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

Августъ

AUGUST

Book VIII

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THE FIRST DAY OF AUGUST

August 1

1 августа

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

Origin of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of the Lord

Происхождение честного и Животворящего Креста Господня

The Feast of the Procession of the Precious Cross was established on the first day of August in Greece by Luke,[1] Patriarch of Constantinople, under Emperor Manuel;[2] and in Russia by Constantine,[3] Metropolitan of Kiev, and Nestor, Bishop of Rostov,[4] under Grand Prince Andrew Yuryevich.[5] The reason for its establishment was as follows. Emperor Manuel and Prince Andrew, who lived in peace and brotherly love with one another, happened to go forth to war on the same day: the former from Constantinople against the Saracens,[6] and the latter from Rostov against the Bulgarians. (The Grand Prince lived at that time in Rostov; the Bulgarians were pagans dwelling in the lower reaches of the Volga, from which they received their name.) The Lord God granted them complete victory over their enemies: the Greek emperor overcame the Saracens,[4948] while Prince An-

1. Luke Chrysoberges – Patriarch of Constantinople, 1156–1169.
2. Manuel Comnenus – Greek emperor, 1143–1180.
3. Constantine II, Metropolitan of Kiev, arrived in Kiev from Greece in 1167; he is mentioned in the chronicle again under 1169.
4. Nestor – sixth bishop of the Rostov eparchy, mentioned by the chronicle under 1149. In 1156 Nestor, slandered before the metropolitan by members of his own household, fell under an interdict; in 1157 he cleared himself before the metropolitan, but in the same year he was expelled from his see by Andrew Bogolyubsky, over disputes concerning the fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.
5. St. Andrew Bogolyubsky, the Righteous — the son of Grand Prince Yuri Vladimirovich and grandson of the famous Vladimir Monomakh, was probably born in 1111. He was killed on 30 June 1175.
6. Saracens – Muslims.

drew Bogolyubsky defeated the Bulgarians and brought them under his rule, making them his tributaries. When Andrew went to war, he was accustomed to take with him an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, holding in her arms the Pre-eternal Infant, our Lord Jesus Christ, and an image of the Precious Cross of Christ, which was carried among the army by two priests. Just before setting out, he offered fervent prayers with tears to Christ and the Mother of God, and received the Divine Mysteries of Christ. He armed himself with these invincible weapons more than with swords and spears, and placed his hope in the help of the Most High more than in the courage and numbers of his army, well knowing David's saying: "He hath no pleasure in the strength of a horse, neither delighteth He in the [swiftness of the] legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy" (Ps. 146:10–11). The prince also urged his warriors to prayer, both by the example of his own reverent prayers and by direct command; and all, falling to their knees, prayed with tears before the icon of the Most Pure Theotokos and the Precious Cross of Christ. And the Grand Prince, gazing upon the icon, spoke thus in his prayer:

"O Sovereign Lady, who gavest birth to Christ our God! Whoever hopes in thee shall not perish, and I, thy servant, by the mercy of God, have in thee a wall and shelter, and the Cross of thy Son as a two-edged weapon against our enemies. Entreat the Savior of the world, whom thou holdest in thine arms, that the power of the Cross may be like a fire consuming the enemies who wish to enter into battle with us, and may thy almighty intercession help us to overcome them."

After their fervent prayer, all kissed the holy icon and the Precious Cross and went fearlessly against the enemy. The Lord aided them by the power of the Cross, and the Most Pure Theotokos gave them help, interceding for them before God. The Grand Prince always observed this custom before every battle, and he did not depart from it before the battle against the Bulgarians: he went forth with the Cross of the Lord carried before the army, as the Emperor Constantine had done in ancient times. Having taken the field, after the battle with the Bulgarians the Russian host put them to flight and, pursuing them, captured five cities, among them the city of Bryakhimov on the Kama River. When

they returned to their camp after the battle with the unbelievers, they saw bright, fiery rays issuing from the icon of the Mother of God with the Christ Child, shining upon the entire army; this took place on the first day of August. The wondrous sight further stirred the Grand Prince's spirit with courage and hope, and he again sent his regiments in pursuit of the Bulgarians. He burned most of their cities, imposing tribute upon those that remained, and laid waste the whole land. After this victory the Grand Prince returned home in triumph. The Greek emperor Manuel, who had gone forth with his army against the Saracens, on that very same day also saw a like miracle: rays issuing from the icon of the Most Pure Theotokos with the Savior, which stood with the Precious Cross among the army, and overshadowing the whole regiment; and on that day he defeated the Saracens.

The emperor and the prince, giving glory to God, informed one another by special letters of the victories won with God's help and of the wondrous radiance that had issued from the icon of the Savior. After consulting with the senior bishops, they established a feast on the first day of August, in thanksgiving to Christ the Savior and His Most Pure Mother. In remembrance of the power of the Cross, armed with which they had conquered their enemies, they commanded that a priest bring the Precious Cross out of the sanctuary and place it in the midst of the church, for Christians to venerate and kiss it and to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified upon the Cross. In addition, the bishops commanded that the blessing of water be performed on this day; hence the feast received its name, the Procession of the Precious Cross, because the Precious Cross is solemnly carried, together with other holy icons, to rivers, wells, and springs. Let us celebrate, brethren, giving praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God and our Savior Jesus Christ and to His Most Pure Mother, the Lady Theotokos, and reverently honoring also the Precious Cross of Christ. But let us celebrate with reverence, pleasing God, dwelling among ourselves in peace and love, performing deeds of charity and, mindful of the fear of God, shunning sins, so that, having pleased our Creator and Master, we may be deemed worthy of an eternal feast with all the saints after that day when the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in heaven (Mt. 24:30)—the Precious Cross of

Christ, going before the coming of the Judge of the living and the dead, who comes with power and great glory, and shining upon all the righteous with bright and joyful rays. After the judgment has been accomplished, it shall go before all the saints, leading them into the Kingdom of Heaven, and all the saints shall be blessed, rejoicing unto ages without end. May our most merciful Savior Christ, through the prayers of our Most Pure Lady Theotokos, number us sinners among them also.[4949] Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

Save, O Lord, Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance; grant victories to our right-believing Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich over his adversaries, and preserve Thine habitation by Thy Cross.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou who wast lifted up willingly upon the Cross, O Christ God, grant Thy compassions unto the new people named after Thee. Gladden our right-believing Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich with Thy might, granting him victories over his adversaries, for he hath as his aid the weapon of peace, the invincible victory.

Troparion, Tone 8:

Looking down from on high and receiving the poor, visit us who are afflicted by sins, O most merciful Master. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, grant great mercy to our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

I have become a worker of every defilement, O most merciful Savior, and have fallen into the pit of despair; yet I groan from my heart and cry unto Thee, O Word: Hasten, O compassionate One, and make haste to help us, for Thou art merciful.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Old Testament Martyrs: Eleazar the Priest, the Seven Maccabean Brothers, Their Mother Solomonia, and Others with Them

Страдание святых ветхозаветных мучеников Елеазара священника, семи братьев Маккавеев, матери их Соломонии и иных с ними.

Before beginning the account of the sufferings of the holy martyrs, whose names are written here on earth in the "Books of the Maccabees" and in heaven in the books of eternal life, it is fitting, as a brief preface, first to relate the disturbances that took place in Jerusalem in those years[7] and the persecutions of the pious Jews who observed the law of God. Both were first stirred up by the deceitful teachers of the Law and the power-hungry high priests of Jerusalem; and when, by the permission of the angered Lord, the Jews fell under the dominion of pagan nations, these disturbances and persecutions grew so fierce that the holy city was filled with blood, and the sanctuary of God with abominations.

The first great and terrible destruction of Jerusalem, wrought by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, took place in the days of the Judean king Zedekiah, as is related in the Life of the holy Prophet Jeremiah and in the Life of the holy Prophet Ezekiel. Seventy years after this ruin, the Jews, by the mercy of God, were delivered from captivity and returned to Jerusalem; in the holy city fair buildings arose anew, and the temple of God, rebuilt, was, like the first, splendidly adorned. The history of the return from captivity, of the renewal of Jerusalem and of the temple, is set forth in detail in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The number of God's people increased rapidly; they soon settled throughout Palestine in the same order and in nearly the same numbers as before. The holy city, faithful to the law of God, flourished for a long time in piety, enjoying tranquility under the rule of its high priests, who were also princes. It was held in glory and honor by all, although it lay under the power of pagan kings. Many pagan kings and princes, though idolaters, nevertheless honored the God of Israel and sent gifts to the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem (2 Macc. 3:2). They

7. Jerusalem – the principal city of ancient Palestine.

also showed particular respect to the high priests. For example, Alexander, King of Macedon, seeing the high priest Addus come out to meet him, bowed to the ground before him; and entering Jerusalem and the temple of God, he brought gifts and sacrifices to the Lord of Hosts. Other pagan kings acted in like manner. Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt, sent many gifts to Jerusalem for the temple of the Lord, and wrote to the high priest Eleazar, asking him to send the books of Holy Scripture and learned men who could translate them from the Hebrew into Greek. The successor of Ptolemy Philadelphus, Ptolemy Philopator, having defeated the Syrian king Antiochus the Great, came into Judea, and in Jerusalem, in the temple of the Lord, offered a thanksgiving sacrifice to the one true God. Antiochus the Great likewise, having in his turn defeated the Egyptians, came to Jerusalem to worship the true God; in the holy temple he offered many sacrifices with thanksgiving prayers, and generously bestowed gifts upon the high priest and the other Jewish leaders. Such was the reverence in which Jerusalem and the temple of God were held by the pagans. Holy Scripture also records this, saying that the kings themselves honored the place and glorified the church with great gifts (cf. 2 Macc. 3:2). Such regard on the part of the pagans for Jerusalem continued for as long as its leaders, living in the fear of God, kept the law of the Lord and led a God-pleasing life; but when they forgot the law of God, then, as before, numerous calamities fell upon them. The beginning of these was the following circumstance.

In the days of the righteous high priest Simon, who is praised in the Book of Jesus son of Sirach (Sir. 50:1), when Seleucus, son of Antiochus the Great, reigned in Asia and Syria, there was in Jerusalem a certain man named Simon, of the tribe of Benjamin. He was entrusted with the administration of the treasures of the temple, the oversight of the temple servants, and the command of the soldiers who formed the temple guard. Out of pride and malice he always opposed the high priest and stirred up disturbances among the people. Unable to bear the threats and admonitions which the high priest was often obliged to make to him, Simon resolved to do harm not only to the high priest but to the whole Church. To this end he went to Apollonius, the military

commander of Syria and Phoenicia, and told him about the treasures of the Church: Simon said that in the storehouses of the temple there were countless riches, where, together with the treasures of the Church, immense treasures belonging to the whole people were kept, and he added that all these riches might pass into the hands of the king (2 Macc. 3:5–6). Apollonius reported Simon's information to the king, who was distinguished by his covetousness. The king at once sent to Jerusalem, with an army, Heliodorus, keeper of the royal treasures, to carry the said treasures off to the royal storehouse. When Heliodorus, on arriving in Jerusalem, began to seize the riches of the Church and to plunder the money collected and kept for the sustenance of the poor, the travelers, the widows and the orphans, he was struck by the punishment of God, as the third chapter of the second Book of Maccabees relates in detail: he was so cruelly scourged by Angels that he nearly died, and for this reason was compelled to return to the king without having carried out his command. Soon after this King Seleucus was slain by his courtiers, and his own brother Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, that is, the Illustrious, succeeded him. He was even more depraved than his predecessor. Some more commonly called Antiochus Epimanes, that is, the Mad, for he madly rose up against the true God and His temple, thereby presenting an image of the future antichrist[4951]. Great disturbances arose in Jerusalem. The brother of the high priest Onias, Jason, desiring the high priesthood, went to the king and bought the dignity of high priest from him for a large sum of money. Wishing to please the king, this unworthy lover of power declared his affection for Hellenic[8] civil laws, customs and manners, and promised to introduce them among the Jews. Having obtained the power of high priest for his money and promises, Jason deprived his brother, the holy Onias, of it, and in place of the good civil laws existing among the Jews began to introduce pagan lawlessness. At the foot of Mount Zion he set up places for spectacles and schools in which Greek philosophical doctrines were taught, and he also established palestras for the athletic games of youths. Jason even set up, contrary

8. Hellenic – Greek.

to the express prohibition of the law, brothels in the holy city, where adultery was committed with impunity; these disreputable houses were frequented chiefly by youths who were learning Hellenic arts. Having introduced Hellenic impiety into Jerusalem, Jason turned many away from the true worship of God, so that even priests abandoned the temple of God for spectacles, races, wrestling and other pagan games and disorderly conduct. Young men and those not firm in the law were even more carried away by these things: they praised Hellenic laws and customs, and forgetting the law of God, they readily inclined to impiety. But men firm in the law and truly pious, seeing the lawlessness committed in Jerusalem, could not but sigh over the ruin of the covenant of the Lord and the defilement of the holy city. They also mourned for their fellow countrymen who followed the blind guide Jason, who, from love of rule, had abandoned God and His law, sold the faith of their fathers, and introduced into the midst of God's people so many occasions of scandal and fall.

For three years Jason exercised the power he had obtained unlawfully, after which he was expelled by another ambitious man of the same kind, an adherent of Hellenic impiety, Menelaus. Thus Jason himself had to suffer what he had earlier inflicted upon his brother, the righteous Onias. Menelaus gave the king a larger sum of money and in return received the high priesthood. Having expelled Jason, he obtained through an impious royal minister the violent death of the former high priest, the righteous Onias. Yet Menelaus also did not remain high priest for long. His brother Lysimachus took the high priesthood from him, having given the king still more money; Menelaus, like Jason, was also driven out. Lysimachus was slain by the people for stealing the sacred vessels and money of the Temple. Menelaus, wishing to avenge the death of his brother, bought from the king the right to put the men of Jerusalem to death, and he deprived many of them, who were wholly innocent, of their lives; at the same time he again received from the king the power of high priest (2 Macc. 4:23–50). Such disorders and turmoil in Jerusalem, the daily growth of pagan impiety and the open commission of lawlessness provoked the Lord, and His righteous judgment, which repays according to deeds, drew near. A wondrous sign

appeared, foretelling the wrath of God coming upon the city: in the air were seen companies of warriors, clothed in golden garments and wearing helmets on their heads, who, sitting on horses, engaged one another in battle, holding drawn swords and spears in their hands; some struck one another with swords, others raised up spears and shields, others shot arrows at one another, in a word doing all that is usually done during battles; from the armor and weapons of the warriors there issued a fiery gleam (2 Macc. 5:2–3). This dreadful, terror-inspiring vision continued for as many as forty days. The inhabitants of Jerusalem remained in great fear and perplexity; each of them involuntarily asked himself: what can this mean? At that time a false report came to Jerusalem that the king had died in battle with the Egyptians, for he had indeed then gone off to war in Egypt. The most pious of the men of Jerusalem rejoiced, triumphed and made merry, supposing that the wicked and impious king had in fact perished. But when it became known that the king had not died, but was alive and returning from Egypt to Syria, they resolved no longer to submit to him or pay tribute; therefore they made ready to fight against him. Learning of this, the king fell into the most violent rage and marched with his army against Jerusalem; the men of Jerusalem closed the gates before him, but they could not offer him sufficiently strong resistance, because dissension had arisen among the besieged themselves: those who had turned to Hellenic impiety, especially the false high priest Menelaus, were well disposed toward the king. Having taken the city with the help of his army, the king ordered that not only all whom they met in the streets be slaughtered without mercy, but that they enter houses to kill husbands, wives, old men, youths and infants; in three days the number of the slain reached eighty thousand; forty thousand were bound and cast into prisons; nearly as many were distributed to the soldiers as captives. In his pride the king, led by the traitor to the fatherland and the law, Menelaus, dared to enter the house of God; here he took the golden altar, the golden lampstand, the golden censers and all the precious vessels given by kings for the adornment of the Temple; he seized also the veil, the crowns and the other golden ornaments, and the gold and silver which he found hidden. Having laid waste and defiled the house of God, having ruined

the city and filled it with blood and weeping, the king returned to Antioch, and in Jerusalem and throughout Judea Antiochus left behind for the torturing of the Israelites even more cruel tormentors than himself (2 Macc. 5:5–22).

After some time Antiochus sent a decree throughout the whole kingdom that all his subjects, without distinction of tribe, should confess together with him the same Greek gods and keep to the same Greek laws. Not only all the pagans agreed to carry out this decree, but even many of the Jews obeyed it: they offered sacrifices to idols and profaned the Sabbath. A few days after the issuing of the decree, the king sent from Antioch to Jerusalem one of his counselors, an elderly man, by birth an Athenian, with the commission to compel all the Jews to renounce the laws of their fathers, to worship idols and to partake of meat offered to idols; he gave a special command that the Jews be made to eat pork, which the Law forbids. At the same time Antiochus ordered the house of the Lord to be turned into a temple of idols: an idol of Jupiter was to be set up in it and it was to be called the temple of Olympian Jupiter. The elderly man sent by the king came to Jerusalem with an army and set about carrying out the royal command: he defiled the house of the Lord by setting up idols in it, to which he offered abominable sacrifices, compelling also the people of God to do the same. Many of the Jews, who lacked firmness of soul, hastened to offer sacrifices to the idols; those among them who were steadfast in faith fled to the mountains and the deserts and there, saving themselves from torments and guarding themselves from the defilements of pagan worship, hid in caves and chasms. Those who remained in the city were seized and, with sorrow in their hearts, were compelled by violence to go, on the king's birthday and at other pagan festivals, to offer sacrifices to the idols; those who would not do so were subjected to tortures (2 Macc. 6:1–9). All the inhabitants of Jerusalem were seized with great fear, so that no one dared openly to call himself a Jew, to keep the Sabbath day, to circumcise his children, or in general to fulfill the precepts of the law of Moses: before everyone's eyes stood the coming tortures and death. At that time it was reported to the tormentor sent by the king that two Jewish women had circumcised the infants they

had borne, according to their law. Then the tormentor ordered these women seized and led through the city for mockery, the infants hung about their necks at their breasts; afterwards they were cast down headlong from the city wall; thus the mothers together with the infants received a martyr's death. He also learned that some Jews were gathering in caves near the city to keep the Sabbath, and the tormentor commanded that all of them be burned with fire (2 Macc. 6:10–11).

After this there was seized one of the foremost scribes, a priest named Eleazar, a man already advanced in years, adorned with gray hair, of a very venerable appearance, renowned for his wisdom and piety; everyone knew him as one of the very first teachers of the Law in Jerusalem: he was one of the seventy-two translators who rendered the holy Scripture from the Hebrew language into Greek for the Egyptian king Ptolemy Philadelphus. Concerning the sufferings of this honorable father the holy Scripture relates the following. When Eleazar was brought before the tormentor, and when, compelling him to eat, they began to force pork into his mouth, he chose rather to die a glorious martyr's death for the law of God than by its violation to preserve a dishonorable life that provokes God. Thus Eleazar of his own will went to the torments; on the way he spat, because he was compelled to touch unclean meat with his mouth; he set an example to other God-fearing Jews, who were likewise threatened with death for keeping the law of God, teaching them by his own deeds that one must not commit sin for the sake of preserving earthly life, nor, out of attachment to it, provoke God by violating the law. Some of the pagans, who had known Eleazar for a long time, pitying him, secretly brought him, instead of the pork, other meat not forbidden by the law, and said in his ear:

"Take this and eat it before everyone in place of the pork; when all see that you are eating meat, they will take it for the pork which the king commands to be eaten, and in this way you will escape torments and death."

But the prudent and pious elder answered them without hesitation:

"I would sooner consent to go to hell than provoke my Lord by violating His holy law, and it is not fitting for me, having reached such advanced years, to play the hypocrite to the temptation of many young

men: when they see me doing what you advise, they will say: 'Behold, Eleazar, in his deep old age, has forsaken the ancient law of our fathers for the law of the pagans'; and because of my hypocritical act they will depart from the true God and perish, looking at my example; out of love for temporal life they will begin to despise the law of God and turn to Hellenic impiety, while I shall disgrace my old age, having become the cause of the perdition of so many souls. If I escape torments at the hands of men, I shall not escape the chastising hand of God, either during my life on earth or after death beyond the grave; better for me to die now, and, dying steadfastly, not losing heart under torments for the holy law, I shall adorn my gray hairs with courage and leave the young a good example to imitate."

At these words of St. Eleazar he was dragged to the torments, and those men who at first expressed their pity for him now, after his speech, flared up against him in anger and fury. During great torments, when from the cruel wounds the priest of God was already drawing near to death, he addressed the Lord through his groans:

"O all-knowing Lord, who hast mercy on all, Thou knowest also that I, though I might escape death, nevertheless gladly and with love accept the cruel wounds, subjecting my body to grievous torments: for I suffer for the glorification of Thy holy name."

Having said this, he died, leaving an example of courage in his death not only to the young men but to all the Jews (2 Macc. 6:18–31). The narrative of the sacred books concerning the sufferings of St. Eleazar is supplemented by the following tradition: after being cruelly beaten, he had strong vinegar, giving off a foul odor, poured into his nostrils, and was then cast into the fire. He, having prayed to God that the Lord would accept his torments and death as a sacrifice for the whole Hebrew people, yielded up his spirit.

After the martyr's death of St. Eleazar, seven brothers were seized together with their mother. Since they belonged to a noble family, they were sent to the king himself in Antioch for trial. Here, in direct violation of the law, the king compelled them to eat swine's flesh, which was regarded as a clear sign of apostasy from the Lord of Sabaoth, in whom the Jews believed, and of submission to the impiety of the Greeks, to

which those Jews inclined who feared torments. The aforementioned seven brothers, disciples of the suffering priest and teacher of Jerusalem, Eleazar, well remembered his instructions and remained unshaken in their piety: they did not obey the king, refusing on no account to transgress the law. For this they were subjected to long torments, beatings with scourges and ox-sinews. Concerning their sufferings and their fearless boldness before the tormentor, the Holy Scripture in the second book of Maccabees relates thus. One of the brothers, the eldest in age, undertaking the duty of answering, said to the king:

"What do you wish to ask, or what would you learn from us? We are ready rather to die than to transgress the laws of our fathers."

Then the king, enraged, commanded that frying-pans and cauldrons be heated. When this was done, the king at once ordered that the tongue of the young man who had undertaken to answer be cut out, his skin be stripped off, and his limbs be severed, in the sight of the other brothers and their mother. The martyr, deprived of all his members but still breathing, the king commanded to be carried to the fire and roasted in the frying-pan; and when a strong vapor spread from the pan, the brothers together with their mother exhorted one another to endure death bravely, saying:

"The Lord God sees and will surely have compassion upon us, as Moses declared in his song before the face of the people: 'and he shall have compassion on his servants.'"

When the first died, they brought out the second for mockery and, having stripped the skin with the hair from his head, asked whether he would eat (the swine's flesh) before they began to torment him, cutting his body into pieces. He, answering in his native tongue, said: "No." Therefore he too endured torments in the same manner as the first, and at his last breath said:

"You, tormentor, deprive us of this present life, but the King of the world will raise us, who have died for His laws, to life everlasting."

After that, the third brother was subjected to mockery, and when they demanded his tongue, he at once thrust it out, fearlessly stretched out his hands, and bravely said:

"From heaven I received these, and for His laws I do not spare them, and from Him I hope to receive them again."

The king himself and those with him were astonished at the courage of this youth, who counted his sufferings as nothing. When this one too had died, they tormented and afflicted the fourth in the same manner. Being near death, he spoke thus:

"It is good for those who die at men's hands to place their hope in God, that He will raise them up again; but for you there will be no resurrection to life."

Then they brought forward and began to torment the fifth. He, looking at the king, said:

"Having power over men, you, who yourself are subject to corruption, do what you will; but do not think that our race has been forsaken by God. Wait, and you shall see His great power, how He will punish you and your seed."

After this they brought the sixth, who, preparing for death, said:

"Do not deceive yourself in vain, for we suffer this for ourselves, having sinned against our God, and therefore what is worthy of wonder has come to pass.[9] But do not think that you will remain unpunished, you who have dared to contend against God."

Yet most worthy of wonder and of glorious memory is the mother, who, seeing her seven sons slain within one day, bore this cheerfully, in hope in the Lord. Filled with valiant feelings and strengthening a woman's reasoning with a manly spirit, she encouraged each of her sons in their native tongue and said to them:

"I do not know how you came to be in my womb: it was not I who gave you breath and life; it was not by me that the constitution of each of you was formed. But the Creator of the world, who formed the nature of man and ordained the origin of all, will again give you breath and life in mercy, since you do not spare yourselves for His laws."

Antiochus, however, thinking that he was being despised, and taking this speech as an insult to himself, urged the youngest, who still remained, not only with words but with oaths, that he would enrich and

9. That is, the persecution and torment of the Jews.

make him happy if he would turn away from the laws of his fathers, that he would have him as a friend and entrust to him honorable offices. But since the youth paid no attention whatever, the king, calling the mother, urged her to advise her son to save himself. After many of his persuasions she agreed to exhort her son. Bending down to him and mocking the cruel tormentor, she spoke thus in their native tongue:

"My son! Have pity on me, who bore you nine months in my womb, nursed you three years with milk, fed, raised, and brought you up. I beseech you, my child, look at heaven and earth, and seeing all that is in them, know that God made everything out of nothing, and that the human race came into being in this way too. Do not fear this murderer, but be worthy of your brothers and accept death, so that by God's mercy I may receive you again with your brothers."

While she was still speaking, the youth said:

"What are you waiting for? I do not obey the command of the king, but I obey the command of the law given to our fathers through Moses. And you, the inventor of all evils for the Jews, shall not escape the hands of God: we suffer for our own sins. If for our correction and chastisement the living Lord has been angry with us for a short time, He will again be reconciled to His servants; but you, impious and most guilty of all men, do not exalt yourself in vain, puffed up with false hopes, that you will raise your hand against His servants; for you have not yet escaped the judgment of Almighty and All-seeing God. My brothers, having now endured a brief torment, have received life everlasting, while you, by the judgment of God, shall bear the just punishment for your arrogance. And I, like my brothers, give up both soul and body for the laws of our fathers, calling upon God that He may soon have mercy on the nation, and that you, with tortures and punishments, may confess that He alone is God, and that on me and on my brothers the wrath of the Almighty, which has justly fallen upon our whole race, may come to an end."

Then the enraged king dealt with him even more cruelly than with the others, indignant at the mockery. Thus he too ended his life pure, having wholly cast himself upon the Lord (2 Macc. 7:2–40). Seeing this, the blessed mother, whose name was Solomonia, was filled with

ineffable joy that she had presented her children to the Lord undefiled; standing over their bodies, she stretched up her hands and, praying with warm and joyful tears, yielded up her spirit into the hands of God. Thus the mother died with her children, having laid down their souls for the law of the Lord Almighty.[10]

Beholding the shedding of the blood of His servants, the Lord had compassion upon the Hebrew people: He raised up among them Judas, who was descended from a priestly family and surnamed Maccabeus. With military strength Judas offered a valiant resistance to the impious Antiochus, and after victory compelled his commanders to withdraw. Then he put to death all who had turned aside to Greek impiety, and cleansed the temple of idols, of which the books of the Maccabees relate at length.

As for King Antiochus, the righteous judgment of God overtook him already in this life. He was struck by a dreadful disease: his bowels began to rot and to swarm with worms, and from him there issued an unbearable stench. Then, according to the prophecy of the youngest of the martyrs (2 Macc. 7:34–35), the impious Antiochus was constrained to acknowledge the almighty power of the true God, whom he had previously reviled, and after his persecutions he turned to Him in prayer. But the Lord did not grant mercy to him who had not shown it to others: Antiochus, without making sincere repentance, died an evil death, arousing in all the thought of the just judgment of God. All glorified the all-powerful God, as He is glorified now by all generations and will always be glorified unto endless ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

By the sufferings of Thy saints, who suffered for Thee, be Thou entreated, O Lord, and heal all our infirmities, O Lover of mankind, we pray Thee.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Seven-numbered pillars of the wisdom of God, and seven-lamped lights of the divine radiance, all-wise Maccabees, greatest of

10. The death of the holy martyrs is dated to 166 B.C.

martyrs before the martyrs, pray with them to God for all who honor you, that they may be saved.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Leontius, Atta, Alexander, Kindeus, Minsipheus, Cyriacus, Mineus (Mineon), Catun, and Eucleus.

Страдание святых мучеников Леонтина, Атта, Александра, Киндея, Минсифея, Кириака, Минея (Минеона), Катуна и Евклея.

These holy martyrs lived in the reign of the emperor Diocletian, in the Pamphylian city of Perge, at the time when Flavian, the governor, ruled over Pamphylia. All of them were descended from Christian forebears. Mineon was by trade a carpenter, and the rest were occupied with farming. All of them, being of one mind, came to one good resolution and dedicated themselves to the martyr's contest. Therefore, leaving their ordinary occupations, they came by night into the temple of Artemis[11] and overthrew everything in it that was an object of veneration. For this they were seized and interrogated, after which they were mercilessly beaten, their wounds were scorched with fire, and then their bodies were flayed with iron claws nearly to the bone; their shoulders were burned with lighted candles, and their eyes were gouged out with nails. After all these tortures they were cast into prison, where, by the command of the tormentor, they were given neither food nor water. Then they were delivered to be torn by wild beasts, but the holy martyrs tamed the beasts, so that all who were present were struck with terror and cried out loudly:

– Great is the Christian God!

At once a storm broke with thunder and lightning, and rain fell upon the earth together with fire and hail. At the same time a voice was

11. Artemis, or Diana, daughter of Zeus and Latona, was venerated by the Greeks as a virgin goddess, protectress of maidens and wives, and also as the goddess of the moon. This goddess enjoyed especial veneration in the city of Ephesus, where a magnificent temple was built for her and where multitudes of people came to worship her from all parts of the Roman Empire. In the veneration of the goddess were concentrated various pagan superstitions, and many immoral ceremonies and rites were performed in her honor.

heard calling the saints, and they, hearing that sweet voice, were filled with great joy. Then, by the command of the governor, their heads were struck off with the sword[12]. So their torment came to an end.

* * *

NOTES

4948. There are no clear indications of a feast for the All-Merciful Savior and the Most Pure Mother of God on account of the victory over the Saracens by Emperor Manuel, either in the Greek historians or in the Greek liturgical books. Yet in the history of Emperor Manuel, who waged many wars against various peoples, there are occurrences which ought to have moved the emperor to a special thanksgiving to God for the successful conclusion of a war and deliverance from dangers. Here the cruel war of Emperor Manuel with the Turkish sultan, or Saracens, draws attention. The emperor himself commanded the army, repeatedly exposed to extraordinary dangers. True, the victory went to the enemy, but the emperor's very preservation was truly a miracle of God's mercy. This was in September; the campaign, of course, had begun earlier, in August. After this war the Greeks had two successful battles with the Saracens, one of them under the command of the emperor himself. These events, together with the news from Russia of God's help in the war against the Bulgarians, may have disposed Emperor Manuel to establish a common Christian feast of the Savior, the beginning of which had already been laid in Constantinople by the blessing of water on 1 August. But no service to the Savior has yet been found in the Greek monuments of hagiology.

4949. Standing on a strictly defined historical ground, it should be noted that on 1 August the Orthodox Church celebrates two festivals, different in their origin: 1) the origin of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord, and 2) the feast of the All-Merciful Savior and the Most Holy Theotokos. The Greek Horologion, ed. 1897, explains the origin of the first feast thus: "Because of the illnesses very frequent in August, there was established in Constantinople from ancient times the custom of carrying the Precious Wood of the Cross out into the roads and streets for the sanctification of places and the averting of diseases. On the eve (31 July), bringing it out of the imperial treasury, they placed it on the holy table of the great church (that is, of St. Sophia). From this day until the Dormition of the Theotokos, making litanies throughout the city, they then presented it to the people for veneration. This is the going-forth (*prodos*) of the Precious Cross." On 14 August the Cross was returned again to the imperial palace. "This custom, combined with another custom of Constantinople — to bless water in the court church of Constantinople on the first day of each month (except January, when the blessing took place on the 6th, and September, when it was done on the 14th) — served as the basis for the feast in honor of the Holy and Life-giving Cross and for the solemn blessing of water at springs, which is performed on 1 August." Already in the ninth cen-

12. The year of the death of these holy martyrs is unknown.

tury this custom existed of carrying the Precious Wood from the imperial palaces to the church of St. Sophia before 1 August; the canon for the forefeast of the Cross on 31 July, written for this occasion (the canon begins with the words "Heralding the Divine Cross"), is ascribed to George, Bishop of Amastris, who lived in the eighth century and twice was in Constantinople. In the Ceremonial of the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (912–959) there are detailed rules for carrying out the Cross from the palace before 1 August; there was then no service to the Cross, which appears in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with the introduction of the Jerusalem Typikon. The feast of the All-Merciful Savior and the Most Holy Theotokos was established in Greece and Russia about 1168, in memory of signs from the Precious icons of the Savior and the Mother of God during the battles of the Greek emperor Manuel (1143–1180) with the Saracens, and of the Russian prince Andrew Bogolyubsky with the Bulgarians in 1164.

4951. Antiochus IV Epiphanes, king of Syria, 176–164 B.C., who seized the throne after the death of his brother, was marked by immense pride (2 Macc. 5:21, 9:8); he called himself God and took the title of Olympian Zeus; he commanded that all his subjects worship one god only — Olympian Zeus, with whom he identified himself; that is, Antiochus in fact commanded that he himself be worshipped as God (2 Macc. 6:7). Among the Jews there were people inclined to paganism in its Greek form; they formed a particular party in Jerusalem which found support in Antiochus (1 Macc. 1:11–15). In 175 B.C. the pious high priest Onias was overthrown by his brother Jesus, who changed his name to the Greek Jason, bought the dignity of high priest from Antiochus, and obtained permission to introduce Greek games, which increased still more the number of traitors to the true religion. Three years later, Jason was overthrown by Menelaus, who offered a greater price for the office of high priest, which he retained by the lowest means: thus Menelaus had Onias killed (2 Macc. 4:23–50). Antiochus undertook a campaign against Egypt and already reckoned on subjecting it entirely, but was stopped by rumors of a Roman attack (in 168 B.C.). Between the first and second campaigns against Egypt Antiochus plundered the temple of Jerusalem (1 Macc. 1:21), and on his final return from Egypt he commanded that the worship of Yahweh, circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath, and the distinction between clean and unclean be abolished; he ordered the sacred books burned; he commanded altars to be erected on which, under pain of death, everyone must offer sacrifices to Olympian Zeus (1 Macc. 1:41; 2 Macc. 5:24). On 15 Kislev 168 B.C. an altar to Olympian Zeus was set up in the temple (2 Macc. 6:2; 1 Macc. 1:54), and on 25 Kislev the first sacrifice was offered; on Mount Gerizim the worship of Zeus Xenios was established (2 Macc. 6:2). But many remained faithful to their religion, despite terrible tortures (1 Macc. 52:64; 2 Macc. 6:7). At the head of the faithful stood the priest Mattathias. At Modin, near Joppa, he killed a Syrian officer before the pagan altar, and an armed uprising of the Jews began. Antiochus decided to suppress it by military force; need of money compelled him to divide his army into two parts; with one half he set out himself for the eastern provinces to collect tribute (2 Macc. 8:10; 1 Macc. 3:34), and the other part he gave under the command of Lysias, who was utterly defeated by Judas Maccabeus, while the Jews took possession of the temple. On 25 Kislev 165 B.C., three years after the first pagan sacrifice, the temple was cleansed and consecrated with great solemnity, and it was ordained that the

feast be celebrated annually in memory of that glorious day (1 Macc. 4:59), which received the name "Feast of the Dedication" (Jn. 10:22). Meanwhile Antiochus had little success in the East; he tried to plunder the rich temple of Nanaea in Elymais, but was driven off by its inhabitants, and died in 164 B.C. at Tabae, following unpleasant news from Judea (1 Macc. 6:4). In the Old Testament Antiochus is portrayed as an adversary of the Lord, His people and His Covenant (1 Macc. 1:10); in the New as a prototype of the Antichrist (Rev. 13:5).



THE SECOND DAY OF AUGUST

August 2

2 августа

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

Translation of the Relics of the Holy First Martyr and Archdeacon Stephen

Перенесение мощей святого первомученика и архидиакона Стефана

After the Holy Archdeacon Stephen had been stoned by the Jews (Acts 7:55–60), his honorable body lay unburied for a day and a night; it had been cast out to be devoured by dogs, beasts and birds; yet nothing touched the body, for the Lord guarded it. On the second night the renowned teacher of the Law in Jerusalem, Gamaliel[1], mentioned in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 5:34, 22:3), who had begun to incline toward the faith of Christ and had become a secret friend of the holy Apostles, sent reverent men to take the body of the First Martyr unnoticed; he carried it to his village, which took its name from its owner, Kafargamala, that is, the village of Gamaliel; it lay twenty *poprishche*[2] from Jerusalem. Here Gamaliel performed an honorable burial of the body of St. Stephen, placing it in a cave in his own new tomb. Afterwards Nicodemus, "a ruler of the Jews," who had come to Jesus Christ by night (Jn. 3:1–2), reposed, weeping over the tomb of St. Stephen; and the same Gamaliel buried him near the tomb of the First Martyr. Then Gamaliel himself, having received holy Baptism together with his son Avivus, and having lived in piety for some time in the Christian faith, also died; both were buried in the same cave, beside the tombs of Stephen and Nicodemus.

1. Gamaliel was a famous Jewish teacher of the law who held a high place in the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, respected by all the people, so that he was called "the glory of the law." Tradition says that he, together with his son Aviv, was baptized by the Apostles Peter and John.
2. A measure of distance, equal to approximately 690 of our sazhens.

After many years, when the persecutors who for a long time had harried the Church of God had perished, and the days of Christian emperors had come with the conversion of Constantine the Great, days of ecclesiastical peace and of piety shining everywhere, then the honorable relics of the holy First Martyr Stephen and of the God-pleasing men buried with him, Nicodemus, Gamaliel and Avivus, were discovered by divine revelation.

They were discovered by the priest Lucian of the aforementioned village, after the following vision. At the third hour of one night, from Thursday to Friday, there appeared to Lucian in a dream a certain elder of radiant appearance, of tall stature, adorned with grey hair, with an elongated beard, clothed in white garments adorned with golden-hued images of crosses; in his hand the elder held a golden staff. Prodding the priest in the side with it, he called him by name three times:

"Lucian! Lucian, Lucian!"

Then he began to speak:

"Go to Jerusalem and say to the holy Archbishop John: 'How long shall we remain shut up? Why do you not open us? For in the days of your hierarchy it is fitting that we should be made manifest. Open, do not delay, our tomb, where our relics lie in neglect, now soaked by the rain, now trampled by the feet of unbelievers. I am concerned not so much for myself as for the saints who lie with me, worthy of great honor. Open the relics pointed out to you, that God may open the doors of His mercy to a world beset by many calamities.'"

The priest Lucian, filled with terror, asked the man who had appeared to him:

"Who are you, lord? And whom do you mean by those who are with you?"

"I," the one who appeared answered, "am Gamaliel, the tutor and teacher of the Apostle Paul; and with me rests the lord Stephen the archdeacon, who was stoned by the Jews and the chief priests of Jerusalem for the faith of Christ. His body, cast out to be devoured by dogs, beasts and birds, I took by night and brought to this village, and laid in my cave in a tomb prepared for myself, desiring to share with him the same lot in the resurrection and the grace of the Lord. In another tomb,

in the same cave, lies the lord Nicodemus, who was taught the holy faith by Christ the Lord Himself and who (after the Ascension of the Lord) received holy Baptism from the Apostles. The Jews, learning of his faith in Christ and of his Baptism, were filled with wrath and wished to kill him as they had Stephen; yet they did not do so out of regard for me, since Nicodemus was my kinsman. The Jews took away his office and joined his possessions to the church property; then, cursing him, they drove him out of the city with much dishonor and reproach. I then took him into my village and cared for him until his death; and when he died, I buried him near the relics of the First Martyr Stephen. There also, in a third tomb, hewn into the cave wall, I buried my beloved son Avivus, who died in the twentieth year of his life, and who had received holy Baptism together with me from the Apostles of Christ. With them, as I was dying, I bade that my own body also be laid."

"Where shall we seek you?" asked the priest.

"Seek us," answered Gamaliel, "before the village, on the southern side, in the field of Delagavri (that is, the field of the men of God)."

Awakening from sleep, the priest gave thanks to God and prayed thus:

"Lord Jesus Christ! If this appearance is from Thee and not a delusion, command that it be repeated up to three times."

And Lucian began to fast, taking only dry bread, until the following Friday, remaining in prayer and disclosing the vision to no one.

At the third hour of the night on the next Friday, Gamaliel appeared again to the priest Lucian, as before.

"Why," he asked, "have you disregarded my command to go and tell Archbishop John all that was said to you?"

"Forgive me, my lord," answered the priest, "I was afraid to go at once after the first vision and report it, lest I should prove to be a liar; therefore I besought the Lord to send you to me a second and a third time, that I might be assured of the truth."

Then Gamaliel, stretching forth his hand, said:

"Peace be to you, priest; rest!"

And he seemed to be withdrawing from the priest's sight.

Then, turning to him again, he said:

"Lucian! You are thinking about how to find and recognize the relics of each of us; so look, and understand what is shown to you."

Saying this, he brought the priest four baskets; three of them appeared to be of gold, and the fourth of silver. One of the golden baskets was filled with red flowers, the second with fragrant saffron. Gamaliel placed the first golden basket, with red flowers, on the priest's right side in the east; the second, golden, with white flowers, he placed on the north side; and the third and fourth baskets he placed together on the west side, opposite the first, which stood in the east.

"What does this mean, lord?" asked the priest of Gamaliel, who was showing him the baskets.

He answered:

"These are our tombs, in which we rest. The first golden basket with red flowers, placed to the east, is the tomb of St. Stephen, who was reddened with martyr's blood for Christ; the second golden basket with white flowers, standing to the north, is the tomb of the lord Nicodemus; the third, also a golden basket with white flowers, standing to the west, is my tomb; the fourth basket, silver, full of fragrant saffron and standing beside mine, is the tomb of my son Avivus, who was pure from sin in body and soul from his mother's womb and who died in unblemished virginity."

After these words Gamaliel became invisible, and the baskets became invisible too.

After this vision the priest gave thanks to God and intensified his fasting and prayer until the third Friday, hoping to be granted a third appearance. And again, on the night of the third Friday, the same honorable and radiant Gamaliel appeared to the priest and spoke threateningly:

"Why until now have you not taken care to go to the archbishop and disclose what has been revealed and said to you? Do you not see what drought and sorrow there are under heaven? Yet you are careless. Are there not in the deserts holy men, better than you in life, worthy of this revelation? But passing them by, we wish to be made manifest through you. Therefore arise, go, and tell the archbishop to open the place

where we rest, and to build a church here, so that through our prayers the Lord may be merciful to His people."

The priest, rising and giving thanks to God, went with haste to Jerusalem, where he told Archbishop John of the threefold vision and command he had received. The archbishop wept for joy and said:

"Blessed be the Lord God, the lover of mankind, who wills to show us His mercy through the revelation of His saints. When we are granted to discover their relics, I must bring the relics of the First Martyr Stephen here to the city, where he labored against the Jews, where he saw the heavens opened and Christ God standing in His glory (Acts 7:1–60). And you, my son," he said to the priest, "go to that field and find the place where the saints lie; dig down to their tomb and report to me."

The priest, returning from the city to his village, gathered reverent men and went with them to the field of Delagavri. In the middle of this field was a hill; thinking that the relics of the saints lay here, he wished to dig, but first he spent the whole night in prayer on that hill. On that same night St. Gamaliel appeared to a monk named Nugetius, who dwelt near those places, saying:

"Go and tell Lucian the priest not to trouble himself digging up that hill, for we do not lie there; let him seek us by the thicket, on the southern side; there we are buried. They laid us on that hill when they carried us to burial, and here, according to an ancient custom, they made lamentation over us; as a witness to this lamentation over us, the hill was heaped up."

Rising up, the monk set out as he had been directed, and on the aforementioned hill he found the priest Lucian with many men, who had already begun to dig. Then the monk told Lucian what he had seen and heard. The priest glorified God, who had revealed another witness to the revelation. They proceeded to the thicket beside which they found a stone with the Hebrew inscription *Heliel*, that is, “servants of God.” Digging around the stone and shifting it from its place, they found a narrow entrance to a cave. Entering the cave with a candle, they saw coffins hollowed into the walls and in them the relics of the saints. The entrance to the cave faced south, so that on the right, to-

ward the east, lay the coffin of St. Stephen; opposite the entrance, to the north, was the coffin of St. Nicodemus; on the western side, opposite St. Stephen, rested St. Gamaliel with his son, as had been previously indicated to the priest by the vision of the baskets. Immediately the priest reported the discovery of the holy relics[3] to John, Archbishop of Jerusalem.

The archbishop, taking with him two bishops who happened to be present, Eleutherius of Sebaste and Eleutherius of Jericho, hastened to the place of the discovery of the relics. Widening the entrance to the cave, they went inside. When they opened the coffin of the Protomartyr, the earth immediately trembled, and people worthy in their lives heard above them the voices of angels singing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace!" A fragrance issued from the relics of the saint such as no man had ever before perceived; this ineffable fragrance spread through the air for ten *poprishche*, and all who were present thought they were as if in Paradise. Many people came with the archbishop from Jerusalem and the surrounding villages; among those who came were many sick people suffering from various infirmities: the blind, the lame, those tormented by internal diseases and by demons, those covered with sores and ulcers; all of them received healing. The number of those healed amounted to seventy-three persons. Then, taking the relics of the four servants of God, they carried them to the hill with the singing of psalms and other sacred hymns; the people touched them, kissing them with reverence. Soon the archbishop built on that hill a church in the name of the newly found saints and placed in it the relics of Nicodemus, Gamaliel and Avivus; the relics of the holy Archdeacon Stephen he solemnly transferred to Jerusalem and placed in the church that stood on Holy Zion.

In these same times a certain noble man, the senator Alexander, together with his wife Juliana, came from Constantinople to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places. Having seen the miracles that took place at the tomb of the holy Protomartyr Stephen, Alexander built in the city a stone church in his name and earnestly asked the archbishop to transfer

3. This uncovering of the relics took place in the year 415.

the relics of St. Stephen into it. The archbishop, moved by his fervent entreaty, granted the request. Some time later Alexander fell ill in Jerusalem with a mortal sickness, and he bound his wife by an oath, charging her to make a reliquary like that of the Protomartyr and to place him in it beside the relics of St. Stephen. Having given this charge, he died. His wife fulfilled her husband's last wish: she had a reliquary made like that of St. Stephen and gave her husband a solemn burial beside the reliquary of the Protomartyr. And she lived in Jerusalem near the aforementioned church, not wishing to be separated from her deceased husband; she believed that he was alive for God.

Since Alexander's wife was still young, beautiful and, moreover, wealthy, many of the nobles urged her to a second marriage. But she, as a chaste woman, would by no means consent to a second marriage; she firmly resolved to remain faithful to her first husband, hoping to share with him in the resurrection the same lot prepared for the righteous (Mt. 25:34). When one of the noblemen, a high official, pressed her strongly to marry him, Juliana, wishing to rid herself of him, devised the following plan: to take her husband's body and return with it to her homeland, Constantinople, although eight years had already passed since her husband's repose. She asked the archbishop not to forbid her to take her husband's body; the archbishop did not agree. Then Juliana at once wrote to her father, who lived in Constantinople, asking him to obtain from the emperor a decree by which she might take her husband's body without hindrance and come to Constantinople. Before long the desired permission came from the emperor, and they showed it to the archbishop. Seeing the emperor's letter, the archbishop could no longer resist and gave his blessing for Juliana's request to be granted. She, having opened with the blessing the ground in the place where the two reliquaries stood, that of the holy Protomartyr Stephen and that of her husband Alexander, took the reliquary with the relics of the saint in place of her husband's reliquary; Juliana acted thus as though deceived, but in fact by the will of God and by the desire of the Protomartyr. Placing the reliquary on a cart drawn by mules, Juliana set out on the journey. It was evening when she left Jerusalem, and on that same night over the relics being carried there was heard in the air the voice

of angels singing praise to God, and from the reliquary issued a great fragrance, like myrrh poured out in abundance. Cries of demons were also heard, shouting from afar:

"Woe to us! For Stephen is coming and striking us!"

The servants of Juliana, hearing all this, were frightened and said to their mistress:

"What does this mean, mistress, that various voices are heard calling the name of Stephen? Are we not carrying the reliquary of the Protomartyr Stephen instead of the reliquary of our master Alexander?"

She answered them with tears of joy:

"Be silent, children; everything is being done as is pleasing to God and to His holy servant."

Arriving at the seaside city of Ascalon, they found a ship bound for Constantinople; having paid the shipmaster the due fare, they embarked with the relics of the saint and began the voyage. When the ship was in the middle of the sea, a terrible storm arose, so that the ship heeled over; all were afraid, seeing the towering waves; but then the holy Protomartyr Stephen appeared visibly to the seafarers and said:

"I am with you; do not fear!"

Having said this, he became invisible, and at once the sea grew calm, and the rest of the voyage was safe; over the relics of the saint a light appeared at night, a strong fragrance issued from the reliquary, and in the air the singing of angels was heard. When they came to anchor at Chalcedon, they resolved to remain there five days. The inhabitants of the city learned of the relics of St. Stephen; they hurried to the ship, bringing with them the sick, and all the sick who were in the city received healing through the coming of the Protomartyr; demons were also driven away from people, and they cried out:

"Stephen, stoned by the Jews, has come and tortures us cruelly and pursues us everywhere, on land and on sea!"

Sailing from Chalcedon, the ship safely reached Constantinople. The pious Juliana went to her father and told him in detail everything about the relics of the holy Archdeacon Stephen. Then they went together with her father to the emperor and the patriarch and told them the same; and all were filled with great joy. The patriarch with the clergy

and all the people went down to the quay to meet the relics of the Protomartyr. Carrying the reliquary out of the ship, they placed it on the imperial carriage and conveyed it with psalm-singing toward the palace, for so the emperor had commanded that it be brought into the palace. How many miracles took place at this time at the holy relics it is impossible to say; in short, all who were afflicted with any sicknesses or diseases received healing. When the solemn procession reached the "Baths of Constantine"[4], the mules drawing the imperial carriage with the relics stopped; and however much the servants beat them, urging them to go farther, they could by no means be moved from the spot. Then one of the mules, by God's command receiving the gift of speech, said:

"Why do you beat us in vain? It is in this very place that the holy Protomartyr Stephen wills to be laid."

Hearing this, all those present were filled with great astonishment and awe and glorified God. The emperor at once commanded that a stone church be begun on this spot; and before long a beautiful church was built in the name of the holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen, and in it his honorable relics were laid, to the glory and praise of the Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit[5]; to Him be honor and glory from us sinners also, worship and thanksgiving, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Thy head was crowned with a royal crown through the sufferings which thou didst endure in Christ God, O Stephen, first sufferer among the martyrs; for thou didst rebuke the frenzy of the Jews, and thou didst behold thy Savior at the right hand of the Father. Pray to Him, therefore, for our souls.

4. These baths were founded by Constantine the Great, continued by his son Constantius, and completed in the year 427 by Theodosius the Younger. Today they are called Teukur-Hamam and are located on the 4th hill.

5. In the year 1200 our Russian pilgrim Antony was in this church; he saw in it the forehead of the protomartyr, struck by stones and stitched together.

Kontakion, Tone 6:

Thou wast the first to be sown on earth by the heavenly Husbandman, O all-praised Stephen. Thou wast the first to pour out thy blood on earth for Christ, O blessed one; thou wast the first to be crowned by Him with the wreath of victory in heaven, O beginning of the sufferers, crown-bearer among the martyrs, first sufferer.

* * *

Repose of the Holy and Righteous Basil the Blessed, Wonderworker of Moscow

Преставление святого и праведного Василия Блаженного, чудотворца Московского

This blessed Basil lived in the reign of the right-believing Tsar and Grand Prince John Vasilyevich[6], and under the rule of the Most Holy Macarius, Metropolitan of Moscow and All Russia. His father was named James, and his mother Anna. Through their prayers he was asked of God, and given to them according to their faith. From his early years he was inflamed with love for God and began to live according to His commandments. Then, leaving his father's house and his kinsfolk, the blessed Basil, in hope of the future blessings, exchanged perishable possessions for spiritual ones: for in place of a father he had the cutting off of the burden of sins; in place of a mother, purity; in place of brethren, the desire to strive toward the heavenly Jerusalem; and in place of children, the sighs of the heart. And in order to obtain all this, he wore himself out with many and severe ascetic labors. The blessed man was so poor that he had not even a small cave for himself, and he wore no clothing on his body, but remained always without dwelling and went naked both in summer and in winter, freezing with

6. The blessed Basil was born in the first years of the reign of the Grand Prince of Moscow John Vasilyevich III (1462–1505), in the village of Yelakhov, then near Moscow, where Yelakhovskaya and Basmannaya streets now stand. At the age of 16 he took upon himself the ascetic labor of foolishness and labored in it for 72 years. He became known in the reign of John IV Vasilyevich the Terrible, to whom he became known through Metropolitan Macarius (1543–1564), who greatly honored the blessed man.

cold in winter and suffering from the heat in summer. Constantly present amid noise and shouting, yet keeping his soul free from the passions, he always lived for Christ's sake the life of a fool-for-Christ. He said nothing and presented himself as if deprived of the gift of speech, desiring thereby to hide his virtues from men and to be known only to God. But "a city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Mt. 5:14). By reason of the purity of the blessed man's life and his unconquerable patience, the report of him reached the ears of the right-believing Tsar and Grand Prince John Vasilyevich, Autocrat of All Russia, to whom the Most Reverend Metropolitan Macarius told of his life. Both of them greatly marveled at his patience, and glorified God that He had bestowed in their time such a holy man.

Thus, steadfastly struggling in labors and patience, enduring hunger and thirst, and daily exposing himself to mortal dangers, the blessed Basil lived out his life. At last, falling ill, he took to his bed. The right-believing Tsar and Grand Prince John Vasilyevich, Autocrat of All Russia, hearing of the saint's approaching departure to God, came to him together with his pious Tsaritsa and Grand Princess Anastasia and with his noble sons, the Tsarevichs John and Theodore, to visit him and receive his blessing. The blessed man, being near death and already at his last breath, prophetically said to the Tsarevich Theodore:

"Everything that belongs to your forefathers will be yours, and you will be their heir."

After these words the blessed man committed his soul into the hands of God. From his body the whole city was filled with fragrance, and a multitude of the city's inhabitants gathered for his burial. A touching sight was revealed. The Tsar and the princes themselves carried the body of the blessed man on their shoulders to the holy church; the bishops and priests with all the clergy, glorifying him, sang psalms and church hymns, while the people, with tears, cried out, saying:

"Most blessed Basil! Pray fervently to Christ our God for our city of Moscow and for all the Russian cities and villages, for our Christ-loving Tsar, his pious Tsaritsa, and their noble children, and be a helper to his host in victory and in overcoming the adversaries."

Taking part in the burial of the blessed man, the Tsar and the Tsaritsa shed from their eyes tears both joyful and sorrowful: joyful, because in such a repose of the saint they saw proof of his perfection and his enrollment in the choir of the saints; sorrowful, because they had lost such a valiant ascetic. And already then many received healing from touching the holy relics of the blessed man. The Most Reverend Metropolitan Macarius with the holy council, having sung psalms and funeral hymns over the body of the saint, buried him with honor on the 2nd day of the month of August, 1552[7]. The whole of his life was 88 years, of which he spent 72 years in foolishness. The Lord glorified the blessed man with miracles also after his death, in 1588. To our God be glory now, always, and forever.

Troparion, Tone 8:

Thy life, O Basil, is without falsehood, and thy purity is undefiled; for Christ's sake thou didst wear out thy body with fasting and vigil, with frost and with the warmth of the sun, with foul weather and rainclouds; and thy face shone as the sun. And now the peoples of Russia, both tsars and princes and all the people, come to thee, glorifying thy holy repose. Therefore pray to Christ God that He deliver us from barbarian captivity and civil strife, and grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Led by the Spirit of God, most blessed Basil, thou didst shake off worldly tumult and didst abhor the turmoil of life; thou didst put off the garments of corruption and didst clothe thyself in the robe of impassibility; thou didst flee the snares of the deceitful ruler of

7. The body of the blessed Basil was buried near the church of the Holy Trinity on the Trench, where in 1554 John the Terrible commanded the building of the Intercession Cathedral, in memory of the conquest of Kazan, known more under the name of the Church of St. Basil the Blessed. In 1586 the relics of the blessed Basil began to pour forth many healings, and in the same year, by command of Emperor Theodore Ioannovich, a church in his name was built over the place of the blessed man's burial (the present Basil's chapel of the Intercession Cathedral), a silver, gilded reliquary adorned with pearls and precious stones was made, and it was established to celebrate his memory on August 2. The relics of the blessed man to this day repose beneath a covering in this church.

the world, and wast a stranger in thy own nation; and choosing the heavenly riches above earthly wealth, thou didst win the crowns of patience. And now, most blessed Basil, pray to Christ God for those who keep thy holy memory, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, most blessed Basil.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the holy hieromartyr Stephen, Pope of Rome, who suffered martyrdom and died on August 2 in the year 257, in the reign of Valerian.

On the same day, the memory of the blessed Basil, who labored in the Monastery of the Savior-on-the-Stone on Kubensky Island of the Vologda district.



THE THIRD DAY OF AUGUST

August 3

3 августа

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

Our Venerable Fathers Isaac, Dalmatius and Faustus

Преподобные отцы наши Исаакий, Далмат и Фавст

Venerable Dalmatius lived in the reign of Theodosius the Great[1]. He served in the army[2] and enjoyed the esteem of the emperor. Then, for God's sake, despising all worldly things, he left his wife and children[3]; taking with him only his son Faustus, he went to Venerable Isaac, who had a monastery near Constantinople. Here they were tonsured into the monastic order by Venerable Isaac, and both led a God-pleasing life, constantly observing a strict fast. When Venerable Isaac[4], having already reached deep old age, felt the approach of death, he gathered the brethren; after giving them his final instruction, he appointed in his place as hegumen Venerable Dalmatius, from whose name the monastery itself afterward received the name of Dalmatian[5]. Venerable Dalmatius was ordained priest by Atticus, Patriarch of Constantinople[6]. He lived a life full of abstinence, and once during the Great Lent he did not partake of food for forty days[7]; by fasting and prayer Venerable Dalmatius overcame the power of the demons. He also struggled against the visible servants of the devil, the heretics, the

1. Theodosius the Great — emperor 379–395.
2. In the second guards regiment, which were then called *scholarii*.
3. Daughters.
4. Concerning the God-pleasing life and great zeal for the faith of Venerable Isaac, which prompted him to fearlessly rebuke the impious emperor Valens, to whom he foretold destruction, and concerning his blessed end, sufficient information is given under the 30th day of the month of May; whoever wishes may read it there.
5. Venerable Isaac died in 383.
6. According to other, more reliable information, he was appointed superior of the monastery by Patriarch Nectarius (381–397), not by Atticus (408–425).

Nestorians, who blasphemed the Most Pure Mother of God[8]: Venerable Dalmatius was an active helper of the holy fathers of the Third Ecumenical Council, which sat under the emperor Theodosius the Younger at Ephesus[9]. For this, Venerable Dalmatius earned the love of the emperor and of the holy fathers, who made him archimandrite of the Dalmatian monastery. Having thus devoted almost his entire life to the service of God, Venerable Dalmatius passed into eternity in deep old age[10]. – Venerable Faustus, like his father, was a great ascetic; he strictly observed the monastic rules, and among them especially fasting[11]. Having completed the course of his earthly life here, he removed to the eternal mansions, and in immortal life he was counted among the choir of Venerable Fathers.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having shone forth by fasting as luminaries, and having refuted the heresies that corrupted the faith, let us praise Isaac in hymns,

7. And afterward, having taken food, for 43 days before the feast of the Ascension of Christ he remained in ecstasy (rapture), and during this time he was granted divine visions, and he related in what places three of the brethren of their monastery, who were at the feast in the church of the Maccabees, were standing—by which he acquired universal glory. St. Proclus, Patriarch (434–446), while Venerable Dalmatius was still alive, praises him very highly in a letter to John of Antioch.

8. The heretical Nestorians maintained that the Most Holy Virgin Mary should not be called Theotokos, because she bore not God but only a man, with whom, besides her, the Word of God, eternally begotten of the Father, was united; the man Jesus, born of Mary, was only the dwelling-place of the Divinity and the instrument of our salvation; this man, through the coming of the Holy Spirit, became Christ, that is, the Anointed One, and the Word of God dwelt with him in a special moral or relative union. The Nestorian heresy was condemned at the Third Ecumenical Council.

9. Learning that the Orthodox faith was threatened with violence at the Council of Ephesus, St. Dalmatius, standing at the head of hegumens, monks and Christians faithful to Orthodoxy, went to the palace of the emperor and spoke boldly before the emperor for the truth; until then he had not gone out of the monastery for 48 years, although the emperor had asked him to do so, wishing that this great ascetic should take part in the common prayers for deliverance from the earthquake.

10. The time of his death is not known with precision; it can only be said that he lived still in the time of St. Proclus, Patriarch of Constantinople. St. Demetrius of Rostov says that according to the unpublished Life of Isaac, Dalmatius and Faustus, St. Dalmatius died at no less than 90 years of age on August 2, was buried on August 3 under Patriarch Proclus, consequently after 434, and probably about 440.

11. No details of his life have been preserved.

and with Dalmatius and Faustus, as servants of Christ, beseech Him for us all.

* * *

Life of Venerable Cosmas, the Eunuch Hermit

Житие преподобного Космы, скопца отшельника

In the book *Leimonarion*[12] is related the following account from the presbyter Abba Basil of the Monastery of Vikentios, concerning Venerable Cosmas.

"During my stay in Antioch," said the presbyter, "Abba Cosmas, a eunuch from the Lavra[13] of Pharan, came to the most holy Patriarch Gregory from Jerusalem. He was a strict faster, a zealot of the faith, a firm guardian of the dogmas of the Church, and he knew the Holy Scripture excellently. A few days after his arrival in Antioch, the elder reposed; the patriarch commanded that his honorable body be laid in his own monastery, where a certain bishop had been buried. One day I went to the tomb of the holy elder to venerate his relics, and there I saw a beggar who was asking alms of those entering the church. Noticing me, he bowed three times at the tomb, and, having offered the priestly prayer for the repose of the departed, he said to me:

'Great is the elder, Lord Abba[14], whom you buried here two months ago.'

'How do you know?' I asked.

12. *Leimonarion* (from Greek *leimon*, meadow, pasture) — a very widespread hagiographical work of John Moschus, a Greek monk (d. 622). Traveling through the monasteries of Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Cyprus, Constantinople and Rome, Moschus gathered a mass of narratives about the lives of Christian ascetics, and also collected many of their sayings and instructions; all this material he set forth in his *Leimonarion*. — Known Russian translations of the *Leimonarion* are: 1) *The Spiritual Meadow* by Philaret, Archbishop of Chernigov (Moscow, editions of 1848, 1850, 1853), and 2) by an anonymous editor: *Meadow, that is, Flower-garden* (Moscow, 1859).

13. Lavra – from the Greek, a part of a city, a lane; properly, a row of cells arranged around the dwelling of the superior in the form of lanes, enclosed by a fence or wall. The monks in the lavras led a hermit's life, each labouring in his own cell, gathering for divine services on the first and last day of the week, and on the remaining days keeping strict silence; life in the lavras was much harder than in other monasteries. From the most ancient times the name *lavra* has been applied to populous monasteries of great importance. It first appeared in Egypt, and afterwards in Palestine. At present, among us, the name *lavra* is used exclusively as an honorary title.

14. That is, father.

He answered:

'I was paralyzed for twelve years—I speak the truth, I do not lie—and through this elder the Lord granted me healing. When I am in sorrow, he comes and consoles me, bringing me relief. I will not hide from you another miracle concerning him: from the very time you buried him, I have heard every night how he says to the bishop: "Do not touch me, and do not draw near, heretic; you are the enemy of the holy catholic Church."'

Having heard this, I went to the patriarch and told him my conversation with the beggar; at the same time I asked the patriarch to take the body of the elder and lay it in another place. But the most holy patriarch said to this:

'Believe me, my son, that no harm can be done to the holy Cosmas by a heretic. Everything you have told has happened so that the zeal for the faith and the virtue of the elder might not be hidden from us, and so that the impiety of the bishop might be revealed, and he might not be honored as Orthodox.'"

This same presbyter Basil also relates another account concerning Venerable Cosmas:

"I came to him in the Lavra, and the elder told me about himself that once there came to his mind the question: what is meant by the words of the Lord addressed to the disciples: 'But now, he who has a purse, let him take it, and likewise a bag; and he who has none, let him sell his garment and buy a sword' (Lk. 22:36), and His answer, 'Enough,' when they said, 'Behold, here are two swords' (Lk. 22:38). The elder long pondered these sayings of the Lord, and not coming to any conclusion, he set out at noon for the Lavra of Pirga to ask Abba Theophilus for an explanation. On the road, which ran through the desert, as he approached Kalamon, he saw a huge serpent coming down from the Mount of Kalamon; the serpent was so large that by its weight it left a deep trace on the ground, and the coils of its body formed great arcs; it was just crossing the elder's path. Perceiving the wiles of the devil, who wished to make the venerable one abandon his intention, the elder armed himself with prayer and fearlessly continued on his way: kept by the power of God, he passed without any harm through the

coils of the serpent's body as if through a gate. Coming to Abba Theodore, he put his question to him and received this answer:

'The two knives signify the two kinds of God-pleasing life: activity, or labor, and contemplation, or the immersion of the mind in prayerful contemplation of God. Whoever possesses these two virtues is a perfect man.'

To his reports concerning Venerable Cosmas, the presbyter Basil added the following:

"During my ten-year stay in the Lavra of Pharan with Venerable Cosmas, to whom I came at the very beginning of my monastic life, he constantly instructed me with his God-inspired conversations. Once, discussing with me the salvation of the soul, he quoted an expression from the words of St. Athanasius the Great, and at the same time remarked:

'Whenever you hear or find in a book some saying of St. Athanasius, then, if you do not have paper, write it on your garment.'"

Such was the reverence Venerable Cosmas had for the great fathers and teachers of the Church; and with them, at the end of his God-pleasing life here on earth, he received a portion of eternal life by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, now and ever.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the repose of Venerable Antony the Roman, in Novgorod, in the year 1147.

THE FOURTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 4

4 августа

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

Holy Seven Youths of Ephesus

Святые семь отроков ефесских

In the days of the impious Roman emperor Decius,[1] the Church of Christ was persecuted, and many servants of Christ—clergy, church servers, and other faithful—were compelled, fearing the merciless tormentor, to hide wherever each one could. When Decius, burning with hatred toward Christians, came from Carthage[2] to Ephesus,[3] he first of all commanded the inhabitants of the surrounding districts to assemble for the offering of sacrifices to the idols. Blinded by his pride, the emperor set up idols in the midst of the city and erected altars before them; at his command, the city authorities were first to offer sacrifices upon them together with the emperor. At this public festal sacrifice the earth was soaked with blood and the air was filled with stench and smoke, so many animals were slaughtered and burned. Two days later, an order went out from the emperor to gather all the Christians and compel them to offer sacrifice to the idols. The Christians were sought out everywhere: they were dragged from their houses and caves, bound together in one throng, and led with dishonor into the square where the people assembled to offer sacrifice. Some of the followers of Christ, who lacked steadfastness of soul, fearing the torments that awaited them, fell away from the faith and, before everyone's eyes,

1. Decius – emperor 249–251.
2. Carthage was a city on the northern coast of Africa, which gave its name to the great West-Phoenician state founded by it, a state that for a long time was Rome's rival, until in 146 B.C. it became a province of Rome.
3. Ephesus was the chief city of Iconia in Asia Minor, near the mouth of the Cayster, the centre of all the trade of the Near East in antiquity. It was famed for the temple of Artemis, Diana.[1*]

worshipped the idols. Other Christians, who had either witnessed or heard of such deeds on the part of their fellow believers, grieved in their souls, mourning their apostasy from Christ and their fall into idolatry; but those who were firm in the faith and strong in spirit went fearlessly to their torments, and, dying under various tortures, manfully laid down their souls for their Lord. So great was the multitude of the tortured that their blood, flowing from the inflicted wounds and from the breaking of bones, poured out upon the earth like water; the bodies of the martyrs were cast away like refuse by the roadside, or hung in rows upon the city walls, and their heads were set upon special stakes before the city gates. Ravens, hawks, and other birds of prey flew to the walls and devoured the bodies of those who had died for the faith. For the hidden and concealed Christians it was a great sorrow that they could not take and bury the bodies of their brethren, which were eaten by the birds; raising their hands to heaven, they prayed to the Lord with tears that He would deliver His Church from such torment.

At this time there were in Ephesus seven youths, sons of respected city officials, who served in the army; their names were as follows: Maximilian, Iamblichus, Martinian, John, Dionysius, Exacustodian, and Antoninus. Not bound by ties of blood kinship, they were bound by ties of spiritual kinship—by faith and the love of Christ; they prayed and fasted together, co-crucified with Christ through the mortification of the flesh and the strict keeping of chastity. Seeing the constant oppression and cruel executions of Christians, they were grieved in their souls and could not restrain their tears and sighs. When the pagans went together with the emperor to offer sacrifice, the holy youths withdrew from them; coming into a Christian church, they fell down on the ground before the Lord, sprinkled dust upon their heads, and offered up tearful prayers to Him. Such actions on their part did not escape the notice of certain people (at that time each one watched his friend to see to what god he prayed, and brother betrayed brother, father son, son father; no one concealed his neighbor if he noticed that he prayed to Christ). They at once went to the emperor and said:

"O King, live forever! You summon Christians from afar, urging them to offer sacrifice, while those who are near you disdain your royal power and, not heeding your commands, transgress them by holding to the Christian faith."

The enraged emperor asked who exactly was opposing his commands. The informers said:

"Maximilian, the son of the city governor, and six other youths, sons of the noble citizens of Ephesus; all of them already hold considerable military ranks."

The emperor at once commanded that they be seized, bound in chains, and brought before him. The holy youths were soon brought to the emperor, their eyes not yet dry from tears and traces of dust on their heads. Looking at them, the tormentor said:

"Why did you not appear with us at the festival in honor of the gods, whom the whole universe worships? Go now and, like the others, offer the due sacrifice to the gods."

Saint Maximilian answered:

"We confess the One God and Heavenly King, who has filled heaven and earth with His glory, and to Him every hour we offer the spiritual sacrifice of faith and prayer; but to your idols, lest we defile our souls, we will not offer sacrifices consisting of the burning of animals, accompanied by stench and smoke."

After such an answer, the emperor commanded that the youths' military belts—the sign of the high position they held—be taken from them:

"You are not worthy," he said, "to serve in the emperor's army, for you obey neither him nor the gods."

Yet, seeing their beauty and youth, the emperor took pity on them and said:

"It would be merciless to hand over to torments such young men at once—therefore, beautiful youths, I give you time for reflection, so that, coming to your senses, you may offer sacrifice to the gods and in this way preserve your lives."

Then he commanded that their chains be removed and that they be released until the appointed time, while he himself departed for another city, intending to return again to Ephesus.

The holy youths, following the teaching of Christ, used the free time granted them by the emperor for good works: taking gold and silver from their parents' house, they distributed it secretly and openly to the poor. At the same time they took counsel among themselves, saying:

"Let us withdraw for a time from the city while the emperor is away from it; let us go into that great cave which is on the mountain to the east of the city, and there, dwelling in silence, let us fervently pray to the Lord for the gift of strength in the coming confession of His holy name, so that we may appear fearlessly before the tormentor, bravely endure the sufferings, and receive from our Master Christ the unfading crown of glory prepared for faithful servants."

Having thus agreed among themselves, they went to the eastern mountain known as Ochlon, taking with them as much silver as was needed to buy food for several days. Having come into a cave in the mountain, they remained in it for a fairly long time, unceasingly glorifying God and praying for the salvation of their souls. The going into the city to buy what was needed was entrusted to Saint Iamblichus, as the youngest. Saint Iamblichus, a very prudent youth, when going into the city, changed his clothes for rags, so that he would not be recognized; of the money they had brought with them, he set aside a portion for distribution to the poor, and with the rest he bought food. On one of these visits to the city, Saint Iamblichus, concealing his name, inquired when exactly the emperor would return, and whether it would be soon. After a sufficient time, Saint Iamblichus, disguised as a beggar, again came into the city and himself saw the emperor's return from his journey, and heard the order proclaimed in the city that all the governors and military commanders were to prepare for the offering of sacrifices to the gods the following morning—so zealous a pagan was the emperor. Besides this, Iamblichus heard that the emperor had commanded that they, the youths who had been released for a time, be sought out as well, so that they might, together with the other citizens, offer sacrifices to the idols in his presence. Frightened, Iamblichus, taking a little

bread, hastened to his brethren in the cave; here he told them everything he had seen and heard, and also reported that they were already being sought for the offering of sacrifice. These tidings struck them with fear: falling on the ground with weeping and groaning, they prayed to God, committing themselves to His protection and mercy. Rising from prayer, Saint Iamblichus prepared a meal, consisting of the small amount of bread he had brought; it was already evening, and the sun was setting; sitting down, the holy youths refreshed themselves with food, awaiting the sufferings that lay ahead. Having finished their meager meal, they conversed among themselves, encouraging and exhorting one another to manfully endure sufferings for Christ. During this soul-saving conversation they began to be overcome by sleep: their eyes grew heavy from the sorrow of their hearts. But the merciful and loving-kind Lord, who always cares for His Church and His faithful servants, ordained that the seven holy youths should fall asleep a wondrous and extraordinary sleep, wishing in the future to reveal a marvelous sign and to assure the doubters concerning the resurrection of the dead. The saints fell asleep a mortal sleep, their souls were kept in the hand of God, and their bodies lay incorrupt and unchanged, as those of sleepers do.

In the morning the emperor commanded that the seven noble youths be sought out, and after fruitless searching he said to the nobles:

"I pity the youths, because they were of noble birth and distinguished by their beauty; I think that, fearing our wrath, they have fled somewhere and are hiding, although, in our mercy, we are ready to spare those who, repenting, turn back again to the gods."

The nobles answered this:

"Do not grieve, O King, over these youths; those who oppose you and the gods: we have heard that they not only did not repent, but became even more bitter blasphemers of the gods; having distributed to the city's poor a multitude of gold and silver, they vanished without a trace. If you permit, their parents can be summoned and compelled by torture to reveal the place where the sons are."

The emperor, without delay, commanded that the parents of the holy youths be summoned, and said to them:

"Tell me, without concealing anything, where are your sons who have dishonored my kingdom? Instead of them I will have you put to death: for you gave them gold and silver and sent them off somewhere, so that they would not appear before my face."

The parents answered:

"We flee to your mercy, O King! Hear us without wrath: we devise no plots against your kingdom, we never transgress your commandments, and we constantly offer sacrifices to the gods. Why then do you threaten us with death? If our sons have gone astray, it was not we who taught them this; we never gave them gold or silver. They themselves secretly took it, distributed it to the needy, and fled and hid themselves, as we have heard, in the great cave of Mount Ochlon. Many days have now passed and still they do not return. We know not whether they are alive there or not."

The Emperor, having heard them, dismissed the parents, and afterwards commanded that the entrance of the cave be walled up with stones, saying:

"Since they have not repented, have not turned to the gods, and have not come before me, let them from now on see the face of man no more, and let them perish of hunger and thirst in the cave walled up with stones."

The Emperor and the citizens of Ephesus thought that the youths were still alive, not knowing that they had already gone to the Lord. At the time the entrance of the cave was being sealed, two imperial chamberlains, Theodore and Rufinus, secret Christians, inscribed on two tin tablets the sufferings of the seven holy youths, recording also their names. Then they placed these tablets in a little copper box and set the box among the stones laid in the passage of the cave. They reasoned thus: if the Lord should visit His servants before His glorious coming, and the cave should one day be opened and the bodies of the saints be found, then from our account men would learn their names and deeds, and would understand that these bodies were the bodies of martyrs who died in the walled-up cave for confessing Christ. Thus the entrance of the cave was walled up, and upon it a seal was affixed.

Soon after this the impious Decius died. After him there were many other impious emperors who likewise persecuted the Church of God, until from the time of Constantine the Great the age of Christian emperors began. In the days of the pious Emperor Theodosius the Younger[4], when a fairly long time had already passed since the death of Constantine the Great, there appeared heretics who denied the resurrection of the dead, although the Lord Jesus Christ had delivered to His Church a clear teaching on this, removing every doubt. And yet many doubted, and not only laymen but even some bishops became followers of the heresy. From the nobles and bishops who had fallen into heresy, of whom the bishop Theodore of Aegae stood out especially, there arose a strong persecution of the Orthodox. Some of the heretics said that after death men could not look for recompense, for at death not only the body but also the soul is destroyed; others maintained that souls would receive their recompense, but that the bodies would decay and perish.

"How," they said, "can these bodies rise again after whole millennia, when not even their dust remains?"

Thus the heretics reasoned, forgetting in their impiety the words of Christ in the Gospel: "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live" (Jn. 5:25); they forgot also what is written in the prophet Daniel: "many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2), and the prophet Ezekiel, speaking in the name of God: "behold, I will open your graves, and bring you up out of your graves, O My people" (Ezek. 37:12). Forgetting this teaching of Holy Scripture, the heretics caused great disturbances in the Church of God. They brought great sorrow upon the Emperor Theodosius: he earnestly prayed to God with fasting and tears that He, the Creator of all, would deliver His Church from the destructive heresy. The merciful Lord, not wishing that anyone should perish by erring in the truths of the faith, heard the prayer of the Emperor and the tearful lamentations of many faithful, and openly revealed the mys-

4. Theodosius II was emperor from 408 to 450.

tery of the expected resurrection of the dead and of eternal life. By the working of Divine providence the following came to pass. A certain man named Adolius, owner of Mount Ochlon, where in the walled-up cave the sleeping youths lay, wished to build a fold for sheep on a free space on the mountain. In its construction the workmen took the stones with which the entrance of the cave had been walled up; not at all suspecting that there was a cave in the mountain, they thought the stones formed a natural part of the mountain. By cutting out the stones and carrying them to the place of the work, they made an opening at the mouth of the cave, through which a man could freely pass. At this time our Lord Jesus Christ, Lord of life and death, who once raised up Lazarus, dead four days (Jn. 11:39, 43–44), raised up those who had slept for many years (about two hundred) and the seven holy youths: by His Divine command the holy martyrs rose, as if awakening from sleep. Rising, they first offered the morning praise to the Lord, after which, according to custom, they greeted one another. It seemed to them that they had awakened from an ordinary night's sleep, for nothing indicated to them an awakening from death: their garments were in no way damaged, their outward appearance had not changed at all; as before they flourished in health and beauty. Everything involuntarily led the holy youths to think that they had fallen asleep yesterday and now, in the morning, had awakened. Entering into conversation among themselves, they recalled with sorrow the persecution of Christians and that they must go to the city in obedience to the Emperor's command that sacrifices be offered to idols; they were certain that Decius sought them for torments. Turning to the holy Iamblichus, they asked him to tell again what he had heard in the city. Saint Iamblichus answered:

"What I told you yesterday, I will say today as well: the Emperor has commanded all the citizens to be ready for the sacrifice this very day, and has also commanded that we be sought, so that we, together with everyone, may bow down to the idols before his eyes; and if we do not do this, he will hand us over to torments."

Then the holy Maximilian said, addressing them all:

"Brethren, let us go out and appear fearlessly before Decius. How long shall we sit here like cowards? Let us go forth and, without fear

before an earthly king, confess the Heavenly King, the True God, our Lord Jesus Christ; for the glory of His holy Name let us shed our blood and lay down our souls. Let us not fear the tormentor or deadly torments: they cannot deprive us of eternal life, which we await through faith in Christ Jesus. And you, brother Iamblichus, take care to prepare food for us at the usual time: take the silver coin and go into the city, and there buy bread in a greater quantity than yesterday—yesterday you brought little, and we are hungry now. Find out what Decius has commanded concerning us, and return quickly, so that, having strengthened ourselves with food, we may of our own will go out from here and surrender ourselves to torments."

Saint Iamblichus took the silver coin and went to the city; it was very early, dawn had only just begun.

Coming out of the cave, the holy Iamblichus to his surprise saw the stones; what does this mean, he thought, when were they put here? Yesterday they were not here. Descending the mountain, he walked in fear, dreading to enter the city, where he might be recognized and led to the Emperor. Approaching the city gates, the holy Iamblichus noticed with great amazement the honorable Cross upon them, of beautiful artistic workmanship. And wherever he turned his gaze, everywhere he saw with the same amazement other buildings, dwellings, and walls. The holy Iamblichus went to the other gates of the city, and there with bewilderment saw the image of the honorable Cross set upon the wall; he went round all the gates of the city and everywhere saw the holy Crosses. From bewilderment the holy Iamblichus was close to madness. Returning again to the first gates, he thought: what does this mean? Yesterday there were nowhere images of the honorable Cross except those secretly kept by the faithful, and now they are openly set on the gates and walls of the city. Do I really see them, or does it only seem so to me? Am I not dreaming? Taking courage, he entered the city. Having gone a little way, the holy Iamblichus heard that many were swearing by the Name of Christ. He was struck with terror, reflecting: yesterday no one dared openly to pronounce the Name of Christ, and now I hear it from many mouths; evidently this is not Ephesus but some other

city; the buildings are different, and the people wear entirely different clothing. Continuing on his way, he asked one man:

"What is the name of this city?"

"Ephesus," the man answered.

The holy Iamblichus did not believe it and still thought: without doubt I have come into some other city; I must quickly buy bread and hasten to leave the city, lest I lose my way altogether. Approaching the bread-seller, he took out the silver coin and gave it to him in payment for the bread, and stopped, waiting for the purchase and the change. The silver coin was very large and bore an inscription and the image of the most ancient kings. The seller took the coin and showed it to another, the other passed it to a third, and this one to a fourth; others present also came up, and looking at the coin, all marveled at its antiquity, and, looking at the holy Iamblichus, they said to one another in whispers:

"Surely this youth has found some treasure hidden in the days of deep antiquity."

The holy Iamblichus, noticing their whispering, was frightened, thinking that he had been recognized and that they were conspiring to seize him and present him to the Emperor Decius.

"I beg you," he said, "take the silver coin for yourselves; I do not want the change from it."

But those standing around seized the holy Iamblichus and, holding him fast, said:

"Tell us where you are from and how you found a treasure of the ancient kings. Give us a share, and we will not speak of you; but if you refuse to divide it with us, we will hand you over to the judge."

Hearing this, the holy Iamblichus was astonished, and, perplexed, he was silent. They continued:

"This treasure can no longer be concealed. Tell us where it is, and tell us of your own will, before the tortures force you to do so."

Saint Iamblichus did not know what to say to them, and he kept silent like a mute. Then the men took his belt, put it around his neck, and held him in the middle of the marketplace. Word spread among the people that some youth had been seized who had found a treasure. A

great crowd surrounded Saint Iamblichus, and all looked at his face, saying: "He is not from here; we have never seen him before." Saint Iamblichus wished to say that he had found no treasure, but from great astonishment he could not utter a single word. He looked at the crowd, trying to find someone he knew, or someone from his household: his father, his mother, or a servant. Finding no one and recognizing no one, he grew even more astonished. Yesterday everyone knew him as the son of a noble man, and today not only does no one recognize him, but he himself finds no one he knows. The rumor of the seizing of Saint Iamblichus, spreading through the city, reached the city governor and Bishop Stephen[5]. By God's providence, both of them were at that time together and conversing. Both of them ordered that the youth, seized with the silver coin, be brought before them.

During the journey, Saint Iamblichus thought that he was being led to Emperor Decius, and he looked even more intently at the people, hoping to see someone he knew, but all his expectations were in vain. When he was brought before the city governor and the bishop, they took the coin and, examining it, marveled at it, since it belonged to a very ancient time of emperors. Then the city governor asked Saint Iamblichus:

"Where is the treasure you have found? Surely you took this coin from there."

"I know of no treasure," Saint Iamblichus answered. "I know only that I took this coin from my parents, and it does not differ in any way from the ordinary coins used in this city. I am amazed and perplexed at what is being done to me."

"Where are you from?" asked the city governor.

The saint answered:

"I think from this city."

To this the city governor said:

"Whose son are you? Is there anyone here who knows you? Let him come and bear witness to the truth of your words, and we will release you."

5. According to other, more reliable reports, the event described took place under the predecessor of Stephen, St. Memnon, whose memory is kept on December 16.

Saint Iamblichus named by name his father, his mother, his grandfather, his brothers, and other relatives. No one knew them.

"You are speaking untruth," objected the city governor, "naming some strange and unusual names that we have never even heard of."

The holy youth, in perplexity, remained silent with his head bowed. Some of those present said:

"He is a simpleton."

"No, he only pretends to be such in order to escape trouble," others answered.

The city governor began to threaten Saint Iamblichus in anger:

"How can we believe you when you say that you took this coin from among the others used by your parents? For on it are the image and inscription of the ancient emperor Decius, who died many years ago, and the coin is not at all like those in circulation now. Are your parents so old that they remember Emperor Decius and possess his coins? You are still young, not yet thirty, and you wish by your cunning to deceive the elders and the wise men of Ephesus. I will cast you into prison, subject you to punishment, and will not release you until you tell the truth and disclose where the treasure you found is."

During this speech of the city governor, Saint Iamblichus, on the one hand, feared his threats, and on the other, was astonished at the words that Decius lived in ancient times. Falling on his knees, he said:

"I beg you, my lords, answer me the question I ask you, and I myself will tell you everything without compulsion. Is Emperor Decius in the city? Is he alive or not?"

The bishop answered him:

"At present, my son, there is no emperor named Decius in this land. In former years, in ancient times, there indeed was such an emperor; now the pious Theodosius reigns."

Then Saint Iamblichus said:

"I beg you, come with me, and I will show you in the cave of Mount Ochlon my friends, from whom you will be convinced of the truth of what I have said. We indeed, fleeing from Decius, withdrew from here several days ago and hid in that cave. I saw Decius yesterday when he

was entering Ephesus; now I do not know whether this is Ephesus or some other city."

The bishop, pondering, said to himself:

"God wishes to reveal some mystery through this youth."

"Let us go with him," he said to the city governor, "and see: something wondrous is about to take place."

Rising, the bishop and the city governor went with the youth, and behind them followed all the city authorities and a multitude of people. When the procession reached the mountain, Saint Iamblichus entered the cave first. The bishop, following him with the others, found at the entrance to the cave, between two stones, a copper box with two silver seals. Opening the box before everyone, the bishop and the city governor found in it two tin tablets on which was written that seven holy youths, Maximilian, son of the city governor, Iamblichus, Martinian, John, Dionysius, Exacustodian, and Antoninus, had fled from Emperor Decius and hidden in this cave; by Decius' command the entrance to the cave had been walled up with stones, and the holy youths died in it a martyr's death for Christ. After this reading, all were struck with wonder and loudly glorified God.

Entering the cave, they found the holy youths flourishing in beauty; their faces expressed joy and shone with the light of God's grace. The bishop, the city governor, and the people fell at the feet of the holy youths, giving praise to God, who had granted them to see so glorious a wonder. The holy youths told them everything about themselves and about Decius, and how the persecution of Christians had been under him. Immediately the bishop and the city governor sent a letter to the faithful Emperor Theodosius, asking him to send honorable men to see the wonder that the Lord had manifested in his reign:

"For," they wrote, "in our days the Lord has shown in the resurrection of the bodies of the holy youths an image of the future general resurrection, not of the soul only, but of the body as well."

Emperor Theodosius, on receiving the news, was greatly rejoiced and at once, accompanied by nobles and a multitude of people, hastened from Constantinople to Ephesus, where he was met solemnly, as befitted his high station. The bishop, the city governor, and the other city

authorities led the emperor to the cave. When Theodosius, entering the cave, saw the holy youths, like Angels, he fell at their feet, but they, stretching out their hands, raised him from the ground. Rising, the emperor embraced the holy youths with love, and kissing them, could not restrain his tears. Then, sitting down on the ground opposite them, he gazed at them with tenderness and glorified God:

"My lords," he said, "in your countenance I see the very King and Lord of mine, Christ, who once raised Lazarus from the tomb. Now He has raised you also by His all-powerful word, to clearly announce to us the coming resurrection of the dead, when those in the tombs, hearing the voice of the Son of God, shall live and come forth from them incorrupt."

Saint Maximilian said to the emperor:

"Henceforth your kingdom, for the steadfastness of your faith, will be unshakable, and Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God (cf. Mt. 16:16), will preserve it in His Holy Name from every evil. Believe that for your sake the Lord has raised us before the day of the general resurrection."

During a rather lengthy conversation, the holy youths spoke to the emperor also many other truths profitable for the soul, and the emperor, with the bishop, the nobles, and the people, listened to them with spiritual joy. (The Greek chronicler of church events, Nicephorus Callistus, adds that the emperor shared a meal with them every day for a week and served them.) After these conversations, the holy youths, before the eyes of all who were delighting in beholding them, again bowed their heads to the earth and fell asleep, by God's command, in a death like sleep. The emperor wept bitterly over them, and all present could not restrain their tears.

The emperor ordered seven tombs to be prepared of silver and gold, to place in them the bodies of the holy youths. That same night they appeared in a dream to the emperor, commanding him not to disturb them but to leave them to rest on the earth as they had rested before. At the place of the repose of the holy youths a gathering of hierarchs assembled, who, having celebrated a bright feast, worthily honored the holy martyrs. The emperor distributed generous alms to the needy and

destitute of that land, released those held in prisons, and after this returned with joy to Constantinople, glorifying Christ our God, to Whom with us sinners be honor and glory, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.[4983]

Troparion, Tone 4:

Great is the wonder of faith: in the cave, as in a royal chamber, the seven holy youths abode, and they died without corruption; and after many years they arose as from sleep, as an assurance of the resurrection of all mankind. Through their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having despised the corruptible things of the world and received the incorruptible gifts, they abode in death beyond corruption; wherefore, after many years, they arise, having buried all the grievous unbelief. Faithful, let us now praise them with hymns and sing to Christ.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Martyr Eudocia, who suffered in Persia under Sapor, about 362–364.

On the same day, the memory of the Holy Martyr Eleutherius, who served as chamberlain (cubicularius) at the court of Maximian, and who, by his command, was beheaded with the sword for Christ.

