14). This circumstance is of the greatest importance in the accounts of the Lord's resurrection, namely as an irrefutable proof of the truth of His resurrection. It is evident that the Apostles were not mistaken in this truth, could not have been deceived, and that it was not their dream, nor the fruit of ecstasy or a disordered imagination. The Apostles did not believe, and the reproaches of the Risen One Himself were needed, and His permission to touch Him and eat with them, to overcome this unbelief; and if the Apostles afterwards believed and preached of the real resurrection of their Teacher and Lord, then this resurrection is an indubitable truth, and no one can any longer reproach the disciples with credulity...

4815. Christ the Savior said: The Kingdom of Heaven (of God) is like a grain of mustard seed, which, though it is the smallest of all seeds, when it has grown becomes a tree, so that the birds come and take shelter in the shade of its branches... (Mt. 13:31–32; Mk. 4:31; Lk. 13:19). Here Christ spoke of the seed of not the ordinary mustard, not a herb, not our annual (sinapis), but of a special Eastern perennial, growing abundantly in Palestine and called in botany "Phytolacca dodecandra", whose seed is minute,

whose chemical elements are the same as those of annual mustard and which are used for the same purposes as ordinary herbaceous mustard; in North America the perennial tree-like mustard, phytolacca, is called forest mustard... When the Jews wished to designate some very small thing, they said that it was the size of a grain of mustard. By this brief parable the Lord showed the image of the spread of the Gospel preaching. Although His male and female disciples were the weakest of all and the most humbled, yet since the power hidden in them was great, their preaching spread throughout the whole world. And the Church of Christ, at first small and inconspicuous to the world, has spread over the earth so that multitudes of peoples, like birds in the branches of the mustard tree, take shelter under her shade. The same happens with the Kingdom of God in the soul of man: the breath of God's grace, at first scarcely perceptible, when the man is diligent, more and more embraces his soul, which then becomes a temple of God, a receptacle of various virtues...

4816. The word *predanie* (tradition) means a narrative, a relation, the memory of an event handed down orally from ancestors to descendants; it also means teachings, instructions, rules of life transmitted from one generation to another — the voice of antiquity, the traditions of old. The scribes and Pharisees say to Jesus: "Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?" (Mt. 15:2). "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle," the Apostle Paul instructs (2 Thess. 2:15). And tradition, teaches St. Philaret of Moscow, could be used on a par with Holy Scripture only in the case that, like the immediate disciples of the Apostles, we had before our eyes the immediate, true apostolic tradition... But Christian traditions have already passed through many lands, peoples, languages and many centuries. To the original apostolic traditions there were joined the traditions of the Fathers of various degrees of antiquity, and there arose a diversity to the point of contradiction. Therefore, in order to use tradition as a source, there is needed an investigation into the authenticity and worth of the traditions, so as to remove from them unrighteous alterations and alien admixtures... And the Orthodox Church acknowledges tradition not as an independent but as a supplementary source of Christian teaching.

4817. Some Fathers of the Church and scholars hold and teach that the Holy Evangelists, in all the accounts of the three women mentioned above, mean only one person, who in her youth was probably given over to debauchery and, because of her sinful way of life, was possessed by seven demons. Having heard of the miracles of Christ, she goes to Him in the house of Simon the Pharisee; for the vividness of her contrition over her sins she merited and received forgiveness from the Saviour, and as a consequence was freed from the seven evil spirits that tormented her; then she could leave, with her relatives Lazarus and Martha, Galilee and choose as her dwelling Bethany, where Jesus often honoured their house with visits. Such was the opinion, for example, of Clement of Alexandria, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great and others. Such was, up to the present time, the opinion also of the Western Roman Catholic Church. But most of the more recent and Western scholarly writers already distinguish Mary Magdalene from Mary the sister of Lazarus. They say that Magdalene did not leave the Saviour in the last years of His life and followed Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, when He came there for the last

feast of the Jewish Passover, whereas the sister of Lazarus, Mary, remained at this time with her brother and Martha in Bethany; for not one of the Evangelists mentions her name when enumerating the women who then followed Jesus and came with Him to Jerusalem. And indeed, these two pious women appear in Holy Scripture bearing entirely different marks: the one is always named Magdalene and is counted among the women who followed Christ from Galilee; the other, on the contrary, by the name of the sister of Lazarus from Bethany. Such a constant difference in their distinguishing appellations could not have been without meaning for the Holy Evangelists, and it necessarily leads to the thought that they should not be confused. St. Irenaeus, the renowned Origen, St. John Chrysostom and many other Fathers of the Church and scholars distinguish St. Mary Magdalene from St. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, but acknowledge the repentant sinner mentioned by St. Luke at the end of the seventh chapter as one person with St. Magdalene. But this opinion too is positively supported by nothing... St. Gregory the Great and some other interpreters of Holy Scripture, who recognize St. Mary Magdalene as one person with the repentant sinner in the house of the Pharisee Simon (in Nain), understand by the seven demons cast out by Christ from Magdalene various sins which she had acquired for herself by her wicked life and which, after her repentance before the Saviour, supposedly left her. But such an interpretation of the words of the Holy Gospel is entirely arbitrary and contradicts the general meaning in which these expressions are used in the Gospel, where by them is clearly and definitely understood the indwelling of unclean spirits in a human being, who, by God's permission, entered the bodies of the unfortunate not only singly but even in a whole legion. Many later Western interpreters of Holy Scripture also accept, in agreement with the Eastern Orthodox Church, the words of the Evangelists Luke and Mark about the casting out of seven demons literally.

4842. The Western Christians also maintained that the holy relics of Mary Magdalene rest in Burgundy, in the abbey of Vézelay, and venerated them there, until they changed their opinion in favor of the relics of a certain saint discovered in Provence, in southern France, which the Provençal tradition and some church writers—who identify Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus, and the sinful woman in the house of the Pharisee with St. Mary Magdalene—claimed to be the holy relics of Mary Magdalene. But these and similar reports of the Western Roman Catholic Church about the life and resting place of the relics of St. Mary Magdalene, and everything true and authentic in these traditions of the Western churches, most probably refer in fact to one of the other holy Marys mentioned in the Holy Gospel, concerning whose activity after the Ascension of Christ the Eastern Church has no certain information.

THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF JULY

July 23

23 июля

New Calendar July 23 · Old Calendar August 5 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Apollinaris

Страдание святого священномученика Аполлинария

In the days of Emperor Claudius[1], Saint Peter, Apostle of Jesus Christ[2], came from Antioch to Rome[3] together with many Christians who accompanied him. Here he first entered the Jewish assembly and presented himself as a Jew. He began to preach the teaching about Jesus Christ, proving from the testimony of the prophetic books that Christ is truly the Son of God, come for the salvation of the human race; he also related all the wonders of the Lord Jesus that He had worked among Israel. As the holy Apostle Peter preached in this way every day to the Jewish congregation, many of the Jews believed in Christ, and not only Jews but many Romans too, hearing the Apostle's preaching, gladly received his word, saying:

"God has visited the human race by sending His Son to renew the world."

And, believing in Christ, they were baptized. Some time later, the holy Apostle Peter addressed his disciple Apollinaris, who had come with him from Antioch, in these words:

"You are well instructed in the knowledge of Christ, the Son of God, and have fully learned all His divine deeds. Therefore receive the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, go to the populous city of Ravenna[4847], and without fear preach there the name of Jesus Christ!"

1. Claudius, emperor 41–54 A.D.
2. Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Peter, June 29.
3. The chief city of the Roman Empire, lying in central Italy on both banks of the Tiber, near where it empties into the sea.

Having said this, the Apostle Peter offered a prayer and, laying his hands upon the head of Apollinaris, ordained him bishop of the city of Ravenna.

"May our Lord Jesus Christ send His Angel, who will keep you on the way and fulfill what you ask."

With these parting words the Apostle sent Apollinaris away, embracing him. Approaching the aforementioned city, Apollinaris entered the house of a soldier named Irenaeus, wishing to rest as a wayfarer. During their conversation the holy bishop told Irenaeus about himself: who he was, whence he came, and why he was going to their city; and he spoke of Christ Jesus and His divine power. Irenaeus said to him:

"Father, wayfarer! I have a blind son. If your preaching has power, heal him so that he may see; then I, believing in your God, will follow Him."

The saint ordered the blind man to be brought to him; when he was brought, all the household gathered, wishing to see what the wayfarer would do to the blind man. He, making the sign of the Cross over the eyes of the blind man, said:

"All-present God! Bring the knowledge of Your Son into this city, so that not only the bodily but also the spiritual eyes of these people may be enlightened, that they may know You, the only true God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, whom You sent for the salvation of the world (cf. Jn. 17:3)."

No sooner had the saint spoken these words than the eyes of the blind boy were immediately opened; he received his sight and fell at the feet of the man of God together with his parents. Thus that whole family believed in Christ and was baptized in a river that flowed not far from Ravenna, and the saint began to live in Irenaeus's house.

In the city there was a sick woman, the wife of a tribune[4], named Thecla, who had lain ill for many years; although various skilled physicians treated her, she could not be cured. It happened that the newly baptized soldier Irenaeus came to the tribune and, seeing that he was deeply grieved by his wife's incurable illness, addressed him thus:

4. Of a military commander.

"There lives with me a wayfarer who healed my blind son without any medicine; if you command, let him come to you, and he will at once heal your wife as well."

The tribune asked:

"Where has this man come from?"

"From Rome," Irenaeus replied.

"Then is he a Roman?" the tribune asked again.

"I do not know; yet it seems to me that he is not a Roman by birth but a Greek."

"Bring him secretly into my house!" the tribune concluded the conversation.

When Saint Apollinaris was entering the city of Ravenna with Irenaeus, making the sign of the Cross over himself, he prayed:

"O God, who aided my teacher Peter, aid me also, that Your holy name may be glorified in this city and Your will may be done here!"

When the saint entered the tribune's house, the tribune greeted him:

"You are welcome, O physician! For what could be more pleasant to a thirsty man than cold water?"

"May the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ rest upon you," said Saint Apollinaris.

"Who is He whom you named?" asked the tribune.

"He is the Son of the Living God (cf. Jn. 6:69), who has renewed the whole perished world," Apollinaris answered.

"I see that you are a Galilean[5]," said the tribune.

"Truly so," the saint confirmed.

"Can you heal?" asked the tribune.

"No," the saint replied, "I know nothing except the name of Jesus."

"And what power is there in the name of Jesus?" said the tribune.

"Summon here the soldiers who are under your command," the saint answered, "and before everyone's eyes you will know the power of my Lord Jesus Christ!"

5. Galilee is a region in the north of Palestine; here the Lord Jesus Christ spent His childhood and youth; Galilee was also chiefly the place of His preaching; for this reason the Lord Jesus was called the Galilean (Mt. 26:69). In the fourth century the Greco-Roman emperor Julian the Apostate died (in 363) with these words addressed to Christ: "Thou hast conquered me, O Galilean!" Hence the followers of the Lord Jesus also bore the name Galileans.

The tribune at once sent for all his soldiers, and then addressed the saint:

"My wife has lain on a sickbed for many years, and the medicines not only do not help her but harm her even more. So if there is any healing power in you, manifest it upon the sufferer!"

"May God," the saint prayed, "open the eyes of your hearts, that seeing His wonders, all may believe in Him!"

And, going up to the bed and taking the sick woman by the hand, he said:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, arise and believe in Him, and do not think that anyone is like Him."

At once the wife felt herself healthy, rose from her bed, and loudly bore witness:

"There is no other God but Jesus Christ, whom you preach."

Seeing this, the tribune and all his soldiers, astonished, cried out:

"Truly this is the only God, who works such things! He can also help us in war if we love Him!"

The tribune with his wife, children, and all the household believed in Christ, and many of the pagans present believed and were baptized. From that time Saint Apollinaris began to stay in the city, in the tribune's house, and multitudes of people came to him daily; he secretly taught them to believe in Christ and baptized them, and those who believed brought their children to the saint for instruction in letters. The bishop of God set up a church in one room of the tribune's house, celebrated the Divine Liturgy there, and gave the faithful Communion of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. Remaining there for 12 years, he ordained two presbyters, Aderetus and Calocerus; he ordained as deacons Marcian, a man of most noble birth, and the philosopher Leucadius, and six men as clerics, and with them he performed daytime and nighttime prayers, glorifying God. When the number of Christians increased, and the report of the name and power of Jesus Christ and of His preacher spread among the people, the man of God could not remain unknown, and he was reported to the governor of the city, Saturninus.

When he was sent for and brought in, the governor presented him to the chief priests of the Ravenna Capitol, and in their presence addressed him with a question:

"Who are you?"

"I am a Christian," the saint confessed in reply in a loud voice.

"And who is Christ?" asked the prince.

"Christ is the Son of the Living God, by whom all that exists in heaven and on earth and in the sea is moved," the saint answered.

"Is it He who sent you," the judge pressed, "to overthrow the worship of our gods? Do you not know the great god Zeus, who dwells in the city Capitol, and to whom you too must bow?"

"Who he is I do not know, and about his temple I have no knowledge," the saint answered.

Then the priests of the idols said to the saint:

"Go then and look at his great temple, wondrously adorned, and in it you will see the image of the invincible Zeus, and you will bow down to him."

And they led Saint Apollinaris to that temple; when he entered it and saw the rich adornments, he laughed and addressed the priests with these words:

"See how much gold and silver has been gathered here in vain: would it not be better to distribute it to the poor than to hang it uselessly before demons?"

Then the impious were filled with anger and fury; they beat the saint severely, and then, tying a rope to his feet, dragged him outside the city and threw him on the seashore as one dead. His disciples, taking up Saint Apollinaris, barely alive, hid him in the house of a widow who believed in Christ, and looked after him.

Six months later, a man of rank named Boniface suddenly became mute. Many physicians were called to him, but they could do nothing to help him. At that time it became known in his house that the servant of God Apollinaris was alive and hiding at a widow's. The wife of the mute man hastened to the man of God and, falling at his feet, begged him to come to her house and heal her husband. The bishop of Christ rose and went there; and when he entered Boniface's house, one of the

maidservants, a girl possessed by an unclean spirit and seized by it, cried out:

"Depart from here, servant of the Living God! If you do not depart, I will see to it that you are dragged out of the city again, with your feet bound!"

The saint, rebuking the unclean spirit, cast it out of the maidservant; going in to the sick and mute Boniface, he prayed over him to God thus:

"Lord Jesus Christ, who closed this man's lips so that he would not call demons to his aid, open them to him now, that he may call upon Your most blessed name and believe that You are God, living forever."

When the saint had prayed thus, and the Christians standing by said "Amen," at that very moment the mute man's tongue was loosed and his lips were opened to glorify the One God, and he cried out loudly:

"There is no other God but the one proclaimed by Apollinaris!"

On that day more than five hundred men believed in Christ and received holy Baptism. A few days later the impious, stirred up to wrath by the demons, seized St. Apollinaris again and beat him severely with staves, forbidding him to preach about Jesus or even to mention His name. The saint, lying on the ground, cried out:

"Truly God is Jesus Christ, who of His own will suffered for men."

The pagans, unable to bear his testimony to Christ, set him barefoot upon hot coals, and while they tormented him they burned him over the fire. But he, still more mightily, proclaimed Christ aloud. Then, binding St. Apollinaris by the feet, the tormentors dragged him out of the city, shouting:

"Although you work cures, if you wish to remain alive, do not dare to enter the city."

And the saint lay near the city and ceaselessly taught about the name of Jesus Christ. Many God-fearing people came to him and attended to him. The believers, who grew in number through the saint's preaching, built a small church not far from the city on the seashore, and in it the bishop of God celebrated the holy Liturgy and baptized in the sea those who turned to Christ God.

Some years later the saint was driven out by the unbelievers and went to the Italian region of Emilia, where by his preaching he brought to the holy Faith whomever he could. At that time, by his command, the presbyter Calocerus governed the church, and he too displayed great signs through the power of the name of Jesus Christ. Having spent sufficient time in Emilia and having turned many to Christ, St. Apollinaris returned again to Ravenna, where the believers received him with joy. At that time Ravenna already had another ruler, named Rufinus, who had only one daughter, and she was so gravely ill that they were already expecting her death. Hearing of St. Apollinaris, the ruler commanded that he be brought with honor into his house, so that he might help his daughter. When the holy bishop with his clergy was entering the prince's house, the sick girl died. Then both her parents and all the household began to weep and to cry aloud. Seeing the saint, Rufinus said to him:

"It would have been better for you not to come into my house, for the great gods have been angered with me on your account and would not allow my daughter to be delivered from death."

"Swear to me by the health of your Caesar," the saint replied, "that you will not hinder your daughter from following her Savior, and you shall see the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom I preach."

"I know," Rufinus answered, "that my daughter is dead; but if I see her raised and speaking, I will praise the power of your God, and I will not forbid her to follow her Savior."

Then the saint, drawing near to the dead girl, prayed:

"Lord Jesus Christ, my God, who fulfillest all the petitions of Thy Apostle Peter, my teacher, fulfill also my petition: raise this maiden, since she is Thy creation. And let those standing here see Thy power and understand that there is no other God but Thee!"

Then, touching the dead girl, he cried:

"Arise, and confess your Creator!"

And at once the maiden rose, stood on her feet, and crying aloud, exclaimed:

"Great is the God whom Apollinaris preaches, and there is no other God but Him!"

The parents of the maiden rejoiced, and all the Christians rejoiced, that the name of the Lord Jesus had been so glorified. The maiden was baptized with her mother and all the household, and the total of souls of both sexes who received baptism was three hundred and twenty-four; and many others from among the pagans believed in Christ and were baptized. As for the ruler Rufinus, although he believed in Christ, for fear of the Caesar he did not receive baptism; yet in secret he loved the holy hierarch of God and served him. His daughter dedicated herself to Jesus Christ, betrothing herself to Him as a bride, and remained a virgin all her life.

The pagans reported to the Caesar that a certain man who had come from Antioch, by his sorcery and enchantments, had introduced the name of Jesus the Jew into the city of Ravenna, that many of the people listened to him, and that he had even led Rufinus' family and household astray into his faith. The Caesar at once sent his deputy, named Messalinus, to Ravenna to deprive Rufinus of his authority, and ordered that Apollinaris either be compelled to worship the pagan gods or be exiled to the most remote lands. Messalinus, carrying out the Caesar's will, summoned Apollinaris to the praetorium and, in the presence of the Capitoline priests, questioned him as to who he was, whence he came, and what his occupation was. The saint said that he was a Christian, a native of Antioch, and a disciple of the Apostles; his work consisted solely in preaching Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, who created heaven and earth and the sea and all that is upon them and in them.

"Is it not the Christ whom you preach who, some years ago, called himself the Son of God and was killed by the Jews?" asked Messalinus. "If He had been God, He would not have died or suffered insult; but since He was proud, He was delivered to torment and perished by a death sentence. Why you count Him among the gods, I do not know."

"This Jesus Christ, of whom you speak," said St. Apollinaris to him, "was God, is God, and will be God forever. Desiring to free the human race from enslavement to the enemy, He humbled Himself and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit in the pure womb of the Virgin who had not known a man, and was born of Her in an ineffable manner."

"We have heard all this," Messalinus replied, "but it is hardly credible."

"Listen to me, O judge, and give heed!" cried the saint. "God was in pure flesh and performed wondrous miracles and signs; and when He was seized by the Jews and crucified, the flesh He had received from the Most Holy Virgin suffered, but the Divinity remained free of suffering and immortal; by this Divinity the flesh also rose from the dead on the third day, and He, appearing to many, ascended into heaven, whence He had come down. So great a power and authority did He give to those who believe in Him, that they can, by His name, cast out demons, heal every incurable disease, and raise the dead (Mk. 16:17–18).

"You cannot persuade me," Messalinus replied, "to become a follower of an unknown God whom the Caesar and the senators do not acknowledge. But enter the city's Capitol and offer incense with your own hands to the great god Zeus, who thunders terribly. If you refuse to do this, I will subject you to various tortures and send you into exile."

"Even if I enter the Capitol, I will not offer incense to demons; but I will offer the sacrifice of praise to my Lord Jesus Christ," the saint answered.

The idol priests cried out:

"Let Apollinaris be tortured!"

And Messalinus commanded that the martyr be stripped and beaten with staves without mercy, saying:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods!"

But the saint, during this torture, cried out:

"I am a Christian!"

"Stretch him out in the place of torment!" cried one of the priests furiously, "and torment him even more cruelly until he offers praise to the immortal gods."

But even amid these more cruel tortures, St. Apollinaris cried out:

"I confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the living God, and no other!"

An hour later Messalinus, ordering the tortures to be eased, addressed the passion-bearer:

"Tell me, wretch, what reward do you expect for the torments you have endured?"

"In our books," the martyr answered, "it is written: 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved' (Mt. 24:13). And if anyone dies for Christ, he shall live: such is the reward for a Christian."

Many people, both believers and pagans, watched the saint's suffering, and the believers, seeing his courage and endurance, glorified the Heavenly God. Then Messalinus again commanded the servants to torment the servant of Christ and to pour boiling water upon his wounds. Meanwhile he gave orders to prepare a ship, intending to send the martyr, bound in iron, into imprisonment in Illyricum[6]. One of the servants who tortured the saint, who had raged against the passion-bearer more than all the others, was suddenly seized by a fierce demon, fell to the ground, and died, for the demon tore out his wretched soul. And St. Apollinaris, being taken down from the instrument of torture, addressed Messalinus:

"Impious man, why do you not believe in the Son of God? Then you might escape eternal torment in Gehenna[7]."

The tormentor was enraged and commanded that the saint be struck on the mouth with a stone. The Christians, seeing such cruelty on the part of the tormentor, could bear it no longer (their number was very great), but, stirred to wrath, they raised a popular uprising; they rushed upon the pagans and killed several of them; they wished to kill Messalinus too, but he, noticing the commotion and the popular uprising, took fright and at once sprang up and fled, hiding somewhere in a fortified building. He commanded the soldiers to seize Apollinaris, shut

6. Illyricum or Illyria was a Roman province, which the Holy Apostle Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Romans as the boundary of his apostolic labors (Rom. 15:19). The Greeks called the whole country lying west of Macedonia, between the Danube and the Adriatic Sea, Illyria. The Romans distinguished illyria barbara, the northern mountainous country, and illyria graeca, the coastal country settled by Greek colonists. In Illyria some of the seventy apostles preached.

7. Gehenna is the place of eternal torment (Mt. 10:28). This name derives from Hebrew words meaning the valley of Hinnom near Jerusalem, where children were burned in honor of Moloch (3 Kgdms. 11:7; 4 Kgdms. 16:3–4). King Josiah abolished this terrible and God-defying custom of such sacrifice; after this, the corpses of executed criminals, carrion, and all manner of filth began to be cast into the valley of Hinnom, and to destroy the stench and contagion all this was given over to fire. Hence the expression fiery Gehenna (Mt. 5:22, 29; 10:28; 23:33; Mk. 9:47), Gehenna of unquenchable fire (Mk. 9:43, 45).

him in a dungeon, put his feet in stocks, and give him neither food nor drink, so that he would die, wasting away from hunger and thirst. But God, who feeds all, did not forsake His servant; He sent an Angel to strengthen the saint when he hungered, and the Angel of God came visibly into the dungeon, so that the prison guards saw him, and brought the prisoner of Christ food and drink, which he took and, having partaken of them, was strengthened and gave thanks to God. Four days later, Messalinus, hearing that the Christian teacher Apollinaris was still alive in the dungeon, commanded that he be bound in heavy iron fetters, secretly put aboard a ship, and sent into exile. Three clerics went with him, unwilling to be parted from their father and teacher, and they set out on the voyage.

After several days, a violent storm suddenly arose, and the sea was fiercely agitated. The ship was broken apart by the force of the waves, and all drowned; only St. Apollinaris, with three clerics and the two soldiers who were with them, survived. Preserved by God, they came unharmed to the shore. The iron fetters in which the saint had been bound fell from him, shattered by an unseen hand at the very moment when the wrecked ship began to sink. Those saved from destruction came ashore. And the two soldiers mentioned asked the saint:

"Master! Father! Where shall we go? What shall we do?"

"Believe," answered the saint, "in our Lord Jesus Christ, receive holy Baptism, and you shall live."

At once, having cursed the idols, they were baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The saint went with the three clerics and the two newly enlightened soldiers from one place to another, and they even came to Mysia[8], where no one received them. But when the saint saw a nobleman who had leprosy on his forehead, he asked:

"Do you wish to be healed?"

"I do," he answered.

"Believe in our Lord Jesus Christ," said the saint.

"Whoever heals me," answered the sick man, "shall be my God."

8. Moesia is a country north of Macedonia, bordering on Thrace.

St. Apollinaris invoked the name of the Lord Jesus and touched that man's leprosy, and he was immediately healed. He renounced the idols, believed in Christ, and was baptized. The saint lived with him for many days, teaching unbelievers to know the true God and enlightening them through holy Baptism. In the same way, as he journeyed from there along the bank of the River Danube, he brought many of the unbelievers to Christ by preaching the word. After this he came to Thrace and stayed near a pagan shrine, where stood an idol of the unclean pagan god Serapis, who conversed with his worshippers; for the demon dwelling in the idol gave answers to those who offered sacrifices and questioned him about any matter. When the saint came there, the idol fell silent. The impious priests and all the pagans of that region were greatly grieved that their god had become mute. After they had long sought to appease him with sacrifices, that he might speak to them again, he at last managed to utter these words:

"Do you not know that a disciple of the Apostle Peter has come here from Rome and bound me by the name of Jesus, which he preaches? Until he is driven away from here, I cannot answer your questions!"

The pagans at once began diligently to seek the preacher of Christ. When they found him, they beat him mercilessly; then, bringing him to the sea, they found a ship sailing to Italy. Having entreated the governor of their country, who was dispatching that ship, they put the holy hierarch of God aboard it, saying:

"Return to the place from which you came!"

With a favorable wind they reached Italy. Coming ashore with his disciples, the man of God went to the city of Ravenna, to his flock. After three years of exile, he appeared in Ravenna and was received by the faithful with great joy. The pagans, however, were exceedingly angry when they learned that the Christian bishop had returned from exile, and plotted evil, seeking a convenient time to carry out their design.

Some time later, while the holy hierarch of God was celebrating the Divine Liturgy in a church in the village of a certain notable man named Cyrene, a great number of pagans attacked it. They scattered Christ's rational flock, seized its holy shepherd, Apollinaris, and, beat-

ing him, brought him bound into the city, where they handed him over to the chief priests of the Capitol temple of Zeus. When they saw him, they cried out angrily:

"He is not worthy to appear before the great god Zeus, whom he has mocked more than once; let them take him to Apollo!"

When the saint was brought to the temple of Apollo, he lifted up a prayer to his Lord, and the idol immediately fell to the ground and crumbled to dust; a little while later, that abominable temple also collapsed. Seeing this, the Christians glorified their Almighty God, while the pagans seized St. Apollinaris, brought him to a prince named Taurus, and handed the martyr over to him to be condemned to death. The governor summoned all the counselors—the citizens—to the praetorium and, in their presence, asked Christ's prisoner by whose power he worked such miracles, healing the sick.

The saint declared that he did everything by the power of Christ, for Christ alone is the true and almighty God.

"I have," said the judge, "a son blind from birth. If by the power of your Christ you make him see, then we too shall believe that Christ is the true God; but if you do not, we shall hand you over to the fire, that you may perish as you deserve."

The hierarch of Christ ordered the man born blind to be brought. When he had been brought, the man of God made the sign of the Cross over his blind eyes and said:

"In the name of Jesus Christ Crucified, open your eyes and see."

At once the man who had been blind from birth opened his eyes and saw. All marveled and cried out:

"Truly, He who works such miracles is the true God!"

And many believed in Christ. The governor released the saint from the hands of the unbelievers and sent him by night to his estate, six miles[9] from the city, on the pretext that he would keep him there in fetters. But the hierarch remained in that village for all four years, not in fetters but at liberty. All the faithful came to him, and many pagans also visited him; by his preaching of the Gospel he brought them too to

9. The Roman milliarium or mile equaled eight stadia; and a stadion is approximately 88 of our sazhens.

the holy faith and baptized them. He healed all the sick who were brought to him.

In those days Vespasian[10] was chosen Caesar in Rome, and the priests who governed in Ravenna wrote a letter to Caesar in these words:

"Unless you destroy the sorcerer Apollinaris, who is harmful to your realm, the worship of the gods will perish and the glory of Rome will diminish. For by daily seducing a multitude of people with his sorcery, he reviles the immortal gods and destroys their temples; but if he alone among the living is put to death, the glory of Rome will be preserved forever."

Caesar Vespasian considered this and sent the following reply to Ravenna:

"If anyone brings dishonor and reproach upon the gods, he must make amends to them by presenting gifts, or else be banished from the city; for it is not fitting to take vengeance on anyone on behalf of the gods, since they themselves can avenge themselves upon their enemies if they are angered."

When this reply from Caesar arrived in Ravenna, the patrician[11] Demosthenes, who had then assumed rule over the city, seized God's hierarch Apollinaris, already advanced in years and physically weakened by many torments. The crowd of pagans demanded of Demosthenes that he either subject Apollinaris to torture or send him far away to places dangerous to health, where he would perish without a trace. Demosthenes handed the saint over to a centurion to be guarded until he could devise what torments to subject him to and to what deadly region to banish him. But the centurion, being a secret Christian, received the man of God and took him not to prison but to his own house, where he cared for him. After several days he addressed St. Apollinaris in these words:

"O master and father, do not hasten to die, for your life is very necessary to us for our good. Go out by night to the village where the sick are, and remain there until the public disturbance has subsided."

10. Vespasian, emperor 70–79 A.D.
11. A man of noble rank by birth.

With these words the centurion secretly released the saint from the city at midnight. When the saint had gone out, some worshippers of idols learned of it and hastened after him. Overtaking him on the road, they beat him and hacked at him with swords until they thought he was dead; then they left him and went away.

When day came, the disciples arrived and found the saint barely breathing. They took him and carried him to the village where the sick were, and he lived there for seven days. Before his end, his whole flock gathered around him. For a long time he taught them not to depart from the holy faith of Christ and to abhor pagan abominations. He prophetically foretold the many persecutions that would come upon the Church of Christ, and also foretold that, after all the grievous tribulations, idols would be destroyed everywhere, the light of piety would shine throughout the world, Christian kings would arise, and Christians would be free to offer sacrifices to the living God. He added these words as well:

"Whoever remains steadfast in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ shall not die, but shall live forever."

Having spoken these and many other words, the hierarch and martyr of Christ reposed in the Lord. All the faithful mourned him, placed his honorable body in a stone coffin, and buried it deep in the earth, fearing the impious might dig it up and dishonor his body. The hierarch of God, Apollinaris, shepherded the Church of Christ for twenty-eight years, one month, and four days. The saint suffered on the tenth day before the Kalends of August (that is, July 23), in the reign of Vespasian among the Romans, and of our Lord Jesus Christ among us Christians, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen.[12]

* * *

12. St. Apollinaris died about 75 A.D.; his body rests in Ravenna, in the church bearing his name, and his venerable hand is in Rome, in the church dedicated to him.

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Trophimus and Theophilus

Память святых мучеников Трофима и Феофила

The holy martyrs Trophimus and Theophilus suffered in the reign of Diocletian[13]. Together with them there also suffered faithful servants and true slaves of Christ, thirteen in all. When they refused to obey the command of the impious tormentor, namely to offer abominable sacrifices to lifeless idols, and would not consent to renounce Christ, they were hanged upon the torture-tree. Then the pagans began to tear their bodies with sharp iron, and also cast stones at the passion-bearers; finally, having broken their shins, they threw them upon a pyre. But by the all-powerful force of God the saints were preserved whole and unharmed in the midst of the flame, and they came out of the fire without harm. Then the tormentor, inflamed with cruel rage as with the fire of Gehenna, commanded that all of them be put to death by the sword. And the venerable heads of the saints were cut off, in honor and glory of the Head of the whole Church, our Lord Jesus Christ[14].

* * *

NOTES

4847. Ravenna is a city in the Italian province of the same name. Ravenna was founded by the Thessalians; its houses were built on piles, and canals partly took the place of streets. In 254 B.C. it was not subject to the Romans; the latter granted Ravenna self-government and various privileges and exemptions. In the days of the Roman Empire Ravenna was one of the important stations of the Roman fleet: Augustus established a harbor here. From 44 A.D. Ravenna became the seat of a bishop, and from 432 of an archbishop. Emperor Honorius, fleeing from Alaric, chose Ravenna as his capital in 402. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire Ravenna was taken by Odoacer, king of the

13. He reigned from 284 A.D. to 305 A.D.

14. The place of the struggles and sufferings of the holy martyrs Trophimus and Theophilus, and of the other martyrs who suffered with them, thirteen in number, is not known with certainty. Some point to the Asia Minor province of Lycia; but with greater probability the homeland of the holy martyrs should be considered the island of Crete, on the ground that the canon in their honor was composed by St. Andrew of Crete (his memory is July 4, under which date see also his life). The time of the martyrs' death falls in the era of the persecutions of Diocletian (beginning of the fourth century).

Heruli; in 493, after a protracted siege of Ravenna, Theodoric the Great took possession of it. From 555 the dominion of Byzantium began in Ravenna and lasted here about two centuries. In 752 it became the possession of the Lombards; in 754 Pepin the Short presented it as a gift to the pope. From 1275 Ravenna became the property of the noble family of Polenta, which had previously been in vassal dependence upon the pope. In 1441 Ravenna was seized by the Venetians, and from their hands it passed again into the hands of the pope in 1509. In 1860 Ravenna was included in the Kingdom of Italy. Along with Rome, Constantinople and Thessalonica, Ravenna is remarkable for monuments of early Christian art, from the time of its transition into Byzantine art.



THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF JULY

July 24

24 июля

New Calendar July 24 · Old Calendar August 6 (civil dates)

Passion of St. Christina the Holy Martyr

Страдание святой мученицы Христины

In the city of Tyre[1] there lived a man of high birth named Urvan, who held the authority of governor. He had a daughter, a young maiden who in the early years of her youth came to know God her Creator. Bravely enduring many cruel tortures, she laid down her soul for Him.

When she was born, her father and mother gave her the name Christina. This was not the work of their pagan reasoning but of God's providence: the name itself, as it were a kind of prophecy, foreshadowed that the maiden, when she came of age, would become a Christian, a slave and bride of Christ, and a martyr. When she reached eleven years of age, her extraordinary beauty became apparent, and there was no maiden among her peers equal to her in beauty. Then her father, wishing to shield her from human gaze, arranged a chamber for her in an exceedingly high palace, assigned to her the finest female servants, and, placing there images of his gods in gold and silver, commanded her to offer incense to them and worship them every day. Many of the noble and wealthy, hearing of the maiden's beauty, desired each to have her as a wife for his son. When they petitioned Christina's father about this, Urvan replied:

1. Tyre, on the island of Volsena (in what is now the Duchy of Tuscany), was later, according to tradition, supposedly swallowed by the waters. Others understand this to be the well-known city of Tyre in the East; and it should be noted that the memory of St. Christina was especially venerated in the East from ancient times.

"I will give my daughter to no one, but I dedicate her to my gods. The gracious gods have greatly loved her; let her remain a virgin for them, serving them always!"

The maiden Christina, growing in years and in understanding, since God enlightened and instructed her by His grace, began to come to the knowledge of the truth. Thus, looking through a small window at the sky and the heavenly luminaries, she came to know the Creator from His creatures; and having become convinced of the insensibility and emptiness of the lifeless idols, she would not offer incense to them or worship them. Instead, gazing toward the east, toward the heavens on high, she sighed and wept, saying to herself:

"How long will the hearts of men remain darkened? How long will their foolish understanding stay clouded, not turning to the Lord God who created heaven and earth and adorned them with such visible beauty?"

Reasoning thus within herself, she began to worship the One, living in the heavens, the true God, and with tears she prayed to Him that He would reveal Himself to her, so that she might know precisely Him whom her heart had kindled to love. When she had spent a sufficient number of days in prayer and fasting, she was granted a visitation by God's mercy: an Angel of the Lord appeared to her, signed her with the sign of the Cross, named her the bride of Christ, fully instructed her in the knowledge of God, and foretold to her the ascetic feats of suffering, namely that for the one God in the Trinity she would be tormented by three tyrants. Having strengthened her for this struggle, and since she hungered from fasting, he gave her pure bread to eat. After this angelic appearance the maiden was comforted in spirit and rejoiced in God her Savior, giving thanks that He had visited His servant by sending her a holy Angel. From then on she began to pray to the Lord with even greater warmth and to find consolation in love for Him. Filled with zeal for God, she began to take the golden and silver idols one by one and break them to pieces, and late in the evening she threw the fragments out of the window into the street below. In the morning passersby gathered up the broken gold and silver.

Once, the governor Urvan, wishing to visit his daughter and worship his gods, entered that high chamber, and not seeing the idols, asked Christina:

"Where are the gods?"

She remained silent. Then, summoning the servants, he questioned them about the gods, and they told him what his daughter had done to the idols. Enraged, he began to strike his daughter on the cheeks, adding:

"Where have you put the gods?"

But she would not answer him. Then, not at once opening her honorable lips, she confessed the one true God, living in the heavens, Creator of all. She called the so-called gods, the golden and silver ones, demons and idols, and told how she had broken them with her own hands. Then Urvan, filled with the greatest fury, cut down all the female servants with his sword, and subjected his daughter to various torments: first they beat her without mercy with rods and whips, and then, bound, they threw her into prison. Learning of this, her mother hastened to her with weeping and sobbing and urged her to turn away from Christ and return to the gods of her fathers. But the martyr of Christ not only refused to listen to her mother's words, but in such words renounced her:

"Do not call me your daughter. Do you not know that I bear the name of Christ, a name that none of our family has been counted worthy to bear? By my name and by my deeds I am no longer of your kin but of Christ's. I have become a kinswoman of Christ, the heavenly King; I am His servant and daughter. He is my Father, my Mother, and my Lord!"

For a long time her mother wept in this way, and, having accomplished nothing, went away in grief. When the night had passed and day came, Urvan, moved to cruelty by the spirit of malice, forgetting the natural feeling of love for his daughter, took his seat in the judgment hall, desiring to torment St. Christina not as his own daughter but as a stranger and a great criminal. As the saint was led from the prison to the place of judgment, many women seeing her said:

"God of Thy servant Christina! Help her, for she has taken refuge in Thee!"

Thus Christ's lamb stood before Urvan, not as before a father but as before a tormentor and a carnivorous beast, and the parent tried to win her over by guile:

"I pity you, my child, and I beg you: approach our great gods and offer sacrifice together with me, that they may have mercy on you and forgive you the sin in which you have offended against them. If you do not do this, you are no daughter of mine, and I will show you no mercy."

"You will give me great joy," the saint answered, "if you do not call me your daughter, for you are a servant of Satan, while I am the servant of Christ and no longer your daughter, since my Father is my Creator."

Inflamed with great fury, Urvan commanded that the maiden be hung naked on the rack, and that her pure virginal body be scraped and cut with sharp iron. The body was flayed to such a degree that the bare bones showed. When she was taken down from the rack and saw the pieces of her flesh lying on the ground, which had fallen off during the torture, she gathered them up and threw them into her father's face, saying:

"Eat the flesh of your daughter."

He, raging still more, stretched St. Christina upon an iron wheel of the torture-house, ordered a fire to be lit beneath her, and commanded that her body be sprinkled with hot oil. The body of St. Christina, turned by the wheel over the fire, was roasted like fish or meat for food. For any human being, especially a woman, it was impossible to remain alive after such torment, but God preserved the life of His servant and strengthened her for the glorification of His holy name and for the humiliation of the pagans. St. Christina, tormented in this way, glorified God and prayed to Him. The holy Angels, invisibly standing by her, eased her sufferings. At the same time, by God's command, an enormous flame unexpectedly broke away from the fire and rushed upon the impious who stood around, and it burned up as many as a thousand men. Urvan, not knowing what more to do with the martyr, ordered

her cast into prison. There an Angel of the Lord appeared to her during her prayer, healed her of her wounds, and made her entirely whole; he also gave her food, which he brought; the martyr was strengthened and gave glory to God. After this the father commanded that she be thrown into the sea. The servants took the slave of Christ, put her in a boat, carried her far from the shore, and, tying a great stone to her neck, cast her into the deep. An Angel of God received her and untied the stone from her neck; the stone sank, while the saint, supported by the hands of the incorporeal one, walked upon the waters as on dry land. Thus the sea became for her the baptismal font of holy baptism, for which she had so thirsted. A bright cloud overshadowed her, and from on high came a voice pronouncing over her the name of the Holy Trinity, as the rite of holy baptism requires; and St. Christina saw the Lord, who appeared to her and spoke words that filled her with joy. Coming out onto dry land, she appeared before her father and terrified him. Indeed, the impious man was astonished and dismayed to see the holy maiden come up alive out of the sea. But even in this miracle he did not perceive the power of God, and he counted it the effect of sorcery. He commanded that the martyr be cast again into prison, intending to put her to death by the sword in the morning. But that very night he himself, suddenly struck down by the scythe of death, perished forever, while the saint remained alive, glorifying and giving thanks to God.

After the unexpected death of Urvan, another ruler (hegemon), named Dion, was sent by the emperor to take his place, and he was informed of Christina, who was imprisoned. He brought her out of prison and presented her for trial, at first attempting by flattery to draw the Martyr into apostasy. But when he found her steadfast in the holy faith, he tortured her for a long time, scourging her, tearing her with iron claws, and burning her with fire. He ordered a great iron frying pan to be heated, the naked saint to be stretched upon it and turned over, and boiling oil and pitch to be poured over her, seeking to compel her to worship an idol of Apollo standing nearby. But the Martyr remained firm as adamant[2] in her steadfast confession of the most holy

name of Jesus Christ. By her prayer she destroyed the idol of Apollo; and when the idol fell and was reduced to dust, the governor Dion also fell to the ground and died. The demon dwelling in the idol, when its habitation was destroyed, carried off the soul of its zealous servant and made it dwell with him in hell, while the holy Martyr was again put in chains and prison. Nor was the suffering of Christ's maiden without fruit, for many of the people, seeing such wonders, glorified the one God, Jesus Christ, and as many as three thousand souls believed in Him. Those who were converted came to the saint, who remained in prison for a long time, and she instructed them until another governor, named Julian, arrived in the city of Tyre.

He summoned the saint to trial and likewise subjected her to various torments. First, a huge furnace was kindled and heated for three days; then the Martyr was cast into it and it was closed, and the holy maiden Christina remained there in the furnace for five days, untouched by the fire, like the youths of Babylon of old (Dan. 3:1–100). As though seated in a chamber, she sang, glorifying God. For the Angels of the Lord were with her, sprinkling and cooling the furnace, and joining their voices to her song, so that the soldiers keeping watch by the furnace heard the voices of those singing. When, after five days, the furnace was opened, the saint was found whole and unharmed, not touched at all by the fire; the Christian God was glorified, and pagan impiety put to shame. But the hegemon, blinded by Satan's malice, did not recognize therein the power of God, but called this wondrous miracle sorcery. Wishing at all costs to overcome her who could not be overcome, he summoned sorcerers and enchanters skilled in charming every kind of reptile, and ordered them by their spells to gather together many serpents, vipers, and scorpions and set them all upon the Martyr, that they might kill her with their venomous bites. But when the reptiles were let loose upon the saint, not one harmed her, although they crawled around her and even coiled about her body. The chief of the enchanters stood nearby, encouraging the reptiles with his incantations and tricks to strike the maiden with their bites. But by God's

2. That is, a diamond.

command they rushed fiercely upon their own charmer and at once killed him with their bites. And the saint said to the reptiles:

"In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you, crawling serpents, vipers, and scorpions: go each to your own place, harming no one!"

And the reptiles at once scattered in different directions. Some time later, taking pity on the man who had been killed by the reptiles, she prayed to the Lord and raised him from the dead, bringing it about that he became a Christian. And not he alone, but many, seeing such wondrous miracles, believed in the Lord. The prince, however, grew furious and ordered her virgin breasts to be cut off, and milk flowed from her wounds instead of blood. Then they cut out her tongue, which had glorified Christ God. But even after her tongue had been cut out, the Martyr spoke clearly; she seized the severed tongue, threw it into the prince's face, and struck him in the eyes:

"Eat," she said, "you impious man, my members!"

And the prince was blinded by the touch of the tongue upon his eyes, while the saint blessed God with still greater strength and reviled the idols and those who served them. The hegemon, no longer able to endure the saint Christina's reproachful words and enraged at his own blindness, ordered her to be put to death. Then the saint was pierced with iron spears by the soldiers, and the undefiled maiden and great Martyr of Christ, St. Christina, delivered her honorable and holy soul into the hands of her Lord. So great was the power the Lord manifested in her, that three fierce tormentors could not overcome one maiden. One of St. Christina's kinsmen, who believed in Christ, took her much-suffering body and buried it with honor. All this took place during the reign of the impious Severus among the Romans and Greeks, and during the great reign among Christians of the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be honor and glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.[3]

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou wast revealed as a radiant dove, having golden wings, and didst soar to the heights of heaven, O honorable Christina.

Therefore we celebrate thy glorious feast, and with faith venerate the shrine of thy relics, from which Divine healing floweth abundantly for all, for souls and bodies.

* * *

Life of our Venerable Father Polycarp, Archimandrite of the Kiev Caves

Житие преподобного отца нашего Поликарпа, архимандрита Печерского

Blessed and most praiseworthy Polycarp—whose name means "fruitful"[4]—was fruitful also in his good works. He brought forth that abundant fruit of which the Heavenly Husbandman said: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn. 12:24); and again: "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit" (Jn. 15:5). This blessed one counted the swiftly passing glory and the form of this world as dust, and, having received the holy, Angelic monastic habit in the monastery renowned for its caves, like a seed in ploughed ground, he mortified his body in every way through ascetic labors of fasting, while his spirit ever abode in God. Thus he brought forth many fruits worthy of repentance and manifested in himself all the fruits of the Spirit: unfeigned love for God and the brotherhood; the joy of an undefiled conscience; the peace of victory over every passion; long-suffering in misfortunes and sorrows; goodness in obedience to all; mercy in heartfelt care for the poor; unshakable faith in keeping the commandments, true in the fulfillment of vows; meekness, knowing no anger; and abstinence from rich and savory food and drink, and from all bodily passions in general (cf. Gal. 5:22–23). God caused all these fruits to grow in blessed Polycarp, and St. Simon, Bishop of Vladimir and Suzdal,[4863] planted them. The latter was his kinsman by blood, and did not wish Polycarp to be separated from him in spirit either; rather, like a good root, he strove to raise up a good branch as well. Therefore, when

3. According to other, more probable accounts, St. Christina suffered martyrdom around the year 300, during the reign of Diocletian.
4. Polycarp, translated from the Greek, means "many-fruited."

Simon himself was appointed from the holy Monastery of the Caves to the episcopal see of Vladimir and Suzdal, he took blessed Polycarp with him. There he encouraged Polycarp to a virtuous life, and for this purpose held with him soul-profiting conversations about what he himself had read or heard from eyewitnesses concerning the holy monks of the Caves of former times: the great labors they endured and how they so pleased God that even here their relics shone forth in incorruptibility through miracles, as a sign that they had received an incorruptible crown in heaven. And blessed Polycarp, having ploughed the soil of his heart through obedience and sown there the seeds of his fatherly instruction, brought forth fruit a hundredfold. Not only was he himself fruitful in virtue, but he desired to root such fruitfulness in all the Orthodox as well. Therefore, whatever he had heard from blessed Bishop Simon about the God-pleasing ascetic labors of the Venerable Fathers of the Caves, he took pains to write down for the benefit of others who were working out their salvation. Thus, while living with that blessed bishop, he set forth the wondrous lives of many saints in his epistle to blessed Akindin, Archimandrite of the Caves; these lives are included in the second part of the Kiev Caves Patericon. Later, although blessed Polycarp was bodily parted from his father and instructor Simon when he returned from his episcopal see to the Monastery of the Caves, he was not separated in virtue from that holy man: he had rooted the latter's former instructions well in his heart and strove to preserve and cultivate them. And St. Simon, for his part, did not cease to instruct him there as well, by means of his written epistle, full of divinely inspired counsels and accounts of the virtuous lives of the saints of the Caves. Keeping this epistle ever before him, blessed Polycarp inscribed all the father's words upon the tablets of his heart, read them with his mind, and fulfilled them in deed. Striving so diligently, he attained a high degree of virtue.

When the blessed Akindyn, archimandrite of the Kiev Caves, who had carefully and piously shepherded Christ's flock, reached a great age and, after long labors, departed to the Lord for eternal rest, there was among the God-chosen company of holy brethren no one older or more experienced in monastic struggles than Polycarp. Therefore the entire

host of Christ's good warriors unanimously and with one heart chose this blessed man as their leader and guide, deeming him worthy and able to steer the helm of the holy great Lavra of the Most Holy Theotokos and of our Venerable Fathers Anthony and Theodosius of the Kiev Caves. This was in the time of the Grand Prince of Kiev Rostislav Mstislavich[5], and of Metropolitan John, the fourth metropolitan of that name[6] and the third after Metropolitan Klim, consecrated with the head of St. Clement[7]. Having assumed the leadership of the holy great Kiev Caves Lavra,[8] blessed Polycarp diligently strove to preserve all the monastic rules established by Venerable Theodosius,[9] adding nothing extraneous to them. He proved a skillful guide in the work of salvation; such a man was indeed what the wonderworking Lavra required, and it gloried in him. The fame of its good order under the leadership of blessed Polycarp spread everywhere. Many noble and ruling princes sought his counsel and aspired to a virtuous life, so that they would leave their glorious thrones in their desire to live with him; a shining example of this was the ever-memorable Prince of Kiev Rostislav Mstislavich. This lover of Christ, ever taking the life of blessed Polycarp as his model, established this good custom: during Great Lent, every Saturday and Sunday, he invited twelve monks of the Kiev Caves and, as the thirteenth, blessed Archimandrite Polycarp to dine with him; and when he had fed them, he would not send them away empty-handed. Every Sunday he himself received the Divine Mysteries, praying with tears, heartfelt sighs, and groans, so that no one who saw him

5. Rostislav Mstislavich was Grand Prince in 1154 (for one week); he was Grand Prince a second time in 1158–1167.

6. John IV, Metropolitan of Kiev, 1164–1166.

7. In the pre-Mongol period the Metropolitan of Kiev was ordinarily elected and consecrated in Constantinople, and there are only two known cases in which the metropolitans were not Greeks but native Russians, elected and consecrated within Rus itself. In 1051 Hilarion was thus installed as metropolitan; in 1147, Metropolitan Klim, or Clement. At the council of 1147, convened for the election and consecration of a metropolitan, the Bishop of Chernigov, among others, justifying the installation of a Russian metropolitan without the Patriarch of Constantinople, said: "I know that the bishops, forming a council, have the right to install a metropolitan; moreover, we have the head (relics) of St. Clement. As the Greeks install (the patriarchs) by the hand of St. John, so shall we install a metropolitan."

8. The Blessed Polycarp was elected and consecrated Archimandrite of the Kiev Caves Monastery in 1164.

9. See the Life of Anthony of the Kiev Caves.

in such compunction could refrain from weeping. When the holy Great Lent came to its end, on Lazarus Saturday the Christ-loving prince summoned all the blessed elders of the Kiev Caves who had shone in the ascetic struggle of fasting, welcomed them all with great warmth, gave them alms, and sent them away with honor. In the same manner he summoned and entertained the brethren of other monasteries, but especially those of the Kiev Caves, for he greatly loved the virtuous life of them all, and above all that of their blessed guide Polycarp, who in every way imitated the first guides of the Kiev Caves, Anthony and Theodosius. The prince therefore often asked the blessed man to receive him into the number of monks of the Kiev Caves monastery. But blessed Polycarp answered him:

"Pious prince! God has appointed you to another life: to govern, to render righteous judgment, and to observe strictly your oath upon the Cross."

But Prince Rostislav replied to him:

"Holy father! The rule of this world cannot be without sin, and it has already wearied me and exhausted me with its daily cares. Therefore I would like, at least for a little while in my old age, to serve God and imitate those princes and kings who walked the narrow and hard way and attained the Kingdom of Heaven."

To these words blessed Polycarp said:

"Christ-loving prince! If you desire this with all your heart, then may the will of God be done."

Although the prince did not live to fulfill this intention, the following clearly shows that it was truly a fervent desire of his heart, born under the influence of the good example of St. Polycarp.

When the prince fell gravely ill in Smolensk and ordered that he be taken to Kiev, his sister Rogneda, seeing how weak her brother was, entreated him:

"Stay here in Smolensk, and here we shall lay you in our church."

But he answered her:

"Please, do not do this; even if I am very weak, still let them take me to Kiev. If God takes me on the way, let them lay my body in the monastery of St. Theodore, built by my father; but if God delivers me

from this illness, I promise to be tonsured a monk in the holy Kiev Caves monastery under blessed Polycarp."

Later, when his illness grew worse and he was already at the point of death, he said to his spiritual father, the priest Symeon:

"You will answer to God for not allowing me to be tonsured by that holy man in the Kiev Caves monastery: I fervently desired this, and may the Lord forgive me the sin of not fulfilling my vow!"

Thus he received a blessed end. The beginning and cause of the virtuous life of the ever-memorable prince was none other than the example of the ascetic life and the God-inspired discourse of our Venerable Father Polycarp, who in the prince's reign was a worthy leader of the holy wonderworking Kiev Caves Lavra. By the virtuous example of his life he inspired not only the brethren but also pious laymen, setting them on the path of repentance and salvation. Thus carefully did he shepherd the flock entrusted to him by God. He lived a long life and, in great old age, reposed in the Lord in the year 6690 from the creation of the world, and in the year 1182 from the Nativity of Christ, on July 24, the feast of the holy Passion-bearers, the Russian princes Boris and Gleb. His body was clothed and buried with honor alongside the holy fathers.

After his death a great difficulty arose in the monastery: the brethren could not choose a new abbot for themselves. Although many of the blessed elders were worthy of such a rank, none wished to accept it, out of humility and their vow of stillness. They thought it better to remain in obedience and solitude, lest they squander in cares and sorrows—the usual companions of leadership—the treasure of virtue they had amassed through arduous labor. The brethren grieved and lamented bitterly: so great a flock could not remain without a shepherd for even one hour. On Tuesday the semantron was struck; all the brethren gathered in the church and began to pray to the Most Holy Theotokos and the Venerable Fathers Antony and Theodosius concerning their need. They called upon the ascetic, the newly reposed blessed Polycarp, to aid them, and asked him to entreat God to show them an abbot in his place, and thereby make known whether he had been pleasing to the

Lord or not. A miracle came to pass: as though with one voice, many said at once:

"Let us go to the pious priest Basil on Shchekovitsa[10]; let him be our abbot and govern the monks of the Kiev Caves monastery."

They all came and bowed before the priest Basil, saying:

"We, all the brethren of the Kiev Caves monastery, bow to you and desire to have you as our father and abbot!"

The priest Basil was greatly astonished, bowed low to them in turn, and said:

"Holy fathers! I have thought only of monastic life; how can I, unworthy as I am, be an abbot?"

For a long while he refused, until at last he yielded to their earnest entreaties. Then the brethren took him with them to the monastery.

On Friday, for the tonsure of this God-chosen Basil, the most reverend Metropolitan of Kiev Nicephorus[11] and the God-loving bishops Lawrence of Turov and Nicholas of Polotsk arrived, together with all the most honorable abbots. The most reverend Metropolitan Nicephorus tonsured him with his own hands. Thus he became the leader and good shepherd of the monks of the holy Kiev Caves monastery; through his prayers, he was a model of virtue to all, to the glory and honor of the heavenly Guide and Chief Shepherd, the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father without beginning and the Most Holy, Good, and Life-giving Spirit, all creation owes unceasing glorification and worship, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

On the same day, the memory of the holy Passion-bearers, the Russian princes Boris (Roman) and Gleb (David). (See May 2.)

* * *

NOTES

4863. Simon was a monk tonsured at the Kiev Caves monastery; from there he was taken by Grand Prince Vsevolod Yurievich to be abbot of the Nativity monastery he had

10. A locality in Kiev.

11. Nicephorus II, mentioned by the Chronicle from 1182 to 1197.

founded in Vladimir. Simon was then appointed the first bishop of the Vladimir diocese, which was separated from Rostov in 1214. Simon died in 1226, after twelve years of rule. Polycarp, likewise a monk tonsured at the Kiev Caves monastery, was twice elevated from there to the position of abbot and twice returned from it to the Kiev Caves monastery; later he became abbot of the Kiev Caves monastery. From the letter of Bishop Simon of Vladimir to Polycarp, and the latter's letter to Akindyn, archimandrite of the Kiev Caves, whose contents comprise a series of accounts of the wonderworkers of the Kiev Caves and of miracles that occurred in the monastery itself during the building of its great church, the celebrated Kiev Caves Patericon was compiled (a book of elders, a book of the fathers, that is, a book by or about the fathers).



THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF JULY

July 25

25 июля

New Calendar July 25 · Old Calendar August 7 (civil dates)

Life of the Venerable Virgin Eupraxia

Житие преподобной девы Евпраксии

In the days of the pious Emperor Theodosius the Great[1] there was at Constantinople[2] a certain distinguished dignitary, Antigonus, a kinsman of the Emperor, a man wise both in word and in deed, and prudent in counsel. He always gave good and useful advice in affairs of state. Besides this, he was kind, compassionate toward people, merciful to the poor, and gladly helped all who asked him. The Emperor loved him not only as a kinsman, but also as a pious lover of Christ and a good counselor. Antigonus was also exceedingly rich, so that after the Emperor there was no one richer than he. He took to wife a beautiful maiden, likewise of the imperial lineage, named Eupraxia. She was pious and God-fearing, loved to visit the holy churches, prayed to God with tears, and generously adorned the houses of God for the decoration of the Lord's holy places. To Antigonus and Eupraxia, this noble and God-pleasing couple, united in body and soul and beloved by the Emperor and Empress, a child was born, a girl, and she was named Eupraxia after her mother. Once, after her birth, Antigonus said to his wife Eupraxia:

"You know, wife, that this life is short, and that the riches of this vain world are nothing. Human life scarcely lasts to eighty years, but

1. Theodosius the Great was emperor from 379–395.

the riches prepared in heaven for those who fear God endure for endless ages. Yet we, bound by worldly cares and enticed by temporal riches, spend our days in vanity, gaining no benefit for our souls."

Hearing this, Eupraxia asked Antigonus:

"What then must we do, my lord?"

Antigonus answered:

"We have borne one daughter to God, and one is enough for us. Let us put an end to the fleshly union of marriage, and let us live on without it."

Then Eupraxia raised her hands on high, lifted her eyes to heaven, and said to her husband with a sigh:

"Blessed be the Lord God, who has brought you into His fear and instructed you in true understanding. I will not conceal, my lord, that I have many times prayed to God that He would enlighten your heart and put into your mind such a good thought, but I never dared to tell you my desire. Since you yourself have spoken of this, allow me also to say something."

"Speak, my lady, what you wish," Antigonus agreed.