NOTES

4983. This marvellous story has very strong and irrefutable proofs of its authenticity: a contemporary, the describer of this event, St. John Kolobos (5th century), speaks of this event in the Life of St. Paisius the Great; the Syriac writer and Orthodox Bishop of Sarugh (in Mesopotamia), James, left a description of this event; in translation it was known to Gregory of Tours (d. 594). The Syrians, the Maronites, who in the 7th century separated from the Orthodox Church, honour the holy youths in their service; they are found in the Ethiopian calendar and in the ancient Roman martyrologies; their story

was known to Muhammad and to many Arab writers. The Cave of the Youths is still shown near Ephesus, on the slopes of Mount Prion. The last report of their relics dates from the 12th century, when our pilgrim to the holy places, Hegumen Daniel, saw them. The subsequent fate of the honourable relics is unknown.



THE FIFTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 5

5 августа

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

Life and Passion of the Holy Martyr Pontius

Житие и страдание святого мученика Понтия

Who can believe, if the Lord does not draw him to Himself? Who can accomplish ascetic labors, if the Lord does not help? Who can be granted the martyr's crown, if Christ does not bestow it? And I, unworthy, says Valerius, the writer of this present Life, who was reared and educated together with the holy martyr Pontius, did not receive such grace as to die together with him for Christ; yet by his labors and martyrdom I hope for mercy from the Lord. All that I say of him, I call Christ and His Angels to witness, I saw with my own eyes, heard with my own ears, and even in part shared with him. For this reason believe also this true narrative, and for your faith you will receive together with the holy martyr a reward from the Lord on the day of the resurrection of the dead.

In Rome[1] there lived an honorable senator named Mark; he was childless, which caused great sorrow both to him and to his wife Julia. In the twenty-second year of their marriage, Julia, to her great joy, perceived that she had conceived; in the fifth month of her pregnancy, going about with her husband to the idol-temples (for both of them were pagans), she came to the temple of Zeus, who was called the Great. Here Julia looked upon a priest who, with a wreath upon his head, was offering sacrifice before the idol; suddenly the priest was seized with violent agitation, and taking off his wreath he began to tear it into pieces, crying out with tears:

1. See below the Life of St. Fabian.

– This woman bears in her womb the one who will destroy this great temple to its foundations and annihilate its gods!

The agitated priest uttered these words several times in a loud voice, which struck terror into all who were present, and especially into Mark and Julia; trembling, they fled from the temple to their house, which stood near the temple. Taking a stone, Julia struck herself on the belly and sides, saying:

– O, would that I had not conceived him by whom the temple will be ruined and the gods overthrown! Better for me to die with him than to bear him!

When the time drew near, she gave birth to a perfectly healthy infant, although all expected that he would be dead, remembering the strong blows with a stone which the mother had dealt herself. Julia wished to kill the newborn, but the father opposed this, saying:

– If Zeus wills it, he himself will avenge himself upon his enemy; but we will not be murderers of our child.

So the boy remained alive and was named Pontius. When the son grew up, his parents placed him in a school, and they never took him with them to the temple. The youth grew not only in years but also in mind: already in his early youth he could justly be called a philosopher; at the same time he was very learned in other sciences as well, since he possessed an excellent memory and wide reading; in his striving after true knowledge, Pontius surpassed all his peers.

Once, early in the morning, he set out to his teacher, and it happened that he passed by a certain Christian house, at the very time when the faithful gathered there together with Pope Pontian[2] were singing the morning psalms. Listening to the singing, Pontius caught the words: "Our God is in heaven; whatsoever He pleases, He does. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; they have eyes, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; they have noses, but they smell not; they have hands, but they handle not; they have feet, but they walk not; neither

2. St. Pontian, Pope of Rome, 230–235.

speak they through their throat. Let those who make them be like unto them, and all who trust in them" (Ps. 113:11–16).

Stopping, he sighed and involuntarily pondered the meaning of this saying; then, moved to tenderness under the action of the grace of the Holy Spirit, Pontius wept and, raising his hands on high, cried out:

– O God, whom I now hear praised, grant me to know Thee!

Then he went to the door of the house and began to knock diligently upon it. Those who looked out from a window above said to the pope:

– Some youth is knocking at the door.

The pope, who already knew everything by revelation of the Holy Spirit, said:

– Go and open to him, that he may come to us, "for of such is the kingdom of God" (Lk. 18:16).

The honorable youth entered the house with only one of his peers and fellow students, Valerius, who wrote the Life of St. Pontius; his slaves he left in the street. Entering the room and seeing that the divine service was being celebrated, the youth withdrew into a corner, where he remained until the end of the service, listening attentively and being moved in heart. Then he approached the holy pope and, falling with tears at his feet, said:

– I beg you, my father, explain to me the meaning of the words which you have just sung: the idols of the pagans are blind and deaf, they do not smell and cannot touch with their hands; especially did the saying strike me: "let those who make them be like unto them, and all who trust in them."

The pope lovingly drew Pontius to himself and said to him:

– I see, my son, that God has enlightened your heart, causing it to strive toward Him. Consider and observe: are not all idols made either of gold, or silver, or bronze, or in general of some substance? Who does not know that stone idols are hewn out of mountains, and from there, placed upon poles, are brought for sale to the marketplace? Can these idols, made of earth, which in the future await destruction and return to earth, be gods? But our God, in whom we believe, is in heaven, and Him one can see only with the eyes of the heart, not with fleshly eyes, and know Him only by faith.

To this the blessed Pontius answered:

– My father and lord, you speak entirely justly: who indeed does not see that the idols are lifeless and immovable, and that they fill not only the marketplace, the Capitol, and the temples, but all the streets as well? Their number is so great that they cannot be counted; they have the most varied appearance and are made with the highest art to which the human mind can attain. Who does not also see that they are fastened to their places with iron or tin, so that the wind may not overturn them and break them? And it is also well known that thieves and robbers often steal the golden and silver idols. How can they guard men from evil, when they themselves need to be guarded by some men lest other men steal them?

The holy pope Pontian marveled at the youth's mind, and taking him by the hand wished to seat him beside himself, but the blessed Pontius said:

– If in the presence of our teachers, who instruct us in trifling matters, we dare not sit, how shall I sit with a father who, instead of the path of error, points out to me the path of truth, and instead of darkness, light?

The pope answered:

– Our Lord and Teacher Jesus Christ gave us such a commandment, that all should be one in Him (cf. Jn. 15:4–5) and instruct one another in what is profitable.

Then the pope asked the blessed youth:

– Do you have parents?

– Already for a second year, Pontius answered, my mother has been dead; only my father is alive, a man already in deep old age, for whom I am the sole consolation.

– Is he a Christian or a pagan? inquired the pope.

– My father, like the majority, is a zealous pagan, said Pontius in reply.

– God, who enlightened you without any instruction from men, said the pope, can enlighten your father as well, so that he who begot you into this mortal life may through you come to know the immortal life.

And you, my son, obey me: believe in Christ and receive holy baptism, which delivers from eternal torments.

In such words the pope for about three hours instructed Pontius, explaining to him the teaching concerning the Kingdom of God; having catechized him and the youth Valerius who had come with him, and having thus prepared them for receiving holy baptism, he dismissed both in peace. And they went out, and like lambs that have left a rich pasture, they rejoiced that they had found the salvation of their souls. From this time on they came every day to the hierarch of God, learning from him.

Once the senator Mark asked Pontius:

– What new things have you learned these days from your teachers, my son?

– During the whole course of my study, Pontius answered, I have heard from them nothing better than what I have now learned.

The father rejoiced, supposing that the youth had learned new information from the sciences taught in the pagan schools. The blessed Pontius, however, seeking a suitable opportunity to draw his father also with himself to faith in Christ, one day said:

– I hear from many, my father, that the gods which we worship are vain and have nothing divine in themselves, of which I too am in part convinced: they possess only the likeness of human organs and are wholly inactive; each one who wishes to have gods in his house hires a craftsman and through him makes for himself gods from such materials as his means allow: of gold, of silver, or of something else. I beg you, my father, tell me, have you ever heard or seen that the gods standing in our house, during all the time they have stood here, have shown their power in any action?

– Nothing of the kind has ever been, Mark answered.

– Then why honor them, offer sacrifices, burn incense, and bow down to them? asked Pontius.

At these words Mark fell into violent fury and wished to strike his son with a sword, saying:

– You blaspheme my gods!

Then, calming himself, he said:

– Can it be, my son, that we alone are to disown the gods and not offer them sacrifices?

The blessed Pontius replied:

– Yet in this city there are very many people who offer the true sacrifice to the true God.

– Where are they to be found? asked Mark.

– If you wish, I will go and bring you a man who will explain everything clearly to you, Pontius proposed.

The father agreed. Pontius turned to Valerius and said:

– Behold the change wrought by the right hand of the Most High – and at once he went to the holy Pope Pontian and brought him to his father.

The Pope conversed at length with Mark, teaching him the knowledge of the true God and opening to him the mysteries of the holy Faith. Mark believed from his whole heart in our Lord Jesus Christ, and together with the Pope and his son began to break in pieces the idols standing in the house; after this he, together with his son and all his household, received holy Baptism. After his Baptism Mark lived but a short time and fell asleep in the Lord, being by then a very venerable old man. At this time the Blessed Pontius was twenty years of age. Six months after his father's death he was taken to the court of the Emperor Alexander and made a senator in his father's place. This came about by the special action of the providence of God, so that afterwards, at the appointed time, not only the people but also emperors should come to know Christ through Pontius. Filled with true piety, the holy Pontius enjoyed the unforced love and respect of all the courtiers. At this time the holy Pope Pontian ended his life with valour, slain for his confession of Christ by the command of Maximian, the successor of Alexander; his place was taken by the holy Anterus, but he too, having scarcely spent a month on the throne of the Roman patriarch, died a martyr's death for Christ under the same Maximinus. After the holy Anterus the holy Fabian was chosen Pope; he loved the holy Pontius as a father loves his own son. The holy Pontius gave him all his property for distribution to the poor, especially to his fellow believers. But it is already time to turn to the account of how the true servant of Christ,

the holy Pontius, converted emperors to Christ, and how, in his struggle with the devil, he won the victory and gained the crown of martyrdom.

After the destruction of the tyrant Maximian, the emperor was Gordian, whose successor was Philip, who made his son, likewise named Philip, his co-ruler; both of them greatly loved the holy Pontius as a man wise, pious, and useful in the affairs of government by his counsels. In the third year of their reign, which was at the same time the thousandth year from the founding of Rome, they, setting out for the temple to offer a thanksgiving sacrifice to the gods, invited with them their beloved senator Pontius:

"Let us go and give thanks to the great gods for granting us the possibility of celebrating the millennium of Rome in the city itself."

The holy Pontius in every way sought to excuse himself from their invitation, so as not to go into a pagan temple; but the emperors insistently called him with them as a friend. Then the holy Pontius, understanding that the opportune time had come to reveal to the emperors the one true God, our Lord Jesus Christ, said:

"O good emperors, set over men by God, why do you not worship Him Who has bestowed upon you royal honour and power? Why do you not offer the sacrifice of praise to Him alone?"

The Emperor Philip the elder said to this:

"I wish to offer a sacrifice to the great Zeus precisely because he has granted me royal power."

The holy Pontius replied to him with a smile:

"Do not be deceived, O emperor, by worshipping Zeus: there is one God in heaven, who created all things by His single Word and quickened all things by the grace of the Holy Spirit."

"We do not know why you say all this," answered both emperors.

"Does Zeus exist from eternity?" asked the holy Pontius.

"No," said the emperors, "before Zeus there was Cronus his father; he reigned in Italy, and under his rule the peoples of Italy enjoyed prosperity."

"And at the time when Cronus reigned in Crete, and before he, expelled by his son Zeus, came to Italy, had not the latter peoples and rulers?" asked the holy Pontius again.

"No," he continued, "do not be beguiled by the false fables of your poets. There is one God over all in heaven, God the Father, Who together with His Son and the Holy Spirit governs all that He has created and by His power sustains all that exists; He created both heaven and earth and the sea with all that is in them; after all this He created the immortal man in His image and likeness and subjected to his power all that is on earth, in the sea and in the air. Seeing the great honour with which God had clothed man, the devil, cast down from heaven, was filled with envy and suggested to man the flattering thought of transgressing the commandment of God, so that through this he might prove ungrateful and disobedient before his Creator and Benefactor. Man followed the deceiver's treacherous counsel and thereby deprived himself of immortality, bringing by his disobedience death not only upon himself but upon the whole human race. But the devil was not satisfied with this deception of man and devised the idols, which you call gods, in order yet more to estrange the human race from the Creator. The merciful Lord, however, not willing the final perdition of man created after His image, was pleased to send down from the Heavenly Throne His Only-begotten Word[4986]: the Word of God, by the action of the Holy Spirit, dwelt in the womb of the Most Pure Virgin, incomprehensibly took flesh from Her and was born of Her ineffably, and the Word became man, that He might renew fallen man and destroy the power of the devil. The God-man displayed among men a multitude of wonders: by His word He healed those born blind, the paralytics, and those bound to the bed of sickness for many years; He cleansed the lepers, raised the dead, calling forth from the tomb Lazarus, dead four days, and gave him life again; as almighty God He wrought an innumerable multitude of other wonders. But the Jews, not believing in Him and envying Him, delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor and nailed to the cross the One Who had come to save them. He, however, as God, rose from the dead on the third day, and after His resurrection for many days appeared to His disciples; He destroyed death, brought

upon man by the devil, by His death and His resurrection bestowed upon us eternal life, and as He, having risen from the dead, dies no more, so we, when this brief life, abounding in sorrows, is ended, rising from our tombs, will live with Him for ever. Having shown the way of salvation, He ascended into heaven; and whoever neglects this salvation shall with the devil undergo eternal condemnation, but whoever believes and walks the way of salvation shall for ever be with Christ in the Kingdom of Heaven."

The holy Pontius long enlightened the emperors: he related to them in detail everything about Christ, about the mysteries of the Faith and about the life to come, and his speech, imbued with the grace of the Holy Spirit, opened the emperors' minds; perceiving the full truth of his words, they were moved in heart and believed in our Lord Jesus Christ. The emperors besought the holy Pontius to explain to them the mystery of salvation still more fully on the following day, so that they might escape the unquenchable fire and in the future immortal life receive a portion with the saints. On that day, and afterwards, the emperors did not go to the Capitol to offer sacrifices to the idols; they only commanded that the day of Rome's millennium be celebrated with public spectacles. The holy Pontius, for his part, did not delay in going to the most holy Pope Fabian, to whom he related everything; the Pope, filled with the liveliest joy, knelt down, saying:

"Lord Jesus Christ, I thank Thee that Thou hast been pleased, through Thy servant Pontius, to bring the Roman emperors to the knowledge of Thy most holy Name!"

On the next day Pope Fabian and Pontius together went to the emperors, and for a long time they conversed with them about the one true God and the whole way of salvation. Seeing the emperors' faith, the pope catechized them for holy Baptism, and after a short time baptized them. Together with them others were baptized as well, for after the emperors' example very many believed in Christ. And who could describe the joy of the Christians at that time? Then was fulfilled also what had been spoken by the devil, at God's command, through a priest possessed by a demon, concerning St. Pontius while he was still in his mother's womb. Having obtained the emperors' permission, St. Pontius

went with the holy Pope Fabian to the temple of Dis, where the aforementioned prophecy had been uttered. There they first shattered the idols, and then razed the temple itself to its foundations. Several other pagan temples were also destroyed, and holy churches of God took their place. In those days very many turned to Christ and were baptized. But they did not make up all the inhabitants of Rome: they were only a part of them, and not all the shrines filled with idols were destroyed during those few years favorable to the Church of Christ, granted by God's will. She enjoyed this freedom for only four years. The Lord Jesus Christ, wishing to try His Church as gold in the furnace, permitted a new persecution to begin. The impious Decius[3], at the head of the pagans, rose up and killed the pious emperors for their faith in Christ. Many of the newly baptized, lacking steadfastness of soul, fearing persecution, returned again to paganism; others fled, hiding wherever they could, while the valiant went boldly to torments, laying down their lives for Christ. In this savage persecution, which arose unexpectedly like a storm, St. Pontius hid in a place in Rome itself, but the pagan priests searched for him with especial diligence. By destroying idols and shrines he had aroused in them the strongest hatred against himself; they thirsted to deliver him to torments. This circumstance prompted St. Pontius to flee from Rome in one night, following the words of the Lord Himself in the Gospel: "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another" (Mt. 10:23). He came to the city of Kimela[4], situated on the border of Gaul, near the Alps, and there he lived as a wanderer and a stranger. Emperor Decius soon perished, and after the brief reign of Gallus with Volusian, Valerian[5] ascended the throne of the Roman state with his son Gallienus. These emperors desired to exterminate the very name of Christians, not only in Rome but throughout all its provinces. To this end they sent special officials everywhere to torment Christians. Two such tormentors, Claudius and Anavius, were sent, among others, to the province of Gaul. They first came to the city of Kimela. Having offered sacrifices to the gods and set up a tribunal in the middle of the

3. Emperor 240–251.
4. Near present-day Nice.
5. Valerian, emperor 252–259.

city, they issued decrees ordering that Christians be seized and brought before them for torture. St. Pontius, as a man famous and noble, was seized and brought first of all before the lawless tribunal. Seeing him, the governor Claudius said with anger:

"You are that Pontius who, by I know not what sorcery, caused confusion in Rome and turned the emperors away from the gods?"

"I have seduced no one and caused no disturbances," St. Pontius replied, "but I have converted whom I could from paganism to the true God."

The governor said:

"Our emperors, knowing that you are a man of noble family, have commanded you to offer sacrifice to the gods. Otherwise you will be condemned to various tortures together with men of low birth and poverty."

To this St. Pontius responded:

"My King and Comforter is Christ. If for Him I lose my earthly fatherland, I shall be heir to the eternal one; and if I lose transitory goods, I shall share with the holy Angels in heavenly glory."

"Why do you wish to obtain deliverance by speaking entirely incomprehensible words?" asked Claudius. "One thing remains for you: to offer sacrifice to the gods. If you do not do this, your body will be torn apart on the rack."

"Why, I have told you that I am a Christian and will never offer sacrifice to the gods," St. Pontius answered.

The governor ordered St. Pontius to be cast, first bound in chains, into a prison until he could report about him to the emperors. Then Claudius sent them such a letter:

"To the masters of the universe, the mighty conquerors, the Roman emperors Valerian and Gallienus, your servants Claudius and Anavius. On entering the borders of Gaul, we found Pontius, who once threw Rome into confusion, shattered the gods and destroyed their temples, and who now is hiding from your power and not obeying your commands. Since he is one of the most distinguished senators, we did not dare to subject him to torments, but only, having bound him, placed

him in a prison until you examine this matter and command us how we ought to deal with him."

The emperors sent this reply:

"Our sovereignty commands you as follows: if Pontius will not offer sacrifice to the gods, you have full power over him and may put him to death in whatever manner you wish."

Having received the emperors' command, the governors Claudius and Anavius went to the tribunal and ordered the prisoner of Christ to be brought. Claudius said to St. Pontius:

"Listen to the just command of your masters, who order you to offer sacrifice to the gods. If you do not do this, you will give yourself up to torments together with the condemned."

St. Pontius answered:

"I have no other master than the one Lord, my Jesus Christ, who is always able to deliver me from those torments with which you threaten me."

"I am amazed," said Claudius, "how you, a man of noble birth, have of your own will come to such poverty and disgrace. You serve a Lord of whom you yourselves say that He was a poor and simple man, and that Pilate, likewise a governor like us, put Him to death for some crime—I know not what. Would it not be better for you to obey the rulers who gently govern the whole Roman realm?"

"I too am amazed," St. Pontius replied, "how you, being a reasonable man, have come to such madness that you will not know the Creator of heaven and earth, who for your salvation became poor, and you dare to call infamous Him whom the Angels in heaven worship, and who, not by compulsion but of His own will, deigned for our deliverance to suffer crucifixion at the hands of the Jews and Pilate. Oh, if only you would bow before so great a God in His humility! Your mind would immediately be enlightened, and you would understand that in your error you lie as in a dark abyss together with your gods, or rather, demons. And your masters, whom you call Roman rulers, worshipping wood and stone, not only go to perdition themselves but also lead astray the people subject to them. Know that if you remain in your unbelief, you will perish a cruel death, and on the day of the Last Judg-

ment you will be condemned together with your gods to eternal torments."

These words drove the governor to fury. In his anger he cried out to the servants:

"Prepare the rakes, the iron hooks, the fire, and everything available for torments, so that his madness may be made manifest before all!"

"Everything is already ready," the servants answered.

"Stretch him on the rack," the governor ordered, "that he may feel the torments with his whole body, and let us see whether his God will deliver him from our hands."

St. Pontius, while they were stretching him, said to the governor:

"Although in your unbelief you call my God powerless, I firmly believe that the torments you intend to inflict on me, by the power of my Lord Jesus Christ, will not touch my body, and it will escape suffering."

Immediately the instrument of torture fell with a great crash and turned to dust. The servants, from fear, also fell to the ground like dead men, and St. Pontius, filled with joy, said to the governor:

"Be convinced at least now, you man of little faith, that my Lord has the power 'to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unrighteous unto the day of judgment to be punished' (2 Pet. 2:9)."

The governor Claudius, from anger, did not know what to do. His companion Anavius said to him:

"Wise man, when we came here, two huge bears, captured in the Dalmatian mountains, were brought at the same time as we were. Order a spectacle to be arranged and give Pontius over to be devoured by these beasts."

At the governor's command the spectacle was quickly arranged, and the holy martyr was placed in the middle. Two keepers led out the bears so that they might tear the saint apart. But the bears unexpectedly rushed upon the keepers and devoured them, while they were afraid even to approach St. Pontius. From the people present there burst an involuntary cry:

"There is one God, the Christian God, in whom Pontius believes!"

The governor, wounded in his pride and still more enraged, shouted to the servants that they should bring wood and brushwood as quickly as possible: he intended to burn the holy martyr. St. Pontius said to him:

"Of what do you accuse me, that you think it right to hand me over to the fire? You yourself will perish in the unquenchable fire. But my Lord, whenever He wills, will preserve me unharmed amid the fire, as He preserved of old the three youths in the Babylonian furnace (Dan. 3)."

When wood and other quickly kindling materials had been gathered, St. Pontius was placed, bound, in the middle of the place where the spectacles were held. Then they piled wood and brushwood all around him and set them alight. Everyone thought that nothing would remain of the martyr but ashes. But when everything had burned, they saw that St. Pontius was alive and wholly unharmed: the fire had not even touched his clothing. And again the people cried out:

– Great is the God of the Christians!

Seeing his defeat, the governor felt a strong sense of shame and said to the holy martyr:

– Why do you boast, as though you had already conquered all torments? Do you not think to escape still greater ones? But here, near the honorable temple of Apollo: go and offer sacrifice in it.

Holy Pontius answered:

– I offer to my Lord Jesus Christ in sacrifice my body, which until now I have kept pure from pagan abominations; and you and your emperors will soon be overtaken by the just judgment of God for this, because you unjustly persecute the innocent servants of Christ.

The governor then began to persuade him hypocritically:

– In truth it would be fitting for you to be our judge and not we yours: for you are one of the first senators, and we are at a loss to understand for what vain hopes you deprive yourself of honor and wealth.

– The honor of this world and its wealth, – answered holy Pontius, – are like the morning mist, which hides from a person's eyes the earth, the mountains, and the sea; but when the wind blows, it quickly disap-

pears, as though it had never been. But the honor, wealth, and glory to which I strive abide forever.

During this speech of the saint, the Jews, who were present in large numbers among the crowd, began to shout to the governor:

– Kill, kill this sorcerer quickly!

And holy Pontius, raising his hands to heaven, said:

– I thank Thee, my God, that the Jews also cry out against me, imitating their fathers, who cried to Pilate against Christ: Crucify, crucify Him! (cf. Jn. 19:6, 15).

After this the governor pronounced the sentence of death upon holy Pontius:

– Lead him outside the city, and there cast him into the marsh.

Everything was carried out as the tormentor commanded. And the holy martyr Pontius, having been beheaded, brought his sufferings for Christ to completion by this last torment. The honorable body of the saint was laid in the grave by Valerius, the describer of his sufferings and his contemporary, in the very place where it had been cast after the beheading[6].

Some time after the death of holy Pontius, his prophecies were fulfilled. The impious Roman emperor Valerian, during his war with the Persian king Shapur, was taken captive, where he was constantly subjected to every kind of humiliation: whenever Shapur mounted his horse, he set his foot upon Valerian's neck as upon a footstool. Another Roman emperor, Gallienus, was killed by his soldiers on the road to Mediolanum. The governor Claudius and his friend Anavius became demoniacs at the very hour when the holy martyr was beheaded: Claudius bit through his own tongue with his teeth and spat it out of his mouth, and Anavius's eyes started from their sockets and hung down along his cheeks; after brief but cruel torments from the demons, both of them ended their lives. The pagans and Jews, seeing the fulfilment of the words of holy Pontius, were seized with fear, and many began to vener-

6. In the fifth century Valerian, Bishop of Cimiez (about 460), in his homilies exhorts his hearers to imitate the martyr Pontius and speaks of his relics, adorned by the zeal of Christians. Later, undoubtedly when Cimiez was laid waste by the Lombards and its inhabitants moved to Nice, the relics of the holy martyr Pontius were transferred there.

ate the tomb of the holy martyr. Valerius, having written the life and sufferings of the saint, and seeing that the persecution did not cease, boarded a ship and sailed away to Libya, fearing the tormentors. And the honorable soul of the holy martyr Pontius entered into the joy of his Lord and Master Jesus Christ, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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Memory of Holy Martyr Eusignius

Память святого мученика Евсигния

Holy Eusignius was from Antioch; throughout the reigns of Diocletian, Maximian, Constantius Chlorus, Constantine the Great and his sons he served in the army; he is known, among other things, as one who conversed with the holy martyr Basiliscus and as the describer of his sufferings endured under Maximian. After the beheading of holy Basiliscus, holy Eusignius saw together with him the Cross depicted by stars in the sky, and, armed with the power of the Cross, he bravely fought against his adversaries. Having served in the army for sixty years, he left it under the son of Constantine the Great, Constantius, since he was already very old. On returning to his homeland of Antioch, he dedicated his life to God, spending all his time in prayer and fasting, constantly visiting the churches of God; thus he lived until the time of Julian the Apostate, persecutor of Christians[7]. When this impious emperor arrived in Antioch, holy Eusignius was seized for torments, owing to the following circumstance. One day he was walking to church and on the way met two pagans who had begun a dispute between themselves that had turned into a quarrel. When holy Eusignius came up to them, they stopped him with the words:

– We know, valiant man, that you were a soldier for a long time and therefore know the laws; we ask you to judge our dispute and pronounce your just verdict.

Holy Eusignius granted their request and judged their case as justice required; one proved to be right, and the other not. The latter

took offense, went to the emperor and informed him that Eusignius was a Christian. The emperor ordered the saint to be seized and brought before him for judgment. Standing before the tormentor, holy Eusignius fearlessly rebuked him for not following the example of Constantine the Great, but renouncing Christ and, turning to paganism, replacing the worship of the true God with the veneration of idols. Holy Eusignius praised at this the faith and piety of Constantine the Great, relating in order how he saw the Cross in the sky and by its power overcame his enemies, how, having left paganism, he cleaved with all his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, enlightening by faith and holy baptism not only himself but the whole universe. Glorifying Constantine the Great in this way, holy Eusignius at the same time denounced the apostate and reproached him for his impiety. Unwilling to listen to these reproaches, Julian ordered the head of the soldier of Christ to be cut off. Thus holy Eusignius died a martyr's death for Christ in the one hundred and tenth year of his life, and passed into eternal life, where there is no time.

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Memory of Hieromartyr Fabian, Pope of Rome

Память священномученика Фавия, папы Римского

Saint Fabian was a native of Rome[8] and served as a presbyter in the days of the impious Roman emperors, who were especially devoted to paganism and persecuted the Church of God. At first Saint Fabian lived in a village near Rome, but afterward he moved into the city itself, and here he zealously undertook the burial of the bodies of the martyrs. At that time many Christians were tormented and put to death for the faith, and their bodies were cast outside the city gates to be devoured by dogs, beasts, and birds. Saint Fabian would secretly take the bodies of the martyrs by night and bury them with honor. After the martyrdom, under the reign of Maximian[9], of the most holy Pope Anterus[10] for his confession of Christ, the faithful, who were hid-

7. St. Eusignius was beheaded with a sword in 362.
8. Rome – the chief city of the Roman state.
9. Maximian I, emperor 235–238.
10. In 236.

ing from persecution and keeping their faith secret, gathered together with the bishops and presbyters in a single church unknown to the persecutors: an inconspicuous house served as their church in those troubled times for Christians. Saint Fabian was present at this gathering. When they began to search for someone worthy to be chosen for so high a position as that of the Bishop of Rome, many recalled honorable and outstanding men who could, according to the Law of Christ, shepherd His flock. But no one even thought of Saint Fabian: as a man who had only recently come from the village, he was one of the lesser presbyters in rank. Disagreements arose during the election, and suddenly there appeared above their heads a dove as white as snow. Descending, it sat upon the head of the presbyter Fabian, then rose upward again and became invisible. Then everyone understood that the Lord Himself, through His Holy Spirit, had chosen Fabian as the president and shepherd of His Church, and with great joy they seated him on the patriarchal throne. Thus Saint Fabian became Pope of Rome, and peace settled upon the Church of Christ. The persecutor Maximinus was slain by his own soldiers, and after him Gordian[11] ascended the throne, under whom the persecution ceased. This emperor, although a pagan, was of a mild and kindly disposition, and he forbade the persecution of Christians. Enjoying peace during his reign, they built churches everywhere. Saint Fabian constructed many spacious churches in the burial caves above the tombs of the martyrs, where the faithful gathered for prayer, and over the very caves that had served as refuges during the persecutions he erected chapels. The Church grew, daily through the conversion of pagans from impiety to Christianity; it attained especial prosperity after the death of Gordian, when his place was taken by Philip[12], who shared the rule with his son, likewise named Philip. Both of them accepted Christianity, having been enlightened by a pious and noble man, Pontius; Saint Pope Fabian baptized them. At this time the number of the faithful greatly increased: following the example of the emperor and his son, many were baptized, and the faith of Christ could be confessed freely and without fear. Saint Pope Fabian, with the as-

11. Gordian, emperor from 238.
12. Philip the Arab, emperor 244–249.

sistance of the true servant of Christ, the senator Pontius, built churches while at the same time destroying the pagan shrines together with the idols. But the Church did not enjoy this peace and freedom for long, only about four years. Her Head, Christ, wishing that His bride, for whom He had shed His Blood, should be on earth like gold tested in the furnace and like a flower among thorns, again permitted her to be subjected to trials and sufferings, and a persecution began, raised by the hellish dragon, who, as the Lord revealed to John the Theologian in a vision, pursued the Woman shining with heavenly glory, pouring out from his mouth a whole river of water to drown Her[13]. This ancient enemy of good, unable to endure the growth of the glory of Christ, rose up against the pious emperors who had accepted Christianity. The pagans, who hated Christ and Christians, gathered under the leadership of the impious Decius[14] and killed Emperor Philip and his son precisely because they had believed in Christ and permitted the free confession of the Christian religion. After the murder of the emperors they turned against the Christians, and at this time the blood of Christians flowed like a river. Saint Pope Fabian was seized before all others: the pagans hated him especially strongly, as the representative and teacher of the Christians. They also sought the pious senator Pontius, but did not find him: he, like many of the faithful, had hidden, and afterward fled from Rome. Saint Pope Fabian was beheaded[15] and passed, together with many of his flock who were slain at the same time, from the militant Church into the triumphant Church. And Saint Pontius was afterward seized and likewise received a martyr's death for our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory forever. Amen.

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13. Rev. 12:15–16
14. Decius, emperor 249–251.
15. In 250.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the commemoration of the holy martyrs Cantidius and Cantidian, stoned in Egypt, and Sivel, likewise in Egypt, slain with arrows.

On the same day, the commemoration of Saint Nonna, the righteous mother of Saint

NOTES

4986. This is the name of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God, Christ the Savior. The name is taken from the Gospel of John (1:1–14). – Why is the Son of God called the Word? a) By comparison of His birth with the origin of our human word: as our word is impassible, invisible, and spiritually born of our mind or thought, so the Son of God is impassibly and spiritually born of the Father. b) As our thought is revealed or expressed in our word, so the Son of God, by His essence and perfection, is the most exact image of God the Father, and therefore is called "the brightness of His glory and the express image (impress) of His person" (Heb. 1:3). c) As we communicate our thoughts to others through words, so God, who spoke to men many times through the prophets, at last spoke through the Son (Heb. 1:2), Who for this purpose became incarnate and so fully revealed the will of His Father that he who had seen the Son had seen the Father (Jn. 14:9).

THE SIXTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 6

6 августа

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

Synaxarion 5000 for the Transfiguration of the Lord

Синаксарь 5000 на Преображение Господне

Drawing near to the sufferings He willingly endured for our salvation, our Lord Jesus Christ began to tell His disciples that He "must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed" (Mt. 16:21). He said this at Caesarea Philippi,[1] after the Apostle Peter had confessed Him: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:16). It was already the last year of Jesus Christ's three-year preaching, and the thirty-third from His birth of the Most Pure Virgin. The words of Christ greatly saddened the disciples, and especially the Apostle Peter, who began to contradict the Lord, saying: "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee" (Mt. 16:22). Noticing the sorrow of the disciples and wishing to relieve it, Jesus Christ promised some of them that they would see His glory, in which He would be clothed after His departure: "There be some standing here," He said, "which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Mt. 16:28). Six days after these events, the Lord, accompanied by the disciples and a great crowd of people, left the region of Caesarea Philippi for the borders of Galilee;[5002] the day had already declined toward evening when He reached the Galilean mountain Tabor.[2] Having the custom of withdrawing at night from the disciples for solitary prayer to God the Fath-

1. A city in northern Palestine, lying at the foot of Mount Hermon. It was built up by the son of Herod the Great, the tetrarch Philip, who adorned the city and named it Caesarea in honor of the Roman emperor Tiberius. To distinguish it from Caesarea Palestinae, or Strato's Tower, the city is called Caesarea Philippi.

er, Jesus Christ did so this time as well: leaving the people below the mountain and taking with Him only Peter, James and John, He ascended with them to the summit to pray, and there, withdrawing from them a short distance onto a raised hill, He gave Himself to prayer. The three Apostles, wearied partly by the ascent and partly by the long prayer, fell asleep, as the holy Evangelist Luke relates: "Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep" (Lk. 9:32). While they slept, as dawn approached, the Lord Jesus Christ was transfigured, shining with the glory of His Divinity; at His command there appeared to Him two prophets: Moses from the dead and Elijah from paradise; they conversed about the sufferings and death awaiting Him in Jerusalem. This conversation and the particular manifestation of Divine power awakened the Apostles; seeing the ineffable glory of the Lord Jesus — His face shining as the sun, His garments gleaming white as snow, and the two men standing in that glory and speaking with Him — the Apostles were struck with terror. By revelation of the Holy Spirit they at once recognized Moses and Elijah among the men, and understood that the conversation concerned Christ's voluntary sufferings; listening to it, the Apostles stood in trembling, while at the same time delighting in the sight of the Divine glory, as far as it was possible for their bodily eyes. The Lord Himself revealed His glory to them to the degree that an earthly man can see it without losing his sight; for mortal man it is impossible to behold the invisible, immortal Divinity face to face. Moses once entreated the Lord to show him His Divine glory face to face; the Lord answered: "There shall no man see me, and live" (Ex. 33:20). When the conversation of Christ with Moses and Elijah was drawing to its close, and the Apostles, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, learned of the imminent departure of the prophets, the Apostle Peter was seized with sorrow that the prophets were about to vanish from their sight: he wished to enjoy continually the wondrous

2. Tabor is a solitary mountain seven verst from Nazareth, about 500 sazhens high. Here Barak gathered his army against Sisera (Judg. 4:6), and at its foot he defeated the enemies (Judg. 6:33). Here our Lord Jesus Christ was transfigured (Mt. 17:1; Mk. 9:2; Lk. 9:28). This glorious destiny of Tabor was foreseen by David (Ps. 88:13): "Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name." By this the psalmist signified the whole land of promise, for these are mountains of the land of promise.

sight of Christ's glory and of the honorable prophets; emboldened, he said: "Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah" (Lk. 9:33). While the Apostle Peter was speaking, a bright cloud, which had brought the two prophets to Christ, overshadowed the Apostles, enveloping the summit of the mountain, so that by Divine command it might again take up the prophets and carry each to his place; the Apostles were struck with still greater fear when, drawing near to Christ, they entered into the cloud itself and heard from it a voice: "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him" (Lk. 9:35). At these words from on high the Apostles, in great terror, utterly lost their presence of mind and in strong fear fell prostrate upon the earth. While they lay prostrate, the glory of the Lord, and with it the prophets, vanished from them. The Lord came to the disciples lying on the ground, saying: "Arise, and be not afraid." Lifting up their eyes, the Apostles saw no one but the Lord Jesus. Dawn was breaking, and they began to descend the mountain; on the way the Lord commanded them to tell no one of the vision until He had suffered, died, and risen from the tomb on the third day; and they kept silent, and during that time told no one anything of what they had been granted to see.

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Sermon on the Transfiguration of the Lord

Слово на Преображение Господне

It is not only in the Evangelists that we find the account of the Transfiguration of the Lord: the teachers of the Church also give it in numerous discourses devoted to this feast; there they also set forth its meaning, offering thus a rich spiritual repast for Christians who love to dwell on pious reflections. And for us, who have at hand these instructions and the words of the Fathers of the Church, which have fully elucidated the meaning of Christ's Transfiguration, nothing remains but to listen to the ready teaching and to delight in this spiritual feast, full of lofty thoughts; nor will it be unprofitable if, making use of the words of the teachers of the Church, we gather together their in-

terpretations, as morsels from the table, and apply them to the explanation of this festival for those who desire it.

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them" (Mt. 17:1–2).

Why did Christ the Savior, wishing before His voluntary sufferings and death to show His disciples, as far as it was possible for them, His glory, not take all the disciples up the mountain Tabor? Because among them was Judas, who was unworthy of this Divine vision. St. Theophylact, Archbishop of Bulgaria, thinks thus about this: "The Lord Christ did not take the twelve disciples to the mountain, for Judas was unworthy with his treacherous eyes to see the glory of Christ's Transfiguration." St. John of Damascus also sang beautifully: "The impious shall not see Thy glory, O Christ God."

But could not Judas, as unworthy, have been left alone below the mountain, and the other Apostles taken up? Certainly, for the Lord this was entirely possible; but our long-suffering Master, covering the sins of all men, did not wish to expose Judas's unworthiness, nor to give him occasion for a greater fall, as Scripture says: "Rebuke not a scorner, lest he hate thee" (Prov. 9:8). For if the Lord, taking all the Apostles, had left only Judas, he would have been filled with anger and hatred not only toward Jesus Christ but toward all the Apostles as well; he would have had something like an excuse for his treacherous malice toward Christ, and could have said: "I betrayed Jesus because He despised me." Thus the blessed Theophylact reasons: "If Christ had left Judas alone below the mountain and taken the others with Him, some people could say that this very circumstance wounded Judas's heart and led him to think of betraying his Master."

But did Judas not envy the three Apostles who were taken up the mountain? He did not envy them: he knew that they were going to prayer, which was to continue all night, as the holy Evangelist Luke writes: "And he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray" (Lk. 9:28); but Judas was lazy and wished to sleep the whole night below the mountain; the lazy and drowsy man is negligent of the labors of piety.

Why then did the Lord take up no more than three Apostles? He did so in order to fulfill the Scripture which says in Deuteronomy: "At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established" (Deut. 19:15). Taking with Him three Apostles, the Lord Jesus Christ wished also to take two prophets, so that for the living and the dead there might be witnesses that He is the Son of God, sent by God the Father for the salvation of the world, and attested by a voice from on high. But why were three Apostles present, if two men suffice for testimony? Moses was summoned from the dead to bear witness to the coming of Christ into the world to the dead enclosed in Hades; Elijah, to speak to Enoch in paradise; and the three Apostles were summoned so that afterward they might preach of the glory of Christ seen in the Transfiguration, saying: "And dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father" (Jn. 1–14). And again: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount" (2 Pet. 1:16–18).

For the Lord, who appeared in His Transfiguration as an object of reverent rapture to Angels and men, it was enough that only three of those living on earth should see His glory and be its witnesses: the three Apostles before His eyes were more worthy than all peoples and tribes. That one righteous man has before God an incomparably greater worth than a multitude of sinners, the Lord Himself clearly showed in the Old Testament: desiring to strike terror by the power of His might into Pharaoh of Egypt, He commanded Moses to appear before him and declare that the God who had sent him was the God of three men: the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. But could Pharaoh, ruler of so many cities and of so great a people as the Egyptian people, fear a God who called Himself Lord of only three men? Would it not have been shameful before the ruler of so great a land to

declare that the One who sent Moses owned only three men? Would it not have better served the purpose, to soften Pharaoh's hardened heart, for Moses to say that the One who sent him was the God who reigns over all the lands under heaven and holds dominion over all the kingdoms of the universe? Yet the Lord was not pleased to do so, but wished to make Himself known to Pharaoh only as the Lord of three of His servants. Why? Undoubtedly because these three, pleasing God and caring only for heavenly goods, were in the eyes of God more worthy than all kingdoms and tribes. "Therefore," says the Apostle, "God is not ashamed to be called their God" (Heb. 11:16), as if to say: why do you, Pharaoh, boast of the greatness of your kingdom and of the multitude of cities and peoples subject to you? I have three such servants that your kingdom cannot be compared with any one of them: I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and I am not ashamed of it. St. John Chrysostom says the same, reasoning: "The God of the universe is not ashamed to be called the God of three (men), and rightly so: for the saints surpass all in worth; one who does the will of God is better than tens of thousands of lawless men." The three Apostles were taken up to Tabor to behold the glory of God, and no more were needed, for the world was not worthy of them (cf. Heb. 11:38).

Why did the Lord take with Him not some other Apostles, but precisely Peter, James and John? St. John Chrysostom and the other Fathers of the Church give a sufficient answer to this question. We, bringing to memory the three virtues necessary for salvation and marked with especial distinctness by Holy Scripture, faith, hope and love, shall say: the Lord took these three Apostles with Him because in them these three virtues had already appeared from the very beginning, becoming manifest with particular clarity afterward. In Peter, faith: he first confessed Christ as the Son of the living God (Mt. 16:16), and afterward the Lord Himself said to him: "I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail" (Lk. 22:32); in James, hope: he was the first of the twelve Apostles to bow his head beneath the sword for the sake of the hope of Israel; in John, love: he was the most beloved disciple of the Lord, named as son of the Most Pure Virgin Mary (Jn. 19:26–27). For this, the holy Apostles Peter, James and John were afterward called

pillars by the Apostle Paul (Gal. 2:9). St. Chrysostom explains this designation in praise of the Apostles: "Great and wondrous pillars, whom all glorify: they first, by faith, hope and love, as by pillars, established the primitive Church."

In these three Apostles, moreover, we find a foreshadowing of three orders of chosen servants of God, most worthy above others to see Christ in His heavenly glory: the order of lovers of God, the order of martyrs, and the order of virgins. In the holy Apostle Peter is the image of the lovers of God: he, according to the testimony of St. John Chrysostom, loved the Lord Jesus Christ with especial force, and according to the power of his love for Christ here in temporal life, each will be loved by Him there in eternal life and will enjoy beholding Him, as He Himself said: "I love those who love Me" (Prov. 8:17). And again: "He who loves Me will be loved by My Father; and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" (Jn. 14:21). In the holy Apostle James we see the image of martyrs, not only of those who were to shed their blood for Christ, but also of those who, without the shedding of their own blood, daily for Christ's sake die to sin, crucifying the flesh with its passions and lusts (Gal. 5:24). James means supplanter, wrestler, victor: these qualities cannot be acquired without suffering. Everyone who wrestles with temptations coming from the invisible enemy, who overcomes and conquers his passions by daily mortification, is, like James, a martyr and a mighty wrestler, though he does not shed his blood; according to the degree of suffering and effort endured in the struggle, as he repels and conquers temptations, he will be glorified with Christ the Victor. In the holy John the virgin is prefigured the order of those who keep purity of flesh and spirit; for them is given a special promise of beholding God in glory: "Blessed," said the Lord, "are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt. 5:8). The Lord, taking with Him to Tabor Peter, James and John to reveal to them the glory of the Transfiguration, thereby teaches that whoever desires to dwell with Him in the Heavenly Kingdom and to enjoy His beholding must in love imitate Peter, in martyrdom James, in purity John; in general, according to his strength, such a Christian must imitate the servants of God who burned with warm love for God, showed themselves, without shedding

their blood, to be daily martyrs through the unceasing mortification of their flesh, and must guard himself from every defilement of flesh and spirit, cleansing himself by true repentance.

For what purpose does the Lord lead His disciples up a high mountain to pray, and not withdraw with them to some level place? In order that, by raising them from earthly lowlands to heavenly height, He might teach all, in a mystical manner, the lesson that whoever desires to be granted revelations from God and to see His glory must leave off earthly, lower attachments, and must desire and seek the heavenly, higher goods. "He leads them," says the blessed Theophylact, "up a high mountain, showing that if anyone does not rise above earthly attachments, he is not worthy to see such revelations. The holy Apostle Paul teaches excellently when he says: 'Seek the things that are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God; set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God' (Col. 3:1–3). One who walks in the lowland cannot see far; but one who has ascended a high mountain easily surveys distant expanses; and one who cares only for the present life, how can he understand the sweetness of the future heavenly goods? But entering the mountain of contemplation, he knows and sees with the mind, as with the eyes, even what is above the heavens. Creeping reptiles on the earth and animals that live upon it cannot look upon the sun's ray; so too the mind of a man immersed in earthly vanity cannot in any way see the glory of Christ or be illumined by the light of His grace. Therefore lift up your mind, O Christian, from earth to heaven, from the present to the coming, from attachment to the earthly to desire for the heavenly; then you will know how good is the God of Israel, how sweet is Jesus, most sweet, how joyful is His love, and you will be gladdened by His Divine revelations.

The Lord leads His disciples up not a low but a high mountain. Why? To teach them contemplation of God and at the same time diligence: without labor there is no possibility of ascending to a height. The height of the mountain is an image of contemplation of God, the ascent of the mountain an indication of labor. It is good to raise the mind to God, but one should not abandon labor: good deeds are attained

by labor. The mind sees God, and labor leads to the sight of Him; the mind submits to Christ, listening to His commandments, and labor bears the yoke of Christ, walking in His footsteps. Contemplation of God enjoys the inner sight of Christ, while diligence draws His gaze upon itself: "Look," said the psalmist, "upon my affliction and my weariness" (Ps. 24:18). And to be seen by Christ is no less a blessing than to see Him. Both these virtues, contemplation of God and diligence, are as necessary for one who desires to attain heavenly goods and joys as wings are to a bird: a bird with one wing cannot fly through the air, and a man possessing only one of these virtues cannot rise to the height of perfect salvation; contemplation without a laborious life is not effective, and diligence without contemplation brings no benefit. With two wings every bird flies freely; with two virtues, contemplation and diligence, each ascends to the spiritual Tabor to behold the glory of God forever; he ascends at the beginning by diligence, for it is the forerunner of contemplation and knowledge of God. The holy Apostles undertook labor in ascending the high mountain to behold the glory of the Lord's Transfiguration, and who can hope to attain the joy of beholding God without labor?

Why did the Lord lead up to the mountain only Peter, James and John, not taking the people following after them or the remaining Apostles? In order thereby to teach those who desire to exercise themselves in contemplation of God and to enjoy intellectual vision of God to seek solitude and stillness.

Only the three Apostles were led up to a place of silence: the height of the mountain was like a wilderness, where no people dwelt, so that in solitude and stillness the glory of the Lord might be more clearly revealed to them. Amid the scattering and bustle of life the Lord is not revealed as He is in quiet solitude. The Prophet Elijah saw God with his mind when, standing before Ahab, King of Israel, he spoke to him and said: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand" (3 Kgdms. 17:1). That is, I stand bodily before you, but in mind before my God; I see you with my bodily eyes, and God with my spiritual eyes. Yet the Prophet Elijah beheld his Lord far more clearly in solitude and stillness on the desert mountain of Carmel (3 Kgdms. 19), where he

was granted sweet converse with God and His revelations, not only inwardly but in visible forms. It is true that one may sometimes raise one's mind to God even amid the chatter of worldly life, but not with the same ease as in silent solitude: there are so many hindrances, but here there is stillness and peace! Surely the Lord Himself does not say in vain: "Be still (that is, be free from the chatter of worldly life) and know that I am God" (Ps. 45:11). Know Me, He says, by giving yourselves to pious meditation: know how compassionate and merciful I am, how I love those who love Me and am near to all who seek Me. Know Me, and you will quickly find Me, if only you cast off vanity and withdraw from excessive worldly cares. Having known this, many fled from the turbulent world into silent deserts, wandered in mountains and chasms of the earth (Heb. 11:38), in order to devote themselves wholly to God in solitude, enjoying the blessings of communion with Him. As St. Damascene sings, for those dwelling in the wilderness there is continual divine longing, apart from the vain world.

Let us seek the mystery here as well: why did the Lord lead the Apostles up the mountain not by day but at nightfall? Because night is more conducive to concentrated prayer than day. At night the whole universe is silent, and nothing is seen but the sky adorned with stars, which by its splendor involuntarily draws the eyes and the mind toward itself. The Lord leads His disciples up Tabor by night with the aim of teaching us also, at the time of prayer, to think of nothing earthly, but to lift our hearts to heaven. Long ago King David prophetically sang, indicating how a man may come to the understanding of divine mysteries. Let us listen to him and seek this teacher: "Night," he says, "unto night sheweth knowledge" (Ps. 18:3). Night is indeed such a teacher, who instructs in the divine reason men who sit through the course of this brief life as in the darkness of night and the shadow of death. "If you look at the sky (at night)," says St. Cyril, "shining like candles with countless multitudes of stars, and think that people who all day long were busy are now, in the night-time (given over to sleep), no different from the dead, then you will be filled with loathing for human sins." Here, then, is the instruction given by night: it teaches us to recognize the vanity of worldly cares and deeds that provoke God's anger, and it

persuades us to avoid both. All who live on earth are like the dead at night; everything visible by day is covered by darkness at night, as though buried by it. Wondrous mansions and beautiful buildings become like coffins; marvelous trees, gardens and forests resemble scarecrows; gold, silver and precious stones in the night's darkness differ in no way from copper, iron and plain stones; their beauty and value are not noticed; nothing on earth can give man delight at night by its beauty, everything is covered in gloom, and only the sky is visible, adorned as with pearls by the stars and giving delight to those who gaze upon it. Here the divine purpose is evident: night mysteriously teaches us pleasing God. If you have withdrawn in silence to pray, joined to laborious ascetic struggle, and begin to raise your mind up the mountain of contemplation of God, let all earthly objects be to your eyes what they are to them at night. All worldly goods, which bring only temporary pleasure, let them be despised by you; turn away from them as unworthy of a Christian, as containing nothing true and covered by the shadow of death. Let your mind contemplate only the heavenly blessings, and then the light of God's grace will be revealed to you, and you will be filled with spiritual joy from the sweetness of contemplating the revelations of God.

Why does the Lord, to reveal to the Apostles the glory of His Transfiguration, lead them up Tabor and not some other mountain? Tabor, in Hebrew, means "the mansion of purity and light." Therefore the Lord leads them up Tabor and not to another place, so that the Apostles, from the very name of the mountain, might receive instruction that one who desires to be present at the revelation of divine glory must first of all have a conscience like a mansion of purity, worthy to receive within itself the light of God's grace. Let us recall here also the ancient event that took place on Tabor. When Sisera, commander of the Canaanite armies, came to destroy the Israelites, Barak, leader of the latter, ascended Tabor and gathered the Israelite army here. From there he rushed upon the enemy and utterly defeated the whole Canaanite army, so that Sisera himself perished (Judg., ch. 4). Lord mystically repeated this ancient event in His Transfiguration: intending to win the final victory over the infernal Sisera, He first ascended

Tabor, so that here, armed as with a breastplate with the manifestation of divine power, He might rush upon the devil and conquer him. About this very thing the conversation on Tabor was held: they "spake of his decease" (Lk. 9:31). Here is an indication for the Christian who wishes to overcome the invisible enemy and the sinful power he brings: let him first ascend the Tabor of purity of heart; let him cleanse his conscience by true repentance and be transformed from an evil life into a virtuous one; let him clothe himself in the armor of righteousness and take up "the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6:13). Then, without any particular labor, he will win the victory over the power of the enemy.

The Lord, having ascended the mountain with His disciples, "was transfigured before them" (Mt. 17:1–2). This phrase, "before them," was written by the Evangelists with a purpose: to make clear that Christ was not transfigured for Himself, illuminating His face like the sun. Light, "being the brightness of glory" (Heb. 1:3), containing no darkness in itself, has no need of illumination. He was transfigured for our sake, to illuminate our darkness and to transform us from slaves of sin into His true servants, and from sons of wrath into beloved sons of God. The aim of Christ's coming, which He also accomplished, was the conversion of us into children of God. For this He became incarnate of the Most Holy Virgin and the Holy Spirit; for this He, "being found in fashion as a man" (Phil. 2:7), for this He took the form of a servant. What labor did He not undertake in order to renew in us, as sons, the lost image of the Father! Long ago Moses said to the Lord: "The sanctuary, which thy hands have established, O Lord" (cf. Ex. 15:17). Let us note this, "which thy hands have established": he does not say "human hands made it at Thy command," but "Thou Thyself labored with Thy hands." Moses said this, pointing to the boundless care of the Lord for man. For whose sake has the Lord not made and not done everything? For man's sake He created heaven and earth, seas, rivers, all that is in them and upon them. For man's sake He illumines the heavens with luminaries by day and by night; for man's sake He sends rain, dew and snow; for man's sake He, like a farmer and vinedresser, plants and nurtures, so that man may lack nothing. Reflecting on this, St. Cyril of Jerusalem says: "For each one our Savior appears accord-

ing to his spiritual disposition: for those who desire to offer their prayers (to God) He is intercessor and high priest. Or: for those who have sins He becomes the Lamb, to be slain for us; and to all He becomes all things, remaining unchanged in the sameness of His nature." Thus in the most varied ways our Master serves us, saying: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mt. 20:28). And He does all things, seeking not His own good but ours, so that we, knowing His unceasing benefactions, may be filled with gratitude and be transformed from sinners into the righteous, from lovers of the world into lovers of God. And on Tabor He was transfigured for our sake as well, so that we might know of the heavenly glory prepared for us. He "shall change our vile body" (Phil. 3:21), so that at the general resurrection it may be conformed to the body of His glory in His boundless kingdom, prepared "from the foundation of the world" (Mt. 25:34) for those who love Him. May God and our Master, Christ the Lover of mankind, grant us also, through His mercy, to be counted worthy with them of the grace of beholding Him, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 7:

Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God, showing Thy glory to Thy disciples as they could bear it. Let Thy everlasting light shine also upon us sinners, through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Giver of light, glory to Thee.

Kontakion, Tone 7:

Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, and as Thy disciples could bear it, they beheld Thy glory, O Christ our God, so that when they should see Thee crucified, they would understand Thy suffering as voluntary, and would proclaim to the world that Thou art truly the radiance of the Father.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day is the memory of the Venerable Job of Ushchelye, who founded a monastery in the village of Ushchelye in the Archangel Province and was slain by robbers on August 5, 1628, and buried on the 6th.

NOTES

5002. The Galilean region in the north of Palestine, or Galilee (from the Hebrew word *galil*, "region," "district"), constituted in the days of Christ the Savior the third region of Palestine, and was divided into the northern or upper part, which was pagan, and the southern or lower part. Galilee occupies a prominent place in world history as the homeland and the place of the preaching of the Lord Jesus. Galilee measured about 120 verst from east to west and 40 verst 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... Through Nazareth, the homeland of Christ the Savior, where He spent His childhood and youth and where, above all, He preached, Galilee was the cradle of the Christian faith. And the parables of Jesus Christ, all of them images reflecting the riches and beauty of nature and the customs of Galilean life: the sky, the earth, the sea, the grain fields, the gardens, the flowers, the vineyards, the grasses of the meadows, the fish and the birds, all served the Savior there as the foundation and the image of His wondrous teachings and divine preaching.

THE SEVENTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 7

7 августа

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

Life of Our Venerable Father Pimen the Much-Suffering

Житие преподобного отца нашего Пимена Многоболезненного

As we begin the narrative of the blessed Pimen, let us fix our attention upon his great fortitude in suffering, and from this let us learn that illness must be borne patiently, and that the power of God is made perfect in weakness. The blessed Pimen was born sick; the illness did not leave him all his life, but this sickness of the body did not allow a sickness of the soul to develop in him: he was pure from vices and kept his virginity from his mother's womb. Many times he begged his parents to allow him to withdraw to a monastery for tonsure into the monastic habit, but out of their strong love for him they did not consent to these requests, wishing to have him as their heir after their death. Once, by the action of Divine Providence, which orders all things for the best, the blessed Pimen fell especially seriously ill, so that he did not even hope for recovery; under compulsion, his parents then brought him to the Monastery of the Caves[1] and asked the Venerable Fathers living in it to pray for their son's deliverance from illness. But the fervent prayers of the monks did not bring healing to the sick man; the prayer of the blessed one was stronger than the prayer of them all: he asked the Lord for a still greater illness, since he feared that, once recovered, his parents would again take him from the monastery and thus deprive him of the possibility of receiving tonsure. Therefore, when his father and mother sat beside him, not permitting the tonsure[2], the blessed Pimen grieved greatly and prayed to God that He

1. The Kiev Caves Monastery was founded by Venerable Antony (1054–1068).

would fulfill his desire by whatever paths He knows. And so, one night, when his parents and servants were plunged in deep sleep, there came to him bright Angels, some in the form of beautiful youths, others in the form of the abbot and brethren; they carried in their hands the Holy Gospel, candles, a hair shirt, a mantle, a koukoul, and all else needed at tonsure:

"Do you wish us to tonsure you?" they asked the Venerable One.

He answered with joy:

"Yea, I wish it; the Lord has sent you, my lords; fulfill the desire of my heart."

They at once began asking the questions, completing fully everything prescribed in the rule of monastic tonsure; thus they tonsured him in the great angelic schema, clothed him in the mantle and koukoul, and named him Pimen. Giving him, according to custom, a burning candle, they said:

"For forty days and nights the candle shall not go out."

And at the same time they foretold to him a constant illness, deliverance from which would be the sign for him of the approaching hour of death. Having kissed the blessed Pimen, they withdrew into the church, where they laid his hair upon the tomb of the Venerable Theodosius, wrapped in linen.

The monks who were in the nearest cells, hearing singing, woke the others, thinking that either the abbot with some of the brethren was tonsuring the sick man, or that he had died; they all together went to the cell where the Venerable One lay. There they found everyone asleep —the father, the mother, the servants; the monks woke them and noticed that the cell was full of fragrance, and the sick man was full of joy and gladness and clothed in the monastic garment.

2. From ancient times the holy Orthodox Church has performed the tonsure into monasticism according to a special rite for those who choose the path of ascetic life and of wholly giving themselves to God in prayer and repentance. The one resolved to enter this path is asked whether he chooses it of his own free will; then he is obliged to pronounce three vows: of virginity, chastity and poverty, after which, in the name of the Holy Trinity, his hair is cut in the form of a cross and monastic garments are placed upon him. The newly tonsured is given into his hands a Crucifix and a lit candle.

"By whom were you tonsured, and what singing did we hear here, which, however, your parents did not hear?" they asked, addressing the Venerable One.

"I thought," he answered, "that I was tonsured, and named Pimen, by the abbot who came here with the brethren; it was they who sang, as you heard; they also gave me this candle, which you see, saying that it would burn without ceasing for forty days and nights; then, placing my hair in a linen cloth, they withdrew with it into the church." Hearing this, the monks at once hastened to the church, but found it locked; having woken the sacristans, they asked them whether anyone had entered the church after evening prayer. They answered that no one had entered, since the keys themselves were in the keeping of the ecclesiarch[3]. The ecclesiarch was woken (he gave the keys to no one and did not himself enter the church with anyone); taking the keys, the monks entered the church, and there on the tomb of the Venerable Theodosius they actually found the hair lying in the linen. After this they informed the abbot of everything. The latter was exceedingly astonished and diligently sought out who could have tonsured the Venerable Pimen, but all his searches were in vain. Then it became clear to everyone that the tonsure had been performed, by the command of God, by the holy Angels. The abbot and brethren long deliberated whether to regard the miraculous tonsure as an ordinary one, performed according to the rule, and came to the thought of not repeating the tonsure over the blessed Pimen, since there were clear proofs of the reality of what had been done over him: the monks indeed found, as the blessed Pimen had said, his hair on the tomb of the Venerable Theodosius, and the candle, for which a single day would have sufficed to burn down, burned for forty days and nights without going out[4], as the Venerable One had also indicated immediately after his tonsure. In view of this they only said:

"For you, Brother Pimen, the image and name given you by God are sufficient."

3. The church keeper (sacristan), who is entrusted with the safekeeping of the church property and upon whom lies the duty of overseeing the observance of the church rule of worship.

"Yet tell us," said the abbot, coming with the book of tonsures, "who exactly were those who tonsured you, and whether they omitted anything written in this book."

The blessed Pimen said to the abbot:

"Why do you test me, Father? You yourself, having come here with all the brethren, performed over me everything prescribed in this book; at the same time you said that I must suffer from illness all my life and only before death shall I be delivered from it, so that I shall be able to bear my own deathbed; pray for me, holy Father, that the Lord may grant me patience."

Hearing this, they all left him.

The blessed Pimen, according to the foretelling of those who tonsured him, lay for many years in a grievous illness that aroused loathing: all who served him loathed it, and often for three days at a time they did not give him either food or drink, but he bore everything with joy, thanking God.

It happened once that a sick man, suffering from the same affliction as the Venerable Pimen, was brought to the Monastery of the Caves and tonsured. The monks, on whom the duty of serving the sick lay, brought him in to the blessed Pimen, so that they might serve both together and equally; but, careless of their duties, they often forgot them, so that the sick at times fainted from thirst. Then the blessed Pimen said to the sick man lying with him:

"Since those who serve us loathe us on account of the stench that comes from us, would you, my brother, be willing to bear their duties, if the Lord should raise you up?"

The sick man promised the Venerable One to serve him diligently until death. The blessed Pimen said to this:

4. The number forty has an important symbolic meaning. It signifies transition from one state to another, renewal, change. After forty days from birth, the infant is brought into the church for its dedication to God. On the fortieth day after death, according to the belief of the holy Orthodox Church, the soul of the departed Christian is raised up to worship God. So too at tonsure into monasticism, for forty days the newly tonsured must especially abide in the labor of prayer, since he is as it were born for a new life, and as it were dead to the earthly and transitory. The same meaning was carried by the lit candle given by the Angels to Venerable Pimen, which burned for forty days and nights.

"Behold, the Lord takes your illness away from you, and you, having become well, fulfill your promise—serve me and those like me; and upon those who perform their duties negligently the Lord will send a grievous illness, so that they, having experienced the chastisement, may receive salvation."

The sick man at once rose and began to serve the Venerable One; and the negligent servants, at his word, were seized by illness.

The brother who had been delivered from illness did not serve the Venerable Pimen for long: unable to endure the stench, he withdrew and left him to languish from hunger and thirst; having departed, he settled in another cell. And then suddenly a strong fever seized him as with fire; unable to rise, for three days he suffered from thirst, and at last began to cry out:

"For God's sake have pity on me, for I am dying of thirst!"

Hearing him, the monks who were in the nearest cell came to him; seeing his illness, they informed the Venerable Pimen of it:

"The brother who served you is dying."

"As a man sows," answered the Venerable One, "so shall he reap (cf. Gal. 6:7): he abandoned me hungry and thirsty, and himself suffered the same, having lied to God and despised my unworthiness. But we are taught not to repay evil with evil; therefore go and say to him: 'Pimen calls you—rise and come to him.'"

When this was conveyed to the sick man, he at once became well, and rising, came to the Venerable One without any help. The blessed Pimen long admonished him, saying:

"Lo, you are whole, O man of little faith; see that you sin no more! Do you not know that he who is sick and he who serves him shall have an equal reward? The patience of the humbled shall not remain without fruit. Those who here endure brief sorrow and burden shall have joy and gladness there, where there is neither sickness, nor grief, nor sighing, but life everlasting. For this cause I endure all things. God, who through me has delivered you from your infirmity, could also raise me up from this bed and heal my weakness; but I do not wish it. 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved' (Mt. 10:22), said the Lord. It is better for me in this life to become a corpse, that in the next my body may

be incorruptible; it is better here to bear the stench, that there I may enjoy an ineffable fragrance. Glorious, my brother, is the ministry of the Church in a bright, pure and holy place, where it is pleasing to God and sweet to offer prayers to God together with the invisible Angelic powers; for this reason the church is called an earthly heaven, and those who stand in it are reckoned as standing in heaven. But this dark and malodorous cell, is it not judgment before judgment? Is it not torment before everlasting torment? Yet he who endures all this with thanksgiving may rightly say: 'I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry' (Ps. 39:2). Comforting such sufferers, the Apostle says: 'If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons... But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons' (Heb. 12:7–8). And the Lord Himself exhorts us, my brother, saying: 'In your patience possess ye your souls' (Lk. 21:19)."

Having taken to heart this instruction of the Venerable Father, the brother did not leave him, but served him. And the valiant sufferer and true imitator of the righteous Job, St. Pimen, lay twenty years on his bed of sickness, unceasingly giving thanks to God. When the time of his departure drew near, a sign appeared at the Monastery of the Caves: at night three pillars of fire were seen above the refectory, which afterwards moved to the top of the church. Only the Lord knew the true meaning of this sign, but it would not be unjust to suppose that through it was shown that God the Trinity, who 'maketh His angels spirits, His ministers a flaming fire' (Ps. 103:4), had already sent His Angels for the soul of the much-suffering Pimen, as for the soul of Lazarus. On that day he suddenly recovered and learned of the approach of his death, recalling the prediction of those who had tonsured him. Rising, he went through all the cells, bowing to everyone and asking forgiveness. To the sick brethren he said:

"My brethren and friends, rise up and accompany me!"

At once, at his word, their sickness left them, and they, made whole, followed him. The Venerable Pimen, entering the church, received the Divine Mysteries, and after this, taking his deathbed, he carried it, without any direction, to the cave, in which he had never been and

which he had never seen since the day of his birth. Entering the cave, he bowed to the tomb of the Venerable Anthony[5] and indicated the place where he wished to be buried. Before his death he disclosed a wondrous secret, pointing to the graves of some of the brethren who lay nearby:

"Here," he said, "you laid this year two brethren, one without the schema, and the other in the schema[6]. The first, laid without the schema, you will find in the schema; he repeatedly wished to receive it but kept postponing it, yet since he showed deeds worthy of this habit, the Lord granted him the schema after death. The other brother, laid in the schema, you will find without it: he did not wish the schema during his life, and did not show deeds worthy of it, but said, 'When you see that I am leaving this world, then tonsure me into the schema.' He did not remember the words of him who said: 'The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence; but we will bless the Lord' (Ps. 113:25–26). Therefore the dignity of the schema was taken from him and given to the one who showed deeds worthy of it: 'For unto every one that hath' (good deeds) 'shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not' (good deeds) 'shall be taken away even that which he hath' (Mt. 25:29). The third brother," he continued, "was laid here many years ago and has entirely decayed, but his schema has remained incorruptible: it is kept for his condemnation and reproof, for he performed deeds unworthy of this habit, spending his whole life in idleness and sins, not remembering the Lord's words: 'To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required' (Lk. 12:48).

5. The relics of Venerable Antony (d. 1073) rest beneath a covering in the cave where he labored (in the so-called Near Caves).

6. The schema is the garment of the highest degree of monasticism, which is called the Great Angelic Schema. At the tonsure into the schema there are placed upon the monk also certain special vestments, namely: the klobuk and the analav. The klobuk is a garment enveloping the head and shoulders on all sides: its top is somewhat pointed and it is adorned with five crosses embroidered from red cords; these crosses are placed: on the forehead, on the breast, on both shoulders and on the back. The analav is a square cloth with cords attached at the corners. Descending from above from the neck on the cords and dividing to the sides, it encircles the muscles under the arms, and, arranged crosswise on the breast and shoulders, binds and draws together the garment with the same cords. Both the klobuk and the analav have a spiritual meaning.

Tonsure into the schema profits nothing those who do not perform good works, which deliver from eternal torments."

Having disclosed the secret, the Venerable Pimen said to the brethren:

"Behold, those who tonsured me have come to receive my soul."

Immediately after these words he lay down and reposed in the Lord[7]. The brethren laid him with great honor in the place indicated. When they opened the graves of which the Venerable Father had spoken, they found, in accordance with his words, three monks: of the two who had recently died, the one buried in the schema had been deprived of it, and it had been placed upon the other, who did not have it; the third brother, who had died long before, was found entirely decayed, only his schema remaining whole. And all long marveled at the ineffable judgment of God, who renders to each according to his deeds. To God be glory, honor and dominion, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Repose of the Venerable Hor the Monk

Преставление преподобного Ора черноризца

In the Egyptian Thebaid[8], a land bordering on Ethiopia[9], among the monastics there was a wondrous man named Hor, who founded many monasteries, whose monks, numbering up to a thousand, were under his authority. He was a ninety-year-old schemamonk, adorned with gray hair, who possessed an exceedingly comely appearance: his face expressed such spirituality that he gave the impression of an incorporeal being. The Venerable Hor began his ascetic life in a distant desert, where he lived for many years in complete solitude, observing the strictest fasting. Then, by the command of God, he moved from there and founded a monastery near a city; so that the brethren

7. February 11, 1110.
8. The Thebaid is the region of the city of Thebes, famous in antiquity; by the same name, after the main city, the whole of Upper (Southern) Egypt was called in general. The region abounded in monastic hermitages.
9. Ethiopia is the country south of Egypt, Nubia and Abyssinia.

would not have to go far for firewood, he planted with his own hands a grove around it; before his coming there had not been a single tree here. Thus the Venerable Father cared not only for the spiritual salvation of the brethren, but also for what was necessary for bodily life, striving that the monks should lack nothing. When he himself lived in the distant desert, he fed only on greens and roots, which seemed to him a very sweet food; he drank water only when he found it; the greater part of the day and night the Venerable Hor devoted to fervent prayer. He lived in this manner into deep old age, and once an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying:

"Thou shalt be a father of many, for many people shall be entrusted to thee, and thou shalt guide many thousands on the path of salvation; in the life to come thou shalt receive a reward according to the rank of those whom thou hast won for salvation. Do not fall into doubt, considering how much will be needed to satisfy the bodily needs of so great a multitude: thou shalt lack nothing, — thou shalt have all that thou askest of God."

After this vision the elder drew near to the settlements; first he built himself a small cell and planted vegetables; and here, as previously in the distant desert, the Venerable Hor fed only on vegetables, and even these he ate in small quantity: often for a week he took food only once. Previously he had not known how to read, but after his move from the distant desert, the Lord granted him the gift of understanding the Scriptures: when one of the brethren brought him a book, he opened it and began to read like one who had long learned the art of letters. At the same time the Venerable Hor received from God power over demons: demoniacs were brought to him by force, and they proclaimed aloud the God-pleasing deeds he had performed in secret; the Venerable Father worked many other healings by the grace of Christ bestowed upon him from above. A multitude of those desiring to labor under his guidance began to gather to the Venerable Hor, and soon a considerable assembly of monastics formed, of which the Venerable Father was the teacher and guide. He had the custom of first partaking of spiritual food and only then approaching bodily food: only after receiving the Divine Mysteries did he go to the refectory, teaching the brethren with

God-inspired exhortations or relating edifying stories. Once, for the instruction of the brethren, he related the following:

"I saw in the desert a man who for three years did not partake of earthly food: an Angel of the Lord every two days brought heavenly food, which at the same time took the place for him of water."

"I know," the Venerable Hor said on another occasion, "of such a monk, to whom demons appeared, taking the form of heavenly hosts and Angelic orders; they pointed to a fiery chariot, where was, as it were, a king surrounded by glory. This king said to the monk:

'Thou possessest all the virtues; now there remains for thee only to bow down to me, and I will take thee, like Elijah (4 Kgdms. 2:1–25), upon a fiery chariot and carry thee up from here.'

At these words the monk fell into reflection:

'What does this mean?' he pondered. 'I constantly worship my Savior, who is also my King, and if this one I see were He, He would not require worship from me, knowing that I always worship Him.'

After such reflection the monk said:

'I have my King, to whom I unceasingly bow down; thou art not my king.'

At once the demons vanished, both with their king and with the chariot.

All this the Venerable Hor related to the brethren as though it concerned someone else, but many of them well knew that everything he told had happened to him. The Venerable Hor was very affable and merciful toward everyone: when any brother came to him and expressed a wish to live with him, he would build him a cell in a single day. Beginning the work, the Venerable Hor would summon the whole brotherhood, and all of them helped him with zeal: some carried stones, others sand, others water, others timber; and by evening the cell was ready. Giving it to the brother who had come, the Venerable Hor also supplied him, to a sufficient degree, with everything necessary for life. God abundantly granted His servant whatever he asked of Him. There is also the following account of the venerable father, relating to the period of his life when he still had only one disciple: once, at the ap-

proach of the bright feast of the Resurrection of Christ, this disciple said to his teacher:

"Do you know, Father, that it is now Pascha, and that we ought to keep it as everyone else does?"

"Yes, my son," the elder replied, "I had forgotten that it is now Pascha."

And going out of the cell, the Venerable Hor stood under the open sky with his hands raised upward; without changing this position he stood thus for three days, given over to contemplation of God. After three days he returned to the cell, saying:

"Behold, child, as far as my strength allowed, I have kept Pascha."

"What were you doing, Father?" asked the disciple.

“For a monk,” the elder answered, “the feast and the Pascha consist in this: that his mind pass by the rumors of worldly life, as Israel passed through the sea on dry feet (Ex. 14), and draw near to God. The monk,” he continued, “by withdrawing from the visible world, comes nearer to the invisible God; but by attaching himself to earthly things he thereby removes himself from the immaterial God.”

Being the father of many brethren, the venerable one knew the life and deeds of each, even those he performed in secret.

Thus, once a certain wandering monk, who was afflicted with the vice of lying, coming to the Venerable one, hid his garments. Appearing before him half-naked, he asked him for clothing; the Venerable Hor at once exposed his lie before everyone, bringing out the hidden garment. All the brotherhood was struck with fear, seeing that the far-sighted father knew the secrets and what was hidden from others, and no one dared to conceal anything from him or to do anything unlawful out of his sight, for God revealed everything to him. Having instructed multitudes on the path of salvation, not only from among the monks but also from among laypeople, the Venerable Hor reposed in the Lord[10] into the heavenly dwellings, and was numbered in the choir of the great venerable fathers who stand before the throne of the Father and the

10. Ninety years from his birth, about the year 390.

Son and the Holy Spirit, one God in the Trinity, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Venerable Martyr Dometius

Память святого преподобномученика Дометия

St. Dometius lived in the reign of Constantine the Great. His homeland was Persia, where he had been converted from paganism to Christianity by a certain Uar. Leaving his relatives and his fatherland, which was full of pagan impiety, St. Dometius withdrew to the borders of the Greek state, to the city of Nisibis[11]. Entering a monastery there, he received holy baptism, and then put on the monastic habit, blamelessly accomplishing the ascetic labor of a life of fasting. But through the slanders of an envious and crafty demon, the monks dwelling in that monastery came to hate him, so that St. Dometius was compelled to flee from there to the monastery of the holy martyrs Sergius and Bacchus, in the city of Theodosiopolis[12]. There he imitated the life of Archimandrite Nurvel, of whom it is recounted that for sixty years he ate nothing cooked, slept very little, and that not lying or sitting but standing, leaning on a staff. Archimandrite Nurvel ordained the Venerable Dometius a deacon, but when the saint learned that the archimandrite wished to compel him to become a priest, he withdrew from there as well[13]. Retiring to a certain desert mountain[14], St. Dometius lived here a life pleasing to God, enduring heat, frost, and all changes of weather. Afterward, entering a cave, he lived there, performing many miracles in the name of Christ: he healed many of those who came to him of their diseases, and led them from idolatry to the faith of Christ. When Julian the Apostate came into that region[5018], learning everything about St. Dometius, he ordered him to be stoned. Those sent to carry out the crime went and found the holy father at the third hour of the day with two disciples, chanting what was fitting.

11. In Mesopotamia.
12. On the eastern bank of the Euphrates.
13. With two disciples.
14. Within the bounds of Cyrrhus in Syria.

Falling upon them, they stoned them, and thus the Venerable Dometius, with his two disciples, ended the course of his God-pleasing life[15].

Troparion, Tone 4:

Having first contended ascetically upon the mountain, thou didst destroy the spiritual hosts of the enemy with the full armor of the Cross, O all-blessed one. Again, thou didst manfully clothe thyself for martyrdom; for both, thou wast crowned by God, O Venerable Martyr Dometius, ever-memorable.

Kontakion, Tone 6:

Having despised corruptible things and thoughts that drag one down, O Venerable Martyr Dometius, thou didst prove a great teacher to monks, not fearing the fury of the king who would not honor Christ, the true God. Wherefore thou didst also depart this life, singing the hymn: God is with me, and none shall prevail against us.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Marinus and Asterius

Страдание святых мучеников Марина и Астерия

In the days of the pagan emperors Valerian and his son Gallienus[16], there lived in Rome an honorable and virtuous nobleman named Asterius, who confessed the faith of Christ; he was a distinguished and wealthy man, enjoying the favor of the emperors. During the persecutions which at that time befell the Church of Christ, Asterius strictly observed piety, concealing in no way his faith in the Lord Jesus.

Once, while in the regions of Palestine, St. Asterius came to the city of Caesarea Philippi[17], known among the Phoenicians by the name of Panias; in this city, inhabited by a multitude of idolaters, there was the

15. In 363, March 23.
16. Valerian was emperor 253–259; Gallienus 260–268.
17. The city was built up by Philip, son of Herod, who named it Caesarea in honor of the Caesar Tiberius. It stood at the sources of the Jordan.

custom of celebrating a pagan festival near a spring flowing from Mount Panias; from here, it is thought, the river Jordan also takes its source. At this festival the sacrifice offered to the demon became invisible: the demon dwelling there snatched away the offering, hiding it from the eyes, and the pagans, blinded by error, glorified this demonic deception as a great miracle. Christ's servant Asterius, being present at this demonic festival, could not but grieve in heart over the error and spiritual blindness of the deluded people; lifting his eyes to heaven and raising his hands, he prayed with faith to Christ God that He would drive out the demon beguiling the people. And immediately the demon was expelled by divine power, and the demonic wonder ceased—all saw the offering with their own eyes; it no longer hid itself as before nor became invisible. When the wonder ceased, the festival also ceased, since the pagans stopped gathering at the spring. Thus the prayer of St. Asterius, joined with faith, cleansed the place from demonic defilement.

His suffering for Christ, by God's providence, came about as follows. In another Caesarea, the Palestinian[18], there lived a noble and wealthy soldier named Marinus, who was yet more honorable in faith in Christ, and rich in good works. His fellow soldiers called him to the post of centurion, left vacant by the death of the soldier who had held it. When Marinus was preparing to take up this post, another soldier, envious and wishing himself to become centurion, went to the judge Achaeus: he disclosed to him that Marinus, as a Christian, did not wish to offer sacrifice to the gods and the images of the emperors, and therefore, the informer added, such a man could not, by the force of Roman laws, be appointed centurion. The judge at once summoned Marinus and asked him about the faith he professed; hearing from Marinus himself that he was a Christian, the judge gave him three hours to consider

18. Caesarea of Palestine was in very ancient times called the city or tower of Straton. This city was restored by Herod the Great, who named it Caesarea in honor of the emperor Augustus. It was situated on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. St. Apostle Paul, during his missionary journeys, was in it more than once (Acts 9:29–30, 18:28, 21:8) and spent two years in it as a prisoner (Acts 23:23, 24:27, 25:4–6). In this city lived the centurion Cornelius, whom St. Apostle Peter converted to Christ and baptized (Acts 10:1–48); here lived St. Apostle Philip (Acts 21:8); here also died Agrippa, struck by an Angel and eaten by worms (Acts 12:20–23). Caesarea of Palestine is not mentioned in the Gospel.

whether to choose life or death. Only two outcomes lay before St. Marinus: either to offer a pagan sacrifice and remain alive, or to die for the confession of the faith of Christ.

At this time Fetheicus, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, came to the confessor of Christ, took him by the hand and led him into the church, giving edifying instruction. Then, bringing him into the sanctuary, the bishop, pointing with his hand to the Holy Gospel and to the military sword with which Marinus was girded, said:

"Of these two things, worthy man, choose one: either to bear this sword, that you may serve an earthly king for a time, and after death receive eternal perdition; or to become a soldier of the heavenly King, to lay down your soul for His most holy name, written in this book, and to reign with Him forever and ever."

St. Marinus, stretching his right hand toward the holy Gospel, kissed it with fervent love, showing that he was ready to go to death for Christ. Then the bishop said to him:

“With all thy soul cleave to God and, strengthened by His power, receive that which thou hast chosen.”

After this the bishop dismissed St. Marinus with the words:

"Go in peace."

When St. Marinus was walking away from the church, the herald was already standing at the doors of the court, loudly calling Marinus by name, for the three hours had already passed. Entering the court, St. Marinus confessed himself a Christian more fearlessly than before, glorifying the name of Christ before all and condemning the pagan impiety. The judge pronounced the sentence of death upon him, and the holy martyr Marinus was led outside the city and there beheaded. At his martyric death St. Asterius was present; by the providence of God he had come to the city at that time. After the suffering death of St. Marinus, he took off his outer precious garment, spread it upon the ground, then wrapped it around the honorable body of the martyr together with the head, and, carrying it to the grave upon his own shoulders, committed it to burial with honor. For this he himself was also counted worthy of the martyr's crown: the impious pagans seized him and cut off his head[19], and thus St. Asterius, together with St. Marinus, stood before the heavenly King, Christ, in the company of the holy martyrs.

This was in the reign of Gallienus, who succeeded to the throne after the destruction of his father Valerian. For the shedding of the blood of many Christians he was punished by the wrath of God: during a battle the Persians gained the victory over the Romans, and Valerian was taken alive captive by Savorius, the Persian king. He was led away to Persia, and there he served Savorius as a footstool when the latter mounted his horse. Valerian could not be ransomed from this shameful captivity: Savorius did not wish to take any treasures for him, prizing the glory that he had the opportunity to tread on the neck of the Roman emperor. After a prolonged mockery of Valerian, the Persian king at last commanded that his skin be flayed before all the people and salt rubbed upon it; thus the evil one perished evilly, already in this life beginning his eternal torments. Such a destruction of his father terrified Gallienus: he recognized in it the punishment of God for the merciless shedding of Christian blood. Therefore Gallienus issued an edict for all the provinces of the Roman state, in which it was ordered that the per-

19. In 260.

secution of the Christians cease and that the bishops be permitted to govern their churches freely. But before the edict came to Caesarea of Palestine, the holy Marinus and Asterius had received a martyr's death for Christ and had entered into the joy of their Lord and our Master Jesus Christ, who reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

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NOTES

5018. Julian the Apostate, nephew of Constantine the Great, son of his brother Julius Constantius, was born in 331. In 345, together with his brother Gallus, he was exiled by Constantius to Cappadocia, where under strict supervision he spent six years. In 351 he left the place of exile and spent several years in Nicomedia, where he became absorbed in the study of philosophy; in 355 he was appointed by Constantius commander of the troops in Gaul, where he succeeded in winning the love of the army, which in 361 proclaimed him emperor. The study of philosophy under the guidance of a pagan teacher, the dissensions among the Christians arising from the Arian disturbances, and hatred of Constantius aroused in Julian also hatred of the religion of his oppressor, Christianity. He set himself the goal of restoring paganism and destroying Christianity. But all his attempts ended in complete failure. Julian died in 363 on a campaign against the Persians; his last words were addressed to Christ: "Thou hast conquered me, Galilean!"

THE EIGHTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 8

8 августа

New Calendar August 8 · Old Calendar August 21 (civil dates)

Feast of the Most Pure Mother of God in Honor of the Appearance of Her Most Honorable and Wonderworking Icon, Called the Tolga Icon

Празднование Пречистой Богородице в честь явления Ее пречестной и чудотворной иконы, нарицаемой Толгской

In the year 6822 from the creation of the world,[1] during the time of Peter, Metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia, under the right-believing Prince David Feodorovich of Yaroslavl, the Bishop of Rostov and Yaroslavl, Prochorus (according to other accounts, Triphon), while visiting his eparchy, arrived at the Kirillo-Belozersky Monastery. From there he continued his journey by water in boats: first along the Sheksna, a tributary of the Volga, and then along the Volga itself as far as Yaroslavl. When the travelers were six *poprishchas*[2] from Yaroslavl, the day began to draw toward evening. They therefore put in for the night at a hill standing on the far side of the Volga, the side on which the city was situated, and having climbed the hill, they pitched a tent. The encampment lay directly opposite the place where the Tolga, a tributary of the Volga, flows into it; the whole of that shore was covered with a great forest. During the night the bishop woke at midnight and noticed a certain light. Rising quickly and looking out of the tent, he found all his companions asleep, the priests, clergy, servants, and even the watchmen; meanwhile a great light illumined the whole locality. Turning toward the river, the bishop saw on the opposite bank an exceedingly bright column, shining with extraordinary radiance, and

1. From the Nativity of Christ, 1314.
2. Approximately at a distance of six versts.

he also saw a bridge leading to it across the Volga. This mysterious appearance filled the bishop with wonder mingled with awe. Nevertheless, having prayed to God, he took his episcopal staff, went out of the tent, and without waking anyone, made his way to the river and stepped onto the bridge he had seen. In fact the bishop walked upon the water as upon wood: no bridge had ever stood at that place, but by the command of God the water, hardening, formed as it were a bridge beneath his feet. Reaching the opposite bank, the bishop saw an image of the Most Holy Mother of God holding in her arms the Infant, our Lord Jesus Christ. The icon did not stand upon a tree but was miraculously sustained in the air at a height of five cubits, so that it could not be reached with the hands from the ground. The bishop, bowing before the icon of the Mother of God, offered warm prayers to the Lady of the world, mingled with tears. After a fairly long prayer he returned, leaving his staff behind in that place. Crossing the river again by the same bridge, the bishop went back to his tent, and since everyone was sleeping, his journey was known to no one; the bishop slept peacefully until morning. When it dawned, all rose, and as usual Matins was sung. The time came to go to the boats, and the servants began to search for the hierarch's staff, but all their searching was in vain. Then they told the bishop that the staff had disappeared without a trace, although it had been placed in the tent in the evening. The bishop recalled that he had left his staff on the far side of the river, and understood that the Lord wished to make known the aforementioned miraculous appearance. Unable to speak for tears, he began to point with his finger across the Volga; then, scarcely able to speak for emotion, the hierarch related in order how he had reached the opposite bank of the Volga and what he had seen there. He then ordered them to go across the Volga in the direction he indicated and to fetch the staff from there. The servants went, and while searching for the staff they found in the forest an icon of the Most Pure Mother of God, no longer in the air but standing on the ground between the trees; near it lay the staff. Bowing before the holy icon and taking up the staff, they returned to the bishop and told him that they had seen the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God. Then the bishop, postponing for the time being his journey to Yaroslavl, crossed

the Volga with all his people. Seeing the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, he at once recognized the very image that had been sustained in the air by night, surrounded by a bright radiance in the form of a pillar. In joy and spiritual gladness the hierarch knelt, offering warm prayers to the Most Holy Mother of God and reverently kissing her holy icon. And all who were present likewise could not restrain tears of joy, and bowing before the honorable image, they also prayed fervently to the Mother of God.

This wondrous appearance of the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God took place on the eighth day of August, when the memory of St. Emilian, Bishop of Cyzicus, is celebrated.

Hierarch Prochorus, without the least delay, at once began with his own hands to clear the place where the holy icon had appeared, to cut down the forest, and to prepare trees for the building of a church. Those with him followed his example with zeal. On that same day they laid the foundation of a small church and by noon had completed its construction. Word of the wondrous appearance and of the events connected with it reached Yaroslavl, and a multitude of people hastened to the place where the bishop was. Among those who came were clergy and laity, old and young, rich and poor, healthy and sick. At the sight of the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God they were filled with inexpressible joy and prayed fervently. Each strove to help those building the church: some cut down trees, while others labored together with those who had begun the construction of the temple. When it was finished, the bishop that same day, toward evening, consecrated it and brought in the wonderworking image. Then, having celebrated the service in the newly built church, the hierarch named it in honor of the Honorable Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God and established the celebration of the appearance of her image on the eighth day of the month of August. All the sick who were present received healing by the grace of the Most Holy Mother of God. At that same time the bishop ordered that a monastery be attached to the church, and that same day he appointed an abbot for it. From that time a monastery was established on the site of the appearance of the wonderworking image, at first quite small, but later, as its fame grew, it increased in size. This

monastery, preserved by God, exists even now and is known by the name of Tolga, from the tributary Tolga that flows into the Volga at that place.

From the day of the appearance of the wonderworking image of the Most Holy Mother of God, a multitude of miracles began to occur, of which we shall mention here only some of the most outstanding. In the year 6900, on September 16,[3] during the abbacy of Herman, when the priest, after the ninth ode at Matins, proclaimed, "Let us magnify the Mother of God and Mother of Light with songs!", suddenly myrrh flowed from the right hand of the Most Holy Mother of God, and the church was filled with a wondrous fragrance. All who were present in the temple, seeing this miracle, could not restrain their astonishment and awe, while at the same time glorifying God and His Most Pure Mother. After Matins a moleben to the Most Holy Mother of God was served, and at its conclusion, during the singing of "O Lady, receive the supplication of Thy servants," myrrh flowed from the left foot of the Most Pure Infant held in the arms of the Mother of God. Thus there appeared before the eyes of the faithful who were in the temple at that time two springs, from the right hand of the Most Holy Mother of God and from the left foot of Christ, miraculously pouring forth myrrh from a single icon. This wondrous miracle could not but awaken spiritual joy in the abbot and brotherhood: with tears they knelt before the Most Holy Mother of God and anointed their foreheads with the myrrh, which possessed great healing power. Whoever of the sick, whatever illness he suffered, was anointed with the wondrous myrrh was at once made whole. Some time after this miraculous event, a boyar named Nikita was sent by the Grand Prince from Moscow into the Belozersk region. When he arrived at Yaroslavl with his wife and servants, he took to the boats in order to continue his journey by water up the river. This boyar had an only son, still a small boy, not more than four years old, and on the way he fell ill and died, and his lifeless body was brought to the Tolga Monastery of the Most Holy Mother of God in order to be buried there. The father and mother of the dead boy wept bit-

3. From the Nativity of Christ, 1392.

terly before the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, since they had no other children. Having prepared the body, they occupied themselves with making the coffin and with the rest needed for the burial; in these sorrowful labors the time passed from one o'clock in the afternoon until ten in the evening. And then, when after the customary supplication the funeral chant began, the boy suddenly came to life and cried out; all were terrified and at the same time rejoiced, and the parents especially rejoiced. They did not know how to thank the Lord and His Most Pure Mother for seeing their son alive and well again. – Once, by the permission of God, a great fire broke out in the monastery; the church caught fire so quickly that the brethren had no time to open the church doors or to carry anything out of the temple, and the whole church with everything in it was burned. All grieved, thinking that the wonderworking icon had shared the same fate. But after the fire, the holy icon was unexpectedly found in a grove near the monastery, completely undamaged and surrounded by radiance; surely the holy icon could have been taken out of the great flames not by human hands but only by Angelic hands. The brethren joyfully received the holy icon and, without delay, set to work building a new church, larger in size and more splendid in its adornments. Even now one can see the beautiful church buildings and the monastery structures. And the grace of the Most Pure Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary does not cease even to this day to work wonders, as from a fountain, from her holy icon, pouring forth healings of diseases and driving evil spirits away from men.