"You know, my lord," Eupraxia continued, "what the Apostle says: 'The time is short; it remains that those who have wives be as though they had none; and those who weep, as though they wept not; and those who rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and those who buy, as though they possessed not; and those who use this world, as though they used it not; for the form of this world is passing away' (1 Cor. 7:29–31). So then, let us spend this brief life as you desire, without carnal intercourse, so that together we may attain eternal and incorrupt life. And why do we need so much wealth as we have now, and so much property? Shall we take any of it with us into the grave? Therefore, in

2. Byzantium was a Megarian colony, founded in 658 B.C. on the European side of the Bosporus. Its remarkable harbor, the Golden Horn, with its many advantages, and its commanding position on the narrow strait connecting the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara ensured it an important role in trade and industry. The Emperor Constantine the Great, recognizing the advantages of Byzantium's position, transferred the capital of the Roman Empire there in 330; in consequence, Byzantium acquired world-historical significance. It broke with the past and came to be called Constantinople, the New Rome.

accord with your good intention, give this away also to the poor, so that the decision we have taken may not be fruitless."

Hearing these words of his wife, Antigonus glorified God and began to distribute his property generously to the poor. With his wife he lived as brother with sister, without carnal intercourse, in mutual spiritual love, unanimously and with one mind pleasing God. Having set for himself such virtuous rules of life, Antigonus departed to the Lord after living only one year without union with his wife. The Emperor and Empress mourned for him as a kinsman and as a righteous and pious man. They also grieved for the widowed Eupraxia, who was still very young: she had lived in marital relations with her husband only two years and three months, and one year without them. After Antigonus's burial, the Emperor and Empress diligently comforted Eupraxia. She, taking her daughter, handed her over into their arms, and falling at their feet, said with weeping and sobbing:

"Into the hands of God and of you I give this orphan. Receive her in memory of your kinsman Antigonus, and be to her in place of father and mother."

Many of those present wept, and the Emperor and Empress themselves wept. Four years after this, when the maiden Eupraxia was five years old, the Emperor, having consulted with her mother, betrothed the child to one of the senators' sons, a noble youth, who promised to wait until the maiden grew up. Having confirmed this, the Emperor ordered Eupraxia to take from him a pledge and a bond. Some time later, a senator wished to marry Eupraxia, Antigonus's widow, and asked the Empress, through certain noblewomen, to persuade Eupraxia secretly from the Emperor to consent to a marriage with him. The Empress sent her court ladies to the widow Eupraxia, advising her to marry the aforementioned senator. Hearing this, Eupraxia wept and said to the women who had come to her:

"Woe will be to you in the life to come, because you give me such counsel, I who have promised God to live in the purity of widowhood. Go away from me; your counsel is contrary to my desire!"

Receiving such a rebuke, they went away in shame and related this to the Empress. When the Emperor learned of it, he was greatly angered with the Empress and reproached her:

"You have done," he said, "a thing wholly unbefitting you! Is it worthy of a Christian empress? Is this how you promised God to reign piously? Is this how you remember Antigonus, our close kinsman and useful counselor? His wife, who lived with him only a little while, and who, in accordance with his wish, chose a pure life for God, you now persuade to return again to worldly life! You do not fear God! Everyone will laugh at you, foolish woman!"

At these words the Empress was so ashamed that she remained silent like a stone for about two hours. And there was no small quarrel between the Emperor and the Empress on account of Eupraxia. Hearing of this, Eupraxia was greatly saddened, grieving unto death; her face grew thin. She resolved to withdraw secretly from Constantinople, and with bitter tears she said to her daughter Eupraxia:

"My child, we have a large estate in Egypt. Let us go there, and you will see the property of your father and of mine, for all of it is yours."

Together with her daughter and a few male and female servants, she secretly left the city without the Emperor's knowledge, and upon arriving in Egypt, she began to oversee her estates. She sometimes went to Inner Thebaid with her servants and stewards, and, visiting churches and monasteries, both men's and women's, she made many donations, generously distributing gold and silver.

Near the city there was a women's monastery of Tabennese with one hundred and thirty nuns, of whose God-pleasing deeds many good things were told among the people. None of them drank wine, ate oil, grapes, or any kind of fruit. Some of them, who had entered the monastery from childhood, had never even seen such things. Their food was bread with water, pottage, and greens, and even that without oil. They ate once a day, in the evening; some ate every other day, and others took a little food only once in two days. They never rested and never bathed. There is no need to speak of the bath: they could not even hear of the baring of the body, and the very word "bath" was used among them as a reproach, a shame, and a mockery. Each one's bed was a

hair-cloth mat on the ground, three cubits in length and one cubit in width; on this they slept, and that only a little. Their clothing was hair-shirts, long to the ground, covering their feet. And each labored according to her strength, as much as she could. When any of them fell ill, she did not take any medicine but bore the sickness with thanksgiving, as though receiving a great blessing from God, and awaited help from Him alone. None of them went outside the monastery walls or conversed with those who came, but all communication was carried on through one doorkeeper: all their zeal was directed toward conversing with God in prayer and pleasing Him. Therefore God also heard their prayers and worked many signs for their sake, granting healing to all the sick who gathered there. The blessed widow Eupraxia was very pleased with this monastery and the wonderful life of these nuns; she often came there with her daughter and brought candles and incense to the church. Once she said to the abbess and the other senior sisters:

"I wish to bring your monastery a small gift of twenty or thirty litras[3] of gold, so that you may pray to God for me, for my daughter, and for her deceased father Antigonus."

The abbess, who was a deaconess[4874] and whose name was Theodula, answered her thus:

"My lady, these handmaids of yours have no need at all of gold or property. They have renounced everything in this world in order to be made worthy of enjoying the eternal blessings, and therefore we wish to have nothing on earth, lest we lose the heavenly riches. Nevertheless, so as not to grieve you, bring a little oil for the church lamps, and candles and incense, and you will receive your reward from the Lord."

Eupraxia did so, and asked the abbess and all the sisters to pray for her husband Antigonus and for her daughter.

Once, when Eupraxia came, as usual, to this monastery, the abbess, as if prompted by the Spirit of God, said to the little girl Eupraxia:

"My lady Eupraxia, do you love this monastery and these sisters?"

"Yes, my lady," the girl answered, "I love you."

3. A litra is a measure of weight, about a pound.

"If you love us," the abbess continued, "then remain with us in the monastic habit."

The girl answered:

"Truly, if my mother is not grieved, I will not leave here."

Then the abbess asked her:

"Tell me the truth: whom do you love more, us or your betrothed?"

"I do not know him," the girl answered, "but I know you and love you. Tell me then, whom do you love more: me, or Him whom you call the Bridegroom?"

The abbess answered:

"We love you, and we love our Christ."

The little girl then confessed:

"And I love you, and I love your Christ."

Her mother Eupraxia sat listening to her daughter's wise words, and abundant tears flowed from her eyes. The abbess too listened with tenderness to the words of the little girl and marveled that she, still a child, for she was not yet quite seven years old, answered so wisely. At last the mother, moved with pity for her daughter, said to her:

"Come, child, let us go home; it is already evening."

But the girl answered:

"I will stay here with the Mother Abbess."

To this the abbess remarked to her:

"Go home with your mother; you cannot remain here. Only a maiden who has dedicated herself to Christ may live here."

"And where is Christ?" asked the girl. The abbess rejoiced and pointed with her finger to the icon of Christ. The girl ran, kissed the icon of the Savior, and, turning to the abbess, said:

"Truly, I too promise myself to Christ, and I will not leave here with my mother, but will stay with you."

"Child," replied the abbess, "you have nothing to sleep on; you cannot stay here."

"Whatever you sleep on," answered the girl, "that is what I too will sleep on."

Evening was already drawing toward night, and the mother and the abbess kept trying every way to persuade the girl to leave the monas-

tery and go home, but they could do nothing, for she did not wish to go away at all. At last the abbess said to her:

"Child, if you wish to live here, you will have to learn to read, the Psalter, and to fast until evening, as the other sisters do."

"I will fast too," the girl agreed, "and I will learn everything; only leave me here."

Then the abbess said to the mother:

"My lady, leave her here. I see that the grace of God has shone upon her, that the righteous deeds of her father and your pure life, and the prayers and blessing of you both as parents, lead her to eternal life."

Then the noble Eupraxia led her daughter to the icon of the Savior, raised her hands on high, and said with tears:

"Lord Jesus Christ, take care of this child. It is You she desired; to You she has given herself!"

Then she turned to the girl:

"Eupraxia, my daughter! May God, who has set the mountains firm, establish you in His fear."

With these words she gave the girl into the hands of the abbess, while she herself wept and beat her breast, and all the nuns wept with her. Thus she left the monastery, having given her daughter to God.

Early the next morning she came back to the monastery. The abbess took the girl Eupraxia, brought her into the church, and, after offering prayer, clothed her in the angelic monastic habit in the presence of her mother. The mother, seeing her in the angelic habit, raised her hands to heaven and began to pray for her to God:

"Eternal King, You who began a good work in her, bring it to completion. Grant that she may fulfill Your holy will; may this orphan, who has given herself to You from childhood, obtain mercy from You, her Creator."

Then she asked her daughter:

"Child, do you like this monastic garment?"

"Yes, I love it," answered the girl, "for I have heard from the Mother Abbess and from the other nuns that this garment is given by Christ as a pledge of betrothal to those who love Him."

To this the mother said:

"Child, the Christ to whom you are betrothed, may He make you worthy of His bridal chamber."

With these words she kissed her daughter, and then, having taken leave of the abbess and all the sisters, she left the monastery. As was her custom, she visited other monasteries in Egypt, both in the desert and in the cities, and also the dwellings of the poor, helping all the needy and destitute with her means. Everywhere the fame of the blessed widow Eupraxia spread, of her good deeds and her numerous acts of mercy; reports of her reached even Emperor Theodosius the Great and his courtiers. All marveled at such a life of hers and glorified God, who strengthened her. It was said of her that she ate neither fish nor drank wine, that she fasted every day until evening, and very late in the evening took only a little lenten food, kutia or vegetables; everyone was amazed at such abstinence in one of such great means. Some years later the abbess of the monastery mentioned above invited the virtuous widow Eupraxia to her and said to her secretly:

"My lady, I wish to tell you something important, but do not be frightened."

"Speak, my lady, whatever you wish," she answered. The abbess said the following:

"If you wish to make arrangements concerning your daughter, do so quickly. I saw in a dream your husband Antigonus, standing before the Lord Christ in great glory, and begging Him to bid you leave your body and dwell with him, enjoying the same glory which he attained through his virtuous life."

Hearing this, the pious woman was not dismayed but even greatly rejoiced: she desired to be parted from the body and to go to Christ. She at once called her daughter, who was then about twelve years old, and said to her:

"My child Eupraxia! Christ is already calling me, as the Mother Abbess has told me, and the day of my death is near; therefore I give all the property of your father and mine into your hands. Dispose of it honorably, so that you may inherit the Kingdom of Heaven."

The maiden Eupraxia wept and said:

"Woe is me! I am left alone, an orphan!"

"Child," said her mother, "you have Christ as your Father, to whom you are betrothed; you are not left a lonely orphan. In place of a mother you will have the Mother Abbess. Only strive to fulfill what you have promised Christ. Fear God, respect the sisters, obeying them with humility; never think in your heart that you are of royal descent, and never say: they ought to work for me, not I for them. Rather be humble, and the Lord will love you; be poor on earth, and you will be rich in heaven. Behold, everything is in your hands: if the monastery is in need of money, give as much as is needed, and pray for me and your father, that we may obtain mercy from God and be delivered from eternal torment."

Such was the testament the blessed Eupraxia gave her daughter; three days later she reposed in the Lord and was buried in that monastery.

The emperor heard that Eupraxia, the wife of Antigonus, had died. He summoned the senator whose son the girl Eupraxia had been betrothed to, and told him that she had renounced the world and gone into a monastery. The senator earnestly begged the emperor to send for her at once, so that she might immediately appear in Constantinople before her bridegroom and their marriage might take place. The emperor hastened to carry this out. But the bride of Christ, Eupraxia, having received and read the emperor's letter, laughed, sat down, and wrote to him in her own hand the following:

"Lord Emperor! Will you indeed command me, your servant, to leave Christ and join myself to a mortal and corruptible man, who is alive today and tomorrow will be eaten by worms? Do not compel me to do this. And let that man not trouble your majesty on my account; for I am already the bride of Christ, and I may not deceive Him. But I beg your majesty, in memory of my parents, to take all their property and distribute it to the holy churches and monasteries, to the poor, the widows and the orphans; then set free the male and female slaves and order the stewards of my parents' estates to forgive all debts owed by debtors. Carry out everything as is fitting, my lord, so that I may serve my Christ without care or hindrance, in Whom I have placed all my

trust. Lord Emperor and Empress, pray also to the Lord for me, your servant, that He may make me worthy to serve Him."

Having written this reply with her own hand, Eupraxia sealed it and gave it to the messenger, who returned to Constantinople. On receiving Eupraxia's letter, the emperor read it together with the empress in private, and they shed many tears of tenderness and prayed to God for Eupraxia. On the next day the emperor assembled all his courtiers, including among them the father of the youth to whom Eupraxia had been betrothed, and ordered her letter to be read aloud in the presence of all. All who heard it said through their tears:

"Emperor, truly this maiden is of your own kin, a beautiful child of beautiful parents, Antigonus and Evpraxia, a holy shoot from a holy root!"

And all, as one man, glorified God for her. The father of the bridegroom also did not dare to say anything to the emperor about Eupraxia. The emperor disposed as was fitting of all her property, which had remained to her after her parents, distributing it to the churches and the poor and thus fulfilling her wish; after living a little while longer, the emperor departed to the Lord. Eupraxia began to labor still more zealously, pleasing God, and fasted beyond her strength; she was twelve years old when she chose for herself the sternest manner of life. At first she ate once a day, and that in the evening; then she began to fast until the next day, and finally until the third day. She labored, serving the sisters with every possible zeal and performing with humility the most menial work: she swept the refectory and the other cells, spread the sisters' beds, carried water and firewood to the kitchen, cooked food, washed the dishes, and in all the monastery's services none was more diligent than she. In that monastery there was a custom: if any sister was tempted in a dream by the devil, she was to tell the abbess at once; and the abbess, with tears, would pray to God to drive the devil away from that sister, and would order her to gather stones, lay them beneath her haircloth bedding, and sleep upon it, and to strew ashes on top of the bedding and sleep so for ten days. Once Eupraxia too was tempted in a dream by the tempter; then she gathered stones beneath

her haircloth bedding and sprinkled ashes over it. Seeing this, the abbess smiled and said to one of the older sisters:

"See, this girl too has begun to suffer from the devil!"

And she began to pray for her:

"O God, who didst create her in Thine image," she said, "and didst bid her choose this monastic estate, establish her in Thy fear, and preserve her from the slanders of the demons!"

Then she summoned Eupraxia and asked her:

"Why did you not tell me that you had been tempted by the devil, but concealed it from me?"

And she fell at the abbess's feet, saying:

"Forgive me, my lady, for being ashamed to tell you."

"My daughter," the abbess admonished her, "this is the beginning of your struggle with the enemy. Take courage, that you may overcome him and receive the crown!"

Some time later Eupraxia was again assailed by the temptation of the devil, and she told a sister named Julia, who loved her dearly and instructed her in the ascetic life. And Julia said to her:

"My lady Eupraxia, do not hide this from the abbess, but tell her properly, that she may pray for you; they say that she herself in her youth endured many temptations from the devil. It is told that once, at night, after a severe temptation, she went out of her cell, stood under the open sky, raised her hands to heaven, and remained so for forty days and nights without food, without drink, without sleep, standing and praying to God, until she overcame the devil. We all are tempted by the enemy, but we trust that with the help of Christ we shall overcome our tempter. Therefore, sister, do not be surprised at this, do not be troubled, but tell the abbess quickly what has happened to you, and do not be ashamed!"

Hearing this, Eupraxia thanked Julia:

"May God help you, sister, for you have instructed me and strengthened my soul. I will go and tell our great lady what has happened to me."

"And not only tell her," Julia added, "but also ask her to pray for you and to increase your ascetic labor."

Eupraxia went and told the abbess about the devilish temptation. The abbess said to her:

"Do not be surprised at this, my daughter. The devil attacks us with every kind of weapon, but do not fear; stand courageously and steadfastly, lest he overcome you. Many more temptations from him still await you; but struggle, that you may conquer him and receive from Christ, your Bridegroom, crowns of victory. Increase your fasting as much as you can, for those who labor receive honor. Tell me, child, how do you fast?"

"I take food every second day," answered Eupraxia.

"Add one more day to your fast," said the abbess, "and eat on the fourth day after sunset."

Eupraxia received this command with joy.

Eupraxia had reached the age of twenty; she had matured in body and was beautiful, thereby revealing the nobility of her family. When she was again subjected to temptation, she told the abbess of it, and the abbess said to her:

"Go, child, and carry these stones here, and lay them down beside the oven."

Eupraxia at once began carrying these stones. Among them were large ones which two strong sisters could hardly have lifted. She, however, lifted them alone, laid them on her shoulder and carried them; she was strong in body, and still stronger in obedience. She asked no one to help her, whether because the stones were heavy, or because she was hungry or worn out, but she carried out the command with diligence. When she had carried all the stones, the abbess, a few days later, said to her again:

"No, it is not well that these stones lie beside the oven; carry them back to their former place."

She did not in the least disobey, but again set to work and carefully fulfilled what she had been commanded. The sisters marveled at her obedience, her patience and her diligence; some of the young ones laughed, while others said:

"Take courage, Sister Eupraxia, and be steadfast!"

She, however, was cheerful and sang at her work. Her labor lasted thirty days, whereupon the abbess ordered her to leave this task and sent her to serve in the bakehouse. She performed all commands with great joy: at times she sifted flour in the bakehouse, kneaded dough and baked loaves; at times she cooked food in the kitchen and chopped wood; at times she served the sisters in the refectory. In no task did she ever grow lazy, disobey, act carelessly, or murmur, but in every service she was kind, obedient, diligent, and patient. For all that, she never missed the customary rule of prayer at midnight, nor the morning chanting, nor the first, third, sixth, and ninth hours; and after the evening chanting she served food to the fasting sisters.

The devil tried once more to disturb her with a nocturnal temptation. One night he appeared to her in a dream in the form of that youth to whom she had been betrothed: it seemed that he had come with a multitude of warriors to abduct her and was forcibly dragging her from the monastery. She lay on her bed, and in her dream began to cry out and call the sisters to help her escape from the hands of her abductor. Her cry woke the sisters, who ran to her, roused her, and asked why she had cried out. She told them of the devilish temptation she had seen in her dream, and all began to pray for her. Since the tempter continued to trouble her, the abbess said to her:

"Take care, my child Eupraxia, lest the devil affect your mind and your labor be lost; endure a little longer, fight him manfully, and he will flee from you."

Julia also said to Eupraxia:

"Sister, if we now, while we are young and strong, do not struggle against our enemy and overcome him, how shall we overcome him in old age?"

Eupraxia answered her:

"As the Lord lives, my sister Julia, if the abbess commands me, I will take no food for a whole week, until, with the help of the Lord, I gain the victory over the enemy who tempts me."

"Truly, my sister," Julia replied, "I cannot fast so long, but if you can, you will do well; in the whole monastery there is no one who could go without food for a whole week except our mother the abbess."

Then Eupraxia went to the abbess and asked her permission to appoint herself such a fast that she would not eat for a whole week. The abbess replied:

"Do all that you can, my child; may your Creator God strengthen you and grant you to overcome the devil!"

And Eupraxia began to fast for whole weeks at a time, taking food only on Sundays, and at the same time not neglecting the monastery labors or her services to the sisters, so that all marveled at her great ascetic labors. "For a whole year we have been watching Eupraxia," some of the sisters said. "Well, have we ever seen her sit down, even when she eats? No, we could never see it, except perhaps when at night she lies down on her bed to rest; otherwise she even takes her food standing."

All the sisters loved her for the way she toiled and for her humility, though she was of royal descent, and they prayed to God for her, that He would grant her strength and salvation.

Among the sisters was one named Germana, who, it was said, was descended from a humble and poor slave woman. She alone did not love Eupraxia, whom everyone loved: the devil kindled envy in her. Once Germana found Eupraxia alone at work in the kitchen and began to scold her:

"Eupraxia fasts the whole week, and we cannot. What shall we do if the abbess commands us to fast like that?"

Eupraxia answered her:

"Forgive me, sister. Our great lady has commanded each of us to struggle according to her strength, and she has not forcibly imposed this labor upon me."

Germana, enraged, said:

"Deceiver, you have many kinds of cunning! Who does not know that you do this deliberately, out of a longing for empty glory, so that everyone may see and praise you? You want, after the abbess's death, her position to pass to you; but I am certain, as God is my witness, that you will never rule over us!"

Eupraxia, in humility, fell at her feet.

"Forgive me, my lady," she said, "I have sinned against God and against you!"

When the abbess learned of this, she summoned Germana and reproached her before all the sisters:

"Wicked and godless slave! What evil has Eupraxia done to you, that you hinder her in her God-pleasing work? You shall be excluded from the church services and from meals with the sisters, as one unworthy!"

With tears Eupraxia long entreated the abbess to forgive Germana, but for thirty days she could not obtain her pardon. On the thirtieth day Eupraxia took Julia with her and asked the senior sisters to intercede with the abbess for Germana's forgiveness. The abbess summoned Germana and said to her:

"Did you not understand, wretch, what a great evil it is to hinder anyone in a good work? You did not consider, either, that she is the daughter of a senator, of royal descent, and yet is so humble, so given over to God, that she serves you, unworthy as you are."

Then all the sisters began to plead with the abbess for Germana; with difficulty they persuaded her, and Germana was forgiven. Thus the visible enemy for a time laid aside his malice; but the invisible enemy, the devil, did not cease to struggle with Eupraxia, raging against her because he was being overcome by her humility. So one night he brought impure worldly thoughts upon her, which deeply troubled her. As soon as she sensed the fierce assault of the enemy who had armed himself against her, she leaped from her bed, signed herself with the sign of the Cross, and went out of her cell. In the courtyard, in a place set apart, she stood, stretched her hands toward heaven, fixing her eyes and mind upon it, and so stood praying day and night, not moving from her place in the least, as though rooted in the earth, for forty days. During this time she neither drank, nor ate, nor spoke with anyone, nor slept, nor lowered her hands. At the beginning of her vigil, the abbess, learning of it, came to her and said:

"May God establish you, child, and grant you patience!"

Eupraxia was then twenty-five years old. When she had stood for two weeks, the abbess and the sisters looked upon her endurance with

smiles and rejoiced for her. Thirty days passed, and the sisters began to marvel and said to the abbess:

"Mother, it seems that Eupraxia wishes to undertake your forty-day standing, as you yourself once stood."

"May God strengthen her," replied the abbess. "Let us all pray for her!"

When forty days had passed, she stood for five more days, and then, exhausted, fell to the ground and lay as if dead. The sisters gathered, carried her into a room, and could not bend her arms: she was altogether stiff as wood and could not utter a single word. The abbess brought her some food, held it to her lips, and said:

"My child Eupraxia! In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, eat!"

At once she took the food, ate, and began to speak; she gathered a little strength and rose. She was led to the church, thanking Christ God, who had strengthened His servant for such a feat. After this Eupraxia gradually began to take food and to recover.

From that time the devil could no longer trouble Eupraxia with foul imaginings and the kindling of carnal passions: the Bride of Christ had won the final victory over his temptations. Then he began to devise other snares against her, as a murderer from the beginning (Jn. 8:44): he resolved to take her life altogether, in the following way. One day the blessed Eupraxia came to the well with a water vessel to draw water; and the devil, by God's permission, seized her and threw her into the well. As she herself later related, her head reached the bottom of the well; but, rising to the surface, she caught hold of the rope hanging from the bucket into the well, and cried out:

"Lord Jesus Christ, help me!"

Cries arose that Eupraxia had fallen into the well; the sisters gathered with the abbess and drew her out. She crossed herself and said with a smile:

"As my Christ lives! You shall not overcome me, devil, I shall not yield to you: until today I carried water in one vessel; now I shall carry it in two."

And so she did. After this it happened that she was chopping wood for the kitchen; when she raised the axe to strike a log, the devil turned

her hands aside. She struck herself in the leg with the axe and cut through her shin; the wound was very deep, and much blood flowed. She fell exhausted to the ground and lay as if dead. Julia saw this; she was frightened, cried out, ran to the sisters, and told them that Eupraxia had wounded her leg with an axe and had died. The sisters gathered and surrounded her, weeping. The abbess came, poured cold water on her face, and, making the sign of the Cross over her, said:

"My child Eupraxia! Why do you lie as though dead? Look up and say something to the sisters: they are grieving for you."

She opened her eyes and said to the abbess:

"Do not weep, my lady mother; my soul is still within me."

The abbess then turned in prayer to the Lord:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Heal Thy servant, for she suffers so much for Thee."

Then, binding her leg with a haircloth, the abbess raised Eupraxia and wanted to lead her to her cell. But Eupraxia looked and saw the wood lying there, and said:

"As my Lord lives! I shall not go from here until I have gathered the wood and carried it to the kitchen."

"I will gather it," said Julia, "and you go and lie down."

But Eupraxia would not let Julia gather the wood; she herself gathered a full armful of logs and carried them. To reach the kitchen one had to climb a staircase; when Eupraxia stepped onto the top step, the devil entangled her legs and hindered her: she stepped on the hem of her garment and fell face-first onto the logs she was carrying in her hands; a wood splinter pierced her face near the eye. Julia cried out, ran to her, and began to say:

"Did I not tell you that you cannot carry wood? Lie down, but you would not listen to me."

"Do not grieve, sister," replied Eupraxia. "Draw the splinter carefully from my face, and my eye is unharmed, by God's mercy."

The splinter was drawn out; much blood flowed from the wound. The abbess took oil and salt, and, after praying, anointed the wound, while Julia urged Eupraxia:

"Go, my lady, lie down on your bed and rest, and I will serve the sisters."

But Eupraxia answered:

"As my Lord lives, I shall not rest until I have finished my obedience to the sisters."

All the sisters urged her earnestly to rest, since her wound was paining her, but she would not rest; she stood and cooked the food, while blood streamed from both wounds. She did not lie down until she had finished serving the sisters at table; only when she had entirely completed her service did she go to her bed, late in the evening. God, seeing her great patience, soon healed her wounds, and she recovered. The devil, consumed with envy, once more tried to destroy her. One day she went with the sisters into a tall building for some purpose; the devil threw her down from above. The sisters who were with her hurried down the stairs: they thought Evpraxia had been dashed to death, falling from such a height. But she rose from the ground unharmed and walked to meet them; when they asked whether she had been hurt, she answered:

"I do not know how I fell or how I got up."

And all praised God, who had preserved His servant from death.

Another time, when she was cooking greens for the sisters in a cauldron and wished to set the boiling pot aside from the fire, the devil buckled her legs; she fell backwards, and the pot of boiling food overturned onto her face. Her helper Julia cried out that Eupraxia had been scalded, and all the sisters nearby ran up; but Eupraxia quickly rose from the ground and said to Julia with a smile:

"What have you done, sister? You have alarmed the sisters and the abbess to no purpose!"

And everyone saw that her face was unharmed, not in the least scalded. The abbess looked into the cauldron and saw that the remains of the boiling water at the bottom were still bubbling; then she asked Eupraxia:

"Did the boiling water not fall upon you?"

"As the Lord lives," she answered, "I felt something like cold water, not boiling water, upon my face."

The abbess marvelled and said:

"May God preserve you to the end, my child!"

Then she said privately to the senior sisters:

"You see, Eupraxia has been granted the grace of God: she fell from the roof and was not injured; she poured boiling water over her face and remained unharmed."

"We see," the sisters answered, "that Eupraxia is a true servant of God, and that the Lord keeps her: from so many temptations has He saved her."

Women—laywomen—from the nearby town and surrounding villages came to this monastery, bringing their sick children; they also brought those possessed by demons. The Lord, as has been said above, granted healing to the sick and cast out demons through the God-pleasing prayers of the abbess and the sisters who lived according to God. They gathered in the church and held joint prayers for various sick persons, who received healing and returned home well. In that monastery there was a demon-possessed woman whom, from her early years, a fierce demon dwelling within her had tormented—the prince of other unclean spirits. This woman was bound with chains at her hands and feet; she gnashed her teeth, hissed, foamed at the mouth, and cried out loudly, so that everyone was frightened by her cries. Many times the abbess and the elder sisters prayed to God in the church that He would drive the demon from this suffering woman, but their prayers were not heard: by God's will this was reserved for a great miracle and for the manifestation of the holiness of the Bride of Christ, Eupraxia, as will be told below. The demon in this woman was so fierce that no one could come near her; she was tied to a pillar in a cellar, and food and drink were given to her from a distance: they tied vessels to a long pole, put bread, beans, and some greens in them, and reached them out to her; and she often seized the vessel together with the pole and flung them into the faces of those bringing them. She was kept in this way in the monastery for a long time. One day the doorkeeper came to the abbess to say that a certain woman had come to the monastery and was weeping; with her was a child of eight, paralysed, deaf, and mute, and she asked that prayer be made for her child's healing. The abbess, knowing

by revelation from God that Eupraxia had already been granted the grace of healing and authority over unclean spirits, summoned her and said:

"Go and take the child from the mother, who is standing at the gate, and bring him here."

She went and, seeing the child utterly paralysed, deaf, and mute, was moved with pity, sighed, and, making the sign of the Cross over him, said:

"May God, who created you, also heal you, child!"

With these words she took him up in her arms and went with him to the abbess. The child, while she carried him in her arms, was at once healed; he began to speak and to call his mother. Eupraxia, hearing that the child had begun to speak, was struck with terror and set him down on the ground; and the child stood up and ran to the gate, calling his mother. The doorkeeper went and told the abbess of this. The abbess then summoned the child's mother and said to her:

"What is this, sister? Have you come to tempt us with a healthy child?"

"The Lord Christ is my witness, my lady," answered the mother, "that until this very hour my child could not speak or hear, could not use his hands, and could not set foot upon the ground; but when this honourable maiden took him in her arms, he at once began to speak, recovered, and began to walk."

Then the abbess said to this woman:

"By Christ's mercy your child has been healed; go in peace and give thanks to God."

When the woman had gone away with her healed child, the abbess said to Eupraxia:

"I wish you, my daughter, to feed with your own hands that sister in our monastery who suffers from demonic possession, if you are not afraid of her."

"I am not afraid, my lady," answered Eupraxia, "and if you command it, I will do so."

After that Eupraxia took bread and cooked food in a vessel and brought it to the demon-possessed woman; she at once gnashed her

teeth, lunged at her, and, seizing the vessel, wanted to smash it. But Eupraxia, taking her by the hand, said to her:

"As the Lord lives, I will throw you to the ground, take the staff of our Mother Abbess, and beat you cruelly, so that you will no longer behave so wickedly!"

The demoniac saw that Eupraxia was far stronger than she, for the Lord had strengthened His servant, and she grew frightened and fell silent. And the saint began to admonish her tenderly:

"Sit down, sister," she said, "eat, drink, and do not be troubled."

The woman sat down, ate and drank, and fell asleep. From that time on they no longer handed her food from a distance on a stick; she took it from Eupraxia's hands, and all the sisters marvelled. And whenever the demoniac began to grow agitated, to struggle and to cry out, the sisters would say to her:

"Be quiet! Eupraxia will come to you with her staff and beat you!"

At once the demoniac was subdued and fell silent. Again envy gnawed at the heart of the aforementioned Hermana; she said to the other sisters:

"Is there no one among the sisters besides Eupraxia who can carry food to the demoniac? Give me bread, and I will serve the demoniac just as Eupraxia does."

She took the bread and the kutya, approached the demoniac and said:

"Take it, sister, eat!"

But the demoniac seized her firmly, tore her clothing off her until she was naked, gnashed her teeth at her, threw her to the ground, sat upon her, and, pressing down, began to bite and devour her body at the shoulders and neck. A terrible cry arose, but no one dared to approach her; then Julia hastened to the kitchen and said to Eupraxia:

"Hermana is being utterly destroyed by the demoniac!"

Eupraxia ran up, seized the demoniac by the arms and by the neck, and thus delivered Hermana, all torn and bloodied.

"Was it good of you," Eupraxia said to the demoniac, "to wound your sister so?"

But she stood there, gnashing her teeth and foaming at the mouth.

"As the Lord lives," Eupraxia added, "from now on, if you do any harm to any sister, I will not spare you, but will take the staff from the Mother Abbess and beat you without mercy."

Then the woman lay down and grew quiet.

Early the next morning Eupraxia came to visit the sick woman. It turned out that she had torn all her garments to pieces and, sitting naked on the ground, was gathering her own pus and eating it. Blessed Eupraxia took pity on her and wept; then she dressed her in other clothing, brought her bread and water, and fed and gave her drink. Returning to her cell, she spent the whole day weeping secretly, away from the sisters, and praying that the Lord would heal the suffering woman; thus she spent the whole night in prayer, and God revealed her prayer to the Mother Abbess. In the morning the Abbess called her and asked:

"My child Eupraxia, why did you hide from me your prayer for the sufferer? If you had told me, I would have labored together with you."

"Forgive me, my lady," Eupraxia answered, "I saw her in such abominations, and I had pity on her."

"My daughter," the Abbess said to her, "I must tell you something; but take care that you do not grow proud. Behold, Christ has given you power to cast out that demon, and power over all other demons has been given to you."

Hearing this, Eupraxia fell to the ground, sprinkled earth upon her head, and cried out, saying:

"How can I, wretched and so foul, cast out a demon, when you have prayed for so many years and until now have not been able to do it?"

The Abbess said:

"My child, this task was awaiting you, so that it might be known what great reward is prepared for you in heaven. Do not contradict; fulfill what you are commanded."

Eupraxia went first to the church, threw herself to the ground before the icon of our Lord Jesus Christ, and moistened the earth with her tears, asking for help from above. Then, remembering the Abbess's command, she went to the demoniac; all the sisters followed her to see what would happen. Coming up to the sick woman, Eupraxia said:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who created you, heals you."

And she made the sign of the cross over her. The demon cried out in a terrible voice: "What a lying and foul nun this is! For how many years have I lived in this woman, and no one has cast me out, yet this unclean one wants to cast me out!

"It is not I who cast you out," said Eupraxia, "but Christ my God, my Bridegroom!"

And the demon cried out:

"I will not go out, unclean one; you have no power to drive me out!"

"I am unclean," the saint answered, "there is much foulness in me, as you say; but come out of her, for Christ my God commands you! And if you do not want to come out, I will take the staff from our Mother Abbess and beat you."

The demon argued for a long time and still would not come out. Then Eupraxia took the rod from the Abbess and threatened him, saying:

"Come out, or I will beat you."

"But how can I come out of her," the demon objected, "when I have made a covenant with her and cannot break it?"

The saint struck three times with the rod, saying:

"Come out of the creature of God, unclean spirit; Christ the Lord commands you."

The demon wailed:

"Where am I to go?" he said.

"Go into outer darkness," the saint answered, "and into the eternal fire, prepared for you and your father, Satan, and for all who do your will, for endless torment."

All the sisters stood and watched from afar, not daring to approach. Since the demon would not come out and kept arguing, Saint Eupraxia lifted her eyes to heaven and cried out:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Do not shame me in this hour, lest the unclean demon rejoice because of me!"

And at once the demon cried out with a loud voice and came out, and from that time the woman became entirely well. Eupraxia took her with her, washed her, clothed her in clean garments, and led her to the

church; there all together glorified and gave thanks to Christ God. And from that day Eupraxia began to be distinguished by even greater humility; she served all the sisters as a slave. When mothers brought sick children to the monastery, the Abbess sent them to Saint Eupraxia, and she, though she did not wish it, yet obeying the command of her superior, healed them by the grace of Christ.

When the time of the blessed repose of Saint Eupraxia drew near, the Abbess received a revelation from God in a dream, that the Bride of Christ was already being summoned to the heavenly chamber. The Abbess was greatly troubled by this vision; it grieved her to part with beloved Eupraxia, and she began to weep and did not wish to tell anyone of her vision. The elder nuns, seeing that she grieved and wept every day, at first did not dare to ask her why she grieved so; then, saddened by her sorrow themselves, they put the question to her:

"Tell us, our lady, Mother, why are you so sorrowful? Our hearts are breaking as we look upon your grief and tears."

"Do not force me to reveal it to you until tomorrow," the Abbess answered.

"As the Lord lives," said the elder nuns, "if you do not tell us, Mother, you will grieve us greatly."

Then the Abbess said:

"I did not want to tell you before morning, but since you so urge me, listen: Eupraxia is leaving us; tomorrow she departs from this life. But let none of you speak of this to her today, so as not to trouble her; let her not know this secret until her time comes."

Hearing the Abbess's words, the sisters burst into bitter weeping: all loved Eupraxia very much and honored her, knowing her to be a great servant of God and a true slave and bride of Christ; to lose her was a great loss for them. One of the sisters, having heard that the elder nuns were weeping, learned the reason, ran at once to the bakehouse, and found Eupraxia there together with Julia, baking bread.

"Do you know, Mother," she said, "the Abbess and the elder nuns are weeping about you."

Eupraxia and Julia were astonished at these words and stood in silence. Then Julia said to Eupraxia:

"Could it be that your former betrothed has persuaded the emperor to take you from the monastery by force? Is it not this that the Abbess and the elder nuns are grieving over?"

"As the Lord my Jesus Christ lives," the saint answered, "even if all the kingdoms of the earth should gather, they cannot compel me to forsake my Christ; yet, my lady Julia, go and learn more surely what they are weeping about; my soul is very uneasy."

Julia went, stood at the door, and listened to what was being said, while the Abbess at that time was telling the elder nuns her vision.

"I saw," she was saying, "two honorable men in shining raiment; they came into the monastery and said to me: 'Release Eupraxia, the King requires her.' Then two others came, even brighter, and said: 'Take Eupraxia and lead her to the King.' I at once took her and led her; when we came to some wondrous gates, whose beauty I cannot describe, they opened of themselves, and we entered within. There we saw a palace not made with hands, full of unspeakable radiance, and a high throne; upon it sat the radiant King. I could not enter within, but Eupraxia was taken and led to the King; she bowed down before Him and kissed His most pure feet. I saw there an endless multitude of Angels and saints, and they all stood and looked upon Eupraxia. Then I saw the Mother of God, the Most Pure Virgin Mary, our Sovereign Lady; she took Eupraxia and showed her a beautiful chamber and a prepared crown, shining with glory and honor. And I heard a voice which said to her:

"Eupraxia! Here is your reward and your rest; but now go, and in ten days come back, and you will enjoy all this for endless ages."

Thus the Abbess told the elder nuns of her vision, and she herself wept and at last said:

"Today is the tenth day since I saw it, and tomorrow Eupraxia will depart."

Hearing this, Julia beat her breast and went back to the bakehouse with weeping and sobbing. Eupraxia, seeing her weeping, said:

"I adjure you by the Son of God, tell me what you have heard, that you weep so?"

"I weep," she answered, "because today we part from you: I heard from our great Lady that tomorrow you will die."

When Eupraxia heard this, she at once lost her strength and fell to the ground as one dead. Julia sat over her and wept.

Then Eupraxia said to Julia:

"Give me your hand, sister, lift me up, and take me to the woodshed; lay me down there."

Julia did so. Eupraxia lay on the ground, wept, and said to the Lord:

"Why, O Master, hast Thou scorned me, a stranger and an orphan? Why dost Thou despise me? Now would have been the time for me to labor and struggle against the devil, yet Thou takest my soul from me now! Have mercy upon me, Thy servant, O Lord, and leave me at least this one year, that I may repent of my sins, for I have not repented, I have no good deeds, and I have no hope of salvation. The dead have no repentance, no tears; the dead do not praise Thee, O Lord, nor do those who go down into hell, but the living bless Thy holy Name. Give me one year, as to the barren fig tree."

While she was thus weeping, one of the sisters heard her, went, and told the abbess and the elder nuns:

"Who told her, the abbess asked, of our conversation, and troubled her soul? Did I not forbid you to reveal this secret to her before her hour came? What have you done! You have troubled her before the time! Go, bring her here!"

When the saint was brought, she fell at the abbess's feet, saying:

"Why did you not tell me, Mother, that my end was near? I would have wept over my sins! And now I depart without hope of salvation: I have no good works. Have pity on me, my lady, and pray to God for me, that He may grant me to live one year, that I may repent of my sins. I depart without repentance, and I do not know what darkness will overtake me, nor what torment awaits me."

To this the abbess said to her:

"As the Lord lives, my daughter Eupraxia, your incorruptible Bridegroom Christ has deemed you worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven, and has prepared for you a beautiful chamber and the crown of eternal glory."

The abbess then began to recount to her the whole of her vision concerning her, and thus comforted her, instilling hope into her soul. Besides this, she asked Eupraxia to pray to God for her, that He might also grant her such a lot. As Eupraxia lay at the abbess's feet, she fell ill: first a chill came over her, and then a fever seized her.

"Take her," the abbess then said to the sisters, "and carry her into the oratory; her hour has come."

They took her and laid her in the oratory, and sat beside her, grieving and weeping until evening. In the evening the abbess ordered the sisters to take their meal, and Julia alone was to remain with Eupraxia, since she had never left her. Julia shut herself in with her and stayed until Matins. She begged Eupraxia:

"Sister, do not forget me before the Lord! Remember that I never parted from you; remember that I taught you your letters; remember that I urged you on to ascetic labor; beseech Christ that He may take me with you!"

With the coming of morning the abbess saw that Eupraxia was at her last breath, and she sent Julia to the sisters with the words:

"Come, take your last farewell of Eupraxia: she is dying."

The sisters gathered and began to bid her farewell, weeping and saying:

"Remember us, sister, in the Kingdom of Christ!"

She could not speak, and was silent. After all the others came the one whom Eupraxia had delivered from the demon that tormented her; she kissed Eupraxia's hands with tears and said:

"These holy hands have served me, unworthy as I am, for God's sake; by them the devil who tormented me was driven away from me."

Eupraxia made her no answer, and the abbess said:

"Are you not sorry for this sister, Eupraxia? She weeps so, and you say nothing to her?"

Eupraxia looked at this sister and said:

"Why do you trouble me, sister? Leave me in peace; I am already at my end. But fear God, and He will keep you!"

Then, looking at the abbess, she said:

"Pray for me, Mother, for my soul is in difficulty at this moment."

All the sisters, with the abbess, began to pray for her; and when, having finished the prayer, they said "Amen," the holy and venerable bride of Christ, Eupraxia, committed her honorable and holy soul into the hands of God. She had lived thirty years[4]. The sisters wept much over her, buried her beside her mother, and glorified God that He had granted them to have among them so God-pleasing a sister and to escort her to God. Julia did not leave her grave for three days, weeping and sobbing; but on the fourth day she came to the abbess joyful and glad and said:

"Pray for me, Mother; Christ is already calling me, whom my lady Eupraxia has entreated on my behalf, that I may be with her."

Having said this, she took leave of all the sisters and died on the fifth day. She was buried beside the grave of holy Eupraxia. Thirty days later the venerable abbess, the deaconess Theodula, gathered the sisters and said to them:

"Choose for yourselves a mother in my place, who may be able to govern you: the Lord is calling me; my lady Eupraxia prayed much to Him for me, that He might make me together with her and Julia; Julia, together with Eupraxia, was also deemed worthy of the heavenly chamber; to them I too am already departing."

All the sisters rejoiced for Eupraxia and Julia, that they had entered into the joy of their Lord, and prayed that He might grant them the same lot. But they grieved over the mother who was leaving them, and they chose as their superior one of the sisters, named Theognia. Before her death the abbess called her and said to her:

"You know well the whole order and rule of monastic life. I charge you by the Most Holy Consubstantial Trinity: do not acquire for the monastery any estates or riches, lest the minds of the sisters be occupied with earthly cares, and lest, for the sake of earthly things, they lose the heavenly blessings; let them rather disregard all that is temporal and receive the eternal."

4. St. Eupraxia died around 413: when Eupraxia, having written to the emperor a letter renouncing the marriage bond, chose even stricter ascetic labors than before, she was 12 years old; the emperor died around that time, in 395. Eupraxia died at 30 years of age, having labored for yet another 18 years; hence 18 + 395 gives 413.

And to the sisters she said:

"You know the life of holy Evpraxia. Imitate her, that together with her you may be deemed worthy of the heavenly chamber."

Then, having taken leave of all for the last time, she ordered herself to be led into the oratory, the doors to be shut, and no one to enter to her until the next day. Early in the morning the sisters went in to her and found that she had died in the Lord; with weeping they buried her beside holy Eupraxia. From that time no one else was buried in that place; and from the honorable relics of these servants of God there were many miracles: healing of all manner of diseases was granted, and demons were cast out, who cried aloud:

"O Eupraxia! Even after death you conquer and cast us out!"

Such were the life and labors of the venerable Eupraxia, who was deemed worthy of heavenly glory. Let us too strive to imitate her: let us acquire humility, obedience, meekness, diligence, patience, and her purity and chastity, that by her prayers we too may be found worthy of the eternal blessings, of joy, and of dwelling with the angelic choirs, and that we may be granted to enjoy the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ in His heavenly Kingdom with all the saints, forever and ever. Amen.

* * *

Life of Saint Olympias the Deaconess

Житие святой Олимпиады диакониссы

The homeland of holy Olympias, named after her mother, was Constantinople, where her well-known and distinguished parents lived. Her father, Anysius Secundus, was one of the most honored senators, and her mother was the daughter of that famous eparch Eulavius who is mentioned in the account of the miracles of the Hierarch of Christ Nicholas, and who, in the reign of Constantine the Great, was the first person after the emperor. Olympias, the daughter of Eulavius, was at first betrothed to Constantine's younger son Constans, who after his father reigned in Ancient Rome; but he was killed before the marriage, and she was given in marriage to Arsaces, king of Armenia, with whom she lived only a short time before being widowed. Then Olympi-

as married the aforementioned senator Anysius Secundus, and bore holy Olympias. The child had not yet reached her majority when her parents betrothed her to a noble youth, the son of the eparch Nebridius; but the marriage itself was postponed. Yet twenty months passed, the bridegroom died, and Olympias remained a maiden and at the same time a widow; although she had reached her majority, she did not wish to marry another, but desired to remain in virginity and chastity all her life.

After the death of her parents, Olympias was left the heiress of great riches and countless property; all this she dedicated to God, and began to distribute it with a generous hand to those in need: to churches, monasteries, hermits, hospitals, almshouses for the poor and wayfarers, to orphans and widows, and to those fallen into poverty; she also sent generous alms to those imprisoned in jails and those sent into exile. Thus her generosity spread to many places. She herself constantly prayed and fasted, mortifying her body in every way and subjecting it to the spirit.

At that time Theodosius the Great[5] reigned, the father of Arcadius and Honorius; he had one kinsman, named Elpidius, to whom he wished to give the blessed Olympias, young and beautiful, but she would not consent. The emperor made requests to her, trying in every way to persuade her to marry his kinsman Elpidius, but she in no way agreed, despite threats, and she knew that the emperor was angered. She sent the emperor this reply:

"Sovereign! If God had wished me to be married, He would not have taken from me my first husband; but since He knew that it was not for my benefit in this life to be married, He released my husband from living together with me, and freed me from the heavy yoke of a husband's authority, and laid His gracious yoke (cf. Mt. 11:30) upon my thoughts."

The emperor was angered and ordered the city prefect to take all her property from her and keep it until Olympias had reached thirty years of age. The prefect, not so much at the emperor's command as at

5. Emperor 379–395.

Elpidius's instigation, so oppressed and constrained her that she had no power over not only her possessions, but even herself: he would not allow her either to converse with God-pleasing hierarchs or to visit the church, seeking to make her marry out of grief; but Olympias rejoiced and gave thanks to God. After some time she wrote the following to the emperor:

"You have shown me royal favor, my lord, and acted truly as a bishop[6] by ordering another to care for and guard the burden for which I cared myself. You will do me an even greater kindness if you order your official to distribute all my property to churches, the poor, and those in need, so that I may avoid the vain glory of giving it away myself; then I shall not neglect my true riches,[7] being free from care for earthly and quickly perishing wealth."

The emperor read her letter and, having reflected within himself, allowed her once more to possess her property: he had heard of her virtuous and God-pleasing life, of her great abstinence and harsh mortification of the body. Indeed, she ate no meat at all and did not go to the bath; if necessity compelled her, because of illness, to wash, she would sit in the bath in a single shift, in warm water, and wash without undressing, for she was ashamed not only before her servants but even before herself, and did not wish to see her naked body.

For such a chaste and honorable life, St. Olympias, whose virtues were admired even by the hierarchs, was taken into the service of the Church: the most holy Patriarch Nectarius[8] appointed her a deaconess.[4880] And she served the Lord honorably and righteously together with the other deaconesses, like the holy Anna, the widow in the Gospel, "who departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day" (Lk. 2:37). The life of blessed Olympias was so blameless that even her enemies could find nothing in her deserving of censure. Those who were hostile to St. John Chrysostom, who held the patriarchal throne after Nectarius, were hostile also to

6. The Byzantine emperor, among other titles, bore the title of "bishop of the external affairs of the Church"; the word *bishop* in Greek means overseer, observer, supervisor.
7. That is, by concern for the salvation of the soul.
8. Patriarch of Constantinople, 381–397.

this innocent handmaid of Christ; among them, Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, was the most hostile. He was angry with her because she had received and given food for Christ's sake to the honorable monks whom he had driven from the Egyptian desert (they are described at length in the Life of Chrysostom) when they came to Constantinople. In general, she very hospitably gave shelter and rest to strangers, monks, and bishops who came to the city, sharing her property with them; Theophilus himself had often before enjoyed her hospitality and generosity. Later, however, he became hostile to her both on account of the monks mentioned above and on account of St. John Chrysostom, and he sought to dishonor her with unjust accusations; but no one believed his malicious lies and slanders, for all knew her pure and holy life. The fame of this true handmaid of Christ spread through all the churches. She acted like the Samaritan mentioned in the Gospel, who set upon his own beast the man wounded by robbers and left unattended by all the passersby, brought him to an inn, and cared for his recovery (Lk. 10:30–37). Indeed, she gave shelter to all who had nowhere to lay their heads; she diligently cared for the poor and sick, stricken with sores, cast aside in the streets and abandoned by all, and in general was wholly and sincerely devoted to works of mercy. How much she spent on good works in gold and silver, in clothing, and by daily giving food to the poor, including those who came to Constantinople on business, meeting their needs in every way! Thus, she came to the aid of St. Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium, and Onesimus of Pontus, as well as Peter of Sebaste, brother of Basil the Great, and Epiphanius of Cyprus, giving them much gold, silver, and church ornaments from her property (and earlier, too, she had helped Gregory the Theologian, who held the hierarchal office in Constantinople before Nectarius). She closed with her own hands the eyes of Optimus, who died in Constantinople. She did good not only to holy and virtuous people, but also to seditious men and enemies, such as Antiochus, Bishop of Ptolemais, Acacius of Beroea, Severian of Gabala, and others like them. She was free from malice and had given herself wholly to God; therefore she considered her property not her own, but God's. St. John Chrysostom honored her as a great handmaid of God and loved her

with spiritual love, as St. Paul the Apostle once loved Persis, of whom he writes: "Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord" (Rom. 16:12). And holy Olympias did no less than Persis, laboring much for the Lord and serving the saints with great and fervent love.

When the innocent St. John Chrysostom was unjustly deposed from his throne, blessed Olympias wept bitterly over it with the other deaconesses. As he was leaving the church for the last time, John Chrysostom entered the baptistery, called blessed Olympias and the deaconesses Pentadia and Proclia, together with Salvina, a virtuous widow, and said to them:

"Come here, my children, and listen to me. I see that what is being done against me is drawing to an end. I have finished my work, and I think you will scarcely see me again. Therefore I ask you, do not abandon the Church on account of the bishop who will be appointed in my place, whether by compulsion or by common counsel; but obey him as you obeyed John, for the Church cannot be without a bishop. So may the mercy of God be with you; remember me in your prayers!"

And they, bathed in tears, fell down before him; then the saint set out for the place of his exile.

After his banishment, the cathedral church caught fire, and a considerable part of the city burned. Therefore all the innocent supporters of St. John were questioned about the fire by the city prefect, who suspected that they had set the church ablaze. Then St. Olympias also suffered, as though she too had been guilty of the arson; she was brought to trial and harshly questioned, for the prefect was cruel and unfeeling. Though no guilt was found against her, he nevertheless unjustly sentenced Olympias to pay a large sum of gold for the arson of which she was innocent.

After this the saint left Constantinople and went to Cyzicus,[9] but her enemies did not leave her in peace there either: she was condemned to exile and imprisoned in Nicomedia.[10] When St. John Chrysostom

9. Cyzicus was situated on the Arctonnesus peninsula of the Propontis (Sea of Marmara).
10. Nicomedia – a city in the region of Bithynia on the shore of the Sea of Marmara, in the northwestern part of Asia Minor. St. Olympias was confined in Nicomedia in 405.

learned of this, he wrote to her from his place of exile, comforting her in her sorrow.[11] After spending a long time in confinement and enduring much grief, the blessed one reposed[12] in the Lord. After her death, while her honorable body had not yet been buried, the saint appeared in a dream to the Bishop of Nicomedia and said:

"Place my body in a wooden coffin and cast it into the sea; where the waves cast it ashore, there let it be buried."

The bishop did so. The waves cast the coffin onto land in a place near Constantinople called Vrokti, where there was a church of the Holy Apostle Thomas. The inhabitants of that place received a revelation from God concerning the body of St. Olympias; they went out to the shore, found the coffin, and placed it in the Apostle's church. And healings from every kind of illness began to be granted. Many years later barbarians attacked the place, burned the church, and threw the holy relics into the sea, though they had remained unharmed by the fire even as the coffin burned; and the water turned blood-red at the spot where the relics had been cast: thus God made known the suffering of His handmaid. But the faithful again took the wonderworking relics from the sea. When Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople[13] learned of this, he sent the presbyter John, commanding him to bring them with honor to Constantinople. When the presbyter arrived there and lifted the holy relics, much blood flowed from them; and all marveled greatly that after two hundred years blood flowed from dry bones as though from a living body. Thus were these holy and wonderworking relics translated to the imperial city and placed in the convent founded by St. Olympias. Many miracles came to pass through her holy relics: every kind of illness was healed, and demons were driven out, through the prayers of St. Olympias and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

11. Seventeen letters of St. John Chrysostom to Olympias have survived.
12. Around 409, 25 July.
13. Sergius – the first patriarch of this name in Constantinople, 610–638.

On the same day, the Dormition of Righteous Anna, mother of the Most Holy Theotokos. (For her Life, together with that of Righteous Joachim, see September 9

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the repose of Venerable Macarius of Zheltovodsk, in 1444.

NOTES

4874. Deaconesses existed already in the times of the Apostles. The Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 16:1), mentions Phoebe, who was "a servant of the church at Cenchreae." In the post-apostolic period the Councils often mention deaconesses (I Ecumenical, can. 19; IV Ecumenical, can. 15; VI Ecumenical, can. 14), as do the Fathers and teachers of the Church and the emperors in their laws (Justinian, Novels 3, 6 and 123). At first, deaconesses were chosen chiefly from virgins, and from widows only those who were "faithful and reverent, having been married only once" (Apostolic Constitutions, Book VI, 18). Under the Emperor Justinian, however, it was permitted to choose from both groups and even before the age of forty, although actual service was entrusted to them upon reaching that age (IV Ecumenical, can. 15; Justinian, Novel 123). Only women distinguished by a pious life were appointed deaconesses at once, without any examination. The duties of deaconesses consisted of the following: 1) they prepared women for baptism; 2) they assisted the ministers of the Church at the baptism of women itself; 3) they carried out various commissions of the bishop concerning women, visiting the sick and those fallen into misfortune; 4) they watched over good order in the church among the women and children.

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THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF JULY

July 26

26 июля

New Calendar July 26 · Old Calendar August 8 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Moses the Hungarian

Житие преподобного отца нашего Моисея Угрина

The impious enemy has most of all been accustomed to stir up war against men with the impure, lustful passion; therefore a man darkened by this unclean defilement ceases in all his deeds to gaze upon God, since only "the pure in heart shall see God" (Mt. 5:8). Our blessed Father Moses, performing ascetic labors in this warfare more than others, suffered evil as a true soldier of Christ, until at last he conquered the power of the unclean enemy and left us an example for imitation. Concerning him the following is reported.

It is known of the blessed Moses that he was of Hungarian birth,[1] a favorite of the right-believing, holy prince and Russian passion-bearer Boris. He served the prince together with his brother George, who, when he fell upon his lord, shielding him with his own body, was slain by the soldiers of the godless Sviatopolk at the river Alta[2] together with St. Boris;[3] they cut off his head also, on account of the golden torque[4] which St. Boris had placed upon him.

The blessed Moses alone escaped death and came to Predislava, sister of Yaroslav, in Kiev, and dwelt there, hiding from Sviatopolk, and

1. That is, from Hungary. The name *ugry-vengry* may have appeared in the Russian language approximately at the beginning of the 9th century, when the Russian Slavs first met the Magyars; evidently at that time the nasal sound still existed in the Russian language and the word was pronounced "ngr"; hence the present *vengr* (Hungarian) is explained.
2. The Alta is a tributary of the Trubezh, which flows into the Dnieper below Kiev on its left, Muscovite side.
3. In 1015.

prayed fervently to God, until the pious Prince Yaroslav arrived, moved by pity for his murdered brothers, and vanquished the godless Sviatopolk.[5] But when Sviatopolk, fleeing to the Poles,[6] returned with Boleslav and drove out Yaroslav, and himself began to reign in Kiev,[7] then Boleslav, returning to his principality, took with him as captives two sisters of Yaroslav and many of his boyars, and among the latter the blessed Moses, whom they bound hand and foot in heavy iron fetters and guarded closely, for he was conspicuous for his strong build and comely face.

In the Polish land a certain woman saw him: a noblewoman, beautiful and young, possessing great wealth and great power; her husband, who had gone with Boleslav, had not returned, for he had been slain in battle. This woman, noticing the beauty of the venerable man, was inflamed toward him with carnal lust and began to entice him, persuading him with such words:

"O man! Why do you endure such torments, when you have a way out, by which you could be freed from your fetters and suffering?!"

"Thus it is pleasing to God," Moses answered her.

"If you will submit to me," the woman continued, "I will free you and make you famous throughout all the land of the Poles, and you will possess me and all my holdings."

The blessed man, understanding her impure desire, answered her:

"Which man, by obeying a wife, has ever changed his condition for the better? The first-created Adam, by obeying his wife, was cast out of paradise. Samson, who surpassed all in strength and conquered an entire army, was betrayed by a woman into the hands of foreigners. Solomon, who attained the depth of wisdom, by obeying a woman bowed down to idols. Herod, who won many victories, to please his wife cut off the head of John the Forerunner. Therefore, how shall I become

4. *Grivna* (from Sanskrit *grīva*, "neck"): properly a necklace or chain, usually of gold, worn on the neck as an ornament. Later the name *grivna* came to be applied to an ingot of gold of fixed weight (from 72 to 96 *zolotniks*), circulating as currency.
5. In the year 1017.
6. That is, into Poland.
7. From 1018.

free by making myself the slave of a woman whom I have not known since my birth?"[8]

"I will ransom you," she said, "I will make you renowned, set you as master over my whole household, and I desire to have you as my husband, only fulfill my will; for I cannot bear to see your beauty perishing senselessly."

"Be assured," the blessed Moses said to her, "that I will not fulfill your will, and I desire neither dominion over you nor wealth; above all this, for me, is purity of soul and body. Let me not destroy the five years' ascetic labor, that is, the grievous bonds which the Lord has ordained for me to endure undeservedly, for which I hope to be delivered from eternal torments."