These wonders are described in detail in the monastery itself; we, setting forth only a little, and that briefly—for a more detailed account there would not be time enough—shall glorify God and His Most Pure Mother, the Virgin Mary, and render due veneration also to Her honorable icon, which all Christian peoples must always honor, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of our Holy Father Myron the Wonderworker, Bishop of Crete

Память святого отца нашего Мирона чудотворца, епископа Критского

St. Myron was born on the island of Crete[4], and was also brought up there; he married at a fairly early age. His chief occupation was tilling the earth, and, "in the sweat of his face," St. Myron ate bread not only himself but also fed others, giving from his harvests to the poor. For this the Lord blessed the labors of St. Myron: the size of his harvests corresponded to the amount of his almsgiving. St. Myron was more merciful than all the people who dwelt in that land: once he found thieves in his threshing-floor, when they had already filled their sacks with grain to such an extent that they could not lift them; St. Myron, instead of subjecting them to bodily or any other punishment, went up to them and with his own hands helped them lift the sacks onto their shoulders; at the same time he strictly forbade the thieves to tell of his deed. For his virtuous life St. Myron was made a presbyter; in this rank he zealously taught his flock the holy Christian life, and during the persecution by the impious emperor Decius[5] he earnestly urged them to bear sufferings steadfastly. When the persecution ended with the death of Decius[6], St. Myron was raised to the episcopal throne; as bishop he established the commemoration of the holy martyrs who had suffered for Christ during the persecution, and by the power of God he wrought many miracles and other marvelous works. Thus, among other things, St. Myron stopped the course of a river: during a flood a nobleman named Triton needed to cross the river[7]; the holy bishop stopped its current until the said man, having crossed, returned again; then St. Myron sent his staff with a command that the river again resume its usual course. When St. Myron's messengers reached the river and, stirring the water with the hierarch's staff, repeated his command, the

4. Crete is the largest of the Greek islands, in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea.
5. Decius was emperor 249–251.
6. In 251.
7. Something different is related in the Life and in the Synaxarion of Nicodemus: there it is reported that a river named Triton was stopped by St. Myron during a flood, and that he, having walked across it on dry ground, afterward sent his staff with a command that it flow again. The river Triton was still known to Diodorus Siculus in Crete.

river flowed back in its former direction with extraordinary speed and force. The holy wonderworker of God performed many wonders similar in their greatness to the one just described. St. Myron departed to the Lord as a centenarian old man, having dedicated his whole life to God by fulfilling His holy commandments[8].

* * *

Memory of our Holy Father Emilian the Confessor, Bishop of Cyzicus

Память святого отца нашего Емилиана Исповедника, епископа Кизического

Emilian, Bishop of Cyzicus[9], suffered for the confession of Christ during the reign of Leo the Armenian, the iconoclast[10]. St. Emilian was repeatedly compelled to abandon the veneration of the honorable and holy icons, but, steadfastly following the teaching of the holy fathers, he did not obey. For this faithfulness to the Orthodox faith he had to endure many afflictions from the heretics, even imprisonments[11], but St. Emilian bore it all with joy, in the hope of receiving eternal blessedness in exchange for temporal sufferings. Passing his earthly way amid sorrows and sufferings with such a purely Christian disposition, St. Emilian died in confinement, trusting in the Lord and adorned with the crown of a confessor.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Thou wast found to be a valiant champion of the Trinity; the Church glorifies thee, singing, O Emilian, for whose sake thou

8. St. Myron reposed about the year 350.

9. Cyzicus is located on the peninsula Arctonnesus in the Propontis (Sea of Marmara); this city was founded by the Milesians five centuries before Christ.

10. Leo V the Armenian was emperor 813–820.

11. Thus, in 815 he was imprisoned together with other bishops. At an assembly of bishops headed by the patriarch before the iconoclast emperor, St. Emilian, the first of the bishops, began to speak boldly with Leo the Armenian, firmly defending the rights of the Church. To the emperor's persuasions, which inclined toward iconoclasm, he said: "If this question, Emperor, is an ecclesiastical one, as you yourself said, then let it be examined in the Church according to custom. From antiquity, from the very beginning, ecclesiastical questions have been examined in churches, not in royal palaces." See the Life of Venerable Nicetas under April 3.

didst suffer. Wherefore we honor thy memory: deliver thy servants from the invasion of the heathen.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Gregory, icon-painter of the Kiev Caves, in the 12th century, resting in the Cave of St. Antony.

On the same day, the memory of the holy martyrs Eleutherius and Leonid, cast into the fire for the confession of Jesus Christ.

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Gregory of Sinai, who lived during the reign of Michael IX Palaeologus and Andronicus, Greek emperors, wrote many books profitable to the soul, and reposed in the first half of the 14th century.

THE NINTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 9

9 августа

New Calendar August 9 · Old Calendar August 22 (civil dates)

Sufferings of the Holy Apostle Matthias

Страдание святого Апостола Матфия

The Holy Apostle Matthias, who was of the tribe of Judah, was born in Bethlehem. From earliest childhood he began to study the sacred books and the law of God in Jerusalem under the guidance of St. Simeon the God-receiver. From him St. Matthias was instructed in a virtuous life; he lived a God-pleasing life, strictly following the path inscribed in the commandments of God. The time came when the Lord, after thirty years from the day of His birth of the Most Pure Virgin Mary, and after receiving baptism from John, made Himself manifest to the world; having gathered disciples, He preached the coming of the Kingdom of God, performing countless wonders and signs at the same time. St. Matthias, heeding the teaching of Christ and seeing His miracles, was filled with love for Him: leaving worldly cares, he followed the Lord together with the other disciples and the people, rejoicing in the sight of God incarnate and in the ineffable joy of His teaching. The Lord, to Whom the most secret movements of the human heart are open, seeing the zeal and purity of soul of St. Matthias, chose him not only into the number of His disciples, but also for the apostolic service. At first St. Matthias belonged to the number of the seventy lesser Apostles, of whom the Gospel says: “The Lord chose seventy others also (disciples), and sent them two by two before His face” (Lk. 10:1). But after the voluntary sufferings, the resurrection, and the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into heaven, St. Matthias was numbered among the twelve Apostles. When Judas fell away from the company of the twelve Apostles, the latter, since no one was chosen in

place of Judas, lost its fullness, and with it the right to the name of the twelve; therefore the chief of the Apostles, St. Peter, standing in the midst of the assembly of the first Christians, addressed the believers with the word that in place of the fallen and perished Judas one of those who had been with the Apostles during all the time the Lord Jesus abode with them should be chosen, so that the company of the twelve nearest Apostles chosen by Him might remain whole and unchanged. "And they appointed two: Joseph called Barsabbas... and Matthias. And they prayed and said: Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all, show which of these two Thou hast chosen to take the lot of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas fell away... And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles" (Acts 1:23–26), as the twelfth. This choice was soon confirmed by the Lord when the Holy Spirit was sent down in the form of tongues of fire, for the Holy Spirit rested upon St. Matthias as upon the other holy Apostles, granting him grace equal to that of the disciples of the Lord. After the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles cast lots as to who should go to which country to preach the Gospel; the lot of St. Matthias was Judea, where he labored, going about the cities and villages and proclaiming the salvation of the world revealed in Christ Jesus; moreover, he preached the name of Christ not only among the Jews but also among the pagans. Tradition says that St. Matthias brought the good news of Christ also to the inhabitants of Ethiopia[1] and suffered there many different torments: he was dragged over the ground, subjected to beatings, hung upon a pillar, his sides scraped with iron and set on fire; but strengthened by Christ, St. Matthias bore these torments bravely and with joy. According to some reports, St. Matthias also preached the Gospel in Macedonia[2], where the impious Greeks, wishing to test the power of the teaching proclaimed by the holy Apostle, seized him and forced him to drink a poison that deprived a man of sight: whoever drank it became blind. But St. Matthias, having drunk the poison in the name of Christ, suffered no harm

1. By Ethiopia is meant Pontic Ethiopia, or Colchis, present-day Mingrelia and Imeretia.
2. Macedonia is a country in the Balkan Peninsula, bordering the northwestern corner of the Aegean Sea (the Gulf of Thessalonica).

from it, and he even healed those blinded by this poison, of whom there were more than two hundred and fifty persons, laying on hands and invoking the name of Christ. The devil, not enduring such a humiliation, appeared to the pagans in the form of a youth, commanding that Matthias be killed, since he was destroying the veneration of demons. When they wanted to seize the holy Apostle, they were compelled to search for him for three days without success: St. Matthias, although he walked among them, was invisible to them. Then the holy Apostle appeared to the pagans who were seeking him and voluntarily gave himself into their hands; they, binding him, shut him up in a prison, where demons appeared to him, gnashing their teeth at him in fury; but the following night the Lord appeared to him in great light; encouraging St. Matthias and freeing him from his chains, He opened the doors of the prison and released him to freedom. When day came, the Apostle again stood among the people, preaching the name of Christ with even greater fearlessness; and when some, hardened in heart, not believing his preaching and in a rage wishing to kill him with their own hands, suddenly the earth opened and swallowed them; the rest were seized with terror, turned to Christ, and were baptized.

Then the Apostle of Christ returned again to his lot, to Judea, and he converted many of the children of Israel to the Lord Jesus Christ, proclaiming to them the Word of God and confirming it by signs and miracles: by the name of Christ St. Matthias restored sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, life to the dying, made the lame whole, cleansed lepers, and cast out demons. Calling Moses holy and urging observance of the law given to him by God on the tablets, St. Matthias at the same time taught belief in Christ, who had been foretold in the signs and types by Moses himself and prophesied by the prophets, sent by God the Father for the salvation of the world, and incarnate of the Most Pure and Immaculate Virgin. In doing so St. Matthias interpreted all the prophecies concerning Christ as already fulfilled in the Messiah who had come.

At this time the high priest of the Jews was Ananus, who hated Christ and blasphemed His name, a persecutor of Christians, who commanded that the holy Apostle and brother of God James be thrown

down from the roof of the church, and thus killed him. And when St. Matthias, going about Galilee, preached Christ, the Son of God, in the synagogues there, the Jews, blinded by unbelief and malice, filled with great fury, seized the holy Apostle and brought him to Jerusalem to the aforementioned high priest Ananus. The high priest, assembling the Sanhedrin and summoning the holy Apostle to judgment, addressed the conscienceless assembly with these words:

"The whole universe and this present gathering know what reproach our nation has brought upon itself; and this is not through our fault, but through the corruption of some who went out from us, and through the insatiable covetousness – or rather, the torment – of the Roman rulers. There is no need even to mention these introducers of new heresies who have seduced so many thousands of the people; you yourselves know how many of them have been slain by the Roman soldiers. Thus the seducers and the seduced perished, covering our tribe with shame. Such were the founders of heresies: Judas the Galilean and Theudas the Magician; with their destruction their very memory was also destroyed. But among all such heretics there arose the heresiarch Jesus of Nazareth: He called Himself the Son of God and God, and amazed many with His magical signs and miracles, drawing hearts to Himself and proclaiming the abolition of the law; for which He received judgment according to the law which He reviled. And what shall we say? Do we not know that the law was given to Moses by God Himself, that the patriarchs and prophets observed it, to whom God granted the power to perform such wonders as Jesus could not? Who does not know Moses, who conversed with God as with a man? Who does not know Elijah, taken into paradise on a fiery chariot? Who has not heard that the dead man thrown upon the bones of Elisha came to life? And how many other saints of God performed miracles; yet not one of them dared such a deed as Jesus did, to appropriate to Himself the honor of God and to establish a new law. The prophets, inspired by the Holy Spirit, spoke in full humility, but He spoke with pride His own inventions, and came to such madness that He subjected the high priests and princes to reproachful rebukes, and called the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites. Did any of the prophets do anything like this? And through

His pride He met a fitting end, receiving the reward for His deeds. Oh, if only His memory had perished with Him, and no one had revived the teaching of Him who died! Especially grievous is it that the temple of God, the holy city, and the laws of our fathers are in slavery to the Romans, and there is neither one who pities, nor one who sympathizes, nor one who delivers; we are dragged without fault before the courts, and we endure it; we are seduced, and we give tacit consent; we are robbed, and we utter not a sound; and – most grievous of all – the Galileans betray us into the hands of the Romans, shamelessly accusing us and our people of the killing of Jesus, as if He were innocent. Better that these few Galileans perish than that this holy place and our whole people be subjected to destruction by the Romans; of two evils – if it is impossible to avoid both – one should choose the lesser, the more tolerable. And this disciple of Jesus standing before us now deserves death; but let him first consider within himself – we do not take time for reflection, for we desire not his destruction but his correction – and let him choose one of two things: either to follow the law given by God through Moses and thus preserve his life, or to be called a Christian and die."

In answer to this, St. Matthias, lifting up his hands, said:

Men and brethren! I do not wish to say much concerning the accusation you lay against me; for me, the name of Christian is not a crime, but a glory. For the Lord Himself says through the Prophet that in the last days He "will call His servants by a new name" (Is. 65:15).

The high priest Ananus objected:

Is it not a crime to count the holy law as nothing, not to honor God, and to listen to empty tales of sorcery?

"If you will hear me," replied St. Matthias, "I shall explain to you that the teaching we preach is not fables and sorcery, but the very truth, attested long ago by the law."

When the high priest had given his consent, St. Matthias opened his mouth and began to interpret the Old Testament types and prophecies concerning Jesus Christ: how God promised to the forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that from their seed He would raise up a Man through Whom all the tribes of the earth would be blessed, of which

David also speaks in the words of the psalm: "And in Him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed; all nations shall call Him blessed" (Ps. 71:17); how the bush that burned and was not consumed prefigured the Incarnation of Christ from the Most Pure Virgin (Ex. 3:2), of whom Isaiah foretold: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel" (Is. 7:14), that is, God is with us. Moses likewise clearly foretold Christ, saying: "The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear" (Deut. 18:15). He also prefigured the Savior's voluntary sufferings by raising the serpent upon a tree, of which Isaiah also spoke: "As a sheep He was led to the slaughter" (Is. 53:7), and, "He was numbered with the transgressors" (Is. 53:12); the Prophet Jonah, who came forth unharmed from the belly of the whale, was a type of the Lord's Resurrection on the third day.

These lengthy explanations of the Old Testament books, which speak of Christ Jesus, angered Ananus, so that he could no longer contain himself and said to St. Matthias:

How dare you thus transgress the law? Do you not know the words of Scripture: "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he give thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, 'Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them' ... that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death" (Deut. 13:1, 2, 5)?

St. Matthias answered:

He of whom I speak is not only a Prophet, but also the Lord of the prophets; He is God, the Son of God, as His true miracles bear witness. It is therefore that I believe in Him and hope to remain steadfast in the confession of His most holy name.

"If you are given time to reflect, will you repent?" asked the high priest.

"Far be it from me to depart from the truth which I have already found," answered the holy Apostle. "With all my heart I believe and openly confess that Jesus of Nazareth, whom you rejected and de-

livered to death, is the Son of God, of one essence and co-eternal with the Father, and I am His servant."

Then the high priest, stopping his ears and gnashing his teeth, cried out:

He blasphemes! He blasphemes! Let him hear the law!

At once the book of the law was opened, and the passage was read where it is written: "Whosoever blasphemeth his God shall bear his sin; and he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones; let not your eye spare him, and so shall ye put away evil from among Israel" (cf. Lev. 24:15–16).

When this passage had been read, the high priest said to the Apostle of Christ:

Your words testify against you; your blood be upon your own head.

After this, the high priest condemned St. Matthias to be stoned, and the Apostle was led away to execution. When they came to the place called Bethlaskila, that is, "the house of those stoned," St. Matthias said to the Jews who were leading him:

Hypocrites! The Prophet David rightly spoke of men such as you: "They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood" (Ps. 93:21). The Prophet Ezekiel likewise speaks of such people, saying that they put to death souls that should not die (Ezek. 13:19).

After these words of the Apostle of Christ, two witnesses—as the law required—laid their hands upon his head and testified that he had blasphemed God, the law, and Moses. They were also the first to cast stones at St. Matthias; and he asked that these first two stones be buried with him, as witnesses to his sufferings for Christ. Then the others too began to cast stones, stoning the holy Apostle; and he raised his hands and gave up his spirit to the Lord. The lawless Jews added mockery to his torment: after the martyr's death, to curry favor with the Romans, they cut off his head with a sword according to Roman custom—as though the Apostle of Christ had been an enemy of Caesar. Thus, having fought the good fight, the holy Apostle Matthias finished his course. The faithful took the Apostle's body and buried it with hon-

or, offering glory to 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.[3]

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thy radiant preaching, shining forth like the sun throughout the whole world, enlighteneth the Church of the nations with grace, O wonderworker, Apostle Matthias.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Anthony

Страдание святого мученика Антония

The holy Martyr Anthony was a native of the city of Alexandria[4], believed in Christ, and led a God-fearing life. He was seized and brought before the governor of the city. At his examination he declared himself a Christian and boldly preached Christ as the true God. For this he was hung upon a tree, and they began to flay his body with iron instruments; but he did not renounce Christ, and resisted his tormentors, patiently enduring his sufferings. Therefore he was condemned to be burned with fire. As he stood upon the pyre, he thus instructed those who stood by:

My beloved brethren! Serve the body not so much, but rather the soul. Remember that it was given you by God and is akin to the rational divine powers,[5] and take care to present it pure to the Master.

After the death of the holy martyr,[6] his body was found wholly unharmed.

* * *

3. According to the Greek Menaia, in the verses for St. Matthias, he is said to have died on the cross. The head of St. Matthias was in Constantinople in the church of the Holy Apostles in 1200, as our Russian pilgrim Antony testifies. Now the head and part of the relics are shown in Rome, and another part in Trier and Pavia.
4. The city of Alexandria was situated in Egypt on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.
5. By the Divine powers one is to understand here the Angels.
6. The time of the death of the holy martyr Antony is not known.

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Julian, Marcian, and the Others Who Suffered with Them for the Icons

Память святых мучеников Иулиана, Маркиана и прочих, пострадавших с ними за иконы

When Leo the Isaurian,[7] surnamed Conon, whose name was that of a beast, ascended the throne of the Greek Empire, he raised up persecution against the Church of God, introducing within it the new heresy of iconoclasm, according to which the holy icons were counted as idols, and those who reverently venerated them as idolaters. Leo the Isaurian ordered the holy icons to be cast out of churches, houses, and dwellings generally, and destroyed by throwing them either into fire or into water. Those who did not share his heretical errors he either banished to the farthest parts of the empire or subjected to various torments, and even put to death. At the beginning of his persecution, he deposed with dishonor and blows the most holy Patriarch of Constantinople, Germanus,[8] because the latter opposed his commands; in place of the deposed patriarch he elevated Anastasius,[9] a heretic of like mind with the emperor. At that time many devout Christians rose up against the heresy, and for this received the martyr's crown, as did those of whom we are now to speak. Their suffering began on this account. In Constantinople, from the time of Constantine the Great, there had been a gate known as the Brazen Gate; above this gate there had from ancient times stood an image of the Savior, also made of bronze. The impious emperor and patriarch ordered this image to be taken down. A ladder was set up, and one of the soldiers, a spatharios by rank, began to climb it. This stirred the devout zeal of the great crowd gathered at the gate; some of them seized the ladder and threw it, together with the soldier upon it, to the ground, putting him to death. When the emperor learned of the people's deed, he sent armed soldiers with drawn swords against the Orthodox. They slew many men and women, old and young; their number is known to the Lord alone. The most distinguished among the crowd, who were venerators of the icons,

7. Leo III the Isaurian was emperor 716–741.
8. St. Germanus was Patriarch of Constantinople 715–730.
9. Patriarch from 730 to 754.

were taken alive. Their names are as follows: Julian, Marcian, John, James, Alexis, Demetrius, Phocas, Peter, and Leontius. After cruel punishment with rods, they were cast into prison, where they remained in chains for as many as eighty days, enduring merciless beatings: each of them received five hundred blows daily. But strengthened by the power of Christ, the holy martyrs endured all courageously, without losing their bodily strength. Seeing this, the torturer ordered their faces first to be burned with red-hot iron, and then had them led out to the square and slain with the sword. Thus the saints ended their sufferings. Together with them, a noble woman named Maria Patricia was beheaded for her reverent veneration of the icons. The bodies of the holy martyrs were cast into the depths of the sea. When the holy martyrs were seized, the Venerable Theodosia the nun was taken with them, being accused of the same offense; she had joined the others in overturning the ladder. The Venerable Theodosia received the martyr's crown before the saints mentioned above; her commemoration is observed on the twenty-ninth day of May, under which date her Life is also given.

All the holy martyrs who suffered for the venerable icon of the Savior stood together before the Master Christ, our God, to Whom be glory for ever. Amen.[10]

* * *

10. From the acts of these martyrs, included in the Acts of the Saints, it is seen: 1) that the chief part in the killing of the soldier who, by the emperor's command, was attempting to cast down the icon of the Savior from the Brazen Gates was taken by Mary Patrikia, of a noble family; 2) the first helper of Mary in casting down the soldier was the protospatharius St. Gregory, and he suffered martyrdom for his exploit; 3) this event took place on 19 January; 4) most of the monuments call the martyr Phocas Photius. — After their death, on 9 August 730, the martyrs were buried in the district of Constantinople called "Pelagius," near the church of St. Martyr Theodore. Their holy relics were found incorrupt, having lain in the earth for 139 years. The uncovering of their relics took place under Patriarch Ignatius, following a threefold revelation given to him in a dream.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day, the commemoration of the Venerable Psoi, disciple of Pachomius the Great, who struggled in ascetic labors in Egypt in the 4th century.



THE TENTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 10

10 августа

New Calendar August 10 · Old Calendar August 23 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Lawrence the Archdeacon, Sixtus the Pope, and Others with Them

Страдание святых мучеников Лаврентия архидиакона, Сикста папы и прочих с ними

The holy Pope of Rome, Sixtus[1], was seized together with his clergy and cast into the public prison by Valerian, the Roman ruler, at the time when Emperor Decius[2] was returning in triumph to Rome[3] after his victory over the Persians. St. Sixtus was born in the Greek city of Athens; at first he was a philosopher, but afterward became a disciple of Christ. When he came to Rome, he proved himself, as a wise and pious man, a most useful member of the Church of Christ; there, for a longer or shorter time, he passed through the various hierarchical ranks. After St. Pope Stephen[4] was slain for confessing Christ, St. Sixtus was raised to his place, as to certain death: at that time there was no pope whom the cup of sufferings passed by. While St. Pope Sixtus was in prison together with the clergy and other Christians, two Persian princes, Abdon and Sennis, were being tortured for Christ in Rome; Decius had brought them with him in chains as captives. After their martyrdom[5], Emperor Decius and Valerian ordered St. Pope Sixtus to be brought to them by night, in the temple

1. The name Sixtus, in other forms Xystus, is derived from *xystos* – polished, smoothed, or *xyston* – a spear; others derive it from the Latin *sisto* – standing firmly, firmly set.
2. Decius – emperor 249–251.
3. Rome – the capital of the Roman Empire, situated in central Italy.
4. His memory is on August 2.
5. Their memory is on July 30.

known as Tellus. When the men sent for the pope came to the prison, he said to the Christians who shared his bonds:

"My brothers and companions, do not fear temporal torments, remembering the great sufferings endured before us by the saints to obtain the crown of eternal life. Christ Himself suffered for our salvation, leaving us an example to follow (cf. 1 Pet. 2:21). Do not fear to suffer for Christ, that you may reign together with Him." Two deacons, Felicissimus and Agapitus, were taken with the pope and brought before Decius and Valerian.

"Do you know," Decius asked the pope, "for what reason you have been seized and brought before us?"

"I know it very well," the pope answered.

"If you know," said the emperor, "then do as others in your place do: thus you will preserve your life and increase the number of your clergy."

"Indeed," the pope affirmed, "I am always concerned to increase the clergy."

"Then offer sacrifice to the gods, and you shall receive authority over all the priests," the emperor proposed.

St. Sixtus answered him:

"I ever offer a pure and undefiled sacrifice to Almighty God the Father, to His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit."

"We spare your old age," the emperor continued, exhorting the pope. "Have pity on yourself and your clergy, that you may save them from death."

"Until now," St. Sixtus answered, "I have cared, and still care, both for myself and for my clergy, that together with myself I may rescue and deliver all from eternal death."

"Take him," Decius ordered the soldiers, "to the temple of Mars, and let him offer sacrifice there; if he does not, then shut him up in the special prison of Mamertine."

The holy pope was brought with the deacons to the temple of Mars, and they urged him to offer sacrifice. But he said to the soldiers:

"O men blinded by the devil and deserving all pity, why do you worship mute and deaf idols, which can help neither themselves nor others?

Listen to me, my children; repent, and so deliver your souls from eternal torments."

But they, carrying out the emperor's command, led the pope and the deacons away to the Mamertine prison.

When the holy Archdeacon[6] Lawrence saw the pope being led to prison, he cried out to him, saying:

"Where are you going, my father, without your son? Where are you hastening, holy bishop, without your archdeacon? You have never celebrated the bloodless Sacrifice without my serving with you; what, then, have I done now to offend your mercy? Am I no longer worthy to be with you? Do you not know me as your servant, ever obedient to you? And if I have shared with you in offering the Divine Mysteries, why should I not also share with you in shedding my blood for Christ? Take your son with you, then, my father; do not leave your disciple, O teacher. Offer me to God as a sacrifice, as Abraham offered his son Isaac (Gen., ch. 22), and as the chief Apostle Peter offered the first archdeacon Stephen (Acts, chs. 6–7); and afterward, when you have seen me receive the martyr's crown, then go forth to meet it yourself."

St. Sixtus answered him:

"I am not abandoning you, my son, but keeping you for greater sufferings: great struggles for the faith of Christ await you. I am already old, and therefore go forth to an easier contest; but you must win a more glorious victory and triumph over the torturer. Do not weep. Know that three days after my death, you, O Levite, will follow your priest; you do not need my presence to strengthen you. Elijah left Elisha, yet did not deprive him of miraculous power (4 Kgdms. 2). Go, and use this time to distribute the treasures of the Church according to your own judgment among the poor and needy." St. Lawrence obeyed. Taking all the treasures of the Church, not even excluding the vessels, he went through the city seeking out the clergy who were in hiding and the destitute Christians, and helped them according to their need. Thus he came to Mount Helion, where he found the dwelling of a widow

6. The duties of the archdeacon at the time described consisted not only in ecclesiastical service, but also in the administration of church property, in aid to the poor, and in the provision of shelter for the homeless.

whose husband had died thirty-two years before. This widow, whose name was Cyriaca, sheltered many Christians, together with their presbyters and clergy. By night St. Lawrence brought silver, clothing, and other necessary things there, and began to wash the feet of both the ministers of the Church and the other Christians. The widow Cyriaca bowed at his feet and said:

"I beseech you, servant of Christ, lay your hands upon my head, which pains me terribly."

St. Lawrence gave her the towel with which he had wiped the feet, laid his hands upon her head, making the sign of the Cross, and said:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, be healed!"

And immediately the widow was delivered from her illness. That same night St. Lawrence went to a district of the city known as Canarius, and there, in the house of a Christian named Narcissus, he found many Christians. He washed their feet too, distributing from the treasures of the Church for their needs. There was among them a blind Christian, who tearfully appealed to the saint:

"Lay your hand upon my eyes, that I may see your face."

St. Lawrence said:

"May our Lord Jesus Christ, who opened the eyes of the blind man, enlighten you!"

With these words he made the sign of the Cross over the blind man's eyes; immediately the man received his sight and rejoiced to see the face of St. Lawrence. After leaving there, the saint learned that many Christians were hiding in the caves of Nepotianus. He went there, taking silver with him for their needs. He found as many as seventy-three Christians, women and men alike; St. Justin the presbyter was also there. Having washed the Christians' feet and distributed the last of the money, St. Lawrence departed. When he heard that St. Pope Sixtus, together with the two deacons, had been taken to trial in the temple of Tellus, St. Lawrence hastened there, wishing to see what would happen.

When the pope appeared before Decius and Valerian at the tribunal, the emperor said to him:

"Out of regard for your old age, we wish you well. Listen to us and offer sacrifice to the gods."

"Have pity rather on yourselves," St. Sixtus answered, "and do not blaspheme the God of Heaven. Repent of the blood of the saints that you have shed, lest you perish utterly."

At these words Decius was overcome with great anger and said to Valerian:

"If he is not removed from among the living, no one will obey the authorities or heed them."

"Put him to death!" Valerian answered.

Then the deacons cried out to their persecutors:

"Would that you, unworthy men, had listened to the exhortations of our father! You would thereby have escaped the eternal torments that await you!"

"How long," said Valerian, "will they live and threaten us with torments? Take them to the temple of Mars, and let them offer sacrifice; but if they will not do so, behead them."

The temple of Mars stood outside the city wall, before the Appian Gate. When the saints were brought there, St. Sixtus, looking at the temple, said:

"May Christ, the Son of the Living God, destroy you!"

The Christians present had scarcely said, "Amen!" when an earthquake began; part of the temple collapsed, and the idol within it was shattered. Then St. Lawrence cried out to the holy pope:

"Do not leave me, my father; I have already distributed the treasure entrusted to me by you!"

When the soldiers heard of the treasure, they seized St. Lawrence and would not let him go; but the holy pope and the deacons were put to death on a hillock before the temple, and their bodies were left unburied. When night came, presbyters, deacons, and the other Christians arrived and took up the venerable bodies: they placed the pope in a tomb in the burial place of Callistus, and the deacons in the burial place of Praetextatus. St. Pope Sixtus and his deacons Felicissimus and Agapitus suffered martyrdom for Christ on the sixth day of the month of August[7]. After the slaying of St. Sixtus, the soldiers led St. Lawrence to the emperor and said to him:

"We have seized Sixtus' archdeacon: he received treasure from the bishop and has hidden it somewhere."

Hearing of the treasure, the emperor rejoiced greatly and, summoning St. Lawrence, said to him:

"Where are the treasures of the Church that you have hidden?"

St. Lawrence made no answer.

Then Decius handed him over to the eparch Valerian, saying:

"Find out from him about the treasures of the Church, and compel him to worship the gods; but if he will not reveal the treasures and worship the gods, let him perish in torments!"

Valerian, taking St. Lawrence, delivered him into the prison for confinement to the military commander Hippolytus, who was at the same time also the warden of the prison. Hippolytus shut St. Lawrence up in the dungeon, where there were already other prisoners; among them was a Greek named Lucillius, who had been held in the prison for a very long time and had become blind from constant weeping.

"Believe," said St. Lawrence to him, "in the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized: He will restore your sight."

"I have long had the desire to be baptized in the name of Christ," the blind man replied.

7. In 258. The oldest evidence of the martyric death of St. Sixtus and of the veneration of him as a martyr is found in St. Cyprian's letter to Successus (80 or 82); St. Cyprian suffered five and a half weeks after Sixtus (September 14). St. Sixtus was bishop of Rome for slightly more than eleven months, or a little less than a year. The relics of St. Pope Sixtus II are in the church bearing his name in Rome; the relics of the martyrs Felicissimus and Agapitus are likewise in Rome, in the church of the Mother of God of Mercy.

"Do you believe with all your heart?" asked St. Lawrence.

The blind man answered with tears:

"I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, I renounce the vain idols and I despise them."

Hippolytus patiently listened to the conversation of St. Lawrence with the blind man, wishing to be convinced whether the eyes of the blind man would indeed be opened and how this miraculous event would come about. St. Lawrence, having catechized Lucillius and blessed the water, baptized him; and immediately the eyes of the blind man were opened, and he cried out in a loud voice:

"Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal God, who has granted me sight!"

Other blind men also heard of this miracle and began to come to the dungeon to St. Lawrence. And he, laying his hand with the sign of the Cross upon their eyes and calling upon the name of Christ, restored their sight. All this aroused in Hippolytus an involuntary wonder. After some time he said to the saint:

"Show me the treasures of the Church."

"If you believe," St. Lawrence replied, "in almighty God the Father and in His Son our Lord Jesus Christ, then the treasure will be revealed to you and eternal life will be given to you."

"If what you say is truly fulfilled, then I will do all that you command," said Hippolytus.

"Listen to me," continued St. Lawrence, "and quickly do what I advise you: renounce the deaf and dumb idols and be baptized."

Hippolytus agreed and led St. Lawrence out of the prison to his home. Having instructed Hippolytus in the holy faith and catechized him, St. Lawrence performed over him the holy baptism.

"I saw," said Hippolytus after baptism, "souls without sin in great joy." (These were indeed those treasures of which St. Lawrence had prophesied to him that they would be revealed to him: during the baptism the Lord showed him in a wondrous vision the heavenly blessednesses.)

"I adjure you," Hippolytus then entreated St. Lawrence, "by the Lord Jesus Christ: baptize my whole household."

And St. Lawrence baptized nineteen persons of both sexes in the house of Hippolytus. At this time an order was conveyed to Hippolytus that he should lead St. Lawrence to Valerian. Hippolytus told this to St. Lawrence, and he said:

"Let us go: for me, as for you, the martyr's crown is being prepared."

When they both appeared before Valerian, the latter said to St. Lawrence:

"Abandon your obstinacy and show us the treasures which, as they say, you possess."

"Give me two or three days' time, and I will reveal the treasures to you," St. Lawrence offered.

"I entrust him to you for three days," Valerian said to Hippolytus, and released St. Lawrence. St. Lawrence, during those three days, gathered in the house of Hippolytus a multitude of beggars, widows and orphans, the blind, the lame and the sick. When the three days had passed, he brought them all to Decius and Valerian, who were in the Hall of Sallustius:

"Here, in them," St. Lawrence addressed Decius and Valerian, "whom you now see, as in vessels, the eternal treasures are enclosed, and whoever puts his substance into these vessels receives it back again with abundance in the Kingdom of Heaven."

Put to shame by this act of St. Lawrence, Decius and Valerian were greatly enraged, but no longer questioned him about the treasures, and began to compel him to idolatry.

"What are you scheming," said Valerian, "offer sacrifice to the gods and cast aside your sorceries, in which you place your hope."

"Why do you allow the devil to teach you to compel Christians to worship demons?" asked St. Lawrence. "Judge for yourselves whether it is right to worship an idol made by man, with a demon dwelling in it, while forgetting the Heavenly God, the Creator of all things visible and invisible."

Falling into a rage, the emperor ordered that the saint be stripped, stretched out on the ground, and beaten with scorpions (the scorpion was an instrument of torture—a thin iron rod with sharp teeth). The

holy martyr was beaten so cruelly that the earth was stained with his blood; Decius himself meanwhile said:

"Do not blaspheme the gods, do not blaspheme!"

St. Lawrence, enduring the blows, replied:

"I thank my God that He has deigned to make me a participant in those sufferings which His servants, the holy martyrs, endured; but you, wretched man, are blinded by your madness and fury."

Then Decius ordered the torments to be stopped and St. Lawrence raised from the ground; he then commanded that an iron bed, boards, tin rods and other instruments of torture be brought and set before him; pointing to all this, he said:

"All of this will serve for your torment, if you do not offer sacrifice to the gods."

"I have long desired such torments as a feast," St. Lawrence replied; "they are torments for you, but for us they are glory."

"If these torments," Decius mocked, "are a feast and glory for you, then tell us where the other Christians like you are hiding: we would bring them here to feast together with you."

"You are impious men," St. Lawrence answered, "unworthy to behold those whose names are written in heaven."

After this the emperor ordered the bound martyr to be led to the palace of Tiberius, whither he himself was also going. Arriving there, he sat in the temple of Jupiter and commanded that St. Lawrence be brought before him:

"Tell us," he said, "where the impious Christians are hiding, so that we may be able to cleanse the city of them; and as for you, bow down to the gods and do not rely on the treasures which you conceal."

"I will not reveal the servants of Christ to you," the saint replied, "but in regard to the treasures I do not hope in vain: they are well known to me."

"Do you not think to escape torments with gold or silver?" asked the emperor.

"I am a servant of Christ," the martyr replied, "and I place all my hope in Him; I also know those heavenly treasures which Christ, my God, has prepared for me and for all His servants."

The enraged emperor ordered the saint to be beaten with clubs, and his sides to be burned with red-hot iron plates; during these torments St. Lawrence prayed to God:

"Lord Jesus Christ, God of God, have mercy upon me Thy servant: they slandered me, but I did not deny Thee; they questioned me, and I confessed Thy most holy name."

Then Decius ordered the martyr to be beaten with tin rods, and St. Lawrence cried out at this:

"Lord Jesus Christ, receive my spirit!"

Then a voice sounded to him from heaven:

"Many more sufferings still await you to endure!"

All heard this voice. Decius, however, falling into a frenzy, cried out loudly:

"Men of Rome and assembly of the people! You hear the voice of demons comforting this sorcerer and sacrilegious man, who does not honor our gods, does not heed me, the emperor, and does not fear torments!"

And then he ordered St. Lawrence to be stretched out again and beaten once more with scorpions. But the holy martyr laughed at the torments, putting Decius to shame, and prayed, saying:

"Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! I thank Thee that Thou showest Thy mercy to us, though unworthy; but grant me also Thy grace, that those present here and those who look upon me may know that Thou art the comforter of Thy servants."

During this prayer one of the soldiers present at the tortures, named Romanus, believed in Christ and cried out in a loud voice:

"St. Lawrence, I see a radiant youth who stands beside you and wipes the sores and all your body; I adjure you by the Lord Christ, who has sent you His Angel, do not forsake me!"

Decius said to Valerian:

"We are conquered by this sorcerer!" And, ordering the martyr to be untied from the rack, he gave him over to Hippolytus in the prison. The soldier Romanus brought a full water-vessel to St. Lawrence, fell at his feet, and with tears implored him to baptize him. When he had been

baptized, other soldiers suddenly came, seized him, and led him to the emperor; before they had even begun to question him, he cried out:

"I am a Christian!"

The emperor immediately ordered him to be beheaded: then Romanus was led outside the city through the Salarian Gate and his head was cut off; this was on the ninth day of the month of August. His body was taken by night by the aforementioned presbyter Justin, and he laid it in the tomb with honor.

That same night Decius and Valerian, while staying at the Olympiad baths, not far from the palace of Sallustius, ordered a tribunal to be prepared for St. Lawrence to appear before him for his final trial; they also ordered all the instruments of torture to be made ready. Learning of this, Hippolytus began to weep. St. Lawrence, consoling him, said:

"Do not weep for me; rather rejoice, since I am going to receive the glorious martyr's crown."

"Why can I not cry out in your presence, 'I am a Christian!', so that I may die together with you?" asked Hippolytus.

"For now," said St. Lawrence, "keep your confession in your heart: after a little while I will call you; you will hear me and come to me."

When the emperor sat on the tribunal together with Valerian, the holy martyr Lawrence was brought before him.

"Abandon your sorcery," Decius said to him, "and tell us what kind of man you are."

"I was born," the saint replied, "in Spain, I was educated in Rome, and I have been a Christian from my swaddling clothes; from my childhood I have already been taught the law of God."

"Is this what you call the law of God," asked the emperor, "that you do not honor the gods and do not fear torments?"

"The law in which I have been taught," the saint replied, "has revealed to me and compels me to honor my God, the Lord Jesus Christ; strengthened by His name, I indeed do not fear the torments with which you threaten me."

"Offer sacrifice to the gods," said the emperor, "and if you do not do so, you will be tormented the whole night."

To this St. Lawrence said:

"My night is not dark, but shines all with light."

The tormentor commanded that a stone be struck against the mouth of St. Lawrence; but the holy martyr became yet more strengthened in spirit, putting the emperor to shame, and gave thanks to God.

"Bring an iron bed," said Decius, "and let proud Lawrence lie down upon it this night."

They brought a bed that was an iron grate; they placed it before Decius and Valerian, and then laid the naked holy martyr upon it, putting hot coals beneath the bed; meanwhile the servants pressed St. Lawrence down from above with iron forks, roasting him as though he were meat to be eaten.

"Offer sacrifice to the gods," said the emperor.

"I have offered myself," the martyr replied, "with a contrite spirit as a sacrifice to my God, like a fragrant incense."

At this the servants kindled the fire still more, heating the bed ever more intensely.

"Know, wretched man," the martyr said to the emperor, "that these hot coals prepare for me coolness, and for you eternal torment. My Lord knows that I, slandered for confessing His holy name, did not renounce Him; but when asked, I said that I am a Christian, and now, being on the fire, I offer Him my thanksgiving."

"Where is that fire with which you threatened us?" asked Valerian.

"O senseless and blinded men!" the saint replied. "Know that these coals on which you are burning me serve my soul as coolness, while they prepare for your souls an unquenchable fire."

All who were present marveled at the cruelty of the emperor, who commanded that a living man be roasted. But St. Lawrence spoke with a radiant face:

"I thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast strengthened me!" And, raising his eyes to Decius and Valerian, he said:

"Behold, wretched men, you have already cooked one side of my body; turn it over to the other and eat what has been cooked."

Then, glorifying God, he said:

"I thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast deemed me worthy to enter Thy gates!"

With these words he gave up his spirit. Decius and Valerian, seeing that the martyr had died, departed in shame, leaving the body on the bed. Hippolytus, however, before sunrise stole away the honorable and much-suffering body of the holy martyr; wrapping it in a shroud with aromatics, he informed the holy presbyter Justin. The latter came at once to Hippolytus, and both carried the body to the aforementioned widow Cyriaca; here it remained until evening, and all that day they fasted, shedding tears. Late in the evening, with a great gathering of Christians, they carried the body with tears into a cave that was on the land belonging to the widow; after performing an all-night prayer here, they buried the martyr with honor. The holy presbyter Justin celebrated the Divine Liturgy, and all communed of the Most Pure Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. The holy martyr Lawrence completed his life of suffering on the tenth day of the month of August. St. Hippolytus suffered together with others on the third day after St. Lawrence, of which more will be said in its place. May glory for all this be to our God, glorified in the Holy Trinity now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.[8]

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having had thy heart kindled with the Divine fire, thou didst utterly consume the fire of the passions, O firm foundation of sufferers, God-bearing Martyr Lawrence; and amid thy sufferings thou didst cry out faithfully: Nothing shall separate me from the love of Christ.

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8. St. Lawrence died a martyr's death in 258. His place of burial was on the eastern side of Rome, one verst from the city, on the Tiburtine Road. On this spot, according to the testimony of Anastasius the Librarian, a magnificent church was built for the saint by the emperor Constantine the Great. The relics, or more precisely a part of the relics, of St. Lawrence were placed in the church bearing his name in Constantinople under Theodosius the Younger on September 27. At present the relics of St. Lawrence are in Rome, in the suburban church in his name on the Tiburtine Road, and his head is in the domestic church of his name of the sacristan of the Quirinal palace.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the repose of the Blessed Lawrence, Fool-for-Christ of Kaluga, in the year 1515.



THE ELEVENTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 11

11 августа

New Calendar August 11 · Old Calendar August 24 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Fathers Theodore and Basil, Monks of the Kiev Caves

Житие преподобных отец наших Феодора и Василия, иноков Киево-Печерских

"The love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10), says the holy Apostle Paul. We see the fulfillment of this saying in the present Life of the Venerable Theodore and Basil. The enemy and author of evil stirred up sinful thoughts and intentions in the soul of St. Theodore by nothing other than the love of money; through the love of money the devil brought bodily sufferings and death not only upon the Venerable Father but also upon his counselor, the blessed Basil. Concerning these holy fathers the following is recounted.

The Venerable Theodore, while living in the world, possessed a very great fortune. Once, hearing the words of the Lord in the Gospel, "So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Lk. 14:33), he obeyed them: leaving the world and distributing his wealth to the poor, the Venerable Theodore became a black-robed monk of the Kiev Caves Monastery, living a life full of ascetic labors. At the command of the abbot he settled in a cave known by the name of the Varangian Cave, where he lived for many years in strict abstinence. During the Venerable Theodore's stay in this cave, the devil implanted in him grief and regret over the wealth he had given to the poor, bringing to his mind his advancing years, the weakness of his health, and the scarcity of monastic food. The blessed Theodore did not understand that such thoughts were a diabolical temptation. Forgetting the words of the Lord, "Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor yet for your body, what you shall

put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Behold the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feeds them" (Mt. 6:25–26), and seeing his poverty, he began to come from grief to despair, being more and more captivated by the temptation each day. Once he opened his sorrow to his friends, concealing nothing.

Among the black-robed monks of the Kiev Caves Monastery there was a certain Basil, one of the most virtuous in life. Wishing to draw the Venerable Theodore out of the ditch of despair and to comfort him, he said to him:

"I beg you, Brother Theodore, do not lose your reward. If you grieve over the wealth you gave to the poor, I will try to return it to you in the same amount. Only say before the Lord that your almsgiving be reckoned to me, and you will at once be freed from sorrow and will regain your property through me. However, see whether the Lord will permit this. In Constantinople also a certain man grieved over the gold he had given to the poor, and reckoned his almsgiving to another, taking from him money equal to what he had given; when he said, 'It was not I, Lord, who performed the almsgiving, but this man,' he at once fell down in the midst of the church and died, losing thus both his gold and his life."

Hearing this, the blessed Theodore came to his senses and began to lament his fall, blessing his brother who had healed him of so dangerous a sickness of the soul. Of such men the Lord said, "If you take the precious from the worthless, you shall be as my mouth" (Jer. 15:19). From this time the love between Theodore and Basil grew still stronger. From then on the Venerable Theodore unceasingly advanced in the commandments of God, striving to perform everything necessary for a righteous, God-pleasing, holy, and blameless life. The devil, however, suffered great shame, being unable to finally beguile the Venerable Theodore with the love of money. He again armed himself against the Venerable Father, devising new snares to stir up in him the passion of covetousness. Once the abbot sent the Venerable Basil away from the monastery on some obedience, the fulfillment of which took him three months. Considering this time convenient for his snares, the devil, tak-

ing the form of Basil, came to the cave of the Venerable Theodore as if for a conversation for the salvation of the soul.

"How," he said, "are you progressing in the virtuous life? Has your struggle with the demonic temptations ceased, or does it still continue, stirring up in you the love of money through the memory of the wealth you gave to the poor?"

The Venerable Theodore, not recognizing the demon and supposing that Brother Basil was speaking with him, answered:

"By your prayers, Father, I bear the struggle with the devil successfully and do not listen to the thoughts he stirs up. And now, whatever you command me, I will gladly perform, obeying you; in your instructions I have found great benefit for my soul."

The pretended brother, not hearing the name of God from the lips of the Venerable Theodore, gained still greater boldness:

"I give you," he said, "a new counsel. Fulfill it, and you will find peace and will soon receive from God a recompense equal to the wealth you gave away. Ask the Lord God to send you a multitude of gold and silver, and do not allow anyone to enter your cave, nor go out of it yourself."

The Venerable Theodore promised to do all this. Then the devil, full of evil stratagems, left him; secretly suggesting to the Venerable Father the thought of acquiring treasures, he induced him to pray for this. The blessed Theodore prayed the Lord to send him a treasure, which he promised to distribute entirely to the poor. After the prayer he fell asleep and saw in a dream a demon who, taking the form of a bright Angel, pointed out to him a treasure in the cave. This vision came not once but many times. After some time the Venerable Theodore came to the place indicated to him in the dream; beginning to dig, he indeed found here a treasure consisting of gold, silver, and precious vessels. After this the demon, under the appearance of Basil, came to him again and said:

"Where is the treasure given to you? The Angel who appeared to you revealed to me also that through your prayers you have received a multitude of gold and silver."

The blessed Theodore did not wish to show him the treasure. And at once the crafty demon began openly to advise him, inserting also secret thoughts, to take the treasure and withdraw with it to another land. At first he said to the Venerable Father:

"Did I not say, Brother Theodore, that you would soon receive from God a recompense for the wealth you gave away? For He Himself said, '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 shall inherit eternal life' (Mt. 19:29). And now the riches are in your hands; do with them what you wish!"

"I asked Him for it," the Venerable Father replied, "so that I might distribute to the poor all that was granted to me, and I think it was for this very purpose that it was sent down to me."

"Look, Brother Theodore," the enemy objected, "lest the devil again bring you sorrow through this distribution, as before. The treasure has been given to you as a replacement for what you gave away, and I advise you: take it and go to another place, and there acquire land for yourself. In that place you can be saved and escape the demonic snares. And when the time of death comes, no one will forbid you to give your property to whomever you wish, and through this a grateful memory of you will be preserved."

The Venerable Theodore answered:

"I am ashamed that, having left the world with its goods and having promised to end my life in this cave, I should become a fugitive and a worldly man."

"You cannot," the devil persuaded him, "conceal the treasure here: it will become known, and then they will take it from you. Better obey me and quickly do what I advise you. If it were not pleasing to God that you should possess property, He would not have sent you the treasure, nor would He have informed me so that I might instruct you."

Then the blessed Theodore, believing the demon as a brother, began secretly to prepare carts and vessels in which he could place the treasures, so as to leave the cave with them and set out wherever the devil might lead him, the devil who by his cunning wished to remove the saint from the place of the Venerable Antony and Theodosius, from the

Most Holy Theotokos, and, above all, from God. But the merciful Lord, "who desires all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2:4), saved by the prayers of His venerable ones His servant Theodore.

At this time the Venerable Basil returned from his journey; he had earlier delivered the blessed Theodore from evil thoughts. Wishing to see him, he came to the cave, saying:

"How are you spending your life in God now, Brother Theodore? I have not seen you for a long time."

The Venerable Theodore was astonished at such a greeting and said:

"What are you saying, that you have not seen me for a long time? Yesterday, the day before yesterday, and earlier, you constantly came to me, instructing me; and now I am setting out, as you bade me."

In turn the Venerable Basil was even more astonished at this answer:

"Tell me," he asked, "what do your words mean, that I came to you yesterday, the day before yesterday, and earlier, constantly instructing you? And where are you going? I have only today returned from the road and know nothing. Perhaps the devil has tempted you? I beg you, for God's sake, do not hide from me."

The Venerable Theodore said to him with anger:

"Why do you tempt me? Why do you trouble my soul, speaking now one way and now another? What am I to believe?"

Having thus expressed his vexation, he drove him away from himself.

Hearing this, the Venerable Basil withdrew to the monastery. And the devil again came to the Venerable Theodore in the form of Basil:

"I have lost my wretched mind," he said, "speaking to you things that I should not; therefore I do not remember the insult you inflicted upon me, and I repeat to you again: this very night go quickly from here, taking your treasure."

With these words he withdrew.

The Venerable Basil, however, taking with him some elders, came again to Theodore:

"God is my witness," he said to him, "that three months have passed since I last saw you. I was sent away by the abbot on monastery business, and today is the third day since I returned. Yet as soon as I entered your presence, you told me that during the whole time of my absence I had been coming to you constantly. I think that a demon has been coming to you in my likeness. If you wish to be certain, do this: do not allow anyone who comes to you to begin a conversation with you before he has said the Jesus Prayer. If the one who enters refuses to do so, then you will know that he is a demon."

After this the Venerable Basil said a prayer of prohibition, calling upon the saints for help. Having instructed Theodore, he went back to his cell in the monastery. The demon no longer dared to appear to the Venerable Theodore, and the deceiver's cunning became plain to him. From that time on he required everyone who came to him first to say the Jesus Prayer, and only then would he speak with them. Thus the Venerable Theodore overcame the enemy and, by the help of God, was delivered from the mouth of the lion seeking whom he may devour (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8). The Lord has granted such deliverance, and still grants it, to many of His chosen ones who wander in deserts and chasms and keep silence alone in seclusion. They need great moral strength and the help of God, so that in the time of their struggle the beast that destroys souls may not overcome them and swallow them up.

Having been delivered from the pit of destruction, the Venerable Theodore set himself to see that the enemy of the human race himself fell into the pit. First of all, he buried deep in the earth the treasure he had found, which had nearly led him to fall away from God. At the same time the Venerable Theodore unceasingly prayed to the Lord that He would grant him to forget the place where the treasure was hidden, and take from him the passion of covetousness. The Lord heard the prayer of His servant. The Venerable Theodore completely forgot where he had hidden the treasure, and never thought of acquiring riches again; gold and silver became to him no more precious than mud.

Then, so as not to remain in idleness, which breeds sloth and with it carelessness, of which the devil could again make use for his temptations, the Venerable Theodore took upon himself a great labor. He set

up a hand-mill in his cave and began to work for the brethren. He not only ground the grain himself but also carried it from the monastery. He spent most of the night, almost without sleep, in prayer and in working the hand-mill, and by day he carried away the flour and brought back more grain. By his labors, over many years, the Venerable Theodore greatly lightened the burden of the monastery's servants, not ashamed to share their toil.

Once, the monastery's cellarer, seeing the heavy and grievous ascetic labor that the Venerable Theodore had laid upon himself, was moved to compassion. When grain was brought from the monastery's villages, he sent five wagonloads of it to the Venerable Theodore, so that he might spare himself superfluous labor and not have to go to the monastery for it. The Venerable Theodore emptied out the grain and set to work, chanting psalms. Growing weary, he wished to rest a little, when suddenly there was a sound like a clap of thunder, and the millstones began to grind by themselves. Perceiving the wiles of the devil, the Venerable Theodore rose and began to pray earnestly, and then he said in a loud voice:

"The Lord forbids you, deceitful demon!"

But the demon did not cease grinding on the millstones. Then the Venerable Theodore spoke again:

"In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, who cast you down from heaven and gave you into the power of His saints, I, a sinful man, command you not to leave off your work until you have ground all the grain. Labor also for the holy brotherhood."

Having said this, he continued his prayer. The demon did not dare to disobey, and in a single night he ground all the grain. In the morning the Venerable Theodore let the cellarer know, so that he might send for the flour. The cellarer was astonished at so extraordinary a thing, that five wagonloads could be ground in one night, and he went himself to the cave to carry the flour away. Then another miracle took place: from this same grain there came out another five wagonloads of flour. Thus was fulfilled here, in the event just related from the life of the Venerable Theodore, the word of the Apostles who once said to Jesus Christ: "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Thy name" (Lk. 10:17),

and also the promise of the Word of God Himself: "Behold, I give you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy" (Lk. 10:19). The wicked demons had wished to terrify the Venerable Theodore and compel him to obey them as before, during his seduction; but instead they had put on themselves the bonds of slavery, so that they were forced to cry out:

"We shall no longer appear here."

The Venerable Theodore and Basil established between themselves a pious custom of never hiding their thoughts from one another, but of discussing them together, so as to see how well-pleasing to God they were. After mutual counsel, Basil withdrew to keep silence in the cave, while the Venerable Theodore, as one who had already reached old age, came out of it in order to settle in the ancient monastery.

At this time the monastery had been burned. The timbers for building the church and cells, floated down the Dnieper on rafts, were lying on the shore, and workmen were hired to haul them up the hill. But the Venerable Theodore, wishing to build his own cell with his own hands, began to carry the logs himself from the shore up the hill, allowing no one to work in his place. The lying demons, forgetting their own forced promise, made under compulsion of labor, never to approach the Venerable Theodore, again began their schemes: every night they threw down the hill all the logs that the blessed Theodore had carried up with great effort during the day, wishing by this to drive him away. Perceiving the schemes of the demons, the Venerable Theodore said to them:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who commanded you to enter the swine (Mt. 8:32), I, His sinful servant, command you to carry all the logs from the shore up to the hill, so that the brethren who work for God may not be distracted from their labor, and may build without your schemes a church to the Most Holy Theotokos and their own cells. Then you will know that the Lord is present in this place."

That same night the demons carried all the logs intended for building the monastery from the shore up the hill. When in the morning those hired for hauling came to the shore, they found not a single log. Looking about, they saw that the logs were already on the hill, not heaped together but laid out in order: those intended for the roof apart,

those for the floor apart, and the long, exceedingly heavy beams apart. All this, as a thing surpassing human powers, aroused wonder. Thus the Lord was glorified through His saints Theodore and his counselor Basil; for the sake of their ascetic labors the Lord showed this miracle. Yet these servants of God, kindred in spirit, were not puffed up on seeing the demons obey them, following the teaching of Christ: "Do not rejoice that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Lk. 10:20). The demons, so plainly exposed in their schemes by the saints Theodore and Basil, could not endure their disgrace. They who had once been worshipped and adored as gods by the pagans now had to bear contempt, humiliation and dishonor from the faithful servants of God. They had to labor for them like purchased slaves, now grinding grain, now carrying logs, and moreover, obeying the prohibition of those same saints, they had to keep away from people. This is why, during the carrying of the logs, they cried out, as some heard:

"O wicked and fierce enemies of ours, Theodore and Basil! We shall not cease to fight against you until we bring you to death!"

From this time the wicked demons, not knowing that they would serve to bring still greater glory to the venerable ones, began by every means to incite wicked men against the saints Theodore and Basil. Immediately after the miraculous carrying of the logs, the workmen who had been hired for the hauling raised a disturbance:

"Pay us our wages," they said to the blessed Theodore. "We do not want to know by what tricks you and Basil carried the logs when we were ready to carry them."

Moreover, an unscrupulous judge, having been bribed with gold, passed sentence as well. Forgetting the Lord's warning that the one who judges unrighteously will himself be judged, he did not hesitate to say to the Venerable Theodore:

"Let those demons who helped you haul pay you."

This new temptation of the devil caused great grief to Theodore, the non-possessor, and to his counselor Basil. Having failed to bring about the death of the venerable ones, the devil, remembering his first victory over the blessed Theodore, once again stirred up a deadly storm. Tak-

ing the form of the Venerable Basil, who at that time was keeping silence in the Varangian cave, he came to one of the boyars closest to the prince. This was a cruel, impious man who knew the Venerable Basil personally.

"Theodore, who lived in the cave before me," the tempter said to him, "found a great treasure consisting of gold, silver and valuable vessels, and he wanted to flee with it, but I restrained him. Now he pretends to be a fool and has dealings with demons, whom he commands now to grind grain and now to carry logs up the hill from the shore. Yet in spite of all this he carefully conceals the riches he has found, so that he may depart somewhere secretly with them, away from me, when a more favorable time comes. In the latter case, of course, nothing will go to the prince."

Hearing this, the boyar led the false Basil to Prince Mstislav Svyatopolkovich. The demon told him the same thing, adding also the following counsel:

Seize him as quickly as possible, before he escapes, and then you will obtain the treasure. If he is unwilling to surrender it of his own accord, have recourse to blows; but if he still does not consent to give it up after these, subject him without mercy to torture and summon me: before everyone I will expose him and point out the very place where the treasure is hidden.

Having thus beguiled the prince, the demon departed.

The next morning the prince, as if setting out for the hunt or against an enemy, rode to the monastery with a multitude of warriors. Taking the Venerable Theodore, he brought him to his house and began first to question him kindly:

"Tell me, Father, is it true, as I have heard, that you have found a treasure?"

"Yes," replied the Venerable, "I did indeed find it, and it is now hidden in the cave."

"Is it not known," the prince asked again, "who exactly hid it, and how much gold, silver and vessels there are in it?"

"Even during the lifetime of our Father Anthony," said the Blessed Theodore, "people spoke of a treasure hidden in this cave by a Varangi-

an, which is why it is called the Varangian Cave to this day. I saw it: it consists of a great quantity of gold, silver and vessels, but only Latin ones."

"Why then, Father, will you not give it to me?" asked the prince. "I will share it with you; take as much as you need, and in return you shall become a father both to me and to my father (who at this time was in Turov)."

To this the Venerable Theodore said:

"I would demand nothing for myself of that which can bring me no benefit; I would give it all to you. Cares rest upon you from which I am wholly free; but the Lord has taken from me all memory of the place where I have buried the treasure."

Then the prince, in anger, commanded his servants:

"Shackle this monk hand and foot, and do not give him bread or water even after three days: he does not value my favors."

After the Venerable Theodore was shackled, he was again asked where he had hidden the treasure.

The Venerable Theodore gave the same answer as before:

"I have already said that I do not know where it is."

After this answer the prince ordered him beaten, so that the hair shirt upon the Venerable was soaked with blood. Then, at the same prince's command, he was hung in thick smoke and, tied by the back, a fire was kindled beneath him. Many marveled at the patience of the Venerable Theodore: he remained in the midst of the flames as if in dew; the fire did not even touch the hair shirt. One of those who saw this told the prince, and the latter, struck with terror, again began to exhort the elder:

"Why do you ruin yourself by not disclosing the treasure, which ought to be ours?"

"I tell you the truth: through the prayers of my brother Basil I was delivered from the love of money when I found the treasure, and now, I repeat, the Lord has taken from me the memory of where it is buried," replied the Venerable Theodore.

Having heard this answer, the prince at once sent for the Blessed Basil, who was brought by force, since he did not wish to leave the cave.

"Everything that you advised me to do with this wicked elder," the prince said to the Venerable Basil, "I have done, and have achieved nothing; and I call you as a witness, you whom I wish to have in place of a father."

"What then did I advise you?" asked the Venerable Basil in perplexity.

"Despite his tortures, he will not reveal where he has hidden the treasure which, as you told me, he had found," the prince answered him.

"I recognize the snares of the wicked devil," said the Venerable Basil, "who has beguiled you, slandered me and this honest man: for fifteen years now I have not left the cave."

"You said this in front of all of us to the prince," objected those present at the devil's conversation with the prince.

"The devil has beguiled all of you," the Venerable replied. "I have not seen you, nor the prince."

The enraged prince commanded that he too, like the Venerable Theodore, be subjected to cruel torture. Unable to bear the rebuke, and reaching a fury of the greatest intensity, which passed from intoxication into frenzy, he took an arrow and wounded the Blessed Basil. Drawing the arrow out of his body, the Venerable threw it at the prince with the words:

"With this arrow you yourself will soon be wounded," which came to pass according to the saint's prophecy. After this the prince ordered the Venerable ones, already barely alive from their torments, to be confined in a separate dungeon, so that in the morning they might be subjected to new and yet more cruel torments. That same night both Venerable ones departed to the Lord (in 1098). The Lord led their souls out of the dungeon to glorify His all-holy Name in the everlasting light. Learning of their death, the brethren came and, taking the bodies of the holy sufferers, buried them with honor in the Varangian Cave, where they had spent their life, full of God-pleasing labors. Afterward they

were transferred to the cave of the Venerable Anthony, where to this day they lie incorrupt, in their bloodstained garments and hair shirts, which likewise did not undergo corruption.

Not long after their blessed end, the prophecy of the Venerable Basil was fulfilled: Prince Mstislav Svyatopolkovich was wounded by an arrow during the battle with Prince David Igorevich at the city of Vladimir; recognizing his arrow, with which he had wounded the Venerable Basil, he said:

"Behold, I am dying, punished for the Venerable Theodore and Basil."

Thus the wicked murderer was punished for his crime; while the venerable sufferers, as victors over the devil, who conquers by the love of money, are crowned not with corruptible silver and gold, but with eternal glory and honor: they have received the crown from the precious Stone, Christ, to Whom with God the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Passion of the Holy Martyr Sosanna the Virgin and of the Other Martyrs with Her

Страдание святой мученицы Сосанны девы и иных с нею мучеников

In the reigns of Diocletian[1] and Maximian[2], surnamed Hercules, there lived in Rome a presbyter named Gavinius, the own brother of the Roman Pope Gaius[3]. Possessing a good knowledge of the pagan philosophers and having thoroughly studied the Holy Scripture, Gavinius, at the advice and urging of his brother, wrote many books refuting pagan errors. Both of them were of noble birth, so that they were related to the Emperor Diocletian; the latter, however, did not wish to acknowledge his kinship with them. He despised them for professing the Christian faith: Diocletian hated it, and therefore disowned his Christian relatives.

The presbyter Gavinius had a daughter named Sosanna. He raised her in a truly Christian spirit, instilling in her from childhood the fear

1. Diocletian – emperor 284–305.
2. Maximian – emperor, co-ruler with Diocletian 285–305.

of God, and at the same time gave her a good secular education. Sosanna was distinguished by intelligence and bodily beauty, which was surpassed by her beauty of soul: she loved the Lord Jesus Christ with all her heart and was His faithful, chaste servant. Hearing of Sosanna's intelligence and beauty, Diocletian wished to make her the wife of his son Maximian. (Others call him Maximinus; in truth he was not Diocletian's son, but was adopted by him as one descended from his closest relatives. At first Diocletian gave his daughter Valeria to him in marriage; but after her death he wished to join Maximian in marriage with his kinswoman Sosanna. This Maximian had another name, Galerius, and he must be distinguished from the above-mentioned Maximian, surnamed Hercules.) Diocletian sent to Gavinius a nobleman, his cousin Claudius, to speak with him about his giving his daughter Sosanna in marriage to his son Maximian. Coming to Gavinius with this commission, Claudius said:

"Our most illustrious emperor Diocletian has sent me to you with great grace and joy: he wishes to renew kinship with you through the marriage of your daughter. What greater benefaction could there be for you than this new glorification of your family through a blood union with the imperial house!"

"We are poor and humble," said Gavinius, "and, with our unworthiness, how can we be called relatives of the emperor?"

Claudius answered:

"Are you and your brother, Bishop Gaius, not the sons of the senator Maximian, who was a kinsman of our uncle, the brother of our lord, the emperor Diocletian?"

"That is true," Gavinius agreed, "yet the circumstances of recent times compel us to say that we are unworthy of the title of relatives of the emperor."

"Do not disown your kinship," Claudius replied. "Behold, our lord and emperor commands you to give your daughter to his son Maximian in marriage; it is said that she possesses wide learning in the sciences. And it is right that branches springing from one root should not be di-

3. Gaius was pope from 283 until April 22, 296.

vided; this we, your relatives, desire as well. I think it will bring you joy too."

Gavinius said:

"I beg you to give me time to learn the opinion of the daughter herself about your proposal."

With this they parted.

After Claudius had gone, Gavinius asked his brother, Pope Gaius, who lived not far away, to come to his house. When Gaius came, Gavinius told him what commission Claudius had brought from the emperor. Then they called Sosanna and said to her with tears in their eyes:

"Emperor Diocletian has sent to us our relative Claudius, conveying through him his desire to see you as the wife of his son Maximian."

The Blessed Sosanna answered her father and uncle thus:

"Where has your wisdom gone now? In truth I do not perceive it in you. Had I not become such a Christian as I am through your teaching, then indeed one might speak with me about the things you are now discussing. But why now do you defile your ears and your lips by listening to impious words and repeating them to me, with the aim that I should marry an impious tormentor? For you yourselves fearlessly renounced all kinship with him because of his impiety, which the holy Christian faith you confess cannot endure. But glory be to almighty God, who has given me a spirit akin to His saints: by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ I reject this foul marriage with an impious man, and I shall be counted worthy of the crown of martyrdom!"

"Look, my daughter," said Gavinius in reply, "be steadfast in the faith you now possess, so that you may keep yourself unashamed before the Lord; and we shall rejoice, seeing the fruit of your faith offered to the Lord Christ."

"My lords," Susanna answered her father and her uncle, "you have often taught me to keep virginity for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, and now I am so confirmed in love for Him and fear of Him that I cannot even think of a carnal marriage. My father, I shall love only Him, live for Him and hope in Him, to Whom you yourself have entrusted me forever. He, the Lord, knows the sincerity of my heart!"

"Since you have been entrusted to the heavenly Bridegroom Christ God, abide always in His love, keeping His commandments," said the holy Pope Gaius.

Thus both holy servants of the Lord, learning of Susanna's good intention, long confirmed her in her pious desire, and at the same time were filled with great joy, which drew involuntary tears of tenderness from their eyes.

Three days later Claudius came again to Gavinius, accompanied by a multitude of servants. Leaving the latter near the house, he himself went inside, where he found also Pope Gaius. After the customary greetings, Claudius said:

"Honorable fathers, the joyful reason which has brought me to you is not unknown to you."

"Even if there were no such reason," answered Bishop Gaius, "we would still be glad of you, being kinsmen to one another. We are glad to be comforted by this family meeting and by conversation with one another."

"You know, most beloved brethren," Claudius continued, "that our lord, the emperor Diocletian, strongly desires to enter into a closer kinship with you, and I advise and beseech you: fulfill the will of him who rules the universe, and so give him comfort."

"Convey this wish of the emperor to my lord and brother, Bishop Gaius," answered Gavinius.

"Our benevolent emperor," Claudius addressed Gaius, "wishes to take your daughter, my granddaughter, as a wife for his son. He knows of her beauty, wisdom and talents. We, her kinsmen, judge that nothing could be more honorable than for our family not only to be never separated from the imperial blood, but to be joined to it still more closely; through this it will rise and be glorified even more."

Since the bishop was silent, Gavinius answered Claudius' speech:

"Let us call the maiden and ask her herself."

Then the holy Susanna was summoned to them. In the room there was no one else; only the three of them were seated. On seeing Susanna, Claudius wept from love and joy, and wished to greet her

with an embrace and a kiss. But she resisted this and said, turning away from him:

"My Lord Jesus Christ knows that the lips of His handmaid have never been touched by a man's lips. Do not defile them."

"I wished to kiss you as a kinsman, for you are my granddaughter," Claudius answered.

To this the holy Susanna said:

"The reason that moves me to loathe your kiss is no other than this: that your lips are defiled by idol sacrifices."

At these words of the holy Susanna, Claudius, as if he had felt the finger of God touch his heart, was moved to tenderness and said:

"What must I do to cleanse my lips of their defilement?"

"Repent and be baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit," answered the holy Susanna.

Then Claudius addressed the bishop with these words:

"Cleanse me, for a man who is pure through faith in Christ is better than one who serves the gods. I have offered them many sacrifices, but have received nothing from them, although even emperors bow down before them."

Seeing the marvelous, swift change wrought in Claudius by the action of the grace of God through the words of the undefiled maiden, Bishop Gaius said with joy:

"Listen to me, my brother! I intend to give you good counsel: you came to us to find a bride for your lord's son, but God is seeking you and wishes, through the prayers of this maiden, to save you, so that from our family too there may be found those worthy of the kingdom of God. Therefore believe in God, repent of the shedding of the blood of the holy martyrs, and do not delay in receiving holy baptism."

"If I," asked Claudius, "receive holy baptism, will all the sinful defilements of my heart be cleansed?"

"Without doubt; only believe with all your heart," answered the holy pope.

Hearing this, the holy Susanna fell at the feet of her uncle, the holy Gaius, saying:

"I beseech you, my lord, do not delay, for Christ's sake, the baptism of Claudius; save his soul."

"Let us first make sure that he truly believes in Christ God," said the holy bishop.

"I believe sincerely," cried Claudius, "only let my sins be forgiven, as you promise me."

"In the name of the almighty Lord Jesus Christ, all your sins are forgiven you," answered Gaius.

Claudius fell to the ground before the feet of the hierarch and cried out, sprinkling dust upon his head:

"O Lord God, eternal Light, forgive my sins, committed in ignorance and unbelief, fill me with Your grace, so that my wife and children may know that You alone save those who hope in You!"

Then the holy Gaius, having instructed and catechized Claudius, dismissed him to his home. Later Claudius came by night to the holy Gaius together with his wife and two sons, asking him for holy baptism. Without further delay the bishop baptized them; the priest Gavinius was their sponsor. When Claudius came up out of the holy font, he said:

"I saw a light surpassing the sun, which shone upon me during the baptism."

After holy baptism and chrismation, the bishop celebrated the holy Liturgy and communed the baptized with the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, and all rejoiced in God their Savior. The wife of Claudius was named Prepedigna, and the sons were called one Alexander and the other Kuphios. After baptism Claudius began to sell his estate and distribute it to the poor. For this purpose he sought out Christians who were hiding in various secret places, and went also secretly by night into the prisons; to all whom he found Claudius washed the feet, kissed them, and supplied their need with generous gifts, providing them daily with clothing and food, and at the same time he continually repented of the sins committed in his former life.

After some time Diocletian began to inquire about Claudius, why he had brought no report, although he had been specially sent to Gavinius to learn of Susanna's consent to marriage with his son; the emperor

was informed that Claudius was ill. Then he sent his younger brother Maximus, who held an honorable office at court, to visit the sick man and to question him about Susanna. Maximus found his brother clothed in a hair shirt and offering prayers to God. He was struck with horror and said:

"My beloved brother, who raised me from earliest childhood, what has caused you to change so? You have become so pale and thin!"

"If you wish to hear me, I will tell you the causes of my change," answered Claudius.

"Tell me, my lord, of your illness!" cried Maximus.

"I repent," Claudius began to relate, "that, obeying the emperors and carrying out their commands, I slew Christians, thus shedding innocent blood. Although I did this in ignorance, following the emperor's orders, nevertheless I now grieve deeply and repent of it."

"What are you saying, brother?" Maximus objected. "Our master, the emperor Diocletian, sent you to our brother Gavinius, that you might betroth his daughter to his son; it is to learn of this that I have been sent to you, yet you say something entirely different."

"It was for this that I went," said Claudius, "to our beloved granddaughter, and I saw her: she is beautiful both in body and in soul; she is holy and wise, and is already the bride of the heavenly King Christ. Thanks to her I too have been delivered from my sins. But so that you too may know of the mercy of God, who wishes to save all, let us go tonight to our brother, the presbyter Gavinius, and you will see the eternal light."

"Whatever you bid, I shall do," answered Maximus.

That same night they went to the city gates known as the Salarian Gate, which stood near the palace of Sallustius. When it was told Gavinius that his brothers, Claudius and Maximus, were standing near the house and wished to enter, he at once hastened to meet them and joyfully led them in. Before beginning conversation with them, Gavinius stood to pray: he bent his knees and bowed his head, and Claudius and Maximus followed his example.

"O Lord God," said Gavinius in prayer, "who gatherest together the scattered and lookest upon those who are gathered, look upon the

works of Thy hands, enlighten all who believe in Thee: Thou art the true Light, world without end."

All answered:

"Amen!"

Rising, they embraced and kissed one another, and Claudius fell at the feet of the presbyter, kissing them. Seeing this, Maximus marveled and asked permission to see Susanna. Gavinius bade her be summoned. When she came to them, she first bowed to God, and then, approaching her father, said:

"Bless me, father."

The presbyter again prayed for the coming of Susanna:

"May peace be granted to us from our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with almighty God the Father, unto ages of ages," he said.

"Amen!" cried everyone.

Seeing holy Sosanna, filled with humility and chastity, Maximus wished to kiss her hand, but she did not permit it. And while they all for a long time could not restrain their tears, evoked by family love, it was told to holy Gaius, who lived not far from the church he had built, that his brothers had gathered together. He thought they were being taken to torments, and desiring to be the first of them to undergo the lot of a martyr, he hastened to the house of Gavinius. All, seeing him, were struck with fear at the unexpectedness and bowed to him down to the earth.

"Peace be to you!" said holy Gaius to them. "Be strong in the name of the Lord! Let us pray!"

And he began to pray, saying:

"O Lord God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who didst send Him for the salvation of all, desiring to deliver us from the darkness of this world and to bring us into life eternal, establish us, Thy servants, in Thy faith, for Thou reignest unto ages of ages."

"Amen," said those present.

Sitting down, the bishop began a God-inspired discourse; all listened attentively to the words of God that he spoke. Holy Sosanna, however, listened standing, not wishing to sit in their presence, and at the same

time she prayed in secret. At the end of the discourse the bishop said to Maximus:

"We thank you, brother, for visiting us," he said.

"I, unworthy, have come to you to kiss your holy feet, and what first moved me to come to you, that you yourselves know well," answered Maximus.

"Better tell it yourself," holy Gaius proposed to him.

"Emperor Diocletian," said Maximus, "asks that Sosanna be given in marriage to his son Maximian."

"The virgin already has Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom, given to her by God the Father, and let it be well known to you that she can no longer marry," the bishop replied to this proposal.

"All that God gives is eternal," said Maximus.

"Receive eternal life also," the pope proposed to him.

"What is life eternal?" he asked.

"That is the eternal life which I have come to know," said Claudius, joining the conversation.

"Whom you have come to know, Him I also desire to know," Maximus addressed him, "but nevertheless we ought not to withdraw from kinship with the emperor."

"We urge you," objected holy Gaius, "to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God; but the visible glory and honor of an earthly emperor are temporal, and kinship with him brings nothing; all this, together with a short-lived life, passes away and perishes. But what the heavenly King, Christ our God, promises us is eternal and necessary, and worthy of our striving for it."

Having heard this, Maximus was moved and with joy gave his consent to accept the holy faith.

"You know, brother," said the bishop, "that we have left all our property and now seek nothing but our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we live and in whom we glory."

"Do not delay, my lords," cried Maximus, "but hasten to do all that you consider necessary for my salvation."

Having enjoined a fast upon him, the bishop dismissed him home. Withdrawing, Maximus at first concealed his faith in Christ, although

he burned with love for Gavinius, Gaius, and especially for the Lord Jesus Himself; then, as his love for God increased, he began openly to confess the name of Christ, despising death. But the bishop and the presbyter advised him to conceal his faith for five days, until he had sold his property and distributed it to the poor. Maximus obeyed them. Five days later he came to holy Gaius and, falling at his feet, said:

"I adjure you, my lord, by the name of Christ, enlighten me with holy baptism, as you enlightened my brother Claudius; from the very time when you instructed me in the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, my heart has been so moved that I cannot be at peace until I receive holy baptism."

The bishop baptized him and, having celebrated the holy Liturgy, gave him communion of the Divine Mysteries. Maximus remained with his Christian relatives, singing and glorifying God with them; at this time he finally sold the property, which he could not sell and distribute in five days, and distributed it to the poor through his faithful friend Pharson, who was a secret Christian and afterwards described the sufferings of these holy martyrs, since everything took place before his eyes.

After fifteen days from the time of Maximus' visit to Claudius, Diocletian learned that both of them, and the latter with his whole family, had become Christians; this greatly grieved him. Nevertheless he concealed his sorrow, and to his wife, Empress Irene, he said only that he had sent to Gavinius, desiring to betroth his daughter Sosanna to his son Maximian. Hearing this, Irene glorified God, for she was a secret Christian; and she said to the emperor:

"Do what God inspires you to do."

Not entrusting his grief to the empress, Diocletian summoned the military commander Julius, a pagan and a cruel man, and told him sorrowfully that his beloved relatives, sent to betroth the bride to his son Maximian, had accepted Christianity despite his prohibition.

"All who disregard the royal commands," said Julius, "even if they are unjust, must undergo the death penalty; your order, however, was just, and if they have violated it, they are all the more worthy of death."

The tsar at once ordered Julius to send soldiers to take everyone except Bishop Gaius, which was carried out. The presbyter Gavinius with his daughter he ordered to be kept under guard in custody; Maximus and Claudius with his wife and children he sent into exile; then he ordered them burned in the city of Ostia[4], casting the ashes into the sea. Thus the holy ones died, having been granted the glorious crown of martyrdom.

Fifty-five days later, Diocletian ordered his wife to take Sosanna to herself, in order to incline her to marriage with his son. When holy Sosanna, who was under guard, saw those coming for her, she, with a deep sigh from her heart and with tears, said, turning to God:

"Lord, forsake not Thy handmaid!"

When Sosanna was brought to the tsarina, the latter bowed to her before she bowed to the tsarina; the tsarina honored in her the grace of Christ and her chastity. Holy Sosanna fell to the ground before the tsarina, but she kindly raised her up with the words:

"Our Savior Christ rejoices over you."

Hearing from the lips of the tsarina the name of Christ, holy Sosanna rejoiced and said:

"I thank Christ my God, who reigns in every place!"

And both of them, Empress Irene and holy Sosanna, rejoiced in the Lord God, conversing about Him with love. They offered fervent prayers to Him, especially holy Sosanna: following her father's instructions, she unceasingly, by day and by night, sang, blessing God. Diocletian, meanwhile, waited, hoping that Sosanna would give her consent to the marriage. After long waiting he sent for the empress and asked her:

"Has she inclined Sosanna to marry his son? Is she inclining toward the love of Maximian?"

"Vain is the labor," answered the tsarina, "where an impossible goal is pursued, and one should not hope where there will be no consent; I see in Sosanna not a trace of such thoughts and intentions as would allow one to think that anyone could compel her to this in any way."

Hearing this, Diocletian fell into the greatest anger, and he gave permission to his son Maximian to dishonor Sosanna, committing a

shameful violence upon her, but not in the palace: let him take her to the house of her father and there disgrace her, obeying his shameful lust. Holy Sosanna was compelled to leave the palace to go to her own house. Dismissing holy Sosanna, the tsarina said to her with weeping:

"He who in ancient times delivered Susanna His servant (Dan. 13) will deliver you too, will help you and grant you a glorious repose."

Having bid farewell, they parted, weeping. When holy Sosanna was brought to her house by two women, she fell to the ground in her room, and here with sobbing and tears she prayed to her Deliverer Christ that He would hasten to her aid. That same night there came Maximian, the son of the tsar, inflamed by impure lust; entering quietly into the room where holy Sosanna was praying, he saw over her an Angel of God, from whom great radiance proceeded. Strong fear fell upon Maximian: not daring to approach holy Sosanna, he hastened as quickly as possible home, to the palace, where he told everything to his father.

"This is nothing more than the sorcery of the Christians," said Diocletian.

And he sent one of his attendants, Curtius, to find out what was happening in Sosanna's house. But Curtius too, as soon as he entered the house, at once felt strong fear and ran in terror to the tsar. At this time Diocletian was disputing with the tsarina concerning the coming of Christ and the veneration of the gods. Having been overcome by the tsarina, he remembered Sosanna and said:

"Why did you not exhort her, seeing her beauty and intelligence, to consent to marriage with my son?"

"She has chosen the better part," answered the tsarina, "for even your son himself said that he saw over her an inaccessible light."

The tsar was exceedingly angry and ordered a certain Macedonius, a zealous pagan distinguished for cruelty, to go to Sosanna and compel her, not only by threats but also by torments, to idolatry; at the same time Diocletian ordered this to be done secretly, so that the tsar would not be condemned for cruelty, people saying that he spares not even his own relatives. Macedonius came to holy Sosanna, taking with him a

4. This was the name of a harbor near Rome.

small golden idol representing the god Zeus; showing it to the saint, he commanded her to bow down to it. Holy Sosanna breathed upon the idol with the words:

"My Lord, Christ Jesus, let not my eyes see the instrument of the devil."

And at once the idol that had been in the hands of Macedonius became invisible, as though someone had snatched it away. Macedonius was astonished and thought that somehow Saint Sosanna herself had stolen the idol and hidden it:

"I see," he said, "that you love gold, since you have stolen the idol from my hands, and I cannot but commend you for it: I think you would not have taken the idol had you not loved it."

"The Lord my God," replied Saint Sosanna, "sent His Angel, who removed the idol from my eyes, casting it out of the house."

While she was speaking these words, a servant of Macedonius came in, reporting that the idol had been thrown out of the house into the road. Macedonius, in violent fury, tore Saint Sosanna's garments with his own hands and began to beat her without mercy with staves. Saint Sosanna, meanwhile, cried out:

"Glory to Thee, O Lord!"

"Offer sacrifice to the gods," said Macedonius.

"I offer myself in sacrifice to my Lord," replied the saint.

Macedonius reported to the Emperor the steadfast and unwavering abiding of Sosanna in the faith and her insult to the idol. The Emperor ordered that she be put to death with the sword, there in the house itself. And the head of the bride of Christ, the holy martyr Sosanna, was cut off; she departed, rejoicing and glad, to the bright chamber of her heavenly Bridegroom. Learning of the slaying of Saint Sosanna, the Empress took by night the honorable body of the holy martyr and gathered up her blood that had been shed upon the earth with the veil from her own head; wrapping the body in linen anointed with fragrant spices, the Empress laid it in the burial vault of Saint Alexander, where many martyrs had been buried, and the blood, gathered onto the head-covering, she placed in a silver reliquary, which she hid in her chamber, where she was accustomed to pray secretly both day and night. The

holy Pope Gaius consecrated into a church the room where the blood of the holy martyr Sosanna had been shed, and celebrated the Divine services in it.[5] – After a little time the holy presbyter Gavinius also suffered, and after him the holy Gaius received a martyr's death; all of them, as martyrs, stood before the throne of God, glorifying the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God in the Trinity. To Him be honor and glory from us also, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.[6] Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Euplus, Deacon

Память святого мученика Евпла диакона

In the reign of Diocletian and Maximian the persecution against Christians spread throughout the whole world. At this time the aforementioned impious emperors sent into Sicily, to search out and torment the Christians, a certain prince, known for his cruelty, named Pentagurus. Arriving at the city of Catania, the tormentor ordered the city prefect Calvisianus to gather the whole populace onto the square, not only those living in the city but also those from its environs. On the Achilleian square a place was prepared for the spectacle, and at the sound of trumpets and drums a multitude of people of both sexes and various ages assembled. Prince Pentagurus came here with Calvisianus; seeing the people, he asked the latter:

"Do all render honor and worship and offer sacrifices to our gods?"

Calvisianus answered:

"Truly, bright prince, all whom you see zealously serve the great gods, offering many sacrifices; among them there is not a single impious man."

This answer brought Pentagurus great joy, and he expressed his approval both to the people and to the city prefect; then, having proclaimed the command of the emperors, he gave authority before all to

5. The Life of Pope Sergius speaks of a church in the very house of Sosanna, which existed in 682.

6. The holy martyrs commemorated together with Sosanna died in 295–296. The relics of Martyr Sosanna, together with those of her father Gavinius, are in Rome, in the church bearing her name; the relics of Pope Gaius are also in Rome, in the church bearing his name.

Calvisianus: if anyone is found calling himself a Christian, he may be delivered to torments and put to death. After this Pentagurus departed for other cities; Calvisianus, however, summoned the praetorian servants and ordered them to search diligently whether anyone might be found anywhere in the city or its environs, even one who secretly professed the Christian faith; such a person they were to take for torments. Then one of the servants approached and said:

"Here in the city there is a man named Euplus: he carries with him some book, and, going around the houses and streets, teaches the people, calling the Christian God great."

(Saint Euplus was a deacon and carried the Gospel with him: reading from it to the people about the wonders of Christ, he taught them to believe in the Savior.)

Hearing this, Calvisianus at once sent to have him taken and brought before him bound. The soldiers set out, searching for Saint Euplus throughout the city; at last they found him in a poor hut, where he was reading the Holy Gospel, instructing those who listened; the soldiers seized him, bound his hands behind his back, and led him to the judgment of the city prefect, taking the Gospel with them. Seeing Saint Euplus, Calvisianus said:

"Are you the reviler of the gods and the transgressor of the imperial commands?"

Saint Euplus answered:

"Who are your gods, that I should venerate them?"

"Our gods are Jupiter, Asclepius and Diana," said Calvisianus.

"You," the saint retorted, "are blind, not knowing the one true God, who created heaven and earth, formed man from the earth, and clothed us Christians with the precious and most bright garment of immortality, which is holy baptism."

"You speak so proudly because you have not yet experienced torments," said Calvisianus.

"For me these torments are a bright crown, but for you darkness and perdition," replied Saint Euplus.

Then Calvisianus, greatly enraged, ordered Saint Euplus to be hung up and flayed with iron combs. During these tortures Saint Euplus raised his eyes to heaven and, praying, said:

"Lord Jesus Christ, clothe me, from whom the flesh is now being stripped away like a garment, with immortality in the life to come; grant me strength for this hour, that the torments may not overcome me." And there was a voice from heaven:

"Take courage and be strong, Euplus! The true garment has already been prepared for you."

The holy martyr was flayed for a long time, during which Calvisianus said to him:

"Will you not really abandon your error? Why do you not wish to enter the temple of the gods and offer them sacrifice, that from them you may receive forgiveness of your sins, from the emperors honor and wealth, from us the offer of friendship; in general, through this you would gain much gold and silver."

"O son of perdition, servant and accomplice of the devil!" answered Saint Euplus, "do you not know how terribly, on the day of the Last Judgment of God, you will be punished for all those whom you now draw to idolatry with gold and silver?"

Growing still more enraged, the tormentor ordered that the saint be struck on the jaws with iron hammers and his thighs and shins be crushed. During these blows Saint Euplus reproached the tormentor, saying:

"Mad man, man blinded by malice! Why do you inflict on me these torments, which I, strengthened by my God, consider as spider-webs? If you can, devise still more savage ones; these for me are no more than a game."

After this Calvisianus ordered that Saint Euplus be untied, and, hanging the Gospel about his neck, be led to prison; at the same time he commanded that the prison doors be locked with especial care and sealed with his signet ring, and that a guard be posted so that no one could come to Saint Euplus and bring him bread and water: Calvisianus wanted him to die, tormented by thirst and hunger. Saint Euplus re-

mained in the prison seven days and nights and felt a most intense thirst; then he prayed to the Lord:

"Lord Jesus Christ, our true God, who givest food to all that lives, Thou who in ancient times didst give drink to Thy people led through the wilderness by Moses, bringing forth for them living water from the rock (Ex. 17:6), Thou who didst bring forth water for Samson from the dry jawbone of an ass (Judg. 15:19) and didst cleanse us with the water of holy baptism, grant also to me, I beseech Thee, refreshment, for I faint with thirst: command that a spring of water flow forth in this prison and quench my thirst, and that all may know that Thou alone art God and there is no other like Thee."

When Saint Euplus had finished this prayer, suddenly a spring of water appeared in the prison; he drank of this water and was satisfied by it not only in his thirst but also in his hunger, as though by food; Saint Euplus sang, glorifying and giving thanks to God. After seven days had passed, Calvisianus ordered the martyr to be brought out of the prison, if he was still alive: he supposed that Saint Euplus had died, partly from his wounds, partly from hunger and thirst. When the soldiers came and opened the doors of the prison, they were struck with terror, seeing that the whole prison was full of water. But Saint Euplus, stretching his hands over the water as if commanding it, caused it at once to vanish from sight. The soldiers said to one another:

"Truly great is the God whom this man serves!"