Then that woman, seeing that she might lose such beauty, turned to another diabolical resolve, reasoning that if she ransomed him, he would in every way, even by force, submit to her. So she sent to the owner under whom the saint had been held captive, that he should take from her as much as he wished, only let him sell Moses to her. And he, seeing a convenient occasion to acquire wealth, took from her nearly 1000 gold pieces and gave Moses over to her. That woman, obtaining power over him, without any shame drew him toward an unseemly deed. Having freed him from his fetters, she clothed him in costly garments, fed him with choice dishes, and, lustfully embracing him, urged him to intercourse. But the blessed Moses, seeing the frenzy of the woman, applied himself all the more to prayer and fasting, preferring for the sake of pleasing God dry bread and water with purity to costly viands and wine with defilement. And at once, stripping off the fine garments, he, like Joseph, fled from sin (Gen. 39:1–23), counting the pleasures of this world as nothing. The shamed woman fell into such fury that she plotted to starve the blessed man to death, casting him into a dungeon. But God, who gives food to every creature, who once fed Elijah in the wilderness (2 Kgdms. 17:1–29), and likewise Paul of Thebes and many other servants of His who trust in Him, did not forsake this blessed man either: indeed, one of the servants of that same

8. That is, from her birth she kept her virginity inviolate.

woman, inclined by God to mercy, secretly brought food to Moses. And others persuaded him:

"Brother Moses, what prevents you from marrying? You are still young, and this widow lived with her husband only one year, and she is more beautiful than other women; her wealth is beyond counting. Her standing in this land of the Poles is very great, so that if she wished, even the prince would not disdain her, and you, a captive and slave, do not wish to become her master?! If you say that you do not wish to break the commandment of Christ, does not Christ say in the Gospel: 'For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh' (Mt. 19:5). Also the Apostle: 'It is better to marry than to burn' (1 Cor. 7:9). And he speaks also of widows: 'I desire that the younger widows marry' (1 Tim. 5:14). You, however, have not given a monastic vow, but are free from it. Why then do you subject yourself to evil and heavy torments and suffer so? If death should overtake you in such a wretched state, what praise will you receive? Indeed, which of the first righteous, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, disdained wives? None, except the present-day black-robed monks. Joseph the slave fled from his mistress, but afterward he too took a wife (Gen. 41:45). And you too, if you come out alive from this woman, afterward (as we think) will likewise find yourself a wife. And who will not laugh at your folly? It is better for you to submit to this woman, to become free and master over her whole household."

But the blessed Moses answered them:

"Truly, brethren and my good friends, you advise me well. I understand that you offer me words most evil of those whispered by the serpent to Eve in paradise: you urge me to submit to this woman, but in no case will I accept your counsel; if it should befall me to die in these fetters and grievous torments, I expect for this from God manifold mercy, and if many righteous have been saved with wives, I, a sinner alone, cannot be saved with a wife. Yes, if Joseph had at first yielded to the wife of Potiphar, then, when he took a wife, he would not have reigned in Egypt. But seeing his former steadfastness, God granted him the kingdom of Egypt; therefore he was glorified unto generations of generations as chaste, although he begot children. And I do not desire the

kingdom of Egypt, and still less to rule and to stand high in the land of the Poles and enjoy honor far through all the Russian land; but I have despised all this for the sake of the Heavenly Kingdom. Therefore, if I come out alive from the hands of this woman, I will seek no other wife, but (if God will) I will become a monk. As Christ said in the Gospel: 'Everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold and inherit eternal life' (Mt. 19:29). Shall I obey Christ more than you? The Apostle also says: 'He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he who is married cares for the things of the world, how he may please his wife' (1 Cor. 7:32–33). So I ask you: for whom must one labor more, for the Lord or for a wife? I know also that the Apostle writes the following: 'Servants, obey your masters' (Eph. 6:5), but in goodness, not for evil. Therefore, let it be known to you who hold me, that never will the beauty of a woman entice me, much less turn me from love for Christ."

Hearing this, that woman conceived another crafty intention in her heart. She ordered that the blessed man be set on a horse and led about by many servants through her towns and villages, adding:

"All this is yours, if it pleases you; do with it all as you wish."

And she herself said to the people:

"This is your lord and my husband; whoever meets him, let him bow down."

He laughed at the folly of that woman and said to her:

"You labor in vain! For you cannot entice me with the perishable things of this world, nor deprive me of my imperishable wealth; understand this and do not labor in vain."

Then the woman, in fury, answered him:

"Do you not know that you have been sold to me, and who can free you from my hands? I will by no means let you go alive, but after many torments I will hand you over to death."

But the blessed man boldly said to her:

"I will not fear any torment, for the Lord is with me; to Him, from this hour, by His good pleasure, I desire to serve in the monastic life."

At that time, guided by God, there came to the Blessed Moses a certain monk from the holy mountain, who was a priest by rank; he tonsured him into the holy angelic monastic habit. He taught him much about spiritual purity, so that he would not yield his shoulders to the enemy nor fear that unclean woman, and with that he departed. They searched everywhere for this monk and did not find him. Then the mistress, despairing of her hopes, subjected the Venerable Monk Moses to severe beatings: she ordered him to be stretched out and struck with rods, so that the ground was soaked with blood. Those who beat Moses urged him:

"Submit to your mistress, fulfill her will; if you disobey, we will break your body into pieces. Do not think you will escape these torments, but after many tortures you will yield up your spirit in worse ones still. Have pity on yourself: cast off these monastic rags, clothe yourself in costly boyars' garments, and you will be freed from the tortures that threaten you."

The valiant Moses answered them:

"Brethren! Do what you have been commanded, without any delay; but I can in no case renounce the monastic life and the love of God, and no torment, whether by fire, by sword, or by inflicting wounds, can compel me to abandon God and the great angelic habit. And to this woman, who has lost all shame and whose mind is darkened, who has utterly despised not only the fear of God but also shame before men, who shamelessly compels me to defile my body and to commit adultery, I will never submit, nor will I fulfill her accursed command."

This woman grieved greatly over how to avenge her humiliation, and at last she wrote to Boleslav the following message:

"You yourself know that my husband was killed in the war waged by you, and you permitted me to take as husband whomever I wished. I fell in love with one of your captives, a handsome youth, and having ransomed him, I brought him into my house, paying much gold for him; and all the gold and silver in my house and all my authority I gave to him, if only he would consent to become my husband. But he set all this at nothing. Many times I tormented him with hunger and beatings, yet I achieved nothing at all. It was not enough for him that he spent five

years in chains with his former owner; now, in the sixth year, he has been with me and has been greatly tormented by me for his disobedience. All this he brought upon himself by his hardness of heart; and now he has been tonsured by some monk. So, what do you command me to do with him?"

Boleslav ordered the woman to come to him and to bring Moses. This was carried out according to his command. Seeing the Venerable One, he long pressed him to take her as his wife, but did not persuade him. At last he said to him:

"Is there another man as insensible as you? You forfeit many blessings and honor and surrender yourself to grievous torments! From this day know that your life and death are in your own hands: either, by fulfilling the will of your mistress, you will be honored by us and will have great power; or, in case of disobedience, you will receive a cruel death after many torments."

The prince also addressed the wife with these words:

"Let the captive you have bought not be free in any case, but as mistress, deal with your slave according to your desire, so that others too may not dare to disobey their masters."

But our Venerable Father Moses answered him:

"'What does it profit a man,' says the Lord, 'if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in return for his soul?' (Mt. 16:26) And you, how do you promise me honor and glory, which you yourself will soon lose, and the grave will receive you with nothing? In the same way this unclean woman will be cruelly slain."

All this came to pass as the Venerable One had foretold. But before this, that woman, having gained final power over him, drew him into sin in an even more shameless manner: she ordered Moses to be forcibly laid upon her bed, where she kissed and embraced him; yet she could not even by this draw him to fulfill her desire. For the Venerable One said to her:

"Your labor is in vain, woman. Do not think that I refuse this sin as some madman does, or because I cannot; I despise you, the unclean one, only out of the fear of God."

Hearing this, the woman ordered that he be given a hundred wounds every day; at last she ordered him to be castrated. The Venerable Moses lay as one dead, from the loss of blood barely retaining faint signs of life. Boleslav, not hindering this, moreover raised a great persecution against the monks and expelled them all from his domain, wishing to please Moses' mistress as a woman of rank and dear to him. But God soon sent vengeance for His servants. For in one night Boleslav suddenly died[9], and a great revolt arose throughout the whole Lyakh land. For, rising up, the people slew their bishops and boyars, among whom was also killed that woman who had lost all shame.

Of this wrath of God, which came upon the expulsion of the monks because of the tonsuring of the Venerable Moses, the wife of the Grand Prince Iziaslav of Kiev, a Lyakh woman by birth and daughter of Boleslav, reminded him many years later, entreating and admonishing him not to drive the Venerable Antony and his brethren from his domain because of the tonsuring of the Blessed Barlaam and the eunuch Ephraim[10]. But let us speak of the present matter. Our Venerable Father Moses, having received a little relief, came to the cave of the Venerable Antony, bearing upon himself the marks of martyrdom, like a valiant warrior of Christ; and he lived in a God-pleasing way, labouring in prayer, fasting, vigil, and in all the monastic virtues, by which he overcame all the snares of the unclean enemy to the end.

For his many victories over the unclean fleshly passions that rose up against this Venerable One, the Lord granted him the power to overcome those same passions when they rose up in others. Thus, one of the brethren, being assailed by the passion of lust, came and begged this Venerable One to help him:

"And I," he said, "promise to keep whatever you command me, until my death."

The Venerable One commanded him:

"Never in all your life say a single word to a woman."

The other gave his promise from his whole heart. Then the Saint, imitating the first Moses, who worked wonders with his staff, touched

9. 3 April 1025.
10. See the Life of Venerable Anthony of the Kiev Caves under 10 July.

the loins of the brother's body with his staff, since without a staff, because of the pains from the wounds he had received before, he could not walk by himself; and immediately all the unclean passions of that brother died (lost their power), and from that time he was no longer tempted.

Thus living, this good warrior of Christ spent sixteen years in suffering and in his God-pleasing labor: for five years he was unjustly tormented in chains by the one who had taken him captive, showing, like Job, patience and thanksgiving to God; in the sixth year he bravely suffered more than Joseph for chastity; then, in ten years of angel-like silence in the cave, imparted to him from the holy Mount Athos, he shone forth before others, as that first Moses did with the "ten-numbered" law, imparted to him by angelic ordering from the holy Mount Sinai. Then our Venerable Moses was truly deemed worthy to be a beholder of God: he proved worthy of the blessedness of the pure in heart, and that he might see God face to face, he reposed on the twenty-sixth day of July[11], while the Venerable Antony was still alive; in whose cave the wonderworking relics of this holy man, who did not corrupt his purity, rest incorrupt even to this day.

By his relics the holy Moses overcomes unclean passions even after death, as the holy and much-suffering John learned. For he, having hidden himself in a cave and buried himself up to the shoulders opposite the relics of the Venerable Moses, long suffered, overcoming in himself the carnal passion, and at last heard the voice of the Lord:

"Let him pray to the dead man lying opposite him, this Venerable Moses the Hungarian!"

When the much-suffering one did this, he was immediately delivered from the unclean warfare. Likewise the same holy John delivered another brother, who suffered from the same abomination, when he gave the one possessed by the passion a bone from the relics of the Venerable Moses, that he might apply it to his body, as is recounted in the life of the Venerable John the Much-Suffering. And may the Venerable Moses be a guide to us also, who have been delivered from all

11. In 1043.

impurity, directing us by his prayers along the path of salvation; let us worship with him in the Trinity the God who is worshipped, to Whom be glory now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Hieromartyr Hermolaus

Память священномученика Ермолая

The honorable presbyter Hermolaus and his companions in suffering, the Hieromartyrs Hermippus and Hermocrates, were priests of the holy church of Nicomedia; they were a remnant of those 20,000 martyrs burned by Maximian in a church, whose memory is celebrated on December 28. These three servants of the Lord, from fear of the pagans, were hiding in various places; yet wherever a suitable opportunity presented itself, they taught the pagans the holy faith and turned them to Christ. Thus the holy Hermolaus, seeing the physician Panteleimon, converted him to Christianity after a God-inspired conversation. When Panteleimon was taken to be tortured by the impious emperor Maximian and was asked from whom he had learned the Christian faith, the Saint, being unable to lie, disclosed the holy Christian presbyter Hermolaus. And at once the holy Hermolaus and his fellow servants of Christ, Hermippus and Hermocrates, were seized and brought before the impious tribunal. At the interrogation they bravely confessed Christ the true God, reviled the foul idols and their worshippers; for this, condemned to death by the tormentors, they ended their lives by the sword. More detail about their sufferings is related in the life of the holy Great Martyr Panteleimon under the 27th.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou didst live piously as a hierarch, and didst receive the crown of hieromartyrdom; having quenched the sacrifices to idols, thou wast a good shepherd of Christ's flock, O wise one, and a true teacher to Panteleimon. Wherefore we honor thee, crying out in hymns: deliver us from afflictions evermore by thy prayers, O our father Hermolaus.

Passion of the Holy Venerable Martyr Paraskeva

Страдание святой преподобномученицы Параскевы

The Holy Venerable Martyr Paraskeva lived in the reign of the emperor Antoninus[12], in the environs of the ancient city of Rome. She was the only daughter of her parents and devoted herself to the study of the Holy Scriptures. When her parents died, she distributed her property to the poor, took the monastic habit, and, imitating the holy Apostles, went about preaching concerning Christ, and turned many pagans to the true faith. Therefore the Jews slandered her before the emperor, who commanded that she be brought before him; and when she, despite both persuasion and threats, would not consent to renounce Christ, he ordered first that a red-hot helmet be placed upon her head, and then that she be cast into a copper cauldron filled with vigorously boiling oil and pitch. But the saint remained unharmed by all this in a wondrous manner, and, having worked a miracle[13], she converted to faith in Christ the emperor Antoninus and those who were with him. Then released from Rome to liberty, the holy Paraskeva went to other cities and everywhere preached concerning Christ. Coming into one city, in which a certain Asclepius was reigning, she was brought before him. Having become convinced that she would not change her convictions, the king commanded that she be led outside the city to a serpent that dwelt in a cave and struck terror into everyone, that it might tear her to pieces; but she made the sign of the Cross over the serpent, and it burst asunder in two. After this Asclepius and those who were with him believed in Christ. Released again, the saint went through all the cities and lands, preaching the faith of Christ. Coming into a city in which another king, named Tarasius, was reigning, she was brought to judgment before him and began to preach concerning Christ. Then he subjected her to numerous and cruel tortures, but since he could not

12. The Roman emperor Antoninus Pius reigned from 138 to 161.

13. In the *Synaxarion* of Nicodemus, where the account of the Venerable Martyr Paraskeva is set forth in detail, this miracle is described thus: cast into the cauldron of boiling oil and pitch and remaining unharmed, the saint threw some of the scalding liquid into the eyes of the curious emperor Antoninus and blinded him; then, at his request, she restored to him the sight he had lost.

compel her by these to renounce Christ, he commanded that her honorable head be cut off with a sword[14].

* * *



14. The year of the holy martyr Paraskeva's death is unknown. The pilgrim Antony saw her relics in Constantinople in 1200, and her church exists there to this day. It is located on the left side of the Golden Horn, in the locality of Has-Keui.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF JULY

July 27

27 ИЮЛЯ

New Calendar July 27 · Old Calendar August 9 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Great Martyr Panteleimon

Страдание святого великомученика Пантелеимона

When the impious Maximian[1], the cruel persecutor of Christians, reigned, and when nearly the whole universe was covered with the darkness of idolatrous impiety, a great persecution was raised everywhere against the believers in Christ, and many confessors of the most holy name of Jesus Christ died as martyrs. At that time the holy Great Martyr Panteleimon also suffered for Christ in the land of Bithynia[4901], in the city of Nicomedia[2].

This most glorious passion-bearer of Christ among the martyrs was born in the same city of Nicomedia to a noble and wealthy father named Eustorgius and to a mother named Eubula. His father, in his faith, was a pagan who zealously devoted himself to idolatry; his mother was a Christian, taught the holy faith by her forefathers and diligently serving Christ. Thus those who were joined in body were divided in spirit: he offered sacrifices to false gods, while she offered "the sacrifice of praise" to the true God. The child born to them, of whom our word speaks, was named Pantoleon, which means "a lion in all things," for it was supposed that in courage he would be like a lion. Later, however, the youth was renamed Panteleimon, that is, "all-merciful," because he showed mercy to all: when he treated the sick without payment, or gave alms to the poor, distributing his father's wealth with an open hand to those in need.

1. 305–311 A.D.
2. Nicomedia was a magnificent city of antiquity on the shore of the Propontis, or Sea of Marmara.

From early childhood his mother brought up the youth in Christian piety, teaching him the knowledge of the one true God who lives in heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ, so that he would believe in Him and please Him by good deeds, turning away from pagan polytheism. The youth heeded his mother's instructions and absorbed them as far as was possible for his youthful years. But what a loss and deprivation! His good mother and guide in his young years departed to the Lord, leaving the youth not yet come to full reason and maturity. After her death the youth readily followed in his father's footsteps of error; his father often brought him to worship the idols, confirming him in pagan impiety.

Then the youth was placed in a grammar school, and when he had successfully completed the whole course of external pagan learning, his father entrusted him to a renowned physician, Euphrosinus, for medical training, that he might acquire skill in the healing art. The youth, having a receptive mind, readily absorbed what he was taught, and soon surpassing his peers, he almost equalled even the teacher himself; moreover, he was distinguished by his conduct, eloquence and beauty, and made a pleasing impression on everyone. He was even known to the Emperor Maximian himself. For Maximian lived at that time in Nicomedia; delivering Christians to torment, he burned 20,000 of them in a church, on the day of the Nativity of Christ he put to death Bishop Anthimus, and many others, after various tortures, he delivered to various kinds of death. The physician Euphrosinus often came with medicines to the tyrant's palace, either to him personally or to his courtiers, for this physician provided remedies for illnesses to the whole imperial court. When Euphrosinus came to the emperor in the palace, the youth Pantoleon accompanied him, following his teacher, and all marveled at the beauty and good understanding of the youth. And the emperor, seeing him, asked:

"Whence is he, and whose son is he?"

Having received an answer, the emperor ordered the teacher to instruct the youth as quickly and as well as possible in the whole art of medicine, expressing the desire to have him always at his side, as one worthy to stand before the emperor and serve him. By that time the youth had already reached full age.

In those days there was in Nicomedia an elderly presbyter named Hermolaus, who, out of fear of the impious, was hiding with a few Christians in a small and modest house. Pantoleon's path, as he went from his home to his teacher and back, lay past the dwelling in which Hermolaus was hiding. Seeing the youth often passing by through a little window, Hermolaus perceived from his face and gaze his good disposition; understanding in spirit that the youth would be a chosen vessel of God, Hermolaus once went out to meet the youth and begged him to come into his house for even a short time. The meek and obedient youth entered the elder's house. Having seated him beside himself, the elder asked him about his origin and parents, about his faith and about the whole manner of his life. The youth told everything in detail and reported that his mother had been a Christian and had died, while his father was alive and, in accordance with pagan laws, honored many demons. And holy Hermolaus asked him thus:

"Well, good child! To which side and faith would you wish to belong, your father's or your mother's?"

The youth answered:

"My mother, while she was alive, taught me her faith, and I came to love her faith. But my father, being the stronger, compels me to observe the pagan laws, and wishes to establish me in the imperial palace among the close and dignified soldiers and servants of the emperor."

Holy Hermolaus asked again:

"And in what teaching does your teacher instruct you?"

The youth related:

"The teaching of Asclepiades, Hippocrates and Galen[3]; this is what my father especially wished, and my teacher also says that if I master their teaching, I can easily heal all kinds of illnesses in people."

In these last words holy Hermolaus found an occasion for a profitable conversation, and he began to sow in the youth's heart, as in good soil, the good seed of the Divine words:

"Believe me," he said, "O good youth, I tell you one truth: the teaching and art of Asclepiades, Hippocrates and Galen is worthless and can

3. Famous physicians of antiquity.

help little those who have recourse to it. And the gods which Emperor Maximian, and your father, and the other pagans honor, are vain, and are nothing but fable and deception for the feeble-minded. But the true and almighty God is one, Jesus Christ; if you believe in Him, you will heal all kinds of illnesses by the mere invocation of His most pure name. For He gave sight to the blind, cleansed the lepers, raised the dead; He drove out with a single word the demons to whom the pagans bow down; not only He Himself, but also His garments brought healing: for a woman, afflicted for twelve years with an issue of blood, had only to touch the edge of His garment, and she was immediately healed. But who can recount in detail all His wonderful works? As it is impossible to count the sand of the sea, the stars of heaven and the drops of water, so it is impossible to count the miracles and to measure the greatness of God. And now He is a strong Helper to His servants, He comforts the sorrowful, heals the sick, delivers from calamities and frees from all the evils of the enemy, not waiting to be moved by this or that prayer, but anticipating prayers and even the movement of the heart. He gives the power to accomplish all this even to those who love Him, and sends them the gift of still greater wonderworking; finally, He gives endless life in the eternal glory of the Heavenly Kingdom."

Pantoleon believed these teachings of holy Hermolaus as true, receiving them into his heart; with joy he dwelt on them in his mind, and he said to the holy elder:

"I have heard this many times from my mother, and often saw her praying and calling upon that God of whom you tell me."

From that day Pantoleon came every day to the elder and delighted in his God-inspired conversations, growing strong in the knowledge of the true God. And when he returned from his teacher Euphrosinus, he would not go home before visiting the elder and receiving soul-profitable instruction from him.

Once it happened that, on his way back from his teacher, he turned somewhat aside and found a dead child bitten by a huge viper, and the viper itself lying there near the one it had stung. Seeing this, Pantoleon at first was frightened and drew back a little, and then he thought to himself:

"Now the time has come for me to test and convince myself whether everything that the elder Hermolaus said is true."

Looking up to heaven, he said:

"Lord Jesus Christ, though I am unworthy to call upon Thee, yet if Thou wishest me to become Thy servant, show Thy power and bring it about that in Thy name this child may come to life, and the viper may die."

And at once the child rose alive, as if from sleep, while the viper burst in two. Then Pantoleon, fully believing in Christ, raised his bodily and spiritual eyes to heaven and blessed God with joy and tears for leading him out of darkness to the light of His knowledge. He quickly went to the holy presbyter Hermolaus, fell at his honorable feet, and asked for baptism. He told him what had happened: how the dead child had come to life by the power of the name of Jesus Christ, and how the viper which had caused the death had perished. Holy Hermolaus, leaving his house, went with him to see the dead viper, and, seeing it, thanked God for the accomplished miracle, through which He had led Pantoleon to His knowledge. Returning home, he baptized the youth in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and, having celebrated the Divine Liturgy in his inner room, gave him Communion of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ.

After his baptism Pantoleon remained with the elder Hermolaus for seven days, being instructed by the Divine words spoken through the elder's lips and by the grace of Christ, and as from a spring of living water he nourished his soul to an abundance of spiritual fruits. On the eighth day he went home, and his father asked him:

"My son, where have you been all these days? I was worried about you."

The saint answered:

"I was with my teacher at the emperor's palace: we were healing a sick man whom the emperor loves very much, and we did not leave him for seven days, until we restored his health."

So spoke the saint, and he spoke no falsehood, but under the guise of a parable he conveyed the truth mysteriously and allegorically. In his mind he called St. Hermolaus the presbyter his teacher; by the royal

palace he understood that inner chamber in which the Divine mystery was accomplished; and he called his soul sick, the soul which the heavenly King had loved and which had been receiving spiritual healing for seven days.

When he came the following morning to his teacher Euphrosynus, the latter asked him:

"Where have you been wandering for so many days?"

"My father, having bought an estate, sent me to take possession of it, and I lingered, examining carefully everything that is there, for it was bought at a high price."

He said this allegorically of the holy baptism which he had received, and of the other mysteries of the Christian faith, which he had learned, and which are all of an extraordinary price, surpassing all riches, for they have been purchased with the blood of Christ. Hearing this, Euphrosynus ceased his questions. The blessed Pantoleon, however, was filled with the grace of God, bearing within himself the treasure of the holy faith. He greatly cared for his father, as if to lead him out of the darkness of idolatry and bring him to the light of the knowledge of Christ; and every day, conversing with him with wisdom, by parables and questions, he said to him:

"Father! Why do the gods that were made standing remain standing as they were first placed, to this day, and never sit down; while those made sitting remain sitting to this day and never rise?"

"Your question is not entirely clear to me either," his father answered, "and I do not know what to answer to it."

The saint, constantly putting to his father other questions like this one, caused him to doubt his gods and gradually to perceive the falsehood and error of idolatry. His father had already ceased to honor the idols as he had honored them before, offering them each day numerous sacrifices and worship, and began to despise them and not to worship them. Seeing this, Pantoleon rejoiced that, although he had not yet succeeded in turning his father from them altogether, he had at least aroused doubt in him concerning the idols. More than once Pantoleon wished to break the idols of his father, of which there were many in his house, but he restrained himself, partly so as not to anger his father,

whom according to the commandments of God he was bound to honor, and partly because he waited for the time when his father, having come to know the true God himself, would wish with his own hand to shatter them.

At that time a blind man was brought to Pantoleon, who asked for healing in this manner:

"I beg you, have mercy on me, who am blinded and deprived of the precious light. All the physicians who are in this city have treated me, and I have received no benefit from them; but I have lost even the last glimmers of light that I could see, together with all my property. For I spent much, rewarding them, and instead of healing I received from them only harm and the loss of time."

The saint answered him:

"If you gave all your property to those physicians from whom you received no benefit, with what will you reward me if you receive healing and regain your sight?"

"All that is left of my little," cried the blind man, "I will gladly give you."

The saint said:

"The gift of sight, which opens the light to you, will be given you by the Father of lights, the true God, through me, His unworthy servant. But what you have promised, do not give to me; give it to the poor."

Hearing this, Eustorgius, the father of Pantoleon, said to him:

"My son! Do not venture to undertake something that you cannot do, or you will be mocked. For what, indeed, can you do more than the physicians, who are better than you, and who treated him but could not heal him?"

"None of those physicians," the saint replied, "knows what remedy is to be applied in this case, as I know it, for there is a great difference between them and my teacher, who revealed this remedy to me."

His father, thinking that he was speaking of his teacher Euphrosynus, remarked:

"I have heard that your teacher also treated this blind man and could do nothing."

"Wait a little, father!" answered Pantoleon, "and you will see the power of my healing."

With these words he touched the blind man's eyes with his fingers, saying:

"In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, who gives light to the blind, receive your sight."

At once the eyes of the blind man were opened, and he began to see. And in that moment Pantoleon's father, Eustorgius, together with the man who had regained his sight, believed in Christ and were baptized by the holy presbyter Hermolaus, and they were filled with great spiritual joy at the grace and power of Christ.

Then Eustorgius began to shatter all the idols in his house, and in this his son the saint Pantoleon helped him; having broken the idols into pieces, they threw the fragments into one deep ditch and covered them with earth. After living a short time after this, Eustorgius reposed in the Lord. Pantoleon, becoming heir to his father's very rich estate, at once granted freedom to the male and female slaves, generously rewarding them; and he began to distribute his property to those in need: to the poor, the beggars, the widows, and the orphans. He visited the prisons, and, going to all those who suffered in chains, he comforted them by healing and by giving them whatever they lacked. Thus he was a physician not only of wounds but also of human poverty; for all received from him unfailing alms, beggars were enriched by his bounty, and in his healing the grace of God assisted him. For there was given him from above the gift of healing, and he healed all manner of diseases without payment, not so much by pharmacological means as by invoking the name of Jesus Christ. Then indeed Pantoleon showed himself to be in reality Panteleimon, that is, all-merciful, both by name and in deed, showing mercy to all and not letting anyone go from him without alms or without consolation, for to the needy he gave help, and the sick he healed without payment. The whole city came to him with their sick, leaving all the other physicians, for from no one were healings so swift and perfect as from Panteleimon, who healed successfully and accepted payment from no one. And the name of the all-merciful and unpaid physician became known among all the people, while the other physi-

cians were condemned and mocked. As a result, no small envy and enmity arose on the part of the physicians toward the saint; it began already from the time when the aforementioned blind man regained his sight. The matter arose in the following way.

Once, when this blind man, who had regained his sight through the holy Panteleimon, was walking through the city, the physicians saw him and said to themselves:

"Is this not the man who was blind and sought healing from us, and we could not cure him? How does he now see? Who and by what means healed him and opened his eyes?"

And they asked him himself how he had regained his sight. And the man did not conceal that his physician had been Panteleimon. They, knowing that he was a disciple of Euphrosynus, said:

"A great disciple of a great teacher."

They did not know that the power of Christ was working through Panteleimon, and, without realizing it, they confessed the truth: that Panteleimon was the great disciple of the great teacher, Jesus Christ. But although with their lips they hypocritically praised the saint, in their hearts, from envy, they devised evil and watched the saint, seeking some accusation against him in order to destroy him. And noticing that he went into the prisons and there healed the wounds of the disciples suffering for Christ, they reported to the tyrant Maximian:

"O Emperor! The youth whom you ordered to be taught the medical art, wishing to have him with you in your palace, despising your so evident kindness toward him, goes around the prisons healing the prisoners who revile our gods, thinking the same as they about our gods and inclining others to the same false opinions. If you do not destroy him soon, you will cause yourself no little trouble, for you will see how many, through his seductive teaching, turn away from the gods. Indeed, the medical art by which Pantoleon heals, he ascribes not to Aesculapius[4] or another of the gods, but to some Christ, and all whom he heals believe in Him."

Thus the slanderers spoke, begging the emperor to order that the blind man healed by Pantoleon be summoned as a confirmation and ex-

act witness of the justice of their words. And the emperor at once ordered that the man who had regained his sight be found, and when he was brought, he asked him:

"Tell me, man, how did Pantoleon heal your eyes?"

He answered:

"He called upon the name of Christ, touched my eyes, and I at once regained my sight."

"And what do you think," the emperor said to him, "did Christ heal you, or the gods?"