And, taking the holy martyr, they led him to the house of the city prefect. The latter, seeing that Saint Euplus was in no way changed in body and was cheerful, as though coming from a feast, was greatly astonished and said:

"Even now, bow down to the gods before your head is cut off."

Saint Euplus answered:

"Crafty and blinded friend of the devil! Who would wish to leave the light in order to walk in darkness?"

The enraged city prefect ordered his ears to be torn off with iron hooks, and the bound man was led to the praetorium for judgment. The tormentor himself came there as well, and sitting in his place, he long compelled the saint to offer impious sacrifices. But seeing that St. Eu-

plus remained unbending, Calvisianus condemned him to be beheaded with the sword. Having heard his sentence of death, St. Euplus asked the prefect that he be granted time for prayer before the beheading, and Calvisianus gave his consent to the request. When the soldiers led the holy martyr to execution, a great crowd of people accompanied him, among whom were not a few Christians who secretly held to their faith. Having reached the place, St. Euplus stopped. Then, turning to the people, he took the Gospel, which he always carried with him, and opening it, began to read of the miracles of Christ, teaching the knowledge of the true God; and many of the pagans were enlightened by the light of the truth of Christ. Then St. Euplus began to pray to God, and a voice came to him from on high:

"Blessed art thou, Euplus, good and faithful servant of Mine. Come and enter into the joy of thy Lord, enjoying rest with all who from of old have been well-pleasing unto Me!"

After this voice had sounded, St. Euplus bowed his head, and after it was cut off, he departed to his Lord; his sufferings ended on the eleventh day of the month of August[7]. Pious men from among the Christians took the honorable body and head and buried them in a specially prepared place. And through the prayers of the holy martyr, many healings took place at his tomb, in which the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was at work, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 1:

Bearing the laws of Christ in thy hand, thou didst stand before the foe, crying out in the contest: "I am self-willed, steadfast to suffer." Wherefore, joyfully bowing thy neck, thou didst undergo beheading by the sword, and complete thy course.

7. According to other, more reliable reports, St. Euplus was beheaded on August 12, 304. His relics are in the territory of Naples at Trivico (now vico della Baronia); when they were transferred here from Catania is not known; in 1656 part of the relics was transferred back from here to Catania.

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THE TWELFTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 12

12 августа

New Calendar August 12 · Old Calendar August 25 (civil dates)

Holy Martyrs Photius and Anicetus

Святые мученики Фотий и Аникита

In Nicomedia, a city of the Bithynian region,[1] the impious Emperor Diocletian (284–305) raised an open persecution against the Christians. In the midst of the city, by his order, instruments of torture were set up: swords, cutting blades, goads, iron claws, griddles, wheels, cauldrons, and other inhuman inventions of this kind; beasts were also prepared. With all these things Diocletian wished to terrify those who called upon the Name of Christ. He dispatched to every corner of the Roman empire dread edicts, by which the Christians were everywhere commanded to be hunted down, tormented and put to death, and many blasphemies were uttered against the Only-begotten Son of God.

At that time there lived in Nicomedia a noble and distinguished count named Anicetus. Filled with zeal for God, he presented himself before the emperor and fearlessly confessed the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Son of God. St. Anicetus eloquently told the emperor of the beginningless birth of the Son of God and of His Incarnation, in the fullness of time, for our salvation; at the same time he condemned the error of the idol-worshippers, calling the pagan gods deaf and insensible; and at last he addressed the emperor with these words:

"Your tortures, O emperor, prepared for the Christians and proclaimed to them, do not in the least terrify us: for us torments are nothing, and we shall never bow down to lifeless idols."

The emperor, full of wrath and fury, was unable to listen to the God-inspired preaching of St. Anicetus, and ordered that his tongue be

1. In Asia Minor.

cut out at once; yet even after this he spoke clearly, glorifying Christ God. Then he was beaten with ox sinews so cruelly and for so long that his bones were laid bare. But St. Anicetus, as though it were not he but another who was being tortured, bore his sufferings bravely and proclaimed loudly to the people looking on him that Christ is the one true God. After this the emperor commanded that St. Anicetus be given to the beasts to be devoured: a huge lion was let loose, which, approaching the martyr with a terrible roar, suddenly became gentler than a lamb; it fawned upon the saint and wiped with its paw, as with a sponge, the sweat that had come out on his brow and cheeks from the tortures. And St. Anicetus cried out loudly:

"I thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast delivered me from the teeth of this beast! I beseech Thee, O Master, in the contest that lies before me also stretch forth Thy right hand to help Thy servant, that I may overcome the fury of the tormentor and be counted worthy of the crown of martyrdom from Thee."

After this prayer of the saint an earthquake began, during which the temple of Hercules together with his idol and part of the city wall collapsed, and many of the pagans perished beneath the ruins. Then Diocletian ordered the head of the holy martyr to be cut off with a sword; but when the soldier raised the sword to execute the emperor's command, at once his hands grew weak, and he himself fell to the ground and lay motionless as if insensible. Seeing this, Diocletian ordered St. Anicetus to be bound to a wheel set among sharp iron spikes, fire to be placed beneath, and the wheel to be turned: he wished the holy martyr to die, cut into pieces by iron and burned by fire. But St. Anicetus, bound to the wheel, prayed thus:

"Lord Jesus Christ, for the sake of those who stand here, deliver me from these torments, so that those who look upon me, seeing Thy swift help, may bravely stand against the tormentor and receive from Thee the crown of martyrdom."

And at once the bonds of St. Anicetus were loosed; the wheel stopped, and the fire went out. Then the tormentor commanded that a cauldron be filled with tin, that it be melted, and that the holy martyr be cast into it. All saw an Angel of the Lord who, together with St.

Anicetus, entered the cauldron; and as soon as the martyr touched the cauldron, the tin cooled and became like ice.

A kinsman of St. Anicetus, named Photius, seeing his struggles and the power of Christ preserving His servant, cast off all fear; coming forth from the midst of the people to the very place of execution, he approached the holy martyr, embraced and kissed him with love, calling him father and the intercessor of his salvation. By this act Photius clearly showed that he was ready to endure whatever torments for Christ. Then, turning to the emperor, Photius said:

"Be ashamed, idolater! Your gods are nothing."

Then Diocletian cried out in anger to the soldiers:

"Strike him dead with the sword!"

But when one of the soldiers raised his drawn sword to strike the martyr, by the power of God his hands turned upon himself, so that, striking himself on the knees, he fell to the ground and died. After this St. Anicetus and Photius were bound with iron chains and both were cast together into prison. Three days later Diocletian summoned them and said:

"If you obey me and offer sacrifice to the gods, I will exalt you and enrich you."

"Keep your honor and your wealth," the saints answered, "let them remain with you to your perdition."

In fury the tormentor first ordered them to be hung on the rack and their bodies scraped with iron claws, the wounds being scorched with fire, and then to be beaten with stones. But all these torments the saints endured with joy and gave thanks to God, since they felt no pain: the Lord, for the glory of His holy Name, kept them unharmed. Then they were bound by the feet to wild horses, which dragged them. But by this torment too Diocletian achieved nothing: the Lord again preserved them without harm; the holy martyrs, being dragged as if they were in a chariot, glorified the invincible power of the Lord and strengthened one another; and the wild horses suddenly stopped; the feet of the saints were freed from their bonds, and they rose completely whole. The tormentor again ordered them to be cruelly beaten, their wounds being sprinkled with vinegar mixed with salt; then they were

thrown back into prison, where they spent three years. Afterward the saints were brought out for new torments. By Diocletian's order a public stone bath was heated for three days, and into it the holy martyrs were then shut. But St. Anicetus and Photius prayed to God, and the bath split open; a spring of water gushed forth, bringing them refreshment. When on the third day the guards opened the bath, they saw that the saints were walking in it unharmed, singing praise to God; and this was reported to the emperor. He, as if not believing the report, went himself to convince himself of its truth. The saints, seeing the emperor, said to him:

"Behold, O tormentor, we have come forth victors in all the tortures, while you are defeated and put to shame."

The emperor returned home in shame; he ordered that the martyrs be taken and kept in chains until he devised how to destroy them. By his command a huge furnace was built, supported on four iron pillars; it could hold a multitude of people. As once Nebuchadnezzar (Dan., ch. 3), he ordered this furnace to be heated, intending to burn in it not only the two holy martyrs but all the Christians he could find. The Christians, not waiting for the pagans to cast them into the furnace, went to it themselves together with their wives and children, crying out:

"We are Christians, and we worship the one God!"

First the holy martyrs Anicetus and Photius entered the furnace, and after them the whole multitude of assembled Christians, with prayer and hands raised to heaven, advanced into the fire. From the flames the Christians cried out:

"We thank Thee, Father and almighty God, that through faith in Thine Only-begotten Son and our Lord Jesus Christ Thou hast gathered us for the crown of martyrdom; we pray to Thee, O Merciful One, stretch forth Thy hands from on high and receive our souls into the eternal rest which Thou hast prepared for Thy confessors."

During this prayer they fell asleep in the Lord. But the holy Anicetus and Photius remained alive in that furnace for three hours, and then, having prayed, committed their souls into the hands of God. When the servants drew out with iron the bodies of the holy Anicetus and Photius, they saw that they had suffered so little from the fire that

even their hair was intact. And many of the pagans believed in Christ our God, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory forever. Amen.[2]

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Commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyr Alexander, Bishop of Comana

Память святого священномученика Александра, епископа Команского

In the city of Comana[3], near Neocaesarea, whose bishop at that time was St. Gregory the Wonderworker, there lived in voluntary poverty a man named Alexander; his God-pleasing life was hidden from the eyes of men and known to God alone. St. Alexander, being an excellently educated man, could have acquired considerable wealth and enjoyed general esteem, but for the sake of God he chose voluntary destitution. Despising the world, he counted his learning as nothing and presented himself as an unlettered, ignorant man, fulfilling the word of the Apostle: "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise" (1 Cor. 3:18). Desiring to live by the labor of his hands, the blessed Alexander, in extreme humility, chose for this almost the lowliest of occupations: he began to make charcoal and sell it, thereby gaining his daily sustenance. Through this, St. Alexander became the object of jests and amusement for the children: from his work his face and clothing were soaked with charcoal dust, and when he appeared in such a state at the marketplace he resembled an Ethiopian; throughout the whole city St. Alexander was known as the charcoal-burner. But the Lord, who dwells on high, regards the humble and exalts them, was pleased, even during this earthly life, to glorify His humble servant Alexander and to bestow in him a pillar and adornment of His Church; for this purpose He counted him worthy of the episcopal rank. The bishop of Comana died, and the inhabitants of the city sent an embassy to Neocaesarea to St. Gregory the Wonderworker with a request that he come to them and ordain a

2. The martyrs commemorated here suffered in 305 or 306.
3. Located in the Pontic Polemoniacus, on the river Iris.

bishop. St. Gregory soon arrived. When at the council they began to choose a man worthy to occupy the hierarchal throne, disagreements arose: some chose persons of noble birth, others the wealthy, others the eloquent, others those respected for their appearance and age, and all these candidates were brought to St. Gregory the Wonderworker as men worthy of praise and of the episcopate. St. Gregory the Wonderworker did not hasten, however, with the election and consecration of a bishop, awaiting the moment when the Lord Himself would reveal the worthy one. He addressed the council and reminded them how God had chosen David to reign over Israel: when Jesse brought his eldest son Eliab to St. Samuel, the prophet asked the Lord whether this one was not the one destined to be His anointed. But the Lord said to Samuel: "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature" (1 Kgdms. 16:6–7).

"And we too," said St. Gregory, "ought to choose a shepherd for this city, not judging by outward appearance, but must seek the one prepared by God: for man looks on the face, but God on the heart, and the measure of worth is not the outward appearance but the inner disposition of the heart, known to the Lord alone."

These words of St. Gregory were unpleasant to some, and they said to one another with a smile: if one looks not at outward appearance and nobility of birth, then Alexander the charcoal-burner might also be chosen and ordained bishop. The mention of the charcoal-burner provoked laughter in others present at the council as well; but St. Gregory, after some reflection, said:

"Not without the working of God's providence is this man mentioned, who has now become an object of ridicule."

And he began to inquire:

"Who is this Alexander of whom you speak? I wish to see him."

St. Alexander at that time was standing near the building where the council was held, holding the mules belonging to those who had come for the election; some went out and brought St. Alexander to the council. When he stood in the midst of the assembly, everyone began to look at him and laugh, because from the charcoal both he himself and his poor rags were black. Amid the general laughter he stood with rever-

ence before the hierarch, absorbed in himself and paying no attention to those who laughed. But St. Gregory the Wonderworker, who possessed the gift of discernment, perceived the grace of God dwelling in the blessed Alexander, which made him worthy of election to the hierarchal throne. Rising from his place, he withdrew with St. Alexander and began to question him, adjuring him in the name of God to speak the truth: who was he? St. Alexander, although he wished to conceal himself, being unable to speak falsehood before so venerable a hierarch, and moreover fearing an oath, related everything about his life: how he, a man of wide learning, had so humbled himself for God and clothed himself in voluntary poverty. From the conversation with him, St. Gregory became convinced that he knew well not only the sciences but also the Holy Scripture. After this the hierarch ordered his attendants to take St. Alexander to him, there to wash him, dress him becomingly and bring him back to the council. And he himself, again taking his place, meanwhile conducted a God-inspired discourse. After a short time St. Alexander was brought into the council, washed, in bright clothing and extraordinarily comely of face; all who had seen the holy man earlier, recognizing him, could not restrain their amazement. And St. Gregory began to converse with him, putting to him questions from the Holy Scripture. St. Alexander answered so wisely that those present could not but acknowledge him to be a learned and sensible man, and they were the more astonished: why had a man of such knowledge concealed his wisdom while living among them as the most ignorant of men? At the same time they reproached themselves that they had mocked and considered mad a man so wise who had humbled himself for God. Then all who were at the council, with joy and unanimously, chose St. Alexander as bishop, in fulfillment of the words of the Lord written in Scripture: "Man looketh on the face, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Kgdms. 16:7). St. Gregory, raising St. Alexander through the hierarchal degrees, first ordained him a priest and then a bishop. After his consecration as bishop, he bade St. Alexander speak a word of edification to the people. When the saint delivered his instruction, the grace of the Holy Spirit flowed from his lips like a river, moving hearts to tenderness; and the whole city rejoiced and glorified

God, having such an instructive shepherd. St. Gregory withdrew to Neocaesarea, and St. Alexander tended the flock of Christ in Comana, showing an example to the faithful by word and by life. In the time of this hierarch it happened that a certain young philosopher from Attica was in Comana; listening to the bishop's instructions to the people, he laughed at the simplicity of his speech, which lacked oratorical adornment; but St. Alexander in his instructions cared not for beauty of expression but for its edifying power, and for the sake of his simple hearers his word was simple, while at the same time being very salutary for the soul. But one day the said Attic philosopher had such a vision: before him appeared a flock of very beautiful white doves, emitting a radiant gleam, as the psalmist says: "The wings covered with silver, and the feathers with pure gold" (Ps. 67:14), and at the same time there was a voice:

"These are the words of Bishop Alexander, at which you mocked."

Awaking from the vision, the philosopher was ashamed of his conduct and, going to the bishop, asked his forgiveness.

Soon, in the reign of Diocletian[4], a persecution arose against the Christians, and St. Alexander, bishop of Comana, was seized by the impious pagans; compelled to idolatry, he did not renounce Christ, for which, after tortures, he was cast into the fire, where the holy bishop also accepted death for Christ our God.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the holy martyrs Pamphilus and Capito.

4. Emperor 284–305.

THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 13

13 августа

New Calendar August 13 · Old Calendar August 26 (civil dates)

St. Hippolytus the Martyr

Святого мученика Ипполита

After the martyr's death of the holy Archdeacon Laurence, the blessed Hippolytus, a military commander and keeper of the prison, honorably laid to rest the much-suffering remains of the martyr, who had first been his prisoner and then became his teacher; the blessed Hippolytus returned home only on the third day after the burial. All his household, nineteen persons of both sexes, were Christians; they had been instructed in the truths of the Christian faith and then baptized by St. Laurence. Together with all his household, the blessed Hippolytus, after a common household prayer, partook of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, and afterwards, having received the spiritual food, a meal was set out to sustain the body; but before they could sit down to it, soldiers came, took the blessed Hippolytus and led him to Emperor Decius[1]. Seeing him, the emperor laughed and said:

"Have you too become a sorcerer, since you have stolen the body of Laurence?"

"I am not a sorcerer, but a Christian," answered the blessed Hippolytus.

Then the enraged emperor ordered that he be struck on the mouth with stones, and afterwards that his clothing, which was the usual dress of Christians, be taken from him.

"You have not stripped me, but have clothed me in more precious raiment," said the blessed Hippolytus in reply.

1. Emperor 249–251 A.D.

"Have you then ceased to honor the gods, if you rave in this way and are not ashamed of your nakedness?" asked the emperor.

"I am wise and not naked," returned the blessed Hippolytus, "for I have clothed myself in Christ; I was mad when, like you, I served demons, and I was naked when I did not have the grace of Christ, but now I am a Christian."

"Offer sacrifice to the gods," proposed the emperor, "so that, like Laurence, you do not perish under torments."

"Oh, if only I might be counted worthy of the fate of St. Laurence, whose name you, accursed one, should not even utter with your foul lips!" cried the blessed Hippolytus.

The emperor ordered him stretched out on the ground and beaten without mercy with clubs; and the holy martyr meanwhile cried out loudly:

"I am a Christian!"

Then the tormentor commanded that the beating cease, that the blessed Hippolytus be raised from the ground and dressed in the usual military garb, and he said, addressing the holy martyr:

"Remember your military rank and be once more our friend, once more offering sacrifice together with us."

"I am a soldier of Christ, my Savior, and I desire to die for Him," answered the blessed one.

After this Decius said to the eparch Valerian:

"Take all his property, and torture him to death."

On that same day Valerian's men plundered the property of the blessed Hippolytus; learning that believers in Christ had been found in Hippolytus' house, Valerian ordered them brought before him. Among those brought was Hippolytus' nurse, named Concordia. Looking at them, Valerian said:

"Spare your lives, so as not to perish together with your master Hippolytus."

"We desire rather," answered Concordia, "to die with honor for the faith of Christ together with our master, than, having lost it, to live among you impious men."

"A race of slaves can be corrected only by wounds," said Valerian, and he ordered Concordia beaten with tin rods; during the beating the holy martyr yielded up her spirit to the Lord. Blessed Hippolytus, who was kept under guard of soldiers there, seeing the martyr's death of his nurse, cried out with joy:

"I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast sent ahead into Thy kingdom to Thy saints her who nursed me!"

The eparch said:

"You still hope in magical cunning, you do not honor the gods and do not obey the emperor's command?"

And in anger Valerian commanded that all of them, together with Hippolytus, be led out of the city through the Tiburtine Gate and there put to death. St. Hippolytus encouraged them on the way:

"Do not fear: both I and you have one Lord over us."

When they came to the place of execution, all were beheaded by the soldiers before the eyes of the blessed Hippolytus. Those who received this martyr's death, of different sexes and ages, numbered eighteen persons, not counting St. Concordia, who was slain in the city. St. Hippolytus himself, by the eparch's command, was tied to wild horses and dragged over rocky places until he departed to the Lord. The holy martyr Hippolytus, together with his household, suffered for Christ on the thirteenth day of the month of August, and on the third day after the martyr's death of St. Laurence.

At nightfall St. Justin the presbyter came to the place of execution with believers and, gathering the bodies of the holy martyrs, buried them on the spot. The body of St. Concordia, however, despite the most careful search in the city, could not be found anywhere; this so grieved St. Justin that he wept. The honorable body of St. Concordia had been cast, by the tormentor's command, into an unclean place. A Christian named Irenaeus learned of this from a soldier only three weeks after the death of the blessed Hippolytus; taking with him another Christian, Abundius, he drew out the body of the holy martyr by night, undamaged by the filth, and brought it to the presbyter Justin. The presbyter was very glad and buried the honorable remains beside the body of St. Hippolytus and the other martyrs. In the morning this became known

to Valerian; he ordered Irenaeus and Abundius seized and, casting them into the place from which they had drawn the body of St. Concordia, drowned them alive in the filth. Both holy men died there on the twenty-sixth day of the month of August. St. Julian drew their bodies out by night and laid them to rest beside the relics of St. Laurence, glorifying Christ God, who is glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever[2]. Amen.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the translation of the honorable relics of our Venerable Father Maximus the Confessor, commemorated on the 21st day of January.

On the same day, the uncovering of the relics of the blessed Maximus of Moscow, Fool-for-Christ.

On the same day, the repose (in 1783) and the uncovering (in 1861) of the relics of our holy father Tikhon, Bishop of Voronezh, Wonderworker of Zadonsk.



2. St. Hippolytus the Martyr and St. Concordia the Martyr suffered in 258 A.D., on August 13.

THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 14

14 августа

New Calendar August 14 · Old Calendar August 27 (civil dates)

On the Building of the Church of the Honorable Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos in the Kiev Caves Monastery

О создании церкви честного Успения Пресвятой Богородицы в Киево-Печерской обители

No one should doubt that the beautiful stone church of the Most Holy Theotokos, magnificent and like unto heaven, in the great and first Lavra in Russia[1] of the Venerable Anthony and Theodosius of the Caves, was built, adorned, and consecrated by the will and providence of the Lord and through the intercessory prayers of His Most Pure Mother. With the blessed Bishop Simon[2], let us first speak of the very beginning of its building, which was accompanied by miracles.

In the land of the Varangians there was a prince named Afrikan, brother of the blind Yakun—the very man who, fighting with his regi-

1. *Lavra* (from the Greek): a part of a city, a lane; properly, a row of cells arranged around the dwelling of the superior in the form of lanes in a town, and enclosed by a fence or wall. The monks in lavras led an eremitic manner of life and labored each in his own cell, gathering together for worship on the first and last day of the week, while on the remaining days they kept silence; life in the lavras was much harder than in other monasteries. From ancient times the name Lavra has been applied to large monasteries of special significance. It first appeared in Egypt and then in Palestine. At present the name Lavra is used among us exclusively as an honorary title.

ment for Yaroslav against his fierce brother Mstislav, refused to put on a garment woven with gold. Afrikan had two sons, Friand and Shimon; after Afrikan's death, Yakun drove both sons from their own lands. Shimon came to Russia to Right-believing Prince Yaroslav, who received him and surrounded him with honor; he made him the chief boyar in the household of his son Vsevolod, and Shimon indeed wielded great authority with Vsevolod.

The following circumstance gave Shimon a very great love for the holy Monastery of the Caves. During the reign of Iziaslav Yaroslavich in Kiev, the nomadic Polovtsians[3] invaded the Russian land. Three princes, the Yaroslavichi—Iziaslav, Sviatoslav, and Vsevolod, in whose retinue Shimon also served—went out against them. They all came to the Venerable Anthony, asking for his prayers and blessing for the battle. The elder, opening his truthful lips, clearly foretold their destruction. Shimon fell at the elder's feet and begged that the Lord preserve him from such a calamity. The Venerable one answered him:

"My son, many of you will fall by the sword; others, while fleeing from the enemy, will be trampled, wounded, and drowned in the water; but you, having been saved, will be laid here, in the church that is to be built." When the armies of both sides met at the river Alta,[4] the Christians, deprived of God's help, were defeated—the princes fled, and many voivodes with their warriors were slain. Among them lay the wounded Shimon. Looking up to heaven, he saw a great church, as he had seen before upon the sea, and remembered the words of the Savior once spoken to him;[5] then Shimon cried out:

2. *Simon* was a tonsured monk of the Monastery of the Caves. From there he was taken by Grand Prince Vsevolod Yurievich as abbot of the Nativity Monastery in Vladimir, which the prince had founded; afterward Simon was appointed the first bishop of the Vladimir eparchy, separated from the Rostov eparchy in 1214. Simon reposed in 1226, after a twelve-year rule. From the epistles of Bishop Simon of Vladimir to Polikarp, likewise a tonsured monk of the Monastery of the Caves and afterward its abbot, and from the epistle of Polikarp to Akindin, archimandrite of the Monastery of the Caves, whose contents consist of a series of accounts of the wonderworkers of the Caves and of miracles that occurred in the monastery itself during the construction of its great church, the famous Kiev-Pechersk Paterikon was compiled.

3. *Polovtsy* or *Cumans*: a Turkic nomadic tribe that lived in the south of Russia in the 10th–13th centuries and from there made raids on the border towns and villages of the Russian land.

4. This took place in 1066. The *Alta*: a tributary of the Trubezh, which flows into the Dnieper below Kiev on the left, Moscow side.

"By the prayers of Thy Most Pure Mother and of the Venerable Anthony and Theodosius, deliver me, O Lord, from this bitter death."

And suddenly some power snatched him from among the dead, and he was instantly healed of his wounds, becoming completely well again. Returning afterward to the Venerable Anthony, Shimon told him everything, and related also the following:

"My father Afrikan made a great cross, about ten cubits in size, bearing an image in the likeness of Christ. In reverence for the image of the Lord, he placed upon its loins a golden belt weighing about 50 grivnas,[6] and upon its head a crown. When my uncle Yakun drove me from my land, I took the belt and crown, and heard a voice from the image of the Savior, which turned toward me:

" 'Never, O man, place this crown upon your head, but carry it to the place prepared for it, where the Venerable one will build a church to My Mother; give it into his hands, that he may hang it above My holy altar.'

"I," Shimon related, "fell down in terror and lay as if dead, paralyzed; afterward I rose and went aboard a ship. During the voyage a violent storm arose, so that we despaired of remaining alive. Then I remembered the belt, which I had entirely forgotten, and began to pray aloud:

" 'Lord, forgive me, for I am dying now because of this belt, which I took from Thine honorable image.' And suddenly I saw a church above, and wondered, 'What church is this?' And from on high came a voice:

" 'It is that very church which the Venerable one will build in the name of the Mother of God. It will be as magnificent and high as you now see; the Venerable one will determine its dimensions by that golden belt: twenty belts in width, thirty in length, and fifty in height. In this church you will be laid.'

"After this, calm came upon the sea. And we all glorified God and rejoiced greatly, knowing that we had been delivered from a bitter death."

5. For the explanation of these words see below.

6. *Hryvnia*: an ancient coin of fixed weight (72–96 zolotniks), often in the form of an ingot of gold or silver.

Having told all this, Shimon addressed the Venerable Anthony:

"Behold, Father, I did not know where the church shown to me would be built until I heard you say that I would be laid here, in the church that is to be built."

And taking the golden belt, he gave it to the Venerable Anthony, saying:

"Here is the measure for the foundation of that church"—and, giving him the crown, he said:

"This crown must be hung above the holy altar."

The elder gave glory to God and answered:

"My son, from this time your name shall be not Shimon, but Simon."

St. Anthony called the blessed Theodosius and said:

"This is the one, Simon, who will build the church."

After this he handed the belt and crown to the Venerable one. From that time Simon was filled with a great love for the holy builder Theodosius: he gave him much from his own estate for the building of the church shown by God, and often came to him. Once, when Simon came to the blessed Theodosius, after their customary conversation he said to him:

"Father, I ask only one thing of you."

"What can you, my son, a man of distinction, ask of our lowliness?" the Venerable Theodosius replied.

"I ask of you a very great gift, beyond my strength," Simon answered.

"You know, my son," the Venerable Theodosius answered again, "our poverty: very often we do not even have bread for our daily sustenance. What, then, do I possess? I do not know."

Simon said:

"If you will, you can grant it to me through the grace given you by the Lord, who called you venerable. For when I took the crown from the head of Christ, the Lord said to me:

" 'Carry the crown to the place prepared for it, and give it into the hands of the Venerable one who will build a church to My Mother.'

"Therefore I ask you: give me your word that you will bless me both during my life and after my death and yours."

St. Theodosius answered:

"O Simon, your request is beyond my strength! But if you witness my departure and, after my repose, the church built here, wherein the statutes entrusted to it are kept inviolate, then know that I have boldness before God; but now I do not know whether my prayer is pleasing to Him."

"Your righteousness," Simon answered, "has been borne witness to by the Lord Himself. I heard of you from the most pure lips of His holy image; therefore I ask you: as you pray for your black-robed monks, so pray for me, a sinner, for my son George, and for all my relatives."

St. Theodosius, as though giving his promise, said:

"I pray not only for them, but also for all who love this holy place."

Then Simon fell to the ground and begged:

"Father, I will not leave here until you confirm your words in writing."

Moved by Simon's love, the Venerable Theodosius wrote the following:

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, through the prayers of our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and of the holy bodiless powers..."—and the other words of the prayer of absolution, ending:

"May you be forgiven in this age and in the age to come, when the righteous Judge shall come to judge the living and the dead."

From that time this prayer began to be placed in the hands of the departed, as the first Simon had ordained concerning himself. Along with this prayer, the Venerable Theodosius also wrote to Simon:

"Remember me, O Lord, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom, desiring to render to each according to his deeds; then, O Master, grant that Thy servants Simon and George may stand at Thy right hand in Thy glory and hear Thy joyful voice: 'Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world' (Mt. 25:34)."

Then Simon asked again:

"Pray, Father, that the sins of my parents and relatives may be forgiven."

The Venerable Theodosius raised his hands and said:

"May the Lord bless you out of Zion, and may you see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of your life, even unto the last of your descendants" (cf. Ps. 127:6).

Simon received the prayer and blessing of the saint as a most precious pearl, from which he was unwilling to part even when going to the grave, as later came to pass. Until then he had been a Varangian—a Latin—but from that time, instructed by the Venerable Theodosius, he abandoned, by God's grace, the Latin errors and turned wholeheartedly to the Orthodox faith; his entire household turned with him, numbering as many as three thousand people, among them priests. All this came about through the miracles of the Venerable Anthony and Theodosius of the Caves. After a considerable time had passed, when the church of the Caves had already been built, Simon was the first to be laid within it, according to a revelation from on high and in accordance with the prophecy of the Venerable Anthony.

The account of the praiseworthy Simon and the revelations of God granted to him clearly shows that the image of the holy church of the Caves, before it was built on earth, had first been prefigured in heaven, so that here were fulfilled the words of the psalmist: "The Most High Himself founded it" (cf. Ps. 86:5). Later, through the intercession of the Queen of Heaven, this was made still clearer, as may be seen from what follows.

Several years had passed since Simon had entrusted the belt and crown to the Venerable Anthony, when one day four church craftsmen came from Constantinople to the Venerable Anthony and Theodosius—builders of stone churches, and very wealthy men:

"Where do you wish to begin building the church?" they asked them.

"Where the Lord shall direct," the Venerable ones answered.

"It is a wonder," said the builders, "that you know the time of your death and yet cannot point out a place for a church, though at the time you hired us you handed us so great a quantity of gold."

The Venerable Fathers gathered all the brethren and began to question the Greeks:

"Tell us without concealment what you have been saying."

The builders said:

"One day, while we were sleeping in our houses, early in the morning, just as the sun had risen, there came to each of us comely youths who said:

'The Queen calls you to Blachernae[7].'

Taking with us our friends and relatives, we all came to Blachernae at the same hour, and in conversation we learned that we had been summoned to the Queen by the same messengers and in the same words. There we saw the Queen surrounded by a multitude of warriors. We bowed down to Her, and She said to us:

'I wish to have a church built for Myself in Russia, at Kiev. Therefore I command you: take gold for three years and set out to build the church.'

Bowing down, we answered:

'O Sovereign Lady and Queen, Thou sendest us into a foreign land. To whom shall we go there?'

'These men standing here,' She said, 'Anthony and Theodosius, I send with you as well.'

'Why, O Lady,' we asked, 'dost Thou give us gold for three years? Only tell them that we may receive food and all that is necessary, and Thou Thyself knowest how to reward us.'

'Anthony,' she answered, 'he goes to the eternal rest[8]; after him in the second summer Theodosius will also go there. Take, then, as much gold as you can, and go. No one can reward you as I can: I shall give you what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man" (1 Cor. 2:9). And I Myself will come to see the church in which I wish to dwell.' After this She gave us the relics of the holy martyrs Artemius, Polyeuctus, Leontius, Acacius, Arethas, James and Theodore, saying: 'Place them in the foundation of the church.' Taking the holy relics and more gold than was necessary, we asked the Queen about the dimensions of the church.

7. *Blachernae*: a district in Constantinople.
8. Venerable Anthony.

'For measuring,' She answered, 'I have sent the girdle of My Son, at His command. Nevertheless, go out into the open and look at its dimensions.'

We went out and saw the church in the air. Returning, we bowed down to the Queen again and asked: 'What, O Lady, will be the name of the church?'

'I wish to give it My name,' She answered.

We did not dare to ask Her name, but the Queen Herself said:

'The church will be in the name of the Mother of God,' and She gave us this holy icon from Her own hands."

Hearing this, all glorified God and His most pure Mother. St. Anthony said to the craftsmen:

"We never went out to you from this place, children."

But the Greeks affirmed with an oath:

"In the presence of many witnesses we took the Queen's gold from your very hands; together with them we escorted you to the ship, and a month after your departure we set out ourselves. Now it is the tenth day since we left Constantinople."

St. Anthony answered them:

"Christ has granted you great grace, for you are the executors of His will. Those comely youths who summoned you are the bright Angels, and the Queen of Blachernae is Herself our most holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary; the warriors who stood around Her were the bodiless Angelic powers; and your receiving the gold from our very hands is a miracle of God, which the Lord was pleased to accomplish over His servants by ways known to Him alone. Blessed is your coming, and you have as a good Companion this holy icon of the Lady Mother of God, who will grant you, as She promised, 'what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man.' No one can grant this except the Mother of God and her Son, the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ. His girdle and crown have been brought here from the land of the Varangians; the breadth, length and height of that most honorable church were indicated by a voice from the heavens, coming from a majestic glory, addressed to Simon the Varangian, who brought us the girdle and the crown."

The Greeks bowed down to the saints with fear and asked as before:

"Where is the place for building the church? Show us."

The Venerable Anthony answered:

"Let us pray for three days, and the Lord will show it to us."

And so, by the inspiration of God, to seek out the place where the church was to be built, a great crowd of people gathered, though no one had summoned them. Some pointed to one place, others to another, but they did not find the place. Nearby lay the field of the prince, and by God's providence it so happened that at that very time Prince Sviatoslav himself was riding past. Seeing the people, he asked what was going on. When he learned, he turned his horse and drew near the crowd; and as if moved by God, the prince pointed out a place on his own field and ordered the church to be built there.

The Venerable Fathers prayed for three days. On the first night of prayer the Lord appeared to the Venerable Anthony, saying:

"Anthony! You have found grace before Me."

The Venerable Anthony answered:

"If I have found grace before Thee, O Lord, let there be dew over all the earth, and on the place which Thou art pleased to hallow, let it be dry land."

And in the morning, when there was dew over all the earth, dry land was found at the place where the church now stands. Praying again the next night, the Venerable Anthony said:

"Lord, let there be dry land over all the earth, and dew on the holy place."

And in the morning they saw dew on the holy place while all the earth was dry (cf. Judg. 6:37–40). On the third day they prayed at this place; the Venerable Anthony blessed it. The width and length of the place were measured with the golden girdle of Christ, brought by Simon from the land of the Varangians, following the measure indicated to Simon by a voice from heaven while he was at sea. Then the Venerable Anthony, raising his hands, prayed with a loud voice, like the prophet Elijah of old:

"Hear me, O Lord, hear me (today) by fire, and let all these people know that Thou art He who willest this" (cf. 3 Kgdms. 18:37).

And at once fire fell from heaven: it burned the brushwood and thorns, consumed the dew, and formed a hollow like a trench along the measured place. Those standing around the Venerable Fathers at that time fell down as dead from fear. Thus, by the grace of God and the fervent prayers of the faithful, led by the Venerable Anthony, the place chosen by God became known. Even earlier, by the prayer of the Venerable Theodosius, as his Life relates, the grace of God had foreshadowed this place: by a vision of flame bending here in an arc from the former church, and by a vision of Angels carrying the holy icon.

After the miraculous indication of the place by the Venerable Anthony and Theodosius, a stone church was founded in the name of the Most Holy Mother of God. This was in the year 6581 from the creation of the world and 1073 A.D., under the God-loving Bishop Michael, while Metropolitan George was then in Greece, in the days of the Right-believing Prince Sviatoslav Yaroslavich[9]. The latter began with his own hands to dig the trench for the church foundation, and gave 100 hryvnias of gold to the Venerable Theodosius to further the progress of the construction.

The relics of the holy martyrs, which the Mother of God had given to the craftsmen at Blachernae, were also placed in the foundation of the walls. According to Her prediction, the Venerable Anthony did not live long after the laying of the church's foundation; in that same year he passed to the eternal rest. The Venerable Theodosius was greatly concerned with the building of the church, but he too soon departed to the eternal dwellings, in the second year after the death of the Venerable Anthony, when the foundation was already finished. The construction of the church was brought to completion in the third year, under the Blessed Stephen, successor of the Venerable Theodosius. The Blessed Stephen witnessed the marvelous miracles just described: he saw the craftsmen come from Constantinople with the icon of the Mother of God, and heard their account of their hiring by the Queen at Blachernae. In memory of these miracles he afterward, after leaving the Kiev Caves monastery, built a church on the Klov[10] in honor of the

9. *Sviatoslav Yaroslavich*: Grand Prince of Kiev, 1073–1075.
10. *Klov*: a locality near Kiev.

Blachernae Mother of God. And the Right-believing Prince Vladimir Vsevolodovich Monomakh, who was then still a youth, saw fire fall from heaven and burn out the pit where the foundation of the church had been measured with the golden girdle.

The report of the wondrous miracles spread throughout the whole Russian land. It moved Prince Vsevolod, with his son Vladimir, to come from Pereiaslavl to Kiev. Vladimir was then ill; they girded him with the aforementioned golden girdle, and by the prayers of our holy fathers Anthony and Theodosius he immediately recovered. Therefore the Christ-loving Prince Vladimir took the measure of the Kiev Caves church, shown by God Himself, and in his principality in the city of Rostov he built a church exactly the same in height, length and breadth; at the same time, on a special sheet of paper, he described all the feasts established in the Kiev Caves church, to guide his own church. The son of Vladimir, Prince George, hearing from his father about the miraculous events in the building of the Kiev Caves church, likewise built in his principality, in the city of Suzdal, a church of the same size. But it is time to turn to the account of the adornment of the Kiev Caves church with holy icons.

Ten years after the arrival of the craftsmen-builders from Constantinople, icon painters also came from there to the then abbot of the Kiev Caves, the Blessed Nikon:

"Show us," they said to him, "those who hired us for the icon painting. We wish to speak with them. In the presence of many witnesses we agreed with them to adorn a small church with icon painting; but this church is very large. Otherwise, take back your gold, and we shall return to Constantinople."

These words perplexed the abbot, and he said to the icon painters:

“What did those who made the agreement with you look like?”

The icon-painters described their appearance to him and gave their names: one was called Antony, the other Theodosius. Then the abbot exclaimed:

"O my children! We cannot present them to you; for ten years now they have gone to the Lord, where they unceasingly pray for us, guard-

ing this church and caring for their monastery and those who dwell in it."

Hearing this answer, the icon-painters were struck with terror. They brought before the abbot many merchants, likewise from Constantinople, saying:

"Before these men we made our agreement with those two, and from their hands we took the gold; but you will not show them to us. If they have departed this life, then show us their image, so that these men may see whether they are indeed the ones."

Then the abbot brought out before everyone the icon of the Venerable Antony and Theodosius. On seeing the image, the Greeks bowed down, saying:

"Truly these are the very ones, and we believe that they are alive even after death, and that they can show mercy and save those who have recourse to them."

The merchants also gave as a gift the mosaic which they had brought for sale; afterwards it was used to adorn the sanctuary. Then the icon-painters began to repent of their sin and related the following:

"When we sailed to Kiev by boat, we saw on the hill this great church, and we asked: what church is this? 'The Pechersk church, which you have been called to adorn,' they answered us."

Seeing the size of the church, we were angered and wished to sail back. But during the night a terrible storm arose, and when we rose in the morning we noticed that we were near Tripolye, and the boat was moving of itself upstream against the current, as though some force were drawing it. We held it back by force and stood all day, pondering what would come next. How had we, in a single night and without the aid of oars, covered a distance that others barely manage in three days? The following night we had a vision: we saw this church and the local wonderworking icon of the Mother of God, and She spoke to us:

"Why do you vainly trouble yourselves, not submitting to the will of My Son and of Me? If you will not obey Me and flee back, I shall set you all and your boat near My church; and know that you will not leave it, but, having been tonsured in My monastery, there you will end your

life. And I shall obtain for you mercy in the age to come, through the prayers of the builders, Antony and Theodosius."

Rising in the morning, we again wished to flee back; but although we helped the current with all our strength by means of the oars, the boat still moved upstream. Therefore we abandoned our intention, submitting to the will of God, and the boat soon came to rest of itself near the monastery.

After this account, all of them, the black-robed monks and the Greek builders and icon-painters, glorified God, His most pure Mother, Her wonderworking icon, and the Venerable Antony and Theodosius.

Then the icon-painters set about adorning the church, and in this the Lord aided them by His signs. When the icon-painters were adorning the church with mosaic, an image of the Most Holy Theotokos formed of itself in the sanctuary. At that time all the icon-painters were present, among them the Venerable Alypius, who had learned from them and helped them; God willed to make them witnesses of so wondrous and terrible a miracle. As they gazed upon the image, it suddenly shone brighter than the sun, so that the icon-painters could not bear to look upon it and fell prostrate in terror. Rising a little, they wished to look once more upon the wondrous image, and suddenly a white dove flew out from the lips of the Mother of God. Those in the church looked to see whether it had flown out of the church. And there, before everyone's eyes, the dove again flew out from the lips of the Savior and circled throughout the whole church: it flew up to the images of the saints, alighting now on one's hands and now on another's head; then, descending, it sat down behind the local wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. Those present in the church wished to catch the dove; they set up a ladder, but they could not find the dove either behind the icon or behind the veil; they searched everywhere and saw nowhere the dove had hidden. And all stood gazing at the icon that had appeared in the sanctuary: and again, before their eyes, the dove flew out from the lips of the Mother of God and rose up to the image of the Savior. Those below cried out to those working above:

"Catch it!"

They stretched out their hands after it, but the dove again flew into the lips of the Savior. Again a light surpassing that of the sun shone upon them all, forcing them to close their eyes; and falling prostrate, they bowed down to the Lord, thanking Him for having granted them to see the action of the Holy Spirit abiding in the Pechersk church. Strengthened by these miracles, the icon-painters, adorning the Pechersk church, which was like heaven, adorned also themselves with various virtues. Having lived in a God-pleasing manner in the monastic habit, they ended their days in the same Pechersk monastery; likewise the master builders. All of them were laid in the vestibule, in the cave of the Venerable Antony, where their bodies lie incorrupt even to this day. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy which the blessed icon-painters heard from the most venerable wonderworking icon of the Mother of God, when the Pechersk church appeared to them at the time they were trying to return to Constantinople; She said to them: "You will not leave there, but, having been tonsured, there you will die."

It is fitting to recall here also another wondrous miracle, manifested by God at the same time through the most venerable wonderworking icon of the Mother of God, which is in the Pechersk stone church of the Dormition of the Mother of God.

In Kiev there lived two noble men, friends with one another, John and Sergius. Once, coming into the Pechersk church, they saw that a light surpassing that of the sun was issuing from the wonderworking icon of the Mother of God, and before it they confirmed their spiritual brotherhood by an oath. After many years, John fell gravely ill, leaving behind a five-year-old son, Zacharias. Having summoned the Pechersk abbot, the blessed Nikon, he, in his presence, distributed his property to the poor; and his son's share, a thousand grivnas of silver and a hundred grivnas of gold, he entrusted to Sergius, and to him he also entrusted his son, as to a friend and faithful brother, bequeathing that Sergius should give his son the silver and gold when he came of age. Having made this disposition, he soon departed this life.

When Zacharias had reached fifteen years of age, he wished to take his silver and gold from Sergius; but Sergius, tempted by the devil,

wished to ruin his own life for the acquisition of wealth. He answered the youth:

"Your father gave all his property to God; from Him ask for gold and silver. He is your debtor, and perhaps He will have pity on you. As for me, I owe nothing either to your father or to you. Your father, in his folly, distributed all his property to the poor and left you without any means."

Hearing this, the youth began to lament his poverty. Then he sent Sergius a request, saying:

"Give me at least half of my inheritance, keeping for yourself the other, equal, part."

But Sergius reviled with cruel words both Zacharias's father and Zacharias himself. Zacharias then asked for a third part, or even a tenth; but seeing that nothing could be obtained, he said to Sergius:

"If you have taken nothing, then come and swear to me before the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Theotokos of the Pechersk church, before which you concluded the brotherly bond with my father."

Sergius, unabashed, went into the church and, standing before the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, swore that he had taken neither a thousand grivnas of silver nor a hundred grivnas of gold. But when he wished to kiss the icon, he could not approach it. And so, as he went out of the church, he began to cry out:

"Venerable Antony and Theodosius, grant me protection before this unmerciful Angel who wishes to destroy me! Pray to the Most Holy Theotokos that She drive away from me the many demons to whom I am given over. Let them take the silver and gold sealed and hidden in my storeroom."

Great terror fell upon everyone, and from that time no one was permitted to swear before the holy icon of the Mother of God. They sent and actually found the sealed vessel, and in it two thousand grivnas of silver and two hundred grivnas of gold. Thus the Lord, the giver to the merciful, multiplied the inheritance. Zacharias gave all the money to the abbot John, that he might use it wherever he wished; he himself was tonsured in the Pechersk monastery and there ended his days. With

this silver and gold a church was built above the Pechersk church in honor of Saint John the Forerunner, in commemoration of the boyar John and of his son Zacharias, to whom the silver and gold belonged.

Having spoken of the miracles that accompanied the adornment of the Pechersk church with iconic painting, let us now tell how the Most High sanctified the dwelling-place of His Mother.

In the first year of the abbacy of the blessed John, whose name signifies grace, under the metropolitan of the same name, the Caves church, wondrously built and adorned, was consecrated; its consecration, by the grace of God, was accompanied by such miracles. – When preparations were made for the consecration of the church, it was discovered that there was no stone slab for the holy table; despite every effort, they could not find a craftsman able to make one; they were therefore obliged to replace the stone slab with a wooden one. But Metropolitan John did not wish that in so great a church the holy table should bear not a stone but a wooden slab; this brought the abbot and brethren into deep sorrow, for the consecration of the church had to be postponed for a time. On August 13 the monks, as was customary, went into the church to celebrate Vespers and suddenly saw, beside the sanctuary screen, a stone slab and the columns for the setting up of the holy table; this was at once reported to the metropolitan, who gave thanks to God and ordered that the consecration Vespers be served. Long and diligently they inquired whence and by whom the slab had been brought, whether by water or by land, and how it had been carried into the church, which had not been unlocked; but all their efforts were in vain. Then three grivnas of silver were sent to the places where such things are made, to pay the craftsman for the stone slab he had made; but no such craftsman could be found, though they searched everywhere; for it was the Creator and Provider of every good Himself who had granted the stone slab for the table in the house of His Mother, the stone on which He willed to be sacrificed for the whole world all days. But this was not the end of the miracles. On the next morning, after the miraculous discovery of the said slab, Metropolitan John was greatly grieved that the time had come for the consecration of the Caves church and no bishop was with him, for their sees were at a great distance from Kiev;

and suddenly there appeared unexpectedly the God-loving bishops: John of Chernigov, Isaiah of Rostov, Antony of Yuryev, Luke of Belgorod, though no one had summoned them; thus the metropolitan's wish to consecrate the church together with the bishops was fulfilled. The metropolitan was extremely astonished, since he had sent for no bishops, and asked them:

– Why have you come here when you were not called?

The bishops answered:

– Young men were sent to us by you, Master, who told us that on August 14 the Caves church would be consecrated and that we should be ready to celebrate the Liturgy with you; and here we are, at your word. Antony of Yuryev added:

– I was ill, and during that night a monk entered to me, saying: tomorrow the Caves church is being consecrated, and you must be there; as soon as I heard it I was made well, and here I am, by your command.

The metropolitan intended to seek out the men who had called them, but suddenly a voice was heard:

– "They vanished who searched out searchings" (Ps. 63:7).

Then he stretched his hands to heaven, saying:

– O most holy Lady Theotokos! As at Thy repose Thou didst gather the Apostles from the ends of the earth for the greater glory of Thy burial, so now for the consecration of Thy church Thou hast gathered our fellow-ministers and deputies; bless us in this work, and for the glory of Thy Son and of Thyself, help us.

All were in awe at such wonders, which, however, were not yet at an end.

When, at the consecration, having circled the church three times, they drew near its doors and began to sing, "Lift up your gates, O ye princes," no one from within the church answered with the chant, "Who is this King of glory?" – for no one had been left in the church. But after a long silence there suddenly rose from within the church a chant like that of the Angels: "Who is this King of glory?" They sought to learn who these singers were, whence they came, and how they could have entered the church when its doors were closed; but not one person was found in the church. And it became evident to all that all

this was being done by the Providence of God; and all, recalling the wonders at the founding of the Caves church, cried out with the Apostle:

– "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. 11:33–34). – Thus the consecration of the Caves church took place in the year 6597 from the creation of the world, A.D. 1089, in the days of the right-believing Prince Vsevolod Yaroslavich of Kiev, by the miraculous assistance of the Lord Himself, through the prayers of His Most Pure Mother and of our Venerable Fathers Antony and Theodosius.

Indeed the account of the Caves church is full of wonders, brethren, the church which the Lord showed in a vision before its building, and for which He sent from the Varangian land a crown and a belt from His honorable icon, while in the Greek land the Most Holy Theotokos herself showed a likeness of the church, sending her icon and the relics of the holy martyrs. In the history of its building, which falls into three parts, the history of the construction of the church building, its adornment, and its consecration, the action of the Holy Trinity was manifest. God the Father, the Ancient of Days, marked out the place where the church was to be built by a dry land, which is the sign of age or antiquity; the Son, "who came down like rain upon a fleece," sent down dew; and the Holy Spirit, who descended in tongues of fire, sent down fire from heaven. Likewise in the adornment of the church: the Father, who created man in His own image, depicted in the sanctuary, in mosaic and without a human hand, the image of the Most Holy Theotokos; the Son, the Sun of righteousness, then filled the church with light; the Holy Spirit, who appeared in the form of a dove, showed the vision of a dove flying out from the mouth of the image. Finally, at the consecration, the Father, who once gave the law on tablets of stone, gave a stone for the holy table; the Son, the High Priest who sits above the heavens, miraculously gathered the bishops; the Holy Spirit, the tongue that speaks over all the earth, from the midst of the church, when no man was there, gave an answer. If God, worshipped in the Trinity, has

with such miraculous signs been pleased to erect for Himself the most honorable Caves church in the name of the Heavenly Queen whom He loves, then surely He also dwells there in love; with Him dwells the Queen who stands at His right hand, the Intercessor and refuge of all Christians, the Most Holy Theotokos, as she herself promised at Blachernae, saying to the craftsmen:

– I myself will come to see the church, and I wish to dwell in it.

Likewise the holy ones of God, whose relics lie along the church walls, like an immovable foundation, abide without ceasing in the Caves church. What shall we say of it? Truly it is holy and wondrous and like unto heaven. Therefore we ought to render thanks and praise to the departed right-believing princes, the Christ-loving boyars, the honorable monks, and all the Orthodox who showed zeal for the holy Caves church. By the prayers of our Venerable Fathers Antony and Theodosius, may Christ, the Head of the Church, grant His goodness and mercy both to them and to us, the children of the Orthodox Church; to Christ God be honor and glory with His unbeginning Father and the all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Translation of the Relics of Our Venerable Father Theodosius

Перенесение мощей преподобного отца нашего Феодосия

In the eighteenth year from the time when our Venerable Father Theodosius was translated in soul from earth to heaven,[11] the Lord was pleased that his body too should be transferred from the cave into the holy church of the Caves, which is like unto heaven. This was accomplished in the following manner.

All the brethren of the holy, great and wonderworking Lavra of the Caves, gathered together with their leader, the abbot John, after deliberation, unanimously came to the decision to transfer from the cave into the great stone church the honorable relics of the blessed and God-bearing Theodosius, a venerable man, high in his life, wondrous in his

11. The Venerable Theodosius of the Caves reposed in 1074.

virtues and glorious in his miracles. The brethren said among themselves:

– Why do we needlessly deprive ourselves of our father and teacher? It is not fitting for us to be left without a shepherd, nor for the shepherd to forsake the sheep entrusted to him by God, lest the wild beast seize the rational flock of Christ. We, brethren, ought always to have before our eyes the honorable shrine of our father, always offering him due veneration. It is unseemly for him to remain outside the monastery and church that he founded, for he laid its foundation and gathered the monastics together.

Then all said, as with one mouth:

– Let us take the honorable relics of our beloved father and transfer them from the cave hither: "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house" (Mt. 5:15).

After this decision the brethren at once prepared a place for the setting of the honorable relics and set up a stone shrine. The feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos drew near. Three days before the feast the abbot ordered that they go into the cave and dig out the place where the honorable relics of our Venerable Father Theodosius had been laid. The first to carry out this task and the first eyewitness of the honorable relics was the blessed Nestor, who wrote the present account. He himself testifies of himself thus:

– I shall tell you in truth and righteousness, for I did not hear it from others,[12] but was myself the first participant. The abbot came to me and said: "Let us go, my son, to our Venerable Father Theodosius." And we went into the cave, entirely unnoticed by anyone. Having looked about, we marked the place that was to be dug out, and withdrew. Then the abbot said to me: "Take with you as helpers whomever you wish of the brethren, and speak of this to no one beyond these chosen ones; let none of the brethren know until we have carried the honorable relics out to the place before the cave."

I prepared the digging implements that same day. It was Tuesday; late in the evening I took with me two brothers, men of wondrous life,

and no one else knew of it. When we came to the cave, having offered prayer with reverence, we set to work without delay, singing psalm-songs. I began to dig; after a long labor I handed the spade to the other brother. So we dug until midnight and could not find the relics of the saint. Then we began to grieve and weep: at first we thought the saint was not pleased to reveal himself to us; then another thought replaced it, – were we not digging in the wrong direction? And so I took the tool again and began to dig still more diligently. One of the brothers who were with me, standing before the cave, heard the strike of the church semantron[13] calling to Matins, and told me that they had already struck the church semantron. But at that moment I had dug through the earth above the honorable relics, and I answered the brother: Brother, I have already dug through the earth. When I had done this, a great fear seized me, and I began to cry out:

– For the sake of the Venerable Theodosius, have mercy on me, O Lord!

Then I sent word to the Hegumen:

– Come, Father, let us bring out the honorable relics of the Venerable One.

The Hegumen came with two brothers; I dug still further. And stooping down, we saw the relics lying in seemly fashion: all the members were whole, and corruption had not touched them; the face was bright, the eyes closed, the lips joined, and the hair had dried upon the head. Laying the honorable relics upon a bier, we carried them out before the cave.

Thus says St. Nestor concerning his own part (in the finding of the honorable relics); he also bears witness to the wondrous works of God that took place at this time.

On that night in the Monastery of the Caves two brothers were keeping watch, when the Hegumen secretly, with a brother unknown to them, was bringing out the honorable relics of the Venerable One; and they gazed attentively toward the cave. When they struck the seman-

12. On the uncovering of the relics of the Venerable Theodosius.

13. A wooden or metal board, struck with a stick or hammer to summon the faithful to worship in the church before the introduction of bells.

tron for Matins, they noticed that three pillars, like luminous arcs, after standing over the cave of the Venerable Theodosius, moved to the top of the great church, whither the Venerable One was to be transferred. Others of the monks going to Matins in the church saw this too; and in the city itself many of the pious townsfolk saw it.

The all-wondrous Stephen, who after the Venerable Theodosius had been Hegumen of the Caves, and who afterwards founded a monastery on Klov and then, by the will of God, became Bishop of the city of Vladimir, was at that time at Klov in his monastery; and on that night he saw through the field a great glow above the cave. Thinking that the honorable relics of the Venerable Theodosius were being carried (he had been told of the event the day before), he greatly regretted that the translation was taking place without him. He at once mounted his horse and, accompanied by Clement, whom he had appointed Hegumen at Klov in his place, hastened toward the cave. On the way they saw the great glow from afar, and when they began to draw near, they noticed many candles above the cave. But on coming to the cave they saw nothing. Then they understood that the divine radiance they had seen issued from the honorable relics of the Venerable Theodosius. Coming to the door of the cave, Stephen and Clement saw St. Nestor with the brethren surrounding the honorable relics.

On the day after the finding of the honorable relics of the Venerable One, by the will of God, the God-loving bishops assembled: Ephraim of Pereyaslavl, Stephen of Vladimir, John of Chernigov, Marinus of Yuriev, Antony of Porozk; the Hegumens of all the (Kievan) monasteries also assembled with a multitude of black-robed monks; and a multitude of faithful people came from the city, bringing candles and incense. And taking the honorable relics of St. Theodosius, they carried them into the God-built, most pure church; and the most pure church rejoiced, receiving its lamp, so that the daylight was overcome by the light of the candles. Then the hierarchs, touching, the priests, prostrating, the monks, with the people, running up in love, kissed the relics of the saint, offering to God spiritual songs, and bringing thanksgiving praise to the Venerable One. Thus they laid the honorable relics in the church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos founded by the Venerable

Theodosius, on the right side, – they laid them on the fourteenth day of the month of August, on Thursday, at the first hour of the day; and they celebrated this day solemnly. It must not be passed over in silence here that on the third day after the translation of the relics of our Venerable Father Theodosius, the following prophecy of his came to pass.

In the days of his hegumenate the sole concern of the Venerable Theodosius was how best to manage the flock entrusted to him; in this he cared not only for the black-robed monks but also for the salvation of lay people, especially of his spiritual children; he consoled and instructed those who came to him; at times he visited their homes and gave his blessing. Among the nobles there was a spiritual son of St. Theodosius, named John; his wife Mary and he himself were pious people, living a chaste life. The blessed Father, coming once to their house (he loved them, since they lived by the commandments of the Lord and in love toward one another), began to teach the spouses about almsgiving to the poor, about the Kingdom of Heaven prepared for the righteous, and about the torments of sinners, and he said much else to them from Divine Scripture, until the word came to the laying of the body in the grave. Taking advantage of this word of the Venerable One, John's pious wife said to him:

– Honorable Father! Who knows where my body will be laid?

But Theodosius, inspired by God, filled with the gift of prophecy, answered her:

– I tell you the truth: where my body will be laid, there you too, after some years, shall rest.

And this came to pass in the eighteenth year after the saint's repose, when his honorable relics were translated; at that time John's wife Mary fell asleep. The relics of the Venerable Theodosius were translated on the 14th day of the month of August, and she, on the 16th day of the same month and year, was laid in that same Caves church, opposite the tomb of the Venerable Theodosius, on the left side. Then, in the fifteenth year after the translation of the relics of the Venerable Theodosius, her husband, the great boyar John, also fell asleep, a venerable elder of ninety years, son of the valiant voivode Vyshata, grandson of the voivode Ostromir, and himself for a fairly long time a

voivode; John was righteous and not inferior to his forefathers, as a good, meek, humble man who withdrew from evil. He was laid at the head of his wife, opposite the tomb of the same Venerable Theodosius, so that on him too was fulfilled the blessed Father's prophecy about being laid where his body also lies.

It is fitting here to recall also the following. The Lord, who glorifies those who glorify Him, and who was pleased with the translation of the relics of the Venerable Theodosius from the dark cave into the holy Caves church in the eighteenth year after His repose, desiring to glorify still more His servant, was pleased to bring his name and veneration from dark ignorance into all the Orthodox churches, also in the eighteenth year after the translation from the cave, – that this lamp might shine for the whole world.

The Searcher of hearts laid it upon the heart of the blessed Feoctistus, Hegumen of the Caves, to take care that the name of the Venerable Theodosius be entered in the synodikon or sobornik of the Church, and that he be numbered among the host of the ancient venerable fathers and all the saints, whose feast the Orthodox Church celebrates everywhere. The blessed Feoctistus began to remind the Right-believing Grand Prince Michael-Svyatopolk Izyaslavich[14] of this: he asked him to command the most reverend Metropolitan Nicephorus[15] to assemble a Holy Council of bishops, hegumens and the whole church clergy and to inform them of the reason for the gathering; and then let everything be accomplished as pleases God. The Metropolitan gladly heeded the prince's words, assembled the bishops, hegumens and the whole church clergy, and informed them of the intended honoring of the Venerable Theodosius. The Grand Prince himself related the life of the Venerable One to all the fathers of the council. Then all unanimously and with one voice resolved to issue a decree that the Venerable Theodosius be venerated in the Orthodox (Russian) Church as equal to all the saints already venerated everywhere. The most reverend Metropolitan commanded the bishops that each of them, in all the churches of his eparchy, should enter the name of the Venerable Theodosius in the

14. Grand Prince of Kiev, 1093–1114.
15. *Nikephoros*: the first metropolitan of this name, 1103–1121.

sobornik of saints. The bishops joyfully carried this out: they entered the name of the Venerable Theodosius and began to commemorate him in all the churches, praying to him and yearly celebrating with praises the day of his festival, to the glory of God who grants all things and of His servant, the Theodosius who bore the gift of his name.

To the blessed Feoctistus, who with zeal had labored to serve his father, the Venerable Theodosius, – to have his name entered in the sobornik, the Lord rendered according to his labors: after a short time he was chosen Bishop of the God-saved city of Chernigov and was consecrated by the same most reverend Metropolitan Nicephorus. When he entered upon his throne, the Christ-loving Prince David, the princess, the boyars and all the people received him with ineffable joy, as one who had brought ineffable joy to the Church by entering the name of the Venerable Theodosius in the sobornik. Through his prayers we too, together with the blessed Feoctistus, look to hear the joyful call: "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Lk. 10:20)

Let us place here also the account of the blessed Bishop Simon[16] concerning the miraculous adornment with gold and silver of the precious shrine of our Venerable Father Theodosius, who, by his precious relics, which had been translated, adorned the holy church of the Caves, as it were, with incorruptible gold and silver, and adorned the other Orthodox churches with the veneration of his precious name. It happened thus. A considerable time after the translation of the relics of Venerable Theodosius, George, son of Simon and grandson of Afrikan, princes of the Varangians, a chiliarch who governed a region in the land of Suzdal on behalf of Prince George Vladimirovich Monomakhovich, wished to adorn the precious shrine of Venerable Theodosius as a sign of his great love for him. He sent from Suzdal to Kiev, to the

16. *Simon* was a tonsured monk of the Monastery of the Caves. From there he was taken by Grand Prince Vsevolod Yurievich as abbot of the Nativity Monastery in Vladimir, which the prince had founded; afterward Simon was appointed the first bishop of the Vladimir eparchy, separated from the Rostov eparchy in 1214. Simon reposed in 1226, after a twelve-year rule. From the epistles of Bishop Simon of Vladimir to Polikarp, likewise a tonsured monk of the Monastery of the Caves and afterward its abbot, and from the epistle of Polikarp to Akindin, archimandrite of the Monastery of the Caves, whose contents consist of a series of accounts of the wonderworkers of the Caves and of miracles that occurred in the monastery itself during the construction of its great church, the famous Kiev-Pechersk Paterikon was compiled.

Monastery of the Caves, one of his boyars, named Basil, and entrusted to him five hundred grivnas[17] of silver and fifty grivnas of gold, to cover the shrine of the Venerable. Taking the silver and gold, Basil set out reluctantly, cursing his life and the day of his birth:

"What is this?" he said. "Has our lord resolved to squander such wealth? And what reward will he receive for covering the tomb of a dead man? Apparently he gathered it without labor, and now gives it away for nothing. But woe especially to me, who dared not disobey my lord: why did I leave my home, and for whom am I making this bitter journey? Shall I receive honor from anyone? I am sent neither to a prince nor to any notable. What shall I say to that handful of stones? And who will answer me? Who will not laugh at my foolish coming?" And Basil said many other things like these to those accompanying him. But St. Theodosius appeared to him in a dream and spoke gently:

"O child! I wished to reward you for your labor; but if you do not repent, you will suffer many hardships."

Basil, however, did not cease his murmuring, and the Lord brought great misfortune upon him for his sins: all his horses died, and thieves stole his possessions, except for the treasure that had been sent. Then Basil took a fifth part of the treasure, consisting of gold and silver sent to cover the saint's shrine; he spent it on his own needs and those of his horses, yet did not suspect that the punishment which had overtaken him was for his blasphemy. When he was in Chernigov, he fell from his horse and was so badly injured that he could not even move his hand. Those accompanying Basil laid him in a wagon and brought him near Kiev in the evening. That night St. Theodosius appeared to Basil, saying:

"Basil! Have you not heard the words of the Lord: 'Make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when you fail, they may receive you into the eternal habitations' (Lk. 16:9); and: 'He who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward' (Mt. 10:41)? My son George conceived a good work; you too were to be crowned with him for your labor, and not

17. *Hryvnia*: an ancient coin of fixed weight (72–96 zolotniks), often in the form of an ingot of gold or silver.

everyone would receive such glory as you were to share with George. Now, however, you have lost everything; yet do not despair of your life, though you can be healed in no other way than by repenting of your sins. Have yourself carried into the Monastery of the Caves, into the church of the Most Holy Theotokos, and let them lay you upon my shrine, and you will be well; and the gold and silver you spent you will find intact."

Venerable Theodosius said this to Basil, appearing visibly and not in a dream. In the morning Prince George Vladimirovich came with all his boyars to Basil; seeing him in grievous illness, he departed sorrowfully. But Basil, believing the saint's vision, ordered them to carry him to the Monastery of the Caves. When they were at the riverbank, someone unknown went in to the abbot of the Caves and said:

"Go quickly to the riverbank, bring Basil, and lay him upon the tomb of Venerable Theodosius; when he entrusts the treasure to you, expose him before everyone, saying that he took a fifth part of it; and if he repents, forgive him." Having said these words, the speaker became invisible. Abbot Timothy began making inquiries about the man who had come to him, but no one had seen him enter or leave. The abbot went to the Dnieper, brought Basil, and laid him upon the shrine of St. Theodosius; and Basil arose whole and well. He began giving the abbot the treasure entrusted to him, saying:

"Here you will find four hundred grivnas of silver and forty of gold."

The abbot said to him:

"Child! Where are the other hundred grivnas of silver and ten of gold?"

Basil began to repent and confessed:

"I took and spent them. Be patient with me, Father, and I will repay everything; I thought I could conceal it from the all-seeing God."

Then they poured the gold and silver from the vessel in which it had been kept under seal, counted it before everyone, and found it intact: five hundred grivnas of silver and fifty of gold; and all glorified God and St. Theodosius. Then Basil began to recount in order the saint's appearances to him and his deeds on his behalf. In the morning the prince came with physicians to the place where he had seen Basil ill, wishing

to treat him, but did not find him. Learning that Basil had been taken to the Monastery of the Caves, and supposing that he had already died, the prince hastened to the monastery and found Basil there, as though he had never been ill. Hearing from him of the wondrous miracles, the prince was both filled with awe and with spiritual joy; he went and bowed before the wonderworking tomb of our Venerable Father Theodosius, and then departed. When George Simonovich, the chiliarch, heard of this, he was inflamed with even greater love for the Most Holy Theotokos and St. Theodosius; to his great gift he added a grivna[18] which he himself had carried and which contained one hundred grivnas of gold. He also wrote the following:

"Behold, I, George, son of Simon, servant of the Most Holy Theotokos and St. Theodosius, blessed by his holy hand, was once ill with my eyes for three years and could not see a ray of sunlight; but at the word of the Venerable one I was healed, for I heard from his lips, 'Receive your sight!' and I received my sight. For this reason I write this epistle (that is, letter) to my descendants, that none may separate himself from the monastery of the Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos, and of the Venerable Fathers Anthony and Theodosius of the Caves; their prayer brings intercession also to the villages of the monastery. When we came with the Cumans[19] against Izyaslav Mstislavich, we saw from afar a great city, and at once withdrew from it. But no one knew what city it was; and among the Cumans who were near it there were many wounded, and we fled from that city. Later we learned that it was a village belonging to the Monastery of the Caves; there had never been a city there, and even those who lived in that village knew nothing of what had happened. When they went out in the morning, they saw that there had been bloodshed and were greatly astonished. Therefore I write to you that you are all inscribed in the prayer of St. Theodosius: he promised my father Simon to pray for us as he prays for his own monks; and he wrote a prayer which my father commanded to be placed in his hand when he was laid in the tomb, in expectation of the fulfill-

18. That is, a chain which was worn around the neck as an ornament.
19. *Polovtsy* or *Cumans*: a Turkic nomadic tribe that lived in the south of Russia in the 10th–13th centuries and from there made raids on the border towns and villages of the Russian land.

ment of that promise. Concerning this, appearing to one of the God-bearing Fathers, he said:

'Tell my son George that I have received good things through the prayers of the saint; and you, my son, follow me in good works.'

'Whoever does not desire the blessing and prayer of St. Theodosius, but turns away from them, shall love a curse—and may it come upon him.'"

Here ends the epistle of the aforementioned George, the lover of Christ. And we, who bring this account to its conclusion, ought to learn from him, that we may not turn away from the blessing and most helpful prayer of our Venerable Father Theodosius, but draw near to him through good works, and he will draw near to us. Thus, not fearing a curse, may we receive a blessing as heirs of the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom and with Whom, to the Father, with the Holy Spirit, be glory, dominion, honor, and worship, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Micah

Память святого пророка Михея

St. Micah, the first prophet of that name, was of the tribe of Ephraim and was the son of Imlah. He lived in the days of the holy Prophet Elijah, when Ahab and Jezebel ruled over the Israelites in Samaria, and Jehoshaphat over the Jews in Jerusalem. At that time the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob were divided into two kingdoms: one was called the kingdom of Judah, comprising the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with Jerusalem as its capital; the other was called Israel and included the remaining ten tribes of the Hebrew people, with Samaria as the capital of that kingdom. The tribe of Ephraim was also within the kingdom of Israel, and St. Micah the Prophet belonged to it by birth. He often reproved Ahab, king of Israel, for the same sins as did St. Elijah the Prophet: either for his falling away from God into idolatry, or for the injustices he committed. The king hated the prophet who reproved him, but did not dare kill him: he was restrained by fear

of God's punishment, shame before the innocence of the righteous man, and fear that his prophetic predictions would come to pass. Nevertheless, the prophet, yielding to the king's unjust anger, withdrew from the capital and often lived in the mountains; he feared that by appearing before the king repeatedly and reproving him, he might provoke in the latter a wrath that would stop at nothing.

In those days a bond of kinship was formed between the house of Ahab, king of Israel, and the house of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah: Jehoshaphat took Ahab's daughter Athaliah as wife for his firstborn son Jehoram. Moved by familial affection, Jehoshaphat came from Jerusalem to Samaria to visit Ahab. During the festivities in honor of his guest, Ahab asked Jehoshaphat to help him in a war against the king of Assyria, in order to take from him Ramoth Gilead; this city had long belonged to Israel, but the Assyrian king had seized it by force. Jehoshaphat, promising to go to war himself together with Ahab, said:

"As you are, so am I; as your people, so my people: I will go with you to war. But first let us inquire of the Lord God whether this war will be favorable for us."

And at once Ahab gathered his impious and false prophets, four hundred in number; the chief of these false prophets was Zedekiah, son of Chenaanah. All of them encouraged Ahab with the hope of success, saying:

"Go up, and God will deliver into your hands not only the city of Ramoth, but the Assyrian king himself."

But Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, being a godly man faithful to God, understood that among these prophets there was not one true one, but that they were all flatterers and men-pleasers; therefore Jehoshaphat said to Ahab:

"Is there not here even one prophet of the Lord whom we might inquire of, so that he might tell us the truth?"

Ahab answered:

"There is one man who can inquire of the Lord and reveal the truth to us: Micaiah, son of Imlah. But I hate him, for he always prophesies only evil concerning me."

"Do not speak so," Jehoshaphat replied to Ahab, "but summon him, hear him, and do not be angry at his rebukes."

And at once Ahab sent for the prophet Micaiah, who had at that time come into Israel from the desert mountains. Both kings sat in all their majesty on thrones at the gate of Samaria, while the false prophets prophesied before them. Their chief, Zedekiah, made iron horns, and, sounding them, said to Ahab:

"Thus says the Lord: with these horns you will destroy and exterminate Syria."

In the same way the rest of the false prophets also said:

"Go up to Ramoth Gilead and you will conquer the Assyrian king; the Lord will deliver him into your hands."

Meanwhile the messenger sent to the prophet Micaiah said to him:

"See, all the prophets foretell good to the king; I beg you, speak as they do, so that your words do not differ from theirs."

"As the Lord lives," the prophet Micaiah answered, "what my God Himself says to me, that is what I will say to the king."

And so, coming in, the holy Micaiah stood before Ahab, king of Israel, who asked him:

"Tell me, Micaiah: shall I go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or should I refrain?"

The prophet, not answering the king's question at once, and wishing to draw him on to more earnest inquiry, said:

"Go up, and you will have success, and they will be delivered into your hands."

Ahab, seeing that the prophet did not speak with boldness, addressed him:

"I earnestly adjure you: tell me the truth, as before the Lord."

Then the holy Micaiah said with boldness:

"I saw all the sons of Israel scattered over the mountains like sheep that have no shepherd."

By these words the prophet foretold that the Israelite army would lose its shepherd, that is, its king, in the war: he would be killed, and all, like sheep, would be scattered by the Assyrian forces over the mountains and the wilderness. And Ahab said to King Jehoshaphat:

"Did I not tell you that he prophesies nothing good about me, but only evil?"

The holy Micaiah continued:

"Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the heavenly host standing at His right hand and at His left. And the Lord said: who will entice Ahab, king of Israel, so that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one (of those standing before Him) said one thing, another said otherwise. And a spirit came forward and stood before the face of the Lord, and said: I will entice him. And the Lord said to him: How? He said: I will go out and be a spirit of lying in the mouths of all his prophets. And He (the Lord) said: you will entice him and prevail; go and do so. Know, O king," said the prophet, "that a spirit of lying is in the mouths of your prophets, and the Lord has spoken evil concerning you."

While the prophet was speaking these words, the false prophet Zedekiah came up and struck the holy Micaiah on the cheek, saying:

"Which Spirit of the Lord spoke all this to you?"

"You will see this," the holy Micaiah answered, "on the day when, from fear of the Assyrians, you will run from room to room in order to hide even in your own house."

Filled with wrath, Ahab ordered that the prophet Micaiah be seized and put in prison, and there fed with "bread of affliction" and given "water of affliction," that is, given bread and water in such small measure that the prophet would not die of hunger and thirst, but would remain alive until the king's return, when he intended to subject him to torment. The king said as much:

"Keep him in custody until I return in peace."

The holy Micaiah answered the king:

"If you return in peace, then the Lord did not speak through me."

Then the holy Micaiah turned to the people and said loudly:

"Hear this, all you people!"

The holy prophet was put in prison, located in the capital of the kingdom of Israel, Samaria. King Ahab went off to war, where he was killed according to the prophecy of the holy Micaiah; this is reported in detail in chapter 22 of the Third Book of Kingdoms and in chapter 18

of the Second Book of Chronicles. After Ahab's death, his son Ahaziah reigned.

Nothing is said in Holy Scripture about the end of the holy prophet Micaiah; only in the Prologue is it reported that he was supposedly killed by Jehoram, son of Ahab; but it has already been noted that Jehoram was Ahab's son-in-law, not his son. However, it is very probable that the holy prophet Micaiah died a martyr's death at the hands of one of his tormentors: for Ahab's wife Jezebel, who remained a widow after her husband, and his son Ahaziah, who after his father took the kingdom, and his son-in-law, the king of Jerusalem, Jehoram, could none of them have felt goodwill toward the one who foretold Ahab's ruin. The memory of the prophet Micaiah is placed in the Great Menaion-Chetiy and in the Kievan monthly calendars on the fifth day of January. And in the Menaion-Chetiy it is said of him that, for rebuking iniquity, he was killed and thrown into a pit; his kinsmen drew his honorable body out of it and gave it burial in their land, near the tomb of a wandering prophet. After 150 years, perhaps even more, after the first prophet Micaiah, there appeared (in the 8th century B.C.) another holy prophet of the same name, whose memory is celebrated today.

He was of the tribe of Judah; his homeland was the small town of Morasthi near the city of Eleutheropolis; hence the holy prophet also received his surname, the Morashtite. He prophesied in Jerusalem in the days of the kings of Judah Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah; at this same time the holy prophet Isaiah also lived. The holy Micaiah rebuked his fellow countrymen, that, having turned aside to idolatry, they had forgotten the true God and adopted the impious customs of the pagans. With heartfelt grief the prophet spoke to them, speaking in the name of God:

"My people, what have I done to you? How have I wronged you? How have I vexed you? Answer Me. Or because I brought you out of the land of Egypt and delivered you from bondage, have you forsaken Me and acknowledged pagan idols as your gods?"

Also rebuking the oppressions, injustices, robberies and wrongs inflicted by princes, judges and elders upon the poor and needy, the holy Micaiah said:

"Hear, you heads of the house of Jacob, who hate good and seek evil: is it not for you to make every effort to render righteous judgment? Yet you so unjustly oppress the wholly innocent poor and needy that you have stripped off their skin, broken their bones and crushed their flesh, as if you wished to put them into a pot to prepare food. Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob, who abhor justice and pervert all that is straight, who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity!"

Thus the prophet rebuked the sinners, and, seeing their lack of correction, he lamented their ruin, crying out with groans:

"Woe is me! For I am now as when the summer fruits have been gathered, as when the vintage has been gleaned: not one berry for eating (so there are none who please God!). Alas, my soul! The merciful have vanished from the earth, there are no righteous among men; all lay snares to shed blood; each sets a net for his brother. Their hands are turned to doing evil; the ruler demands gifts, and the judge judges for bribes."

Lamenting, in rebuking the wicked, their unrepentance, the prophet foretold the wrath of God coming upon them: it would first overtake Samaria, the capital of the kingdom of Israel, since idolatry and the violation of God's law and pagan impiety began here; then the same punishment would befall Jerusalem: God's justice had decreed that Samaria would be laid waste by the Assyrians, and Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. And again the prophet wept, saying:

"Alas, alas for me! The visitation of God is approaching!"

But amid such sorrowful predictions the prophet of God also declared a joyful one: that the Shepherd and Savior of our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ, would be born in Bethlehem: "But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you are small among the thousands of Judah, out of you shall come forth for Me One who is to be ruler in Israel" (Mic. 5:2).

The remaining prophecies of this holy prophet of God are set forth in the prophetic book bearing his name.

As to how holy Micah ended his life after completing his prophetic ministry, we have no certain information, but it does not seem that he died a martyr's death. In the Book of the Holy Prophet Jeremiah it is

related that when the priests, together with the false prophets and a multitude of the people, wished to kill the Holy Prophet Jeremiah, some of the elders defended him, saying to the assembly:

"Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and said to all the people of Judah: Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Zion shall be ploughed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps of stones, and the mountain of this house a wooded height. Did Hezekiah, king of Judah, and all Judah put him to death for this? Did he not fear the Lord and entreat the Lord? And the Lord revoked the evil which He had pronounced against them. But we are about to do great evil to our souls."

From these words we can see that the Holy Prophet Micah was not killed, but at the end of his God-pleasing life he fell asleep in peace. He died and was buried in his homeland, Morasthi. After very many years his honorable relics were uncovered together with the relics of the Prophet Habakkuk, in the reign of Theodosius the Great, by divine revelation to Zevinus, Bishop of Eleutheropolis. For all this may glory be to our God always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Arcadius, disciple of Ephraim of Novotorzhok.

On the same day, the memory of the Holy Martyr Marcellus, Bishop of Apamea, who was burned by idolaters about the year 389 for the destruction of a pagan temple.

THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 15

15 августа

New Calendar August 15 · Old Calendar August 28 (civil dates)

Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

Успение Пресвятой Владычицы нашей Богородицы и Приснодевы Марии

After the Lord had wrought the salvation of the human race and ascended into heaven, the most pure and most blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God and Mediatrix of our salvation, lived for a considerable time among the first Christians. She was filled with great spiritual joy as she beheld the Church of Christ spreading throughout the whole universe and the glory of her Son and God extending to the ends of the earth. In these early days of the life of the Christian Church, the Most Holy Theotokos saw with her own eyes the fulfillment of her words, that all generations would call her blessed (Lk. 1:48): Christians everywhere glorified Christ God and called His Most Pure Mother blessed, while she still dwelt on earth.

The Most Holy Theotokos drew near to her most honorable and glorious Dormition, having already completed her days[5085]; she herself desired to depart from the body and enter unto God more swiftly. Her soul was ever possessed by one unceasing desire: to behold the sweet face of her Son, seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Heb. 1:3), for she burned with a love for Him far greater than that of the Seraphim.[1] The Mother of God, pouring streams of tears from her holy eyes, fervently prayed to the Lord that He take her from this vale of

1. Seraphim – from the Hebrew, fiery, burning beings. The holy prophet Isaiah describes them (Is. 6:1–3). This vision of the prophet shows that the Seraphim are the beings nearest to God, the highest spiritual beings. In the "Celestial Hierarchy" of St. Dionysius the Areopagite they occupy the first place among the orders of Angels.

tears into the blessed heavenly mansions.[2] While dwelling in the house of St. John the Theologian on Sion,[3] she often withdrew from there to the Mount of Olives,[4] the place from which her Son and Lord had ascended into heaven; there, in solitude, she offered Him her fervent prayers. And once, during such a solitary prayer of the Mother of God on the Mount of Olives, asking that the Lord soon send her death and take her to Himself in heaven, the Archangel Gabriel appeared before her.[5] He had ministered to the Most Holy Theotokos from the first days of her childhood: he had nourished her in the Holy of Holies, brought her the good tidings that the Son of God would be born of her (Lk. 1:27–38), and guarded her without ceasing throughout her life on earth. With radiant countenance, the heavenly messenger delivered to the Most Holy Theotokos the Lord's joyful message to her: that soon, after three days, she would depart to Christ God. Announcing to the Most Pure Virgin the hour of death, the Archangel told her not to be troubled, but to receive his words with joy, for they called her to immortal life with the eternal King of glory:

"Your Son and our God," said the Archangel, "with the Archangels and Angels, the Cherubim and Seraphim, with all the heavenly spirits and the souls of the righteous, will receive you, His Mother, into the Heavenly Kingdom, that you may live and reign with Him for endless time."

As a sign of the Theotokos' triumph over death—that bodily death would have no power over her, just as spiritual death had not prevailed over her, and that she would, as though falling asleep in death for a little while, soon rise again as if awakened, and, casting death from her as one casts sleep from the eyes, behold, in the light of the Lord's countenance, immortal glory and life, to which she would depart amid joyful

2. Heavenly (Gorny) – higher, heavenly (Ezek. 41:7; Col. 3:3).
3. Zion, in translation from the Hebrew, according to some means an open, sun-scorched place, and according to others: a high, famous place or fortress. Zion is the southwestern hill in Jerusalem, on which the Jerusalem citadel rises.
4. The Mount of Olives, or Elaion, received its name from the olive trees growing on it in great numbers; it lies to the east of Jerusalem and is often mentioned in Holy Scripture, especially in the New Testament.
5. Archangel – chief of the Angels (1 Thess. 4:16; Jude 9).

cries and spiritual gladness—as a sign of all this, the Archangel gave the Most Holy Virgin a branch of Paradise: it was a branch from a date palm, shining with the light of heavenly grace. As the Archangel said, it was to be carried before the bier of the Mother of God when her most honorable and most pure body was borne for burial. The most blessed Mother of God was filled with ineffable joy and spiritual exultation, for what could be more joyful and pleasing to her than dwelling in heaven with her Son and God, and being blessed as she gazed upon His sweet countenance? Falling to her knees, she began fervently to give thanks to her Creator:

"I was not worthy," prayed the Most Holy Theotokos, "to receive Thee, O Master, into my womb, hadst Thou not Thyself had mercy upon me, Thy handmaid. I have guarded the treasure entrusted to me, and therefore I have boldness to beseech Thee, O King of glory, to preserve me from the power of hell:[6] if heaven and the Angels tremble before Thee, how much more does man, formed of dust, who has no merits of his own, save those bestowed by Thy goodness! Thou, O Lord and God, art blessed forever."

At her departure from this life, the Most Pure Lady desired to see the holy Apostles, who had already dispersed throughout the universe to preach the Gospel. She prayed to the Lord also that at the hour of her death she might not see the prince of darkness and his fearful servants, but that her own Son and God, fulfilling His promise, would Himself come and receive her soul into His holy hands. As our Lady, kneeling on the Mount of Olives, offered prayers and thanksgivings to her Creator, her prayer was accompanied by this wondrous sign: the olive trees standing on the Mount of Olives bowed, as though endowed with life, together with the Theotokos. When the Mother of God bent her knees, the trees too bent down; when she rose, they straightened

6. Gehenna is a rendering of a Hebrew word meaning the valley of Hinnom, or "of the sons of Hinnom"; by this valley is meant a deep, narrow ravine where the Jews once, in the period of the kings, sacrificed their children to Moloch (4 Kgdms. 23:10; Jer. 7:31). In later times it served as a dump for all kinds of filth, and for the destruction of the latter a fire was constantly kept burning here; therefore the valley of Hinnom became a symbol of the place of eternal torment. In this very sense, that of hell, the word Gehenna is used in the New Testament (Mt. 5:29–30, 10:28, 18:9, 23:15; Mk. 9:43, 45; Lk. 12:5; Jas. 3:6).

again. Like servants, the trees ministered to the Theotokos, honoring the Mother of God.

When her prayer was ended, the Most Holy Theotokos returned home, and at once everything trembled at the presence of the invisible power of God surrounding the Mother of God, and at the glory of the Lord with which she was illumined. Her face, which had always shone with God's grace more brightly than the face of Moses, who once spoke with God on Sinai (Ex. 34:30), was now illumined with an even more ineffable glory. The most blessed Lady began to prepare for her departure. First of all, she told her beloved disciple John, whom she had adopted as her son, and showed him the radiant branch of Paradise, charging him in particular to carry it before her bier. Then the Most Holy Virgin told the same to the other members of her household who served her. After this, she commanded that her chamber be filled with fragrance, that as many lamps as possible be prepared and lit therein, and that both the chamber itself and the bier standing in it be adorned—in a word, that everything necessary for the burial be arranged. St. John the Theologian immediately sent word to St. James, the brother of the Lord and first bishop of Jerusalem, as well as to all her relatives and those near to her, announcing the approaching departure of the Mother of God and specifying the exact day. St. James lost no time in informing all the Christians living not only in Jerusalem but also in the surrounding towns and villages, so that, together with the bishop of Jerusalem, all her relatives and a great multitude of the faithful, men and women, gathered to the Most Holy Theotokos. In the hearing of all assembled, the Most Pure Lady recounted the words the Archangel had spoken to her concerning her translation to heaven, and, as proof, showed the branch of Paradise received from her messenger, which shone with the light of heavenly glory like a ray of the sun. Hearing from the lips of the Mother of God herself the news of her approaching death, the faithful around her could not restrain their tears: the whole house was filled with weeping and lamentation, and all implored the merciful Lady, the common Mother of all, not to leave them as orphans. But the Mother of God asked them not to weep, but to rejoice at her departure, since, having drawn nearer to the throne of God, beholding her

Son and God face to face and speaking with Him mouth to mouth, she would be able after death to beseech Him with greater boldness for mercy and goodness. At the same time, the most blessed Theotokos promised not to leave them as orphans after her departure, nor the whole world: she would visit the whole world, heeding its needs and helping the afflicted. The comforting words of the Theotokos wiped away the tears of those who wept and quieted their grief. The Most Pure Lady then made a bequest concerning two of her garments, that they be given to two poor widows who had served her fervently, receiving their sustenance from her. Concerning her most pure body, the Mother of God decreed that it be buried in the Garden of Gethsemane,[7] lying beside the Mount of Olives, not far from Jerusalem, where were the tombs of her righteous parents, Joachim and Anna, and of her betrothed, St. Joseph. These tombs adjoined the Valley of Jehoshaphat, extending between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, which was a common burial place for the poor inhabitants of Jerusalem.

During these final arrangements of the Most Holy Theotokos, a sound was suddenly heard, like peals of thunder in its strength, and clouds surrounded the house of St. John the Theologian. At God's command, Angels had snatched up the Apostles, who had dispersed to preach the Gospel to the ends of the universe, and brought them on clouds to Jerusalem, setting them down on Sion before the door of the house where the Mother of God dwelt. The holy Apostles, seeing one another, rejoiced and at the same time wondered, saying:

"What is the reason for which the Lord has gathered us together?"

St. John the Theologian came out to them and greeted them with joyful tears, telling them of the approaching repose of the Most Holy Theotokos. Then the holy Apostles understood that the Lord had gathered them from the farthest regions of the universe to be present at the blessed death of His Most Pure Mother, so that they might honorably commit her most pure body to burial. The news of the Mother of

7. Gethsemane, from the Hebrew "olive press," is the place at the foot of the Mount of Olives, famous as the site of the Savior's redeeming agony and of His high-priestly prayer (Mk. 14:26, 32; Lk. 22:39; Jn. 18:1); according to tradition, going back to the fourth century, Gethsemane lay fifty sazhens east of the bridge over the Kidron.

God's approaching death filled the hearts of the holy Apostles with great sorrow. Entering the house, they saw the Theotokos sitting on her bier with a joyful countenance. The holy Apostles greeted her, saying:

"Blessed are you of the Lord, who made heaven and earth!"

"Peace be with you, brothers, chosen by the Lord Himself!" answered the Most Pure Lady.

And then she asked:

"How have you come here?"

The holy Apostles told her that each of them had been caught up by the power of the Spirit of God from the place where he preached and borne to Zion upon a cloud. The Mother of God glorified God, who had heard her prayer and fulfilled the desire of her heart, that she should see the holy Apostles at her death.

"The Lord," she said, addressing them, "has brought you here to comfort my soul, which is about to be parted from the body, as mortal nature requires; the time appointed for me by my Creator has already drawn near."

They, in answer, said to her with sorrow:

"In the time of your sojourn upon earth, O Sovereign Lady, we were comforted by looking upon you as upon our very Lord and Teacher; but now, deprived of your presence, how shall we bear the heavy grief that has taken hold of our souls? Yet you are departing to the mansions of the life to come by the will of Christ God, whom you did bear, and we cannot but rejoice in God's decree concerning you; at the same time we cannot but mourn our own orphanhood, for we shall see you no more, our Mother and Comforter."

As they spoke these words, the holy Apostles wept.

"Weep not," the Most Holy Theotokos comforted them, "and do not darken My joy, friends and disciples of Christ, with your sorrow. Rather rejoice together with Me, for I am going to My Son and God. My body, which I have Myself prepared for burial, commit to the earth in Gethsemane, and then return again to the preaching of the Gospel that has been laid upon you. As for Me, if the Lord will, you shall see Me even after My departure."