"O Emperor!" he answered, "these physicians whom you see around you took much trouble and for a long time over my cure; they took all my property, and not only brought me no benefit, but deprived me even of the small sight that I had and utterly blinded me. But Panteleimon, by merely invoking the name of Christ, made me see. Now you yourself, O Emperor, judge and decide who is the better and true physician: Aesculapius and the other gods, invoked for a long time and of no help at all, or Christ, invoked only once through Panteleimon, who at once gave me healing."

Not knowing what to answer, the emperor, following the custom of all tyrants, began to compel him to impiety:

"Do not be mad, man, and do not remember Christ, for it is evident that the gods have given you the ability to see the light."

But the healed man, paying no heed to the emperor's power and not fearing the tyrant's threats, answered Maximian more boldly than the Gospel blind man (Jn. 9:27) who was once brought for questioning before the Pharisees:

"You yourself are mad, O Emperor, calling your blind gods the givers of sight, and you yourself are like them, not willing to see the truth."

Filled with wrath, the emperor at once ordered that his life be taken by the sword, and the head of the good Confessor of the name of Jesus Christ was cut off; and he departed, so that he might see face to face, in the unfading light of heaven, Him whom he had confessed on earth

4. The god of the healing art.

while he still possessed bodily sight. His body St. Panteleimon bought from the murderers and buried beside the body of his father.

After this the emperor commanded that Panteleimon be summoned before him. While the soldiers were leading the saint to the emperor, he sang the words of the psalm of David: "O God of my praise, hold not thy peace: for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me" (Ps. 108:1–2), and the rest of that psalm. Thus he stood in body before the earthly emperor, and in spirit before the Heavenly One.

The emperor Maximian, looking upon him without any anger, began to persuade him gently, saying:

"I have heard no good things about you, Panteleimon. They tell me that you in every way reproach and disparage Asclepius and the other gods, and that you glorify Christ, who perished by an evil death, and put your hope in Him, and call Him alone God. It is not unknown to you, I think, how great an attention I have paid to you and how great a kindness I have shown you: you have been received into my palace, and I ordered your teacher, Euphrosynus, to teach you the healing art quickly, so that you might always remain constantly with me. But you, despising all this, have turned aside to my enemies. Yet I do not wish to believe what is said about you, for people are accustomed to speak much falsehood. That is why I have summoned you, so that you yourself might tell the truth about yourself and expose the false slander of your envious accusers, in the presence of all, by offering, as is fitting, a sacrifice to the great gods."

The saint answered:

"Deeds, O emperor, must be trusted more than words, for the truth is far better known from deeds than from words. Therefore believe the reports about me: I renounce Asclepius and your other gods, and glorify Christ, because from His deeds I have come to know that He is the one true God. Hear, then, though briefly, the deeds of Christ: He created heaven, established the earth, raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, cleansed the lepers, and, in a word, raised paralytics from their beds. What similar things the gods you venerate have done—I do not know, nor whether they can do them. But if you now wish to know the

all-powerful might of Christ, you will see its working immediately, in deed. Command that some man lying on a bed in mortal sickness, concerning whom the physicians have lost hope, be brought here; let your priests come and call upon their gods, and I will call upon my God. Whichever of the gods heals the sick man, let him be acknowledged as the one true God, and let the others be rejected."

The emperor was pleased with this counsel of the saint, and he at once ordered that such a sick man be sought.

And there was brought a man on a bed, paralyzed for many years, who could move no member and was like some insensible tree. The priests also came, those who served the idols and were skilled in the healing art, and they proposed to the saint that he should first call upon his Christ.

The saint replied to them:

"If I call upon my God and my God heals this paralytic, then whom will your gods heal? But let you call upon your gods first, and if they heal the sick man, there will be no need to call upon my God."

So the priests began to call upon their gods: one invoked Asclepius, another Zeus, another Diana, others other demons; yet no voice or attention was perceived. For a long time they exerted themselves in their god-opposing prayers without any success. The saint, seeing their vain labor, laughed. Seeing him laughing, the emperor turned to Panteleimon:

"Do you, Panteleimon, make this man whole by calling upon your God, if you can."

"Let the priests withdraw," said the saint, and they withdrew.

Then the saint, approaching the bed, lifted his eyes to heaven and offered the following prayer:

"Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto Thee. Hide not Thy face from me; in the day of my trouble incline Thine ear unto me; in the day [when I call upon Thee], hear me speedily" (Ps. 101:2–3); and show Thy all-powerful might before those who do not know Thee, for all things are possible to Thee, O King of hosts!

Having uttered this prayer, the saint took the paralytic by the hand, saying:

"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, arise and be whole!"

And at once the paralytic rose, felt strength in his whole body, and rejoiced as he walked; and, taking up his bed, he carried it to his house.

Seeing such a miracle, many of those present believed in Christ; but the priests who served the idols gnashed their teeth at the servant of Christ and addressed the emperor with these words:

"If he remains alive, the sacrifices to the gods will cease, and we shall be mocked by the Christians. Destroy him, O emperor, as quickly as possible!"

Then the emperor said to Panteleimon:

"Offer a sacrifice to the gods, Panteleimon, that you may not perish in vain. You know how many have perished because they renounced our gods and disobeyed our commands. Do you not know how cruelly the elder Anthimus was tortured?"

"All who have died for Christ," answered the saint, "have not perished, but have found for themselves eternal life. And if Anthimus, being old and infirm in body, could endure cruel torments for our Lord, how much more ought I, young and strong in body, to suffer without fear all the torments to which you will condemn me. For I shall consider my life empty if I do not die for Christ, and if I die, I shall count it gain."

The emperor ordered the naked martyr to be hung on the instrument of torture and his body to be scraped with iron claws, while his ribs were scorched with burning candles. He, enduring these sufferings, looked up to heaven and said:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Appear to me at this moment, give me patience, that I may endure the torments to the end."

And the Lord appeared to him in the form of the presbyter Hermolaus, saying:

"Fear not, I am with you."

And at once the hands of the tormentors grew weak and as if lifeless, so that the instruments of torture fell from them and the candles went out. Seeing this, the emperor commanded that the martyr be taken down from the place of torment, and said to him:

"What is the power of your sorcery, that even the servants have grown weary and the candles have gone out?"

The martyr answered thus:

"My sorcery is Christ, whose all-powerful might accomplishes all things."

The emperor objected:

"And what will you do if I appoint even more severe torments?"

"In greater torments," answered the martyr, "my Christ will show greater might, sending me greater patience in order to put you to shame. And having endured heavier torments for Him, I shall receive from Him greater rewards."

Then the tormentor commanded that tin be melted in a large cauldron and the martyr thrown into it. When the tin was boiling, the martyr was led to the cauldron; he lifted his eyes to heaven and prayed thus:

"Hear, O God, my voice in my prayer; preserve my life from fear of the enemy; hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked, from the insurrection of evildoers" (Ps. 63:2–3).

As he prayed thus, the Lord again appeared to him in the form of Hermolaus, and, taking him by the hand, entered the cauldron with him; at once the fire went out and the tin cooled, while the martyr sang the words of the psalm: "As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice" (Ps. 54:17–18). Those present marveled at the miracle, and the emperor exclaimed:

"What, then, will finally become of it, if the fire has gone out and the tin has cooled? To what torment shall I hand over this sorcerer?"

Those present advised:

"Let him be cast into the depths of the sea, for surely he cannot bewitch the whole sea—and he will perish at once."

The tormentor commanded that it be done so.

The servants, seizing the martyr, led him to the sea, placed him in a boat, and tied a large stone around his neck; having rowed far from the shore, they cast him into the sea and themselves returned to shore. When the saint had been cast into the sea, Christ again appeared to

him, as at the first time, in the form of Hermolaus, and the stone tied to the martyr's neck became as light as a leaf, so that Panteleimon stayed with it on the surface of the sea without sinking; rather, as if on dry land, he walked upon the waters, guided, as once the Apostle Peter was, by the right hand of Christ. He came out onto the shore, singing and glorifying God, and presented himself before the emperor. The emperor was inexpressibly amazed at such a miracle and exclaimed:

"What is the power of your sorcery, Pantoleon, that you have also subjected the sea to yourself?"

"The sea too," explained the saint, "obeys its Lord and fulfills His will."

"So you also rule the sea?" asked the emperor.

"Not I," answered the martyr, "but my Christ, the Creator and Lord of all visible and invisible creation. He holds dominion over heaven and earth, and likewise over the sea: 'Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters' (Ps. 76:20)."

After this the tormentor commanded that an amphitheater for wild beasts be prepared outside the city, so that the martyr might be given to the beasts to devour. The whole city gathered for this spectacle, desiring to see the beautiful and innocently suffering youth torn apart by the beasts. The emperor also came; bringing the martyr, he pointed with his finger at the beasts and said:

"They are prepared for you. Listen, then, to me: spare your youth, spare the beauty of your body, offer a sacrifice to the gods; otherwise you will die a cruel death, torn by the teeth of the beasts."

The saint, however, expressed his wish rather to be torn apart by the beasts than to obey such a wicked counsel and command. And he was cast to the beasts. But the Lord, appearing to the saint here too in the likeness of the priest Hermolaus, shut the beasts' mouths and made them meek as sheep, so that, creeping up to the saint, they licked his feet. He stroked them with his hand, and each of the beasts strove that the saint's hand might touch it, pushing one another aside. The people, seeing this, were astonished and cried out with a loud voice:

– Great is the Christian God! Let the innocent and righteous youth be released!

Then the emperor, filled with wrath, led soldiers with drawn swords against those who glorified Christ God, and many of the people who had believed in Christ were slain; and the emperor ordered that the beasts too should all be killed. Seeing this, the martyr cried out thus:

– Glory to Thee, O Christ God, that not only men but beasts die for Thee!

And the emperor withdrew from the place of the spectacle, grieved and angry, and he cast the martyr into prison. The slain men were taken by their own people and given burial, and the beasts were left to be eaten by dogs and carrion birds. But here too a great wonder came to pass: these beasts lay for many days without being touched, not only by the dogs but by the birds, and moreover their carcasses gave off no odor. Learning of this, the emperor ordered them cast into a deep ditch and covered with earth. For the martyr he ordered a terrible wheel prepared, studded with sharp spikes. When the saint was bound to it and the wheel was set turning, the wheel at once, by the action of an unseen power, flew to pieces, and it wounded to death many who stood nearby, while the martyr came down from the wheel whole and unharmed. Fear fell upon all at the sight of such wonders, by which God was glorified in the person of His saint. The emperor was greatly amazed and asked the martyr:

– Who taught you to perform such great magical deeds?

– It was not magic but true Christian piety that I was taught, said the martyr, by the holy man, the priest Hermolaus.

– And where is that teacher of yours, Hermolaus? asked the emperor. We wish to see him.

The martyr, perceiving in his spirit that the time of the martyr's crown was drawing near for Hermolaus, answered the emperor:

– If you command it, I will summon him to you.

And the saint was released, under escort of three guarding soldiers, to summon the priest Hermolaus.

When the martyr came to the house in which the priest lived, the elder, seeing him, asked:

– For what purpose have you come, my son?

– Lord and father, the emperor calls you.

– You have come to summon me at the right time, said the elder, for the hour of my suffering and death has arrived; for in this night the Lord appeared to me and declared: "Hermolaus! It behooves you to suffer much for Me, like My servant Panteleimon."

With these words the elder joyfully went with the martyr and presented himself before the emperor. The emperor, seeing the priest, asked him his name. The saint, giving his name, did not hide his faith either, loudly calling himself a Christian. The emperor asked him again:

– Is there still anyone with you of the same faith?

The elder answered:

– I have two co-workers, true servants of Christ, Hermippus and Hermocrates.

Then the emperor ordered those two also brought before him, and he said to the three servants of Christ:

– Is it you who turned Pantoleon away from our gods?

– Christ Himself, our God, they replied, calls to Himself those whom He deems worthy, leading them out of the darkness of idolatry into the light of His knowledge.

– Now leave off, proposed the emperor, your false words, and turn Pantoleon back to the gods; then your first guilt will be forgiven you, and you will receive honors from me to such a degree that you will become my closest friends in my palace.

– How can we do this, the saints asked with firmness, when we ourselves are preparing to die with him for Christ our God?! Neither we nor he will renounce Christ, much less offer sacrifice to deaf and lifeless idols.

Having said this, they turned all their thoughts to God and began to pray, lifting their eyes to heaven. And from on high the Savior appeared to them, and at once an earthquake occurred and that place was shaken.

– You see how the gods have been angered against you, proclaimed the emperor; they are shaking the earth!

– You have spoken the truth, the saints agreed, that the earth has been shaken because of your gods, for they fell from their places to the

ground and were broken, cast down by the power of our God, who is angered against you!

While they were speaking thus, a messenger ran to the emperor from the temple with the report that all their idols had fallen to the earth and crumbled to dust. The frenzied ruler, seeing in all this not the power of God but the sorcery of the Christians, cried out:

– Truly, if we do not destroy these sorcerers at once, the whole city will perish because of them.

He ordered Panteleimon to be led to prison, and, after subjecting Hermolaus the elder and his two friends to many tortures, condemned them to be beheaded with the sword. And so the three holy martyrs, the priest Hermolaus and his co-workers Hermippus and Hermocrates, having completed their martyr's contest, together presented themselves to the Holy Trinity in heavenly glory.

After the slaying of the three holy martyrs, the emperor, having ordered the holy Panteleimon brought before him, addressed him with these words:

– I have turned many from Christ to our gods; you alone will not listen to me. Your teacher Hermolaus with both his friends has also bowed down to the gods and offered sacrifice to them, and I honored them with high rank in my palace. Do you likewise, so that you may receive the same honor with them.

The martyr, knowing in his spirit that the saints had departed, asked the emperor:

– Command them to come here, that I may see them before you.

– They are not here now, lied the emperor, for I have sent them to another city, where they will receive great riches.

– You have against your will uttered the truth, the saint explained to him; you have sent them from here, delivering them to death, and they have indeed departed to the heavenly city of Christ to receive riches which the eye cannot behold.

The emperor, seeing that the martyr could in no way be turned to impiety, ordered him cruelly beaten, and after subjecting him to grievous wounds, he condemned him to death, that his head should be cut off

with the sword, and he commanded that his body be given to the fire. And the soldiers, taking him, led him outside the city to the beheading.

The saint, going to death, sang the psalm of David: "Many have oppressed me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed against me. The plowmen plowed upon my back" (Ps. 128:2–3). And so on to the end of that psalm.

When the soldiers had led the martyr from the city a distance of more than one stade, they came to the place where it pleased the Lord that His servant should die; they bound Panteleimon to an olive tree, and the executioner, drawing near, struck the saint with his sword upon the neck, but the iron bent like wax, and the saint's body did not receive the blow, for he had not yet finished his prayer.

The soldiers cried out in terror:

– Great is the Christian God!

And falling at the saint's feet, they begged:

– We beseech you, servant of God! Pray for us, that our sins may be forgiven, which we have done to you at the emperor's command.

While the saint was praying, a voice was heard from heaven, addressed to him and confirming his renaming; for the Lord, instead of Pantoleon, called him Panteleimon, openly bestowing upon him the grace to show mercy to all who take refuge in him in every kind of misfortune and sorrow; and the Lord summoned him to heaven. The saint, filled with joy, ordered the soldiers to strike off his head with the sword; but they did not wish to, because they feared, and trembling fell upon them. Then the saint addressed them with these words:

– If you do not carry out what has been entrusted to you, you will not receive mercy from my Christ.

The soldiers approached and first kissed his whole body; then they entrusted the task to one of them, and he cut off the martyr's head, and instead of blood milk flowed. The olive tree, from that very moment, was covered with fruit from root to crown. Seeing this, many of the people who were present at the beheading believed in Christ.

The wonders displayed here were reported to the emperor, and he ordered that the olive tree be immediately cut into pieces and burned together with the martyr's body.

When the fire went out, the faithful took the saint's body from the ashes, unharmed by the fire, and buried it with honor in the nearby land of the scholasticus Adamantius.

Lawrence, Vassoy and Provian, who served in the martyr's household, followed him at a distance, saw all his sufferings and heard the voice from heaven that spoke to him, wrote an account of his life and sufferings and handed it down to the holy churches in memory of the martyr, for the benefit of those who read and hear it, to the glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto ages of ages. Amen.[4905]

Troparion, Tone 3:

O holy Passion-bearer and healer Panteleimon, entreat the merciful God that He grant forgiveness of transgressions to our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 5:

Being an imitator of the Merciful One, and having received from Him the grace of healings, O Passion-bearer and Martyr of Christ God, heal by thy prayers the infirmities of our souls, driving away the temptations of the ever-warring adversary from those who faithfully cry out: Save us, O Lord.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Abbess Anthusa

Память преподобной игумении Анфисы

St. Anthusa (more correctly, Anthousa) labored in the eighth century, in the lands of Mantinea, in Asia. Leaving her parental home, she first labored in solitude, in caves. Meeting the elder Sisinnius, she continued her ascetic labors under his guidance and so advanced in the spiritual life that ninety maidens entrusted themselves to her direction. The Venerable Anthusa suffered for the veneration of the holy icons. To the wife of the persecutor Constantine Copronymus she foretold the birth of a boy and a girl. The latter, under the name An-

thousa, likewise became renowned for her holiness and is commemorated by the Church on April 12.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the repose of the Blessed Nicholas, Fool-for-Christ, of Kochanov, in Great Novgorod, in the year 1392.

NOTES

4901. Bithynia is a region in the northwest of Asia Minor, lying along the shores of the Black Sea, the Bosphorus and the Strait of Constantinople. This country has been known since remote antiquity, and it received its name from the Bithynians, who had migrated into it from Thrace. Bithynia was picturesque, fertile and rich in cattle. In 546 B.C. the Bithynians fell under the power of the Persians, but from 327 Bithynia again became an independent state; in 75 B.C., by the testament of King Nicomedes III, Bithynia passed to the Romans, with the status of an independent province governed by a special proconsul. Christianity appeared in Bithynia in apostolic times (1 Pet. 1:1). In the time of Pliny the Younger, who governed Bithynia, and of the emperor Trajan (98–117 A.D.), there were very many Christians here, not only in the cities but also in the villages and hamlets. Under Diocletian (284–305 A.D.) there was a terrible persecution of Christians in Bithynia. In the fourth and fifth centuries Bithynia was especially notable in the ecclesiastical respect: many church councils were held here on account of various heresies.

4905. St. Panteleimon was beheaded on 27 July 305. The Menologion of Basil states that the blood and milk which flowed from the saint at his beheading were preserved until the tenth century and gave healing to the faithful; this is also recorded in the Greek verse prologue of the twelfth century. The memory of St. Panteleimon was from ancient times especially venerated in the East; the churches built in his name at Sebasteia in Armenia and at Constantinople date from the fourth century. His relics were translated to Constantinople; from there the greater part of them was transferred to Paris, to Saint-Denis, and his head, supposedly, to Lyons in 802. However, the Russian pilgrim Antony saw his head in Hagia Sophia at Constantinople in 1200, and according to the testimony of Stephen of Novgorod (1350), in the fourteenth century the relics of St. Panteleimon rested in the Blachernae church at Constantinople. Part of the relics is now in the Athonite Monastery of St. Panteleimon.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF JULY

July 28

28 июля

New Calendar July 28 · Old Calendar August 10 (civil dates)

Holy Apostles (of the Seventy) Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, and Parmenas

Святые Апостолы (из семидесяти) Прохор, Никанор, Тимон и Пармен

After the Ascension of the Lord, and after the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, the number of believers in Jerusalem increased greatly; therefore, at the counsel of the Apostles who were then in Jerusalem, seven men were chosen, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:5), for the diaconal service. The names of these men were as follows: Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch. Concerning their election itself, the Book of the Acts of the Apostles relates thus:

"In those days, when the disciples were multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution of necessities. Then the Twelve, calling together the multitude of the disciples, said: It is not fitting that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, choose out from among you seven men of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicholas a proselyte of Antioch; whom they set before the Apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. And the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples was multiplied greatly in Jerusalem" (Acts 6:1–7).

Of all these chosen men, the memory of the holy first martyr Stephen is honored on the twenty-seventh day of the month of December; the memory of St. Philip is observed on the eleventh day of the month of October; but the memory of the other deacons, with the exception of Nicholas, who was not numbered among the saints[1], the holy Church honors together on this present day, although they died at different times and in different places, preaching the name of Christ and sealing their preaching with a martyr's death.

St. Prochorus at first accompanied the holy chief Apostle Peter (even before the Dormition of the Mother of God) together with the other disciples; by this same Apostle Peter St. Prochorus was ordained bishop of the city of Nicomedia in Bithynia, as the blessed Symeon Metaphrastes[4907] relates in the narrative of the life and labors of the holy Apostle Peter (under June 29). After the Dormition of the Mother of God, Prochorus was the companion and fellow-worker of the holy Apostle John the Theologian; together with him Prochorus traversed many countries, everywhere enduring sufferings from the pagans for the preaching of the name of Christ; together with John the Theologian, Prochorus was banished to the island of Patmos; here he wrote down everything he heard from the holy John the Theologian, who spoke by divine revelation[2]; after this St. Prochorus labored again in Nicomedia, where he was the first bishop; here he converted pagans to Christ, increasing the newly gathered Church. St. Prochorus died a martyr's death, having been slain by pagans in the city of Antioch for preaching the name of Christ[4909].

St. Nicanor suffered on the same day on which the holy first martyr Stephen was stoned; at that time a cruel persecution was raised against

1. Some church writers (St. Irenaeus of Lyons, St. Epiphanius of Cyprus, Blessed Jerome and others) consider the Deacon Nicholas to be the founder and leader of the sect of the Nicolaitans, whom the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian denounces in the Apocalypse (2:6,15). It is supposed that the Deacon Nicholas misunderstood the teaching of Christ about love and Christian freedom, and was a preacher of unrestrained carnal love. However, Clement of Alexandria testifies that the Deacon Nicholas led a strict and pious life, had a wife and children, and that his daughters grew old in virginity. His words, "The flesh must be used for evil," that is, one must disregard the flesh, not prize it, and restrain it, were falsely understood by the sectarians; Nicholas himself, as a strict ascetic, was far from such errors."

the Church of Jerusalem; St. Nicanor, like the first martyr Stephen, was put to death together with two thousand people who had believed in Christ. The manner of his slaying is mentioned in the canon, that he was as a lamb offered in sacrifice to God[3].

St. Timon was ordained bishop of the city of Bostra, which was in Arabia, by the holy Apostles; for preaching the name of Christ he suffered much both from the Jews and from the pagans; at last he was cast into a heavily heated furnace, but he was in no way harmed by the fire and came out of the furnace unhurt. The tradition of the Roman Church adds that St. Timon, having come out of the furnace unharmed, was put to death by crucifixion[4].

St. Parmenas zealously performed the ministry entrusted to him by the holy Apostles; he died before their eyes, and was buried by their hands and mourned by them. Some, however, maintain that he suffered before his death and was adorned with the martyr's crown[5].

Kontakion, Tone 1:

O ye honorable deacons and eyewitnesses of the Word, chosen vessels of the faith, ye were revealed, Nicanor, Prochorus, Parmenas, and Timon, renowned ones; wherefore today we celebrate your holy memory, blessing you with joy of heart.

* * *

Commemoration of the holy martyr Eustathius

Память святого мученика Евстафия

The holy martyr of Christ Eustathius served in the army. Since he was a Christian, he was seized and brought before the governor of the city of Ancyra[6], Cornelius. At the interrogation he boldly con-

2. According to tradition, St. Prochorus wrote down the Gospel from the words of St. John the Theologian.
3. Canticles 4, 6 and 7.
4. The memory of the holy Apostle Timon is still celebrated by the Church on December 30 and January 4.
5. According to the opinion of some scholars, the holy Apostle Parmenas preached the Gospel in Macedonia. His martyr's death is referred to the reign of the emperor Trajan (98–117), and specifically to the last years of his reign.

fessed Christ, and for this he was first mercilessly beaten, then his heels were pierced, and then, binding a rope to him, they dragged him from the city of Ancyra to the river Sagka[7], the governor walking behind him and watching; and at last they placed him in a chest and cast it into the river. But at this time, by the will of God, an Angel of the Lord appeared and carried the chest from the river to dry ground. The saint was found alive, and while in the chest he sang: "He that dwelleth in the shelter of the Most High" (Ps. 90:1) and the rest. Seeing this, the governor felt himself put to shame, and drawing his sword, he killed himself. Meanwhile the holy martyr prayed to God, received the Divine Mysteries from the hands of the Angel who had appeared—the Mysteries having been brought to him from heaven by a dove—and after this yielded up his spirit into the hands of the Lord[8]. His honorable relics were buried in the city of Ancyra.

* * *

Commemoration of the holy martyr Acacius

Память святого мученика Акакия

The holy martyr of Christ Acacius suffered in the reign of Licinius[9], to whom he had been delivered for judgment. For confessing Christ, Licinius commanded that he be hanged and that his body be scraped, and then sent him on to the eparch[10] Terentius. The latter ordered him to be cast into a cauldron filled with pitch and tallow, but he remained entirely unharmed. When the eparch was to set out for

6. The city of Ancyra is located in the Roman province of Galatia in Asia Minor.
7. By the name Sakgi is meant here the river Sangarius. It takes its source in the province of Phrygia, bordering Galatia, flows through Galatia and Bithynia, and empties into the Euxine Pontus, now the Black Sea.
8. The holy martyr Eustathius died about 316.
9. Licinius, who governed the eastern part of the Roman Empire from 311, was the successor of the cruel persecutor of Christians Maximian Galerius. In 311 he together with Constantine the Great issued a law in favor of the Christians, but afterwards, when unpleasant relations arose between him and Constantine, based on the question of whether the empire should have two rulers or one, he, suspecting the Christians of sympathy for Constantine, began first to oppress them and then to persecute them. This continued until 323; in the war with Constantine, Licinius was killed.
10. In the Graeco-Roman regions, the rulers of provinces were called eparchs.

Apamea and Apollonia[11], he commanded St. Acacius to follow him. In one of these cities he was brought into a pagan temple, and by the power of prayer he overthrew all the idols that were in that temple. After this the eparch delivered him for judgment to a tribune[12], by whose command he was first severely beaten, then fought with wild beasts, and at last was cast into a furnace, but remained unharmed. The tribune, thinking that the furnace was cold, approached it, wishing to make sure of this, but he himself was burned, and his body was reduced to ashes. After the death of the tribune the saint was given over for judgment to Posidonius, who commanded that heavy fetters be placed upon him and that he be led to Miletus[13], where he again overthrew the idols. For this they cut off his head[14], and from the wound there flowed blood and milk. A certain presbyter, Leontius, buried his body in the city of Synnada[15].

* * *

Suffering of the holy martyr Julian

Страдание святого мученика Иулиана

In the reign of the emperor Antoninus[16], the pagans compelled Christians to offer sacrifices to the gods; otherwise the pagans threatened the Christians with cruel tortures and with death itself. In the province of Campania[17] at that time the hegemon was a certain Flavian, a man most cruel; this hegemon hated the name of Christ.

The hegemon Flavian sent throughout the whole province of Campania his impious servants, commanding them to take all the Christians

11. The cities of Apamea and Apollonia were located in the Roman province of Phrygia in Asia Minor, near its southeastern border with Pisidia.
12. In the Roman Empire, various officials were called tribunes, especially military commanders over a thousand soldiers.
13. Miletus was a seaport city in the Roman province of Caria in Asia Minor.
14. The holy martyr Acacius died about 321.
15. The city of Synnada was located in Asia Minor, in the Roman province of Phrygia.
16. Antoninus Pius governed the Roman Empire from 138 to 161.

they met and to bring them to the city of Atina, where he himself was at that time.

At this time there came into Campania from Dalmatia[18] a certain man, young in years but old in conduct and in Christian wisdom; beautiful even in body, but still more beautiful in grace and holiness; honorable by birth, but still more honorable in faith. The name of this man was Julian. As Julian was passing near the city of Anagnia, he happened upon the soldiers of the hegemon. Julian gave them the Christian greeting, saying:

"Peace to you, brethren!"

The soldiers, however, guessing from these words and from the whole gentle bearing of the saint that he was a Christian, began to ask him who he was and whence he came, what his name was, and what faith he professed.

The servant of God Julian, desiring to suffer and die for the name of Christ, answered fearlessly:

"I am a Christian; my name is Julian; I come from Dalmatia; I am journeying in these lands, everywhere exhorting people to renounce the worship of idols and to believe in the one true God, and in His Son our Lord Jesus Christ; I exhort people to honor Him of whom I preach and for whose sake I am ready to lay down my life."

The soldiers were greatly astonished at the saint's so courageous answer; nevertheless, they seized him, bound him tightly, and led him away, striking him with clubs and weapons and saying:

"Let us see how true your words are, that you desire to die for the Crucified One!"

Enduring the blows, the saint prayed to God, asking Him to give him strength to endure the sufferings to the end for His holy name.

17. Campania was a province in ancient Italy, bounded on the west by Latium, on the north by Samnium, on the east by Lucania, and on the south and southwest by the Tyrrhenian Sea. Ancient authors praise its blessed climate and the fertility of its soil, which allowed three sowings and harvests a year. Here there were many vineyards, olive groves and timber forests. The inhabitants of Campania (pagans) were known for their effeminacy and love of luxury.

And the prayer of St. Julian was heard by God, for a voice came down which strengthened the saint and said:

"Fear not, Julian! I will be with you and will give you strength and courage."

Then the holy youth offered thanks to the merciful God, after which he was led to the hegemon and by his command was shut up in a terrible dungeon called the "Cold Ditch." In this dungeon the saint was kept for seven days without food or drink, the authorities thinking to destroy him by hunger and thirst.

But God did not forsake His servant, for He sent to him a holy Angel. The prisoner of Christ rejoiced in beholding and conversing with this Angel, receiving heavenly food from his hands.