During this conversation of the Mother of God with the holy Apostles, there arrived also the vessel chosen by God, the holy Apostle Paul. Falling at the feet of the Most Holy Theotokos, he opened his mouth, magnifying and blessing her:

"Rejoice," said the holy Apostle, "Mother of Life and of my preaching! If before the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ I could not enjoy the sight of Him here on earth, yet now, looking upon you, I think I see Him as it were."

With the Apostle Paul were also his close disciples Dionysius the Areopagite[8], Hierotheus[9] and Timothy[10]; and the remaining Apostles from among the seventy were present as well. All were gathered together by the Holy Spirit, that they might be granted the blessing of the Most Pure Virgin Mary and by their presence add solemnity to her burial. The Most Pure Lady called each of the holy Apostles to Herself by name, praising their faith and their labors in proclaiming Christ Jesus; to each she wished eternal blessedness and prayed for the peace of the whole world.

The fifteenth day of the month of August arrived, and the long-awaited, blessed hour drew near, the third hour of the day, at which the Most Holy Theotokos was to depart. In the upper room many lamps were lit; the holy Apostles offered praise to God; and the all-pure Virgin lay upon an adorned bed, preparing for her blessed end and awaiting the coming to Herself of her beloved Son and Lord. Suddenly in the upper room there shone an unspeakable light of divine glory, which

8. St. Dionysius the Areopagite, a member of the Areopagus of Athens, was, according to the testimony of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 17:34), converted by the holy Apostle Paul. According to the words of the church historian Eusebius he was the first bishop of Athens, and he sealed his ministry, as the apology of Aristides says, with a martyr's death under Domitian in 96.

9. St. Hierotheus was also a member of the Areopagus of Athens and was likewise converted to Christianity by the holy Apostle Paul; by him he was ordained bishop of Athens; St. Hierotheus died in the first century.

10. St. Timothy, a native of Asia Minor, of Derbe or Lystra (Acts 16:1, 20:4; 2 Tim. 3:4); he owed his conversion to Christ to the preaching of the holy Apostle Paul, who therefore calls him his son (1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 1:2); he was the constant companion of the holy Apostle Paul in his journeys of preaching the Gospel (Rom. 16:21; 1 Cor. 16:10; 1 Thess. 3:2). Ordained afterwards, according to tradition by the Apostle himself, as bishop of the Church of Ephesus, Timothy ended his fifteen-year episcopal ministry with a martyr's death: according to some in the reign of Domitian (81–96), according to others of Nerva (96–98); St. Timothy was stoned to death on a pagan festival by a crowd of pagans enraged by his denunciatory preaching.

outshone the lamps. Those to whom this vision was granted were struck with terror. They saw that the roof of the upper room was opened and the glory of the Lord descended from heaven: Christ Himself, the King of glory, with myriads of Angels and Archangels, with all the heavenly powers, with the holy forefathers and prophets who had of old foretold the Holy Virgin, and with all the righteous souls, drew near to His Most Pure Mother. Seeing the approach of her Son, the Mother of God, in great joy, cried out the words of her song:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior, for He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaid" (Lk. 1:46–47).

And rising from the bed, as if to go forth to meet her Son, she bowed down before the Lord. He, drawing near and gazing upon her with love, said:

"Come, My beloved; come, My dove; come, My precious treasure, and enter into the mansions of eternal life."

The Mother of God, bowing, answered:

"Blessed is Thy name, O Lord of glory and my God, who hast been pleased to choose Thy lowly servant for the service of Thy mystery. Remember Me, O King of glory, in Thy eternal kingdom. Thou knowest that I have loved Thee with all my heart and have kept the treasure entrusted to me; and now receive my spirit in peace and protect me from all the snares of the dark, satanic power."

The Lord comforted her with words full of love, bidding her not to fear the satanic power, which she had already overcome; He called her lovingly to pass without fear from earth to heaven.

"My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready" (Ps. 107:2), answered the Most Holy Virgin.

Then, having spoken the words she had once spoken, “Let it be to me according to thy word” (Lk. 1:38), she lay down again upon the bed. Feeling ineffable joy at the sight of the radiant face of her Son and Lord, the Mother of God, filled with spiritual rapture from her love for Him, committed her most pure soul into the hands of the Lord; in this she felt no pain, but passed as if into a sweet sleep. He whom she had conceived without violation of her virginity and borne without travail

received her soul also from her most pure body. And at once there began a wondrous Angelic singing, full of joy, in which were heard the words of Gabriel's greeting to the Most Holy Virgin, often repeated by the Angels:

"Rejoice, thou who art highly favored! The Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women" (Lk. 1:28).

With such solemn hymns the heavenly ranks escorted the most holy soul of the Mother of God, which was being borne in the arms of the Lord to the heavenly mansions. The holy Apostles, who had been granted the vision, followed the Mother of God with tender eyes, as once they had followed the Lord ascending from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9–12); they stood for a long time, struck with awe and as if in a trance. Coming to themselves, the disciples of Christ bowed down to the Lord, who had gloriously taken up to heaven the soul of His Mother, and with weeping they surrounded the bed of the Theotokos. The face of the most blessed Virgin Mary shone like the sun, and from her most pure body there came forth a wondrous fragrance, to which nothing on earth can be compared. All the faithful, reverently venerating the most pure body, kissed it with fear; from the honorable relics of the Theotokos there went forth a sanctifying power, filling with joy the hearts of all who touched it. The sick received healings: the blind regained their sight, the deaf had their hearing opened, the lame were made to walk, demons were cast out; every sickness was utterly dispelled by the mere touch of the bed of the Mother of God.

Amid these events that accompanied the death of the Mother of God, the solemn procession began, bearing her most venerable body for burial: the holy Apostle Peter, together with the holy Apostles Paul and James, the brother of God, took the lead and, along with the other holy Apostles from among the twelve, lifted the bed of the Most Holy Theotokos; and the holy John the Theologian went before, carrying a branch of Paradise that gave forth radiance. The rest of the faithful, with candles and censers, walked nearby, surrounding the bed. All sang the prayers for the departure: the holy Apostle Peter began, and the others sang in harmony after him the psalm of David, "When Israel went out of Egypt" (Ps. 113), adding alleluia to every verse; under the

inspiration of the Holy Spirit they also sang other solemn and thanksgiving prayers and psalms. The solemn procession with the most pure body of the Theotokos proceeded from Zion through Jerusalem to Gethsemane. Above the bed and those escorting it there appeared a cloudy circle, resembling a crown and shining with an exceptionally bright radiance. And in the clouds, audibly, filling the air, there resounded wondrous Angelic singing. This cloudy crown floated through the air above the bed of the Mother of God as far as the place of burial; throughout this time the Angelic singing did not cease. But the joyful procession, which the weak human tongue cannot fully describe, was suddenly interrupted. Many of the Jews who did not believe in Christ, hearing the unusual singing and seeing the solemn procession, left their dwellings and joined it; they too went outside the city, marveling at the glory and honor that were rendered to the most venerable body of the Mother of Jesus Christ. Learning of this, the chief priests and scribes fell into a violent rage and sent servants and soldiers, having also incited many from among the people, to overtake the procession and disperse its participants; at the same time they ordered that the disciples of Christ be killed and the body of the Theotokos burned. But when the crowd, obedient to the instigators, armed as if for battle, ran furiously after those who bore the body of the Most Holy Theotokos and was already overtaking them, suddenly the cloudy circle floating through the air descended to the earth and, as if with a wall, surrounded both the holy Apostles and the rest of the Christians; those pursuing heard only the singing, seeing no one behind the cloud. The holy Angels, invisibly hovering over the body of the Theotokos and the Christians, struck the malicious pursuers with blindness: some of them dashed their heads against the city walls; others groped about and, not knowing where to go, sought guides. At this time a certain Jewish priest named Aphonius happened to set out on the way: seeing the holy Apostles—the cloud, by God's command, had risen again for the greater glory of the Theotokos—and the multitude of Christians with candles and singing, surrounding the body of the Ever-Virgin Mary, Aphonius was filled with envy; the former malice toward our Lord flared up in him, and he said:

"Look what honor surrounds the body of Her who bore the seducer who overturned the law of our fathers!"

Being very strong, he ran with fierce fury through the crowd of Christians toward the bier, to cast down to the ground the body of our Most Pure Sovereign Lady. But when the audacious hands of the priest touched the bier, an invisible Angel instantly severed them in the middle with the incorporeal sword of God's vengeance, and they hung there, not separating from the bier; Athonius himself fell to the ground, crying out:

"Woe is me!"

Recognizing his sin, he began to repent and to say to the holy Apostles:

"Have mercy on me, servants of Christ!"

The holy Apostle Peter commanded that those carrying the body of the Mother of God stop, and said to Aphonius:

"Behold, you have received what you desired. Know that God, the Lord of vengeance, has revealed Himself (Ps. 93:1), and we cannot heal you of your wounds. This can be done only by our Lord Himself, against whom you unrighteously rose up, and whom you seized and killed. Yet He will not wish to grant you healing until you believe in Him with all your heart and confess with your lips that Jesus is the true Messiah, the Son of God."

Aphonius cried out:

"I believe that He is the Savior of the world foretold by the prophets, Christ. From the beginning we saw that He is the Son of God, but, darkened by malicious envy, we would not openly acknowledge the majesty of God, and we handed Him over to death though He was innocent. But by the power of His Divinity He rose on the third day, putting to shame all of us, His enemies. We tried by bribing the guards to conceal His resurrection, but we could do nothing, for the report of it spread everywhere."

As Aphonius spoke these words, repenting of his sin, the holy Apostles and all the faithful rejoiced with the joy of the Angels over a repentant sinner. The holy Apostle Peter commanded Aphonius to apply the wounds of his severed hands, with faith, to the hands hanging

from the bier, calling upon the name of the Most Holy Theotokos. Aphonius did so, and immediately the severed hands joined to their places; they became perfectly whole, and only a mark of the severing remained, like a thin red thread encircling the elbow. Aphonius fell prostrate before the bier, worshipping Christ, God born of the Most Holy Theotokos, and extolling His Most Pure Mother with many praises. He brought forward from the holy Scripture prophecies bearing witness both to her and to Christ, and all were doubly astonished, seeing the miraculous healing of Aphonius's severed hands and hearing from him wise words by which he glorified the Lord Jesus and magnified the Mother of God. Then Aphonius joined the holy Apostles, following the bier with the other Christians to Gethsemane. In the same way, those who had been struck blind also received healing: those who, acknowledging their sin, came with repentance, led by guides, to the honorable bier and touched it with faith received sight, not only of the bodily eyes but of the eyes of the soul. The merciful Mother of all, our Most Holy Sovereign Lady, who by her birth gave joy to the whole universe, did not wish to grieve anyone even in her Dormition. As the good Mother of the good King, she mercifully consoled even her former enemies with her gracious gifts.

But now the holy Apostles, with the whole multitude of Christians, reached the Garden of Gethsemane. When they set down the bier with the venerable body, weeping again arose among the Christians. All, losing such a treasure, wept over their orphanhood; giving the final kiss, the Christians fell down to the body of the Most Holy Mother of God and kissed it, bathed in tears, so that only toward evening could they lay the venerable body in the tomb. Even when the great stone had been rolled against the tomb, the Christians did not depart from it, held by love for the Mother of God. The holy Apostles remained at the tomb of the Most Holy Mother of God, not leaving the Garden of Gethsemane, for three days and nights, singing psalms. And during all this time there was heard in the air the wondrous singing of the heavenly hosts, glorifying God and extolling His most pure Mother.

By a special providence of God, one of the Apostles, the holy Thomas, was not present at the glorious burial of the body of the Most

Pure Mother of God; he came to Gethsemane only on the third day. The holy Apostle Thomas grieved greatly and was distressed that he had not been deemed worthy, as the other holy Apostles were, of the last greeting and blessing of the Most Pure Mother of God. He also wept bitterly that he alone had not seen the Divine glory, the wondrous mysteries and works of God manifested during the Dormition and the solemn burial of the Mother of God. The holy Apostles, taking pity on him, resolved to open the tomb so that the holy Thomas might at least see the lifeless body of the most blessed Mother of God, venerate it and kiss it, and thereby receive some relief from his sorrow and consolation in his grief. But when the holy Apostles, rolling away the stone, opened the tomb, they were struck with terror: the body of the Mother of God was not in the tomb; only the burial cloths remained, diffusing a wondrous fragrance. The holy Apostles stood in amazement, not knowing what this meant! Kissing with tears and reverence the burial cloth left in the tomb, they prayed to the Lord that He would reveal to them where the body of the Most Holy Mother of God had disappeared. Toward evening they sat down to take some nourishment. The holy Apostles had this custom at their meals: they left one place among themselves unoccupied, laying upon it, in honor of Christ, a piece of bread as His portion. At the end of the meal, offering thanksgiving, they took up this portion of bread, called the portion of the Lord, and lifted it up, glorifying the great name of the Holy Trinity; then, after the words "Lord Jesus Christ, help us!", they ate this piece as God's blessing. The holy Apostles did so not only when all were together, but also when each was far from the others. Now, in Gethsemane, during the meal, they thought and spoke of nothing else than why the body of the Most Pure Mother of God had not been found in the tomb. And so, when, having finished the meal, the holy Apostles began to raise up the piece of bread set aside in honor of the Lord, glorifying the Most Holy Trinity, they suddenly heard Angelic singing; lifting up their eyes, they saw standing in the air the Most Pure Mother of God, surrounded by a multitude of Angels. She was illumined with ineffable light, and she said to them:

"Rejoice! For I am with you all the days."

The holy Apostles, filled with joy, instead of the customary "Lord Jesus Christ, help us," cried out:

"Most Holy Theotokos, help us!"

From that time they both believed themselves and taught the holy Church to believe that the Most Pure Mother of God, on the third day after her burial, was raised by her Son and taken with her body into heaven. Entering the tomb again, the holy Apostles took the burial cloth that had been left, for the consolation of the sorrowing and as an unfailing witness to the Mother of God's rising from the tomb.

It was not fitting that the tabernacle of life should be under the power of death, or that she who bore the Creator of creation should share the lot of corruption with earthly creatures. The Lawgiver became the executor of the law He had given, that children should honor their parents: He honored His most pure Mother as Himself. As He Himself rose gloriously on the third day and afterward ascended with His pure flesh into heaven, so He raised His Mother gloriously on the third day and took her to His heavenly dwellings. The holy David foretold this, saying: "Arise, O Lord, into Thy resting place, Thou and the ark of Thy might" (Ps. 131:8); his prophetic words were fulfilled at the resurrection of the Lord and the raising of His Mother by Him. The empty tomb of the Mother of God, hewn in the rock, like that of her Son, has survived to this day and serves as an object of reverent veneration by the faithful.

By a special providence of His own, the Lord delayed the arrival of the holy Thomas until the day of the Dormition of the Most Pure Mother of God, so that the tomb might be opened for him, and the Church might thus be assured of the Mother of God's resurrection, just as earlier, through the unbelief of the same Apostle, it had been assured of Christ's resurrection (Jn. 20:24–31). Thus were accomplished the Dormition of our Most Pure and Most Blessed Lady, the Mother of God, the burial of her immaculate body, her glorious resurrection, and the solemn assurance of her taking up into heaven with her flesh.

At the end of all these wondrous miracles and mysteries of God, the holy Apostles, again borne by a cloud, returned each to the land from which he had been taken during his preaching of the Gospel.

Saint Ambrose, speaking of the life of our Sovereign Lady on earth, describes the wondrous spiritual qualities of the Most Holy Mother of God as follows:

"She is a Virgin not only in body but in spirit: humble in heart and unhurried in speech; her words are full of divine wisdom. She is almost constantly occupied with reading the holy Scripture and untiring in her labors; chaste in her conversations, speaking with people as before God; she never offended anyone, desiring good for all; disdaining no one, not even the poor, mocking no one, but covering with her love everything she saw; never did a word proceed from her lips that did not bring grace; in all her deeds she displayed the image of the highest virginity. Her outward appearance was a reflection of her inner perfection: of goodness and guilelessness."

So says Saint Ambrose. Descriptions of the holiness of her soul and of the Mother of God's outward appearance are also found in Epiphanius and Nicephorus.

In any case She preserved a venerable dignity and steadfastness; She spoke very little, only what was necessary and good, and Her words were sweet to the ear. She treated each person with due respect; with each she held a conversation suited to them, without laughing, without agitation, and still less in anger. Her stature was average; her complexion was like the color of wheat grain; her hair was light brown and somewhat golden in hue; her gaze was quick and penetrating; her eyes were of a color resembling the olive fruit; her eyebrows were slightly arched and dark; her nose was of medium size; her lips were like the color of the rose and sweet of speech; her face was not quite round; her hands and fingers were long. There was no pride in Her; everything in Her was simplicity, without the slightest pretense. She was a stranger to all indulgence, while at the same time showing an example of the highest humility. Her garments were plain, without any artificial ornament, as the covering of her head that has survived to this day attests. In a word, in everything there appeared the Divine grace that pervaded Her.

Thus Nicephorus and Epiphanius describe the spiritual and bodily appearance of the Most Holy Theotokos during Her life on earth.

But concerning the Mother of God, who has been established in the heavenly abodes and stands at the right hand of the throne of God, only the heavenly spirits can tell, and the souls of the righteous who stand before the Theotokos and rejoice in the vision of both God and the Most Pure Virgin; they alone can speak to us of Her as her holiness requires. We, glorifying the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God in the Trinity, also glorify, after God, His Most Pure Mother, and to Her, who is glorified and blessed by all generations forever, we fervently bow down.

Individual events from the life of the Most Holy Theotokos from the day of Her birth have been written about in Her special feasts: the Conception, the Nativity, the Entry into the Temple, the Annunciation, and likewise at the Nativity of Christ and the Meeting. Here, after the account of Her immortal Dormition, to complete the history of Her life, we shall relate where and how our Lady lived after the Ascension of Christ.

The holy evangelist Luke writes in the Acts of the Apostles that, after the Lord's departure into heaven, His disciples returned from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem; having entered the upper room (where Christ had held the Last Supper), "they all with one accord continued in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus" (Acts 1:13–14). After the ascension of Jesus Christ, the Theotokos was for His disciples their sole consolation, joy in sorrow, and steadfast teacher of the faith. For all the words and wonderful events which the Mother of God kept and pondered in Her heart (Lk. 2:19), from the joyful Annunciation of Gabriel concerning the seedless conception and incorruptible birth of Christ from a virgin womb, to the years of the Lord's childhood and the time of His life before His baptism by John, all this She disclosed to the disciples of Her Son. Having received abundant revelations from the Holy Spirit, and having Herself been a witness to all the wonderful works accomplished in the life of Christ up to the day of the Lord's manifestation to the world, the Mother of God strengthened the faith of the holy Apostles by a detailed account of the life of the Savior up to His baptism. All the faithful, abiding in the aforementioned upper room, prayed unceasingly, preparing

themselves to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, promised by the Lord from the Father. And at the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire (Acts 2:1–4), on the eleventh day after the Lord's Ascension, the Comforter (Jn. 14:16), sent from the Father, first came to rest upon the Most Pure Virgin, who until then had been a worthy temple in which He dwelt without ceasing. The gifts of the Holy Spirit were poured out upon the all-blessed Virgin in greater abundance than upon the holy Apostles, just as a larger vessel can hold more water; and the Most Pure Virgin, the vessel richest in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, since She is higher than the Apostles, the prophets and all the saints, as the Church also cries out to Her: "Truly Thou art, pure Virgin, higher than all," therefore She also received within Herself more of the gifts of the Holy Spirit than all.

The Mother of God lived in the house of the holy John the Theologian, which stood on the highest place of Jerusalem, on Mount Zion, from the time when the Lord said from the cross to His Mother, pointing to the beloved disciple, "Woman, behold thy son!" and to the disciple, "Behold thy mother" (Jn. 19:26–27); John took the Most Holy Virgin to his own home and truly served Her as his mother. After the descent of the Holy Spirit, the holy Apostles did not at once disperse throughout the world with the preaching of the Gospel, but remained a long time in Jerusalem, as is seen from the Acts of the Apostles. There it is related that, after the stoning of the holy first martyr Stephen (Acts 7:59–60), "a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and all, except the Apostles, were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria" (Acts 8:1). The disciples of Christ, protected by the power of God, remained in Jerusalem for about ten years, counting from the time of the Lord's ascension until the day when "Herod the king laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church, to harm them" (Acts 12:1). True, during the period described the holy Apostles went away for a time to other lands: Peter and John together to Samaria (Acts 8:14–15), or Peter alone to Lydda, where he healed the paralytic Aeneas, who had suffered for eight years (Acts 9:32–34), and to Joppa, where he raised the dead Tabitha (Acts 9:36–43), to Caesarea, where he baptized the centurion Cornelius (ch. 10),

and to Antioch, where he founded the first see of his episcopate; or as James, the brother of John, went to Spain, but afterwards they again returned to Jerusalem. At the beginning of their preaching the holy Apostles desired to serve chiefly the salvation of the Israelite people, while at the same time establishing the first church in Jerusalem, which is the mother of all churches, as St. John of Damascus sings: "Rejoice, holy Sion, mother of churches, dwelling of God, for thou didst first receive the remission of sins." At the same time they desired to see the Mother of God as often as possible and to be instructed by Her. Honoring Her as, so to speak, the vicegerent of Christ, the holy Apostles gazed upon the most venerable and glorious face of the Mother of God as upon the face of Christ Himself, and, listening to the words of the Ever-Virgin, filled with goodness, they were penetrated by an ineffable spiritual joy, forgetting through the sweetness of Her words the bitterness of sorrows and misfortunes. Therefore many who had believed in Christ came to Jerusalem from distant lands to see the Mother of God and to hear Her conversation, full of holy wisdom. That the fame of Christ and of His Most Pure Mother, spreading to all the ends of the earth, drew many to Jerusalem to the Most Pure Virgin, is clearly seen from the epistle of St. Ignatius the God-bearer to St. John the Theologian from Antioch:

"Among us," he writes, "there are many women who desire to see the Mother of Jesus; they constantly seek the opportunity to come to you and visit Her, to fall at the breast that nourished the Lord Jesus, and to learn from Her certain mysteries. Among us She is glorified as the Mother of God and Virgin, full of grace and virtue. It is reported of Her that She is joyful in afflictions and persecutions, does not grieve in poverty and want, not only is not angered by those who injure Her but even does them good; in joyful events She is meek, merciful to the poor, giving them help as far as She is able; to those who war against our faith She opposes herself with firmness. She is the Teacher of our new piety and the Instructress of all the faithful in every good work. She especially loves the humble, and is Herself humble toward all; all who have seen Her extol Her. And how humble She is, when the Jewish lawyers and Pharisees mock Her! People worthy of full trust have told

us that in Mary, the Mother of Jesus, human nature, by reason of Her holiness, seems united with the angelic nature. All this arouses in us who hear it an immeasurable desire to see the heavenly, I would say, wondrous and most holy miracle."

In another epistle the same St. Ignatius the God-bearer writes again to St. John the Theologian:

"If an opportunity opens, I intend to come to you, that I may see the faithful gathered in Jerusalem, and especially the Mother of Jesus. They say of Her that She is honorable, affable, and arouses wonder in all, and everyone desires to see Her. And who does not desire to see the Virgin and converse with Her who bore the true God?"

From these epistles of St. Ignatius to John the Theologian one may easily understand with what strong desire the saints strove to see the living sanctuary of God, Mary the Most Pure Virgin, and those who were vouchsafed to see Her considered themselves most fortunate. Truly blessed are the eyes of those who saw Her after Christ the Savior, and blessed are the ears of those who were vouchsafed to hear from Her venerable lips words that revive to spiritual life!

What joy and grace they received!

For this reason the Lord left His Most Pure Mother on earth, so that by her presence, guidance, instruction and warm prayers to the Son and God the Church Militant might be multiplied and strengthened, and grow to the boldness of laying down its life for the Lord. The Mother of God strengthened everyone, comforted everyone with joy in the Holy Spirit, and prayed for everyone. When the holy Apostles were cast into prison, the Mother of God prayed for them with a tender heart, and an Angel was sent to them by the Lord, who during the night opened the doors of the prison and led them out (Acts 5:18–19). When the holy First-martyr Stephen was led out to death, the Mother of God followed him from afar; and when the holy Stephen was stoned (Acts 7:57–60) in the valley of Jehoshaphat, by the brook Kidron, she stood together with John the Theologian at a distance on a hill, watched from there his death, and fervently prayed to God that the Lord would strengthen the sufferer and receive his soul into His hands. When Saul was "ravaging the Church" (Acts 8:3) by persecuting the

believers, the Mother of God prayed to the Lord for him with such warm tears that she changed him from a ravening wolf into a meek lamb, from an enemy into an Apostle, from a persecutor into a disciple and teacher of the world. And what benefits did the first Church not receive from the Most Holy Theotokos, as an infant from its mother? What grace did it not draw from this inexhaustible fountain? Not without her care and gracious influence was the Church nurtured and brought to manly age, and grew strong enough that the gates of hell could not prevail against it (Mt. 16:18); in this, the Mother of God herself rejoiced, according to the word of David, as a mother rejoicing over her children (Ps. 112:9). She saw that the children of the Church were constantly multiplying: thus already at the beginning, through the preaching of the holy Apostle Peter, three thousand were converted (Acts 2:41), then five thousand (Acts 4:4), and then more and more. The holy Apostles, returning to Jerusalem from preaching the Gospel, also told the Most Holy Theotokos of the spread of the Church of Christ throughout the world. The success of Christian preaching filled her with spiritual joy and moved her to offer praise to her Son and God.

But then persecution by Herod befell the Church: he slew with the sword James, the brother of John, who had returned from Spain, and then seized Peter and cast him into prison with the intention of delivering him to the same death (Acts 12:1–4). Then, after the wondrous deliverance of the holy Peter from the bonds of prison through an Angel, the need arose for the Apostles themselves to leave Jerusalem, in order to escape the fierce persecution of the Jews; they dispersed throughout the world, casting lots as to which country each of them was to preach in. But before parting, the holy Apostles composed a symbol of faith, so that they might preach it everywhere in agreement and plant the holy faith in Christ. Each departed to his lot; only the brother of God, the holy James, whom the Lord Himself had appointed Bishop of Jerusalem, remained in Jerusalem. Fleeing the persecution, the holy John the Theologian also withdrew together with the Mother of God, to whom he had been adopted as son; they left Jerusalem, yielding to the fierce persecution and torment, until the wrath of the Jews should abate. But so as not to lose time in vain, the Mother of God and the

holy evangelist John went to Ephesus, to which the Theologian's lot had fallen. That the Most Pure Mother of God stayed with St. John in Ephesus is clearly confirmed by the following: there exists an epistle to the clergy of Constantinople from the fathers of the Third Ecumenical Council, which assembled at Ephesus against Nestorius; in this epistle there is this passage: "The originator of the impious heresy, Nestorius, called (to judgment) by the holy fathers and bishops of the council at Ephesus, where once the holy John the Theologian and the holy Virgin, the Mother of God Mary, dwelt, did not dare to come to them, being convicted by his evil conscience and excommunicating himself; therefore, after a threefold summons, he was condemned by the righteous judgment of the holy council and deposed from the sacred rank." From these words about the Mother of God's sojourn with the Evangelist John in Ephesus it is seen that the Most Holy Virgin, together with the beloved disciple of Christ, truly, having left Jerusalem, spent some time in Ephesus. And the Mother of God visited not only Ephesus but also other cities and lands enlightened by the light of Christ's teaching: tradition says that she was in Antioch with the holy Ignatius Theophorus, to whom, before her visit, she sent notice of her journey: "I come with John, to see you and your flock." It is also said that the Most Holy Theotokos was on the island of Cyprus[11] with the four-day dead Lazarus, who there carried out episcopal service, and on the Holy Mountain of Athos. Of this writes Stephen, a monk of the Holy Mountain.

After the Ascension into heaven of our Lord Jesus Christ, the holy Apostles, together with the Mother of God, remained inseparably on Zion; here they awaited the Comforter, as the Lord had commanded them, bidding them not to depart from Jerusalem until they had received the promised Holy Spirit (Lk. 24:49). The disciples of Christ cast lots as to which of them, and which country, would be given for the preaching of the Gospel of God; the Most Holy Theotokos said:

"I too wish to take part in the preaching of the Gospel, and I desire to cast my lot together with you, so as to receive the country that God shall point out."

11. An island at the northeastern end of the Mediterranean Sea.

At the word of the Mother of God, the holy Apostles, with reverence and fear, cast the lot, and the land of Iberia[12] fell to her by lot. The Most Pure Theotokos received her lot with joy, and immediately, after the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of tongues of fire, wished to go to the land of Iberia; but an Angel of God said to her:

"Now do not depart from Jerusalem, but remain here for the time being: the country that has fallen to you will be enlightened in the last days, and your dominion there will be established; after some time you will have the labor of preaching in the land to which God shall direct you."

And the Most Pure Theotokos remained in Jerusalem for a considerable length of time.

The four-day dead Lazarus lived on the island of Cyprus; here he was ordained bishop by the holy Apostle Barnabas. He greatly desired to see the Most Pure Mother of our Lord, whom he had not seen for a long time, but he did not dare to come to Jerusalem for fear of the Jews. Learning of this, the Mother of God wrote Lazarus an epistle: in it she comforted him and instructed him to send a ship for her, so that she might visit him in Cyprus; but the Most Holy Virgin did not command him to come to Jerusalem on her account. Having read the epistle, Lazarus rejoiced exceedingly, at the same time marveling at the humility of the Mother of God; without the least delay, he dispatched a ship for her together with a reply epistle. The most blessed Theotokos boarded the ship together with the beloved disciple of Christ John and the others who reverently accompanied them, and all sailed toward Cyprus. But suddenly a contrary wind arose and drove the ship into a harbor near the Mount of Athos; this was that brief labor of preaching of which the Angel had spoken to the Mother of God. The whole Mount Athos[13] was filled with idols: here was a great shrine and sanctuary of Apollo, where divinations, sorceries and other demonic rites were performed. All the pagans greatly revered this place as chosen by the

12. Present-day Georgia.

13. Mount Athos (Athos) is a narrow, mountainous peninsula projecting into the Archipelago (the Aegean Sea), known as the center of monastic life for the Greek East. Monastic life appeared here in ancient times, though somewhat later than in Syria and Palestine.

gods; to it they flocked for worship from the whole world, and there they received answers to their questions from the soothsayers. And when the ship on which the Most Holy Theotokos was sailing entered the harbor, all the idols at once cried out:

"All of you, deluded by Apollo, come down from the mountain to Clement's harbor to meet Mary, the Mother of the great God Jesus" (thus the demons who were in the idols, against their will, compelled by the power of God, proclaimed the truth, like those who once cried out to the Lord in the country of the Gergesenes: "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Mt. 8:29)).

Hearing all this, the people marveled, and hastened to the seashore to the aforementioned harbor; seeing the ship and the Mother of God, they received Her with honor and asked among themselves:

"What God did You bear? And what is His name?"

The Most Pure Theotokos, opening her divine lips, declared to the people everything in detail about Christ Jesus. All, falling to the ground, worshipped the God born of her and paid great honor to her who bore Him; believing, they were baptized, for the Mother of God performed many miracles here. After the baptism, she appointed as leader and teacher of the newly enlightened one of those who had accompanied her on the ship, and, rejoicing in spirit, she said:

"Let this place be My portion, given to Me by My Son and God."

After these words the Most Pure Theotokos blessed the people, saying again:

"May the grace of God abide in this place and in those who dwell here, who with faith and reverence keep the commandments of My Son and God; all that is necessary for life they shall have in abundance without grievous labor; they shall be granted heavenly life, and until the end of the age the mercy of My Son shall not depart from this place; I will be the Protectress of this place and its warm Intercessor before God."

Having said this, the Mother of God again blessed the people, and, entering the ship together with John and those who accompanied Her, sailed to Cyprus. She found Lazarus in great sorrow, for the journey of

the Most Holy Theotokos had been very long, and he feared that the delay might have been caused by a storm; the events that had taken place on Mount Athos by the providence of God were unknown to him. By Her arrival the Mother of God turned his sorrow into joy; as a gift to him She brought an omophorion and epimanikia, which She Herself had made for him; She related to him everything that had happened in Jerusalem and on Mount Athos. And they gave thanks to God for everything. Having stayed in Cyprus not long, and having comforted and blessed the Christians of the Church of Cyprus, the Mother of God boarded a ship and sailed back to Jerusalem. (Thus far Stephen, monk of Mount Athos.)

Having visited the aforementioned lands, the Most Pure Virgin Mary again settled in Jerusalem, in the house of the holy Evangelist John; the all-powerful right hand of God preserved Her from the malicious schemes of the God-killing synagogue, which did not cease to wage war against the Son of God and those who believed in Him. Certainly the embittered Jews would not have left the Mother of Jesus alive, and would have destroyed Her by some means; but the special providence of God overshadowed the living Ark of God, so that the hand of the unbelievers should not touch it. Once Her Son, Christ our God, after preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth, when the Jews, filled with fury, led Him to the top of the mountain in order to cast Him down from there, passed unharmed through their midst: the Jews, although they saw Him, could not lay their hands on Him or even touch Him, for the power of God threw them back and held them in that position, since the time of the sufferings of the Son of God had not yet come (Lk. 4:29–30). The same the Lord showed over His Most Pure Mother, restraining the snares the Jews devised and confounding their counsel against Her: very often the Jews tried to seize the Mother of God and, having subjected Her to torments, to kill Her, but could do nothing. Amid such strong hatred and enmity the Most Pure Virgin lived in Jerusalem as a sheep among wolves and as a lily among thorns, often repeating, words of Her forefather David which were indeed fulfilled in Her: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? If evildoers,

adversaries and my enemies come upon me to devour my flesh, they themselves shall stumble and fall. If a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; if war should rise against me, even then will I trust" (Ps. 26:1–3), for Thou, O Son and my God, art with Me. – The Most Pure Theotokos was visited, in order to venerate Her, by holy Dionysius the Areopagite, who had been converted to Christ by the holy Apostle Paul at Athens and had constantly accompanied him for three years. He greatly desired to see the Mother of God, and therefore, three years after his conversion, with the blessing of his teacher, the holy Apostle Paul, he came to Jerusalem: on seeing the Most Pure Theotokos he was filled with great spiritual joy. In his epistle to the holy Apostle Paul, St. Dionysius the Areopagite describes his visit to the Mother of God as follows.

"For me, our great leader, it was beyond doubt – I speak as before God – that nothing other than the Most High God could exist so filled with divine power and wondrous grace; and yet it is impossible for the human mind to comprehend that I saw the comely and, in holiness, surpassing all the heavenly Angels, all-holy Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was granted me by the grace of God and by the honor of the apostolic company, and also by the ineffable goodness and mercy of the most merciful Virgin. I confess again before the omnipotence of God, before the grace of the Savior and before the great glory of the Virgin, His Mother, that when I, with John, first among the evangelists and prophets, who, living in the flesh, shines like the sun in heaven, was brought in to the comely and Most Pure Virgin, a great divine radiance shone upon me from outside, illuminating my soul; and at that I perceived so wondrous a fragrance that my spirit and body were scarcely able to bear this manifestation of glory and the foretaste of eternal blessedness; from the glory and Her divine grace my heart and spirit grew faint. I bear witness before God, who dwelt in the most pure virginal womb, that I would have acknowledged Her as the true God and would have honored Her with the worship due to God alone, if my newly enlightened soul did not keep within itself Your divine instructions and laws: no honor and glory of men glorified by God can compare with the blessedness which I, unworthy, experienced at that

time, having been counted worthy of it; that time was for me a time of the greatest blessedness. I thank my most high and most good God, the divine Virgin, John, great among the Apostles, and also you, the adornment of the Church and invincible leader, who mercifully bestowed upon me so great a benefaction."

From this epistle of St. Dionysius the Areopagite we clearly see with what divine grace the face of our Most Pure Sovereign Lady was illumined during Her life on earth, and how souls were enlightened and hearts filled with spiritual joy in those who saw Her in the flesh. To Her came in multitudes, from everywhere, the newly enlightened of both sexes; as a true Mother She received all alike without partiality, pouring out upon all the bounty of Her grace – to the sick giving healing, to the weak health, to the sorrowing consolation, and to all without exception steadfastness in faith, firmness in hope and divine joy in love, and to sinners correction.

During Her life in the house of St. John the Most Pure Virgin often visited those places which Her beloved Son and God had sanctified with the tread of His feet and the shedding of His blood. Thus She visited Bethlehem, where, Her virginity ineffably preserved, Christ God was born of Her; but especially often the Mother of God came to the places where our Lord voluntarily suffered. Maternal love impelled Her to shed here abundant tears, and She said:

"Here My beloved Son was scourged; here He was crowned with the crown of thorns; here He walked, bearing the cross; here He was crucified."

But at the tomb the Theotokos was filled with inexpressible gladness and exclaimed with joyful tears:

"And here He was buried, and on the third day He rose in glory."

In addition to this, the following is reported. Some hateful Jews informed the chief priests and scribes that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, went every day to Golgotha and to the tomb where her Son Jesus had been laid, knelt there, wept and burned incense; whereupon they set a guard to prevent any Christian from passing that way. From this we see that already at that time the pious custom had begun among the faithful of visiting the holy places and there worshipping Christ God,

who suffered for us of His own will; the first example in this respect was given by the Theotokos Herself, and the other holy women and men followed Her. Thus, by the chief priests and scribes, filled with malice and murder, a guard was set, which was commanded to admit no one to the tomb of Jesus, and to kill His Mother. But God blinded the guards, so that they could not see the coming of Jesus' Mother to the tomb of Christ. And when the most blessed Virgin, faithful to Her custom, came to the tomb, the guards could not see Her or those who were with Her. After a long time they left the tomb and assured the chief priests and scribes with an oath that they had seen no one coming to the tomb of Jesus. The Most Holy Theotokos also often went to the Mount of Olives, from which our Lord ascended into heaven: kneeling, She kissed the footprints of Christ's feet impressed upon the stone. With strong tears the Mother of God prayed at that place that the Lord would also take Her to Himself. Surely She, far more than the holy Apostle Paul, had the "desire to depart and be with Christ" (Phil. 1:23), and often repeated the words of David: "When shall I come and appear before the face of God? My tears have been my bread day and night" (Ps. 41:3–4), when shall I see My beloved Son? When shall I come to Him, who sits at the right hand of God the Father? (Mk. 16:19) When shall I stand before the throne of His glory? When shall I be satisfied with the sight of Him? O most sweet Son and my God! It is time to show mercy to Zion (cf. Ps. 50:20), it is time to have mercy on Me, Thy Mother, who until now have been grieving, not seeing Thy face, in the sorrowful vale of this world; bring my soul out of the body as out of a prison; as the hart pants after the water brooks, so my soul pants after Thee, O God, that I may be satisfied when Thy glory appears to Me (Ps. 41:2). The Most Pure Virgin sometimes remained on the Mount of Olives for quite a long time: at the foot of the mountain were the garden of Gethsemane and a small estate of Zebedee, which came by inheritance to the holy John the Theologian. In the garden of Gethsemane our Lord, before His voluntary passion, prayed until He sweated blood, falling on His knees and face before the Heavenly Father (Mt. 26:36–44). Here, in this very place, His Most Pure Mother also offered Her warm prayers, likewise falling on Her knees and face and

watering the earth with tears; here She was also comforted by the Lord through His Angel, who informed Her of her approaching repose into heaven. According to the testimony of George Kedrenos, a Greek historian, before her dormition the Most Holy Theotokos was visited by an Angel twice: the first time fifteen days before the Dormition, and the second time three days before; from the Angel the Mother of God received a palm branch of paradise, which the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian carried before Her bier. Some, such as Melito, bishop of Sardis, report that the beloved disciple of Christ, before the Dormition of the Theotokos, withdrew to Ephesus, and from there, like the other Apostles but earlier than they, was caught up by a cloud and brought to the burial of the Mother of God. But others, for example Metaphrastes and Sophronius, affirm without any hesitation that the holy John the Theologian never left the God-blessed Mother, into whose adoption he had been received, but, as a true son, served Her, giving Her shelter in his house until Her very death. Only rarely, for a very short time, did he visit the surrounding regions (as we saw above from the Acts of the Apostles: thus the holy John the Theologian, together with the Apostle Peter, was in Samaria), but he did this with the consent and blessing of the Mother of God Herself, and immediately returned again to Her in Jerusalem; and until his return the holy James, the brother of God, who never left his see, Jerusalem, served the Most Pure Theotokos. And if we also agree with those who say that John the Theologian, like the other holy Apostles, was caught up by a cloud, then, without doubt, it was from the locality nearest to Jerusalem.

The solemn celebration of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos on August 15 was established in the reign of the pious Greek emperor Maurice[5099]. – Joyfully celebrating the all-glorious repose of the Mother of God from earth to heaven, let us give glory to Him who was born of Her and who received Her into heaven with glory, Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

Thou didst preserve thy virginity in childbirth, and in thy Dormition thou didst not forsake the world, O Theotokos: thou didst pass over unto life, being the Mother of Life, and by thy prayers thou deliverest our souls from death.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

The Theotokos, who is unsleeping in prayers and unfailing in intercessions, the tomb and death could not hold; for as the Mother of Life, she was translated unto life, He who dwelt in her ever-virgin womb.

* * *

NOTES

5085. Melito, bishop of Sardis, an apologist of the second century, refers the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos to the 69th year of Her life, the 55th after the Nativity of Christ, and the 22nd after the Ascension of the Lord; Hippolytus, bishop of Rome (third century), names as the year of the Dormition of the Mother of God the 43rd after the Nativity of Christ and the 57th after Her birth; Eusebius Pamphilus, the "father of church history," bishop of Caesarea in Palestine (d. 340), writes that the year of the Dormition of the Ever-Virgin was the 63rd of Her life, the 48th after the Nativity of Christ, and the 15th after the Ascension of the Savior; Epiphanius of Cyprus (d. 403) counts all the years of the holy life of the Theotokos as 72, and, in his opinion, this year was the 57th after the Nativity of Christ. The same is said by George Kedrenos, a Byzantine writer of the late eleventh or early twelfth century. The church historian Nicephorus Callistus (fourteenth century) cites the words of St. Evodius, one of the seventy Apostles, who counts the year of the Dormition of the Theotokos as the 59th of Her life and the 44th after the Nativity of Christ. St. Andrew of Crete (d. 712) and St. Symeon Metaphrastes (tenth century) do not determine the number of years of the life of the Mother of God precisely, and say only that She reposed "in advanced old age."

5099. There is a credible account that Juvenal, on the basis of tradition, affirmed before the Emperor Marcian (450–457) the authenticity of the legends that were then circulating concerning the miraculous bodily Assumption of the Mother of God into heaven. He even sent to Constantinople the burial linens of the Theotokos, which Empress Pulcheria placed in the church of the Mother of God at Blachernae, built by her at the beginning of Marcian's reign. This tradition concerning Juvenal is recorded on 2 July in the Menologion of Basil in the tenth century, whose author, if not the emperor himself, was an inhabitant of Constantinople, and undoubtedly knew from reliable sources of the burial linens in the Blachernae church. Nikephoros Kallistos (fourteenth century) speaks of this in detail. It is evident from this that in Constantinople under Marcian and Pulcheria the feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God was celebrated, of which her burial lin-

ens bore visible witness. From the verse prologues it is seen that the feast of the Dormition was celebrated in the Blachernae church. It is hard to imagine that in Constantinople, which Constantine the Great had entrusted to the protection of the Mother of God, and where not one but several churches had been built to her, by Constantine himself and by Pulcheria in three instances, there was no celebration of the Dormition of the Most Holy Virgin in the fourth or at least the fifth century, when the days of many saints were being observed. Therefore the opinion, based on the testimony of the historian Nikephoros, that the feast of the Dormition was first introduced by the Emperor Maurice (592–602), is unjust. Nikephoros says: "The emperor (Justinian) established that the Presentation be observed as a feast throughout the whole world; Justin did the same with regard to the Holy Nativity of Christ, and a little later Maurice commanded that the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos be celebrated on 15 August." Nikephoros's words are to be understood as meaning that Maurice made this feast more solemn and, above all, established a fixed day of celebration, 15 August. Before this time some celebrated the Dormition in January: in the ancient Roman martyrology of Jerome the Dormition of the Mother of God is shown on 18 January, and the Assumption on 15 August. Gregory of Tours (d. 594) says that the glorious ascension of the Mother of God into heaven was celebrated in France in the eleventh month, that is, in January (counting from March). In Coptic and Abyssinian monuments the Dormition is shown on 16 January and the Ascension of the Mother of God into heaven on 16 August. Then the feast of the Dormition is found in the Sacramentary of Pope Gelasius I (492–496), a full century earlier than Emperor Maurice. It is found in a Roman calendar of the fourth and not later than the fifth century on 16 August, and it is known that other great feasts, with the exception of the Nativity of Christ, came to the West from the East, as is seen from their names in ancient calendars; the same must be thought of the feast of the Dormition. In the East, at the beginning of the seventh century, Modestus, Patriarch of Jerusalem (d. 634), delivered a sermon on this feast; in the same century or at the beginning of the eighth, St. Andrew of Crete (d. 712) speaks in three homilies on the Dormition of the solemn celebration of this day. The feast of the Dormition is found in the oldest surviving festal Gospel book of 715 and in all other calendar monuments of the eighth and later centuries. "Without doubt," reasons, following the considerations cited above, the well-known hagiologist Sergius, Bishop of Vladimir, "the faith of Christians in the Mother of God's ascension into heaven in glorified flesh is true. If Enoch from the antediluvian world and the prophet Elijah from the period under the Law were taken up into heaven bodily, could the most pure flesh of her who is more honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious than the Seraphim be delivered to corruption? Hosts of martyrs and ascetics have been glorified by the incorruption of fragrant relics that pour forth streams of healing; the bodies of many of them, who had been unknown, have been revealed to the faithful by visions and miracles after no short time in the earth, yet the most pure body of the Mother of God, even if incorrupt, is hidden somewhere in the earth in obscurity? There is not in any corner of the Christian world a part of the relics of the Mother of God; this is because the faith in her ascension into heaven with her most pure flesh is very ancient, contemporary with the apostles and martyrs. The girdle of the Mother of God and her holy garments are open for veneration to the

Christian world; kept with reverence, divided over the face of the earth into parts, they have worked and work miracles. Her numerous icons everywhere pour forth so many healings and signs; yet her holy body is somewhere in the earth, unknown? No, this is impossible! The holy relics of glorified martyrs at times undergo, because of the sins of those living on earth, the common lot of earthly things: the action of fire, floods, earthquakes, outrage at the hands of barbarians. This has not been permitted in regard to the most pure body of the Mother of God; it has not been left to the accidental changes of the passing world, nor has it been humbled before the bodies of the saints by unknown concealment in the earth; it is incomparably more exalted above them by the glorious Assumption into heaven." (Complete Menologion of the East, vol. II, Holy East, by Archbishop Sergius. Vladimir, 1901. August, 15th, pp. 323–326.)



THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 16

16 августа

New Calendar August 16 · Old Calendar August 29 (civil dates)

Translation from Edessa to Constantinople of the Non-Handmade Image of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Перенесение из Эдессы в Константинополь нерукотворного образа Господа нашего Иисуса Христа

In the days when our Lord Jesus Christ appeared upon the earth, when, living among men, He passed through the cities and villages of Judea with the preaching of the Kingdom of God, "healing every sickness and every disease among the people," there lived in Edessa, a Syrian city beyond the river Euphrates, a prince named Abgar. He suffered from an incurable disease, leprosy: bluish sores covered him outwardly, and inwardly he felt aching in his bones and weakness through his whole body. The report[5100] had reached Abgar of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the great miracles which He performed, how by His word He healed leprosy, weakness and every disease; and Abgar greatly desired to see with his own eyes the Creator of such miracles, hoping to receive healing from Him himself. And since the prince had no possibility of going himself to Judea, he sent a petition to the Lord Jesus, entreating Him to come to him at Edessa. But not being certain that his petition would be granted, Abgar sent to Palestine a skilled painter, Ananias, charging him to depict the face of the Lord upon an icon; the prince wished to have at least this consolation in his sickness, that he might look upon the image of the face of Christ Jesus; so great was his love for Christ, kindled by faith through hearsay. The message of Abgar to the Lord Jesus was as follows: "Abgar, prince of Edessa, to Jesus, the good Savior who has appeared in the lands of Jerusalem, greeting in the flesh.

The report has reached me concerning Thee and Thy glorious wonders, how without remedy or medicine Thou healest diseases: Thou givest sight to the blind, walking to the lame, driving unclean spirits away from men, cleansing lepers, healing with a word the paralytics who lie on their beds for many years, and raising the dead. Hearing of Thee that Thou performest such wondrous deeds, I have come to two conclusions concerning Thee: either Thou art God, come down from heaven, or the Son of God. Therefore I address Thee with this humble entreaty, that Thou wouldst take the trouble to come to me and heal my incurable sickness, from which I have suffered for many years. It has also reached me that the Jews hate Thee and wish to do Thee harm. I have a city, small indeed but beautiful and abounding in all things; come therefore to me and dwell with me in my city, where there will be found for us both all that is needful."

With this message of Abgar the painter Ananias came to Jerusalem. He saw the Lord Jesus teaching on the plain among a great multitude of people, but could not approach Him because of the crush caused by the crowding of the people. Waiting for the time when the people should disperse, Ananias stepped upon a stone rising a little above the ground; from here he looked attentively at the face of the Savior, intending to depict it; and Ananias could not do this, for the All-Seeing One, not favoring the painter's intention, changed His face by the Divine, incomprehensible glory and grace, which is inaccessible to depiction by a human hand. Ananias labored long, but achieved nothing. The Lord, however, commanded the Apostle Thomas to go and bring the man who, standing upon the stone, was depicting His face. When he was brought, and before he had yet begun to speak, the Lord called him to Himself by name, and, pointing to his occupation, addressed him by name as the painter Ananias, and revealed the cause of his coming, saying:

"Where is the letter of thy prince Abgar, which thou hast brought to Me from Edessa?"

Ananias, astonished and terrified at the Lord's foreknowledge, at once took out the letter of the prince and, trembling, gave it into the

hands of the Savior. The Lord, having read the letter, wrote to Abgar the following:

"Blessed art thou, Abgar, who didst not see Me and didst believe in Me, for it is written concerning Me that those who see Me shall not believe, and those who do not see Me shall believe in Me and inherit eternal life. Thou writest to Me that I should come to thee; but it behooves Me to accomplish that for which I am sent, and, having accomplished it, to return to the Father who sent Me. And when I am taken up to Him, then I shall send to thee one of My disciples, who, fully healing thee of thy sickness, will give thee and those who are with thee eternal life (through baptism)."

Having written such a message to Abgar, the Lord Jesus Christ sealed it with a seal on which was inscribed in Hebrew letters: the Divine vision, the Divine miracle. Then the Lord, fulfilling the desire of Abgar and of the artist, commanded water to be brought, and, washing His most holy face, wiped it with a four-fold cloth that had been handed to Him. And O miracle! Plain water was changed into a color, and upon the cloth was imprinted the most holy likeness of the Divine face. Giving this image to Ananias together with the letter, the Lord said:

"Take it and give it to him who sent thee." (These were the last days of the Lord's life on earth before His sufferings.[5101])

And Ananias returned[1] to Edessa to his prince and gave him the non-handmade image upon the cloth of the face of Christ, and the letter. Taking them, Abgar was filled with joy and kissed them with love; bowing before the image of Christ, he at once received relief from his sickness, so that only a small part of the leprosy remained upon his face until the time when the disciple sent by the Lord should come to him.

After the Lord's voluntary suffering, resurrection and ascension into heaven, there came to Edessa, by Divine grace, the holy Thaddeus,

one of the seventy Apostles. Having sufficiently instructed Abgar in the holy faith in Christ, St. Thaddeus baptized the prince; and when Abgar, entering the holy font, was baptized, the remaining part of the leprosy was at once removed, and he came forth from the font wholly pure, sound in body and soul. Together with Abgar his whole household and the whole city were baptized, and in Edessa the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one true God, was glorified. Now upon the gates of Edessa there stood, from of old, an idol of some pagan deity, to which everyone entering the city was obliged to render worship. This idol Abgar threw down from its place and destroyed; then he made over the gates, in the stone wall, a round recess into which the rain could not fall; having laid the cloth with the non-handmade image of Christ upon a board of incorruptible wood, Abgar covered it and adorned it with gold set with precious stones, and placed it in the wall above the gates; besides this, he also made the following inscription in golden letters:

"O Christ God! Whoever hopes in Thee shall not be put to shame."

And Abgar commanded all who entered the city and went out of it to worship the Divine image of Christ; he issued a law requiring that such honor to the image of the Lord be unfailingly rendered. This pious ordinance of Abgar, secured by law, was observed for many years: both in the days of his life and of his son, who reigned in Edessa after him, and under his grandson. Then, under one of the great-grandsons of Abgar who succeeded to the rule in Edessa, the ancient pagan impiety revived in the city: this prince, having become corrupt, fell away from Christ and turned to idol-worship. Seeing upon the city gates the image of the Savior, honored by all who entered and went out, the prince, as an enemy of Christ, was indignant; he wished to cast the Divine image down from the wall and set an idol in its place. Learning of this, by a

1. The tradition recorded by Constantine Porphyrogenitus reports that when Ananias, returning to his homeland, reached the city of Hierapolis, he stopped outside the city and hid the image of the Face of Christ in a heap of freshly made bricks. About midnight the inhabitants of the city saw a fire surrounding that place, and they found the hidden holy object here; at the same time it became evident that an image of the Savior had appeared on one of the bricks. The inhabitants of Hierapolis kept this brick for themselves and released Ananias. Constantine remarks that this brick was still preserved in Hierapolis in his time.

special revelation from the Lord, the bishop of Edessa came by night with the clergy to the gates of the city, and, ascending by the ladder, set a lit lamp with olive oil before the holy image of Christ; then the bishop walled up the holy image with a clay board and then with bricks, and covered the sealed place with lime and leveled it with the wall, as he had been commanded by a Divine manifestation. When the non-handmade image of Christ became invisible, the impious prince abandoned his intention. And after much time, the memory of the holy image was lost from the minds of men, and the place of its walling was forgotten; no one knew of it until the day of its miraculous appearance after very many years, which came to pass in the following manner.

In the days of the pious emperor Justinian, the Persian king Chosroes approached Edessa with a great army, surrounded it, and began a stubborn and prolonged siege. When the citizens, exhausted from perplexity and great fear, were praying to God with tears, there appeared one night to Eulavius, bishop of Edessa, a certain most bright bride, shining with great glory; pointing with her finger to the city gates and to the place in the wall, she said:

"Above these gates is hidden the Divine non-handmade image of the Savior Christ; thou wilt do well if thou takest it out of its walling."

The bishop went hastily to the gates, and, ascending to the place indicated in the wall, found everything as had been told him in the revelation; recognizing the walling, he dug it out and removed the board; and he found the most pure and most holy image of Christ intact and undamaged, the lamp not gone out, though so many years had passed, and full of oil; and upon the very board with which the image had been walled up, another such likeness of the face of Christ had been imprinted without hands. The bishop took the cloth with the image of the Savior and showed it to the citizens; and there was great joy for all, and all were filled with courage, hoping in the Lord. The bishop, offering fervent prayer, carried the image along the city walls, showing the face of the Savior to the Persian soldiers besieging the city, and at once the whole Persian army, pursued by Divine power, turned to flight. Thus Edessa, by the mercy of Christ our God and by the manifestation of His non-handmade most holy image, was delivered from its enemies.

Then, also after many years had passed, when Roman Porphyrogenitus, also called Lecapenus, was emperor in Greece, sharing power with Constantine, the son of Leo the Wise and his own son-in-law, the holy cloth bearing the Image of the Divine Face of Christ, not made by hands, was brought from Edessa, which had been seized by the Saracens, to Constantinople; for at that time all Syria, in which Edessa is situated, was already under the power of the Saracens. The translation took place in this manner: the Greek emperor Roman, desiring to possess in Constantinople the priceless treasure—the Image of the Savior not made by hands—repeatedly sent requests to the Saracen emir to surrender the Image of Christ. But the emir, entreated by the Christians of Edessa, was unwilling to give up the Image, and war broke out: Emperor Roman sent his army to Edessa and besieged the city, laying waste its surroundings. Then the people of Edessa sent a petition to the Greek emperor, asking him to end the war; the emperor, however, asked them for the Image of Christ. The Saracen emir, under whose rule Edessa stood, was unwilling to give it without payment; but the Christian emperor, moved by a great desire to possess the Image of Christ not made by hands, gave the emir twelve thousand pieces of silver and released from Greek captivity two hundred distinguished Saracens. To this he added a royal document sealed with gold, promising never to wage war against Edessa or the cities around it. Having thus obtained what he desired, the emperor received the Image of Christ not made by hands, and with it also the letter which, as noted above, our Lord Jesus Christ had written to Abgar, prince of Edessa. The holy Image was carried to Constantinople by the hands of hierarchs and other revered men of the spiritual order. On the way, and in Constantinople itself, many miracles were wrought through the revered Image: every kind of infirmity was healed—the blind received their sight, the deaf heard, the lame walked, and demons were cast out. One man possessed by a demon cried aloud:

"Receive, O Constantinople, thy glory and joy, and thou, Porphyrogenitus, the honor of thy kingdom."

As he cried this, the man was healed of his possession.

The feast of the translation of the Image of Christ not made by hands was established on the 16th day of August, when the imperial city received it with great honor and solemnity, and placed it in the church of the Most Holy Theotokos of the Pharos[2], for the protection of the city and to the glory of Christ our God, who is glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.[5104]

Troparion, Tone 2:

We worship Thy most pure Image, O Good One, asking forgiveness for our transgressions, O Christ God; for Thou wast pleased of Thine own will to ascend in the flesh upon the Cross, that Thou mightest deliver from the bondage of the enemy those whom Thou hadst created. Therefore we cry unto Thee in thanksgiving: Thou hast filled all things with joy, O our Savior, who camest to save the world.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Knowing Thine ineffable and divine dispensation toward mankind, O uncircumscribable Word of the Father, and the unwritten and God-inscribed Image as the victorious proof of Thy true Incarnation, we honor it, reverently kissing it.

* * *

Discourse of our Venerable Father John of Damascus[3] on the Veneration of Holy Icons

Слово преподобного Иоанна Дамаскина 5105 о поклонении святым иконам

Since some censure us for worshipping and honoring the Image of our Savior and the Image of the Mother of God, as well as the images (icons) of the other holy servants of Christ,[4] let such people

2. This church was built by the Emperor Michael (856–867).

3. St. John of Damascus was a famous theologian and hymnographer, a monk of the Monastery of St. Sabbas, a zealous defender of Orthodoxy in the struggle with the iconoclasts, who lived in the eighth century. For his highly artistic and tender hymns he received the name "Chrysorrhoas" (Golden-Flowing). His memory is celebrated by the Holy Church on December 4.

know that in the beginning God created man in His own image. Why do we bow to one another (greet one another), if not because we are all created in the image of God? The God-bearing and holy great Father of the Church, Basil the Great,[5] says that the honor paid to an image passes to its prototype. The prototype is that whose likeness is drawn and from which the image upon the icon is made. And why did the people of Moses bow before the tabernacle of heavenly things, standing around it, when the tabernacle contained likenesses of many images? For God said to Moses: "See that thou make them after the pattern shown thee on the mountain" (Ex. 25:40). Likewise, were the Cherubim that overshadowed the altar not the work of human hands? And was not the glorious church of Jerusalem also built by the art of human hands? Holy Scripture condemns only those who worship idols and offer sacrifices to demons. Both the pagans and the Jews offered sacrifices: but the former sacrificed to demons, whereas the latter sacrificed to God. The sacrifices of the pagans were rejected and cursed, but the sacrifices of the Jews were acceptable to the Lord. Behold, Noah offered a sacrifice,[6] "and the Lord smelled a sweet savor" (Gen. 8:21), for this sacrifice was offered from a pure and benevolent heart; but the idols of the pagans, being abominable and hateful to God, were forbidden and cursed, for they were images of demons.

Besides this, who can depict the face of the invisible, incorporeal, uncircumscribable God, who cannot be represented? It would be the madness of godlessness to desire to depict the Godhead as It exists in Itself. For this reason, icons were not used in the Old Testament. But

4. In speaking of people who reproach Christians, St. John of Damascus has in mind the iconoclasts. The iconoclastic heresy appeared in the eighth century; consequently St. John of Damascus was its contemporary. The iconoclasts foolishly confused veneration of icons with idolatry. In the present discourse on the veneration of the holy icons, St. John of Damascus exposes the godless error of the iconoclasts. — The founder of the iconoclastic heresy is considered to be Constantine, bishop of Nacolia (in Phrygia, an area of Asia Minor). The most zealous champions of iconoclasm were the emperors Leo III the Isaurian (717–741) and Constantine V Copronymus (741–775). This heresy was condemned at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, which was held in 787 in the city of Nicaea.

5. St. Basil the Great, the most famous Father of the Church of the fourth century. His memory is celebrated by the Holy Church on January 1 and January 30.

6. Noah, son of Lamech, the last patriarch before the Flood. The sacrifice to God was offered by Noah on leaving the ark (Gen. 8:15–20) and was a prefiguring of the sacrifice of Christ.

later, when the merciful God, in His compassion, wrought our salvation and appeared in the form of a true man—not merely in the likeness of a human face, as He had once appeared to Abraham and the prophets, but as a true man, walking upon the earth, living among men, working miracles, suffering, being crucified upon the Cross, buried, then rising again and ascending into the heavens—then all that had truly taken place, all that people had seen, though we who did not live at that time had not seen it, was recorded for our instruction and remembrance, that we, though not seeing it, might hear of it as though we did, and, believing, receive blessedness (eternal). And since not all are able to know the Scriptures, nor has everyone been granted the gift of reading books, the holy Fathers unanimously judged that all these things should be depicted upon icons for more immediate remembrance, like glorious trophies of victory. For often, through our negligence, we forget the Lord's suffering; but when we look upon the depiction of Christ's Crucifixion, we immediately remember His saving sufferings and, falling down, worship—not the material, but Him whose image we see before us. For we worship not the material of which the Gospel is made, but the word of God written in it; in the same way, we worship not the material of which the Cross is made, but the Crucifixion of Christ depicted by the Cross. The Cross would differ in no way from the material of which it is made if it did not depict the Crucifixion of Christ. The same must be said of the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, for the honor we render to the Mother of God passes to Him who was incarnate of her. Likewise, the valiant struggles of the holy servants of God, depicted upon icons, stir us to courage, zeal, and imitation of their virtues, and to glorify God. And, as we have said, the honor we render to the worthy ascetics depicted upon icons is a witness of our devotion before the Lord who is common to us all; moreover, that honor passes to the true prototype.

What we have said is not recorded in Holy Scripture, just as neither is bowing toward the east, venerating the Cross, and much else of the same kind. But in History it is recorded how Abgar, king of Edessa, sent his painter to make an image of the Lord, but the painter could not carry out what had been commanded him because of the wondrous light

that shone from the face of Christ. Then the Lord Himself applied a towel to His divine and life-giving face and impressed His likeness upon the towel, which He sent to Abgar in order to fulfill his desire. And that the holy Apostles handed down much to us without writings is attested by the Apostle to the Gentiles, St. Paul: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or by our epistle" (2 Thess. 2:15). And in another place: "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the traditions" (1 Cor. 11:2).

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Diomedes

Память святого мученика Диомида

St. Diomedes was from the city of Tarsus in Cilicia,[7] and by profession a physician; in faith he was a Christian, and he healed not only bodies but also the souls of men, for he exhorted the pagans to believe in God and enlightened them, preparing them for holy Baptism.

In the reign of Emperor Diocletian,[8] St. Diomedes left Tarsus and came to the city of Nicaea, which lay in Bithynia.[9] There, as was his custom, St. Diomedes performed healings, treating people not only with medicines, but chiefly by invoking the all-powerful and healing name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the sign of the Precious Cross. Through his skill in healing, as well as through his teaching, he converted many idolaters to faith in Christ.

When Emperor Diocletian, who was at that time in the eastern regions, learned of this, he sent soldiers to seize the saint. When the soldiers arrived at that place, they found that St. Diomedes had already died in the Lord; nevertheless, they cut off the dead man's head in order to take it to the emperor. But immediately after the beheading, those soldiers lost their sight and became blind, so that others led them

7. Cilicia — an area of Asia Minor.
8. Reigned 284–305.
9. Bithynia — an area of Asia Minor.

to the emperor, carrying the severed head of the holy Martyr Diomedes.

When the emperor saw the head and also saw the blind soldiers, he ordered them at once to take the head and place it back upon the body in its proper place. As soon as the soldiers had done so, they immediately received their sight and believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, the true God, to whom glory is ascribed forever. Amen.[10]

* * *

On the same day, the commemoration of the Venerable Cherimon

В тот же день память преподобного Херимона

The Venerable Cherimon is mentioned in the *Lausiac History* of Palladius and in the Alphabetical Paterikon. His cave was twelve *poprishches* distant from water; after his repose he was found sitting in his place with his handiwork in his hands, for he had died at his labor. This holy Cherimon is also mentioned by St. Theodore the Studite[11] in the Lenten Triodion, on Cheesefare Saturday, in the canon at Matins, in the sixth ode[12].

* * *

NOTES

5100. The first account of the relations between Christ and Abgar is found in the father of church history, Eusebius Pamphili (d. 340). By his own words, he inserted this account into his history, relying not on tradition alone but on written documents he had found in the archives of Edessa. After Eusebius, from the fourth century, come Ephraim the Syrian; from the fifth, the Armenian historian Moses of Khoren; and from the sixth, Procopius. The Armenian historian Moses of Khoren, of the fifth century, describes the circumstance through which Abgar heard of Jesus Christ: Abgar learned of Christ from his envoys, whom he had sent to the Roman tribune governing Phoenicia, Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia; on their return journey the envoys were in Jerusalem and there

10. The repose of St. Diomedes occurred at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century.

11. His memory is November 11.

12. The repose of St. Cherimon occurred at the end of the fourth century or in the first years of the fifth century.

saw the wonders of the Savior. The tenth-century writer Constantine Porphyrogenitus (d. 959), in whose work we find the most detailed account of the origin of the Image Not Made by Hands, relates that Abgar was informed of Christ by his servant Ananias, who had returned from a journey to Egypt.

5101. The authenticity of the letters of Abgar to Jesus Christ and of Jesus Christ to Abgar is disputed. It is said: (1) The Gospel is silent about this event. But the Gospel says: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book" (Jn. 20:30). According to the Gospel, the report of Jesus Christ spread as far as Syria, and from there they brought the sick (Mt. 4:24). (2) The writers of the first three centuries before Eusebius are silent. But this, like the first argument, is an argument from silence. Cicero's treatise *On the Republic* was discovered only in 1822; what is surprising if the Eastern Greek writers, many of whose works have not survived, did not know of this letter? Moreover, in George the Syncellus, under the year 215 A.D., it is said that Julius Africanus spoke of Abgar, the holy man and king in Edessa; likewise in Moses of Khoren (5th century, bk. 2, ch. 9). (3) Blessed Jerome is silent. But Eusebius stands above Jerome. He himself saw these acts and published them in Greek in his church history. (4) Blessed Augustine says that Jesus Christ wrote nothing. He says this in a dispute with the Manichaeans, who relied on writings supposedly written by Christ Himself about Himself, and he generally means that Jesus Christ did not set forth in writing, nor intend to set forth in writing, the teaching about Himself; this cannot apply to the brief letter of Jesus Christ to Abgar. Jesus Christ bent down and wrote on the ground before the Pharisees who brought to Him the woman taken in adultery. (5) In the letter of Jesus Christ there is an allusion to John (20:29). It is not an allusion to John but to the prophecy of Isaiah (6:9; 50:15; 65:2). (6) In Eusebius, the year of Christ's death, by the era of the Seleucids, 340, falls on the 30th year of His life (the 15th of Tiberius). Eusebius cites not his own chronology but that of the Edessenes. In antiquity many held the opinion that Jesus Christ suffered in the first year of His ministry, that is, in the 30th year of His life. Moreover, it is known that errors in numbers in ancient manuscripts are a common occurrence. (7) Pope Gelasius, by his decree, recognized this work as apocryphal; but this meant only that it was not included among the canonical writings, though not all writings recognized as apocryphal are unworthy of belief. In the Slavonic Menaion it is said that the Apostle Thaddeus reposed in Virite, a Phoenician city. In the work on the Apostles attributed to Hippolytus, the martyr's death at Virite is ascribed to Thaddeus, one of the Twelve Apostles, or Jude (June 19).

5104. Constantine Porphyrogenitus describes the translation of the Image Not Made by Hands and of Christ's letter to Abgar from Edessa to Constantinople in 944. The Image Not Made by Hands was kept in Constantinople until 1204. As for the brick with the image not made by hands, according to the testimony of Zonaras (d. 1118), it was transferred by the Emperor Nicephorus Phocas (963–969) in 968. Zonaras calls it *hieron ke phion ektypora* (the holy and divine image). — According to one account, around 1362 the Image Not Made by Hands was given by John Palaeologus to the Genoese general Leonardo di Montalto in return for deliverance of the Greek empire from the Saracen attack, and Montalto gave it to the monastery of St. Bartholomew in Genoa,

where it remains to this day. According to another, more probable account, during the rule of the Crusaders in Constantinople in 1204–1261 it was carried off by the Venetian doge Dandolo, but the ship on which it was, together with other sacred objects, sank in the Propontis.



THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 17

17 августа

New Calendar August 17 · Old Calendar August 30 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Patroclus

Страдание святого мученика Патрокла

In the reign of Aurelian[1] a cruel persecution was raised against the Christians in Gaul, as also in other regions. At that time there dwelt in the city of Tricassis an honorable man named Patroclus. He lived on the outskirts of the city, in the house that had come to him after the death of his parents. He was rich and possessed much property. This man served God day and night, for he loved His holy law and led a strictly Christian and pious life. Being well instructed in the sciences, he read the Holy Scriptures diligently at all times, and every hour he bent his knees in prayer. He took food only once a day, at the twelfth hour, having first offered praise and prayer to the Lord before partaking of his meal. The riches that he possessed he distributed to the needy, to widows and orphans, and especially to needy Christians who served the Lord with all their heart. His mercy was so great that the beggars took him for a dispenser of heavenly treasures, for he gathered no treasures upon earth but in heaven, and he withdrew from all worldly pleasures, thinking only of obtaining the Kingdom of Heaven. This holy man, who passed his life in the fear of God, in fasting and prayer and in every pleasing of God, received from the Lord power to command demons; he was also granted the grace of healing, so that by the power of Christ he cast out unclean spirits and healed the various diseases that befell people. At this time the impious emperor Aurelian, a cruel persecutor of the Christians, arrived from the city of Senonis in the city of Tricassis. Hearing of the holy Patroclus, Aurelian com-

1. The Emperor Aurelian reigned from 270 to 275.

manded that he be seized and brought before him. Seeing Patroclus, he said to him:

"I have heard of your madness; you have embraced a vain faith and worship Him who was mocked by men."

But the saint made no answer to these mad words.

Then Aurelian asked him:

"What is your name?"

The saint answered:

"My name is Patroclus."

Aurelian asked again:

"What faith do you hold, and to what god do you pay worship?"

The holy Patroclus answered:

"I worship the living and true God, who dwells in heaven and regards the humble; I worship that God who knows all things before anything has come to pass."

Aurelian said:

"Abandon your madness and bow down to our gods; for this you will be rewarded by us with honor and wealth, and your name will be glorified."

The saint answered:

"I know no other God than the true One, who created heaven, earth, the sea, and all things visible and invisible."

Aurelian said in reply:

"Prove to us whether what you say is true."

Patroclus answered:

"Truly all that I say is just; but since you all perish in falsehood, you are unwilling to believe the truth, for falsehood always hates the truth."

Aurelian said:

"I will deliver you to the fire if you do not offer sacrifice to the gods."

The saint answered:

"Behold, I offer the sacrifice of praise, and I offer myself as a sacrifice to my God, who has been pleased to call me to the martyr's contest for His holy name."

Then the emperor Aurelian was filled with wrath and commanded that iron fetters heated in the fire be placed on the martyr's feet; he

also commanded that the saint's hands be bound behind his back with iron chains heated in the fire; then he ordered the saint thrown into prison and kept there until he should devise a means of destroying him.

While in his fetters, the saint prayed to God, saying thus:

"Let Thy mercy be my comfort, according to Thy word to Thy servant" (Ps. 118:76).

And again:

"I will rejoice and be glad in Thy mercy, for Thou hast regarded my affliction" (Ps. 30:8).

Three days later the emperor Aurelian seated himself on his public tribunal and commanded that the martyr be brought out of the prison and presented for judgment. When the saint had been brought, the emperor said to him:

"Blasphemer, go, save yourself quickly from death and offer sacrifice to the gods."

The martyr answered:

"Our Lord has saved from eternal death the souls of His servants; He will not forsake all who hope in Him. If you desire to receive something of my wealth, I will gladly give it to you, for I see that you are poor."

Aurelian said in reply:

"How dare you call me, the emperor, poor, when I possess countless treasures?"

The saint answered:

"You have earthly riches, transient and fleeting; but you are poor, for you do not possess yourself, since you have not acquired in your heart the holy faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore you will be condemned by the righteous Judge, God, to torments together with your father, the devil."

Aurelian said:

"You grievously insult me, and therefore I cannot be merciful to you."

The martyr said:

"My God, whom I have served from my youth, is merciful to me. But woe to you, when you are led to the place where the devil, whom you

now serve, abides in torment; there you will see the eternal torments prepared for you."

The emperor said in reply:

"I do not understand what you are saying; I understand only this: you are in my hands, and there is no one who could save you from my hands."

The saint said:

"Only my body is in your power; but my soul you cannot touch, for no one has power over it except the one God who created it, who has also said to us, His servants: 'Fear not those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell' (Mt. 10:28)."

Emperor Aurelian said in reply:

"Do not our gods have the very same power? For they are true to us, since they always give answers about everything about which they are asked; it is they who have hitherto allowed you, their enemy and blasphemer, to live."

The saint said:

"What gods do you have?"

Aurelian answered:

"Among our gods are the great Apollo,[2] the mighty Zeus,[3] and the mother of the gods Diana,[4] for they foretell the future to men without deception."[5]

The holy Patroclus said:

2. Apollo was considered by the ancient Greeks to be the god of light; at the same time he was credited with the gift of foretelling the future.

3. Zeus – the supreme god of the ancient Greek religion, regarded as the progenitor of the other gods.

4. Diana – was considered by the ancient Greeks to be the goddess of light and life; she was also honored as the dispenser of the fresh, flourishing life of nature.

5. The Emperor Aurelian, as a pagan, was convinced that the gods in whom he believed could foretell the future; he mentioned the name of Apollo not without purpose, since Apollo was considered among the ancient Greeks the predictor of the future. Many temples built by the ancient Greeks in honor of Apollo were at the same time famous oracles; the most renowned was the Delphic oracle, and there were oracles at Orobia, on the island of Euboea, and in other places. The ancient Greeks had recourse to the help of an oracle in all serious and important cases, both of personal and of public life; it is self-evident that the diviners to whom the Greeks turned for counsel could not foretell the future, since they always gave confused and unclear answers.

"As for Apollo, whom you call a god, we have heard from our fathers that he was a shepherd of the Thessalian king Admetus.[6] As for Zeus, whom you worship as a god, we know that he was a vile and impious man, an adulterer, a fornicator, a robber, and a sower of every evil; we know that he sowed enmity and disorder among men, committed murders and robberies, and died a most shameful death, so that the earth did not receive his corpse. And Diana, whom you call the mother of your gods, who does not know that she is the noonday demon?[7] O wretched madness of men blinded by unbelief, worshipping what is vain and empty!"

The emperor said:

"My patience is great, for until now I have listened to your reproaches. But now I say to you for the last time: if you do not bow down and offer sacrifices to Apollo, Zeus, and Diana, I will at once deliver you to death."

The martyr answered:

"Impious tormentor! You are like a robber who kills an innocent man but cannot devour his body. So you too, though you boast that you will put my body to death, will not eat it; and even if you were to devour my body, you would not dare to harm my soul."

After the saint had spoken these words, Aurelian was greatly enraged and commanded that the saint be beheaded with the sword. At the same time Aurelian ordered his soldiers to behead the saint not on dry ground, but somewhere in a marshy place, so that he could not be given the burial customary among men, but would be devoured by reptiles, birds, and beasts.

The soldiers took the holy martyr and led him to the bank of a river named Sequana, in order to behead the saint here, in the marsh on the riverbank. The saint went to death with joy, calling upon God in prayer:

"Lord Jesus Christ, do not permit my body to perish in that marshy place, but glorify Thy most holy name, that it may be glorious before

6. In this case Saint Patroclus had in view the absurd tales of ancient Greek mythology.

7. The noonday demon, literally "a destroying plague at noon"; perhaps a special sickness, like rabies, caused by the scorching rays of the southern sun (cf. Ps. 90:6).

the eyes of Thy enemies, lest the pagans say: where is their God? Hear, O holy Master, my prayer, as Thou didst hear Moses and Aaron, who prayed for Thy people, and dividing the sea for them, Thou didst lead (the Israelites) over on dry ground (Ex. 14:21–32); so also command me to cross this river to the other side, to a place not marshy, that my blood may be shed on dry ground, and that my body may find rest not in the bog: 'Draw me out of the mire, that I sink not' (Ps. 68:15). Deliver me from my tormentors!"

No sooner had the saint prayed in such words than the eyes of the soldiers who had brought him were darkened, so that they did not see the martyr.

The holy Patroclus, entering the river, walked through the water, which came below his knees. Yet that river was very large and deep, and moreover had much water from the rain; but the holy martyr walked through it without sinking even to his knees. Then, crossing to the other bank, the martyr climbed a hill that stood there and said:

"The Lord keeps the souls of His holy venerable ones and delivers them from the hands of sinners."

The soldiers, not seeing the martyr whom they had been leading, were seized with great fear and terror, for they feared that the emperor would think they had released the condemned man of their own will and would punish them. The soldiers said to one another:

"How great is the God of that man, for He has saved him from our hands invisibly!"

Others of the soldiers said:

"That was not a man but some apparition, for he vanished without trace from our eyes."

While the soldiers argued this among themselves for a long time, not daring to return to the emperor, a certain pagan woman who was crossing the river in a boat, hearing the soldiers' dispute and seeing their distress, said to them:

"I saw on the other side of the river, on the hill, the Christian man whom you are seeking; he was lying prone and praying to his God."

They, having swift feet for the shedding of innocent blood, at once crossed the river in a boat, and climbing the mountain, found the saint

in the position the woman had described. Then the senior soldier said to the saint with vexation:

"Truly you deserve death, for you ran away from us; but now you are again in our hands, and now you will not escape from us: you will be put to death. But if you wish to remain alive, offer sacrifice to our gods."

The saint answered them:

"I will not bow down to impious demons. I worship only the one God."

The soldiers said to him:

"What god do you have, one begotten or one created?"

The saint said:

"O vain delusion! O mad unbelief! O unreasoning words! Who among men can say anything of the unbeginning God? Who can tell of His origin? He spoke, and all came to be; He commanded, and all was created, both the visible and the invisible. He sent to the human race a Redeemer, His Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who shed for us His holy blood, to deliver us from perdition and eternal death. But the Lord rose from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven in the presence of His disciples, and sent them, as He had promised, the Holy Spirit. And one must believe as the Holy Spirit taught through the lips of the Apostles, for this teaching is right and true. Whoever does not believe this teaching will not see eternal life, but the wrath of God will abide on that man forever. We Christians firmly believe and hope to receive eternal life from Christ our God; therefore we also suffer for Him with love and die with readiness, knowing that whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord. But all who worship demons, like you, together with the demons will be cast into the fire of Gehenna."

While the saint was speaking these words, the soldiers flew into a rage, and calling the saint a blasphemer of their gods, they drew their swords to cut the saint down. The martyr, turning to God, said:

"Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit, for Thou knowest that I die for Thy most holy name."

After this, the holy martyr Patroclus was beheaded[8].

The soldiers took the martyr's head and threw it a long distance from the body; then they left.

At that time, on the mountain, near the place, there were two beggars, advanced in years, who had formerly received alms from the hand of the saint and who confessed the Christian faith. These saw the martyr's death and heard his last words. When the soldiers had gone, they took the body of the martyr and his head with great fear, fearing to be noticed by the impious; they hid the honorable body and head of the martyr until evening, and then secretly told everything to the archpriest of that city, named Eusebius.

When night came, the archpriest came to the place where the body of the martyr had been hidden, together with the deacon Liverius; wrapping that holy body in a clean winding-sheet, they laid it in the tomb that same night, quietly and with few candles, chanting the fitting psalmody, fearing the pagans.

The holy martyr Patroclus died in the reign at Rome of Aurelian, among the Christians however under the dominion of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

* * *

Life of our Venerable Father Alypius of the Kiev Caves

Житие преподобного отца нашего Алипия Печерского

Our Venerable Father Alypius of the Kiev Caves showed himself an imitator of the holy Evangelist Luke, for he served the Lord who created us in His own image and likeness (Gen. 1:26), as did that Luke; namely, he not only depicted wondrously the faces of the saints on icons, but also embodied their virtues in his soul; moreover he was a wondrous healer. His God-pleasing life presents itself to us in the following form:

In the reign of the right-believing Prince of Kiev Vsevolod Yaroslavich[9], under the Venerable Abbot Nikon, by the providence of God and on the counsel of the Venerable Fathers Anthony and Theodosius, who had miraculously appeared at Constantinople in the tenth year after their repose, Greek icon-painters arrived to adorn the holy Church of the Caves; to these icon-painters the blessed Alypius was given by his parents for instruction in the art of painting. Saint Alypius was an eyewitness of that marvelous miracle which is related in the account of the Church of the Caves, namely: when the icon-painters were decorating the sanctuary with paintings, there an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos depicted itself of its own accord; at this the icon shone and gleamed brighter than the sun; then from the lips of the Most Holy Theotokos a dove flew out, which, flying for a long time (through the church), entered the lips of the Savior depicted on an icon located in the upper part of the church. It was then that this blessed Alypius was learning, helping his teachers; and he moreover painted beautifully in his soul, for the grace of the Holy Spirit abode in that Church of the Caves.

When the said icon-painters finished their work and adorned the holy church with icons, Alypius too was adorned by the Venerable Abbot Nikon in a wondrous manner with the holy angelic monastic rank. And Saint Alypius began to learn the art of depicting in his soul the virtues of the saints, being already trained in the art of depicting their faces materially (on icons).

Saint Alypius was so skilled in his work that, by the grace of God, he reproduced through the visible image on an icon as it were the very spiritual image of the virtues; for he learned the art of iconography not for the acquisition of wealth but for the acquisition of virtues; he constantly labored, painting icons for the abbot, for the brotherhood, and for all who had need, taking nothing for his labor.

The blessed Alypius asked all who saw dilapidated icons in any church to inform him of this; then he, demanding no reward, adorned

8. The repose of Holy Martyr Patroclus took place c. 275.
9. Vsevolod Yaroslavich reigned for the first time from 1075 to 1076 (six months) and for the second time from 1078 to 1093.

those churches with his art. If the saint was free from such work, then he exercised himself in the iconographic art for himself and painted icons, which he gave to those from whom he had borrowed gold and silver needed for the adornment of icons. The saint acted thus so as not to spend time in idleness; he became like the ancient holy fathers, who constantly occupied themselves with manual labor, and like the supreme Apostle Paul himself, who says of himself: "These hands have ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me" (Acts 20:34).

If it ever happened that Saint Alypius earned some sum of money by his handiwork, he divided it into three parts: the first part he spent on the renewal of icons, the second on alms to the poor, and the third he gave for the needs of the monastery. The saint did so every year, giving himself no rest either by day or by night; for at night he exercised himself in prayerful vigil and prostrations, while by day, with great humility, non-acquisitiveness, purity, patience, fasting, love, and God-mindedness he occupied himself with handiwork; no one ever saw him idle; yet for all that he never missed the assemblies of prayer, not even for his labors.

When the abbot noticed such great virtues and the iconographic skill of the Venerable, so that he was worthy, bearing the angelic image of the monastic rank, to show himself an imitator of the Son of God Jesus Christ, the Priest after the order of Melchizedek[10], he raised him to the degree of the priesthood. Then the Venerable was set as a lamp on a lampstand (Mt. 5:15), or, better to say, as a pattern for imitation set on a high place, shining with a double beauty of monastic and priestly virtues; and the saint was not a simple example, for he worked miracles; of his many wonderworkings we shall recall here some.

10. Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God Most High, is mentioned in Gen. 14:18. The Book of Genesis, which relates the story of Melchizedek, says nothing either of his origin or of the end of his life. Together with his blessing of Abraham, this made Melchizedek, according to the interpretation of St. Apostle Paul (Heb. 6:20), a type of Jesus Christ, the eternal High Priest and King. Already King and Prophet David pointed to the typological significance of the priesthood of Melchizedek when he spoke of the Son of God: "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 109:4). But the typological significance of Melchizedek is revealed most clearly and in greatest detail by St. Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, Heb. 7:1–28.

A certain man from among the wealthy citizens of the city of Kiev suffered from leprosy; he sought help from many physicians, sorcerers, and pagans, but not only did he receive no relief from his illness, he fell into an even worse state. Then one of the sick man's friends advised him to go to the Caves monastery to ask for the prayers of the holy fathers; he agreed, but with displeasure.

When this sick man was brought to the Caves monastery, the abbot commanded that he be given water to drink from the well of the Venerable, and also ordered that his face be washed with the same water. And at once so much pus appeared on the sick man's body, as punishment for his unbelief, that all shrank from him, being unable to bear the foul odor emanating from the sick man's body. Then, weeping and indignant, this leper returned to his home and did not leave the house for many days because of the stench that came from him, saying to his friends: "They cover my face with shame. I have become a stranger to my brothers and an alien to the sons of my mother" (Ps. 68:8–9), because I did not show faith in the Venerable Fathers Anthony and Theodosius; and every day he awaited his death.

However, having come to himself, this man resolved to confess all his sins; therefore he went again to the Caves monastery to the Venerable Alypius and confessed his transgressions to him. The Venerable said to him:

"You have done well, child, in coming to confess your sins to God before my unworthiness; so the prophet also bears witness of himself, crying to the Lord: 'I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and Thou didst take away the guilt of my sin' (Ps. 31:5)."

Then the Venerable Alypius for a long time instructed him with soul-saving words; then, taking iconographic paints, he adorned his face, anointing the places of the pus; after this Saint Alypius led the sick man into the church, communed him of the Divine Mysteries, and commanded him to wash with that water with which priests were accustomed to wash after receiving the holy Mysteries; and soon after this the festering scabs fell off the sick man and he became healthy as before.

In this miracle our Venerable Father Alypius showed himself an imitator of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. For as Christ, healing the leper, commanded him to show himself to the priest and offer the gift for his cleansing (Mt. 8:4), so this Venerable Father commanded the man stricken with leprosy to show himself to him, as to a priest, during the celebration of the divine service, and to bring as an offering that of which the Prophet speaks: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation" (Ps. 115:3–4). Let us mention here also the gift, for the great-grandson of this leper, in thanksgiving for his cleansing, overlaid with gold the ark that stood above the Holy Table in the church of the Caves.

Besides this, Venerable Alypius showed himself an imitator of Christ, who healed the man born blind. For as Christ, healing the man born blind, first anointed his eyes with clay and then commanded him to wash in the pool of Siloam (which means "Sent") (Jn. 9:6–7), so this Venerable Father first anointed the scabs of the leper with painters' pigments, and then commanded him to wash with the water with which priests, the messengers of God, customarily wash. Thus the saint healed the sick man both of his bodily leprosy and of his sinful blindness, so that all who had come with the sick man from the city were greatly astonished at so swift a healing. But Venerable Alypius said to them:

"Brethren! Take note of what is said: 'No man can serve two masters' (Mt. 6:24). For this man was at first enslaved to the demon on account of his sins; therefore, when he came to God, but under the counsel of the enemy, he despaired of his salvation and did not believe in the Lord, who alone could save him, then the leprosy seized his body with still greater force, as a punishment for his unbelief. For the Lord said: 'Ask,' and not merely 'ask,' but with faith: 'it shall be given you' (Mt. 7:7). And now, when he turned again to God in repentance, in my presence, 'God, who is rich in mercy' (Eph. 2:4), healed him."

Having heard this, the people bowed to the saint and set out on the return journey together with the healed man, glorifying God and the Venerable Fathers Anthony and Theodosius, and also their disciple, our Venerable Father Alypius. And they said of this Saint Alypius that he

had appeared to them as a new Elisha, for he healed of leprosy that sick man just as Elisha healed of leprosy Naaman the Syrian (4 Kgdms. 5:14).

There was also a certain God-fearing man from the same city of Kiev. This man built a church and wished to have seven large icons for its adornment. This man gave silver, together with boards intended for painting the icons, to two monks of the Monastery of the Caves who were known to him, asking them to consult with Saint Alypius concerning the painting of the icons. But the monks said nothing to Alypius, and appropriated the silver to themselves. After some time, that man sent to ask the monks whether his icons were painted or not. They replied that Alypius demanded still more silver. Then again, taking the silver sent by that man, they appropriated it to themselves. Then, having come to the utmost shamelessness, these two monks again sent word to that man (slandering the saint) that Alypius demanded as much silver again as he had received. That Christ-loving man gave the silver a third time, saying:

"I greatly desire to receive a prayer and blessing from the work of his hands."

But Saint Alypius knew nothing of what the monks were doing.

At last that man sent once more to learn precisely whether the icons had been painted. The monks, not knowing what to answer, said that Alypius had taken all the silver, sent three times over, but did not wish to paint the icons.

Then that Christ-loving man came to the Monastery of the Caves together with his retinue, went to Abbot Nikon, and told him the cause of the grief that had been (allegedly) caused him by Alypius. The abbot, calling Alypius, said to him:

"Why, brother, do you inflict such an offense upon this son of ours, who most earnestly begged you to paint the icons and gave you as much silver as you asked? But you, having taken so much silver and having given your promise to paint the icons, have not painted them, although in other cases you have painted icons even without any payment."

To this the Blessed Alypius replied:

"Honorable Father! You well know that I have never shown indolence in this matter; but at present I do not at all understand what you are speaking of."

Then the abbot again said to him:

"You have taken triple the price for painting seven icons; yet until now you have not painted them."

And at once, wishing to expose the saint, he ordered the boards intended for painting the icons to be brought (the boards had been seen the day before standing in one of the monastery buildings, with nothing painted on them). The abbot also ordered that those monks through whom that man had passed the silver to the saint be summoned, so that these monks might expose Alypius.

Those sent for the boards found them most skillfully painted and brought them to the abbot. Seeing this, all who were there were greatly astonished and fell into great fear; then, trembling, they fell prostrate to the ground and bowed before those images not made by human hands: namely, the image of the Lord, the image of the Most Holy Theotokos, and the other images of God's saints.

Then came the two monks who had slandered Alypius; knowing nothing of this miracle, they entered into dispute with the saint, saying:

"Look, you have taken triple the price, and yet you do not wish to paint the icons!"

Hearing these words, all who were there showed those monks the icons, saying:

"Here are these icons, painted by God Himself, which attest the innocence of Alypius!"

The monks, seeing the icons, were struck with terror at so great a miracle. They were at once exposed by the abbot as thieves and liars, were expelled from the monastery, and were deprived of all their property.

But these monks did not cease their malice: they began to spread slander against Venerable Alypius throughout the city, asserting that they themselves had painted those icons; "our superior," they said, "not wishing to reward us for our labor, in order to keep us from the work,

lied concerning the icons, saying that they were painted by God Himself, who willed to vindicate Alypius."

Hearing such speeches, many citizens went from the city to the monastery in order to see those icons and bow to them. Yet, although many of the citizens believed those monks who had slandered Venerable Alypius, God, who glorifies His saints, as He Himself says in the holy Gospel: "a city set on a hill cannot be hid" (Mt. 5:14), and again: "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house" (Mt. 5:15), God did not conceal the virtuous labors of this righteous man. For the news of this miracle, wrought by the Lord for the sake of Saint Alypius, reached even Prince Vladimir Monomakh;[11] this miracle was further confirmed in the following manner:

By God's permission a fire broke out in Kiev, by which almost all of the Podol[12] in Kiev was burned; in that part of the city stood the church with the aforementioned icons, which was also burned. Yet, after the fire, all seven of those icons were found completely undamaged.

When the prince heard of this, he came in person to the site of the fire, wishing to see the miracle that had occurred there. Seeing the icons, which had remained unharmed by the fire, the prince first learned that they had been painted in the course of a single night by the providence of God, who willed to vindicate Alypius from the slander brought against him. Then Prince Vladimir Monomakh zealously glorified the Creator, the God of all, who had manifested such great miracles for the sake of the virtues of Venerable Alypius. Then, taking one of those icons, namely the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, he ordered it to be sent to the city of Rostov, to the stone church there that he himself had built. At one time that church in Rostov was also destroyed, yet that icon remained completely undamaged. Afterwards the icon was placed in a wooden church; but this church, too, after some time was burned by fire; the icon again remained undamaged, so that after the fire not even a small scratch was found on it.

11. Vladimir Monomakh reigned from 1114 to 1125.
12. A part of the city.

All this confirmed beyond doubt the virtuous life of our Venerable Father Alypius, for whose sake that icon was painted by itself.

Let us now turn to the miracle that took place at the saint's repose, in order to see how wondrously this man, a skilled creator of icons, passed from this temporal life into eternal life.

A certain pious man asked Venerable Father Alypius to paint an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, and asked the saint to paint this icon by the feast of the Dormition. But the Venerable fell ill soon afterward and was already approaching death; the icon had not yet been painted, and the man grieved greatly over this and disturbed the saint very much. The Blessed Alypius said to him:

"Child! Do not trouble me, but cast all your care upon the Lord, and He will do as He wills: the icon will be in its place on its feast day."

That man, believing the saint's words, went home rejoicing.

Then he came again to Alypius on the eve of the feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, and saw that the icon had not been painted, and also saw that Venerable Alypius had grown still worse. The man began to reproach the Blessed One, saying:

"Why did you say nothing to me about your grave illness? Then I would have given the icon to another iconographer, who would have painted it for me, so that the feast might be honorable and solemn; but now you are casting me into great shame."

The Venerable answered him with meekness:

"O child! Did I do this out of idleness? Yet God can write an icon of His Mother with a single word of His. See, I myself am leaving this world, as the Lord has revealed to me, but I do not wish to leave you in sorrow."

The man departed in deep grief. Immediately after he left, a certain radiant youth entered to Venerable Alypius and began to paint the icon for that man. Alypius thought that the man, offended with him, had sent a new iconographer, and at first took the youth for a human being. However, the speed and elegance of his work showed that he was an Angel; for within three hours he painted a very beautiful icon, now laying gold upon it, now grinding various colors on a stone and painting with them. Then he said to the Venerable:

"Father! Perhaps something is still lacking here, or have I erred in some respect?"

The Venerable answered:

"You have done everything beautifully; God Himself helped you to paint the icon with such splendor. It is He who has done this through you."

When evening came, that iconographer became invisible together with the icon.

Meanwhile the owner of the icon could not sleep all night for grief, since he thought the icon would not be ready for the feast; therefore he considered himself unworthy of such a mercy of God and called himself a great sinner. For this reason, rising in the morning of the next day, he went to the church to confess his sins there before the Lord. But no sooner had he opened the doors of the church than he saw the icon standing in its place. At once he fell to the ground in fear, thinking it was an apparition; then, rising a little from the ground and looking attentively at the icon, he understood that it was his own icon. Seized by great fear and awe, he remembered the words of Venerable Alypius, who had told him that the icon would be ready for its feast; then he went and woke all his household. His household hastened to the church with joy, bearing candles and censers; seeing the icon shining like the sun, all fell to the ground, bowed to the icon and kissed it with joyful souls.

After this, that pious man went to the abbot and told him about the miracle that had befallen the icon; then they went together to Venerable Alypius and found him already departing from this world. Nevertheless, the abbot asked him:

"Father! By whom and how was the icon for this man painted?"

Alypius told them everything he had seen, and said:

"The icon was painted by an Angel, and he himself stands here, intending to take my soul."

Having said this, the blessed one gave up his spirit into the hands of the Lord on the seventeenth day of the month of August[13]. The

13. The repose of the Venerable Alypius took place in 1114.

brethren, covering his body with shrouds, carried it into the church; then, having performed the usual funeral chant, they laid the body of the saint in the cave of Venerable Anthony.

Thus this holy, wonderworking iconographer adorned heaven and earth; having lived on earth in the body, he ascended to heaven with a virtuous soul, to the glory of the Chief of iconographers, God the Father, who said: "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness" (Gen. 1:26), and in the "express image of His person" (Heb. 1:3); God the Son, who "in appearance having become as a man" (Phil. 2:7); together with the Holy Spirit, who descended from heaven in the form of a dove (Mt. 3:16) and in the appearance of fiery tongues (Acts 2:3). All these, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, abiding in one essence, let us praise together with our Venerable Father Alypius, and let us glorify them unto endless ages. Amen.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Straton, Philip, Eutychian and Cyprian

Страдание святых мучеников Стратона, Филиппа, Евтихиана и Киприана

These holy martyrs, being men of distinction, went about Nicomedia[14] and, visiting public spectacles, taught the people gathered there, persuading them to abandon the worship of idols and turn to faith in Christ. Once the governor of the city saw that the place of spectacles was empty, almost without spectators, and learning the reason for this, namely that the people had left the assembly of those who gathered for the spectacles, having been taught by the holy martyrs, and therefore despised the ancestral customs, living some new kind of life, he immediately ordered the saints to be brought before him. When they stood before the governor, they declared that they held the faith in Christ and taught it to others. Then they were brought to the place of spectacles and given over to be torn by beasts, but the beasts

14. Nicomedia was the capital of the eastern part of the ancient Roman Empire and the residence of the Emperor Diocletian; it was a famous city in the Roman province of Bithynia in Asia Minor, situated in the north-western part of Asia Minor.

did them no harm. After this they were subjected to many various tortures and, at last, cast into the fire. Thus the holy martyrs ran the course[15] of sufferings for Christ and, gaining the victory, received the crowns[16].

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Myron

Память святого мученика Мирона

Saint Myron was a presbyter in Achaia[17] during the reign of the impious emperor Decius[18]; the governor of that land was Antipater.

The saint came from a noble and wealthy family; he was of a very gentle disposition; in his heart he always cherished warm love for God and men, and lived a God-pleasing life.

Once, on the feast of the Nativity of Christ, the governor Antipater entered a Christian church to seize the Christians gathered there for prayer and deliver them to torments. Seeing this, Saint Myron was filled with zeal and with force rebuked and reproached the governor. For this he was seized, by the governor's order, and subjected to cruel torments: he was hung on a tree and subjected to scraping with an iron comb; then he was burned with fire; at last he was cast into a furnace heated to great heat and sending out a terrible flame. But at that moment fire came out of the furnace and burned a hundred and fifty of the impious servants of the governor who stood nearby; the saint, however, remained alive by the grace of Christ, suffered no harm, and standing in the midst of the furnace blessed God. At the same time, in the furnace holy Angels were seen standing around the saint in the midst of the fire, cooling the furnace.

When the furnace went out and the saint came out of it, having suffered no harm, the governor began to compel him to bow down to

15. Among the Greeks, a *stadion* (*poprishche*) was a place of a set length and width, enclosed for running races. He who ran the stadion and reached the end before the others was considered the victor and received a wreath as his reward.
16. The time of the death of these St. Martyrs is unknown.
17. Achaia was an ancient Greek region located on the Peloponnesus peninsula.
18. Emperor Decius reigned from 249 to 251.

idols; but when the saint did not fulfil this impious command, the governor ordered the skin to be stripped from the saint and cut into strips, from shoulders to feet. The holy martyr, however, took one strip from himself and threw it in the face of the governor; then he was again subjected to scraping with iron claws over his bare body, and afterwards was given to be eaten by beasts, yet he suffered no harm from them.

Then the governor Antipater, seeing himself put to shame in everything by the Passion-bearer of Christ, Myron, was filled with anger and frenzy and killed himself with his own hands; so the impious one perished with a noise, giving his loathsome soul to the demons into hell for eternal torments. The holy martyr was led to the city of Cyzicus[19] and here died, being beheaded, and gave up his holy soul into the hands of God[20]. Thus, having received the martyr's crown, he entered into the joy of his Lord.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

From youth thou didst gloriously love Christ, and keeping His divine commandments, thou didst cleave to Him with all thy being, most honorable Myron, and didst pray diligently with the Angels. Entreat, that remission of sins be granted to all who honor thy memory.

* * *

19. The city of Cyzicus was situated on the peninsula of Arctonnesus.
20. The repose of St. Martyr Myron took place around 250.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the holy martyrs Paul and his sister Juliana; their memory is celebrated on the fourth day of the month of March (under which date their suffering is also described in detail).

On the same day, the memory of the holy martyrs Thyrsus, Leucius and their companions, who suffered under the emperor Decius (249–251) in Caesarea in Bithynia; their memory is also celebrated on the fourteenth day of the month of December (under which date the account of their suffering may also be read).



THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 18

18 августа

New Calendar August 18 · Old Calendar August 31 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Emilian and of Those with Him

Страдание святого священномученика Емилиана и прочих с ним

Saint Emilian was born in the Asian region of Armenia. His parents, who were Christians, were people of noble and wealthy standing. For his literary education they entrusted him to a virtuous man, a certain hieromonk named Hilarion. Having thoroughly learned the understanding of books, and having come to mature age, Emilian led a chaste, God-pleasing and pious life, zealously devoting himself to fasting, prayer and the reading of books, and keeping his virginal purity unblemished. When word reached Armenia that the impious Roman emperors Diocletian and Maximian had raised a cruel persecution against the Christians in Europe, Emilian was kindled with holy zeal for the true faith, and, burning with love for Christ to the point of readiness to accept death for Him, he resolved to go to those lands, there to preach the name of Christ to the pagans and to give his life for his Lord. Emilian had two brothers, Dionysius and Hermippus. By inspired exhortations he instilled the same intentions in them as well. And so the brothers, after the death of their parents, by mutual agreement left home, homeland, inheritance and all the goods of this world out of love for Christ, and set out from Asia to Europe. They took with them also their teacher, the hieromonk Hilarion, and came to Italy, to the city of Spoleto[1]. In this city, among the pagans, they found many Christians living a pure and righteous life, and at their request they

1. Now Spoleto, situated on one of the tributaries of the river Tiber in Umbria. This tributary was called Clitumnus in antiquity.

settled among them. The blessed Emilian was an example of holiness to all, for both by day and by night he exercised himself in prayer and in the preaching of the Word of God.

After some time, in a neighboring city called Trebia[2], the bishop died. Then the inhabitants of that city, who were Christians living among idolaters, like wheat among weeds and like a lily among thorns, having learned of the life and wisdom of Saint Emilian, chose him as their bishop, as a man who, though young in years, surpassed the elders in understanding and virtues. For his consecration they sent him to Rome to the Most Holy Pope Marcellinus. Having received the episcopal consecration from the Pope, Saint Emilian, together with his teacher and brothers, moved from Spoleto to Trebia, the cathedral city of his eparchy. Having taken up the governance of his flock, he ruled it valiantly, instructing the flock of Christ both by deed and by word, and, miraculously healing diseases and tending human bodies and souls with the grace of Christ, he converted many of the unbelievers to the Christian faith.

At that time the ruler of those lands was a man of cruel disposition, named Maximian, to whom the impious emperors had entrusted authority over Etruria and Umbria. Having heard about the Christian bishop Emilian, that he was converting many from the service of idols to Christ and abolishing pagan temples, Maximian hastened to Trebia and, ordering the hierarch of God to be seized and brought before him for judgment, said to him:

"Emilian, what is this I hear about you? To what end, in your madness, do you willingly wish to deliver yourself to death? If you do not bow down to our gods, I will subject you to cruel tortures and command that you be given over to a dreadful death."

"I will not bow down to demons," the holy bishop answered with complete firmness, "for all the pagan gods are demons, as is also said in the holy books, and whoever bows down to them shall inherit eternal torments in hell."

2. Trebia, a fairly significant city in antiquity, which, like Spoletium, lay on the great road connecting the capital of the universe, Rome, with one of the ports of the Adriatic Sea; it no longer exists. It was in Umbria, somewhat north of Spoletium and at a close distance from it.

At these words the ruler flew into a rage and commanded that the saint be beaten without mercy, and after the beating he began to mock him with words. He reviled Christ God and said that the Christian God had no power whatever, while the gods whom he honored were almighty. Then the hierarch of God said to him:

"Test, if you wish, and learn whose power is greater, Christ's or your gods'? Command that some paralytic or a man afflicted with some other sickness be brought here, and bid your priests to pray to their gods for the healing of the sick man; I too will pray to my God, and whichever God by His power heals the sick man, that God let be acknowledged by all as the true God, and let all bow down to Him."

This proposal of Saint Emilian pleased Maximian, and he at once sent to seek out a sick man. Soon a certain paralytic was brought, who had for a very long time lain in bed and had completely lost the use of his limbs. A multitude of people gathered at this spectacle, wishing to see the miracle that was about to take place. And so, by the ruler's command, the priests began to pray to their gods, calling upon Apollo, Zeus, Mercury and their other vain and false gods, that they might heal the paralytic. They prayed for a very long time but had no success, while the saint, standing aside, looked on and smiled at them and at their gods. At last Maximian commanded his priests to cease their prayer, and, turning to the bishop of the Christians, Emilian, said to him:

"Now you pray to your God, if you expect to obtain anything from Him."

Then the bishop knelt down for prayer, and, raising his hands and lifting his eyes to heaven, he began to pray, saying:

"O Lord! Hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto Thee. Hide not Thy face from me... in the day [when] I call [upon Thee], hear me speedily" (Ps. 101:2–3). Show, O Lord, to all who are present here that Thou alone art the true God, and save those who believe in Thee.

Having thus prayed, the bishop approached the paralytic and, taking him by the hand, said:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, arise and be whole."

The paralytic at once stood up, healthy in his whole body, and before everyone's eyes began to walk, rejoicing and glorifying God. To all he showed himself as proof that he was completely healed, and he went home with joy.

This miracle astonished all who witnessed it, and many believed in Christ. Maximian himself had begun in his soul to incline toward the faith, but the impious priests began to persuade him not to believe, saying that this miracle had been accomplished not by the power of God but by the magic art of Emilian, and they cried out to the ruler:

"Put this sorcerer to death, lest the veneration of the gods perish altogether."

Listening to the impious priests, and giving greater credence to their lying words than to the visible power of God, Maximian again began to persuade Saint Emilian to bow down to the idols, and said:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, knowing that many who did not heed my counsel have until now perished in terrible torments."

"Those who did not offer sacrifice to your impious gods," the saint answered, "but resolved to die for Christ, now enjoy eternal blessedness together with Him."

"Speak to me no more of the name of Christ," Maximian said to this, "but spare your youth, for dreadful torments await you."

"I am a servant of Christ," Saint Emilian answered, "and I shall not cease openly to utter and to glorify the name of Jesus Christ; for Him I am ready to endure every kind of torment and even death itself."

Then Maximian commanded that the saint be stripped, hung up at the place of torture, and his body scorched with lit candles.

Bearing this torment without murmuring, the holy martyr prayed to the Lord that He would strengthen him in his sufferings. And behold, Christ appeared to him and said:

"Fear not, Emilian, I Myself am with you!"

And at that very moment the candles went out and the hands of the executioners became contorted. Seeing this, the ruler commanded that the martyr be taken down from the place of torture, and said to him:

"By what art do you work, that you have both extinguished the candles and crippled the hands of my servants? But I have yet more

terrible torments in store for you, which you will no longer be able to withstand."

"My art," the martyr answered, "is Christ, and if you subject me to greater torments, He will give me also greater endurance and will show in me still greater power of His."

Then Maximian commanded that a cauldron of tin be melted and the martyr thrown into it. But Christ again appeared to His servant and, taking him by the hand, entered the cauldron together with him; the fire at once went out, the cauldron burst apart and the tin poured out, while the saint remained unharmed. This miracle astonished the ruler and all who were with him; yet they did not recognize in it the power of God.

After this Maximian gave orders to tie a great stone to the neck of the holy martyr and cast him into the river flowing near the city, which bore the name Clitumnus. But here too Christ appeared to Saint Emilian and, as once to the Apostle Peter, took him by the hand and led him out of the depth of the waters onto the shore. The soldiers brought the saint back to the ruler and told him of the miracle that had taken place.

Maximian then commanded that Emilian be thrown to the beasts to be devoured, but the beasts did no harm to the servant of God either, for the Lord Himself was there, again appearing to His servant. Christ said to him:

"Take courage, Emilian, good and faithful servant of Mine!"

And the beasts grew calm: the lions and leopards became meek as lambs, and some licked the saint's feet while others licked his hands. At the sight of such wonders the people cried out:

"Great is the Christian God! Let His servant be set free."

And on that day a thousand people believed in Christ. In terrible wrath against the people, Maximian sent armed soldiers against them and commanded them to kill all who glorified Christ. Thus there were slain a thousand believers of both sexes and of every age. In addition, by the command of the enraged ruler, the beasts that had done no harm to the martyr were also killed. Seeing the slaughter of the beasts, Emilian exclaimed:

"Glory to Thee, Christ God, for not only men but also beasts die for Thee."

Unsure what further torment to inflict on St. Emilian, Maximian ordered him put back into prison. At that time, on the advice of his executioners, he gave orders for a special wheel of torture to be built and fitted with many sharp iron teeth. But when, at his command, the holy martyr was brought from the prison and bound to this wheel and rolled down the hill, the Lord appeared to the saint in that very moment, unbound him and removed him from the wheel, while the rolling wheel wounded and killed many of the pagans who were below the hill. After this the holy martyr was again put into prison. Meanwhile Maximian, learning of St. Emilian's two brothers, Dionysius and Hermippus, and of their teacher Hilarion, sent soldiers to seek them out, since in fear they had gone into hiding. When they were found and brought before the governor, he ordered them put into the same prison where St. Emilian was held. Seeing his teacher and brothers, the Hierarch of God rejoiced greatly; and all together they rejoiced that they had been counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. That same night the Blessed Hilarion received a revelation from God that all of them would soon receive the crowns of martyrdom. Shortly after this, Dionysius and Hermippus, together with the elder Hilarion, were brought to trial before the governor. But when he, compelling them to bow down to the idols, began to threaten them with torments, Christ the Lord appeared to them to strengthen them, and at the same moment an earthquake occurred, the idols fell from their places and were broken to dust. Therefore the saints, by the governor's command, were cruelly beaten and at last beheaded. Thus they received the crowns of martyrdom promised them by the Lord.

On the following morning Maximian ordered the Hierarch of God Emilian brought to the court and said to him:

"Your brothers and your teacher have renounced Christ, and I have sent them to another city to receive honors."

But St. Emilian, knowing by divine revelation of the martyr's death of the saints, answered the governor:

"Tyrant, you speak falsely: they did not renounce Christ, but laid down their lives for Him. Yet you spoke rightly in saying that you sent them to another city, for in killing them you truly sent them to the heavenly city to receive honors from the King of glory, Christ, for whom they suffered."

At these words Maximian flew into a rage and sentenced St. Emilian to beheading by the sword. After this sentence, the saint, accompanied by a great crowd of people, was led outside the city for the execution, a distance of one stadion[3], to a place called Karpianovo. Walking to the place of execution, the martyr sang, glorifying God and praying for the people. When the executioner struck the saint on the neck with his sword, the sword bent like wax and caused no wound. Then the soldiers present at the execution, falling at the saint's feet, asked his forgiveness, acknowledged that Christ is the one true God, and entreated the holy martyr to pray to Christ God for them. And when the martyr, kneeling, began to pray not only for them but for all people, he heard a voice from heaven informing him that his prayer was accepted and calling him to the heavenly mansions. Hearing this voice, the holy martyr was filled with inexpressible joy. He wished to be quickly freed from the body and to live with Christ; yet he desired to attain this not by an ordinary death but by a martyr's death, and he prayed to the Lord that He would let him die by the sword. And behold, another executioner came and cut off his honorable head. Thus the holy bishop Emilian was also crowned with the martyr's wreath. From his wound, instead of blood, milk flowed, and many of the pagans, being eyewitnesses of such wonders, believed in Christ. They wrapped the honorable body of the holy martyr in clean linen cloths anointed with fragrant oil, and buried it on the spot.

Afterwards, when the persecution against the Christians ceased, the faithful solemnly transferred the relics of the saint into the city and laid them in a sacred place, glorifying Christ God, to Whom be glory from us also, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now, always, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

3. A *poprishche* – a measure of distance of about a verst (690 sazhens).

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Florus and Laurus

Память святых мучеников Флора и Лавра

The holy martyrs Florus and Laurus were brothers not only in the flesh but also in spirit, for both believed in Christ with one accord and pleased Him by good deeds. By trade they were stonemasons. Their teachers were the pious men Proclus and Maximus, from whom, together with their craft, they learned also a God-pleasing life according to the rules of the Christian faith. For faith in Christ their teachers were first put to death, and afterwards, some time later, following their teachers, they too inherited the crowns of martyrdom, receiving a death of suffering from Lycion, the governor of Illyricum[4]. The occasion of their suffering was the following event.

A certain governor of a neighboring land asked the governor of Illyricum to send him skilled stonemasons to build a magnificent stone temple for the pagan gods. Since the most skilled experts in this craft in the country were the saints Florus and Laurus, Lycion sent them to this governor. While building the temple according to the latter's will, the holy brothers distributed to the poor the pay they received for their labor, and at the same time taught the poor the holy faith in Christ. They themselves always spent their time in fasting, prayer and labor: they prayed at night and performed their work by day; they took food in small amounts, yet fed the hungry and the poor abundantly. By acting in this way they converted to the Christian faith not only the poor whom they cared for, but also a certain pagan priest with his son. It happened thus.

One day, when the holy brothers were hewing stone, the priest's son, a young man, approached them, and standing close, watched their work. Suddenly a chip flew from the stone, struck the youth in the eye

4. Illyria – a vast region in the northwestern part of the Balkan Peninsula, situated along the shore of the Adriatic Sea. At present, on the site of ancient Illyria are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and others.

and knocked it out. From the pain the youth cried out; at his cry his father, the pagan priest, ran up. Seeing that his son's face was bloody and his eye had fallen out, he tore his garments in grief, began to revile the holy workmen and rushed at them to beat them, but other workers present restrained him. Affirming the innocence of the holy brothers, they said that the youth himself was to blame for his misfortune, because he had come close to them while they were hewing stone and watched their work, without taking precautions. The holy God-pleasers Florus and Laurus, seeking to calm the priest, promised to heal his son's eye soon and make him as sighted as before.

After this they took the youth to their house for the night and began to teach him the knowledge of the one true God, Jesus Christ, saying to him:

"If you believe with all your heart in that God of whom we speak to you, your eye will soon be healed."

"If my eye becomes as it was before," the youth answered, "then I will believe in your God and honor Him. Without doubt one ought rather to believe in that God Who heals the sick and restores sight to the blind, than in those gods who not only do not heal the sick but even make the healthy sick."

At this the youth related to the saints an event of this kind.

"There is," he said, "among our priests one priest named Herm. When some years ago they wished to ordain him to the priestly office, they brought him to the idol of Zeus to lay the idol's hand on his head. Such is our rite in ordaining to the priesthood. It consists in this: the priests, with the help of a silver chain, raise upward the idol's hand, which is attached at the shoulders and moves at the joint, and then lower it onto the head of the one being ordained. When this hand was being lowered onto Herm's head, the silver chain by chance slipped from the hands of those holding it, and the idol's hand, falling on Herm's face, tore his skin with its fingernails down to the bones, so that to this day his teeth are visible from afar. And no god has given him any help; on the contrary, he grows worse."

When the youth had told of this event, the saints Florus and Laurus began with tears to pray to God that He would heal the youth and en-

lighten not only his bodily eye but also the eyes of his soul. After fervent prayer they made the sign of the cross over the youth's sick eye, and the eye immediately healed, became completely sound and saw as well as before. By virtue of this miracle not only the healed youth but also his father, the pagan priest, believed in Christ. The name of this priest was Memertinus, and from that time he passed from a servant of demons to a slave of our Lord Jesus Christ, together with his son.

After this, the holy workmen Florus and Laurus, receiving help in their work from an Angel of God, in a short time completed the temple they were building; but they did not leave it as a dwelling for idols, rather they consecrated it to the glorification of the most holy name of Jesus Christ. They set in it, toward the east, an honorable cross, and gathering up to three hundred poor men, their brothers in faith, they held an all-night vigil, glorifying Christ God. During the prayer there descended from on high an ineffable light of heavenly glory, and filled the temple with a wondrous radiance. At the conclusion of the all-night prayer, all who were in the temple went to a building standing nearby, in which the idols prepared for the new temple were kept, and, binding their belts around the necks of these idols, they dragged them along the ground, beat and broke them, and thus smashed them into small pieces.

Having learned of all this, the provincial governor ordered Florus and Laurus and all who were with them to be seized, including Mamertinus and his son. He sentenced all who had been with the saints to be burned, and he had the saints themselves severely beaten, bound, and sent to Lycion, governor of Illyricum. Lycion questioned them thoroughly about everything, and, learning that they were Christians and remained steadfast in their faith, he ordered them to be cast into a deep well and covered over with earth.

Many years later their holy and wonder-working relics were discovered and, to the glory of Christ our God, were translated with honor to Constantinople.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Let us the faithful praise, according to their worth, the most radiant and God-wise pair, Florus the most blessed and Laurus

the most honorable, who zealously proclaimed to all the uncreated Trinity with clarity. Therefore, having suffered unto blood, they were crowned with radiant crowns; pray ye to Christ God that He save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As martyrs of piety and God-wise sufferers for Christ, the whole universe today honors Florus and Laurus with glory, that through their prayers we may obtain grace and mercy, be delivered from afflictions and calamities, and from wrath and sorrow on the Day of Judgment.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Hermes, Serapion, and Polyaenus

Память святых мучеников Ерма, Серапиона и Полиена

The pagans lodged an accusation against these holy martyrs, saying that they worshipped Christ and turned away from and despised the idols. As a result they were seized and, standing before the Roman eparch[5], boldly confessed their faith in Christ. For this they were first thrown into a foul-smelling prison, and afterwards brought out of it, but they would not offer sacrifice to the idols. Therefore they were dragged through narrow and impassable places, and, dashed against the stones, they gave up their precious souls to God, receiving eternal blessedness in the place where dwell all who rejoice[6].

* * *

5. In the Greco-Roman Empire, provincial governors were called eparchs.
6. The year of death of these holy martyrs is unknown.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the holy Patriarchs of Constantinople John and George. John was Patriarch from 669 to 674, George from 678 to 683, both under Emperor Constantine Pogonatus (668–685).



THE NINETEENTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 19

19 августа

New Calendar August 19 · Old Calendar September 1 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Andrew Stratelates

Страдание святого мученика Андрея Стратилата

The impious Maximian[1], ruling the eastern part of the Roman Empire, raised a general persecution against the Christians. At that time there was in Syria a military commander named Antiochus, a man of cruel disposition and a most zealous servant of the idols, who breathed threats and executions against the believers in Christ. The Emperor had entrusted him with authority over all of Syria and had given orders that the Christians be subjected to torture and death; for this purpose a considerable number of chiliarchs, with the Roman troops under their command, were placed at his disposal. Among the other chiliarchs, like a fragrant lily blossom amid thorns, there was under Antiochus's authority a follower of Christ, Andrew, who at first kept the holy faith in Christ in secret, but afterwards, when the time came, revealed it to the whole world, openly confessing the name of Christ before all. Although he was not yet baptized, he cherished in his heart, with a firm faith, a fervent love for Christ, shunning every deed displeasing to God and zealously performing deeds in accord with the will of God. For such piety God granted him an extraordinary courage and valor in battle, so that in bravery and fortitude there was no equal to him in the whole Roman army. More than once he gained brilliant

1. Here is meant not the co-ruler of Diocletian, Maximian Herculius, but Maximian Galerius, son-in-law of Diocletian and his co-ruler in the East of the Roman Empire. He suggested to Diocletian the thought of issuing a general law against the Christians, as a result of which the general persecution of them began.

victories over the enemies and enjoyed among the soldiers greater glory and honor than the other commanders.

Once a considerable force of the Persian army, stirring up war against Antiochus, made a sudden attack upon Syria. Because of the unexpectedness of the Persian attack, Antiochus was in great alarm. But remembering the valiant chiliarch Andrew, he quickly summoned him, entrusted him with the supreme command of the army in his stead, and, naming him Stratelates, that is, senior commander over the commanders, ordered him to march out with the troops against the enemies who had invaded the land and to halt their advance, saying to him:

"Your courage and bravery in war are known not only to me, but the Emperor himself knows them well; that is why I have honored you with such a high rank. So, I entrust you with this war that has suddenly arisen. Take the army, command it in my place, and strive to increase still more the glory you already have."

Having received this charge, the warrior of Christ, Saint Andrew, desired to march against the enemies with fitting valor not for his own personal glory but for the glory of the name of Jesus Christ. Imitating the ancient Gideon (Judg. 7:1), he chose for the war only a small number of soldiers out of the numerous Roman army, knowing well the saying of the holy King David that the Lord "taketh not pleasure in the strength of the horse, nor delighteth in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy" (Ps. 146:10–11). Saint Andrew's choice fell upon those whom the grace of God, by a mysterious inspiration in his heart, pointed out to him, and he marched out with them against the enemies. Seeing the very considerable forces of the opponents, who, like locusts, had fallen upon the Syrian region, Saint Andrew began to strengthen his soldiers for a courageous struggle, so that they, in their small number, would not be frightened by the numerous Persian army. Since all his soldiers worshipped idols and none of them was yet a Christian, he proposed to them to come to know the one, almighty God, terrible in war, who gives all-powerful help to those who believe in Him. He said to them:

"My brothers and friends! Now you can be convinced in deed that the pagan gods are demons. Being themselves powerless, they are unable to help anyone; but there is one true God, whom I serve, who created heaven and earth. He is almighty, and to all who call upon Him He sends swift help: He makes them strong in war and turns their enemies to flight before them. Behold, as you see, numerous regiments of enemies are advancing against us, who by their numbers are far stronger than we; but if you reject your vain gods and, together with me, call upon the one true God, you will at once see the enemies vanish before you, just as smoke or dust vanishes."

When the saint had said this, all the soldiers with him believed his words, and, calling upon Christ God for help, boldly rushed upon the enemies. A fierce battle arose, and the soldiers of Saint Andrew gained a brilliant victory, for through the faith and prayers of the saint there appeared to help them from on high an invisible power, which struck fear into the Persian forces and threw them into disorder, and they, retreating, took to flight; while the Roman army, led by Saint Andrew, pursuing them, cut down the Persians with their swords, as one reaps ears of grain with a sickle. Thus, by the power of Christ, came the glorious victory of the Romans over the Persians. When the enemies had been driven off, all the soldiers who were with Saint Andrew, seeing so unexpected a victory won with the help of Christ, believed in Him; and Saint Andrew, as far as he was able, strengthened them in the faith, explaining to them the right paths that lead to salvation. Returning triumphantly from the war, Saint Andrew and his soldiers, crowned with glory, entered the city of Antioch.

Meanwhile some of the envious commanders, envying the valor and glory of Saint Andrew, denounced him to Antiochus, informing him that the Stratelates Andrew worships the crucified God. Hearing this, Antiochus fell into a violent rage and sent to him certain men of high military rank to learn from him whether what was said about him was true. Having learned that all this was indeed true, Antiochus again sent envoys to Andrew, partly with exhortations and partly with threats, reminding him of his intolerance toward the Christians; and finally he ordered the envoys to say to him:

"You know well by what cruel death I put to death the son of Polyeuctus, Euthymius, and with him many other followers of the Christian faith. I spared none of them. What then do you count on, and what do you hope for, in rendering divine worship to a Man who was crucified on the cross?"

When the envoys from Antiochus came to the saint with this message and delivered these words to him, he answered them:

"The words of Antiochus encourage me more than they frighten me. For if those of whom he reminds me, having been delivered to cruel torments, became his conquerors and stood before Christ God in the crowns of martyrs, then why should I not also be a faithful servant of my Jesus Christ, so that together with those who suffered for Him before me I may be found worthy of the inheritance in His kingdom?"

After the envoys reported this answer of Saint Andrew to Antiochus, he was filled with fury and sent soldiers to the saint with orders to bind him and bring him before him. Seating himself on the judgment seat, he commanded Saint Andrew to declare openly before all whether he wished to submit to the imperial command or intended to serve his God. Then the saint, standing in this impious tribunal, before the face of angels and men, with a loud voice boldly confessed Christ as the true God and himself as His servant. After this the tormentor at once ordered a bronze bed to be brought and heated strongly, so that the warrior of Christ might be burned upon it. When the bed had been heated to such a degree that sparks leapt from it, Antiochus said to the martyr:

"Andrew, you have labored much in military service; therefore, after so many labors, it is fitting that you should rest on this bed."

The holy martyr, without waiting for the executioners to take him, at once himself took off his garments, quickly mounted the bed, and, lying down, stretched himself upon it as though upon a soft couch, bravely enduring the burning of his body. At first feeling the pain, he began to pray to Christ God that He would send him swift help; and indeed the fire, by the command of God, at once lost its strength and could not harm the body of the martyr. At the same time Antiochus ordered some other men of Andrew's soldiers to be seized, and, having

their hands nailed crosswise to beams made of four parts, he asked them mockingly whether this was pleasant to them. Considering such suffering for Christ very pleasant to themselves, they said:

"O that we might be found worthy to be imitators of Christ, our Lord, who was crucified on the wood of the cross!"

After this, the tormentor turned again to St. Andrew and asked him whether he had been sufficiently punished by the fiery burning, and whether he did not wish to renounce Christ and turn to the worship of the gods. The martyr replied that he wished to endure to the end, for the end crowns every undertaking; for it is not he who has begun his struggle well who receives the reward from Christ God, but he who has finished it well. Therefore the tormentor Antiochus ordered that St. Andrew be taken down from the bronze bed, and that his companions be released from the stocks and cast into prison, as if to give them time for reflection until they agreed to turn to the gods; but in truth in order to report about them to the emperor, since he did not dare, without the knowledge and consent of the latter, to put to death such a valiant and distinguished man as Andrew and his companions. Emperor Maximian, having received and read Antiochus' report, found it unsafe openly to execute by death so renowned a warrior, and with him the other soldiers who had shown such extraordinary courage: lest there arise from this agitation and mutiny in the army, and lest a new war be kindled on their account. In reply he wrote to Antiochus a letter in which he ordered that Andrew and his company be released, freed from confinement and execution; but at the same time he gave Antiochus a secret command, that after the release of Andrew and his companions, having waited a little while, he should skillfully find some other charge against them and put them to death if they stubbornly remained Christians, as though not for their faith, and that he should take them for execution one at a time. Having received such a command from the emperor, Antiochus immediately released St. Andrew and his companions from their fetters and prisons and set them at liberty, and he ordered them to remain in the same rank in which they had been before.

Meanwhile the warrior of Christ, St. Andrew, having learned by divine revelation of this treacherous design of the impious, secretly from

Antiochus, together with all the soldiers who had believed in Christ (and they numbered 2593 men), departed to the Cilician city of Tarsus[2] to the bishop of that city, Peter, to receive from him holy baptism, since none of his soldiers, nor he himself, had yet been baptized. Some time later Antiochus, learning of the departure of St. Andrew and his company into the region of Cilicia, was filled with terrible fury and wrath, and, having taken counsel with those close to him, sent to the governor of Cilicia, Seleucus, a letter in which he wrote:

"I know that you have heard of Andrew, who was a chiliarch in the imperial armies. Now he has not only himself fallen into madness, disobeying the emperor's commands, but he has also turned many of the soldiers to the same madness, and, as we have heard, has fled with his like-minded companions into the region of Cilicia. Therefore, in fulfillment of the emperor's command, order that Andrew and all who are with him be seized, and, bound, send them to us. If they should attempt to resist or to flee, order armed soldiers to strike them down."

Seleucus, having received such a letter from Antiochus, immediately dispatched envoys throughout all the regions of Cilicia to search out Andrew and the soldiers with him; and learning that he was in Tarsus, he went there himself with an army. At that time St. Andrew, perceiving in spirit that the wolves were already coming upon the flock of Christ, asked the bishop of Tarsus, the blessed Peter, and another bishop from the city of Berea, named Nonus, who happened to be then in Tarsus, to perform holy baptism over him and his soldiers without delay; and the bishops at once baptized St. Andrew and his entire company.

Having received holy baptism, St. Andrew with his companions departed from Tarsus to a place called Taxanites, not because he feared death, which on the contrary he greatly desired for Christ's sake, but in fulfillment of the command of his Lord, expressed in the words: "When they persecute you in one city, flee into another" (Mt. 10:23). Soon after this Seleucus arrived at Tarsus with soldiers armed as for war.

2. Cilicia was a Roman province; it lay in the south-eastern part of the Asia Minor peninsula, on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, to the north-east of Syria, and bordered on the latter on the east. The city of Tarsus was the homeland of the holy Apostle Paul.

Not finding Andrew and his company there, he was troubled and even changed countenance from anger, and then, filled with terrible fury, set off in pursuit of the flock of Christ. Meanwhile the saints went from the aforesaid place into the borders of Armenia, into the mountains called Taurus[3], and Seleucus pursued them everywhere, striving to overtake them in order to put them to slaughter. Passing through various localities in these mountains, the saints came to a narrow place, surrounded on all sides by sheer rocks like walls, which could be entered only by a single passage, as through the gates of a city. Here St. Andrew halted with his company and waited for his murderers, for this very place had been foreordained for him by God as the site of his and his companions' martyr's death. St. Andrew then addressed his company with these words:

"Friends, brothers and children of mine, 'now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation' (2 Cor. 6:2; Is. 49:8); let us then stand unanimously and firmly in the love of God, as our Lord commanded, and let us not raise our hands against those who pursue us, but let us lift them up to God with prayer of thanksgiving that He has granted us to live until this time, when we shall receive the inheritance with all the saints who have suffered for Him. Let us therefore pray to Him as the holy first martyr Stephen prayed when the Jews were stoning him, saying: 'Lord Jesus Christ, receive (Acts 7:59) the souls of Thy servants, whom we commit into Thy hands.'"

Having spoken such words to his company, St. Andrew, standing in the midst of it, and raising his hands and turning his gaze to heaven, began to pray, saying:

"Lord, Lord, great and almighty! Hear the prayer of Thy sinful and unworthy servant, and of all who are with me, who have kept the holy faith in Thee undefiled; receive our souls in peace, cover them with Thy mercy, and count them worthy of the mansions of Paradise. O Master! We pray Thee further for those who shall honor our memory. Fulfill all their petitions that lead to salvation, and for the sake of our prayer be

3. Now the Taurus is a mountain chain stretching along the southern shore of the Scandinavian peninsula, then rising to the north and running east. In its eastern part it is called the Antitaurus. From the glaciers of the Antitaurus takes its beginning the well-known river Tigris.

their helper in all their needs. And in this place, where our humble blood shall be shed for Thee, let there be a spring that gives healing and drives out unclean spirits. As for all who shall come hither, preserve them from every calamity, and grant them health of soul and body, that in this place Thy most holy name may be glorified, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

While St. Andrew and those with him were thus praying to God, Seleucus with his soldiers overtook them. Drawing their swords and gnashing their teeth, they rushed like beasts upon the flock of Christ. The holy warriors of Christ, though as brave and experienced in battle they could have defended themselves in that narrow place with only one passage against the hands of the murderers, yet, imitating their Lord, like gentle lambs they surrendered themselves to their murderers for slaughter. Kneeling down, they stretched out their necks under the swords, and the soldiers of Seleucus, cutting them down without mercy, slew them all in a short time. And the blood of the saints was shed like water, flowing in a stream from that place, and their souls entered with triumph into the joy of their Lord.

The saints suffered on the 19th day of the month of August, on a Sunday, at the second hour of the day, and in the place where their martyr's blood was shed, a spring of fresh and healing water immediately gushed forth.

The slaughter of the saints was witnessed by the aforementioned bishops, Peter of Tarsus in Cilicia and Nonus of the city of Berea, who, together with their clergy, had followed them from afar, wishing to see their end. When Seleucus, after the slaughter of the holy martyrs, went back home with his soldiers, these bishops with their clergy approached the bodies of the martyrs and wept over them, and then, having prepared them for burial, honorably interred them in the same place. They also saw the spring that had gushed forth through the prayer of the holy martyrs, and having drunk of its water, they learned of its healing power; for one of the clergy who was with the bishops had long suffered from an unclean spirit, but when he drank from this spring, the unclean spirit immediately left him. After the burial of the saints, Bishop Peter did not return to Tarsus, since Seleucus sought him in or-

der to put him to death, but went with all who were with him into Isauria.

Meanwhile the local inhabitants, learning of the healing spring, began to come to it and brought their sick. They drank the water, bathed in it, and received healing from every kind of sickness, through the prayers of the holy passion-bearer Andrew and the holy martyrs who suffered with him, and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory now, always, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 5:

Having forsaken the glory of earthly rank, thou didst inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; with the drops of thy blood, as with most wondrous gems, thou didst adorn the incorruptible crowns, and to Christ thou didst bring a company of passion-bearers. With the Angelic hosts thou didst behold Christ in the unsetting light of the never-waning Sun, O holy Andrew Stratelates. Entreat Him with those who suffered with thee always, that He may save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Standing before the Lord in prayer, as a star preceding the sun, thou didst behold the desired treasure of the Kingdom, being filled with ineffable joy; thou singest unto the immortal King for endless ages, ceaselessly praised by the Angels, O Andrew Stratelates. Pray with them unceasingly for us all.

* * *

Feast in Honor of the Icon of the Mother of God of the Don[4]

Празднество в честь Донской 5144 иконы Божией Матери

On this day, in the monastery called Donskoy, which lies near the royal city of Moscow, the feast of the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos is celebrated in honor of her wonderworking icon.

4. For the icon see golden-ship.boom.ru

Concerning this icon, the following is told.

When the right-believing Grand Prince Demetrius Ioannovich fought between the rivers Don and Nepryadva against the impious Tatar khan Mamai, this most venerable and wonderworking icon was also among the Russian forces. It had been brought by the Don host to the Grand Prince as a gift and as a help against the enemies. Through the prayers of the Most Pure Mother of God, by the grace of her power streaming forth from the wonderworking icon, the Tatars were defeated. Celebrating the victory solemnly together with his army, the Grand Prince returned to his throne city of Moscow and brought with him the honorable icon, which was named "Donskaya" (of the Don) because of the victory over the Tatars won beyond the Don.

Concerning the monastery, which is called Donskoy after the Donskaya icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, there exists the following account.

In the reign of the right-believing Tsar and Grand Prince Theodore Ioannovich, the Crimean horde made a sudden raid upon the domains of the Muscovite state, and the Tatar khan Murat Giray approached the very throne city of Moscow. Then the right-believing Tsar went out with his army against the Tatars and encamped on the very place where the monastery now stands. Here, into his military camp, he also took the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos brought from the Don. With the help of the Most Pure Mother of God he gained the victory over the Tatar forces and drove them off. Giving thanks to the Mother of God for the victory, he commanded that a stone church be built on this place and that the aforementioned icon be placed in it. From that time the monastery came to be called Donskoy.

On this day all the clergy come from the great cathedral church of the city of Moscow to the monastery with the venerable crosses and icons, and celebrate a solemn festival in honor of the Mother of God.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Timothy, Agapius and Thecla

Страдание святых мучеников Тимофея, Агапия и Феклы

The glorious martyr Timothy was a native of the Palestinian city of Gaza[5]. Since he aroused wonder by his life and by his gift of speech, he was appointed a teacher of the Christian faith. He was seized in Gaza and, standing before the governor of the city, Urban, under interrogation declared himself a Christian, preaching of the love of Christ for mankind, of His coming to earth and of His incarnation. For this he was subjected to various tortures, but he remained unyielding in the faith. Cast afterwards into the fire, he expired. At the same time, in the same city, the holy Agapius and Thecla were subjected to cruel tortures, and since even after this they still held to the faith in Christ, they were cast to be torn apart by beasts, from which they died, receiving the heavenly crowns[6].

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5. Gaza lies on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. In antiquity it was one of the five most famous Philistine cities and served as the boundary of the Canaanites in the south of Palestine. In the New Testament, Gaza is mentioned only in the account of the conversion of the Ethiopian queen Candace (Acts 8:26). From the fourth century Gaza was already a Christian city, and in the seventh century it was conquered by the Muslims.

6. According to the Menologion of Vershinsky, the holy Timothy and Thecla died in 304 in the city of Gaza, and the holy Agapius in 306 in the city of Caesarea in Palestine. The first was burned, the holy Thecla was torn apart by beasts, and the holy Agapius was cast into the sea.

THE TWENTIETH DAY OF AUGUST

August 20

20 августа

New Calendar August 20 · Old Calendar September 2 (civil dates)

Life of the Holy Prophet Samuel

Житие святого пророка Самуила

Before the beginning of the kings among the Israelites, at the time when the people of God were still governed by judges, there lived a man named Elkanah. He was of the tribe of Levi and dwelt in the portion of Ephraim, in the city called Ramaph (Rama), situated on a mountain called Spera. This city was afterward named Armathem and Arimathea, whence Joseph came who buried the most pure body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Elkanah had two wives. The name of one was Hannah, and the other was Peninnah. Peninnah bore children, but Hannah was barren. Elkanah, however, loved Hannah more than Peninnah, as a result of which Peninnah hated Hannah and often insulted her. Troubled by her adversary, Hannah grieved over her childlessness and wept from sorrow. Each year at the great feasts Elkanah went with both of his wives to Shiloh (this was the name of both the mountain and the city) to offer sacrifice and prayer to the Lord God of Hosts, for before the building of the temple in Jerusalem there was a temple and the ark of God there, and all the tribes of Israel came there to worship God. At that time the priest and at the same time judge of Israel was a certain man named Eli, who had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas.

Once Elkanah, having come with his wives to Shiloh and having offered a sacrifice to God, gave a portion of the offering to Peninnah and a separate portion to each of her children, but to Hannah he gave only one portion, since she had no children. Then Peninnah began to mock her and reproach her. Hannah was greatly grieved both by Peninnah's reproaches and by her own barrenness. She wept, did not eat,

and from her severe sorrow, that the Lord had closed her womb, had not given her children, and had thereby made her a reproach to Peninnah, she fell into exhaustion. Then her husband Elkanah said to her:

"Hannah, what is wrong with you? Why do you weep, why do you not eat, and why do you dry out your heart with such great sorrow? Am I not better to you than ten children?"

But Hannah could not find strength to be comforted. When the meal was over she rose and went to Shiloh, to the temple of the Lord. At that time the priest Eli was sitting in his priestly place by the threshold of the Lord's temple. Standing before the temple, Hannah bowed to the Lord and wept from the sorrow of her heart. She began to pray, speaking in secret:

"Adonai, Lord of Hosts! If Thou wilt graciously regard the humility of Thy handmaid, and, remembering me, give Thy handmaid a male child, I will offer him to Thee as a gift, that he may serve Thee all the days of his life. He shall drink no wine nor any intoxicating drink, and no razor (as is the custom of the Nazirites) shall touch his head."

While Hannah was praying thus before the Lord and continued her prayer for a long time, the priest Eli watched her lips. Since she spoke in her heart and only her lips moved, and her voice could not be heard, Eli supposed her to be drunk and said to her:

"How long will you remain here in a drunken state? Depart from the place of the Lord and sober up."

"No, my lord," Hannah answered him, "I am not drunk, but I am a woman oppressed by heavy sorrow. I have drunk no wine nor any other intoxicating drink; I have poured out my soul before the Lord. Do not make your handmaid a laughingstock among the daughters of Israel, for it is from my great grief and sorrow that I have spoken until now."

Then Eli said to her in reply to her words:

"Go in peace. May the God of Israel fulfill every petition that you have asked of Him."

"I, your handmaid," said Hannah, "have found favor in your eyes."

After this Hannah returned to her husband, ate and drank with him, and her face was no longer sorrowful as before. On the next day, rising early and bowing to the Lord, they returned to their house. And the

Lord regarded the humility of Hannah, heard her prayer, and removed her barrenness. Hannah conceived, and when the time was fulfilled she bore a son and gave him the name Samuel, which means "asked of God."

Soon the feast drew near at which Hannah's husband, according to his custom, went with his whole household to the Lord in Shiloh to bring his sacrifices and prayers to God and to give the tithe of the fruit of his land. Hannah said to her husband:

"Now I will not go with you to Shiloh, but will remain at home until I have nursed the infant, and when he is weaned, then I will go to appear before the face of the Lord and fulfill the vow that I made to the Lord: let my son remain forever for His service."

Her husband answered her:

"Do what seems good to you, and may the Lord fulfill your word which has come out of your mouth." Hannah remained at home and did not go to Shiloh to the Lord for three years, until she had weaned the infant Samuel, for it was the custom of Hebrew mothers to nurse their infants for three years.

After Samuel was weaned, Hannah went with him and with her husband to Shiloh. They took for the sacrifice three young bulls, and carried three measures of wheat flour and a wineskin, and entered the house of the Lord in Shiloh with the child. Hannah brought the child as a gift to the Lord, as she had promised, and, giving him to the priest Eli, said:

"I am the same woman whom you saw here three years ago praying to the Lord for the removal of barrenness. The Lord has fulfilled my petition and has given me this child, whom I asked of Him. Now I give him to the Lord, that he may serve Him all the days of his life."

With such words Hannah placed her child in the priest's hands and bowed to the Lord, and her husband Elkanah handed to him the gifts brought for the sacrifice (1 Kgdms. 1:1–28). Then Hannah was filled with a prophetic spirit and sang, saying:

"My heart is established in the Lord, and my strength is exalted in my God," and the other words which are now often sung in the church (1 Kgdms. 2:1–10).

Having completed their thank-offerings and prayers, Elkanah and Hannah returned home, and they left the three-year-old boy Samuel with the priest Eli to be with the Lord, since they no longer wished to take back to themselves him whom they had once given to God. From that time the boy was brought up in the temple of God, learned letters and the service at the holy place under the supervision of Eli. His mother, often coming to Shiloh with gifts for God, brought clothing to her son and rejoiced over him, seeing him growing and performing the service in the temple of the Lord in the priestly linen garment. The priest Eli loved him, noticing his zeal in service and foreseeing in him the gift given by God. And Eli blessed Samuel's parents and said to Elkanah:

"May the Lord give you children from me in place of Samuel, whom you have given as a gift to the Lord."

After this the Lord again sent mercy upon Hannah, and she began to bear sons and daughters, while Samuel at this time grew not only in body but also in understanding, and was in favor with the Lord and with men.

The priest Eli was old, and his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were wicked men. Like the sons of lawless men, they did not know God and did not observe their priestly duty. They wronged those who brought sacrifices, taking for themselves the best portions, and permitted outrages against women who came to pray in the temple of the Lord. And there was scandal and offense to all Israel from them, for they committed many other injustices as well. Their father Eli heard of this and did not punish them with blows or excommunication; he only admonished them with words to cease their evil deeds, but they did not listen to him. And the Lord was angered not only with the wicked sons but also with their father, because he did not punish them properly for their crimes, although he himself was blameless. And the Lord desired to destroy Eli and his sons with their whole house, and first sent to Eli an unnamed prophet to say to him:

"I chose the house of your father from all the houses of Israel to serve Me in My temple, but you have disregarded the honor which I gave you, and have shown preference for your sons above Me, for you

permitted them to commit lawlessness before Me. Therefore I will take this honor from your house, for I will glorify only those who glorify Me, and those who dishonor Me shall be put to shame. Behold, days are coming in which I will destroy your offspring and the offspring of your father's house. And the sign of the punishment coming upon your house will be this: both of your sons shall die on one day together by the sword. And in their place I will set up a priest faithful to Me, who will do everything according to My heart" (1 Kgdms. 2:10–36).

Such a prophecy was given to Eli at the time when Samuel was still a young boy, but even after this prophecy Eli did not endeavor to restrain his sons by real punishment, but continued to admonish them only with words, and the corrupt sons did not fear their father. And God, ever more and more provoked, drew near to the punishment and foretold it a second time to Eli through Samuel in the following manner.

When Samuel was already twelve years old and was serving the Lord under the priest Eli, it happened that one night Eli was lying in his special place in the vestibule that was at the temple of the Lord, and his eyes began to close in sleep, while Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and the lamp was still burning. And the Lord called from the side of the inner veil, saying:

"Samuel, Samuel!"

Samuel, awaking at once, answered:

"Here I am!"

And he ran to Eli and said:

"Here I am! You called me."

But Eli said:

"I did not call you, my son! Go back and lie down."

Samuel went and lay down. But the Lord called to him a second time:

"Samuel, Samuel!"

Samuel rose, ran to Eli, and for the second time said:

"Here I am! You called me."

But the priest said:

"I did not call you, my son! Go back, lie down."

Samuel did not yet know the voice of the Lord at that time, because the revelation of God had not yet come to him.

And the Lord called Samuel yet a third time. Rising quickly, he went a third time to Eli and said:

"Here I am, for you called me."

Then Eli understood that the Lord was calling the lad, and he said:

"Go back, my son, and lie down; and when He who calls shall call you again, you shall say:

'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.'"

Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came and stood near, and called as at the first, the second and the third time, saying:

"Samuel, Samuel!"

Samuel, awaking and rising quickly, said:

"Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

The Lord said to Samuel:

"Behold, I will do a thing in Israel of which whoever hears it, his two ears shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house. I will begin and I will make an end. I have told him that I will punish his house forever for the iniquity that he knew, how his sons were acting impiously, and did not restrain them."

Samuel heard these words of the Lord with trembling, and when the manifestation of the Lord was ended, he lay down again and slept until morning. Rising in the morning, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and he feared to disclose this vision to his master, the priest Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said:

"My son Samuel! What did the Lord say to you? I beg you, do not hide it from me."

And with an oath Eli required of the lad Samuel that he conceal from him none of the words of God. Then Samuel told him all that he had heard. The priest Eli said with humility:

"As it pleases my Lord, so let Him do."

But Eli no longer had the strength to restrain and correct his sons, for he was now very old, and his sons did not fear him at all. Samuel,

meanwhile, grew day by day and was strengthened in spirit, and the grace of God increased in him. The Lord was with him, and he spoke prophetic words, and not one of his words remained unfulfilled. And all the people of Israel understood that Samuel was a prophet of the Lord (1 Kgdms. 3:1–21).

After some time the punishment of God came upon the house of Eli, and together with it upon the whole people of Israel, for it was not only the sons of Eli who had angered God, but the Israelites as well. Although not all of them, many had acquired from the pagans a habit of idolatry, and did not abandon it; while serving the true God, they at the same time offered sacrifices to idols, and thereby angered their God. But the long-suffering God bore with the sins of the people, until the sons of Eli, who were priests and rulers of the people of Israel, offended Him. And when by their lawlessness they provoked God to wrath and punishment, then the righteous Judge and Recompenser, remembering also the sins of the people, punished them all together, for God punishes the subordinates together with those who command them. And the sins of the people do not provoke the angered God to punishment as swiftly as the sins of those whom He has appointed as leaders and rulers of the people.

The Philistines went to war against the Israelites, and the Israelites were defeated by the Philistines, and four thousand men of the Israelite army fell slain. And the elders of Israel said to one another:

"Why has the Lord smitten us today before the foreigners? Let us take from Shiloh the ark of the Lord our God, and bring it into our camp. Let it dwell among us during our war with the Philistines, and let it save us from the hand of our enemies."

Having so decided, they sent to Shiloh and took from there the ark of God, which sits upon the cherubim; and with the ark of God were both sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas. When the ark of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel raised such a loud shout of joy that the earth resounded. The Philistines heard this shout and said:

"What means this great shouting in the Hebrew camp?"

And the Philistines learned that the ark of the Lord had come into the camp of Israel. They were afraid and said:

"God has come into their camp to make war against us. Woe to us! Who will deliver us from His hand? For He smote the Egyptians with all manner of plagues. But let us take courage, men of the Philistines, and fight manfully against the Hebrews, lest we become their servants, as they have been ours."

Encouraging one another with such words, the Philistines stood bravely against the Hebrews. There was war and a great battle on both sides, and instead of being defeated, the Philistines defeated the Hebrews. Since God was angered, the holy thing gave no help, for where the punishment of God comes, it does not spare even the holy thing. The Philistines overcame the Israelites, slew thirty thousand of their soldiers, took captive the ark of God, and slew the two sons of Eli who were with it. Thus, according to the word of God, both of them fell together by the sword.

So God punishes subordinates for the sins of their leaders, and for the wicked deeds of those who serve the altar He permits the impious to plunder holy altars and lay waste His temples. The sons of Eli, who were in place of their aged father priests, judges and rulers of all Israel, had chiefly provoked God by their lawlessness; and meanwhile all Israel suffered punishment from God on their account, and the ark of the Lord was delivered into the impious hands of foreigners.

When the Israelite army had been thus defeated, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, named Jeminei, fled from the field of battle, and with torn garments and dust upon his head, came to Shiloh and announced in the city the defeat of the Israelite army; and the whole city broke out in loud lamentation. At that time Eli was sitting on his seat by the doors of the house of the Lord, and his heart trembled for the ark of God. Hearing the sounds of the people's wailing, he asked those who were with him:

"What means this uproar?"

Then the man who had run from the camp came to Eli and said:

"I have fled from the field of battle."

Eli asked him:

"What happened there, my son?"

"The Israelites," he answered, "were defeated by the Philistines and fled before them; a great slaughter of the people has occurred, both your sons are dead, and the ark has been taken."

When Eli heard of the capture of the ark of God, he immediately fell backward from his seat, broke his spine, and died, for he was old and heavy, being ninety-eight years old (1 Kgdms. 4:1–22).

Meanwhile the Philistines, after the defeat of the Israelite army, took the ark of God and, exulting and boasting that they had taken captive the holy thing of Israel, brought it to their chief city, Ashdod, and placed it in the temple of their unclean god Dagon, beside their idol. But when they entered the temple of Dagon the next morning, they found their god lying on the ground prostrate before the ark of God. They lifted him from the ground and set him in his place. But when, on the following morning, they again entered the temple, they found Dagon not only lying before the ark of God, but broken: his head and both soles of his feet lay cut off, each apart, on the threshold, and both palms of his hands were at the doorway; only the trunk of Dagon remained. The power of God, which was with the ark, punished in this way not only the god of the Philistines, but all the Philistines and their land. From small to great it struck them with an extraordinary disease with festering growths in the secret parts of the body, and many died; and those who remained alive suffered terrible wounds and cried out so loudly from unbearable pain that their cry reached heaven (1 Kgdms. 5). Besides this, the land was filled with mice, which devoured everything, and the land became foul from the multitude of mice. The Philistines then understood that the God of Israel was punishing them on account of His ark, which they had taken captive, and against their own will they sent it back to the Israelites with golden gifts, as is written in detail in the first book of Kingdoms (1 Kgdms. 6:1–21). But we shall return to the narrative about the holy prophet Samuel.

After the end of the war described above, and after the death of the priest and judge of Israel, Eli, the Israelites were for twenty years under the yoke of Philistine servitude, under the power of their enemies and paying them tribute. But after twenty years, God looked upon the affliction of His people, oppressed by the Philistines; and when, having

taken pity on it, He desired to deliver Israel from the power of its enemies, He first raised up among it a preacher of repentance, His faithful servant and priest, the prophet Samuel. For God would not otherwise have mercy on His people, except after they had repented. And the holy Samuel began to preach to all the tribes of Israel, saying:

"If with all your heart you turn to the Lord, remove from your midst the foreign gods and the groves of Ashtoreth[1], and direct your hearts to the Lord and serve Him alone, and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."

The people heeded the words of Samuel and believed him, for they knew him from his childhood, and also knew that his prophetic words were always fulfilled. And the children of Israel removed the foreign gods, Baal[2] and the groves of Ashtoreth, and began to serve the Lord alone; and the holy Samuel, as prophet and priest of God, was their judge and ruler. And the holy Samuel commanded all Israel to gather to him in the city of Mizpah, on a high mountain, to perform there a general penitential prayer to God. When the people of Israel had gathered to the prophet of God, Samuel, and prayed, fasting and confessing their sins and saying: "We have sinned before the Lord," and the holy Samuel, as priest of God, offered sacrifice to God for the forgiveness of the people's sins, then the Philistines, hearing of the gathering of the people of Israel and thinking that they were preparing to make war against them, armed themselves in great numbers and suddenly attacked the Israelites, intending to destroy them utterly. The Israelites, hearing that their enemies were approaching with the purpose of attacking them, were greatly frightened and said to the prophet of God, Samuel:

– Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines.

But the saint encouraged them not to be afraid, but only to pray to God and to put their hope in Him; and he himself, offering up a sacrifice, prayed fervently for them. And the Lord heard Samuel's prayer.

1. Astarte: a goddess revered among the Phoenicians and other ancient peoples of the East. Her worshippers built for her service not temples but groves or thickets.
2. Baal, the god of the sun, was especially revered by the ancient Phoenicians.

He had not yet finished the sacrifice when the Philistines approached to make war on the Israelites, but on that day the Lord thundered mightily over the Philistines, and sent upon them terrible peals of thunder and lightning, so that they were struck with terror and routed before Israel. Then the Israelites came out from the city of Mizpah and pursued their enemies, striking them as they went, as far as the place below Beth-car,[3] and, through the prayers of the holy servant of God Samuel and by their own repentance, with God's help they utterly defeated their enemies.

Thus the Lord subdued the Philistines before His people, and they no longer came into the borders of Israel during all the days of Samuel; and moreover, the cities which they had taken from the Israelites they restored to them again. And there was peace among the people of God for all the time that the holy Samuel was judge and ruler over them, and he governed all Israel worthily. He went about from city to city, corrected whatever needed correcting, and rendered judgment justly and without self-interest, for he accepted no gifts from anyone, and he judged without regard to the persons of those who came before him. Then he would return to Armathem (Ramah), for his house was there; there he judged the people, and there he built an altar to the Lord (1 Kgdms. 7:1–17).

Having been judge of Israel for many years, the holy Samuel grew old, and he appointed as judges of the people his two sons, Joel and Abijah. But his sons did not wish to walk in his ways: they turned aside to covetousness, began to take gifts from those who came to them for judgment, judged for reward, and rendered unjust decisions. Therefore the elders of Israel gathered and came to the holy Samuel and said to him:

– Behold, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now then, appoint over us a king, to judge and govern us, as other nations have.

These words of the elders did not please Samuel, for they did not ask that he should punish his sons or take from them the authority of

3. Beth-horon: a mountain height with a town of the same name. It lay in the tribe of Benjamin, near the north-eastern border of the Philistine territories.

judges, which he would gladly have done, but that he should appoint them a king; and the people insisted, saying:

– Give us a king, that he may judge us.

Then Samuel prayed to the Lord, and the Lord said to him:

– Hearken to the voice of these people and do for them as they ask, for it is not you they have rejected, but Me, that I should not reign over them. Nevertheless, declare to them the rights of the king who will reign over them.

And Samuel said to the people:

– Men of Israel! Know how the king you ask for will rule over you. He will take your sons and make them his servants: he will put weapons on them, place them on horses, command them to run before his chariots, and appoint them as commanders of thousands and of hundreds. Moreover, he will make them his slaves: he will make them plowmen of his fields, reapers of his harvests, gatherers of grapes in his vineyards, and doers of every work he requires. And he will take your daughters to make perfumes, to cook, and to bake bread. He will take your fields, your vineyards and olive groves, and all the best that you have, and give them to his servants; and of what seed, vineyards and fields remain to you, he will impose a tithe, so that you will give him the tenth part of what remains to you. In like manner, he will take your menservants and maidservants and your best cattle for himself, and you will be his slaves. And in those days you will cry out, burdened by your king, and the Lord will not answer you, because you yourselves desired a king.

While the holy Samuel was speaking these words, the people would not listen to his words, but cried out to him, saying:

– We want a king, that we too may be like the other nations. Let our king judge us and go out before us to war against our enemies.

After this the holy Samuel commanded the people to go home, until God should show him a man worthy to be king (1 Kgdms. 8).

In the tribe of Benjamin, in the city called Gibeah (Gibe), there was a man named Kish. He had a son named Saul, tall of stature and handsome, and among the Israelites there was none more comely than he. Kish's she-asses were lost, and Kish sent his son Saul with a servant to

look for them. Searching for the she-asses, they passed through all the regions and did not find them. And they came to the mountain called Zuph, where the city of Armathem (Ramah) was, the native place and dwelling of the holy Samuel. And Saul said to his servant:

– Let us return home to my father, for my father, I think, is troubled not so much about the she-asses as about us.

But the servant said to him:

– In this city there is a man of God, a seer. To those who come to him, he foretells the future. Let us go to him; perhaps he will tell us where to find the she-asses.

And they went to the man of God; but the Lord had already revealed to the holy Samuel everything about Saul, and had commanded him to anoint him to the kingdom. The holy Samuel, seeing the son of Kish, Saul, greeted him kindly and told him not to trouble about the she-asses, for they had already been found; and he gave him lodging with himself for that day and night. The next morning, as he sent Saul away, Samuel took a vessel of oil, poured the oil upon his head, kissed him, and said:

– Behold, the Lord has anointed you king over His people. Now you shall reign over the people of the Lord and save them from the hand of their enemies around them.

This anointing was performed secretly, as a prophecy of the future reign of Saul. And the holy Samuel told the anointed Saul all that was to happen to him on his way, saying:

– Here is a sign to you that the Lord has anointed you king. When you go from me now, you will meet two men near Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah, hurrying toward you; they will say to you, "The she-asses that you went to seek have been found, and your father has forgotten about the she-asses and is very anxious about you." Having left these two men, when you come to the oak of Tabor, you will meet there three men going up to God at Bethel with offerings for sacrifice: one leading three kids, another carrying three sacks of loaves, and a third carrying a skin of wine. They will greet you and give you two loaves. Afterward you will go up to the hill of God and meet a company of prophets. The Spirit of the Lord will come upon

you, and you will prophesy with them. When you see these signs fulfilled in accordance with my words, know that God is with you.

When Saul departed from the holy Samuel, everything happened on the way just as the prophet had said to him.

After this the holy Samuel commanded all the people to gather before the Lord at the city of Mizpah; he himself came there and said to the Israelites:

– Thus says the Lord God of Israel: I brought your fathers out of the land of Egypt and delivered you from the hand of Pharaoh and from all the kings who oppressed you; but you have now rejected your God, who saves you from all calamities, and have demanded a king to be set over you. Therefore, let it be as you desire.

Having said this, Samuel placed all the tribes of Israel before the Lord by their tribes, and began to cast lots to choose the king from which tribe; the lot fell upon the tribe of Benjamin. Then they cast lots again among the men of that tribe, and the lot fell upon Saul, son of Kish. They began to seek Saul among them and could not find him, for he had hidden himself in a house, considering himself unworthy of so high an honor and avoiding it; but the Lord revealed him. Then some of the people together with Samuel went and took him from there and set him in the midst of the assembly. He was taller than all the people. And Samuel said to the whole people:

– Do you see whom the Lord has chosen? There is none like him among you.

The whole people rejoiced and cried out:

– Long live the king!

And Samuel set forth to the people the laws concerning the king, wrote these laws in a book, and laid it before the Lord. Yet at that time Saul's royal authority was not yet fully established, for there were those who were discontented and disagreed. Samuel dismissed the people, and each went to his own house. Saul also went to his house in the city of Gibeah, and with him went valiant men whose hearts the Lord had inclined to Saul; but his opponents said:

– How can this one save us from the hand of our enemies?

And they despised him and brought him no gifts; but Saul pretended not to hear their contemptuous words (1 Kgdms. 9–10).

About a month after this, Nahash, king of the Ammonites, came with a vast army to the city in the territory of Manasseh called Jabesh Gilead, and besieged it on every side. The besieged inhabitants of the city, seeing the great army of Nahash, said to him:

– Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you.

But Nahash answered them:

– I will make a covenant with you, but on this condition: that I gouge out the right eye of each of you, and so lay disgrace upon all Israel.

Then the inhabitants of the city sent to Saul, asking him to help them and deliver them from the siege. Saul immediately sent messengers into all the regions of Israel, quickly gathered a considerable army, and, taking with him the holy prophet Samuel, suddenly came upon Nahash. Very early in the morning he attacked him, routed and scattered his army, and killed him himself. Then the Israelites said to the prophet Samuel:

– Who said that Saul did not reign over us? Give us these men, and we will put them to death.

But Saul said:

"Let no man die this day because of me, for today the Lord has wrought salvation in Israel."

And St. Samuel said:

"Let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingdom."

And all the people went, and Samuel, in the presence of all the people, anointed Saul there as king before the Lord in Gilgal. And there they offered peace offerings before the Lord, and Saul and all the Israelites rejoiced greatly there (1 Kgdms. 11:1–15).

At this time, when the Israelites were rejoicing over their newly appointed king, with whom they had won so glorious a victory over the Ammonites, St. Samuel said to them:

"Behold, I have hearkened to your voice in all that you said to me, and have set a king over you. And behold, the king now goes before you from my youth until this day. Now, therefore, say before God and be-

fore His anointed, your king: have I taken an ox or an ass, or anything else, from any of you? Have I wronged or oppressed anyone, or taken payment or any gift from anyone's hand? Bear witness against me, and I will restore it to you."

The people answered him:

"You have wronged us in nothing, nor oppressed us; you have taken nothing by force, nor received from us any payment or any gifts."

After this Samuel said:

"The Lord and His anointed, your king, are witnesses this day that you have no offense against me for which you might demand a king, since the Lord Himself was your King and ruled over you through various judges, saving you from the hand of your enemies. Know, therefore, that you have committed a great sin before the Lord, because you asked for a king. Behold, now you shall see a sign" (1 Kgdms. 12:1–25).

Having said these words, Samuel began to pray to the Lord. It was the time of the harvest, and the day was clear and dry. Suddenly a loud thunder sounded, a terrible lightning flashed, clouds appeared and a pouring rain fell. All the people were seized with great fear before the Lord and Samuel, and said to the prophet:

"Pray to the Lord your God for your servants, that we may not die, for we see that to all our sins we have added yet another sin, in asking for a king for ourselves."

And St. Samuel answered the people:

"Do not fear; the Lord will not forsake His people. Remain with your king, but serve the Lord with all your heart, and do His will, you and your king. And I will not cease to pray to the Lord for you; only fear Him and truly serve Him, remembering all the wonders and benefits which He has wrought for you. But if you do evil, you will perish together with your king." Having said all this to the people, St. Samuel laid down the authority of judge and devoted himself only to the priestly service.

Reigning over Israel, Saul gradually became corrupt, provoking God to anger, and presumed to appropriate to himself the rights of the priestly office, offering sacrifice to God without the priest of God,

Samuel. Moreover, he proved disobedient to the commandment of God. For through His prophet Samuel the Lord commanded him to go and destroy the Amalekites for their ancient evil deed: because when the Israelite people were journeying through the wilderness from Egypt to the promised land, they had placed a great obstacle in their way. The Lord gave this command, saying:

"Spare none of them, but put to death everything, from man to woman, from boy to nursing infant, from ox to sheep, and from camel to ass."

King Saul, gathering a great army from among the Israelites, went into the land of the Amalekites, defeated their forces, and, having taken possession of their land, captured their king alive. He put to the sword the entire Amalekite people, old and young, men and women, but he spared their king. Moreover, he and his soldiers took for themselves all the best of the Amalekite flocks, destroying only the worst and of little value. They also plundered for themselves all the best property of the Amalekites, not fulfilling the Lord's command that nothing be spared and nothing be taken for themselves, but that everything be given over to destruction.

And the word of the Lord came to the prophet Samuel:

"I regret that I set Saul as king, for he has turned away from Me and has not fulfilled My word."

Samuel was grieved for Saul and cried out to the Lord all night, praying for him. Rising early in the morning, Samuel went to meet the Israelites returning from the war, and found Saul in Gilgal. When Saul saw St. Samuel, he said to him:

"Blessed are you of the Lord, for I have fulfilled all that the Lord said to me through you."

But Samuel said:

"What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears, and the lowing of oxen that I hear?"

Saul answered:

"I have brought them from the Amalekites. The people spared the best of them, and gathered them, and those that were worse they destroyed."

And St. Samuel said to him:

"Why did you not hearken to the voice of the Lord in all that He told you, but rushed upon the spoil and did evil in the sight of the Lord?"

Then Saul answered Samuel:

"I hearkened to the voice of the Lord and did as He commanded me. I destroyed the Amalekites, took their king and brought him alive, and the people took spoil from the flocks—the best sheep and buffaloes—for a whole burnt offering and a sacrifice to the Lord God."

St. Samuel answered Saul:

"Are your burnt offerings and sacrifices indeed pleasing to the Lord? Would it not have been better to fulfill the Lord's command? For obedience is far more pleasing to God than all sacrifices and the fat of rams. Disobedience to God's commandment is as great a sin as sorcery, and transgression of the Lord's commandment is the same as idolatry. And since you have rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord has therefore rejected you, and your house shall not reign over Israel."

Saul said:

"I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, but I feared the people and hearkened to their voice. Yet I beg you, forgive my sin and return with me to the sacrifices, that I may worship the Lord God in your sight."

But St. Samuel turned to go away from him, and Saul seized the hem of his garment and tore it, drawing the man of God toward himself. Then the saint said to him:

"The Lord has today torn the kingdom of Israel from you and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you."

Saul said to Samuel:

"I have sinned before the Lord, but do not dishonor me now before the elders of Israel and before my people, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord your God."

Samuel returned with Saul, and they worshipped the Lord. And St. Samuel said:

"Bring to me here Agag, king of the Amalekites."

Agag came to him trembling and said:

"Oh, how bitter is death!"

St. Samuel said to him:

"As your sword has bereaved women of their children, so shall your mother be bereaved of her son among women."

And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal, not because he acted cruelly, but to fulfill the command of the Lord. After this Samuel went away to Armathem (Ramah), and Saul went to his house in Gabaa (Gibeah). And St. Samuel did not see King Saul again until the day of his death, but he grieved over him, lamenting his destruction (1 Kgdms. 15:1–35).

After some time the Lord said to Samuel:

"How long will you grieve over Saul, whom I have rejected from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go to Bethlehem to Jesse, for among his sons I have found one worthy to be king."

Samuel answered the Lord:

"How can I go? Saul will hear and kill me."

Then the Lord said:

"Take a heifer from the herd, and, bringing her to Bethlehem, say that you have come to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. And invite Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice. I will show you what to do, and you shall anoint for Me the one of whom I shall tell you."

And Samuel did as the Lord had told him, and came to Bethlehem. At his coming the elders of the city were seized with fear, went out to meet him and said:

"O seer! Is your coming peaceful?"

Samuel answered:

"It is peaceful. I have come to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. Sanctify yourselves by abstinence and prayer, and come to me, and I will perform the sacrifice."

Having performed the sacrifice, St. Samuel came to the house of Jesse and ordered him to bring his sons before him one by one. Jesse brought to the prophet his eldest son, Eliab. And the prophet inquired of the Lord, praying to Him within himself, whether this was the one destined by Him to be king. The Lord said to Samuel:

"Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, for I have rejected him. For I judge not according to the face. Man looks at the face, but God looks at the heart."

Then Jesse called Abinadab and brought him to Samuel. The prophet said:

"The Lord has not chosen this one either."

Then Jesse brought Shammah, and Samuel said: "The Lord has not chosen this one either."

Thus Jesse brought his seven sons before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse:

"Are these all your sons?"

Jesse answered:

"There is still one, the youngest. He is tending the sheep in the field."

Samuel said:

"Send and have him brought, for we will not sit down to eat until he comes here."

Jesse sent, and they brought David. He was fair-haired, with beautiful eyes and a pleasing countenance. And the Lord said to Samuel:

"Arise and anoint him, for this is he."

Samuel then took the horn of oil and anointed David in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rested upon David from that day forward. After this Samuel arose and went to Armathem (Ramah), to his house (1 Kgdms. 16:1–13).

Having finished the days of his life, Samuel, already in old age, fell asleep in the sleep of death. All the Israelites gathered and wept for him, and they buried him in his house in Armathem (Ramah) (1 Kgdms. 25:1).

This holy prophet Samuel is extolled by Jesus, son of Sirach, who speaks in praise of him:

The prophet of the Lord, Samuel, beloved of the Lord, established the kingdom and anointed kings over his people, Saul and David. He judged the people according to the law of the Lord, and (through his prayers) the Lord regarded Jacob. By his faith he was proved a true prophet. When his enemies pressed upon him on every side, he called

upon the Almighty Lord, and the Lord thundered from heaven; with a great noise He made His voice to be heard, and He destroyed the princes of Tyre and all the rulers of the Philistines. Even before the time of his death, (Samuel) testified before the Lord and His anointed that he had taken nothing from anyone, not even footwear, and no man had reproached him. He prophesied also after his death, and foretold to the king (Saul) his end, and from the earth in his prophecy he raised up his voice, that the lawless people would be destroyed (Sir. 46:16–23).

Thus Sirach speaks of Samuel. We sinners, hoping through the prayers of this holy servant of God to obtain forgiveness of sins and salvation, shall glorify the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God in Trinity, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As a most honorable gift[4]*, offered to God before conception, and from youth serving Him as an Angel, O all-blessed one, thou wast granted to foretell things to come. Wherefore we cry to thee: Rejoice, Samuel, prophet of God, great hierarch.*

* * *

Holy Martyrs Severus and Memnon, a centurion, and with them thirty-seven Martyrs

Святые мученики Севир и Мемнон сотник и с ними тридцать семь мучеников

On the same day is the commemoration of the holy martyrs Severus, a native of Thrace, and Memnon the centurion, and with them thirty-seven martyrs who suffered for Christ at Philippopolis, under the governor Apelianus. Severus was subjected to the scraping of his flesh with iron; then red-hot rings were put on his fingers; afterwards he was girded with an iron belt heated in the fire, and finally he was beheaded. The centurion Memnon was stretched between two posts and tortured, the torturers cutting from his skin three strips from head to foot; then they cut off the hands and feet of Memnon and of the other thirty-seven martyrs, kindled a great furnace, and cast all the sufferers

4. That is, a gift worthy of special veneration.

for Christ into the fire. Thus the holy passion-bearers ended their sufferings[5].

* * *



5. These holy martyrs suffered in 304, under the emperors Diocletian and Maximian.

THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF AUGUST

August 21

21 августа

New Calendar August 21 · Old Calendar September 3 (civil dates)

Life of the Holy Apostle (of the Seventy) Thaddeus

Житие святого Апостола (из семидесяти) Фаддея

The Holy Apostle Thaddeus was from the city of Edessa[1]; he was by birth a Jew, and he knew the Holy Scripture of the Old Testament perfectly. In the days of St. John the Baptist, the Holy Thaddeus came to Jerusalem; hearing here the preaching of the Forerunner of the Lord, and seeing his angelic life, Thaddeus was greatly astonished and received baptism from John the Forerunner. Soon after this, the Holy Thaddeus saw our Lord Jesus Christ, dwelling in the flesh and living among men; he also heard His teaching and saw the wondrous miracles accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ, and he followed Him. The Holy Thaddeus was received by the Lord and numbered among the company of the seventy Apostles (the lesser), of whom it is said in the Gospel: "The Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come" (Lk. 10:1).

Among these seventy Apostles was the Holy Apostle Thaddeus, whom we commemorate today. Sending these Apostles to preach the Gospel, the Lord said to them:

"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into

His harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if not, your peace shall return to you. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they have: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you... He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me" (Lk. 10:2–16).

The seventy disciples went forth to preach the Gospel with great joy and proclaimed the word of the Lord. Then they returned to the Lord and told Him that even the devils were subject unto them through His name.

After the voluntary suffering, death, three-day resurrection and ascension into heaven of our Lord Jesus Christ, the holy Apostles scattered throughout the whole world to preach the Gospel; the Holy Apostle Thaddeus was sent by the Lord to preach the Gospel in the city of Edessa, for our Lord Jesus Christ had promised, even before His voluntary suffering, to send hither one of His holy Apostles. The ruler of this city was Prince Abgar, and it was to this Abgar that the Lord had promised to send His Apostle.

This Abgar was afflicted with an incurable illness, leprosy. Having heard of the wondrous miracles wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ,

Abgar greatly desired to see Him, to hear His teaching, and to be healed by His power of his grievous sickness. But not daring to hope that the Lord Jesus Christ would come to him Himself, Abgar sent to the Lord a certain skilled iconographer and commissioned him to portray the face of the Lord in colours. At the same time Abgar sent to the Lord an epistle, in which he wrote of what he had heard concerning the Lord and His wondrous miracles: how without any medical remedies or herbs He healed diseases, gave sight to the blind, made the lame to walk, cleansed the lepers, cast unclean spirits out of men, healed with a single word the paralytics who had lain long on the bed of sickness, and raised the dead.

"Hearing all this of Thee," wrote Abgar, "I think of Thee one of two things: either Thou art God Thyself, come down from heaven, or Thou art the Son of God, since Thou doest such marvellous and glorious miracles. Therefore I write to Thee this my humble epistle, that Thou wouldest deign to come to me and heal me of my incurable sickness, which I have suffered for many years[2]:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, seeing the faith and hope of Prince Abgar, sent to him the image of His Most Pure Face not made by hands, and also wrote an epistle, in which He spoke thus:

"Blessed are you, Abgar, who have not seen Me, yet have believed in Me; for it is written of Me that those who see Me shall not believe, and those who see Me not shall believe in Me and inherit eternal life. You write to Me that I should come to you; but it behoves Me to accomplish that for which I was sent, and having accomplished it, to return to the Father who sent Me. And when I am taken up to Him, then I will send to you one of My disciples, who, fully healing you of your sickness, shall give you and those who are with you eternal life."

1. Edessa, the present-day Urfa, is a city in the north of Mesopotamia on the Euphrates River; from 137 B.C. it was the chief city of the newly formed Osroene or Edessene kingdom; in A.D. 217 it was made by the Romans into an eastern colony. In Edessa in the fourth century St. Ephraim the Syrian founded a theological school, which in the fifth century inclined toward Nestorianism, in whose favour the teacher of the Edessene school, the presbyter Hiba, was especially active. In 614 Edessa was conquered by the Arab caliphs; in 1098 Count Baldwin took it and made it the chief city of the Principality of Edessa; in 1144 it was conquered by the Turks, and from that time it passed from hand to hand until, in 1637, it finally fell under Turkish rule.
2. More details on this may be read above, under the 16th day.

Prince Abgar, receiving this epistle and beholding the image not made by hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, was filled with great joy. Kissing the epistle with love and bowing before the image of Christ, Abgar soon received considerable relief from his sickness, for only a small part of the leprosy remained upon his face.

For the complete healing of Abgar from his sickness, the Holy Apostle Thaddeus was sent by the Lord, according to His promise, who healed Abgar fully, not only in body but also in soul, as will be told below.

When the Holy Apostle Thaddeus came to the city of Edessa, he did not reveal himself at once to Prince Abgar, but first entered the house of a certain Jew known to him, by name Tobias. Dwelling in the house of this Jew, the Holy Thaddeus wrought many miraculous healings by the power of Christ, healing all manner of diseases by the laying on of hands and the invocation of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The report of the Holy Thaddeus soon spread throughout the whole city, and the inhabitants of that city began to bring many sick to the holy Apostle; seeing their swift healing, all were greatly amazed.

After some time it was reported to Prince Abgar that an unknown man, who had come from Jerusalem, was performing many miracles in the name of Christ.

Immediately Abgar recalled the promise of Christ to send him one of His disciples, and he thought to himself: is not this the one whom the Lord promised to send? Then he commanded that Tobias be summoned, and said to him:

"I have heard that in your house there dwells a certain man who came from Jerusalem; they say that this man heals diseases in the name of Jesus Christ."

Tobias answered:

"Yes, indeed it is so; you have spoken quite truly, my lord, that the man who lives with me works many miracles in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Then the prince said:

"Bring him to me."

Tobias went to the Holy Thaddeus and said to him:

"The prince of this city has summoned me and commanded me to bring you to him, that you might heal him of the sickness from which he suffers."

The Holy Thaddeus answered:

"Truly I have been sent to him."

On the next day, early in the morning, both went to the prince; meanwhile all the nobles and counsellors had already gathered at the prince's.

When the Holy Apostle Thaddeus entered the doors of the princely palace, the prince looked upon him and perceived that the face of the Apostle shone with an unusual light. Abgar was struck with terror, rose from his place, and bowed down to the earth before the Apostle of Christ.

Meanwhile all who were there were greatly astonished at this action of the prince, wondering why the prince should bow to a simple man, since they had not seen the wondrous radiance that shone from the face of the Apostle of Christ.

Then the prince asked the Holy Thaddeus:

"Are you the disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who promised to send me one of His disciples, that He might fully heal me of my infirmity and grant me, as well as all my kinsfolk, eternal life?"

The Apostle of Christ answered:

“Since you have shown great hope in my Lord Jesus Christ, I have indeed been sent by Him to you; and if your faith increase yet more, all that you desire will be fulfilled according to your faith.”

Abgar answered:

“I believed in Him (the Lord Jesus) so fervently that I intended to gather an army and go to war against the Jews who crucified the Lord, to take vengeance upon them for their cruelty and malice and to destroy them utterly; but the Roman authorities, to whom our land is subject, prevented me in this.”

The Holy Thaddeus said:

"The Lord and our God Jesus Christ had no need whatever of human help during His suffering at the hands of the envious and hard-hearted Jews; for He Himself could, had He willed, have summoned le-

gions of Angels; but, fulfilling the will of the Father, our Lord suffered for the salvation of the world; and having fulfilled the will of His Father, He ascended to Him into heaven in glory and sat at His right hand. Our Lord has no need that anyone should avenge Him upon His enemies, for He Himself has power over all; He Himself will one day judge the living and the dead, and will render to each according to his deeds."

The Holy Apostle Thaddeus spoke to Prince Abgar and to all who were with him of many other things concerning our Lord Jesus Christ; then, having brought him to perfect faith in the Lord, he baptized him.

Immediately after the baptism, Abgar received healing from the leprosy. It should be noted that after the first healing[3], Abgar still had leprosy upon his face, whereas at first he had been stricken with leprosy over his whole body. When the epistle of Christ and the image not made by hands of the Most Pure Face of Christ were brought to him, then for the first time Abgar was healed: his body was cleansed of the leprosy, and only a small part of his body, by God's providence, namely his face, remained unhealed until the arrival of the Apostle.

Together with this, another healing took place, not of the body only but also of the soul, after the Apostle's arrival, following holy baptism; for Prince Abgar came up out of the holy font in perfect health.

Nor did Prince Abgar alone receive baptism after the Apostle's preaching; all who dwelt in his house were baptized, and likewise all who had seen the wonders wrought by the Apostle, as well as those who had been healed of their infirmities by the Apostle.

After this, the holy Apostle Thaddeus commanded the prince to gather all the townspeople, that they too might hear the word of God.

On the following morning the whole people assembled. The Apostle of Christ, standing in an elevated place, began to preach to all the people concerning the one God, who created heaven and earth and all things, visible and invisible, by His almighty power. The holy Apostle Thaddeus also told the people how our Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven to earth, ineffably incarnate for the salvation of men; how

3. See there also.

He suffered of His own will, rose again, ascended into heaven, and prepared an eternal reward in the heavens for the righteous, but for the wicked unending torments in hell. The holy Apostle related in detailed discourses also all the other mysteries of God's dispensation.

All the people who heard the Apostle believed his words, for they had also seen the wonders wrought by the Apostle: they all saw their prince healed, and many others who had previously been afflicted with various diseases. All began to glorify the Lord and asked the Apostle for baptism.

Thus the city of Edessa was enlightened by the holy faith in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by holy baptism. After this, churches began to be built there, and presbyters were ordained by the laying on of the Apostle's hands.

Prince Abgar greatly desired to repay the Apostle of Christ in some way for his wondrous healing, and therefore he offered him much gold; but the saint accepted nothing, saying:

"If we have left our own possessions, how shall we desire to receive and acquire anything from others?"

After the holy Apostle Thaddeus had established the holy faith and piety in Edessa and directed all things to the good, he departed for Mesopotamia[4]. There he enlightened many, turning them to Christ, and built churches. The holy Apostle passed through many Syrian cities, labouring in the preaching of the name of Christ. Then he came to the Phoenician city of Berytus[5]. Having preached the name of Christ there and baptized many, the holy Apostle Thaddeus reposed here in peace in the Lord[6].

It should be noted that the holy Apostle Thaddeus commemorated today is a different person from the holy Apostle Jude Thaddeus, called

4. Mesopotamia was a rocky and sandy country lying between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, extending from Armenia in the north to the Persian Gulf in the south.

5. Beirut is the chief city of Lebanon. In antiquity Beirut was a Phoenician harbour and bore the name Berytus. The Egyptian king Thutmose II conquered this city, and Antiochus III took it from the Ptolemies. In 140 B.C. Beirut was destroyed by the Syrian Diodotus Tryphon, but under the emperor Augustus it was restored by Agrippa and made a colony for Roman veterans. Under later emperors Beirut was famed for its higher school of rhetoric, poetics, and especially of law.