Seven days later the governor came out to the public court (on this spot a church was afterwards built in the name of the Most Pure Theotokos) and seated himself in the judgment place in the presence of a great crowd of people; then he commanded that the martyr be brought before him for interrogation. When the saint had been led to the governor, the latter asked him:

"Are you not ashamed, being so handsome and honorable a youth, to worship some obscure Nazarene who was crucified on a cross? Would it not be better for you to renounce this wicked faith? Worship our gods, and then the emperor will show you mercy."

The martyr answered:

"My glory and my praise is Christ crucified, my God; and I desire to boast of nothing else but the Cross of my Lord. As for the holy faith which you call wicked, I am ready to die for it. But your gods are truly abominable, for they are demons; let all who worship them be put to shame."

After these words of the saint, the governor flew into a rage and commanded that the saint be struck on the mouth and tormented, stretched upon the torture-wood.

18. Dalmatia was a Roman province in antiquity. Dalmatia lies in a narrow strip along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea; it borders Croatia to the north, Bosnia and Herzegovina to the east, and Montenegro to the south. Dalmatia came under Roman rule in 6 A.D.; from that time it, together with Illyricum, became an imperial province. The inhabitants of Dalmatia belonged to the Illyrian tribe and were engaged in hunting, agriculture and cattle-breeding.

The saint, enduring the blows, prayed to God, saying thus:

"In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; save me by Thy power. Thou art my God, my helper, my refuge and my deliverer; let all who worship idols and who devise evil against me be put to shame. To Thee, O Lord, do I cry: deliver me not into the power of my enemies."

And again a voice from heaven was sent to the saint, strengthening him and saying:

"Fear not! Struggle manfully!"

Then the martyr of Christ, turning to the people, said:

"Hear me, wretched ones! Do not place your hope in gods whom you have made with your own hands; know the God who created heaven and earth out of nothing."

Exhorting the people with such words, St. Julian turned to Christ more than thirty men; then he was again led back to prison.

On the next morning the saint was again brought out to the court. The governor said to him these words:

"I would wish to spare you, though you do not spare yourself and do not wish to worship the invincible gods."

To these words the holy martyr answered:

"It is in vain that you say this to me; you will not change my thoughts. I worship the God whom all must worship. This God created heaven and earth."

The governor Flavian was angered by these words of the saint and commanded that Julian be hung upon the torture-wood and that the saint be racked with blows and scraped with iron. But by the power of God, wondrous in His saints, the hands of the tormentors grew weak and ached, so that they not only could not touch the saint, but could not even hold the instruments of torture in their hands, and in general could do nothing.

While the governor was greatly astonished at this, a messenger arrived to announce that the temple of their god, called Serapis[19], had fallen and that the idol of that god, together with the other idols, had turned to dust.

The governor and his demonic servants were struck with great amazement at this news and were filled with shame; but the Christians who were among the people and who confessed the holy faith in secret rejoiced in their souls and glorified Christ God.

Then the pagans standing near that place cried out aloud:

"Let this sorcerer be destroyed as quickly as possible!"

The governor, filled with anger and malice, at once gave his consent to the demand of the people and delivered the martyr to death, announcing his decision in these words:

"We command that Julian, who has been taught by the Christians the magical cunning, the reviler of the gods, the disobeyer of the imperial command, be beheaded with the sword; and we command that he be beheaded in the place where the temple has been destroyed, that vengeance may be taken for the dishonor done to our gods."

And the saint was led to that place.

Arriving there, the saint knelt and prayed to God in these words:

"O boundless goodness of God! I thank Thee, O God, that Thou hast granted me, unworthy as I am, so honorable a death as death for Thy holy name. And I pray Thee: wash me by this very shedding of my blood, cleanse me of my sins and lead me into Thy blessed Kingdom. Receive my spirit in peace. Do not forget in Thy mercy also all those who desire, for the glory of Thy most holy name, to honor the memory of my sufferings."

After the saint had prayed in these words, a voice was heard from heaven, assuring that his prayer had been heard and calling the saint to the heavenly places. And the holy martyr Julian was beheaded[20]. His holy soul, separated from the flesh, ascended into heaven to Christ our

19. Serapis was properly a deity of the Egyptians. Serapis was regarded by the Egyptians as the supreme god, just as Zeus was regarded as the chief god by the Greeks and Romans. The worship of Serapis was not confined to Egypt; in the 2nd century B.C. the cult (worship) of Serapis penetrated into Greece and Rome. The cult of Serapis was especially favored by the emperor Nero and by Antoninus Pius, who is mentioned in the Life. In Rome there existed several temples dedicated to Serapis, and there were also many inscriptions and monuments bearing the name of this god.

20. The exact year of Julian's death is unknown. The time of the saint's death should be placed in the middle of the 2nd century.

God, who reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, to whom glory is offered, now and always and unto endless ages. Amen.

* * *

NOTES

4907. Symeon Metaphrastes was the most renowned church writer of the 10th century; he was born in Constantinople; he served as secretary to the emperor Leo the Philosopher and Constantine VII; he performed important diplomatic commissions; he saved the city of Thessalonica from the destruction with which the Arabs threatened that city in 904, by persuading their leader to accept a monetary ransom for the city; toward the end of his life he was a patrician and magister. For his pious life he was counted by the holy Church among the saints (his memory is celebrated by the Church on November 27). Symeon Metaphrastes became very famous for his church-historical works; he compiled (or, more correctly, gathered) the "Lives of the Saints"; but in doing so St. Symeon did not limit himself to merely collecting the ancient accounts of the lives, exploits and sufferings of the saints, but retold or re-composed them; hence his surname "Metaphrastes" (from the Greek, to retell, to re-compose).

4909. According to the opinion of some scholars, two persons bearing the name Prochorus should be distinguished: 1) Prochorus the deacon, companion of St. Apostle Peter and afterwards bishop of Nicomedia. This Prochorus suffered for confessing the name of Christ in Antioch on August 9. 2) Prochorus, who lived later, a disciple and companion of the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian. This Prochorus is considered the compiler of the narrative about the life and miracles of the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, from the Dormition of the Mother of God to his own death. It is thought that it is precisely this Prochorus who is depicted in ancient icons as a scribe (copyist of the Gospel). However, we cannot assert with certainty that two persons named Prochorus should be distinguished; perhaps Prochorus the deacon and Prochorus the companion of the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian are one person, as St. Demetrius of Rostov accepts.



THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF JULY

July 29

29 июля

New Calendar July 29 · Old Calendar August 11 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Serafima, a Virgin

Страдание святой мученицы девицы Серафимы

In the days of the terrible persecutions raised up by the impious Roman emperors, many believers suffered for Christ in various torments. At that time, in the village of Vindenae, in the house of a certain woman named Savina, who was of noble lineage, there dwelt the virgin Serafima, a citizen of Antioch. By her teaching she also brought Savina to the faith of Christ.

The hegemon Beryllus sent his servants to the house of Savina with an order to take the holy virgin Serafima and bring her before him for judgment. The blessed Savina resisted this and with all her strength endeavored to prevent the messengers from seizing the virgin. But the holy Serafima said to her:

"My lady and mother! Let me go with them. Only pray earnestly to God for me. I trust in my Lord Jesus Christ and believe that He will come to me and give me strength to serve Him faithfully, though I am unworthy of this because of my sins."

The blessed Savina nevertheless did not dare to let the holy virgin go with the impious servants of the hegemon, and went with her to the hegemon herself. Since by her birth she belonged to the famous senatorial family, the hegemon, seeing her before him, was confused and hastened to send her home together with the holy Serafima.

Three days passed. The hegemon gave orders to set up a court in the place where judgment ordinarily took place, and commanded the city governors to bring Serafima. The impious officials seized the holy virgin and led her to judgment. The blessed Savina again followed after

her. Seeing that there was no possibility of freeing Serafima from the hands of her enemies, she cried out to the hegemon:

"Savage Asiatic dog! Do not dare to do evil to the holy virgin of God. You yourself will perish, for Christ our God is with us, and He will punish you and your impious emperors with eternal torments for the many sufferings which you have devised for the servants of the living God."

Having said this, Savina returned to her house in tears.

Then the hegemon addressed Serafima with these words:

"Offer sacrifice to the immortal gods, whom our emperors also worship."

Serafima answered:

"I reverence and serve the Almighty God, who created heaven and earth and all that is in them. Those whom you command me to worship are not gods but demons; it is not fitting for me to honor them, for I am a Christian."

The hegemon said to her:

"Then go and offer your Christ that very sacrifice which is prepared for our gods."

Seraphima answered:

"Every day I offer Him sacrifice; I worship Him and pray to Him both by day and by night."

Then the hegemon asked:

"Where is the church of your Christ? What sacrifice do you offer Him?"

Serafima answered:

"The sacrifice pleasing to Christ consists in my keeping my virginity unblemished in purity, and, with His almighty help, bringing others also to this struggle."

The hegemon said:

"Is this your church and your sacrifice?"

Serafima answered:

"There is nothing higher than the knowledge of the true God and the service of Him alone by a pious life."

The hegemon said:

"Are you not then yourself, as you say, the church of your God?"

Serafima answered:

"Since I preserve myself unblemished by the almighty help of my God, I am truly His church. In our Holy Scripture it is said: 'You are the temple of the living God' (2 Cor. 6:16)."

The hegemon asked:

"But if you were violated and your virginity defiled, would you then remain the church of your God?"

To this Serafima replied with the words of Holy Scripture:

"If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him" (1 Cor. 3:16–17).

But the hegemon did not understand these words and ordered that Serafima be handed over to two shameless youths, natives of Egypt, that they might remain with her the whole night. These impious youths took her and led her into a dark chamber. The holy virgin prayed to the Lord with tenderness:

"Lord Jesus Christ, true keeper and guardian of my virginity, I call upon Thee for help! To Thee I cry, O light and eternal joy! Thou who visited and strengthened Thine Apostle Paul imprisoned in the dungeon, look also upon me and have mercy on Thy humble servant. Deliver me from the impure lust of these youths. I beseech Thee, let their eyes be darkened, and let them not touch Thy servant who trusts in Thee! Let them not defile my body, which is sealed by Thy holiness. Shame their shamelessness, and do not permit my defilement; command that I may soon depart to Thee. Look also upon Thy servant Savina, O good Jesus, and strengthen her by Thy power, lest the fierce enemy the devil triumph, for she too has suffered much in my cause. Hear me, Lord Jesus Christ, blessed and most glorious, and glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto ages of ages. Amen."

And behold, at the first hour of the night, when the impious youths were about to commit their shameful deed, suddenly a great noise arose and a terrible earthquake began, which was heard by all the neighboring inhabitants. The youths fell to the ground as if lifeless, and all their limbs became paralyzed. Seeing such swift help of God, the pure virgin, lifting her hands to heaven, gave thanks to the Lord with tears and

spent the whole night in prayer. Early in the morning messengers came from the hegemon to ask whether the youths had accomplished their desire. Entering the chamber, they saw that the holy virgin was praying, while the youths lay as dead, having no strength either to rise or to say anything; only their open eyes showed that they were still alive. A multitude of people gathered to see this miracle. Hearing of what had happened, the hegemon again commanded that the servant of God Seraphima be brought before him for judgment, and said to her:

"Has your carnal desire been satisfied, Serafima, or are you still inflamed with lust?"

The holy Serafima answered:

"You, as I see, have a corrupt heart, and the devil dwells in it; therefore you blaspheme so. But I did not know those youths of whom you speak, and I did not even perceive whether they were with me."

The hegemon said:

"So you maintain that they did not spend the whole night with you?"

Serafima answered:

"With me was He whom I serve as a slave and who acquired me by His own blood."

The hegemon asked:

"Who is this?"

Serafima answered:

"My keeper and guardian, the Lord Jesus Christ."

The hegemon said:

"Why do you speak so much that is improper? Tell rather, by what sorcery did you bring those youths into paralysis?"

The holy Serafima answered:

"We Christians ought not to learn sorcery; but those whom you kill by your wicked sorcery, our Lord and Master of all, Jesus Christ, restores to life when they call upon His help."

The hegemon said:

"If your Christ can overcome all magical craft, then call upon Him that He may restore to these youths their former bodily strength. Then we can learn from them themselves what they did with you all night. I

myself am almost certain that by some evil sorcery you deprived them of their reason, so that they cannot declare your impurity."

Serafima answered:

"The God whom I serve is almighty, and nothing is impossible for Him."

The hegemon said:

"Then do it: let the youths come to their senses, let their health return, and let them be able to speak."

Serafima answered:

"You still think that I am a sorceress. But I know nothing of magical craft at all. I offer my prayers to my God, by which He grants what is asked not to me alone, but to everyone who calls upon Him with all his heart."

The hegemon said:

"Do what you wish, only let the youths regain the power of speech, and we shall learn whether you have preserved your virginity."

Serafima answered:

"I have already told you that I do not know sorcery; I can only beseech God to show His mercy."

The hegemon said:

"Go then to the place where the youths are, and pray for them to your God."

Serafima answered:

"It is not fitting for me to go there, for then others would be deprived of the opportunity to see this miracle, and in their unbelief they would also think of me, as you do, that I am a sorceress. Rather, order the lifeless youths to be brought here."

The hegemon gave orders to bring the youths to the place of judgment. When they were brought, all were astonished at the sight of them. They were in such great paralysis that they seemed to have neither tongue, nor hands, nor feet.

The hegemon said:

"Serafima! Now pray to your God that the youths may recover."

Then the holy Seraphima, lifting her hands to heaven, began to pray with tenderness:

"Almighty Lord God! Thou hast made heaven, earth and sea, and all that is in them. Through Thy disciples and Apostles Thou didst raise the dead, heal the lepers, give speech to the dumb and hearing to the deaf. Hear now me, Thy servant, who trust in Thee. Do not despise my prayer, and do not turn away from me because of the unbelief of this unhappy ruler, but grant healing to these youths before the eyes of all who wait for this miracle. Let the madman be put to shame, who, roused by fury, raised persecution against those who believe in Thee. Hasten, O Lord, to show Thy power, that they may know that Thou alone art God who workest miracles, and there is none other beside Thee."

Having prayed thus, the holy Serafima went up to the youths, and touching them, cried out:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I command you: rise to your feet!"

The youths immediately stood up and began to speak. Seeing this, all were struck with terror and marveled.

But the hegemon said:

"Did you not notice that she could not perform her magical trick until she had touched the youths with her hands?"

After this he turned to the youths and asked:

"How could this woman deprive you of your reason and bodily strength?"

The youths answered:

"Lord Hegemon! When at your command we entered her presence, suddenly there appeared a youth, beautiful and shining all over like the sun. He stood between us and the maiden. From the extraordinary radiance of his brightness there came upon us fear, trembling, darkness, and complete weakness. From that hour until now we have remained in this condition. Judge for yourself now whether she is a sorceress, or whether her God is truly great."

The Hegemon turned to Seraphima and said:

"Explain to me, Seraphima, by what cunning you did this, and I will release you at once."

Seraphima answered:

"I have hated the evil teaching, and all Christians can drive away every sorcery and enchantment, and experience no harm from them, if only they call upon the name of their Lord."

The Hegemon said to her:

"I see how much you can accomplish by your incantations; nevertheless, this is what I say to you: if you do not offer sacrifice to my gods, I will order your head to be cut off."

Seraphima replied:

"Do what pleases you, but I will not offer sacrifice to your demons, nor fulfil the will of Satan your father, for I am a Christian."

Then the Hegemon commanded that her body be scorched with two candles. But the candles suddenly went out, and those who were scorching her fell to the ground. St. Seraphima, lifting her eyes to heaven, said:

"Lord Jesus Christ, let all my enemies be put to shame and confounded."

The Hegemon said to her:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, that you may not die in torments."

Seraphima answered:

"It is for this very reason that I do not offer sacrifice to your demons: that I may not die the eternal death."

The Hegemon said to her:

"Mad and raving woman! Obey the imperial commands, bow down to the immortal gods, and you will free yourself from torments and destruction."

Seraphima answered:

"It is you yourselves who are possessed by demons and are mad, for you renounce the living and true God and worship demons, with whom you will perish. But I offer myself as a sacrifice to the immortal God, if only He may be graciously pleased to accept me, sinful though I am, yet a true Christian."

Then the Hegemon ordered her to be beaten with rods. When this had been done, suddenly a great earthquake arose. From one of the rods with which the saint was beaten a fragment broke off and struck the Hegemon in his right eye, and after three days he was blinded.

Then the Hegemon fell into great fury and issued this decree:

"Seraphima, who not only despises the imperial commandments but is also guilty of great crimes, we command to be put to death by the sword."

And the holy virgin Seraphima was beheaded.

The noble Savina, taking her holy body with great reverence, performed its burial with honors befitting such a virgin and martyr of Christ, and, as a great treasure and most precious pearl, laid it in her new tomb, offering praise to Christ, the true God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Passion of St. Callinicus the Martyr

Страдание святого мученика Каллиника

St. Callinicus the Martyr was born in Cilicia and was brought up in Christian piety. Having reached mature age, Callinicus saw how many people adhered to pagan impiety; darkened by demonic delusion, they were far from the Lord Christ, believed in lifeless stones, and offered sacrifices to idols. Callinicus wept bitterly over the perdition of these people, and resolved to begin openly teaching them the knowledge of the truth, so that they might turn from their error and believe in Christ God. Preaching the word of God, like the Apostles, Callinicus passed through many cities and villages, and at last arrived in the Galatian city of Ancyra. He remained in this city for a fairly long time. Caring for the salvation of human souls and laboring in the preaching of Christ, he converted many to Christ. For this he was seized by the unbelievers and brought to judgment before the prince Sacerdon. Sacerdon was a most zealous servant of the idols, an enemy of Christ, and a fierce persecutor of Christians. When they brought Callinicus before him, the impious cried out:

"Here is the foreigner Callinicus, who teaches people not to offer sacrifices to the gods nor to worship them, and he has already seduced many."

Looking at the saint with fury, the prince began to interrogate him sternly:

"How did you dare, madman, being a stranger here, to corrupt the people, teaching them to forsake the gods who created the world and whom the emperor, and all the authorities, and the whole universe honor? Do you not know their power?"

The saint answered him meekly:

"I am a servant of Christ. Seeing how people go to perdition, I grieve for them in my heart, and as far as I can I strive by good teaching to turn them from darkness to light, and from perdition to salvation. For it is written in our books: 'He who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins' (Jas. 5:20). I would also wish to bring you to the light from the demonic darkening that holds you, and to set you on the true path."

The prince, filled with wrath, said:

"Do you really wish and think that I should reject the gods and, listening to your mad words, prefer bitter death to a blessed life? No, never! On the contrary, I will persuade you, even against your will, to bow down to our gods. For I will deliver you to cruel tortures, and then I will see whether your God comes to deliver you from my power. I will not spare your body until you come to know the power and authority of the gods, and offer sacrifice to them."

The saint courageously answered Sacerdon:

"Every torment for the sake of my Lord is as desirable to me as food to a hungry man. Do not delay, then, nor waste time on threats, but begin in deed your tormenting. Here is my body: it is ready for torments. But in my soul is God Himself, who will prepare salvation for me, and destruction for you."

Still more enraged, the prince said:

"Wretch! How dare you vex me with such speeches? I swear by the gods that I will not spare you, but will flay your body from the bones, and devise every torment for you until you perish a cruel death."

The saint answered:

"Most vile of all the impious! How long will you vainly waste time in your fury and not proceed to the deed? Hand me over to torment, and learn the courage and magnanimity of Christ's athlete, who awaits receiving the victor's crown from his Savior."

Then the tormentor ordered the martyr to be stripped and beaten without mercy with ox sinews. For a long time they beat the saint, while a herald cried out:

"Callinicus, acknowledge the gods and call upon them, and they will deliver you from torments!"

But the holy martyr laughed at the tormentor and the torments, and said loudly:

"You threatened me with great torments, and you inflict the weakest tortures. Inflict great wounds on me, subject me to the most cruel torment; for I fear neither fire nor do I dread the sword, I laugh at death, since I await eternal life from my God."

Then the prince commanded that the passion-bearer be hung on a tree and his body scraped with iron nails. Thus they scraped his flesh down to the bones.

But the saint continued to laugh at this torturing, as though it were not his own body but another's that was being subjected to torment, and said to the prince:

"Command them to scrape me still harder, for the more you scrape my body, the more you feed my soul: Christ helps me; strengthened by His grace, I feel no pain from the torments."

After that the tormentor ordered that the sufferer of Christ be taken down from the tree, shod in iron boots with sharp nails inside, led to the city of Gangra, eighty stadia distant from Ancyra, and burned there. He decided this because in that city Callinicus had converted very many to Christ. He thought that, seeing the martyr's death of Callinicus, these new converts would be terrified and return to their former faith. So the cruel prince delivered the warrior of Christ into the hands of his savage soldiers and gave them orders to ride on swift horses while driving the martyr before them, urging him on with blows to go faster. Shod in the iron boots with nails, the martyr walked as though not feeling pain from the nails, and sang the psalm of David: "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry; He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings" (Ps. 39:2–3).

Thus he set out on the appointed road, and went swiftly, without any compulsion, in front of the horsemen.

When they had gone sixty stadia and came to a place called Matrica, the soldiers began to suffer from thirst because of the strong heat of the sun—for it was the month of July. There was no water anywhere along the way, and the soldiers themselves were exhausted, and their horses could scarcely breathe. Then they cried out to the saint with tears:

"Servant of the true God, have mercy on us, who have despaired of our very lives. Entreat your God to give us water, that we may not die. We have heard that your God is almighty. Forget, then, the sufferings we have caused you: it was not of our own will but at the prince's command that we tormented you."

Seeing that they were dying of thirst, St. Callinicus took pity on them, and desiring to do good to his enemies, he stood beside a stone that lay on the road, and, lifting his eyes to heaven, began to pray:

"Lord of heaven and earth, and sea, and all creation! In ancient times You gave water from a rock to Moses wandering in the desert, and to the people with him. Show Your wonders now also: let water flow from this stone by Your command, and give drink to these thirsty ones, so that Your wondrous deeds may be made manifest even to those who do not know You, and Your holy name be glorified."

As soon as he finished his prayer, at once a spring of living water burst forth from the stone. All drank, quenched their thirst, and cried out loudly:

"Great is the Christian God, and glorious above all!"

From that hour this spring never ceased to give water, in unforgettable memory of the miracle of God accomplished through the prayers of the martyr.

Having cooled themselves sufficiently, the soldiers and their horses completed the rest of the journey without difficulty and arrived at Gangra. They did not wish to hand over to death their benefactor Callinicus, who had saved them from perishing on the way. But fearing that the prince, in his anger, would put them to death themselves, they carried out the prince's command. Kindling a furnace, they set the martyr

close beside the flame. He, rejoicing and exulting, made the sign of the Cross over himself and began to pray:

"O heavenly Father! I thank Thee that Thou hast deemed me worthy to die for Thy holy name. Receive my spirit in peace, and put to shame Thine enemies, O almighty God!"

With these words he entered into the very midst of the furnace blazing with fire, and, lying down, he committed his holy soul into the hands of God. When the furnace had gone out, his honorable body was found unharmed. The faithful took it and buried it with due honor, glorifying the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one God in the Trinity. To Him be honor and glory from us also, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Thou hast worthily inherited the fair things on high, for, being greatly inflamed with love for Christ, thou didst courageously brave the fire, O Callinicus. Standing now before Him, cease not to intercede for us all.

THE THIRTIETH DAY OF JULY

July 30

30 июля

New Calendar July 30 · Old Calendar August 12 (civil dates)

Holy Apostles Silas, Silvanus, Crescens and the Others with Them

Святые апостолы Сила, Силуан, Крискент и другие с ними

Holy Apostle Silas, whom the senior Apostles chose for the service of preaching the Word of God, bore great labors in proclaiming the teaching of Christ, first together with the holy chief Apostle Paul, and afterwards alone, without him. When from the Council of Jerusalem a letter was composed to the Church of Antioch, to the effect that the pagans who accepted the holy faith of Christ should not be circumcised, holy Silas was sent there together with other distinguished men, as St. Luke writes in the Acts of the Apostles:

"Then pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren" (Acts 15:22).

Arriving in Antioch, they gathered the people and delivered the letter. Having read it, all rejoiced greatly at the instruction received. Judas and Silas, being endowed with the gift of prophecy, zealously instructed the faithful, consoling and strengthening them in the faith. Silas wished to remain in Antioch, while Judas returned to Jerusalem. After this, the Apostle Paul conceived the intention of going to other countries to preach, and chose holy Silas as his companion. Commended by the brethren to the grace of God, they set out and visited Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches there. Passing through Derbe and Lystra, they met Timothy there and went on with him into Macedonia. When they were at Philippi, they cast out an inquisitive spirit from a

slave-girl who, through her prophecies, brought great profit to her masters. When the masters saw that their hope of gain was lost, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the square before the magistrates, accusing them of stirring up the inhabitants of the city. A great crowd gathered, and the magistrates, tearing the garments from Paul and Silas, ordered them to be beaten with rods. After many blows, they cast the holy Apostles into prison, fastening their feet in the stocks. At midnight, when Paul and Silas, singing, prayed to God, suddenly there occurred so great an earthquake that the prison shook, the doors opened of themselves, and the chains were loosed. The jailer awoke and, seeing the prison doors open, snatched a knife and was about to kill himself, thinking the prisoners had fled; but the Apostle Paul, calling out to him, restrained him from suicide. Trembling, the jailer fell down before Paul and Silas, then led them out of the prison and brought them to his house, where he washed their wounds, and he himself and all his household were baptized. From there the holy Apostles Paul and Silas went to Amphipolis, Apollonia and Thessalonica. Many of the Greeks and not a few noble women joined them. The Jews, however, out of envy and stubbornness, enlisting certain worthless men, stirred up the people against the Apostles and sought to destroy them. The brethren by night sent Paul and Silas away to Berea, but here too Jews who came from Thessalonica stirred up the people against the preachers of the Word of God. Therefore Paul departed to the regions by the sea, while Silas and Timothy remained there. Going after a few days, they found the holy Paul at Corinth (Acts 16:1–40, 17:1–34, 18:1–28). Here holy Silas became a bishop. Having labored a considerable time in preaching the Word of God and having wrought certain signs and miracles during his life, he departed to the Lord.

Holy Apostle Silvanus labored in preaching the Word of God together with the chief Apostles Peter and Paul; both of them mention him in their writings. Holy Peter writes in his first catholic epistle as follows:

"By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly unto you" (1 Pet. 5:12).

The holy Apostle Paul also says in his second epistle to the Corinthians:

"For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus" (2 Cor. 1:19).

From this it is clear that holy Silvanus labored with each of the chief Apostles in the preaching of the teaching of Christ, sharing in their labors and sufferings. In Thessalonica he was a bishop, and having endured many sorrows for the sake of the faith, he departed here to Christ, who crowns all struggles.

Of the holy Apostle Crescens the Apostle Paul remembers in his second epistle to Timothy, saying: "Crescens to Galatia" (2 Tim. 4:10), that is, he was sent to preach. In Galatia he was a bishop; afterwards he preached of Christ in Gaul, and in the city of Vienne he ordained his disciple Zacharias as bishop; he returned again to Galatia, and here he ended his life by martyrdom in the reign of Trajan[1].

Of the holy Apostle Epaenetus the Apostle Paul also remembers in the epistle to the Romans: "Salute my well-beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ" (Rom. 16:5). Epaenetus was a bishop in Carthage.

In the same epistle to the Romans the Apostle Paul also remembers the Apostle Andronicus: "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me" (Rom. 16:7)[4929].

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Ye have been revealed as the branches of Christ's vine, bearing clusters, O wise ones, in virtues, and pouring out for us the wine of salvation; receiving it we are filled with joy, celebrating your all-honorable memory, wherein ye pray for the forgiveness of our sins, O Apostles of the Lord.

* * *

1. Emperor, 98–117 A.D.

Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Valentine

Страдание святого священномученика Валентина

In Umbria, an Italian region, in the city called Interamna, there was a bishop, holy Valentine, who had received from God the gift of healing. He, healing all sorts of diseases and infirmities among men by prayer and by invoking the most holy name of Jesus Christ, turned unbelievers from idol-worship to God (at that time pagan polytheism still reigned in the world, and impious emperors who ruled West and East persecuted the Christians). In those days three scholastics[2], natives of Athens[3] of pagan faith, named Proculus, Ephebus and Apollonius, came to Rome for study, wishing to become better acquainted with the language and Roman learning. They found a learned teacher, experienced in both languages, Latin and Greek, named Craton; they entered his instruction and lived in his house. It happened that one of Craton's sons, named Herimon, fell gravely ill; the illness consisted in his spine being bent, his head coming to lie between his knees, so that he could in no way straighten himself. Many physicians were summoned, but they could bring no benefit to the sick youth. He suffered in this way for about three years and lost all hope of healing. Once there came to the house of Craton a tribune[4], named Fronto; seeing the sick youth, he said:

"Such an illness was in my own brother, and he received healing from a certain Christian bishop, called Valentine, who lives in the city of Interamna."

Having related this, the tribune advised Craton to send his sick son to this bishop; he said also of his brother that, having received healing, he did not wish to leave the bishop, and, drawn by his goodness, became attached to him in love. Hearing all this, Craton sent to the bishop certain honorable, faithful men devoted to him, with a request that he come to him, since it was impossible to carry a sick youth on such a journey. The man of God, for the glory of the Lord, did not hesitate to

2. Disciple.
3. In Greece.
4. Military rank.

come from his city to Rome to the man who had invited him, and he was received by him with great honor. Showing the hierarch the sick Herimon, Craton began to beg that he heal his son as he had healed the tribune's brother. Holy Valentine said:

"If thou wilt, thy son shall be healed."

"I will not spare half of my estate to give to thee, if only thou canst heal my son," answered Craton.

"I marvel," replied the saint, "that thou, being a wise teacher, dost not understand the words I have spoken. Again I say to thee, if thou desirest it, the sick one will recover, for if thou believest in my Christ, all things are possible to him that believeth. The believer is incomparably more pleasing to God than the unbeliever, who places his hope in worldly and worthless things and reveres as gods the images of evil men who once lived, made of wood, stone, or some other substance. How is it possible to allow that they are gods who, being immersed in evil deeds and practicing cruel tortures, have not one hour free from abominable lawlessness? If thou wilt accept the faith I offer thee, renouncing pagan impiety, and place thy hope in the One God, invisible and almighty, then health will be given to thy son, as thou desirest. The same half of thy estate which thou offerest me, distribute to the poor, that they may pray to God for thee and thy son. As for me, thou shalt in no way persuade me to take anything from thee for the healing of thy son; I ask only one thing: faith. Therefore believe in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, that He is the true God, renounce all thine idols, and thou shalt see thy son healthy."

Craton said in reply:

"Although I do not know wherein your faith properly consists, I have heard that each is saved by his own faith; the faith of one cannot help another, and likewise the unbelief of one cannot harm another."

The holy bishop answered:

There are things in human life that cannot help or harm another. Paternal unbelief cannot harm a son's faith, but in need and in the healing of the sick, the faith of one person may benefit another: by faith a father can help his son, a sister her brother, and a master his servant. In Scripture we read that the centurion, by faith, obtained the recovery

of his dying servant (Mt. 8:5–13); the ruler of the synagogue saw his dying daughter restored to life (Mt. 9:23–25); and the sisters, weeping for their dead brother Lazarus, who had been buried, saw him raised on the fourth day at the Lord's word, and rejoiced (Jn. 11:1–44). There are other numerous examples in the Old and New Testaments that plainly show that the faith of one person can help another. It also happens that the unbelief of one brings harm to others: for instance, the unbelief of one man, Pharaoh, brought various plagues upon all Egypt and even destroyed him together with all his host.

Hearing these and similar words of the bishop, the teacher Craton fell at his feet and said:

"I believe in the One you preach, that He is the True God and there is no other than He who commands sicknesses and death to depart, and they depart; who commands life, and it returns."

Holy Bishop Valens said to him in reply:

"The Christian faith must be shown not only in words but also in deeds."

"And what are those deeds," asked the teacher, "by which faith may be made manifest?"

"Renounce," the bishop instructed, "the idols made by human hands, and receive the holy washing, that you may be numbered among the sons of God."

"And how," asked Craton, "can water, which washes only the bodily uncleanness, cleanse from sins?"

"Water," the saint resolved his perplexity, "when over it the name of the Most Holy Trinity is invoked, mysteriously receives the Holy Spirit, who cleanses all the sins of the person who is baptized in that water."

"Our conversation keeps growing long," said Craton, "while the life of my son Herimon is being shortened."

Holy Valentine said to this:

"If you do not believe in that which you have never been able either to hear or to see, your son cannot be well."

"What is this, then," Craton wondered, "that I have been unable either to see or to hear?"

"Have you ever heard," the hierarch explained, "of a Virgin who conceived without defilement, gave birth, and remained a Virgin after the birth? Have you seen anyone walking on the sea as on dry land? Have you heard of anyone who with one word stilled a storm at sea, who in the end was crucified, died, was buried, rose from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven before the eyes of many, while Angels, clearly appearing to people, bore witness that He would come again from heaven to judge the living and the dead? If you believe that all this happened as it is told, then come forward and receive baptism, that your son may receive health and you yourself may be granted eternal life."

"I will do all that you say," agreed the teacher, "only let my son be well."

To this the holy bishop said:

"Since all worldly wisdom, of which you are considered a teacher, is nothingness before God, and you cannot believe as perfectly as faith itself requires, then give me your word that you and your whole household will turn to Christ and be baptized, once your son has received health through my faith!"

Then the teacher Craton, summoning his wife and all his household, fell at the feet of the hierarch, and all promised to become Christians if Herimon should recover. Here were also the aforementioned youths: Proculus, Ephebus, and Apollonius; they too, desiring the recovery of their teacher's son, promised to become Christians. After this the holy bishop ordered a separate room to be prepared, and that they remain in silence for that day and the following night. He himself, taking the sick youth into this room, shut himself in with him in solitude. The sick youth was bent in body, as though rolled into a round ball: his head was between his knees, his feet were on his shoulders and back. No part of his body was free; he could not even speak with his tongue, but only moaned; none of the physicians could either understand or cure this illness. Holy Bishop Valens, taking his hair shirt on which he usually prayed, spread it on the ground and laid the half-dead boy upon it, and he himself prayed and glorified God the whole night. At midnight a heavenly light shone in that room, so that to those outside it seemed as

if a fire had broken out within; and after midnight the youth rose up healthy and began to praise God with a loud voice. The parents and all who were in the house, hearing the voice of Herimon and the words he uttered, rejoiced greatly, since for three years they had heard nothing from him but groans. Coming to the doors, they began to knock and to beg the saint to open to them that they might see Herimon. But the saint answered that he would not open to them until he had performed his customary prayers; and so they waited until morning, rejoicing at what had happened. When day began, the holy bishop opened the door and, bringing out the boy completely healthy, as though he had never been ill, gave him to his parents. Then the teacher Craton, with his whole household, believed in Christ and was baptized; all rejoiced in spirit in God their Savior.

The healed youth Herimon, having received baptism, did not wish to leave his physician, Holy Valens; likewise the three aforementioned youths, after their baptism, having forsaken worldly wisdom, attached themselves with all zeal to the spiritual teacher, the God-given archpastor, and became his disciples, imitators of his holy life and seekers of their salvation. And other scholastics, youths and boys of their own age, moved by their exhortations and by the example of an honest and chaste life, turned to the faith of Christ and holy baptism, so that a multitude of scholastics began to gather to them; these, hearing their God-inspired teaching, were instructed in heavenly wisdom and set foot on the true path. When the son of the city's governor, named Avundius, having believed in Christ and been baptized, was kindled with divine zeal and openly before all confessed himself a slave of Christ, his father and the other officials were greatly angered; they seized the first teacher of the Christian faith, Holy Bishop Valens, and beat him without mercy. They urged him to idolatry, but he would not comply with their will; therefore they tormented him again, even more savagely, and then cast him into prison in chains. The saint, however, rejoiced that he had been granted to suffer for Christ, his Lord, and, adorned like the apostles with the wounds he had received as precious ornaments, he boasted of them and said:

"I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus on my body" (Gal. 6:17), "and fill up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ in my flesh" (Col. 1:24).

Moreover, he strengthened his disciples, who came to him in prison, in the holy faith. Learning of this, the governor flew into a great rage and, sending for him at night, led him out of the prison and beheaded him. Thus Holy Bishop Valentine ended his passion-bearing struggle. His disciples, the saints Proculus, Ephebus, and Apollonius, took his honorable body and carried it to the city of Interamna; in the suburbs they bought a small plot of land and buried him with honor, remaining at the tomb for several days and nights in fasting, prayer, and glorification of the Lord. The believers in the city and a multitude of unbelievers gathered to them; the latter, hearing their soul-profiting words and Christ's preaching, were enlightened by faith. After some time this became known to the city prefect Leontius, and he, seizing these three youths, cast them into prison. When he saw that the people were stirring and grieving for them, since everyone loved them, he ordered them to be killed at night: he feared to condemn them to death by day, lest the stirring people take them away. Thus the holy martyrs were beheaded with the sword at night and departed to the unfading light of the Heavenly Kingdom. The aforementioned Holy Avundius, son of the Roman governor, when he came to his beloved friends and learned of their murder, was greatly grieved; taking their honorable bodies, he buried them with honor beside the tomb of his teacher, Holy Valens, glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto endless ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Polychronius

Страдание святого мученика Полихрония

The impious Roman emperor Decius,[5] having tortured many Christians, set out with his whole army for Persia; having defeated the Persian host and taken the land captive, he took possession of the

5. Decius, emperor 249–251 A.D.

regions of Babylonia, Bactria, Hyrcania, and Assyria; finding many Christians in these lands, the emperor pursued them and tormented them in every way. At that time there was in Babylon a bishop, Polychronius, and with him three presbyters: Parmenius, Elima, and Chrysotelus, and two deacons: Luke and Muco; seizing them, Decius ordered them to be led at once to offer the idol sacrifice. But Holy Polychronius boldly said:

"We offer ourselves in sacrifice to our Lord Jesus Christ; to demons and to worthless idols made by human hands we will never bow down."

Decius ordered the bishop, presbyters, and deacons to be cast into prison, and he himself began to build in the city of Babylon a temple to his abominable god Saturn, for whom he also made a gilded idol. To Valerian, the prefect at Rome, he wrote of his successful victory over the Persians, which, in his opinion, had been granted to him by the gods, and he ordered a great festival to be held in Rome in honor of the gods, and the Christians to be tormented and killed.

Valerian acted in Rome in accordance with this command of the Emperor. When the abominable temple of Saturn was completed in Babylon, the impious Decius summoned before his tribunal Bishop Polychronius with the presbyters and deacons, and said:

"Are you the blasphemer who honors no gods and obeys no imperial decrees?"

The holy bishop, not answering with a single word, stood in silence. Then the Emperor turned to the presbyters and deacons:

"Your leader has become mute!"

But the presbyter Parmenius said:

"Our father is not mute, but he does not wish to defile his pure and holy lips by obeying the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, who said: 'Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you' (Mt. 7:6). Is it right to defile pure lips with pus?"

Decius, enraged, said:

"So we are pus?"

And he at once ordered the presbyter's tongue to be cut out. When St. Parmenius had his tongue cut out, he nevertheless spoke clearly, addressing St. Polychronius:

"Holy father, pray for me, for I see upon you the King, the Holy Spirit, who closes your lips and places a honeycomb upon mine."

So wonderful is God in His saints: He commands the one who has a tongue to be silent, and gives the power of speech to the one whose tongue has been cut out, to show forth His almighty power. And Decius said to the bishop:

"Polychronius, offer sacrifice to the gods and you will be my friend, and I will entrust to you the new temple of Saturn."

The bishop made him no answer. Decius, falling into a rage, ordered that he be struck on the mouth with stones; the saint, as he was being beaten, raised his hands to heaven and lifted up his eyes, and gave up his spirit. Decius left the body of the martyr lying before the temple of Saturn. On the following night two noble men, Persian princes by name Avdon and Sennis, secret Christians, secretly took the body of the holy bishop Polychronius and buried it near the city wall. Decius, meanwhile, went to the city of Cordyba, which was in the land of Persia, and ordered the prisoners, the presbyters and deacons, to be led after him in iron fetters.

As the saints were being led, the iron chains fell from their necks and hands. On arriving at the city of Cordyba, Decius ordered the prisoners brought before his tribunal, and said to them:

"O madmen, do you too wish to perish? Here I offer you the chance to offer sacrifice to the immortal gods!"

But the presbyter Parmenius, whose tongue had been cut out, answered loudly:

"O wretch, who would persuade us to bow down to idols made by human hands! Rather bow down yourself to our Lord Jesus Christ: if you do not bow down to Him, you will perish together with your gods."

Decius ordered that all of them be hanged for torment. But the saints, even in that position, gave thanks to God, saying to the presbyter Parmenius:

"Pray for us, father!"

He said:

"May God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, give us for consolation the Holy Spirit, who reigns unto ages of ages."

And all answered:

"Amen!"

But Decius cried out in fury:

"This is sorcery! A man without a tongue speaks: is this not clear proof of sorcery?"

To this the presbyter Parmenius answered:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who once gave speech to the dumb, has also given me, a sinner, the ability to speak though my tongue is cut out; but you, though you have a tongue and speak, are dumb, since you do not glorify the true God!"

Decius ordered them to be burned with fire, to have red-hot iron plates applied to their sides, and to have their bodies torn with iron hooks. While the saints were thus tormented, a voice was heard from heaven, saying:

"Come to Me, you who are meek in heart!"

Decius, hearing this voice, explained it too as sorcery, and ordered the martyrs taken down and their heads cut off, and their bodies cast out of the city on the road, and guards set over them so that no one might take them and bury them. Thus the three presbyters, Parmenius, Elima and Chrysotelus, and the two deacons, Luke and Muco, the holy passion-bearers, finished their torment for Christ. The two princes mentioned above, who had come here together with the Emperor, secretly stole away their cast-out bodies by night and buried them in their village near Cordyba. At this same time Emperor Decius sent throughout Persia to seek out Christians and torment them. Some of his servants said to him:

"Emperor, those captives whom you spared and to whom you gave life and freedom are Christians; they gather Christian bodies, bury them in their village, do not bow down to your gods, and do not even carry out your orders."

"Who are these impious men?" asked the Emperor in anger. The servants named Avdon and Sennis. The Emperor at once ordered them summoned, and when they came he said:

"Are you really so mad that you do not understand that you were conquered and brought under Roman rule for no other reason than your disrespect toward the gods?"

To this they answered:

"Christ made us victors over the devil precisely because we despise your gods."

Decius said to them with anger:

"Do you not know that your life is in my hands?"

"Our life," answered the saints, "is in the hands of our God, and we bow down to Him who came down from heaven to earth for our salvation."

Decius ordered them bound with iron fetters and shut up in a narrow dungeon. When they were fettered, the saints said:

"Behold our glory, which we have always hoped to receive from our Lord!"

On the same day two other noble men, Olympius and Maximus, were accused before the Emperor of being Christians, and the Emperor at once seized them and ordered them beaten with rods without examination, saying:

"They are not worthy to be heard, since they do not honor the gods, and they deserve death, for they count a dead man as their God."

St. Maximus replied to this:

"You rightly said 'dead,' but why did you not also say 'risen'?"

"Name to us your treasures," said Decius.

The holy Olympius answered:

"Our treasure, our gold, silver and all riches, is our Lord Jesus Christ, for whose sake we spare not our health and despise all earthly riches!"

When the saints were cruelly beaten, they said:

"Glory to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast been pleased to number us among Thy servants!"

Decius grew more and more enraged and ordered the martyrs beaten with rods of tin; then he handed them over to his deputy, a certain Anisius, who continued to torment them and at last cut off their heads with an axe, and threw their bodies to be devoured by dogs. For five days the bodies lay unburied and nothing touched them; on the sixth day Christians, taking the honorable remains by night, buried them with honor.

After this the impious Decius went to Rome, and with him were led the holy martyrs from Persia, Avdon and Sennis, in chains, whom Decius took with him for his own glory, to make a spectacle for the Romans. At this time the governor Valerian in Rome seized the holy Pope Sixtus, his clergy and many Christians, and shut them up in prison. For many days the pope remained in prison; secret Christians came to him there, bringing their children, and also bringing relatives and acquaintances who, turning from the impiety of idolatry, were converting to Christ; they were baptized by the pope in the prison. In these days Decius entered Rome in glory and great triumph, leading the two Persian princes, Avdon and Sennis, as captives. Then, after this, Decius called together the whole Roman senate with the governor Valerian and presented to them the princes brought from Persia, bound with chains, yet dressed in princely fashion; although they were worn down by various torments on the way, they were adorned for the glory of Decius with gold, silver and costly garments set with precious stones. Pointing at them with his finger, Decius said:

"Look upon the enemies whom the gods and goddesses have delivered into our hands. These are enemies of the Roman empire!"

Seeing them, the whole Roman senate marvelled at their noble bearing and, moved with pity for them, was softened. Such grace did the Lord give to His servants that those who looked upon them were sooner moved to compunction than to fury. Decius ordered the chief priest of the Capitol, named Claudius, to be summoned, and he came, bringing with him an idol and a tripod, and Decius said to the saints:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, and you will become free Roman princes, will possess all your estates, will be enriched with still other wealth, and will receive from us great honors!"

But the saints answered:

"We offer only ourselves as a sacrifice to our God, our Lord Jesus Christ; to your gods, offer sacrifice yourself!"

After this the Emperor commanded that a spectacle be prepared for the morning, at which the Persian princes Avdon and Sennis were to be given to the beasts to devour. When morning came and everything was ready for the spectacle, Emperor Decius did not appear, and in his place he sent the governor Valerian. The latter, coming and bringing out the martyrs, first of all sought to persuade them to idol-worship, saying:

"Spare your nobility and lay incense upon the altar of the gods; if you do not do this, you will perish in the teeth of the beasts."

"We have already said," said the saints, "that we offer only to our Lord Jesus Christ the sacrifice of praise and the incense of prayer, and to Him alone we bow down, and handmade idols we will never honor."

There stood here an idol of the Sun, and Valerian commanded the soldiers to lead the martyrs to this idol and compel them to bow down to it; but the saints, approaching the idol, spat upon it. Then Valerian fell into a rage and commanded that the holy martyrs be beaten with tin rods, and afterwards be led naked to that specially prepared place, where they were to be devoured by wild beasts before the eyes of the people looking on from the raised tiers. And the saints stood naked in body, but clothed in Christ in spirit, and they signed themselves with the sign of the Cross. First two lions were loosed upon them, and afterwards four bears, but the beasts did them no harm and lay at their feet like guards. Then Valerian said:

"This is obviously Christian sorcery!"

And he commanded the beasts to be taken away, and his armor-bearers to go in and slay the martyrs. The saints were run through with swords; their bodies were hooked by the legs, drawn out, and cast down before the idol of the Sun to terrify the Christians, as the tyrant had commanded; they lay there for three days. A secret Christian named Kirin, by rank a subdeacon, living near that place, stole the bodies of the martyrs by night and buried them in his house in a tin coffin. Thus ended their lives the holy martyrs Avdon and Sennis, Persian

princes. Holy Pope Sixtus, with the clergy, was martyred after them; his suffering, together with that of the archdeacon Lawrence, is commemorated on the tenth day of August. The honorable relics of the two holy martyrs Avdon and Sennis remained in the earth until the reign of Constantine the Great; in the days of his reign, by divine revelation, they were discovered by the faithful and transferred to the tomb of Pontian, to the honor and glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.[6]

* * *

Memory of St. John the Warrior

Память святого Иоанна Воина

This Saint John served in the army[7] during the reign of the Emperor Julian the Apostate[8], and together with other soldiers was sent to slay Christians. To those who saw him in the performance of this duty he appeared a persecutor of Christians, but in secret he rendered them no small assistance. Thus, some he warned before they were seized, so that they might escape, and others he released after they had been seized. He showed mercy not only to the persecuted Christians, but also to those who asked help of him, giving them everything of which they stood in need. Exercising himself in prayer and fasting, St. John adorned his life by visiting the sick and comforting the sorrowing, and perfected himself in virtue. Having lived his life so pleasing to God, he departed to the Lord and was buried in the place

6. In the Roman martyrology the memories of the holy martyrs are indicated on different days; St. Demetrius of Rostov united them all into one company, as those who suffered under the same Decius and as coming from the same lands. The relics of Avdon and Sennis have been in the church of St. Mark in Rome since the ninth century; here (in Rome) they have been from the time of their death.

7. In the Prologue of the Ambrosian Library and in Nicodemus it is said that St. John was a soldier in a regiment composed of soldiers of the Scythian tribe of the Taifali. Bishop Sergius, in the "Complete Monthly Calendar of the East" (vol. II, p. 220), suggests his Slavic origin.

8. Julian, the nephew of the Emperor Constantine the Great, reigned from 361 to 363. He is called the Apostate because, having been a Christian from childhood, upon ascending the throne he renounced the Christian faith and became a zealous pagan. Wishing to weaken Christianity and restore the paganism that was falling in the Roman Empire, he used cunning measures against Christians at first, and then passed to measures of violence, but he did not raise a general persecution of the Christians; there were only isolated cases of their persecution.

where strangers were buried.[9] Later, in a revelation, he told a certain woman of all the deeds which he had performed in his life, and also named to her the name which he had borne. It is said that besides this, St. John performed other miracles. He is especially known for restraining slaves from flight, exposing theft, and discovering what has been stolen. By such works of wonder God glorified St. John for his virtuous life.

* * *

NOTES

4929. The Blessed Theodoret, in his commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul (2 Cor. 1:19; 2 Thess. 1:1), holds that the Apostle Silvanus mentioned here is one and the same person as the Apostle Silas. This is supported by the fact that Silas is not mentioned at all in the Epistles, although he was one of the most zealous fellow-workers of the holy Apostles, whereas Silvanus is mentioned by the Apostles in contexts that fit Silas. Western commentators (Wieseler, Meyer, and others) also consider the Silvanus of whom the Apostle Peter speaks in his first epistle (1 Pet. 5:12) to be Silas. Crescens, who according to the sixth ode of the canon in the Greek Menaion preached in Gaul and was the chief pastor of Carchedon, according to a note in the Greek Menaia was bishop of New Carchedon in Spain, neighboring Gaul. In the Slavonic Menaion, instead of Carchedon stands Chalcedon, and the words "in Gaul" are replaced by "with the anointing of joy."

9. The year of St. John's death is unknown. It is known only that he died and was buried in Constantinople.

THE THIRTY-FIRST DAY OF JULY

July 31

31 июля

New Calendar July 31 · Old Calendar August 13 (civil dates)

Saint Eudocimus the Righteous

Святой праведный Евдоким

Saint Eudocimus the Righteous was a native of Cappadocia,[1] the son of pious parents, Basil and Eudocia. In the reign of Theophilus[2] he served in the army and was distinguished by a virtuous life, diligently keeping all the commandments of God and persevering in fasting and abstinence, as well as in prayer and contrition for his sins. Zealously occupied with reading and study of the Divine Books, he bestowed generous alms upon the poor, the destitute, orphans and widows, did good to churches and monasteries, and, showing abundant mercy to all, kept his virginal purity unblemished. He was so chaste that he never permitted himself either to converse with women or to look upon them; he did not even admit any woman to his presence except his own mother, whom alone he honored as a son and with whom alone he conversed. In all his conversations he guarded himself from idle talk and empty words, preferring silence to much speaking; he withdrew from those who love to talk without purpose and foolishly; of lying, slander and every kind of condemnation he would not only refrain from speaking but did not even wish to hear, adorning his soul with every virtue. Amid the gossip, disorder and worldly bustle, he could be looked upon as a lily among thorns, or as gold in the fire, in no way harmed by worldly temptations and passionate desires. For his virtues he was loved and esteemed by all, and was known even to the emperor, who appointed him commander of the Cappadocian regiment and

1. Cappadocia – a region of Asia Minor.
2. Theophilus – Byzantine emperor, 829–842.

sent him to the land of Harsianon[3] to govern the people. Exercising his authority, he administered with kindness and perfect justice, so that in his life he was righteous both before God and before men. Of his secret virtuous labors, however, no one can know or tell anything except God alone, who knows all things, who searches hearts and thoughts, and whom this blessed and righteous man served with all his heart and soul; and, having fully pleased Him, he departed in peace in his youth, being only thirty-three years of age. In him the Scripture was fulfilled: "Being made perfect in a short time, he fulfilled long years; for his soul was pleasing to the Lord" (Wis. 4:13–14). Although he did not live to see gray hairs, he surpassed many elders by the perfection of his virtuous life, for God-pleasing old age is not measured by the number of years: the God-pleasing gray hair is wisdom, and the old age is the pure life of a virtuous man; and whoever attains such an age has no need to remain for long years in the vain and worthless world, but desires "to depart and be with Christ" (Phil. 1:23). Having attained such an age, Saint Eudocimus died, though he was young in years. He pleased God, and God loved him; therefore he was taken from among sinners and caught up, lest malice should pervert his understanding or deceit beguile his soul (cf. Wis. 4:1–20). How his death came about was reported by those present at it. When he, lying on his sickbed, drew near the hour of death, he called his household and charged them with an oath that, after his soul had departed, they should not examine or wash his body, but should bury him in the same clothing and the same boots that he wore, and so lay him in the coffin. Then, having ordered everyone to leave and shut the doors, he offered a prayer, which some heard through the door. In the prayer he asked that his death should not be seen by anyone, just as his life, which contained secret labors, should not be known to anyone. Having thanked God for everything, he finally said, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit," and departed from the body and went to the Lord. His household buried him as he had commanded them.

The Lord, wishing to glorify His servant and to show by his death what holiness his life had possessed, gave his glorified relics a won-

drous grace, by which healings of every kind of sickness were obtained from them. First of all, a certain man named Elijah, who had an unclean spirit within him and suffered grievously from it, a short time after the repose and burial of Saint Eudocimus, pursued and tormented by the demon, came to the tomb of the righteous one. As soon as his feet touched the tomb, the unclean spirit, as if scorched by fire, cried out loudly and, throwing the man down upon the tomb, came out of him and fled, driven away by the prayers of the righteous one. People, seeing this, began to bring and carry their sick and lay them upon that tomb; and all received speedy healing. For this reason they honored Saint Eudocimus by erecting a canopy over the tomb and lighting a lampada. The fame of his wonders spread everywhere, and many began to flock to him; those afflicted with various diseases received healing, some through anointing with oil from the lampada, others through applying to the diseased places earth taken from the tomb. A woman brought her child, whose hands were paralyzed, motionless as if dead; as soon as she anointed her child's hands with oil from the lampada of the saint, at once it was healed and began to use its hands properly. In like manner another boy was brought, paralyzed in his legs, so that he was unable either to walk or to stand; when his deadened legs were anointed with the same oil from the lampada, immediately the boy was restored and began to walk and leap, praising God. A woman who had a painful abscess on her body came, took earth from the saint's tomb, mixed it with water, or rather with her tears, and applied it to the abscess as a healing plaster, and on that same day was completely healed. The fame of the wonders of Saint Eudocimus reached even Constantinople, where his parents still lived, having moved there from Cappadocia. His mother came from Byzantium to the land of Harsianon, and, seeing her son's tomb and the great gathering of people flocking to it for healing, she fell down before the tomb and, embracing it, said with tears:

"O my dear child! Light of my eyes! Whence hast thou this great wonder-working power? Whence this healing grace? Truly this has

3. The Harsian region in Asia Minor, in the western part of Cappadocia.

been given thee by God for thy secret virtuous labors, by which thou didst please thy Master! Blessed am I among mothers, having been granted to be the parent of such a son; and now I offer not lamentations for thee as for a dead son, but spiritual songs, as for a friend of God who lives with God."

Having spoken other words also with joyful tears, the mother ordered the stone to be removed, the earth dug up, and the coffin opened; when this was done, they saw the body of the saint, not in the least decayed, the face bright as if alive, and the lips in their natural beauty; though the saint had been in the ground eighteen months, he had not changed at all, but was as one living, only asleep; a great fragrance issued from him, and the coffin with the relics was brought up out of the earth. When the mother wished to clothe her son in new garments, it happened that a monk named Joseph, a visiting priest of virtuous life, was present; he lifted the saint's body out of the coffin, as if alive – his arms and legs bent freely; the monk removed the old clothing from the saint's body, and the boots from his feet without any difficulty, for the hands yielded to being undressed and the feet to being unshod; having clothed the body in new garments, they again laid it decently in the coffin.

The mother wished to take the wonder-working body of her beloved son and carry it with her to Byzantium.

"This star," she said, "has shone forth from my womb; let it therefore return to me, to my house!"

But the inhabitants of that land gathered together and did not give her the body, saying thus:

"Although this star rose from thy womb, yet it has set among us, and again it has shone forth more brightly through wonders. Although this good vine grew from thee, yet among us it has borne sweet fruit of healing grace. If God had desired the wonder-working relics of His servant to be in another place, could He not have returned him living to the place from which he came to us? O good mother! Do not resist the judgments of God, and do not envy us our gift; enough for thee is the glory that thou didst bear such a saint!"

At these words the mother fell silent, and after remaining for several days beside her son's grave, she took leave of everyone and returned home. The aforementioned hieromonk Joseph became the guardian of the relics of the holy wonderworker and remained with them for some time; but then, finding a convenient moment, he secretly took the relics of the righteous one by night and went away with them to Constantinople. And during the journey miracles took place: just as stolen myrrh, though concealed, cannot be hidden on account of its strong fragrance, so the relics of St. Eudocimus, though secretly taken, could not be concealed on account of the grace of healing that issued from them: whenever a sick person met them on the way, he received healing. A demon-possessed woman drew near to the glorified reliquary, and the demon within her cried out, denouncing the righteous one who was being carried and uttering blasphemies against him; but at once, struck by an invisible power, it abandoned the woman and fled from her. The abbess of the Mantinius Monastery suffered from an illness and a great ulcer in a hidden part of her body; she could in no way be cured of it, and she suffered greatly. Meeting the relics of the saint, she touched the honorable reliquary, kissed the body of the saint, and whispered to him, as to one alive, about her infirmity, and at once she received healing. Joseph brought the honorable relics of St. Eudocimus to Byzantium and gave them to his parents; they rejoiced beyond words, and not only they, but the whole city rejoiced greatly at the arrival among them of the wonderworking relics.[4] The parents soon overlaid the honorable reliquary of their holy son with silver and placed it in the church of the Most Holy Theotokos which they had themselves built, glorifying and giving thanks to God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the God who is glorified in the Trinity, to Whom be glory from us also, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

4. On the basis of the testimony of the Greek prologues, it is supposed that the repose of St. Eudocimus was on July 31, and the translation of his relics on July 6. Our Russian pilgrim Antony, who was in Constantinople in 1200, says: "By the pillar on the side of the Theotokos monastery lies a new Eudocimus in a silver tomb, as if alive." The Life of St. Eudocimus, from the Greek original, was published by Loparev in 1893.

He who called thee from earth to the heavenly dwellings preserves thy body unharmed even after death, O holy Eudocimus; for in chastity and pure living thou didst live, O blessed one, not defiling thy flesh. Wherefore, with boldness entreat Christ God that we be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Desiring the things on high and joining thyself to those on high, thou didst make thy soul a fiery chariot through the divine ascents of virtue, most blessed Eudocimus; living on earth as one without a body, thou didst please the Creator of all.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Julitta

Память святой мученицы Иулитты

St. Julitta, forcibly deprived of her property, asking the judge for justice, received the answer that she could recover her property only by renouncing Christ; the fearless confessor of the name of Christ then preferred death to apostasy from the faith. Having renounced property and life, St. Julitta fearlessly entered upon the ascetic struggle of martyrdom; her suffering took place in 304 or 305 under the emperor Diocletian.



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