Lebbaeus, one of the twelve Apostles, whose memory is celebrated on the nineteenth day of the month of June (under which date his Life may also be read). In the Prologue, under today's date, above the synaxarion for the holy Apostle Thaddeus commemorated today, there is this inscription: "The memory of the holy Apostle Thaddeus, who is also Lebbaeus." It should be observed, however, that the epithet "Lebbaeus" must be ascribed not to this St. Thaddeus but to another, the Apostle of the twelve, as is also mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 10:3).

Nicephorus Callistus[7], the ancient Greek church historian, speaks of this in more detail in the fortieth chapter of the second book of his History. Nicephorus Callistus says the following: "Saint Jude, not Iscariot, but another, who was given two names, Thaddeus and Lebbaeus, son of Joseph, brother of James who was cast down from the roof of the temple, first preached the Gospel in Judea and Galilee, in Samaria and Idumea, and also in the cities of Arabia, in the countries of Syria and Mesopotamia; afterwards he came to Edessa, the city of Abgar, where another Thaddeus, an Apostle of the seventy, had previously preached the name of Christ, and here he completed all that had not been finished by that Thaddeus"[5159].

Thus Nicephorus Callistus speaks of these two Thaddeuses: the one he names (from among the twelve Apostles) Lebbaeus, and the other (the one commemorated today), from among the seventy Apostles, only Thaddeus and not Lebbaeus.

It should also be noted that the holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew is called Lebbaeus by some Evangelists[8].

Kontakion, Tone 4:

6. The repose of the holy Apostle Thaddeus took place about the year 44. There is a report of an embassy from Narses, king of Assyria, to Abgar, prince of Edessa, asking either to send to him the holy Apostle Thaddeus or to write to him (Narses) about the wonders wrought by this Apostle. In answer to Narses' request, Abgar informed him of the wonders of the Apostle Thaddeus.

7. Nicephorus Callistus was the most renowned church historian of the fourteenth century, a monk of the Monastery of St. Sophia in Constantinople. His *Ecclesiastical History* (in 18 books) extends to the death of the Byzantine emperor Phocas (c. 611).

8. More details about this may be read in the account of the life of the holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, under the 16th day.

As a most bright star the Church hath acquired thee, O Apostle Thaddeus, ever enlightened by thy wonders: save by faith those who honour thy memory.

* * *

Memory of the holy martyr Vassa and her children: Theognius, Agapius and Pistus

Память святой мученицы Вассы и чад ее: Феогния, Агапия и Писта

The holy martyr Vassa lived in the reign of the emperor Maximian[9] in the city of Edessa[10]. Joined in marriage to a certain idol-priest named Valerius, she bore three sons: Theognius, Agapius and Pistus, and brought them up in Christian piety, for she was a Christian (she had received the knowledge of the holy Christian faith from her parents). Slandered by her husband, she was brought before a pagan judge, to whom she confessed herself a Christian; therefore she was cast into prison together with her children. Afterwards the holy Vassa was led out to the place of judgment; and before her eyes her sons were subjected to various tortures: first Theognius was hanged and scraped; then another of her sons, Agapius, was beaten; the torturers stripped the skin from the head of this Agapius down to the chest, yet he remained silent and did not utter a single word; then her third son was also subjected to various tortures. The mother, beholding the sufferings of her children, strengthened them and, in prayer, exhorted them to bear their contest manfully. And all three youths, having bravely endured all the torments laid upon them, were beheaded with the sword at the same time.

Vassa, their mother, rejoiced, having sent her beloved children before her to Christ. Afterwards she was again subjected to imprisonment, where she was tormented by hunger, yet she received food from an Angel, by which she was strengthened for still greater sufferings. Then, according to the command of the tormentor, she was led to

9. Emperor Maximian governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 305 A.D. to 311 A.D.

10. The city of Edessa was located in Macedonia.

Macedonia and compelled there to make an abominable sacrifice; but she did not obey the tormentors, for which she was thrown first into water, then into fire; after this she was subjected to stoning, but remained unharmed amid all the torments. When she was led into an idol temple, she took the image of the god Zeus[11], cast it to the ground and broke it. Afterwards the holy Vassa was given over to be devoured by beasts, but she remained unharmed among them. Then the tormentors threw her into the sea, thirty stadia from the shore. And all who watched the saint from afar saw three radiant men, shining brighter than the sun, lead the saint into a ship and seat her upon a throne. Eight days after this, the holy Vassa appeared to soldiers on a certain island called the Hellespont; when the Macedonian governor, named Philip, learned of this, he wrote to the administrator of the Cyzicene region (the Hellespontine eparchy) to seize the martyr; he, having taken the saint, compelled her to sacrifice to idols. But seeing that the saint remained unyielding, he ordered her hands to be bound behind her and her whole body to be beaten without mercy; finally he ordered her honourable head to be cut off. Thus the holy martyr Vassa gave up her holy soul into the hands of Christ God, to Whom glory is offered now and always and unto ages of ages. Amen[12].

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Abramius the Diligent of the Kiev Caves, who laboured in the Cave of St. Antony, c. 12th century.

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Abramius, Wonderworker of Smolensk (he reposed in the first half of the 13th century).

11. Zeus—the supreme god of the ancient Greek religion, who was considered the progenitor of the other gods.

12. The death of the holy Martyr Vassa and her children took place at the beginning of the fourth century. At Chalcedon, around the year 450, there existed a church built in honor of the holy Martyr Vassa.

NOTES

5159. There is report that the holy Apostle Jude preached Christianity also in Persia, and it was from there that he wrote his catholic epistle. The occasion for writing this epistle was the fact that ungodly men had crept into the community of believers, who turned the grace of God into an occasion for lawlessness and, under the guise of Christian liberty, permitted themselves every kind of sinful deed. This epistle contains, in part, doctrinal teaching: concerning the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the distinction between good and evil Angels, and the future Last Judgment. It also contains moral teaching: an exhortation to avoid sinful fleshly impurity, blasphemy, pride, disobedience and other vices. The Apostle exhorts all to be steadfast in their duties and offices—in faith, in prayer, in love—and exhorts them to care for the conversion of those who have gone astray and to guard themselves against heretics.

THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF AUGUST

August 22

22 августа

New Calendar August 22 · Old Calendar September 4 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Eulalia

Страдание святой мученицы Евлалии

In the reign of the pagan emperors, when the whole universe was darkened by Hellenic godlessness, there lived in the Spanish city of Barcinon[1] a certain maiden named Eulalia, the daughter of Christian parents. From her infancy she loved our Lord Jesus Christ with all her heart; she dwelt with her parents in a village at a considerable distance from the city. Her parents loved Eulalia very much for her gentleness, humility and wisdom, which surpassed her years. Eulalia was taught from books, and she had one firm purpose: to serve the Lord with her pure virginity. The saint occupied herself with reading books and with glorifying God day and night, living in a special cell together with her companions of the same age.

When Eulalia had reached the age of fourteen, the Emperor Diocletian[2] raised a cruel persecution against the Christians. The governor Dacian came to the city of Barcinon; he offered abominable sacrifices here to his impious gods, and then began to search out Christians in order to compel them to burn incense to the idols. As a result there was great confusion in the city, for the Christians were forcibly dragged from their houses and compelled by torments to idolatry; and all this soon became known throughout the surrounding villages as well.

When the maiden Eulalia heard of all this, she was filled with great spiritual joy and, with a cheerful face, said:

1. Now Barcelona.
2. The emperor Diocletian reigned from 284 to 305.

"I thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ! Glory to Thy most holy name, for I have obtained what I sought. I believe in Thee, my Master, that with Thy help the desire of my heart shall be fulfilled."

When Eulalia's parents, and also the maidens who were with her, heard these words of the saint, they did not understand what she was speaking of, and asked her what was the cause of her joy, what she had obtained and what she desired. But she said nothing to them, keeping her intentions hidden in her soul. And all were amazed, for the saint had the custom of concealing nothing that she understood concerning the holy faith; but as far as she herself grasped it from the books, being enlightened by the grace of God, she recounted everything to all for their profit, so that everyone loved her as their own soul. Eulalia did not speak of her thoughts at that time, in order not to meet with an obstacle to her purpose on the part of her father and mother, who loved her exceedingly.

When night came and everyone was asleep (and the first crowing of the cocks had already sounded), the holy maiden secretly left her house, and no one noticed her departure, and she set out for the city, wholly aflame with love for her heavenly Bridegroom Christ the Lord, having the firm intention of laying down her soul for Him. And this night journey did not seem frightening to her, as it usually does to all young girls who fear to go out of their homes at night; placing all her hope in God and firmly resolved to die for Him, the saint disregarded the darkness of the night, was not troubled by nocturnal phantoms or by beasts crossing her path; but, like a deer hastening to the springs of water, she pressed on along the stony road with bare feet, unaccustomed to so harsh a way.

Saint Eulalia came into the city already by day. Passing through the city gates, she heard the summons of the heralds calling the people to the spectacle. She hastened to the place of the spectacle, which was in the middle of the city; there she saw the governor Dacian, seated on a high judgment seat. Pressing with effort through the crowd, the saint came before the governor and said in a loud voice:

"Unrighteous judge, who sittest upon a high throne and fearest not God, who dwelleth above all. Is it for this that thou sittest here: to des-

troy innocent people whom God created in His image and after His likeness, that they might serve Him? Thou drawest them into the service of Satan, and dost deliver to death those who do not obey thee."

The governor, amazed at such great boldness in a young maiden, said:

"Who art thou, who hast dared to appear before our tribunal without summons, speaking reproachful words to our face and opposing the imperial command?"

The saint answered with great boldness:

"I am Eulalia, the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Trusting in Him, I was not ashamed to come of my own accord and to reprove thee. Why dost thou act so unwisely, despising God, who created all things: heaven, earth, sea, and all that is on them and in them? Why dost thou worship the devil, and moreover compel even people who serve the true God, by various tortures, to worship idols, which are not gods but demons? With them, you and all who worship them shall be given over to the eternal fire."

The governor, filled with wrath, immediately ordered the naked maiden to be beaten without mercy on the back with oaken rods. And while Eulalia was being beaten, the governor said:

"Wretched girl! Where, then, is thy God? Why does He not save thee from these blows? And why hast thou become so mad as to dare to speak of a matter that does not concern thee? Confess, then, that thou didst this through inexperience, not knowing how great is the power of the judge; then thou shalt receive forgiveness, for I pity thee, so young, beautiful and noble a maiden, being delivered to such cruel blows."

The saint answered him:

"I mock at thee, for thou advisest me to lie, that I, out of ignorance, have presumed to go to torments for my God, and that I did not know how great is thy power. Who does not know that the power of every despot is temporary? As a man lives today and dies the next day, so his power is changeable. But the power of my Lord Jesus Christ is endless, for He Himself is eternal. I do not wish to lie, for I fear my Master, who will deliver all liars and lawless men to the fiery Gehenna, to be burned. My maidenly youth will be all the more adorned, and my nobil-

ity all the more increased, if I endure sufferings for the sake of my Lord. Know, then, O tormentor, that I feel no pain from the sufferings inflicted upon me, by the protection of Christ, my Master, who will condemn thee according to thy deeds on the day of the Last Judgment to eternal torments."

At these words of the martyr the governor grew still more angry and ordered the saint to be hanged on the instrument of torture, fashioned in the form of a cross, and to have her pure maidenly body scraped with iron combs until all the skin was removed from her. The saint, in the midst of those sufferings, called upon God, saying thus:

"O Lord Jesus Christ! Hear me, Thy unworthy servant, and forgive my sins! Strengthen me in the midst of the torments which I endure for Thy holy name, that the devil may be put to shame together with his servants."

The governor said to her:

"Where is He to whom thou criest out? Rather listen to me, mad and wretched maiden, and offer sacrifice to the gods: then thou shalt be left alive; for see, death already draws near to thee, and there is no one who can deliver thee."

The saint Eulalia answered him:

"May no good come to thee, sacrilegious, possessed man, full of ruin! And I shall the more not turn away from my God, for He to whom I cry is here, but thou dost not see Him because of thy impurity, for thou art unworthy to see Him. He strengthens me, so that I count as nothing the torments which thou dost dare to inflict upon me."

Then the governor ordered the saint to be burned with lighted candles, commanding that she be burned until she died.

Being burned, the martyr was filled with joy and loudly uttered the words of the psalm: "Behold, God is my helper; the Lord upholds my soul. He shall recompense evil to my enemies; in Thy truth destroy them. I will diligently offer Thee sacrifice, I will praise Thy name, O Lord, for it is good, for Thou hast delivered me from all troubles" (Ps. 53:6–9).

While the saint prayed in such words, the fire from the candles turned upon the servants and severely burned their faces, so that they

fell to the ground. When the saint saw this, she lifted her eyes to heaven and said still more loudly:

"O Lord Jesus Christ! Hear my prayer, and show Thy mercy upon me; number me among Thy chosen for repose in eternal life: 'Show me a sign for good, that those who hate me may see and be ashamed' (Ps. 85:17); and let those who believe in Thee glorify Thy power."

Having prayed in such words, the saint yielded up her spirit to God[3]; and all saw a white dove, white as snow, flying out of her mouth and rising toward heaven; all who saw this were greatly amazed; and the Christians (who were many among the people) rejoiced that they had been granted to have, from their own city, an intercessor before the Lord in heaven.

When the governor saw that the martyr had already died, he was greatly ashamed, having been defeated by a young maiden; and rising in anger from the judgment seat, he went to his house. The governor ordered the body of the martyr to be left hanging on that instrument of torture, and posted guards so that no one could take the body of the martyr down from there; the governor said that it should hang on the tree until the birds ate it and scattered its bones.

When the governor had gone away, and the body of the saint was still hanging on the tree, suddenly snow came down from the cloud and covered the honorable body of the holy martyr as with a white garment; fear fell upon the guards, and they withdrew from that place and watched from afar, astonished at all that had happened.

Meanwhile the holy maiden's parents learned of everything. For they rose in the morning, and seeing their beloved daughter was not at home, they were in great distress and began to search for her everywhere. By about noon they learned that their daughter had died for confessing the name of Christ, and was still hanging upon the tree of torment. Then they hastened to the city with bitter tears. Seeing the saint dead, stretched out in the form of a cross upon the tree and covered with snow, her parents wept greatly, grieved and sobbed with bitter tears; yet at the same time they rejoiced that their dear daughter

3. The end of the holy martyr Eulalia took place about 303.

had received the crown of martyrdom and entered the bridal chamber of the Heavenly Bridegroom. They intended to take the body of the Martyr of Christ to their home, but they were not admitted to it by the guards; looking upon the saint from afar, they wept, and at the same time rejoiced in spirit.

On the third day, some pious men took the honorable body of the holy martyr by night (the guards did not notice this), and wrapped it in a pure shroud with aromatic spices, in the presence of her parents, who bathed the body of their dear daughter with their tears. Saint Felix (who afterwards suffered for confessing the name of Christ)[4], gazing upon the face of the dead martyr, said with tears of joy:

"Lady Eulalia! You have been granted to receive the crown of martyrdom before us!"

As Felix spoke these words, the face of the maiden, who had been dead for three days, smiled upon him as if she were alive; after this, all who were there began to sing the words of the psalm: "The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles" (Ps. 33:18).

And they buried the body of the holy martyr Eulalia with honor, glorifying God the Father, and His Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, one God in the Trinity, whose Kingdom is endless and abides unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Feast in honor of the Georgian Icon of the Mother of God

Празднество в честь Грузинской иконы Божией Матери

In the north of Russia flows the river Pinega, which empties into the river Dvina; along the banks of the Pinega many villages are situated; adjoining this river is a large and high mountain called Chernaya (the Black); this mountain extends all the way to the Ocean (the Arctic Ocean) and is about five hundred stadia in length; formerly it was desolate and uninhabited by men.

4. The memory of St. Felix is celebrated by the holy Church on 22 August.

By a certain revelation of God, upon that mountain there was built, in the year 7111 from the creation of the world (in the year 1603 A.D.), a monastery in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos; this monastery was built by a certain priest of that land named Myron, who afterwards became abbot of that monastery.

It should be noted that during the reign of the right-believing Tsar and Grand Prince Michael Feodorovich[5], the Persian Shah Abbas[6] subdued Iveria[7]; finding here the many-healing robe of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, he took it; at this time the Persians also took from Iveria many other holy objects and venerable icons and carried everything off to Persia, not out of reverence (for they were pagans), but for sale to Russian merchants; for at that time there were very many Russian merchants in Persia, and the Persians knew that they paid honor and worshipped holy icons. Among these merchants was a certain man named Stephen, from the Russian city of Yaroslavl; this Stephen was the steward of the estate of a citizen of the city of Yaroslavl named George. To this Stephen a certain Persian brought an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, adorned with silver and gold, and offered to sell it to him. That pious man bought that venerable icon from the Persian with great joy.

At the very time when he was buying this icon in Persia, the aforementioned master of his, George, who lived in the city of Yaroslavl, had a vision in sleep, in which he heard these words:

"The steward of your estate, who is living in Persia, has acquired for you a precious pearl; and when he brings it to you, send it to the regions of the Dvina territory, to the Black Mountain."

Indeed, after some time, the aforementioned Stephen, steward of George's estate, arrived from Persia and brought George the venerable icon of the Most Holy Theotokos which he had bought in Persia. George received the holy image with joy, and remembering the vision, said:

5. Michael Feodorovich reigned from 1613 to 1645.
6. In 1622.
7. Present-day Georgia.

"This is truly the priceless pearl of which I was told in the vision in sleep."

Soon after this, in accordance with the command of God, George set out for the regions of the Dvina territory and came with that venerable icon to the aforementioned Chernogorsky Monastery[8] (this icon was called Georgian because it had been taken from the land of Iveria, or Georgia). George brought as a gift to the monastery much gold, silver, church vessels, and liturgical books[9].

At the time when this venerable icon of the Mother of God was brought into that monastery, the abbot and brethren were celebrating the All-night Vigil in the church; a certain monk of that monastery, named Pitirim, who had been blind and deaf for many years and was in the monastery infirmary during the service, went out into the vestibule before his cell to pray to God. While he was praying, suddenly a great light shone upon him, so that he was greatly frightened, for he had not seen light for many years (because of his blindness); Pitirim took this for a demonic deception; then he signed himself with the sign of the Honorable Cross and lifted his eyes to that great mountain, after which he saw upon it a light like the rays of the sun; then, having offered a prayer, he immediately began to see with his eyes and to hear with his ears. After the morning doxology, Pitirim went to the abbot and told him, as well as the brethren, of the healing he had received from blindness and deafness; and all who were there glorified God.

When that pious man George, who was there at that time, heard of this glorious miracle, he built a beautiful church in that monastery in honor of the Most Holy Theotokos. And then many miracles began to take place through that holy icon; healings were granted to many sick people; for example, the grace of the Most Holy Theotokos healed a certain woman named Neonila, who was paralyzed; another woman named Theodosia, who suffered from her eyes, was also healed. The Most Holy Theotokos showed Her help to a certain man named Kodratus, who was possessed by a demon and driven by demons

8. Or Krasnogorsky.
9. The Georgian icon of the Mother of God was brought to the Chernogorsky (or Krasnogorsky) monastery in 1629.

through the desert for ten weeks, eating nothing and drinking nothing; the Mother of God appeared to him, strengthened him, showed him the way to his parents' home, and commanded him to come to Her monastery to the wonderworking icon, promising to grant him complete healing from his illness, which indeed She granted. Through the intercession of the Mother of God, a certain man named John, who was engaged in fishing and was drowning in a lake, was saved from drowning; besides this, the Mother of God also appeared to another man, named Paul, who lived in a seaside country and had been ill with a stomach ailment for a whole year; appearing to this Paul, the Mother of God taught him the Divine Scripture and healed him of his illness. Likewise the Mother of God healed many other incurable diseases and infirmities, such as ailments of the stomach, swellings of the body, various diseases of the eyes and teeth; She also healed those possessed by unclean spirits, and even now She manifests Her miracle-working power by healing from various diseases[10]. And not only there, but also in Moscow, many miracles take place from a copy of that venerable icon, which is in the church of the Holy Trinity.

The copy of the icon was made on the following occasion.

In 1654 the wonderworking Georgian Icon of the Mother of God was brought from the Chernogorsky or Krasnogorsky Monastery to Moscow for the restoration of its painting, and was placed, it is thought, either in the Trinity Church in Nikitniki, or in the house of one of the parishioners of that church. In the first week of Great Lent of that same year, Hieromonk Macarius, at the request of a craftsman named Gabriel Evdokimov, who had a gravely ill son, brought this icon to his house for a moleben, and the sick man received healing. In thanksgiving for the healing, Gabriel Evdokimov had a copy made of the wonderworking Georgian icon, which he placed in the Trinity Church near the Varvara Gates.

10. In the reign of Alexis Mikhailovich (1645–1676) the wonderworking Georgian icon of the Mother of God was carried into Siberia to the river Lena and into the inland cities of Russia: Ustyug, Vologda, Pereyaslavl-Zalessky and Moscow. – The wondrous signs of the mercy of the Queen of Heaven have not ceased to be accomplished through the Georgian icon even to the present time. Thus, in 1897 (17 June), the wife of a priest of the village of Shuisky, Totma district, Vologda province, was healed before this icon of an extremely grave and dangerous illness.

Miracles from this icon take place even now, and it enjoys fervent prayerful veneration among the inhabitants of the city of Moscow[11].

These miracles were granted to all who came with faith, and they were performed to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now, always, and unto endless ages. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the holy martyrs Agathonicus, Zoticus, Theoprepius, Acindynus, Severian, and the others with them

Память святых мучеников: Агафоника, Зотика, Феопрепия, Акиндина, Севериана и прочих с ними

The martyr of Christ Agathonicus lived in Nicomedia[12] in the reign of the emperor Maximian[13]. He turned the Hellenes from the worship of idols and brought them to Christ. He was taken to be tortured by the comes[14] Eutolmius. When this comes, sent by the emperor into the Pontic country to torment Christians, was sailing on a ship and arrived at a place called Karpin, he found there St. Zoticus together with disciples who confessed Christ. The comes Eutolmius condemned his disciples to death by crucifixion, but St. Zoticus he took with him. Returning to Nicomedia, he took a certain Pricipus, who had been instructed in the holy Christian faith by St. Agathonicus; binding him together with Agathonicus, Zoticus and the other Christians, among whom were Theoprepius, Acindynus and Severian, he led them all into Thrace, whither the emperor himself had also come, so that here he might deliver them all to torments. When the saints were in the coun-

11. More detailed accounts of the wondrous signs manifested through this icon can be read in the book mentioned: Glory of the Mother of God (pp. 590–591).

12. Nicomedia was a city at the northeastern corner of the gulf formed by the Sea of Marmara. It was founded in 264 B.C. and received its name from the Bithynian king Nicomedes I. On the site of ancient Nicomedia there now stands the city of Izmit.

13. Maximian Herculius, who bore the title of Augustus, was co-ruler with Diocletian and governed the western half of the Roman empire from 285 to 305.

14. A comes was an imperial bodyguard, a collector of taxes for the imperial treasury, a city governor; in this case the word comes denotes city governors.

try called Potama, the comes put to death St. Zoticus, Theoprepius and Acindynus, for they could no longer walk because of the wounds and sores they had received earlier. Coming to the vicinity of Chalcedon[15], the comes put to death St. Severian, who had boldly confessed Christ. The other martyrs, together with St. Agathonicus, he led to Byzantium, and here tormented them for some time. Then he came with them to Selymbria, to a place called Ammus, for Maximian was staying there. Here the holy martyr Agathonicus, together with all the Christians brought with him from Nicomedia, was tortured and tormented for the last time, after which they were condemned to death and beheaded, suffering for the name of Christ, our God[16].

Kontakion, Tone 1:

Having acquired a good name, O wise in God, thou didst turn away from the faith of wicked men, not fearing torments, O glorious Agathonicus. Therefore thou didst become an heir to good things, and with those who suffered with thee thou didst receive worthy crowns.

* * *

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Anthusa, of the holy Hieromartyr Athanasius the bishop, and of the two servants of St. Anthusa: Charisimus and Neophytus

В тот же день память преподобной Анфусы, святого священномученика Афанасия епископа и двух слуг святой Анфусы: Харисима и Неофита

St. Anthusa, daughter of wealthy inhabitants of the city of Seleucia, having received Baptism, struggled for 23 years in the desert. Athanasius, bishop of Tarsus in Cilicia, who baptized St. Anthusa, was beheaded with the sword in the reign of Aurelian (270–275). By

15. Chalcedon, or more correctly Calchedon, was originally a Megarian colony on the shore of the Sea of Marmara. Under the Christian emperors Chalcedon was the capital of the Asia Minor province of Bithynia. In the history of the Christian Church, Chalcedon is notable as the site of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, convened in 451 by the emperor Marcian.
16. The martyrs' end took place at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century.

the same death died Charisimus and Neophytus, who were baptized together with their mistress. St. Anthusa reposed in peace a long time after their martyr's end (more than 20 years).



THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF AUGUST

August 23

23 августа

New Calendar August 23 · Old Calendar September 5 (civil dates)

Martyrdom of the Holy Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons

Страдание святого священномученика Иринея, епископа Лионского

St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, belongs to the number of the most remarkable Fathers and teachers of the Church. He lived and labored in the second century, devoting his whole life to the struggle against Gnosticism.[5181] His significance for the Christian Church of the second century may be compared with that of St. Athanasius the Great for the Christian Church of the fourth century. Both of them, in their life and activity, were in an equal and preeminent degree defenders of the pure, uncorrupted teaching of the Church against the false heretical doctrines of their time: St. Irenaeus against Gnosticism, St. Athanasius against Arianism.[1]

St. Irenaeus was a native of Asia Minor; his homeland was the city of Smyrna. From his early years Irenaeus studied thoroughly all the wisdom of the Greeks; he was well acquainted with Greek poetry, philosophy, and the other sciences of the Hellenes.

Yet St. Irenaeus was not carried away by the falsely named knowledge of this world. Having heard of spiritual wisdom, the wisdom of Christianity, Irenaeus desired to receive it with all his heart; from then

1. The founder of the Arian heresy was Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria. He denied the consubstantiality of the Son of God with God the Father, regarded Jesus Christ as a creature, and so forth. The heresy of Arius was decisively condemned at the First (325) and Second (381) Ecumenical Councils, at which the gathered fathers composed the Creed. In the fifth century Arianism had almost no followers in the Roman Empire, but it revived in Germany among the Goths, Burgundians, Vandals and Lombards, where it existed until the seventh century.

on he desired to be instructed only in this true wisdom that saves the soul, and he counted the worldly wisdom of the Hellenes as nothing.

In the truths of the Christian faith, St. Irenaeus was first instructed by St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. This St. Polycarp was a disciple of the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, and had been installed by him on the episcopal throne of the city of Smyrna. St. Polycarp labored very much for the benefit of the Church of Christ, for he cared not only for his Smyrnean flock but also wrote epistles to neighboring churches. According to the testimony of the blessed Jerome,[5183] Polycarp was "the leader of all Asia in Christianity."

Indeed, St. Irenaeus was the disciple of this glorious Polycarp. Hearing from the lips of St. Polycarp the soul-saving Christian teaching, Irenaeus loved it more than any secular learning; having become a disciple of Polycarp, St. Irenaeus became, as it were, a disciple of Christ Himself, for he received with all zeal in his mind the truths of the Christian faith and gave himself wholly to the service of God. Since Polycarp was a disciple of the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, he passed on to St. Irenaeus all that he had himself heard from the holy Apostles, who had been eyewitnesses and servants of Christ.

Irenaeus impressed all this upon his mind, recording everything in his heart as on some sheet of paper.

St. Irenaeus was ordained a presbyter by St. Polycarp and was sent by him to Gaul to preach the Word of God there.

The bishop in Lyons at that time was St. Pothinus, who afterwards sealed his preaching with martyrdom for the name of Christ. Arriving in the Gallic city of Lyons, St. Irenaeus began to labor zealously, helping St. Pothinus in his archpastoral labors.

At this time a cruel persecution of the Christians was raised in Lyons by the pagans, and St. Irenaeus showed himself a courageous defender of the Christians and a steadfast pillar of the Church. From there St. Irenaeus was sent by Bishop Pothinus to Rome, to carry the epistle of the confessors to Bishop Eleutherus.[2]

2. In this epistle St. Irenaeus is praised as the most zealous defender of the Christian faith.

Returning from Rome, St. Irenaeus, after the martyr's death of St. Pothinus,[3] took upon himself the administration of the episcopal throne.

St. Irenaeus was a good shepherd to the citizens of Lyons in the most difficult times for them, for at that time the Church of Christ was beset by many troubles: impious idolaters had then raised a cruel persecution against the Christians and, besides this, godless heretics had begun to sow disorder and dissension in the Church of God.

St. Irenaeus patiently endured for the name of Christ all the oppressions and vexations inflicted upon him by the idolaters, while against the heretics he armed himself formidably with his word and his writings. The archpastoral activity of St. Irenaeus was not confined to Lyons, all of whose citizens Irenaeus converted to Christianity, but extended also over all of Gaul. St. Irenaeus maintained very lively relations with the Roman Church as well as with the churches of Asia Minor, as is witnessed by his epistles to the Roman presbyters Florinus and Blastus, and by his epistles to the Roman and Asia Minor bishops during the disputes about the celebration of Pascha which arose under Pope Victor I.[4] St. Irenaeus always strove to reconcile those who were at enmity and in disagreement. Thus, for example, when the aforesaid Pope Victor I of Rome, by his unwise obstinacy, threatened to bring about a division among the eastern and western Christians over the difference of views concerning the time of the celebration of Pascha, St. Irenaeus succeeded by his influence in averting the division and reconciled those in disagreement.

St. Irenaeus also showed great zeal in refuting the heretical false teachings of his own time. He wrote many works in which he boldly exposed the errors of the heretics and set forth the truths of Christian doctrine. Of all his writings the most remarkable is the one entitled "Against Heresies."[5] St. Irenaeus began to write this work at the request of one of his friends, with the aim of refuting the heresy of the

3. The martyric death of St. Pothinus followed around 177.

4. Victor I occupied the papal throne from 187 to 200.

5. The exact title of this work is: "Exposure and Refutation of the Falsely Named Knowledge." This work was written in Greek, but of the original text only fragments survive, preserved by Eastern Church writers. The said work is divided into 5 books and belongs to the number of the most remarkable polemical writings.

Valentinians,[6] which at that time was spreading its false teaching widely not only in Rome but also in Gaul. Then, desiring to show the falsity and essence of the Valentinian heresy, which merely repeated the earlier errors of the heretics, St. Irenaeus described the most ancient heresies that had appeared earlier and had entered into conflict with Christianity; and with true Christian wisdom Irenaeus refuted all the errors of the heretics and set forth the only saving teaching, the Christian one.

The principal foundation on which the whole Christian doctrine rests, the "pillar and ground of the Church"[7], as St. Irenaeus expresses it, is the four New Testament Gospels, written by the disciples and eyewitnesses of the Lord. These Gospels, Irenaeus reasons, are as follows: the Gospel of Matthew, written in the Hebrew tongue; the Gospel of Mark, the disciple of the Apostle Peter; the Gospel of Luke, the companion of the holy Apostle Paul; and the Gospel of John, the beloved disciple of the Lord, written by him during his sojourn in Asia Minor, at Ephesus. Thus there exist in the Church only four genuinely apostolic Gospels, trustworthy and infallible; and, as St. Irenaeus reasons, "it is impossible that there should be more Gospels or fewer than those that exist in the Church"[8]. The followers of the (heretic) Valentinus, he continues, without any fear offer their own writings and boast that they possess more Gospels than there are. They have proceeded to such audacity that they entitle their recent composition the "Gospel of Truth," although it in no way agrees with the Gospels of the Apostles. For if the Gospel they offer is true, and yet is wholly unlike those delivered to us by the Apostles, then those who wish may learn, from the writings themselves, that it is not the Gospel of truth delivered by the Apostles[9]. That those Gospels are true and trustworthy, St. Irenaeus proves in the following manner. There must be four Gospels, if only for the reason that there are but four regions of the earth; and then the fourfold number of the Gospels, in St. Irenaeus's judgment, ought to

6. These heretics received this name from the name of their chief founder, Valens.
7. *Against Heresies*, Book III, ch. 11.
8. Ibid., Book III, ch. 11.
9. Ibid.

correspond to the four covenants that God gave to mankind: the covenant given to Adam before the Flood, the covenant given after the Flood to Noah, the legislation given through Moses, and finally the fourth and last covenant, the Christian, which contains within itself all the others[10]. Lastly, St. Irenaeus sees the most important proof that the number of the Gospels is precisely four, neither more nor fewer, in the correspondence of the Gospels to the four apocalyptic living creatures, the Cherubim, upon whom from eternity sits "the Word that orders all things and contains all things"[11]. The force of this proof lies in the fact that the Gospel ought to serve as the expression of the four modes or aspects of the activity of the Son of God, which are indicated in the Apocalypse[12] under the symbol of the four living creatures, the Cherubim. The first living creature, as the Apocalypse relates, is like a lion and signifies the eternal dominion and royal power of God the Word; this same thing is expressed also by the Gospel of John, which describes the eternal and glorious birth of the Son from the Father, as God from God: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (Jn. 1:1–2). The second living creature is like a calf and signifies the priestly service of our Lord Jesus Christ; to this same service, in St. Irenaeus's reasoning, the Gospel of Luke also points; it begins with the account of the priest Zacharias offering sacrifice to God; this means that the Lamb, foreordained from eternity for slaughter for the sins of the world, appeared in the world in order to offer to God the propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of men. The third living creature, upon which the Word sat, had the face of a man and signified the manifestation of the Son of God in human form and appearance; and the Gospel of Matthew likewise proclaims chiefly the humanity of Jesus Christ, presenting Him as the Son of Joseph and Mary. Finally, the fourth living creature is like a flying eagle and signifies the presence in the Church of the Holy Spirit, sent by God the Father for the sake of

10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Rev. 4:1–11

the redemptive merits of the Son of God; and the presence of the Holy Spirit is expressed, in St. Irenaeus's judgment, also by the Gospel of Mark, written in the form of a concise and as it were abridged narrative, because such is precisely the prophetic spirit. "Thus," St. Irenaeus concludes, "such as the activity of the Son of God is, such is the form of the living creatures, and such as the form of the living creatures is, such is the character of the Gospel. The living creatures are fourfold, the Gospel is fourfold, and fourfold is the activity of the Lord"[13]. The complete correspondence of the Gospels to the four aspects of the activity or ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ thus constitutes an indubitable proof of their genuinely apostolic origin, their truth and trustworthiness; all other Gospels that are put forward as true are neither genuine nor trustworthy, because the genuine Gospels can be only four, neither more nor fewer.

St. Irenaeus particularly censured the heretics who denied the unity of the Divine essence. The heretic Marcion mistakenly asserted two opposite actions in God, expressed in two covenants, the Old and the New; he maintained that there exist two gods, one who punishes and chastises, and another who only shows mercy.

Refuting this false teaching, St. Irenaeus said that such a conception is incompatible with the very notion of God. The true God, Irenaeus reasons, cannot be exclusively punitive and chastising, without love and goodness, nor exclusively good and merciful, without justice and judgment, because both love and justice belong to God essentially and necessarily. One of the most essential attributes of God, Irenaeus reasons, is wisdom. If God is wise, then He possesses the capacity to determine and decide, and consequently to judge; and if He judges, then He rewards each according to his works, that is, either punishes or recompenses[14].

One of the principal proofs on which Marcion based his theory of the opposition between the Old Testament and New Testament dispensations, between the Old and the New Covenant, was that the actions of God in the Old Testament were supposedly opposite to the actions of

13. *Against Heresies*, Book III, ch. 11.
14. *Against Heresies*, Book III, ch. 25.

God in the New Testament. In the Old Testament God appears, as it were, only as the God of judgment and justice, Marcion reasoned; in the New Testament He appears, as it were, exclusively as the God of love and goodness.

In his writings St. Irenaeus refuted this impious error of Marcion and set forth the thought that the Old and the New Covenant constitute one indivisible whole. To ascribe to God in the Old Testament justice alone, and in the New Testament only all-embracing love, means, in St. Irenaeus's judgment, not to know or understand the spirit and meaning of either covenant. God punishes strictly in the Old Testament, but He will punish still more strictly, and does punish, in the New Testament. Christianity is more perfect than Judaism; the New Covenant is broader and fuller than the Old; on this basis the demands of Christianity must also be much stricter than the demands of Judaism. In Judaism fewer means were given for the fulfilment of the Divine law; in Christianity far more were given: in Christianity all the gracious gifts and powers for the fulfilment of the Divine law have been imparted; consequently every transgression and non-fulfilment of this law in Christianity must be punished much more severely than in Judaism. "In the New Covenant," St. Irenaeus reasons, "as our faith in God has increased (that is, has been opened more widely), so also have the demands regarding the manner of life increased: we are commanded to refrain not only from evil deeds but even from evil thoughts, from idle talk, from frivolous words and empty speech; and in the same measure has the punishment increased for those who do not believe in the Word and despise His coming"[15]. In Judaism, precisely because it is not more perfect than Christianity, the punishments of God, in St. Irenaeus's judgment, were "moderate" and, as it were, temporary punishments; but in Christianity, since it is higher and more perfect than Judaism, these punishments are much stricter, and no longer merely temporary but eternal[16].

Thus, both in the Old Testament and in the New, God equally reveals Himself as a Being both punitive and loving; here and there He

15. *Against Heresies*, Book I, ch. 27; cf. Book III, ch. 25; Book IV, chs. 28 and 40.
16. *Against Heresies*, Book IV, ch. 28.

both rewards and punishes, both shows mercy and chastises. And this is one and the same true, almighty, and all-perfect God.

In refuting Marcion and the other heretics like him, St. Irenaeus sets forth in detail in his writings the meaning and significance of the Old Testament.

According to St. Irenaeus, the Old Testament Law comprises two aspects: the external, ritual aspect, and the internal, moral and spiritual aspect. The external aspect of the Law had only a relative and temporary significance. The ritual prescriptions and ordinances that surrounded the whole life of the Old Testament man, and which held him under the yoke of bondage, had meaning, in St. Irenaeus's view, only in relation to the Jews, and were in the hands of the Providence of God merely a necessary means for the moral and religious education of the Hebrew people. The Jews had to be held under the yoke of bondage, "because of the coarseness and disobedience of their heart," reasons St. Irenaeus, and "because of their constant inclination to return to idols and to make for themselves golden calves."[17] But with the coming of the New Testament, the ritual prescriptions of the Mosaic Law proved wholly unnecessary and superfluous, because man now stood in other relations to God, relations that were close and filial, and became capable of fulfilling the commandments of God freely and without constraint, without particular detailed external prescriptions. The spirit of bondage in man's relationship to God in the Old Testament, and the spirit of sonship in the New Testament, according to St. Irenaeus's reasoning, by no means contradict one another. The change from the spirit of bondage to the spirit of freedom and sonship indicates only a strict gradualness and consistency, and a wise purposefulness in the history of the Divine economy and in the moral and religious education of men. One and the same God educated ancient mankind in a certain manner, and educates the new mankind in an altogether different manner. "God does everything by measure and in order," reasons St. Irenaeus, "and nothing is unmeasured with Him, for nothing is disordered."[18]

17. *Against Heresies*, Book IV, chs. 14 and 15.
18. Ibid., Book IV, ch. 4.

As a necessary educational means in the hands of the Divine covenant, which proved unnecessary and superfluous and was therefore abolished, the external side of the Mosaic Law was at the same time, according to St. Irenaeus's reasoning, a prophecy of the future times of the Messiah and had a prefigurative significance. From this aspect too, the abrogation of the ritual Mosaic Law is again natural and necessary, and by no means proves an opposition between the Old and New Testaments. But what especially speaks against Marcion's theory is the Savior's attitude toward the internal, moral side of the Old Testament Law. The Savior, reasons St. Irenaeus, did not abolish this side, but only "completed and extended it."[19] The chief moral commandment of the Mosaic Law was love of God and neighbour; the Savior does not abolish this commandment but, on the contrary, affirms and clarifies it as the fundamental commandment of the New Testament law. The moral teaching of the Gospel and of the New Testament in general is higher and more perfect than the moral teaching of the Old Testament, but the principal foundation of both is one and the same; hence the Author of both moral teachings is also one and the same.

Thus, according to St. Irenaeus's reasoning, between the Old and New Testaments there is not the slightest opposition, and both are the creations of one and the same true and most high God, who arranged the work of human salvation in strict gradualness and consistency, according to the wise plan drawn up from eternity. Hence it is understood of itself that the Old Testament writings, in which the will and economy of God concerning the salvation of men is expressed, are as divinely inspired and salutary as the New Testament writings, in which the very accomplishment and appropriation of salvation is depicted. "The same Spirit of God," reasons St. Irenaeus, "Who through the prophets proclaimed what the coming of the Lord would be, and through the elders[20] well interpreted what had been said by the prophets, He also through the Apostles proclaimed that the fullness of the time of adoption had come and the Kingdom of Heaven had drawn near."[21]

19. Ibid., Book IV, chs. 12 and 13.
20. The Seventy translators are meant.

According to St. Irenaeus's teaching, God is the Lord of all in the broadest sense of this word. Only He alone is the Master and Lord of all, and there is and can be no other equal or similar Master and Lord to Him, "because," reasons St. Irenaeus, "he who has someone above himself or equal to himself can no longer be called either God or the great King."[22] Only one God, as Lord of all, undividedly possesses supreme authority and power over all; everything else that exists was created by Him and is sustained by His power.

In exposing the heretics, St. Irenaeus also reasoned about the sources of the holy Christian faith. In brief, his reasoning was as follows.

Holy Scripture, both of the Old and of the New Testament, undoubtedly has a Divine origin, for it was written under the special spiritual illumination of the Spirit of God upon the writers of the sacred books. This Holy Spirit acted both through the prophets and through the Apostles. Holy Scripture is the first and most principal source of faith and religious knowledge, true and infallible and binding for all. The correct and unerring understanding of Scripture is possible only under the guidance of the holy universal Church, and only in her can the truth be found. Sacred Tradition has the same Divine origin as Scripture, and therefore constitutes a second source of faith and religious knowledge, equally true and infallible and binding for all as Holy Scripture. The sole guardian of genuinely apostolic Tradition can be only the universal Church, in the person of her leaders. "Everyone who desires to know the truth," reasons St. Irenaeus, "must turn to the Church, for the Apostles entrusted the Divine truth to her alone, and, as into a treasury, placed in her everything that pertains to the truth. Only the Church is the door of life."[23] And in particular, according to St. Irenaeus's teaching, only the pastors of the Church, lawfully ordained, are the true teachers and guardians of the truth contained in the Church.

St. Irenaeus grounds this significance of the Church, as the only infallible guardian and bearer of genuinely apostolic tradition, on the con-

21. *Against Heresies*, Book III, ch. 21.
22. Ibid., Book II, ch. 30.

stant presence of the Holy Spirit in her and on the constant action within her of Divine gifts and powers. The Spirit of God, according to St. Irenaeus's teaching, has existed in the Church from her very foundation. He is, as it were, the life and soul of the Church; He moves and governs her just as the soul moves and governs the members of our body. In the Church God has established all the necessary ministries, apostleship, prophecy, teaching, through which our salvation is accomplished.

By virtue of the constant and direct presence of the Spirit of God in the Church, the Church can never err or go astray. Hence the Divine truth entrusted to her by the Apostles, orally or in writing, will always remain in her one and the same, as pure and Divine a truth as it was in the time of the Apostles, because one and the same Holy Spirit acted in the Apostles, and acts now in the Church, in the persons of their successors. The succession of the apostolic office, reasons St. Irenaeus, is preserved everywhere and without interruption in the Church, and together with it the apostolic tradition is preserved in its pure and uncorrupted form. "In general," St. Irenaeus observes, "the Church, although scattered throughout the whole world, by virtue of the presence in her of one and the same Spirit of God, and by virtue of the uninterrupted continuity in her of one and the same apostolic office, preserves everywhere one and the same teaching. She believes in one and the same way, as though having one soul and one heart; she proclaims, teaches and hands down in one and the same way, as though having one mouth. In Germany, in Spain, in Gaul, in the East, in Egypt and Libya, they believe alike and have the same tradition of the Church. As the sun is one and the same throughout the whole world, so also the preaching of the truth shines and enlightens all men, one and the same throughout the whole Church."[24]

By thus teaching and instructing everyone, St. Irenaeus saved many from pagan idolatry and from heretical error; he guided many Christians onto the path of salvation, and strengthened others for the martyr's struggle. Finally, he himself suffered for the name of Christ, under the

23. Ibid., Book III, ch. 4.
24. Ibid., Book I, ch. 10.

emperor Severus.[25] For confessing the Gospel, St. Irenaeus was beheaded, and thus received the glorious crown of martyrdom in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.[26]

* * *

Memory of St. Callinicus, Patriarch of Constantinople

Память святого Каллиника, патриарха Константинопольского

St. Callinicus was at first a priest and keeper of the vessels of the Blachernae[27] church in honour of the Most Holy Theotokos. When Patriarch Paul departed to the Lord, St. Callinicus was raised to the patriarchal throne. This was in the reign of Justinian II,[28] a wicked and not God-fearing emperor, who oppressed very many (Christians), did not respect the clerical order, and did not honour the churches of God.

This emperor was building for himself a great and beautiful palace, which he wished to name after himself. Near the palace stood a church erected in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos; this church was called the Metropolitan's Church. Since one of the walls of the palace being built at the command of Emperor Justinian had to pass by the aforementioned church, the emperor resolved to destroy it, so that it would not obstruct the palace under construction—especially since steps and a porch before the palace entrance were to be built on that very spot. The

25. Emperor Severus reigned from 193 to 211. – The repose of the holy hieromartyr Irenaeus followed in 202.

26. Besides the work *Against Heresies* ("Exposure and Refutation of the Falsely Named Knowledge"), St. Irenaeus is credited with many other writings that have come down to us, though in small fragments. Thus to him belong: the *Epistle to the Roman Bishop Victor* (on the question of the time of celebrating Pascha), *On Monarchy, or That God Is Not the Author of Evil*, and *On the Octad* (that is, of the aeons; the refutation of the Gnostic teaching on the aeons as sources of life is meant). About 50 further small fragments bearing the name of St. Irenaeus have been gathered, but their authenticity has not yet been proven.

27. Blachernae was a locality in Constantinople, situated in the western corner of the city, renowned for its shrines. Here stood the church mentioned in the Life, built in honor of the Most Holy Theotokos by the Emperor Leo the Great (457–474), in whose reign the venerable robe of the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos, brought from Palestine, was laid in this church; the Holy Church commemorates this event on July 2 (under this date one may also read the account of the said event). – Later this church burned down; now only small remnants of it are visible.

28. Emperor Justinian II reigned from 685 to 695; then again from 705 to 711.

emperor ordered the patriarch to offer a prayer of blessing for the demolition of the aforementioned church. But the patriarch resisted the emperor, saying:

"I have no prayer for the destruction of a church; rather, I have prayers for the foundation and building of a church, for God created the world for existence, not for destruction."

Then the emperor's messengers began forcefully to entreat the patriarch, and even to compel him to carry out the emperor's command. But he, shedding tears, cried aloud:

"Glory to Thee, O Christ, who endurest all things!"

And at once the church collapsed.

A short time later, by the righteous judgment of God, the emperor himself suffered ruin: for he was driven from his kingdom in disgrace, and the palace he had built became the dwelling of others. All this came to pass in the following manner.

When the emperor learned that the inhabitants of Constantinople were murmuring against him, for they disliked him because of his frequent oppressions and lawless life, and heard that everyone in the city spoke ill of him, he was filled with anger and fury against the whole city. Then he commanded the patrician[29] and voivode Stephen, a cruel man who shed human blood without mercy, a Persian by birth, secretly to prepare armed soldiers, unknown to all, and on the following night to fall unexpectedly upon the noblest citizens and slay them all without mercy.

At that time the voivode Leontius, who had served in the East, was living in Constantinople. This voivode had more than once shown great courage in war and defeated many regiments of the enemy; but instead of receiving honor and praise, he had been imprisoned by the emperor for three years. At this time he had only just been released from prison.

When Leontius learned of the emperor's cruel and unjust design and command, he secretly told some of his faithful friends everything. They in turn told the same to other friends, in the same way, and thus, by late evening, they had all assembled together in considerable num-

29. In antiquity, patricians were people of noble origin; to them were usually entrusted the most important state offices.

bers. To forestall the unjust slaughter of citizens that was to begin that night, they armed themselves and went to the imperial palace. Finding the emperor asleep, the soldiers seized and bound him. At once Leontius opened all the prisons, brought out all the prisoners, armed them, and sent them throughout the city. They went about the city crying aloud:

"Christians! All of you, gather at the church of St. Sophia, for Emperor Justinian has been defeated and bound."

Hearing this, everyone went to the church with great joy, saying:

"This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad in it!" (Ps. 117:24)

When day came, Leontius led the emperor, bound, to the place where the horse races were usually held[30]. In the presence of all the people assembled there, he cut off the emperor's nose and sent him into exile at Chersonesus[31]; from that time Justinian was surnamed "Nose-Cut"[32]. The inhabitants of Constantinople immediately proclaimed Leontius emperor, and the most holy Patriarch Callinicus crowned him.

Leontius reigned for three years; then he was driven from the throne by the voivode Apsimar, whose soldiers chose him as emperor and named him Tiberius III[33]. Apsimar seized Leontius and sent him into exile at the Dalmatian monastery; Apsimar reigned for seven years.

At this time Justinian Nose-Cut fled from his exile in Chersonesus and went first to the Khazars, and afterward to the Bulgarians. Having gathered a great army among the Bulgarians, Justinian marched toward Constantinople and halted at the Golden Gate[34]. His army was so numerous that it extended as far as Blachernae. Justinian remained there for three days, urging the inhabitants of Constantinople to receive him again as their emperor; but the inhabitants of Constantinople answered him with reproaches and insults.

30. Horse racing.
31. Chersonesus or Cherson (Old Russian Korsun) is the ancient name of the present peninsula of Crimea.
32. In translation from the Greek: "with cut-off nose."
33. Emperor Tiberius III Apsimar reigned from 698 to 705.
34. A locality in Constantinople.

Meanwhile Apsimar, frightened by Justinian, who had come against him with a great army, fled to Apollonia[35]. Then Justinian sent envoys to the most holy Patriarch Callinicus and the entire senate[36], begging them to receive him and swearing that he would do no harm to anyone.

After taking counsel, the patriarch and the senate proposed that Justinian kiss the honorable Cross of the Lord, the Holy Gospel, and the Most Pure Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, so that by this kiss he might confirm his oath—namely, that he would take vengeance on no one for his former expulsion. Justinian thus confirmed his oath.

Then the inhabitants of Constantinople opened the city gates to him and received him with honor. But when the emperor entered the city with his soldiers and regained the throne, the wretch immediately broke his oath and began to put to death many members of the senate, as well as other distinguished citizens. Then he ordered that Leontius, who had driven him out, be brought from the Dalmatian monastery; his soldiers also seized Apsimar at Apollonia and brought him to him. He ordered both men, bound, to be led in disgrace through the city. Then he commanded that they be brought to him at the place of the horse races; and when they had been brought and cast at his feet, he set his feet upon their necks and trampled their heads, while his soldiers cried aloud:

"Thou shalt tread upon the asp and basilisk; thou shalt trample underfoot the lion and the dragon" (Ps. 90:13).

After mocking and reviling them, Justinian ordered that they be beheaded.

Yet this was not enough: Justinian filled the whole city with blood, sparing not even the common people. Then, seizing the most holy Patriarch Callinicus, he put out his eyes, cut off his nose and tongue, and sent him into exile at Rome, commanding that he be walled up there in a stone wall.

35. The name Apollonia is associated with several ancient Greek cities. In this case, probably Apollonia situated in Illyria is meant.

36. Synclitus: a council formed of the oldest and most honorable citizens (and representatives of the highest spiritual authority).

The imperial command was carried out, and St. Callinicus was walled up. But after forty days the barrier fell away, and St. Callinicus was found still alive, though scarcely breathing. Four days later the saint departed unto the Lord[37].

At that time the holy chief Apostles Peter and Paul appeared in a dream to Pope John VI of Rome[38] and commanded him to bury the body of the holy Patriarch Callinicus with honor in their apostolic church. The pope carried out the command of the holy Apostles.

But the perjurer and tormentor, Emperor Justinian Korkonos, did not escape the righteous judgment of God. Unable to endure his inhuman oppressions, the citizens and military commanders conspired against him and, choosing a favorable moment, attacked him and cut off his head.

Thus the impious man perished by an evil death, while Christ's Hierarch Callinicus was granted the crown of martyrdom in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Lupus

Память святого мученика Луппа

The holy Martyr Lupus lived during the reign of Emperor Aurelian[39] and was the slave of a certain master, yet free in Christ the Lord (cf. 1 Cor. 7:22), in whom he had believed. Filled with pious zeal, St. Lupus smashed the lifeless idols of the pagans, and drowned others in the depths of the sea. When the impious idolaters saw this, they were filled with fury and rushed upon the saint with drawn swords, intending to cut him to pieces; but they fell into madness and cut one another down. The saint, unharmed among the pagans, preached to them the word of God, being filled with faith, wisdom, and the grace of God. Despite all their efforts, the impious could not seize the saint, for the power of Christ prevented them from doing so and

37. The repose of St. Callinicus followed in 705.
38. Pope John VI occupied the papal throne from 701 to 705.
39. Emperor Aurelian reigned from 270 to 275.

would not even allow them to approach the Martyr of Christ. Therefore, standing at a distance, they bent their bows and began shooting arrows at the saint; but instead of striking the martyr, they struck one another. St. Lupus stood among them as a target for their arrows (the place at which they aimed), yet he was not only not slain by an arrow, but was not even wounded. And since the Martyr of Christ had not yet been baptized, and greatly desired holy Baptism, lest he die at the hands of his tormentors without being a Christian, he prayed to the Lord for this; and immediately water poured down upon him from heaven. Thus the holy Martyr of Christ received Divine Baptism from on high, in the presence of all the pagans who watched him and greatly marveled at all that took place.

After this St. Lupus voluntarily gave himself, like a spotless lamb, into the hands of the impious for slaughter. They seized the saint and led him to the governor. At first the governor tried by blandishments to persuade Christ's servant to forsake his Lord and worship the idols, but he could not deceive the saint. Then the governor ordered that the saint be beaten mercilessly with rods. After this the governor subjected the saint to other torments; but since he could not overcome Christ's invincible servant, he condemned him to be beheaded with a sword.

Thus the holy Martyr Lupus bowed his head beneath the sword and laid down his life for Christ, his Lord[40]. The faithful buried him with fitting honors; and from his tomb came healings of every infirmity and disease, through his holy prayers and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Eutychius and Florentius

Память преподобных Евтихия и Флорентия

Within the borders of the Nursian country there lived together, in holy monastic habit, two men who led a hermit's life in the wilderness. One of them was named Eutychius, and the other Florentius. Eutychius, warmed by the heat of spiritual zeal, cared not

40. The repose of St. Lupus the martyr followed around 275.

only for his own salvation but also for the salvation of others, and by his soul-profiting teachings and admonitions he strove in every way to lead all men to the Lord. Florentius, in his simplicity, thought only of himself, spending all his life in prayer.

Not far from the dwelling-place of these saints, Eutychius and Florentius, there was a monastery. It happened that the abbot[41] of this monastery died, and the monks, gathering together, came to Eutychius and began to beg him to be abbot in their monastery. Heeding their request, Eutychius went to them and accepted the leadership of the monastery, leaving his friend Florentius alone to labor in that hermitage, so that the church they had there would not be left empty (that church was very small).

Left alone, Florentius began to pray earnestly to God, asking Him to help him labor alone, unhindered, in that secluded place.

Then once, having performed the customary prayers and gone out of the church, Florentius saw a bear standing at the church door, its head bowed to the ground, showing no trace of its savage nature; on the contrary, by its meekness it showed that it had been sent to Florentius by God for service and labor. Understanding this, the holy servant of God Florentius gave thanks to God, who had sent him such a companion. Florentius had five sheep at his cell; not knowing who could pasture and guard them, Florentius commanded the bear, saying:

"Go, drive these sheep out to pasture and tend them; and about the sixth hour return together with them."

And the beast always did so, taking upon itself the charge given it over the sheep; thus he who was accustomed always to devour his prey, having torn it to pieces, now tended sheep, suffering hunger and overcoming his natural disposition.

When the man of God wished to fast until the ninth hour, he commanded the bear to come with the sheep at the ninth hour; and the beast did so. When he did not intend to fast until the ninth hour, but wished to take food at the sixth hour, the bear returned at that hour; in a word, the beast obeyed every command of the man of God and never

41. *Abba*: the head, abbot of a monastery.

erred: it never came at the ninth hour when it had been bidden to come at the sixth, nor, conversely, did it ever come at the sixth hour when it had been bidden to come at the ninth. For God Himself instructed that beast, which He had placed in subjection to His servant, and taught it to understand the elder's command and to fulfill his will.

After the beast had served the elder for a long time, the fame of the man of God Florentius began to spread throughout that whole country, for everyone marveled at that wondrous thing, seeing that the bear tended the sheep and served the elder.

Meanwhile the ancient enemy, the devil, stirred up envy in some. For the devil, seeing virtuous people shining in their glory, ensnares with envy those who are corrupted in manner and life, and leads them to perdition. And so, at the devil's instigation, four monks, disciples of the holy Eutychius, greatly envied Florentius, since their teacher worked no signs, while Florentius alone (the envious reasoned), left by their teacher in the solitary cell, had become so famous. Harboring such thoughts, those four disciples came to Florentius and, lying in wait in the place to which the bear drove the sheep to pasture, killed the bear. Since the bear did not return to the elder at the hour when it had been commanded to return, the elder was troubled; waiting until evening, and seeing neither the beast nor the sheep, the elder began to grieve that the bear, which in his simplicity he had been accustomed to call brother, had not returned to him.

On the next day in the morning Florentius went out into the field to search for the beast and also for the sheep; seeing the bear slain, the elder was deeply grieved. Having examined it closely and understood by whom the beast had been killed, the elder began to weep; he wept, however, not so much over the death of the bear as over the deadly malice of those four brethren, and he wept bitterly.

When Abbot Eutychius learned of the sorrow and grief of Florentius, he called him to himself and began to comfort him. The man of God, in the presence of the abbot, with a deeply saddened face, said:

"I trust in Almighty God that those who killed the bear, which had done no harm to anyone, will receive, even in this present life and before the eyes of all, punishment from the Lord."

No sooner had the servant of God finished these words than the deed followed them; for suddenly those four monks were struck by the Lord with a dreadful leprosy, so that all their members rotted, and they died of that disease.

After all this had happened, the man of God Florentius was seized with great fear, because he had cursed those brethren, and for the rest of his life he never ceased to weep over them, calling himself their cruel murderer.

All this Almighty God brought about so that this simple and virtuous man, though wronged, would never again curse anyone with his lips.

This God-pleasing man performed yet another wondrous deed. When the fame of him had spread everywhere, a certain deacon came to him from afar, that he might be granted his prayers and blessing. Seeing around his cell a very great number of snakes and reptiles of various kinds, the deacon was greatly frightened and cried out, saying:

"Servant of God! Pray for me!"

At that time the air was very clear and bright, being illumined by the radiance of the sun. Florentius, going out of his cell and standing on the earth, fixed his eyes on heaven and lifted up his hands, praying that the Lord would drive those reptiles away by whatever means were known to Himself. And at once thunder sounded, lightning appeared, and that thunder together with the lightning struck down all the snakes that dwelt in that place. Seeing all this, the man of God Florentius, lifting his eyes to heaven once more, said:

"Behold, Thou hast struck down these snakes, O Lord; but who will carry them away from here?"

And immediately after his words there flew a great multitude of birds, as many in number as the reptiles that had been slain; and each bird took up one snake, carried it far away and cast it down there; thus was that place, where the venerable man lived, cleansed of reptiles.

Having lived all his days in great God-pleasing, the holy Florentius passed over to life without end[42].

42. The repose of St. Florentius followed in 547.

Likewise the Venerable Eutychius shepherded the flock entrusted to him for many years; having set many on the path to the heavenly Kingdom and guided many to salvation, the saint reposed in the Lord[43]. And he who during his life had worked no miracles appeared a wonderworker after his death; for from the garment left after the saint's death healings were granted to the sick who suffered from various ailments. Thus the Lord glorified His servant.

When drought came and the land suffered from dryness, the inhabitants of that country, gathering together, took the garment of the venerable Eutychius, brought it into the church and, having offered prayer to the Lord, carried it through the villages, fields and gardens; and at once rain was sent down from the Lord, moistening and saturating the earth[44]. By this it was clearly shown to all how great, during his life, was the inner power of the soul's virtue of him whose outward garment, carried before the Lord, already turned away the wrath of the Lord.

Thus was God glorified by His two servants then, and now for their sake He is glorified by us His servants, and He shall be glorified unto endless ages. Amen.

* * *

NOTES

5181. Gnosticism is the general name for many heretical false teachings that appeared during the first two centuries of the Christian era. Gnosticism was widely spread and had many adherents in various countries. The Egyptian, Syro-Chaldean and Asia Minor forms of gnosis are distinguished. Representatives of Egyptian gnosis were Cerinthus (a contemporary of the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian), Valentinus and Basilides; Syro-Chaldean gnosis was supported by the followers of Simon Magus and Menander; Asia Minor gnosis was supported by the heretics Cerdon and Marcion. The Gnostics strictly distinguished the divine, spiritual existence from the worldly, carnal existence; and at the same time all Gnostic systems rejected the very possibility of communion between absolute (all-perfect) being and relative being (that is, the being of the world). The inevitable consequence of the absolute division between the divine and the worldly, the spiritual and the carnal, in the practical sphere was the division of spirit

43. St. Eutychius died around 540.

44. The described event took place in 1492.

and flesh. The Gnostics denied divine revelation and explained all the truths of Christian doctrine by the efforts of reason alone.

5183. Blessed Jerome is one of the greatest teachers of the Western Church (330–419). A Slav by birth (from the city of Stridon in Dalmatia), Jerome received at Rome an education that was brilliant for his time. In 373 he set out for the East, having first received holy Baptism. For his pious life Jerome was ordained to the rank of presbyter. – Blessed Jerome wrote a very great number of works on various questions of theological knowledge. His writings are divided into four principal groups: 1) exegetical, 2) dogmatic, 3) moral-instructive, and 4) historical. The most important work of Blessed Jerome is his translation of Holy Scripture, known under the name of the Vulgate. Apart from this, among Jerome's writings the following deserve particular attention: the *Chronicle*, *Lives of the Fathers*, *On Illustrious Men*, the *Martyrology*, and others. The number of all Blessed Jerome's writings, not counting minor letters, reaches 180.



THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 24

24 августа

New Calendar August 24 · Old Calendar September 6 (civil dates)

Martyrdom of the Holy Martyr Sira

Страдание святой мученицы Сиры

In the reign of the Persian king Khosroes the Elder[1], in the twenty-eighth year of his reign, there appeared in Persia, like a pure pearl in the sea, the holy maiden Sira, who shone with the beauty of the Christian faith and was glorified by her great ascetic sufferings for the name of Christ.

Saint Sira was born in the city called Kerkh-Seleucia, and came of an impious family. Her father was an idol-priest, a magus held in great esteem (by the pagans); for a long time he had been the judge and chief of the assembly of magi and priests of Persia; he knew well the teaching of the most ancient archimagus Zoroaster[2], the first expert in astrology (the science of the stars) in Persia. This magus, the father of the holy maiden Sira, greatly hated Christians and greatly feared lest his daughter should learn of Christianity and become acquainted with Christian maidens. For in Persia at that time there were very many Christians (as there were indeed very many throughout all Asia under the rule of the Agarenes), although they were greatly oppressed and persecuted. For this reason (wishing to protect Sira from Christian influence), her father, after the death of her mother, sent her to another city, called Fars (in this city sorcery was very widespread), to a certain

1. Khozroi (or, more precisely, Khosrov) in Persian means simply king. This title was customarily added to the personal name of one or another Persian king. Khozroi the Elder, that is, Khosrow I Anushirvan, reigned from 531 to 579.

2. Zoroaster was a Persian sage (magus); he lived 1000 years B.C.; he founded a very complex religious teaching, built upon a dualistic principle (that is, upon the principle of a strict division of good and evil as two irreconcilable yet independent principles).

female sorceress, a relative of his, that she might bring her up in the impious pagan customs.

When the young girl began to come to understanding, she was taught sorcery and dedicated to the abominable service of idols; namely, she was entrusted with offering to the demons certain secret sacrifices, called by the pagans "Iasph," which they considered to be pure offerings.

All this is said of the holy maiden Sira in order that it may be known in what darkness and demonic delusion she was, and from how great a darkness she passed to the light of knowledge of the true faith, escaping the snares of the devil.

When Sira had reached full age and had thoroughly studied all the magical art, for she already served the abominable Persian gods in the rank of priestess, the way of salvation was prepared thus.

By the providence and will of God, she became acquainted with some poor Christian women, and from them she first heard of Christ the Lord, the true God. Then she began to question them more closely about the Christian faith, its dogmas, and all the Christian teaching, as well as the life of Christians; and everything she heard from them she weighed in her mind, comparing the Christian faith with the Persian and finding between the one and the other a great difference. For everything that pertained to the Persian faith she began to consider false and abominable, while everything that concerned the Christian faith she held to be righteous and pure; then there arose in her a firm resolve to abandon the impiety of Persia and join the Christians. Desiring still more thoroughly to become acquainted with Christian piety, she began secretly to come to the Christian churches, where she listened to the reading and singing of the Church and to instruction from the word of God, and attentively observed the orderly and reverent celebration of the Church services. Little by little she came greatly to love the Christian faith, and the manner of life of the Christians pleased her. Then she began cautiously to imitate the Christians by fasting and by mortifying her body. She was already eighteen years old, and she feared above all that she might be given in marriage and her mind burdened with worldly cares. Therefore she did not show her-

self before people (the pagans), did not cultivate acquaintance with the famous and rich Persian maidens and women, but avoided them, shunning conversation and friendship with them; with the Christian maidens and wives, however, she often came and spoke with them about the birth of Christ from the Most Pure Virgin, about all His miracles, about His voluntary suffering and death, about His resurrection and ascension in the flesh into heaven, about the future Last Judgment, about the recompense of the righteous and the torments of sinners. Everything she heard from the Christian maidens she believed without doubt, sealing in her heart all that they said, her soul being softened and kindled more and more with love for the Lord. She shut herself in her room, read Christian books, accustomed herself to prayer and psalm-singing, and prayed to the one true Christian God, sprinkling ashes upon her head. Thus for a long time she struggled, keeping the Christian faith in secret. For she feared her father and the other magi, and besides she thought that for salvation it was enough to believe in Christ in secret; she had not yet understood the apostolic word: "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10).

After a fairly long time Sira fell into a certain illness, yet she did not seek healing through sorcery, as was the custom of those impious people, but turned her heart to the Lord. Suffering in body, she came to a Christian church and began to beg the presbyter to give her even a little of the dust of the church, hoping to receive healing from that dust. But the presbyter rejected her as impious, saying:

"What fellowship can there be between you, an unbeliever, and believers? What have you, a worshipper of idols, in common with the Christian church?"

She was not angered by this, knowing herself to be unworthy, but kept silent and touched with faith the garment of the priest, as once the woman with an issue of blood touched the garment of Christ (Mt. 9:20–22), and immediately she received healing from her infirmity; then she returned home healthy, so that all marveled at her swift recovery.

After this the holy maiden Sira thought to herself: if such is the power of the servants of Christ, how much more all-powerful is Christ Himself! And she greatly desired to know the Christian faith more perfectly, pondering how she might be granted holy baptism.

The devil, envious of all good things, noticing in the blessed maiden Sira the beginnings of holy faith, resolved to hinder her; therefore he appeared to her by night in an angry form and began to rebuke her for having abandoned the customs of her people and turned in sickness to the help of Christians, and for having touched the garment of a Christian priest.

The blessed maiden, understanding that it was a demonic delusion, made the sign of the cross over herself, as she had been taught by the Christians, and, kneeling down, began to read the ninetieth psalm of David: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps. 90:1), all of it to the end.

After this the devil disappeared for a short time, but after the reading of the psalm he appeared again and said the same thing to the maiden, with anger.

And again the maiden knelt before God and began to read the same psalm.

Again the devil disappeared for a short time, but then he returned once more and dared to say to the maiden:

"I am the god who dwells on high, under whose protection all abide; and you (he continued) ought to take refuge in me, and not in the Christians who deceive you."

The holy maiden, bowing three times with prayer, began with zeal to beseech Christ God to reveal the truth to her and to drive away from her every delusion.

And immediately by the power of God the tempter was driven away from the saint; but in her mind, as a trace of the demonic delusion, a doubt remained. Perceiving that this doubt came from a demonic deception, Sira with a warm heart turned to God, repenting with tears and confessing to Him her weakness.

In the following night the saint was comforted by God in a dream-vision, which foreshadowed her martyrdom.

It seemed to her that she stood in a certain high place, higher than the priests, and held in her hands a holy chalice filled with the blood of Christ; this chalice she displayed to the people, while two deacons censed, standing on either side of her. This vision signified that the saint was to drink the cup of suffering for the name of Christ in the presence of the people, who would look upon the spectacle; the high place on which she stood signified the high honor of martyrdom, surpassing all the ranks of the saints; and the censing was a sign that her suffering was well-pleasing to God, as a sacrifice and incense, and that by that suffering the whole Church of Christ would be made fragrant.

After that vision the saint began to lead a strictly ascetic life devoted to God. Soon her brothers and relatives learned that she sympathized with the Christian faith; for they saw that she had changed in body and was pale of face from abstinence and fasting, that she spoke almost with no one but shut herself in her room and remained in silence, that she had ceased to offer sacrifices to the gods and had abandoned the services customarily performed among the pagans. Seeing this, they grieved and began to ask the stepmother to persuade the maiden to abandon such a life and not to turn away from the service of the ancestral gods, lest they dishonor their family and bring the king's wrath upon the whole household. The stepmother, however, being instructed by him who in ancient times, taking the likeness of a serpent, deceived Eve in Paradise[3], approached the blessed maiden alone, with a joyful and cheerful face, and began to tell her about herself, that she too professed the same Christian faith, but kept it secretly and served Christ. The stepmother advised her to remain secretly faithful to Christ, but openly to perform for all the customary priestly service to the idols, so that everyone, seeing that she served the gods, would cease to suspect her of belonging to Christianity.

"By acting thus," the seductress said, "you will not anger Christ either (for He is content even when someone serves Him in secret), nor will you provoke your father and your brothers, and you will escape the cruel tortures that will certainly overtake you if you do not heed my

3. That is, the devil.

counsel. Consider how you, a young girl, weak in body, will endure beatings, wounds, the tearing of your flesh, burning in the fire, and the other torments. Are you not afraid that, unable to bear the sufferings, you will against your will renounce Christ? Then you will commit a great and unforgivable sin. It is far better for you to serve Christ in secret and to show outwardly, in pretence, that you serve the gods. This will not be counted against you as a sin."

These and many other words like them the stepmother spoke to the maiden Sira every day, and she inclined her heart to this counsel: "Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33), says Scripture.

Yet the Lord did not permit His servant to sink into that seduction as into an abyss, but again strengthened her with new revelations.

Four months passed after this; the Great Fast came, the holy Forty Days, and the holy maiden desired to labor in secret through fasting and prayer. When the saint began to fast, she saw, in a dream vision, her brothers plunged in pus and slime, and she also saw her father lying on some filthy bed; but turning to the other side, she saw a chamber and a high and beautiful couch, shining with a wondrous light. She also saw many bright faces calling her into that chamber.

After that vision she awoke from her sleep, and early in the morning she went to the Christian church. Coming to Bishop John, she told him everything in detail about herself: how she had been healed of her illness by touching the garment of a priest, what visions she had received from the Lord; and she began to ask the bishop to vouchsafe her holy baptism.

The bishop, hearing all that the maiden told him, rejoiced in spirit for her, understanding that she was being called by God to salvation. Yet, taking into account the harsh times of that day, he did not vouchsafe her baptism, for he knew that she came from a very noble family and had a father highly esteemed (by the pagans); he also knew of the implacable hatred which all the magi bore toward the faithful. He feared to provoke the pagans, lest they should fall into fury at the baptism of that maiden, persuade the king to raise a persecution against the Church of Christ, and scatter the spiritual sheep of Christ by their rage, being cruel as wolves. Besides this, the bishop was also concerned

for the maiden, fearing that, frightened by the wrath of her parents and terrified of torments, she might renounce Christ, and that thereby the grace of holy baptism might be dishonored. Therefore the bishop advised the blessed maiden first to confess Christ before her father, her brothers, her relatives, and all her household. If it turned out that she was able to endure the sufferings which her holy relatives might inflict, then she could remain unshaken to the end in confessing the name of Christ, and then she would be vouchsafed holy baptism. Having given this counsel to the maiden, the bishop dismissed her in peace.

The maiden left the bishop very grieved, since her desire had not been fulfilled; she was troubled in her thoughts, for she was caught between love and fear: she burned with love for Christ, yet at the same time feared the torments; therefore out of fear she kept silent.

After some time the holy maiden again had a dream vision: she saw an Angel of God holding in his hands an iron rod, and he struck her with this rod; and the Angel asked her:

"Where is your promise? For you vowed to serve the true God faithfully and to stand firmly for His holy name against the impious."

Waking from this dream and vision, the maiden was seized with great terror.

When morning came, she was summoned to her stepmother. The stepmother ordered her to perform the morning sacrificial service to the gods, according to custom. Already burning with zeal for Christ God, Sira intended to confess the name of Christ openly and to renounce sorcery and idol-worship before everyone; yet at that hour she outwardly showed obedience to her mother, and, taking the implements of priestly service according to the devil's rite and the traditions of Zoroaster, she approached the altar. But at that moment she saw herself illumined as if by some divine light. Strengthened in her heart and having cast fear out of her soul, the saint shattered before the eyes of all those priestly implements, spat upon the fire (which the Persians revered as a god), extinguished it, destroyed the altar, and cried out in a loud voice:

"I am a Christian! I reject the service of idols, I condemn all the foul demonic works of sorcery, I trample underfoot the false gods and the

impious altars; I believe in the One true Christian God, and I go to the Christian church."

Her brothers, with the stepmother, and all who were in the house and had heard what the maiden said, seized her, held her, and shut her up in a room so that she could not go out; then they set guards to watch over the maiden (her father was not at home at that time). The blessed one began to ask them to summon her father, that she might confess the name of Christ before him as well, even though he might deliver her to torments; for she no longer wished to conceal her faith in Christ, but desired to show it openly to all, fearing no torments.

Meanwhile her relatives and acquaintances came to the maiden and began, with tears, to urge her to abandon such a course, not to grieve her father and brothers, not to dishonor her family, and not to give herself up of her own will to cruel tortures; but the saint would not even hear these crafty exhortations.

When her father came and saw that his magic fire, which he revered as a god, had been extinguished, the altar overturned, and the implements of priestly service broken, and when he also heard that his daughter Sira had loudly proclaimed the name of Christ, he was filled with great fury; seizing her, he began to beat her with his own hands without mercy, and he beat her until he himself was exhausted. Then he began to entreat her with tears and to coax her, speaking to her tenderly and kindly; yet he had no success. Although her father subjected her to many torments, bound her in chains, shut her up in a dark place, starved her and kept her from water, and inflicted many beatings, and sometimes, either himself or through his kinsfolk, tenderly entreated her to turn to the ancestral gods and to the priestly service, the true servant of Christ remained firm as adamant and unshaken as a pillar in confessing the most holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When her father became convinced that Sira's attachment to the Christian faith was unshakable, and that the maiden could not be turned from Christianity by any means, he went and told everything to Maviptis, who was considered among the Persians the chief of the magi. Maviptis, gathering all the priests and magi from the neighboring cities, sat down with them at the temple of their god, fire, and ordered

the maiden of Christ to be brought before his tribunal. A great crowd gathered there; among the people there were not a few Christians, who had come to see the feat of the maiden Sira, for everyone already knew of her conversion and of the sufferings inflicted on her by her father.

Maviptis began to question the maiden as to why she had rejected the ancestral gods and ancestral traditions and had embraced another faith. The maiden answered him thus:

"No man who has sound reason will imitate senseless animals, which follow those who begot them, going nobody knows where; but he will go by the path that he finds best. No sensible person will follow his fathers and forefathers, who lead him astray in their error to perdition. Likewise I, seeing that the Christian faith was incomparably better than ancestral impiety, chose the better and rejected the worse."

Maviptis said with anger:

"Many torments await you, maiden, if you do not obey us."

Sira, laying her hand on her neck, said with great boldness:

"Cut off this one; it is in your power. I tell you once and for all."

After this Maviptis questioned her many times, but she answered him nothing; instead she read to herself the Psalms of David, which the pagans did not understand.

At last Maviptis asked those standing around:

"What is she saying?"

But no one knew what she was saying. And only one of the pagans present said:

"She is reading Christian prayers."

Maviptis at once ordered that the Christian bishop be summoned, to learn whether the maiden was speaking Christian words.

The bishop came in great fear, dreading the power of the magi. The martyr looked at him. Noticing that he was afraid, the maiden said to him in a loud voice:

“Do not be afraid, Father, but remember the words of Scripture: ‘I will speak of Thy testimonies before kings, and I shall not be ashamed’ (Ps. 118:46). And again: ‘Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul’ (Mt. 10:28).”

When the bishop was asked about the words spoken by the maiden, he confirmed that they were indeed the words of Christians.

Maviptis, enraged at the maiden, ordered her to be struck on the mouth. After this he spoke to her now with flattery, now threatening torments, but he accomplished nothing, and he was put to shame before the Christians who were present there and who watched all that was taking place.

Then Maviptis ordered that the maiden be kept for a time in her father's house. He did not wish to report the maiden to the emperor at once, lest he bring dishonor upon her noble family. At the same time, Maviptis advised her father to persuade the maiden to renounce Christianity, using caresses rather than threats. And the martyr returned home rejoicing and glorifying God, for she had been granted to suffer for the name of Christ before the prince, the judges, and the whole people.

While the maiden was in her father's house, the Lord comforted and strengthened His servant with new revelations, for she often saw Angels, who taught her how to answer the impious judges. Sometimes Moses, Elijah, the Apostle Peter, and other saints appeared to her, as is related in the fuller account of the sufferings of the holy maiden Sira.[4]

Meanwhile the maiden's father did everything he could to turn her away from Christ, but he could not overcome her steadfastness, and therefore he again reported the obstinacy of the maiden to Maviptis and to the whole assembly of sorcerers.

At that time there happened to arrive in that city a certain nobleman, a member of the supreme council at the emperor's court, named Dar. Both of these nobles, Dar and Maviptis, were together when they heard the maiden's father complaining of his daughter, and also slandering the Christians, claiming that they had supposedly risen up against him and wished to stone him.

The nobleman Dar sent several distinguished men to the maiden, ordering them to ask the saint why she had abandoned magical wisdom and the priestly service and turned to the Christian faith. Dar also in-

4. This more extensive account has not come down to us.

structed the envoys to exhort the maiden with gentle words, promising her imperial gifts; but if she did not obey them, he told them to inform the maiden that terrible tortures awaited her.

When the envoys came to the maiden and began to question her about everything, speaking to her kindly and courteously, the maiden answered:

"I wished to go myself to him who sent you and tell him of my faith in Christ. But since you have come to me, listen: I accepted the Christian faith because I have understood its truth and rightness, for this faith confesses the one God, all-powerful and immortal, as the Creator of all. Your sorcery and your service to idols I have come to hate, because you acknowledge many gods, yet these gods are lifeless and worthless. Tell him who sent you: take care not to break your promise, but in truth deliver me to torments as you have promised, for I am ready to suffer and even to die for Christ, my God."

Hearing such an answer from the maiden, the nobleman Dar was filled with anger and ordered that the maiden be taken from her father's house and led to a prison. There she was bound in iron chains by her hands and feet, shut up in a narrow and gloomy chamber, and given neither bread nor water.

The saint remained in prison for three days and three nights, unable to move, both because of the heavy iron chains with which she was bound and because of the narrowness of the place.

After three days the maiden was brought out of confinement. Then the pagans asked her whether this punishment was enough for her, and whether she wished to return to the worship of the gods of her fathers and to acknowledge the laws of her ancestors.

The maiden remained steadfast in the faith of Christ.

Then the pagans again held a trial against her and resolved to cast her into a certain deep ditch, dark, foul-smelling and loathsome, binding the saint with very heavy iron fetters. When the fetters were laid upon the maiden and they wished to fasten the shackles with nails, the nails would not enter the places prepared for them. Many smiths were summoned, but they accomplished nothing. The martyr made the sign of the Cross over the nails and the shackles, and at once the nails

placed themselves in their proper positions by themselves. Yet the enemies of Christ, blinded by malice, did not perceive the wonderful power of the holy Cross, and without mercy they bound the saint, bending her head down to her feet; then they cast her into the ditch.

Christ the Lord, who does not forsake those who love Him, at once sent consolation to His servant who was in that ditch. For a heavenly light shone upon her there, the iron fetters loosed themselves and fell away from the saint, the stench turned into fragrance, and the martyr remained in the ditch as though in a chamber, rejoicing and glorifying God.

Meanwhile the Christians in that city gathered together with their bishop in the church and began with tears to pray to God on behalf of the martyr Sira, that He would help her to accomplish her contest courageously.

The martyr remained in that ditch for fifteen days, so that no one thought she could remain alive, because of the great stench and hunger, and also because of the weight of the fetters laid upon her.

Meanwhile at that time a drought occurred, from a long lack of rain, and the people said that this was the wrath of God, who was punishing everyone with drought and famine for the innocent sufferings of the maiden Sira.

After fifteen days the impious judges learned that the maiden Sira had remained alive in the ditch and that she had been freed from her fetters. All were greatly astonished. The saint was brought out of the ditch and again placed in the public prison.

No sooner had the martyr been brought out of the ditch than abundant rain poured down from heaven upon the earth and watered it in plenty. And the people said that God had sent this rain for the sake of the maiden Sira, who had been brought out of the ditch.

The Lord also gave His servant the gift of working miracles, so that she could heal diseases and cast out demons. Very many people came to the saint who was in prison, wishing to receive healing from her; and all who touched her garment, or only her fetters, received healing from their infirmities. The demons, however, could not bear to come near her.

After some time there came a feast, established in honor of the holy martyrs who had earlier suffered in Persia. This feast was celebrated only once a year, in a church situated outside the city. The martyr wished to be present at that public festival and at that all-night singing. For a certain God-loving Christian gave gold to the guards and vouched to them for the martyr, so that she might be released from the prison, promising to return her to the prison the following morning.

The saint was released from the prison. She changed her clothing so that the pagans would not recognize her, and on coming to the church she stood in a corner of the vestibule and listened to the church singing.

By chance there was in that festive gathering a certain demon-possessed woman. No sooner had this woman approached the holy maiden Sira than the demon within her cried out loudly that the martyr Sira had come into the church and could cast him out. And when all who were there began to search the church for the holy martyr, she at once departed from there and came back to the prison.

So greatly did the demons fear her that they could not even come near her.

On one of the following nights the holy maiden Sira was again released from the prison on bail, for a payment to the guards. Then she went to the bishop and received holy Baptism from him in the church situated in the city.

After all this, Maviptis and the other judges and sorcerers who were with him resolved to send the martyr to the emperor, since they could in no way turn her away from confessing the Christian faith. As they sent the maiden to the emperor, those judges placed a seal upon the martyr's neck, according to their custom, so that no other woman might be presented in place of the maiden Sira. This seal was of such a kind that it could not be removed from the neck of the holy martyr by any means, except together with her head.

Taking the saint, the soldiers led her to a city called Aliak, for the emperor was then there. The soldiers handed the martyr over to the city governor, together with a written report on the martyr's offense and on her lineage and the sufferings she had endured.

The city governor (eparch) first approached the saint with gentle words of exhortation, then began to threaten her with torments, urging the maiden to return to her former faith and practices (that is, to the pagan faith and way of life). But seeing that she did not obey him, he ordered that her garments be removed, that she be clothed in some wretched rags, and that she be placed under the supervision of the Jews, knowing that the Jews were enemies of the Christians.

The Jews took the saint, bound in iron fetters, and shut her up in a narrow chamber. As food they gave her a very small piece of barley bread, so that she would not die of hunger. Each day they reproached her with abusive words and also blasphemed Christ, saying:

"Where now is the fable told about you, that the very chains fall away from your neck, hands and feet? Let us see now how the chains will fall away!"

Once, when the Jews were mocking the saint with such words, she lifted her eyes to heaven, sighed, and prayed to the Lord in the depths of her heart. At once, before the eyes of the Jews, her chains fell away from her neck, her hands and her feet, so that the Jews greatly marveled.

The saint remained with the Jews for eleven days. Then the eparch again ordered her to be brought to the chief of the sorcerers who was at the emperor's court, and told him everything he knew about the maiden.

The chief of the sorcerers, having the maiden brought before him, asked her:

"Why have you rejected our faith? For our faith is kept in honor even by emperors and princes; our faith has spread everywhere, holds sway over all, and enriches those who keep it. Why have you joined the Christians, people who are dishonorable, poor, and despised and hated by all?"

The maiden answered with boldness:

Where now are the crowns of your dead kings? Where is the glory of princes? All of it has perished. Kings and princes, like grass, flourished for a brief time, but then withered and inherited eternal death, because they did not know the true God, the Creator of all, and did not

honor the Lord of life and death, but worshipped creation as divinity, reverencing fire, water, the sun, the moon and the stars. The Christians, however, for the sufferings which they endure from you in this present life, shall receive eternal life; and for their temporary dishonor they shall inherit heavenly glory.

The chief of the magi was enraged at such words from the maiden; then he began to question her closely as to where she had been before. Learning how great the torments she had endured were, and also learning of her grievous imprisonment, and hearing too that the saint had been kept under watch by the Jews, he ordered that she be given back to the Jews, and commanded them to keep careful watch so that no Christian might come to the maiden.

Taking the saint, the Jews began to torment her without mercy, tearing at her with various tortures over the course of three days.

When a royal official, to whom had been entrusted the oversight of all the prisons and all the prisoners, heard about the martyr, he took her from the Jews and placed her in his own prison. This man did so for the sake of gain, since the Christians had a custom of buying from the prison guards, with gold and silver, the right of entry into the prison to the prisoners who were suffering for the name of Christ.

While the martyr was in prison, some Christians, having obtained by payment the right of entry into the prison, came to the holy maiden Sira to visit her. Seeing that she was tightly bound with iron fetters and lay on the bare ground, they brought and arranged a bed for her, so as to ease her great sufferings at least somewhat. But one of the prison guards, coming to the martyr, threw her off the bed and caused her severe pain, on account of the heaviness of the fetters laid upon the martyr. And at once those iron bonds came loose of their own accord and fell from the martyr, so that all who were there were greatly astonished at what had happened.

In those days the king wished to go from that city to another city, called Resankusadon; with him went all the Persian nobles, as well as the chief of the magi. Following after them was led the holy martyr Sira (bound), as well as all the other prisoners; throughout the whole journey the holy martyr prayed to the Lord, singing the psalms of Dav-

id. The soldiers who led the saint many times demanded that she be silent; for this reason they laid even heavier fetters upon her; but she did not cease singing and giving thanks to God.

When they came to the place called Kars, the chief of the magi together with the other judges ordered the saint to be brought before them for interrogation, and asked her:

"You have had more than enough time for reflection; tell us, then, what you choose: are you willing to return to your former service of the gods and remain alive, or do you wish to die as a Christian?"

The saint answered:

"What else can I choose, other than what I have already chosen once and for all? For I have said many times that I am a Christian, the servant of my Lord Jesus Christ: Him I love, to Him I minister, and for Him I desire to die."

The chief of the magi said:

"Speak to us the words of magical wisdom in which you were first instructed."

The saint, however, began to proclaim aloud the words of prayer to God from the psalms of David.

The chief of the magi was greatly enraged and ordered her garments torn off and she was brought before him for interrogation naked; then he asked:

"Do you not feel any shame now?"

The saint answered:

"Why should I be ashamed? I am not a robber, not a harlot; I have done no evil to anyone. Although you have stripped me of my outer garment, I have a bright, incorruptible, eternal robe in heaven, which my Lord has prepared for me, for whose sake I am now naked."

While the saint was speaking these words, the prince of the land of Huzain, who was seated together with the magus, said:

"She is raving."

But the saint answered:

"It is not I who am possessed, but you are possessed, for you serve demons; if you wish, I will place the sign of the cross upon your fore-

head, and then a demon will come out of you, and the eyes of your soul will be enlightened, so that you may know the truth."

Then all who were there cried out with one voice:

"She is guilty of death, for she blasphemes our gods, dishonors the king, and speaks insolence to the princes."

Then the judges sentenced her to death and again placed a seal upon her neck, so that by someone's trickery another woman might not be put to death in her place. They were already intending to lead her to execution that same day. But some of the judges advised postponing her death for a short time, saying that she should not be put to death in that place, since there were many Christians there, and therefore a revolt and murmuring might arise because of her death. For this reason the execution of the martyr of Christ was deferred, and the judges handed the saint back to the chief keeper of the prisons; receiving the martyr, this keeper of the prisons ordered her to be bound and shut up in one chamber together with the other prisoners.

After this the king set out from there for the city called Vefarmais, and stopped there for some time. The holy martyr was also brought here and shut up in prison. In prison the martyr fell very seriously ill, so that she was already expecting death; then the martyr of Christ began to pray to the Lord with tears, asking not to let her die here, but to grant her the crown of martyrdom and an end amid sufferings. God heard the prayer of His servant and granted her health.

Then one of the prison guards, stirred up by the devil to the sin of the flesh, began to ask his chief to permit him to commit a fornicatory outrage upon the captive (the holy maiden Sira).

Having received permission from the chief of the guards, the pagan approached the bride of Christ, burning with impure lust. But the Lord, who guards His servant, invisibly struck the guard's eyes, ears and tongue, so that he became blind, deaf and mute, and falling prostrate on the ground, he began to utter frenzied cries.

The chief of the guards, seeing all this, instead of being struck with terror, acknowledging the power of God and punishing that guard for his audacity, himself plotted to commit lawlessness, burning with passion for the holy maiden.

The saint said to him:

"I am betrothed to the King of heaven, and He will not permit His virgin and bride to be defiled."

But the chief of the guards did not listen to her. However, when he tried to approach the maiden shamelessly, at once an Angel of God struck him, and he fell to the ground as dead. Servants came and carried him away from there; he came to himself only after a long time, but even after such a chastisement from God, this slave of Satan remained incorrigible. Filled with rage, he at once plotted to destroy the martyr, for he had been ordered to deliver the martyr to some kind of death. That impious man did not wish to slay the saint with a sword, but planned to strangle her with a cord. Summoning a blacksmith, he ordered him to remove the iron fetters from the martyr.

But the holy maiden said to the chief over the guards:

"A blacksmith is not needed here."

Saying these words, she herself removed the fetters from her neck, hands and feet. All who saw this were astonished, yet they did not recognize the power of God.

Then the chief of the prison guards ordered the hands of the martyr of Christ to be bound again, so that she would offer no resistance during the execution. But the martyr again said to him:

"Abandon your vain counsels, for I myself, of my own will, will give myself to death for my God, so that I will not even move my hand."

Then the impious men bound the martyr's neck with a cord and began to tighten the noose. When the saint was already at the point of death, they loosened the cord somewhat and said to her:

"If you renounce the Christian faith, we will leave you alive."

But the martyr answered them:

"Do what you have been commanded."

They again began to strangle her, but again loosened the cord and asked:

"Do you not wish to renounce Christ, so as to remain alive?"

But the holy martyr, desiring to die for Christ, again ordered them to do what they had been commanded. Then the tormentors pulled the cord forcefully from both sides, until they put the holy martyr to death.

Thus died the holy martyr, the maiden Sira, having suffered for Christ, her Lord.[5]

Her honorable body her tormentors resolved not to give to burial, but to give over to be eaten by dogs. Therefore they took the martyr's body from the prison, carried it into a house, gathered many dogs there, and, locking the gates, threw the martyr's body to the dogs to devour. But the dogs did not touch it, and at night the pagans threw the martyr's body out of that house. The Christians of that city, learning of the martyr's sufferings and death, watched closely to see what the tormentors would do. When the body of the martyr of Christ was cast out, the Christians took it and buried it with honor, glorifying the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God in Trinity, to whom honor and glory are offered also by us, now, always, and unto endless ages. Amen.

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Memory of the Hieromartyr Eutychius

Память священномученика Евтихия

Saint Eutychius was from the city of Sevastopolis.[6] Hearing the good tidings of the name of Christ, he left his parents and friends and came to the beloved disciple and Apostle John the Theologian; following him everywhere and imitating his life, Saint Eutychius learned from him the wisdom of God and drew from him, as from a fountain, the grace of God. Filled with apostolic zeal, Saint Eutychius bravely uprooted the demonic delusion. Meeting the holy Apostle Paul, Eutychius became his companion and labored much together with him, preaching the Gospel and bravely enduring all the calamities that befell him; for this reason this Saint Eutychius is counted a disciple of both of

5. The repose of the holy martyr Sira took place in 558. Soon after the repose of the holy martyr Sira, her kinswoman, Saint Mary (in Persian, Golinduch), began her suffering for the confession of the name of Christ, under the same king Khozroi I; but the persecutions continued under another king of the name of Khozroi, his grandson, namely Khosrow II Parvez (590–628). Memory of St. Mary Golinduch, July 12.

6. Under the name of Sevastopolis (or Sebastia) several cities are known from antiquity; which particular Sevastopolis is meant in this case is unknown.

them, of the Evangelist John the Theologian and of the holy Apostle Paul.

This Eutychius is also reckoned among the lesser Apostles and is called an Apostle, although he is not found among the seventy Apostles. He was honored with the name of Apostle because he labored together with the senior Apostles, proclaiming the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also because by those senior Apostles he was ordained bishop for the service of the word (preaching) and the offering of sacrifice, and, finally, because with the preaching of the name of Christ he traversed many lands, not only together with the other Apostles but also alone. Nevertheless, he did not preach the Gospel alone, for he always had as his companion the Angel of God, who strengthened him and foretold to him all that was to befall him. This Apostle of Christ everywhere bore with patience both imprisonment and beatings, suffering bravely for his Lord.

Once, when Saint Eutychius had been cast into prison and for a long time was tormented by hunger, bread was sent to him from heaven by God; this bread was brought by an invisible hand. Having eaten of this bread, the Apostle of Christ was so strengthened that he counted as nothing all the tortures to which he was subjected.

At another time, when he was hanged naked upon the torture tree and was torn with iron instruments, from his pure body fragrant myrrh flowed out with the blood and filled the air with fragrance.

Then, when the holy Apostle was cast into a blazing fire, suddenly thunder was heard from heaven, then a great rain came down together with snow (hail), and quenched the fire; and the saint remained alive and unharmed and glorified the Lord.

The saint was also given over to be devoured by beasts, but they became meek as sheep at the sight of him; and, most remarkable of all: a lion, released against him, speaking with a human voice, proclaimed aloud the greatness of the Lord and Savior our Jesus Christ, and greatly astonished, and even terrified, all who beheld the spectacle.

But what is there to wonder at? He who in ancient times could open the mouth of Balaam's ass (Num. 22:28–31), so that she spoke in human fashion, could He not open the mouth of a lion, that it should utter

words in human speech, to reprove and put to shame the impious and to glorify His almighty power? One and the same Lord was present and wrought wonders both there and here.

As to how the holy Apostle Eutychius completed his course, it is known that he was brought bound from Ephesus to his homeland, Sevastopolis, and died there. The service appointed to him in the Menaion mentions the manner of his death, namely: he was beheaded with a sword upon his holy head, which God also crowned with the splendid crown of victory.[7]

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Co-throned with the Apostles, and the beauty of hierarchs, O Eutychius, thou wast gloriously martyred and didst shine as the sun, enlightening all, and didst dispel the deep night of impiety. Wherefore we honor thee as a truly divine mystagogue of Christ.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Tation

Память святого мученика Татиона

This holy martyr was of Mantineus, which lay in the Metropolis of Claudiopolis and the Eparchy of Honorias.[8] Seized by the pagans for believing in Christ, he was brought to the city of Claudiopolis[9] before the governor of the city, Urban, and at his interrogation declared himself a Christian, for which he was cast into prison. After this he was subjected to a second interrogation, and since he unchangingly remained in the Christian faith, he was first beaten with rods, and then they began to scrape his body with iron instruments, after which they beat him again and dragged him through the city. Reaching the city

7. The repose of the holy Apostle Eutychius took place at the end of the 1st century or at the beginning of the 2nd.

8. Mantineus and Claudiopolis lay in the Honoriad region of the northwestern Asia Minor Roman province of Bithynia. Among the Greeks, metropolises were the principal cities of provinces, and eparchies were the cities of provincial regions. Administratively, Mantineus was under the authority of the Claudiopolitan hegemon and the Honoriad eparch.

9. The city of Claudiopolis, formerly called Bithynia, lay in the Asia Minor province of Bithynia near the upper reaches of the river Billaeus.

gates, the holy martyr signed himself with the sign of the cross, and at that moment he heard a voice from on high which announced to him a joyful future, after which he yielded up his spirit to the Lord.[10]

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the holy confessor George of Limnia, who labored under the iconoclast emperor Leo III the Isaurian (717–741).

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Arsenius of Komel, wonderworker of Vologda, who reposed in 1550.

On the same day, the translation of the relics of the holy Metropolitan Peter, wonderworker of all Russia (in 1479).

10. Since the persecutor of Saint Tation was the prefect Urban, his martyric death is dated to the time of Diocletian, namely to the year 305. Emperor Basil, in his Menologion, calls him Tatian.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 25

25 августа

New Calendar August 25 · Old Calendar September 7 (civil dates)

St. Titus the Apostle

Святой Апостол Тит

The holy Apostle Titus was a native of Crete and was born of parents who, though noble (for they traced their descent from Miroy, king of Crete), were not orthodox but pagans, adhering to the impious worship of idols. Titus himself at first served the same impiety, and in his youth he showed great zeal in the study of Hellenic learning: he diligently studied the writings of the ancient philosophers and poets, such as Homer and others. Nevertheless, Titus led a life that was gentle and chaste; although he did not know the true God, he preserved the virginal purity of his body in innocence, as Saint Ignatius the God-bearer later bore witness of him in his epistle to the Philadelphians, calling Titus a virgin. That very God whom Titus did not know by faith, he honored by his good deeds, and he was pleasing to Him.

When Titus had reached the age of twenty years from his birth, he heard a voice descending to him from heaven, saying:

"Titus! You ought to leave this place and save your soul, for Hellenic teaching does not lead to salvation."

After Titus heard this voice, he desired to hear it a second time, for he knew that sometimes voices and suggestions come from idols. Now Titus no longer wished to believe in idols, since he had begun to recognize the demonic delusion to which all who worship idols are subject; and he remained there yet another year.

Then in a dream he received a command from God to read the Hebrew books; and after that dream vision Titus began to seek the Hebrew books. Finding the book of the holy Prophet Isaiah, Titus

opened it and stopped at the forty-first chapter, which begins thus: "Keep silence before Me, O islands, and let the nations renew their strength" (Is. 41:1). As he read this chapter, Titus came upon certain words which, it seemed to him, God Himself was speaking to his heart, namely: "You are My servant; I have chosen you and will not reject you: do not fear, for I am with you"; do not be deceived, "for I am your God" (Is. 41:9–10). And again: "I am the Lord your God; I hold your right hand" (Is. 41:13). At the end of the chapter he read about idolatrous deception, namely: "There was no one, and among them there was no counselor whom I could ask, that they might give an answer. Behold, they are all nothing, and their works are worthless; their images are wind and emptiness" (Is. 41:28–29).

These and other words of the prophetic book were for Titus as a key opening the doors of his mind to the knowledge of the one true God, and at the same time to the understanding of idolatrous delusion and pagan error; and from that time Titus was kindled in heart toward the God whom the Jews worshipped.

At this time a report about Christ, the God who appeared in the flesh, who dwelt among men in Jerusalem and performed wondrous and ineffable miracles, spread on the island of Crete (where Titus lived); for the fame of Him went through all the ends of the earth. The Anthypatos[1] of Crete, who was Titus's maternal uncle, after consulting with men of distinction, sent his nephew Titus, this prudent and inquisitive man, to Jerusalem, so that he might listen attentively and understand what was spoken from the lips of Christ, and converse with Him; in this way Titus could report most fully to his compatriots everything he himself learned about Christ.

Titus went to Jerusalem; seeing the Lord Christ, he bowed down before Him and followed Him and His disciples, mingling with the crowd that went in great numbers after the Lord; thus Titus was an eyewitness of many miracles performed by Christ, and saw the saving passion of the Lord, and was also assured of His resurrection. After the Lord's ascension, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles in

1. That is, the ruler.

the form of tongues of fire, so that the Apostles began to speak in different languages, Titus heard the Apostles' speech, which was also in the Cretan tongue, and he greatly marveled, as it is written also in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles: "Sojourners, Cretans and Arabians (among them was Titus)," marveling, said to one another: "We hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty works of God" (Acts 2:10–11). Afterwards Titus related all of this in his homeland of Crete.

The blessed Titus also took part in the apostolic ministry. When the door of faith was opened also to the Gentiles (Acts 14:27), and the centurion Cornelius and then other Hellenes were baptized, then Titus too, being born of uncircumcised pagans, received baptism from the holy Apostle Paul, formerly called Saul. Although Titus believed in Christ, the Apostles did not receive him into the chief Church until he was baptized, since they generally did not admit the uncircumcised; and Titus did not wish to fulfill the Old Testament rite of circumcision. However, Jews who had believed in Christ at first required all the Gentiles to fulfill this rite, saying that without circumcision no one could obtain salvation, as it is written in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles: "Some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved'" (Acts 15:1). These people murmured also against the holy first-ranking Apostle Peter for the baptism of the centurion Cornelius, and they entered into a dispute with him (the Apostle Peter), telling him that he had gone into the house of uncircumcised men and had eaten with them. When the holy Apostles considered this question at the council, they decreed not to compel the Gentiles to be circumcised; then the blessed Titus also came to baptism, since no one compelled him to be circumcised, as the Apostle Paul also mentions in his epistle to the Galatians, saying: "But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised" (Gal. 2:3).

After his baptism, Titus was empowered by the other chief Apostles for apostolic service and was numbered among the seventy lesser Apostles. Titus was sent together with the Apostle Paul to preach the Word of God to the Gentiles; and Titus constantly followed the holy Paul, not only as a disciple following his teacher, but also as a son fol-

lowing his beloved father. For Paul calls him his son, as can be seen from his epistle to Titus: "To Titus, my true child in our common faith: grace and mercy" (Tit. 1:4). Holy Titus sometimes went with the Apostle Paul, and sometimes was sent by him to preach independently; thus, for example, he was sent by Paul to Dalmatia, as Paul mentions in his epistle to Timothy, saying: "Titus to Dalmatia" (2 Tim. 4:10), that is, he was sent by me to preach the Gospel in the cities of Dalmatia. Sometimes the holy Apostle Paul sent Titus with his apostolic epistles, as for example to the Corinthians, to whom he says: "I urged Titus, and sent with him one of the brethren" (2 Cor. 12:18). He also says: "We urged Titus that, as he had begun, so he should also complete" (2 Cor. 8:6). And again: "Thanks be to God, who has put such earnest care for you into the heart of Titus" (2 Cor. 8:16). Undoubtedly Paul had great spiritual love for Titus in Christ, since he calls him now son, now brother; and when Titus delayed, having left Paul, the latter grieved for him, saying of himself: "When I came to Troas to preach the Gospel of Christ, though a door was opened to me in the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find my brother Titus there" (2 Cor. 2:12–13). And as greatly as the great Apostle grieved without Titus, so greatly was he comforted by his presence, for he says: "God, who comforts the humble, comforted us by the coming of Titus" (2 Cor. 7:6). And again he says: "We rejoiced with the joy of Titus" (2 Cor. 7:13).

Traveling through many lands with the proclamation of the name of Christ, the holy Apostles came to Crete, the homeland of Titus. The Anthypatos of Crete at that time was Rustil, the husband of Titus's sister; hearing the apostolic preaching about Christ God, he at first mocked it; but when his dead son was raised by the Apostle Paul, Rustil believed in Christ and received holy baptism together with his whole household; and at the same time many of the other unbelievers living on that island also received the holy faith and baptism. Holy Paul appointed the blessed Titus bishop of the island of Crete and the other neighboring islands, and, entrusting the newly enlightened Christians to him, left him there; he himself went to other lands to preach the name of Christ to the pagans. Coming to Nicopolis, the holy Paul wrote an

epistle to Titus, instructing him in the good governance (of his flock): "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order what was lacking and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you" (Tit. 1:5). Explaining these apostolic words, Saint John Chrysostom says: "Titus was the most skillful of all who were with Paul; for if he had not been skillful, Paul would not have entrusted to him the whole island, would not have commanded him to complete what was lacking, nor would he have subjected the bishops to his judgment, had he not relied on this man (Titus)."

When Paul stayed in Nicopolis, he again called Titus to himself, saying in his epistle to him: "When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, hurry to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there" (Tit. 3:12). And the holy Titus came to him at Nicopolis; after staying with him for a short time, Titus was again sent by him to Crete.

After this, St. Paul was seized in Jerusalem, put in chains and sent to Rome. Titus, hearing of all this, came to Rome to see the sufferings of his teacher. Titus remained in Rome until the repose of St. Paul the Apostle; after the honorable head of the Apostle was cut off (which was done by the command of Nero[2]), Titus gave the honorable body of the Apostle to burial, and returned again to his flock in Crete. Titus had the throne of his hierarchy in one of the best cities of Crete, called Gortyna. Titus labored unceasingly, turning the Hellenes from their error to Christ, instructing them and confirming their faith by miracles.

It should be noted that on that island there was an idol of the goddess Diana[3], worshipped by the pagans; many Hellenes came to worship this idol, and also brought sacrifices. Once St. Titus came to the place of assembly of the impious and began to speak to them the word of God, exhorting them to turn to the true God, having recognized the delusion of idols. But since the people did not listen to his words, St. Titus prayed to God, and at once that idol fell and crumbled into dust. Then all who were there were struck with terror, and on that day five

2. The Emperor Nero reigned from 54 A.D. to 68 A.D.
3. Diana was regarded by the ancient Greeks as the goddess of the hunt and, in general, as the patroness of nature.

hundred persons believed in Christ. Likewise, when, by command of the Roman emperor, a large idol temple in honor of the abominable god Zeus[4] was being built on the island of Crete, and was already nearing completion, the Apostle of Christ Titus, passing by that place, prayed to the true God, and suddenly that temple fell and was destroyed to its foundations. Seeing such a miracle, many Hellenes turned to Christ and built a beautiful church in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true God.

Having enlightened the island of Crete and the surrounding lands with the holy light of faith, the Apostle Titus attained deep old age; he reposed in the Lord, being ninety-four years old. At his death, Angels came down from heaven to take his soul, and his face shone like the sun. For whose life was a light to the world, that one's death was also glorified by the radiance of light from our Lord Jesus Christ[5].

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Thou didst appear as a companion of Paul, O Apostle, and didst proclaim to us the word of Divine grace; O Titus, ever-memorable mystagogue. Wherefore we cry unto thee: Cease not to pray for us all.

* * *

Translation of the Honorable Relics of the Holy Apostle Bartholomew

Перенесение честных мощей святого Апостола Варфоломея

After the suffering death of the Holy Apostle Bartholomew[6], which he endured for Christ at the hands of the impious in the Armenian city of Alban[7], the faithful took the honorable body of the Holy Apostle and laid it in the same city in a tin reliquary; and miracles

4. Zeus was regarded by the Greeks as the chief deity, the progenitor of all other men and gods.
5. The precious relics of the holy Apostle Titus rested in the cathedral church at Gortyna. After the island was laid waste by the Saracens in 823, only his head remained there, and this was carried to Venice, to the church of St. Mark. According to other reports, however, the head of the Apostle is kept on the island of Crete itself, in the church bearing his name.
6. The memory of the holy Apostle Bartholomew is celebrated on June 11.
7. Now Baku.

began to be wrought by the relics of the Apostle, for healing was granted to the sick through them; for this reason many of the unbelievers were converted to Christ. But the servants of the devil, the impious and cruel priests, hearing of these miracles and even seeing them with their own eyes, not only failed to recognize the power of God, but grew hardened in their hearts and hated the honorable relics of the Apostle. Reaching the utmost degree of enmity and fury, these servants of the devil took the said tin reliquary with the relics and cast it into the sea, intending to drown it in the depths of the ocean. Besides this, these wicked men also cast into the sea four other reliquaries with the relics of other holy martyrs, namely, as is believed, of Papian, Lucian, Gregory and Acacius. But instead of sinking in the abyss of the sea, these reliquaries floated like boats upon the surface of the water, bearing within them priceless treasures. The reliquary of the Apostle Bartholomew, although it was of tin, did not sink in the water; on the contrary, against nature it proved exceedingly light and floated over the sea in the midst of the other martyrs' reliquaries, like a ship steered by Almighty God; for two reliquaries were on its right side and two on its left, out of honor for the Apostle.

Sailing miraculously over the sea, the said reliquaries came to the Thracian Bosporus in the Propontis, then passed through the Hellespont strait, crossed the Aegean and Ionian seas, and reached Sicily; leaving Syracuse on the left, they headed west and came to the island of Lipari. Here the reliquary of the Apostle came ashore; the reliquaries of the other holy martyrs, having escorted the Apostle to Lipari, left him there and separated, each going, by divine providence, in its own direction. The reliquary of Papian sailed to Sicily, that of Lucian to Messinia, that of Gregory to Calabria, that of Acacius to the city of Ascalus; of all this there was a revelation from God to Agathon, bishop of the island of Lipari.

This bishop came with the clergy and people to the seashore, and finding here the reliquary with the relics of the Apostle, was filled with joy together with the others and said:

"Whence has such priceless treasure come to thee, O Lipari? Truly thou art now exalted and glorified; rejoice and be glad, receiving with

thy hands this great intercessor and advocate with God who has visited thee, and cry out to him: Blessed art thou who hast come to us, Apostle of the Lord!"

All marveled that the tin reliquary with the relics of the Holy Apostle not only had not sunk in the water, but had proved lighter than a boat, and had crossed so distant a sea-route, guided clearly not by human strength but by the power of God. And they all glorified the greatness of God.

Afterwards, taking the holy reliquary with the relics of the Apostle, they carried it with the singing of psalms solemnly into the church; and myrrh flowed from the holy relics of the Apostle; by this myrrh healing was granted for incurable diseases[8].

These honorable relics of the Apostle of Christ remained on that island for a long time, even until the reign of Theophilus the Iconoclast[9]. In the reign of this Theophilus, by God's permission for the sins of men, the Agarenes captured the island of Lipari. The ruler of the city of Benevento, Prince Sicard, who had long heard of the miracles of the Apostle of Christ, was kindled with warm faith toward the saint; therefore, calling sailors from the city of Amalfi and promising to reward them sufficiently, he persuaded them to sail by ship to the island of Lipari and from there bring to him the relics of the Holy Apostle Bartholomew as a precious treasure. These men set sail, came to the island of Lipari, took from there that longed-for spiritual treasure, and returned to their own. And as soon as Prince Sicard heard of the relics of the saint approaching him, he went out with the bishop and many people in ships onto the sea to meet them; the honorable relics of the Apostle of Christ were received with joy; afterwards they were carried with honor into the city of Benevento and laid in the Great Church, the event being solemnly celebrated. From that time a feast was established in honor of the translation of the honorable relics of the Holy Apostle Bartholomew, on the twenty-fifth day of the month of August. From these honorable relics healing was granted to those afflicted with vari-

8. The event in question took place at the end of the sixth century.
9. The Emperor Theophilus reigned from 829 A.D. to 842 A.D.

ous diseases, through the prayers of the Apostle Bartholomew and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ[10].

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou didst appear as a great sun to the world, shining with teachings and wondrous miracles, guiding those who honor thee, O Bartholomew, Apostle of the Lord.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Confessors of Christ Who Suffered at Edessa from the Arians

Память святых исповедников Христовых, пострадавших в Едессе от ариан

After the many persecutions against Christians raised by the impious idolatrous emperors and tyrants, the Church of Christ received freedom in the days of the great emperor Constantine and began to flourish in peace and quiet; yet a new persecution was raised against it through the working of the devil, but now not from idolaters, rather from heretical Christians who had fallen into heresy. After the death of the Emperor Constantine, the blasphemous heresy of Arius[11] greatly increased, first in the reign of Constantius[12], son of Constantine, and afterwards in the reign of Valens[13]; for both of them adhered to the Arian heresy, and each, in his reign, greatly oppressed the Church of Christ.

In the reign of Valens, when orthodox bishops were being driven from their thrones and heretics were being set in their places, in the city of Edessa there was a bishop named Barsis, an orthodox and holy man, who had the gift of healing all kinds of diseases in people; this

10. The precious relics of the holy Apostle Bartholomew were translated from Lipari to the city of Benevento around 839 A.D.

11. The founder of the Arian heresy was Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria. He denied the consubstantiality of the Son of God with God the Father, regarded Jesus Christ as a creature, and did not acknowledge in Him the divine perfections: almighty power, omniscience, and so forth. The heresy of Arius was decisively condemned at the First (325 A.D.) and Second (381 A.D.) Ecumenical Councils.

12. He reigned from 337 A.D. to 361 A.D.

13. From 364 A.D. to 378 A.D.

Barsis zealously stood against the Arian heresy. The wicked emperor Valentin, unable to bear this holy man, expelled him from his throne and sent him into exile, first to the island of Arad; but hearing that many of the people were coming to the holy bishop Barsis there and listening to his orthodox teaching, Valens transferred him from there to Oxyrhynchus, an Egyptian city. But when the saint became famous here as well, through his miracles and his teaching, Valens again transferred him to a yet more distant city, named Phenon, located near the dwelling place of the barbarians; here the holy hierarch and confessor of Christ reposed in a blessed death; and the bed (couch) that remained after him on the island of Rade granted healing to infirmities; all who suffered from any sicknesses, lying upon that bed, became well and were freed from unclean spirits.

Having driven this holy hierarch from the throne of the church of Edessa, the impious emperor set up in his place a wolf, in name and in character; for that vain bishop was called Lupus, which means "wolf"[14]. And thus, instead of the true shepherd, a ravening wolf in the sheep's clothing of the episcopacy entered into the flock of Christ.

The Orthodox people of Edessa would not enter into communion with that heretical false shepherd who, like an abomination of desolation (Mt. 24:15), presided in the holy place, that is, in the church. For this reason the Orthodox citizens of that city went out of the city into the fields, gathered in an open place, and there performed the service to God as in a temple; for not a single church had been given over to the Orthodox, but all the churches were closed to them, and the Arians had seized all the most famous churches, in accordance with the imperial command.

It happened once that the Emperor himself, travelling from Antioch, came to Edessa. Learning that the Orthodox (Christians) abhorred the Arian impiety and would not have communion with the aforementioned bishop, but fled from him and gathered outside the city for prayer, the Emperor was angered with the eparch of Edessa, named Modestus, for allowing the people to act in this way, and struck the eparch on the

14. Latin *lupus*: wolf.

cheek. Then he commanded him to prepare armed soldiers; and then he ordered the eparch, leading these soldiers to the place of the people's prayer-assembly, to cut down and put to death the Christians and disperse them.

The eparch, although he had received a rebuke from the Emperor, yet sparing the innocent people, secretly informed the Orthodox that on the following day they should not go out of the city nor gather for their customary prayer and service, since the Emperor, in his anger, had ordered armed soldiers to be led out against the Christians to kill them. The Orthodox, however, hearing of this, instead of being frightened were filled with still greater zeal; and rising early in the morning, they went out of the city together with their wives and children; the Christians made their way to their usual place of assembly, intending to lay down their souls there for Christ. The eparch, however, fulfilling the Emperor's command, early the next morning set out with armed soldiers for that place, as if going out to war. And when he was at the city gates, he saw a certain woman coming out of her house, not having shut the door behind her, dressed hastily (not in festive attire), carrying with her a small boy; the woman was weeping and tried to outpace his soldiers as she made her way out of the city. The eparch commanded that she be seized and brought before him. Halting on the road, the eparch began an interrogation, saying:

"Unhappy woman! Where are you hurrying at so early an hour, and why are you in such haste?"

The woman answered:

"I am hastening to the field where the Christians are gathering."

The eparch answered:

"Have you not heard that the eparch intends to come there with soldiers and slay all whom he finds there?"

The woman answered:

"Yes, I have heard of this; that is why I am hastening, so that together with them (the Christians) I may die for the name of Christ."

The eparch asked again:

"Why, then, have you taken this child with you?"

The woman answered to this:

"I want this child too to be counted worthy together with me of the crown of martyrdom."

Hearing this, the eparch marvelled at such zeal of the Christians and their readiness to die for the faith, and commanded the soldiers to return; then he went to the Emperor and said to him:

"If you command me to die, I am ready; but I cannot carry out the order you have given me."

Then the eparch told the Emperor about the woman with the child, saying with what zeal she hastened outside the city into the field, that she might be counted worthy of a martyr's death, which she desired both for herself and for the child; then the eparch also reported to the Emperor the readiness of the whole people to accept death, for all the Christians, with their wives and children, were ready to die for their confession of faith in Christ.

"And it is impossible," added the eparch, "to compel the people of Edessa to communion in the faith with the bishop, even if all the citizens were put to death; but what profit would there be in this? For by their courageous endurance of suffering they will be glorified among all Christians, while the shame and everlasting ridicule will fall to our lot."

Speaking thus, the eparch turned the Emperor away from slaughtering the people: the Emperor commanded that the people not be oppressed, and ordered that only the priests, deacons and other clergy who did not wish to have communion with the Arian bishop be taken for torture.

After this the eparch summoned to himself the whole clerical rank of Edessa that held to Orthodoxy, and began meekly to exhort them all to obey the Emperor's command, and proposed that they enter into communion with the bishop called Lupus. The eparch said in this connection:

"It is the height of folly that you, representing a small number of people, do not heed the Emperor's command and resist it, when he rules over many lands."

When the eparch was saying this, all were silent. Then the eparch, turning to the eldest presbyter, named Eulogius, who was already advanced in years, asked him:

"Why do you not answer me?"

Eulogius answered:

"I do not answer you because you speak to everyone together; for this reason I do not wish to anticipate all the others with my answer. But if you ask me alone about something, then I will answer you."

The eparch asked:

"Why do you not receive Communion with the Emperor?"

The blessed Eulogius, mocking the heretic's question, answered:

"Has the Emperor received the rank of presbyter, that I should receive Communion together with him?"

The eparch, filled with anger, reproached the holy elder and said:

"O madman! Why do you shun the faith of the Emperor and not enter into communion with those who enter into communion with the Emperor?"

Then all, together with the holy elder Eulogius, confessed their Orthodox faith in Christ, the true God, consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father, and expressed their readiness to lay down their souls for this confession.

After this the eparch, by the Emperor's command, took eighty men of the clerical rank, put them in fetters and sent them into exile in Thrace.

And as these confessors of Christ were being led away into exile, people came out to meet them from all the cities and villages, showed them honour and supplied them with all necessities. Learning of this, the heretics soon sent word to the Emperor, saying that instead of dishonour those being led away were receiving great honour.

Then the Emperor commanded that the said Christians be divided into pairs and sent all to different lands: some to Thrace, some to Arabia, some to Egypt, and to other lands. The blessed elder Eulogius, and with him another honourable presbyter, named Protogenes, were taken to the Thebaid city of Antinoe, where there were few Christians and an innumerable multitude of pagans who worshipped idols. Here the saints remained for no little time, healed various diseases in people by invoking the name of Jesus Christ, and converted many pagans to the Christian faith, counting them worthy of holy baptism.

When the impious Emperor Valens perished, and the sceptre of the Eastern Empire was taken by the pious Theodosius, the Arian heresy was put to shame and quieted, and the power and authority of the heretics who persecuted the Church of Christ was exhausted; the confessors of Christ who were in exile (namely those of them who had not yet departed to the Lord but were still alive) received their freedom and returned each to his homeland; the Orthodox archpastors again received their thrones. Then the aforementioned two holy presbyters, Eulogius and Protogenes, also returned from exile to Edessa; and the Orthodox Christians took back their churches from the Arians; since the holy Barsis had already departed to the Lord in exile, Eulogius was appointed bishop of the city of Edessa; Protogenes was appointed bishop of the Mesopotamian city of Carrhae. These holy Eulogius and Protogenes both adorned the Church of Christ by word and by life until the day of their death[15]. And of all these we glorify Christ God, our Saviour, who is glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.

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Memory of St. Mina, Patriarch of Constantinople

Память святого Мины, патриарха Константинопольского

In the reign of Justinian[16] St. Mina was a presbyter and a provider for wanderers in the Hospice of St. Sampson. After Patriarch Anthimus[17] was deposed from the throne for heretical opinions, St. Mina, as an Orthodox man who led a holy life and was therefore worthy of high rank, was raised to the patriarchate by St. Agapetus[18], Pope of Rome, who had come to Constantinople at that time.

During the patriarchate of St. Mina, the following miracle occurred in the city of Constantinople:

A certain Jewish boy entered a Christian church with Christian children during the communion of the most pure Mysteries of the Body

15. The repose of the holy Confessors of Christ Eulogius and Protogenes took place in the second half of the fourth century.
16. The reference is to the Emperor Justinian I, who reigned from 527 A.D. to 565 A.D.
17. Anthimus I reigned from 535 A.D. to 536 A.D.

and Blood of Christ; this boy, approaching the Mysteries together with the other children, received Communion. When the boy came home, his father asked him where he had been and why he was late. He, as a child, told him the whole truth: he said that he had been in a Christian church and had received Christian Communion. Hearing this, the Jewish father became very angry, and taking the child, threw him into the heated furnace by which he worked glass (for he was a glassmaker); but he said nothing to his wife.

Meanwhile the mother, weeping, searched everywhere for her son and called him by name; on the third day of the search she approached the heated furnace, and the child answered her call; then she, with great difficulty, drew him out of it and asked:

"How and why, being in such a fire, did you not burn, and are still alive?"

The boy then told her the following:

"A certain most radiant Woman often came to me, cooled the fire and gave me water; She also brought me food when I was hungry."

Soon the news of this miracle spread throughout the whole city; Emperor Justinian and the holy Patriarch Mina learned of this miracle. After this the said boy was baptized together with his mother; the father of that boy, who had grown embittered and would not be baptized, the Emperor handed over to judgment as a child-murderer, and commanded that he be put to death

St. Mina shepherded the Church of Christ for sixteen years, and then reposed in the Lord.[19]

* * *

18. Agapetus I occupied the papal throne from 535 A.D. to 536 A.D.
19. St. Mina was Patriarch from 536 A.D. to 552 A.D.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 26

26 августа

New Calendar August 26 · Old Calendar September 8 (civil dates)

Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs Adrian and Natalia

Страдание святых мучеников Адриана и Наталии

The great persecutor of the Church of Christ, the impious Emperor Maximian,[1] while pursuing and putting to death multitudes of Christians everywhere, arrived at the city of Nicomedia.[2] Entering the temple of the idols, the emperor performed worship to his foul gods, falling prostrate on the ground before the idols, and, with the participation of all the inhabitants of the city, offered abominable sacrifices. Thereafter he ordered that Christians be sought out and delivered to torments. The emperor threatened especially severe punishments against anyone who should dare to conceal Christians. On the contrary, he promised rewards and honors to those who, learning where a Christian was hiding, would inform against him, or who, finding one, would themselves bring him to judgment. And so they began to betray one another to death: neighbor betrayed neighbor, one his fellow; some from fear of the emperor's dread command, others for the rewards.

Some of the impious reported to their commander that in a certain cave Christians were hiding and singing and praying to their God through the whole night. Soldiers were dispatched at once, who came to the cave and seized all the Christians who were in it, twenty-three persons in number. Bound with iron chains, they were sent to the city to be presented to the emperor.

1. Maximian Galerius (305–311) was the son-in-law of the emperor Diocletian and then his successor.

2. Nicomedia was the eastern capital of the Roman Empire, a splendid city in the province of Bithynia, on the shore of the Sea of Marmara, in the northwestern part of Asia Minor.

At that time the emperor was driving in his chariot to the temple of the idols to offer sacrifices. Meeting him on the way, the soldiers who were leading the bound Christians cried out to him:

"O Emperor! Here are the opponents of your decree and the blasphemers of our great gods."

Commanding that the chariot be halted, and calling those prisoners nearer to him, the emperor asked them whence they came.

"We were born in this land, and in faith we are Christians," they answered.

"Have you not heard," the emperor continued, "what torments await those who call themselves Christians?"

“We have heard,” the saints replied, “and we have laughed at your madness, and at Satan himself, who works in the sons who do not believe in God, over whom you are the chief!”

The enraged emperor cried out:

"O wretched ones! How dare you call me mad and laugh at me? I swear by the great gods that in the most cruel torments I will grind your bodies to dust!"

"Stretch them out and beat them with staves without any mercy," he commanded the soldiers, "and then we shall see whether their God will come to their help and deliver them from my hands."

And the martyrs were cruelly beaten by the soldiers. As they were beating the martyrs, they said to the emperor:

"Enemy of God! Set over us yet three more tormentors; however many you call and whatever torments you devise, know that by this you will only multiply our crowns."

"O most wretched of men!" cried the emperor. "I will take your heads from you, and do you yet look for crowns upon them? Renounce your vain faith and do not destroy yourselves for your folly!"

The martyrs answered:

"God will destroy you, because you unjustly torment His servants, who have done no evil!"

Then the emperor commanded the soldiers:

"Strike them on the mouth with stones!"

Hastily seizing stones in their hands, the servants began to strike the martyrs on the mouth, but they harmed not so much them as themselves, for they became so frenzied that with those very stones they crushed one another's jaws.

And the saints said to the tormentor Maximian:

"Lawless one and enemy of God! You beat us without mercy, though we are guiltless before you. The Angel of God will strike you down as well and destroy your whole impious house. You cannot satisfy yourself with the sufferings with which you torment us through so many hours and with such cruelty, and far greater torments await yourself. Evidently you have not considered that we have the same body as you, with the only difference that yours is foul and unclean, while ours has been cleansed and sanctified by holy baptism."

Still more enraged by such words, the tormentor Maximian cried out:

"I swear by the great gods that I will order your tongues to be cut out, so that others, seeing you, may learn not to contradict their masters!"

The martyrs of Christ answered:

"Listen, impious tormentor! If you hate and torment those servants who oppose their earthly masters, why then do you compel us to oppose the Lord our God? Or do you wish that we should suffer the same torments that await you?"

"And tell me," asked the tormentor, "what torments await me?"

"What God has prepared for the devil and his angels," the saints answered, "He has prepared for you also, the vessels of the devil: namely, unquenchable fire, the worm that does not sleep, unceasing torment, eternal punishment, the perdition of hell, outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, and many other innumerable torments."

"I swear I will cut out your tongues!" cried the tormentor.

"Madman!" answered the saints. "If you cut out those organs with which we glorify God, our sighs will reach Him all the more easily, and our hearts will cry out to Him all the more strongly, and our blood,

which you pour out, like a trumpet will raise its voice to the Lord that we suffer unjustly."

Hearing such an answer from the saints, the impious emperor commanded that they be bound in iron chains and cast into prison, and that their names and words be recorded in the court registers.

When the saints were brought into the court chamber to have their names recorded, one of its officials, a nobleman named Adrian, who held to pagan impiety,[3] having witnessed the patient and steadfast suffering of these martyrs, approached them and asked:

"I adjure you by your God, for whose sake you suffer so, tell me in truth what reward you expect from your God for such torments? I think you hope to receive from Him something great and wondrous."

The holy martyrs answered him:

"We cannot express with our lips, and you cannot receive with your hearing, nor comprehend with your mind, the joys and the glorious honors which we expect to receive from our Lord, the Righteous Rewarder."

"And from the books of the Law, the prophets, and the others, are you not aware of anything about this?" asked Adrian.

"Even the prophets themselves," answered the saints, "could not fully comprehend with their minds those eternal blessings, since they were men like us; although they pleased God by good faith and good deeds, and spoke what the Holy Spirit inspired in them, yet concerning that glory and those rewards which we expect to receive, the Scripture says: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him' (1 Cor. 2:9)."

Hearing such words, Adrian stepped into the middle and said to the scribes who were recording the names of the martyrs:

"Write down my name with these saints also, for I too am a Christian, and together with them I will die for Christ God!"

The scribes at once went to the emperor and reported to him that Adrian had declared himself a Christian and asked that his name also be written among those condemned.

3. That is, the Graeco-Roman religion.

Hearing of this, the emperor was astonished and enraged, and having Adrian summoned to him at once, asked him:

"Have you lost your reason, Adrian? Or do you too wish an evil death?"

"No," he answered, "I have not lost my reason; on the contrary, from great folly I have come to sound reason."

"Do not reason," cried the emperor. "Rather, ask forgiveness, confess before all that you have sinned, and strike your name from the list of the condemned."

"From now on," answered Adrian, "I shall begin to beseech the true God that He forgive me the sins I committed while I was a pagan."

Enraged at such words of Adrian, the emperor Maximian then commanded that he too be bound in iron chains and shut up in prison together with those martyrs, appointing the day when he would deliver them all to torment.

One of Adrian's servants, running hastily to his house, reported to his mistress Natalia, the wife of Adrian, that her master had been bound in chains and sent to prison.

Hearing of this, Natalia was seized with great terror, wept bitterly, and tearing her garments asked the servant:

"For what fault was my master cast into prison?"

"Having witnessed," the servant answered, "how certain men were tormented for the name of some Christ, and because they did not obey the emperor's decree, did not renounce their faith and did not offer sacrifice to the gods, our master asked the scribes to write his name too among those condemned to death, for he wishes to die together with them."

"Do you not know more precisely for what those men were tormented?" Natalia asked the servant again.

"I have already told you," the servant answered, "that they were tormented for a certain Christ, and because they did not obey the emperor's command to worship the gods."

Then Natalia rejoiced greatly in spirit, ceased weeping, cast off her torn garments, and, putting on the finest of her clothes, went to the prison.

The daughter of believing and holy parents, Natalia had earlier been afraid to reveal her faith in Christ to anyone, which she kept secretly, for she saw what cruel persecution and torment the Christians were subjected to by the impious; but now, having heard that her husband believed in Christ and was written among those condemned to torment, she firmly resolved to declare herself a Christian.

Entering the prison, the blessed Natalia fell at the feet of her husband and, kissing his chains, said:

Blessed art thou, my lord Adrian, for having found such a treasure as thou did not inherit from thy parents: **for thus shall the man be blessed who feareth God**. Truly, my lord, at so young an age thou hast by thy faith in Christ gathered such riches as thou wouldst not have acquired even in thy old age, had thou remained in pagan error. Now thou shalt go without grief into the life to come and shalt find a treasure which those will not obtain there who gather great wealth and acquire estates. There they shall have no time to acquire anything, or to lend, or themselves to borrow from anyone, since no one can deliver from eternal death in hell and from the torments of Gehenna; there no one will help another: neither father the son, nor mother the daughter, neither the great earthly wealth to him who gathered it, nor slaves to their master, but each shall bear his own punishment. But all thy virtues, my lord, shall go with thee to Christ, that thou mayest receive from Him the blessedness prepared for those who love Him. Go then to Him with boldness, not fearing the punishment to come; for thou hast already now overcome both the unquenchable fire and the other torments. I beg thee, my lord, to remain steadfast in that state to which thou hast been called by God's mercy. Let neither regret for thy youthful beauty, nor love for thy kindred, nor friends, nor wealth, nor male slaves, nor female slaves, nothing earthly turn thee back from that good path: all this will grow old and decay; but keep before thine eyes only that one thing which is eternal, and look not upon the perishable and temporal goods of this world. Be not led astray by the flattering words of thy kinsmen and friends, lest by their wicked counsel they turn thee aside from the faith. Hate their caresses, reject their counsels, and listen not to their deceitful words; look only upon those holy martyrs

who are with thee, heed their words, imitate their endurance without any hesitation. Fear not the fury of the tormentor nor his various tortures; all this will soon be over, but from Christ in heaven His servants who suffer for Him shall receive an eternal reward.

Having said this, Natalia fell silent. It was already evening.

Adrian said to her:

"Now go home, my sister, and sleep in peace; and when I learn the time at which we shall be led out to torment, I will let thee know, that thou mayest come and see our end."

Rising from Adrian's feet, Natalia went to each of the twenty-three prisoners, and, falling down before them, kissed their chains, saying:

"Servants of Christ! I beg you, strengthen this lamb of Christ; counsel him to endure to the end, pointing him to the future recompense prepared for the faithful who offer their blood to Christ God, as you have offered your blood to Him, for which suffering you will receive eternal salvation as a reward. Join his soul to your souls and be fathers to him in place of his fleshly parents, who were ungodly; strengthen him by your holy counsel, so that, believing without doubt, he may accomplish his martyr's struggle."

Having said this, Natalia turned again to Adrian, who was in the innermost depth of the dungeon:

"Look, my lord," she said, "spare not thy youth and bodily beauty: the perishable body will be food for worms. Think not of thy estate, of gold and silver, for all this will profit nothing at the Last Judgment. There no one can by any gifts ransom his soul from eternal perdition, for no one will accept gifts; only the good deeds of holy souls will God accept in place of gifts."

Having said this, Natalia went home.

After some days, Adrian, hearing that the emperor wished now to bring him together with the other prisoners to judgment and torment, addressed the holy martyrs with this request:

"My lords!" he said, "with your blessing I must go to my house and call your servant, and my sister, Natalia, that she may see our suffering, for I promised to call her at the hour appointed for it."

The saints gave him their blessing and vouched for him; Adrian, having paid the prison guards, went off.

One of the townsmen, seeing him going home, hurried to Natalia and told her that her husband had been freed from his chains and was approaching the house.

Hearing this, Natalia did not believe it and said:

"Who could have freed him? It cannot be that my husband has been parted from the holy martyrs."

During their conversation one of the servants also came and said:

"Dost thou know, mistress, that our master has been freed and is coming close to the house?"

Thinking that he had renounced Christ and was for that reason freed, Natalia fell into great grief and wept bitterly; and seeing through the window that he was already drawing near the house, she threw down her work from her hands, rose quickly, shut the doors, and said loudly:

"Begone from me, apostate from God, who hast deceived thy Lord! I cannot speak with one who has fallen away from God, and I will not listen to lying words. O godless and most wretched man! Who induced thee to undertake a task which thou couldst not bring to an end? Who separated thee from the saints? Who tempted thee to withdraw from fellowship with them? What turned thee to flight before going out to battle? Thou hast not yet seen the enemy, and thou hast already cast away thy weapon; no arrow has yet been shot at thee, and thou art already wounded! I was astonished, thinking, can any good come from a godless race and an ungodly city? Can a pure sacrifice be offered to God by the offspring of a tormentor? Will the incense of those who shed innocent blood be fragrant to the Most High? And what am I to do, wretched one, who have married this ungodly man? I was not granted the title of wife of a martyr; instead I have become the wife of an apostate. Short was my joy, and it has turned into eternal reproach; for a time I had praise among women, and now I shall have before them unceasing shame!"

Blessed Adrian, standing behind the door and listening to Natalia's words, rejoiced in his soul and was strengthened for the struggle, burn-

ing with a still greater desire to fulfil what he had promised Christ God. He marvelled at such words from a young wife who had but recently entered into marriage with him, for only thirteen months had passed since the day of their wedding.

Seeing the great grief of his wife, Adrian, knocking at the door, began to beseech her, saying:

"Open to me, my lady Natalia! I have not fled from the torments, as thou thinkest; no, I could not do so. I have come to take thee with me, as I promised, that thou mayest see our end."

Not believing his words, Natalia went on speaking to him reproachfully:

"Thus does the criminal deceive me, thus lies a second Judas! Begone from me, lest I kill thee!..."

And she did not open the doors.

"Open quickly, then," Adrian pleaded, "or I shall go away without seeing thee, and thou wilt grieve over it, for I must hurry back. The holy martyrs have vouched for me, and if I do not come at the appointed time, and the officials ask about me and I am not there, the holy martyrs will have to bear, besides their own torments, such torments for me as well; but can they bear torments even for me, when they are already barely alive?"

Hearing this, Natalia at once joyfully opened the doors, and the two of them fell into each other's embrace.

"Blessed art thou, wife!" said Adrian. "Thou alone hast known God in order to save thy husband! Truly, thou art a wife who loves her husband! Blessedness will be thy crown for this, for though thou thyself dost not endure torments, yet thou dost grieve over the sufferings of the martyrs with thy sympathy."

Taking his wife, Adrian set out with her.

On the way he asked her:

"And what shall we do with our property?"

Natalia answered:

"Leave, my lord, the care of earthly things, lest it turn thy mind aside; take care and think only of accomplishing the struggle to which thou hast been called. Forget all that is worldly, perishable, and harm-

ful to the soul; rather take care to behold and receive the eternal goods prepared for thee and for those saints with whom thou goest on the way of the Lord."

Entering the dungeon, the servant of God Natalia fell down before the holy martyrs, and as she kissed their chains she saw that their wounds had already festered and worms were falling from them, and from the weight of the iron fetters with which they were bound their bodily frames were coming apart. Bending down, she wiped the pus from their wounds. Then she at once sent her maidservants to bring good linen and bandages from the house. When all this had been brought, Natalia with her own hands bound up the wounds of the sufferers and, as far as she could, relieved their unbearable pains, ministering in the dungeon for seven days until they were led out to judgment.

When the day of judgment came, the emperor Maximian seated himself on the judgment seat and commanded that the prisoners be brought before him. The servants at once went to the dungeon to announce the emperor's command. Seeing that they were so exhausted in body from their grievous wounds that they could not even walk, the servants dragged all the martyrs, like the carcasses of cattle, bound with one chain; Adrian, however, was led behind them all, with his hands bound behind his back.

As they approached the judgment hall, it was announced to the emperor that the prisoners had been brought.

"Bring them," commanded the emperor, "all here together, that they may see each other's torment; and bring them naked, prepared for torture."

The chief of the prison reported to the emperor:

"Emperor! Those who were tortured earlier cannot be brought here for examination. Command that Adrian alone be brought, for he is still alert and sound in body, and able to endure various torments. The bodies of the others have festered, bones show through their wounds, and if they are tortured again they will most likely die at once, without enduring the many tortures prepared for them. We do not wish that they should die from a brief torment, as men who are little guilty; rather,

give them some time to recover and regain their strength, so that they may afterward endure greater torments for their lawlessness."

Then the emperor commanded that Adrian alone be brought in.

Having stripped Adrian naked, the servants gave him the instruments of execution as well, that he might carry them himself with his own hands.

The holy martyrs said to him:

"Blessed are you, Adrian, that you have been granted to bear your cross and to follow Christ! See that you do not fear, do not turn back, and do not lose your reward. Take care that the devil does not steal your treasure. Do not be afraid of the visible torments, but look to the future recompense. Approach boldly and put the tormentor to shame! Know that 'the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that shall be revealed in us' (Rom. 8:18), which we hope to receive by the mercy of the Lord."

The blessed Natalia also said to him:

"Turn your mind, my lord, to God alone, and let your heart fear nothing! The labor is small, but the rest is endless; the suffering is brief, but the glory of martyrdom is eternal. You will endure a little pain and soon rejoice with the Angels. If, serving an earthly emperor, you took care to gather small taxes, spared not your health, and were ready to die in war, how much more ought you now to bear all torments with courage and die for the Heavenly King, with whom you will yourself reign!"

When Adrian was brought before the impious emperor Maximian, the latter, looking at him, asked:

"Do you still persist in your madness, and wish to end your life in torment?"

"I have already told you," Adrian answered, "that I am not mad, but have come to my senses, and I am ready to die in this life!"

The emperor asked:

"Will you not offer sacrifice and bow down to the gods, just as I and all who are with me bow to them and offer sacrifice?"

"Madman," Adrian answered, "you yourself are in error; why then do you also lead others into the same error? You not only bring yourself

to perdition, but you also draw the whole people who listen to you into the same perdition, counseling and compelling them to worship lifeless idols, having forsaken the true God, the Creator of heaven and earth!"

"So you consider our great gods to be small?" asked the emperor.

"I," Adrian answered, "do not call them small or great, for they are nothing."

The enraged tormentor then commanded that he be beaten cruelly with rods.

The blessed Natalia, hearing that her husband had begun to be beaten, informed the holy martyrs, saying:

"My lord has begun to suffer!"

The saints at once began to pray to God for him, that He would strengthen him in his torments.

The tsar, however, ordered the torturers to repeat: "Do not blaspheme the gods!"

While the martyr was being beaten, he said to the tsar:

"If I am tormented for blaspheming gods who are not gods, what torment awaits you for blaspheming the Living and true God?"

"You have learned to speak so boldly, no doubt from these flatterers?" asked the tsar.

The martyr answered:

"Why do you call the teachers of salvation and the guides to eternal life flatterers? You are great deceivers, leading men into perdition!"

The enraged Maximian commanded four strong servants to beat the martyr cruelly with thick stakes.

And while Adrian was being beaten, he said:

"The more torments you, tormentor, devise for me, the more crowns you will obtain for me in exchange for them!"

And the blessed Natalia related to the holy martyrs everything that the tsar had asked and that Adrian had answered him.

"At least spare your youth," the tormentor continued to exhort, "and call upon the gods! Why do you so vainly and willingly go to your death? My gods are great, and I am very sorry for you, seeing how grievously you suffer and how your beauty is perishing!"

"I spare myself," the martyr answered, "so that I may not perish entirely!"

"Then call upon the gods," the tormentor implored, "they will have mercy on you, and I will restore to you your former rank. You should not be compared with those who were in chains with you, for you are a noble man, the son of distinguished parents, and although you are young, you are worthy of great honors; those prisoners, however, are poor men of low birth and foolish ignoramuses!"

"I know," the martyr answered, "that you are acquainted with my family and origin. But if you knew the lineage of those saints and the rich inheritance they are awaiting, you would be one of the first to fall at their feet and ask them to pray for you, and with your own hands you would destroy your lifeless gods!"

Angered still more, the tormentor commanded four strong servants to beat the martyr on the belly.

And they beat the saint until his belly burst and his entrails began to fall out. Seeing this, the tormentor ordered the beating to stop.

The blessed Adrian was young and tender of body: he was only twenty-eight years old.

"Do you see," the tsar addressed him, "how I spare you! Call upon the gods even with a single word, and at once they will be merciful to you; and I will summon physicians to heal your wounds, and today you shall be in my royal palace!"

"If you promise me the care of physicians," the martyr answered, "and honor in your palace, and you say that your gods will be merciful to me, then let them speak to me with their own lips and tell me what they wish to give me; let them say what benefit they promise me! And when I hear their words, I will offer them sacrifice and bow down, as you desire!"

"They cannot speak!" answered the tsar.

"And if they cannot speak," said the martyr, "then why should one worship them, mute and lifeless as they are?"

In rage and fury the tormentor commanded that the holy martyr be bound again with the other prisoners and shut up in the dungeon, appointing a day when he would bring them out for judgment.

Then the soldiers took the holy martyrs: some they dragged away, while others, exhausted from their bodily sufferings and unable to walk, they carried in their arms; and they led St. Adrian away and again shut him up in the dungeon.

The blessed Natalia encouraged and comforted him, and embracing him, said:

"Blessed are you, my lord, that you have been granted the lot of the holy martyrs! Blessed are you, light of my eyes, since you suffer for the sake of the One who suffered for you! Now you go to behold His glory and to share in it, for the partaker of His sufferings will also be a partaker of His glory."

During this conversation Natalia wiped his blood and anointed her own body with it.

The holy martyrs rejoiced greatly at Adrian's courageous endurance, and approaching him they kissed him, saying: "Peace to you, brother."

Those who could not walk because of the weight of their wounds lay on the floor and crept toward him to kiss him, and all said to him:

"Rejoice in the Lord, beloved brother, for your name is written among the glorified servants of God!"

"Rejoice also, you servants of Christ," Adrian answered, "for you will receive crowns for your care of me! Pray to the Lord for me, that He may strengthen me, who am very weakened in body, and that the enemy who rises against me, the devil, may be unable to do anything to me!"

"Trust in God," said the saints. "Satan will not overcome you: by your suffering you have driven him far away. At first we feared for you, thinking that you, being a man, would be weak; but now, seeing your steadfast endurance, we no longer doubt you and believe that with God's help the enemy can do nothing to you. Therefore do not be afraid: Christ is with you, the Conqueror of the devil!"

Together with the holy Natalia were other pious women, who attended the saints, applying healing remedies to their wounds and dressing them, and they divided the martyrs among themselves so that each could tend to her own with every care.

Learning that many pious women were coming into the dungeon and attending to the prisoners, applying remedies to their wounds, the impious tsar forbade them to be admitted to the prisoners.

Seeing that women could no longer come to the martyrs, the holy Natalia cut off her hair, dressed herself in men's clothing, and, entering the dungeon in the guise of a man, alone attended not only her husband, the holy Adrian, but all the other holy martyrs as well.

Having bound up the wounds of the martyrs, she sat at Adrian's feet and said:

"I beg you, my lord, to remember our union and my presence with you during your suffering, and my desire for you to receive the crowns; pray to our Lord Jesus Christ that He may take me also with you, so that as we lived together in this sorrowful and sin-filled life, so we may remain inseparable in that blessed life. I beg you, my lord, when you stand before Christ the Lord, offer Him first prayer on my behalf; I believe that whatever you ask, the Lord will give you, for your prayer is pleasing to Him and your petition is acceptable. But you know the impiety of these citizens and the godlessness of the tsar, and I fear that they may force me to marry another, an impious pagan; then my bed would be defiled and our union broken. I beg you, keep your wife, as the Apostle teaches; grant me, as a reward for my chastity, to die with you!"

Having said this, she rose and again attended the saints, giving them food and drink, washing and dressing their wounds.

Pious women, learning that Natalia, dressed in men's clothing, was serving the saints, followed her example: they likewise cut off their hair, and, clothed in men's garments, continued to enter the prison and minister to the saints.

When the impious emperor learned what the women had done, and also that the prisoners, weakened by festering wounds, were scarcely alive, he ordered an anvil and an iron hammer to be brought to them in the prison, that the martyrs' shins and arms might be broken, saying:

"Let them die not by the ordinary violent death of men!"

And when the tormentors and murderer-servants brought the iron anvil and hammer into the prison, Natalia, seeing this and learning the

reason for their coming, met them with entreaty that they begin with Adrian, for she feared that her husband, seeing the cruel torment and the death of the other martyrs, would grow fearful.

The tormentors heeded Natalia and first approached Adrian.

And Natalia, lifting her husband's feet, laid them upon the anvil; the tormentors, with a powerful blow of the hammer upon the martyr's legs, broke his shins and shattered his feet.

"I beseech you, my lord, servant of Christ," said Natalia, "while you are still alive, stretch out your hand, that it too may be broken, and you shall then be made equal to the other holy martyrs, who have suffered more than you!"

Holy Adrian stretched out his hand to her, and she, taking it, laid it upon the anvil. The tormentor, striking the hand hard with the hammer, severed it, and at once Saint Adrian yielded up his soul into the hands of God, out of great sufferings.

Having put Saint Adrian to death, the tormentors went with the hammer and anvil to the other martyrs, but they themselves laid their feet and hands upon the anvil and said:

"Lord, receive our souls!"

After this the impious emperor commanded that the martyrs' bodies be burned, so that Christians could not take them.

Hearing this command of the emperor, the blessed Natalia secretly took her husband's hand and hid it with herself, so that it would not be burned.

When the tormentor's servants lit the furnace and carried the bodies of the holy martyrs out of the prison for burning, Saint Natalia and the other pious wives followed after them and gathered the martyrs' blood into their precious garments and bandages, and, keeping it, anointed their bodies with it. Moreover, they bought from the servants, for money, even their garments stained with the martyrs' blood.

When the bodies of the saints had been cast into the furnace, the women cried out with tears:

"Remember us, our Lords, in your eternal rest!"

Saint Natalia ran up to the furnace to throw herself into the fire, desiring to offer herself together with her husband as a sacrifice to God, but she was restrained from this.

Suddenly a terrible thunder crashed, lightning flashed, and a heavy rain fell, which flooded all the place with water and extinguished the furnace itself. Seized with fear, the impious tormentors fled, and many of them fell dead on the road, struck by lightning.

When the tormentor's servants had scattered, the faithful men who were there, together with Saint Natalia and the other women, took the bodies of the holy martyrs out of the furnace whole, in no way harmed by the fire, so that not even a hair on them had been singed.

One pious man with his wife, falling down before Natalia, began to beseech her and the rest of the brethren, saying thus:

"We live at the edge of the city in a secluded place; we abhor the godlessness and can no longer look upon the cruel bloodshed that the impious emperor is carrying out, and therefore we do not wish to remain here any longer, but are moving to Byzantium. Give us the bodies of the holy martyrs; we will carry them onto a ship, take them away from here with us, and keep them there until the death of the impious emperor Maximian. After his death, if we are still alive, we will return and bring the bodies of the saints back here, that they may be honored by all. But if they remain here now, the emperor will again order them burned, and you will be betrayers of bodies which God has preserved from burning by means of the rain."

All agreed, and they carried the bodies of the martyrs onto a ship to send them to Byzantium; and the wind was favorable for the ship's departure.

Meanwhile Saint Natalia lived in her house, keeping by her the hand of her beloved spouse, Saint Adrian, which she, having anointed it with precious myrrh and wrapped it in purple, placed at the head of her bed, a thing no one of her household knew.

Some time later a noble man, of the rank of a chiliarch, desired to marry Natalia, since she was young, beautiful, and rich. He asked the emperor to permit him to take Adrian's wife to wife, and the emperor

consented to this marriage. The bridegroom at once sent noble women to Natalia with an offer of his hand. But Natalia said to them:

"I am glad of the news that such a man wishes to take me to wife; but I ask you to wait three days, that I may make ready, for I never expected that anyone would wish to be joined in marriage with me so soon."

In saying this, the blessed Natalia planned to flee to the place where the bodies of the martyrs had been taken.

Having sent the women who had been sent to her back to the chiliarch and given them hope, she herself went into her bedchamber, where the hand of Saint Adrian was kept, and, falling to the ground, cried out to the Lord with weeping:

"Lord our God, God of those who sorrow and are crushed in heart, look upon me, Thy servant, and suffer not the bed of Thy martyr Adrian to be defiled. Forget not, O Lord, the sufferings of Thy servant, which he endured for the sake of Thy holy name! Merciful Lord! Remember the breaking of his shins and the severing of his hands and of Thy other servants, who suffered for Thee, and let not their sufferings be in vain. Have mercy for their sake on me also, and suffer me not to be joined in union with Thine enemies. Thou who didst deliver those holy ones from fire, deliver me also from the design of this wicked man!"

During this prayer Natalia, from exhaustion and sorrow, dozed off and fell into a light sleep, and behold, in a dream vision one of the holy martyrs appeared to her and said:

"Peace to you, servant of Christ, Natalia! Believe that God has not despised you, and we too have not forgotten your labors, which you undertook in caring for us during our confinement in the prison; stand before the face of Christ, we pray Him that He may command you to come to us quickly."

The blessed Natalia then asked him:

"Tell me, holy martyr, has my lord Adrian stood before Christ the Lord with you?"

The martyr answered:

"He stood before the Lord before us! And you, go and at once embark on the ship and sail to where our bodies are; there the Lord will appear to you and lead you to us!"

Awaking from her sleep, Saint Natalia at once left everything, and taking only the hand of Saint Adrian, went out of the house, and, coming to the sea shore, saw a ship, as if specially awaiting her and ready to sail to Byzantium. Entering it, she found on it people of both sexes, all Christians who had fled from the torment of the impious emperor Maximian, and she gave glory to God.

The chiliarch, learning of Natalia's departure, obtained soldiers from the emperor for help, and, embarking on another ship, pursued her. When his ship had sailed a thousand stadia from the shore, a contrary wind rose upon the sea, which drove the ship back to the shore to the place from which it had set out, and caused it great harm, so that many of those on board drowned. But the Christian ship, on which Saint Natalia was, sailed without any danger. At midnight the devil appeared to them, as if sailing toward them from the east on a ship, with men about him like sailors; the devil asked the Christian shipmen, as if with the voice of a helmsman:

"Where have you come from, and where are you bound?"

They answered:

"We are from Nicomedia, sailing to Byzantium[4]."

The enemy said to them:

"You have strayed from the straight course; turn the ship to the left side."

Saying this, the devil meant to deceive and drown them. The Christians, trusting the false counsel and thinking that those they met were indeed sailing from the east, began to set the sails and turn the ship to the left; but suddenly Saint Adrian, the martyr, appeared to them, shining with light, and cried out with a loud voice:

"Sail on the course you have undertaken, and do not listen to the words of the enemy, who surely is preparing your destruction!"

4. Byzantium, afterward the famous Constantinople, or Tsargrad, was at first a small colony of Megara, founded about 658 B.C. and named after its founder Byzas, a native of the Greek Asia Minor city of Miletus, which was once subject to the Persians.

Saying this, the martyr seemed to walk forward upon the waters, and the devil vanished together with his ship.

The blessed Natalia, rising, saw Saint Adrian walking ahead of the ship and cried out:

"There is my lord!"

And at once the saint became invisible.

A favorable wind blew. The travelers arrived at Byzantium before dawn and put in at the shore near which stood the church where the bodies of the holy martyrs had been laid, and with joy they disembarked.

Coming into the church to the bodies of the holy martyrs, Saint Natalia, with inexpressible joy, fell down before them, kissing them and shedding tears of joy; placing the hand of Saint Adrian against his body, she knelt and prayed for a long time. Then, after a prolonged prayer, she rose and kissed the brothers and sisters present in that place, for many faithful Christians had gathered there, who received her with joy, led her into the house, and begged her to rest a little, for they saw that she was much exhausted from the sea voyage. When she had fallen into a deep sleep, Saint Adrian appeared to her in a dream and said to her:

"It is well that you have come here, servant of Christ and daughter of a martyr: enter into your rest, prepared for you by the Lord; come and receive the reward that is due to you!"

Rising from sleep, St. Natalia told the Christians who were with her what she had seen in her dream, and asked them to pray for her. After this she fell asleep again. The faithful came an hour later to wake her, but found her already dead, for her holy soul had passed into eternal rest with the Lord. Thus, shortly after the sufferings of the holy martyrs, St. Natalia also completed her martyr's course, though without the shedding of blood. She had much fellowship in the sufferings of the holy martyrs, serving them in prison and looking upon their torments; and for the sake of chastity she also left her house and her homeland, and so she stood before Christ our Savior in the company of the martyrs, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Thy martyrs, O Lord, in their sufferings received incorruptible crowns from Thee, our God; for through Thy strength they overthrew their tormentors and crushed the feeble audacity of demons. Save our souls through their prayers.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having placed the God-inspired words of the women in thy heart, O Adrian, martyr of Christ, thou didst zealously press on to the torments, and receivedst the crown together with thy spouse.

* * *

Feast in Honor of the Meeting of the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God

Празднество в честь сретения Владимирской иконы Божией Матери

In the reign of the right-believing Grand Prince Basil Dmitrievich[5], under the most holy Metropolitan Cyprian[6], there came an invasion of the Russian land by the Agarene king (the Mongol conqueror) Tamerlane. This Tamerlane, rising from the east with a great host, subdued many lands and at last drew near to the borders of the Russian land. Approaching the frontiers of the Ryazan region, Tamerlane took the city of Yelets, took captive the prince of Yelets, and put many Christians to death; for he was a hater and a fearsome persecutor of Christians. Tamerlane boasted that he would lay waste the whole Russian land and root out the Christian faith; this destroyer directed his course toward the city of Moscow, intending to destroy it.

When the Grand Prince Basil Dmitrievich heard of this, he gathered his warriors and went toward the city of Kolomna. Setting out from there, he halted on the bank of the river Oka and here drew up his forces against the enemy; but Tamerlane stood in one place for fifteen days. When the Grand Prince (and all the Christian warriors) learned

5. Basil (II) Dmitrievich reigned from 1389 to 1425.
6. Cyprian administered the Moscow metropolia from 1380 to 1385, and then a second time from 1390 to 1406.

of the great strength of the impious king who had come into Russia with a numerous army, and heard also of his evil intent, the Grand Prince, together with the warriors, raised his hands to heaven and prayed with tears to the Lord and to the Most Pure Mother of God, asking for deliverance from that godless Agarene. The Grand Prince called upon the help of the saints of God, the holy hierarchs Peter and Alexis, the Venerable Sergius, and the other Russian wonderworkers.

At the same time the Grand Prince asked his spiritual father, the most reverend Metropolitan Cyprian, to proclaim a fast with prayer for the people; the Grand Prince also asked the Metropolitan to take from the city of Vladimir the wonderworking icon of the Mother of God and bring this icon to Moscow for the protection of the Russian capital city. The holy hierarch of God Cyprian had earlier thought of bringing the aforementioned venerable icon of the Mother of God to Moscow; and when he received the command of the prince, he gave thanks to God with zeal that He had placed the same thought in the heart of the Grand Prince; the most holy Metropolitan received this unanimity with the Grand Prince as a sign of God's good pleasure and consent that the wonderworking icon of the Mother of God be brought to Moscow.

Soon after this the Metropolitan sent to Vladimir men of distinction from the clergy, to take the venerable icon of the Mother of God from there; gathering all the clergy and a multitude of people, the most holy Metropolitan together offered a supplicatory service for victory over the enemies, and commanded all to keep a fast with prayer; he himself did not leave the church, performing services by day and by night and praying with tears for the Grand Prince, for his warriors, and for all Orthodox Christians.

When the venerable icon, taken from the city of Vladimir, drew near to the city of Moscow, on the fifteenth day of the month of August, on the feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God, the most reverend Metropolitan went out to meet it with the rest of the clergy and a multitude of people. Seeing that holy icon, all fell to the ground and bowed before it as to the Most Pure Mother of God who had come to them, and received her with great joy; gazing upon this icon, all shed

tears with tenderness and prayed to the Mother of God for deliverance from the invasion of the Agarenes.

The common fervent prayer was not in vain: on the very day on which the venerable icon of the Most Holy Mother of God was brought to Moscow, the impious Agarene king Tamerlane was seized with terror, being frightened by a dreadful vision in a dream, and fled back with all his army, though no one pursued him.

The vision he had was this: he saw before him a high mountain, from the summit of which holy hierarchs came toward him, bearing golden staves in their hands and threatening him; above these hierarchs Tamerlane saw in the air an extraordinary light; he also saw a certain Queen standing in the midst of those hierarchs in ineffable glory, clothed in a crimson robe and shining with lightning rays brighter than the sun. Around this Queen there stood an innumerable multitude of armed warriors who served Her and seemed prepared for war. The hands of the Queen were stretched out toward heaven—she seemed to be praying. It seemed to Tamerlane that this Queen threatened him, commanding him to depart from the borders of the Russian land, and as if ordering Her host to rush upon him.

From this dreadful vision Tamerlane was seized with terror; rising from his bed, he cried out in fear:

"Woe is me, for I have seen a dreadful sight!"

And the unhappy man trembled, shaking and groaning, and was as if in a frenzy.

After some time Tamerlane came to himself, called his princes and commanders, and told them all that he had seen, trembling with fear.

They, having heard Tamerlane's account and seeing that he trembled with fear, were also seized with terror, and in perplexity asked one another:

"What will happen now?"

Some said:

"The Queen who was seen is the Mother of the Christian God, the Lord Jesus Christ; without doubt She intends to protect the Christians, for She is their Helper and Intercessor."

Tamerlane said:

"If the Christians have such a Helper, then we have armed ourselves against them in vain; we labor to no purpose; for if She sends only one of those who stand before Her, She will conquer us all, so that we shall not find even a place where we might flee."

Thus that impious king with all his Agarene host returned, fleeing in shame, for it seemed to the Agarenes that many regiments of warriors from the Russian land were pursuing them; struck with fear and trembling at this, the Agarenes trampled one another, threw down their weapons, and abandoned their booty and all whom they had taken captive.

Thus victory over the enemies was granted to the Orthodox Christians without battle, and defeat without the shedding of blood, through the prayers of the Most Holy Virgin Mother of God.

This invasion of Tamerlane with the Agarenes, and his miraculous expulsion from the borders of the Russian land, took place in the year 6903 from the creation of the world[7]; from that time a feast in honor of the meeting of the icon of the Most Holy Virgin Mother of God, called the Vladimir icon[5263], was established in the royal city of Moscow, in unforgettable and thankful remembrance of the miraculous deliverance from the Agarenes, granted through the intercession of the Mother of God. May honor, glory, and worship always ascend to the Mother of God together with Christ God born of Her, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Today the most glorious city of Moscow shines brightly, O Sovereign Lady, having received Thy wonderworking icon as a sunrise; to it we now draw near and pray, crying to Thee thus: O most wondrous Sovereign Lady Theotokos, pray to Christ God, incarnate of Thee, that He deliver this city and all Christian cities and lands unharmed from all the assaults of the enemy, and save our souls, as the merciful One.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

7. In 1395 A.D.

To the victorious Leader, having been delivered from evils by the coming of Thy precious image, O Lady Theotokos, we joyfully celebrate the feast of Thy meeting, and as is customary cry to Thee: Rejoice, Unwedded Bride!

* * *

NOTES

5263. Eighty-five years after the events described, a second feast was established for the Vladimir Icon, on June 23, in thanksgiving for deliverance from the invasion of the Horde khan Akhmat in 1480. "Let not the frivolous boast of the fear their weapons inspired," the Russian chroniclers said in explanation of this miracle. "No, it was not weapons, nor human wisdom, but the Lord Himself who has now saved Russia." In 1521 the Mongols again advanced against Russia, led by Mehmed Giray. Through the intercession of the Mother of God, Moscow was saved from its enemies on this occasion as well. The Holy Church commemorates this event on May 21. In 1812, during the French invasion, the wonder-working Vladimir Icon was taken, together with the Iveron and Smolensk Icons, to Murom on September 1 by Archbishop Augustine, and after Moscow was freed from the enemy it was returned to the capital on October 20. The wonder-working Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God is now in the Dormition Cathedral in Moscow. (A fuller account of this icon may be read in the book *Slava Bogomateri* ("The Glory of the Mother of God"), published by the Moscow Synodal Press, Moscow, 1907, pp. 380–385.)

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 27

27 августа

New Calendar August 27 · Old Calendar September 9 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Pimen the Great

Житие преподобного отца нашего Пимена Великого

The Venerable Pimen was a native of Egypt[1]. Together with his two younger brothers he went to one of the common-life monasteries of Egypt, and there, along with his brothers, he received the monastic habit[2].

Some years after this, the mother of these brothers, moved by a mother's natural love for her children, went to them, wishing to see them. She could not see them, and so she stood near the church, awaiting their coming to the church for prayer. When they were making their way to the church, the mother approached them, but they ran away from her back to their cell, and shut the doors against her. Coming to the doors, she began to knock and to call upon her sons, standing outside the cell and weeping with tenderness. But the monks not only did not open the cell door, they did not even answer her. Meanwhile, while the woman wept for a long time standing at the cell door, Abba Anubius, having heard all, entered by another door to the monks and said to Pimen:

"What shall we do with this old woman? See, she has been weeping bitterly for a long time and will not leave this place."

Then Pimen rose, went to the door, and asked:

"Why do you weep, old woman?"

She, hearing his voice but not seeing him, since the doors were shut, said:

1. The Venerable Pimen was born about 340 A.D.
2. He received monastic tonsure about 355 A.D.

"I want to see you, my children! Was it not from my breasts that I nourished you? Was it not I who raised you? And now I am already advanced in years; I suffer greatly in my heart, hearing the voices of my children but not seeing them. I very much wish to see you, my children, before I die."

Pimen said:

"Where do you desire to see us: here, or in that future life?"

She answered:

"Shall I see you there, my children, if I do not see you here?"

Pimen answered:

"If you patiently endure and do not see us here, we hope that, by the loving-kindness of God, you will certainly see us there."

Heeding what had been said, she replied:

"Truly, I prefer to see you there rather than here."

Then she departed with great hope, rejoicing greatly, for she desired to see her children better in the life to come than in this temporal life.

The blessed Pimen, spending his days and years in ascetic labors and unceasingly abiding in prayer, advanced in the monastic virtues and, with God's help, valiantly took up arms against the invisible adversary. He mortified his flesh, which warred against the spirit, exhausted it by great labors as a captive, and subdued it to the service of the spirit. Thus he ascended to the summit of dispassion and became the most glorious of all the desert fathers, as the most perfect in virtue.

Some time later the ruler of that land desired to see our Venerable Father Pimen and sent a messenger to him, asking leave to come to the venerable one. The elder, however, was greatly grieved, reflecting within himself:

"If the nobles come to me to do me honor, then many from the people will also come to me and disturb me. They will hinder my stillness, and I shall lose the grace of humility which, with God's help, I acquired from youth through great labors; then I may easily fall into pride."

Having so reasoned, the venerable one refused to see the prince, and through the same messenger asked him not to come to him, since, said

the venerable one, he would not see him; rather, he would drive him away from that place.

Hearing such an answer, the prince was greatly grieved and said:

"It is because of my sins that I have not been found worthy to see the man of God."

Yet, greatly desiring somehow to see the holy elder, he devised a stratagem: as if for some offense, he took the son of the elder's sister and imprisoned him, hoping that the elder would intercede before him for his nephew; in this way he thought to see the saint. Therefore the prince said to his servants:

"If Abba Pimen comes, I will at once release the youth to freedom; but if he does not come, I will not leave the offender unpunished, for his offense is very great."

When the youth's mother (Pimen's sister) heard of this, she at once set out into the desert to her brother. Coming to his hermit's cell, she began to knock at the door, tearfully begging him to go to the prince and intercede for her son, that he might be released.

The elder not only did not open the door to her, he did not answer her at all.

Yet the sister, for a long time, continued with tears to entreat the elder, knocking at the door; but since she received no answer, she began to speak to the elder with reproaches and anger:

"Merciless, insensible, cruel, godless, and beast-natured man! Do my tears not move you? For my son, who is my only one, is in mortal danger!"

The elder sent a disciple to say to her:

"Go away from here: Pimen has no children, and therefore he does not grieve."

The sister returned, weeping bitterly and reproaching her brother.

When the prince heard of all that had happened, he said to his friends:

"Tell the elder to write me a letter petitioning for release, and then I will let his nephew out of prison."

And many advised the elder to write a letter to the prince. The elder wrote thus:

"Command by your authority that the crime of the offending youth be carefully investigated, and if anything worthy of death is found, let him die, that by temporal punishment he may escape eternal torments; but if the offender is not found worthy of death, then, having punished him as the law requires, release him."

When the prince read this letter of the elder, he marvelled at the mind and virtue of the man, understanding that he was a true friend of God; the prince released the youth. The venerable Pimen, avoiding vain glory and the honors of men, wandered through various lands for a long time. Afterwards he settled again in the Egyptian desert and remained there until old age, pleasing God by ascetic labors; and this holy Pimen was the father of many monks.

Teaching his disciples humility, as he himself was humble, the venerable one set before the disciples, as an example, an account of a certain elder (perhaps of himself), saying thus:

"Not long ago an Egyptian monk lived near Constantinople, in a certain desert place, having a small cell. It happened once that the pious emperor Theodosius (the Younger)[3] passed by that place; hearing of the monk who lived there, the emperor left all his companions and, taking the appearance of one of the common soldiers, made his way to the door of the elder's cell. When the emperor knocked at the door, the monk opened the cell, but did not recognize the emperor in the visitor, and took him for a common soldier. Having made prayer, the two sat down. Then the emperor asked:

"How do the fathers who dwell in Egypt labor?"

"They all pray to God for our salvation."

Looking all around the elder's cell, the emperor found nothing in it but a basket hanging on the wall, and in it a little dry bread; then he said to the elder:

"Father! Bless me to partake of a little."

At once the elder poured water into a vessel, sprinkled salt, and placed pieces of the dry bread; and the two ate together; then the elder

3. However, some understand here Emperor Theodosius the Great, who reigned from 379 A.D. to 395 A.D.

brought a jug of water and gave the emperor to drink. After the meal the emperor asked the elder:

"Do you know who I am?"

He answered:

"I do not know, sir; God knows you."

Then the emperor said to him:

"I am the emperor, Theodosius."

And at once the elder bowed down to him.

Then the emperor said:

"Blessed are you monks, for you are free from the cares of this vain world and lead a life of stillness, concerned only with how to obtain the heavenly, eternal life and the blessings of heaven. Truly I tell you that I, born in my own kingdom and now reigning as emperor, never ate bread with such sweetness, nor drank water, as I have now eaten and drunk with such pleasure."

The elder answered:

"That is because we monks take our food with prayer and blessing; for this reason even the plainest food is sweet. But in your houses the preparation of dishes is done without prayer, with much quarreling and idle talk; for this reason your food does not receive the blessing which might sweeten it."

Having kissed the elder, the emperor departed from there, and from then on greatly honored that monk.

Meanwhile the elder, fearing destructive self-exaltation and pride, lest he lose his gift of humility through the honor of men, and lest he be deprived of the grace of God, rose, fled from there, and afterwards came back again to Egypt.

Such was the account St. Pimen related to his disciples, wishing to teach them humility; by this account St. Pimen wished to teach his disciples to shun vain praises and honors, which bring monks not benefit but harm.

St. Pimen also taught his disciples other virtues; his instructions were always effective, for he could teach anyone the path of salvation; just as by his life he showed an example of virtue equal to the angels, so his word was profitable to all. Not only novices came to him, but also

those grown old in monastic labors, asking him what was useful for the salvation of the soul; all who came to the venerable one received from him divinely wise and God-inspired answers for the edification of their souls; some wrote these answers down in the books of the Fathers[4]. Let us recall some of these answers here.

Someone asked Abba Pimen, saying:

"If I see my brother who has sinned, must I conceal his sin?"

Pimen answered:

"If we conceal the sins of our brothers, God will also conceal our sins."

A certain brother said to Abba Pimen:

"Father! I am in confusion and think of leaving here."

The elder said:

"For what reason do you wish to leave here?"

The brother answered:

"I hear evil talk about one of the brethren who live here, and I am being scandalized."

The elder said:

"What you heard is not true."

The brother answered:

"Truly, Father, it was true, for the one who reported it to me deserves every credence."

But the elder said:

"No, the one who reported it to you does not deserve credence, for if he deserved credence he would not have reported that to you. But never believe what is told you if you have not seen it yourself. For even God, when He heard the outcry of Sodom, did not form a judgment until He came down Himself, that He might see all things with His own eyes[5]: 'And the Lord said: The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is, and their sin, how very grievous it is. I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come up unto Me; and if not, I will know' (Gen. 18:20–21)."

The brother said in reply:

4. That is, the *Apophthegmata* (*Paterika*).
5. An expression in figurative language.

"And I, Father, saw with my own eyes that brother committing a sin."

Hearing this, the elder looked at the ground; then, taking a small twig from the ground, he said to the brother:

"What is this?"

The brother answered:

"It is a twig."

Then the elder looked up at the roof of the building and, pointing to the beam on which the roof rested, asked:

"And what is this?"

The brother answered:

"It is a beam."

And the elder said to the brother:

"Keep this in your heart: your sins are like this beam, and the sin of the brother of whom you speak is like this twig. Then you will never be troubled or caused to stumble."

Abba Sisoes, who was then with him, heard these words of St. Poemen. Greatly amazed at what he had heard, he said to St. Poemen:

"How shall we praise you, Abba Poemen! Truly your words are full of grace and glory, like a precious stone!"

Then Abba Poemen said:

"It is written: bear witness only to what your eyes have seen. But I tell you that even if you see something with your own eyes, do not give credence to it."

And then he related the following incident.

A certain brother was mocked by the demon with such an illusion: he saw another brother committing sin with a woman. The brother was troubled in his thoughts and was inflamed with lust. Approaching, he struck them with his foot, saying:

"Stop; why do you sin?"

But it turned out that these were sheaves of wheat, not people.

"Therefore," concluded Poemen, "I tell you: do not give credence even to what you see with your own eyes."

Abba Anubius said to St. Poemen:

"But what answer would you give to God if you saw a sinner and did not rebuke him?"

Poemen said in reply:

"I would say to God: Lord, You commanded, 'First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye' (Mt. 7:5). I have fulfilled Your command."

Afterward a certain brother asked Abba Poemen, saying:

"Father! I have committed a grievous sin. I want to spend three years in repentance. But are three years enough for repentance?"

The elder answered:

"That is a lot."

Then the brother said:

"So you are ordering that I repent for only one year?"

To this the elder answered:

"That too is a lot."

When the other brothers heard about this, they said:

"So repentance should be no more than forty days?"

But the elder said in reply:

"That too is a lot."

And then he added:

"I think that if a person repents with all his heart and firmly resolves never to return to sin, God will accept even a three-day repentance."

Another brother asked Abba Poemen, saying:

"How ought a person to live?"

The elder answered:

"From the example of Daniel we see that they could not slander him in anything except that he served the Lord his God."

By these words the saint made clear that a person ought to live so that his whole life is nothing other than service to the Lord God.

Another monk asked:

"How can I protect myself from the snares of the enemy?"

The Father answered:

"When a kettle heated from below is boiling, neither a fly nor any other insect can touch it; but when it has cooled, flies and insects settle

on it. Likewise, the enemy does not dare approach a monk who zealously labors in the works of virtue, nor draw him into his nets; but he approaches with ease a person who passes his life in carelessness and sloth, and draws him into sin as he wishes."

Someone asked the elder how one can be freed from evil thoughts that force themselves upon the mind. The elder answered:

"This case is like a man having fire on his left side and a vessel of water on his right. If the man catches fire from the fire, he takes water from the vessel and extinguishes the fire. The fire is the evil thoughts which the enemy of our salvation puts into a person's heart, as a spark into a building, so that the person is kindled with sinful desire; the water is the prayerful turning of a person toward God."

Again Abba Ammon asked Abba Poemen about evil thoughts arising from the heart and about vain desires. The elder answered from Holy Scripture, saying:

"What glory can an axe obtain without one who wields it? And can a saw boast without a worker? So you too, do not lend your consent to aid evil thoughts, and all these thoughts will scatter."

Abba Joseph asked Abba Poemen about fasting, saying:

"How is one to fast?"

The elder answered:

"I eat a little food each day, without being fully satisfied."

Abba Joseph asked:

"And when you were a young man, did you not fast for two days?"

Poemen answered:

"Truly I did fast, and not only for two days but for three, and for a whole week; but the holy fathers, having tried both, found that it is better to eat each day, but little; for this is the royal way (to salvation), easier and more convenient, lest the mind become proud."

The abbot of the Great Monastery asked Abba Poemen, saying:

"How can I attain compunction?"

The elder answered:

"Can there be compunction in a heart that thinks about cheeses, jars of oil, and other worldly matters?"

Another asked the elder:

"Which is better: to speak, or to be silent?"

The elder answered:

"He who speaks for God's sake does well; and likewise he who is silent for God's sake acts well."

Such wise answers the elder gave to questions; besides these, the Paterikons contain many wise sayings of St. Poemen. Here are some of them.

Abba Poemen used to say:

"When a man intends to build a house, he gathers many materials from which the house can be built; likewise we can easily build within ourselves a spiritual house, if we take a small portion from each virtue."

He also said:

"A person must observe three main rules: to fear God, to pray often, and to do good to one's neighbor."

Abba Poemen also said:

"Non-possessiveness, patience, and discernment are the three foundations of the monastic life; for it is written: if there were found in it these three men, 'Noah, Daniel and Job, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness' (Ezek. 14:14). Noah is the model of non-possessiveness, Job of patience, and Daniel of discernment; if these three virtues are found in a monk, God, who saves him, will dwell in him."

The elder also said:

"If a monk hates two things, he can be free from the allurements of this world."

A brother asked the elder:

"And what are these two things?"

To this the elder replied:

"The comfort of the flesh and vainglory."

Then the elder said:

"In the Gospel it is written: 'He that has a garment, let him sell it and buy a knife' (Lk. 22:36); this means: he who has the comfort of his flesh, let him give it up and begin to live a hard life, entering upon the narrow way."

Then he also said:

When David fought with the lion or the bear, he slew the beast by seizing it by the throat (1 Kgdms. 17:34–35); likewise, with God's help, we shall overcome the lion, the devil, and the bear, our flesh, if we put the bridle of abstinence on our throat and belly."

The elder also said:

"If Nebuzaradan, the chief of the cooks of the king of Babylon, had not come to Jerusalem, the temple of the Lord would not have been burned; likewise in us the fire of sinful desire will not be kindled, and our mind, fighting against the enemy, will never suffer defeat, if we do not surrender ourselves to gluttony and indulgence."

The elder also said:

"Just as bees flee from smoke, allowing people to use the sweet fruits of their labor, so by the repose of the body the fear of the Lord is driven from our soul, and it (the soul) is deprived of every good work."

Then he also said:

"Just as every royal armor-bearer stands near the king, always ready to defend him, so our soul must always be ready to fight against the demon of fornication."

Once Abba Pimen heard about a certain brother who fasted for six days and ate only a little food on the seventh day, but who at the same time was angry with his brother. Abba Pimen said of him:

"He has learned to fast six days, yet cannot refrain from anger even for one day."

A presbyter of a monastery, hearing about certain brothers who often went into the city, bathed in the bathhouse, and did not attend to their salvation, became angry with them; and coming to the monastery, he stripped them of their monastic garments. But afterward he repented, went to Abba Pimen, and told him all that he had done to those brothers. The elder said to him:

"Do you not have in yourself something of the old man; or perhaps you have completely put him off?"[6]

6. The old man is the man given over to sin, who does not know the way of salvation. The holy Apostle Paul applies this designation to people who have not yet received the grace of the New Testament (cf. Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9).

The presbyter, hearing such words from the elder, was moved to compunction, summoned those brothers whom he had grieved, asked their forgiveness, and clothed them again in the monastic garments.

Once Abba Isaac came to Abba Pimen and, seeing that he was pouring a small amount of water on his feet, said to him:

"How cruelly some wear down their bodies!"

But the elder said to him:

"We have not been taught to be murderers of the body."

And then he said:

Sometimes a man may seem to be silent, yet if his heart condemns others, he is always speaking. And there are some who speak with their tongue from morning until evening, but at the same time keep silence (for he who does not condemn his neighbor is the same as one who keeps silence).

Abba Joseph related, speaking thus:

Once, when we were sitting with Abba Pimen, the young brother Agathon was among us. Wishing to say something to this Agathon, the elder (Pimen) addressed him as abba, saying thus:

"Abba Agathon."

But we said to the elder:

"This brother is still young; why do you call him abba?"

The elder answered:

"His silent lips compel me to call him abba."

Then Abba Pimen said further:

"A brother who is together with his neighbor ought to become like a stone image; when he is wronged, he ought not to be angry; when he is praised, he ought not to be puffed up."

He also said:

"Evil can never be conquered by evil; if anyone does evil to you, show that person good; then your virtue will overcome his malice."

The Venerable Pimen taught this virtue (as well as other virtues) also by his deeds. For before his arrival from the skete into Egypt, there lived in Egypt a certain elder, honored by all. When Abba Pimen came to that place, many, leaving that elder, began to come to Pimen; for this reason that elder began to be angry at the newcomer Abba (Pi-

men), grew envious of him, and spoke evil of him. When Abba Pimen heard of this, he was grieved and said to his brethren:

"What are we to do now? For these people have caused us sorrow, having left so holy and virtuous an elder and come to us, who are nothing? How shall we remove the anger of that great father? Let us prepare a little food, take a little wine, go to the elder, and eat with him; perhaps in this way we shall soften his heart."

Taking a little food and wine, they went to that elder and knocked at the door of his cell. The disciple of that elder, hearing the knock, asked:

"Who is it?"

They answered him:

"Tell your abba that Pimen has come with his brethren, that he may receive a blessing from your abba."

The disciple went and told this to the elder. The elder, having heard, said:

"Go and say to them: Depart from here, for I have no time to see you."

When the disciple said this to those who had come, they answered him:

"We will not leave here until we are granted to bow down to the elder."

And they stood in the scorching sun at the door of the cell.

Seeing the humility and patience of the visitors, the elder was moved, opened the doors to them, and received them with a kiss; they sat down, conversed with love, and partook of what they had brought. Then that elder said:

"Truly, not only is what I have heard of you true, but I see in you good deeds a hundred times greater."

From that time the elder became peaceable toward Abba Pimen.

Thus the Venerable Pimen knew how to remove the malice of one who was hostile to him, and gave an example of this to others.

The Venerable Pimen knew how to heal some by his silence as well as by his word.

Once the presbyters of that land visited the monastery in which the Venerable dwelt; Abba Anubius, wishing to entertain them somewhat,

went in to the Venerable Pimen and told him of this. However, Pimen gave no answer, but remained in silence for a long time; and Abba Anubius departed from him in sorrow.

Afterwards the brethren who were with him asked him (Abba Pimen):

"Why did you give no answer to Abba Anubius?"

The elder answered them:

"I had no instrument for this (that is, a tongue); for I am dead; and the dead do not speak; therefore do not count me as dwelling among you."

The elder acted thus so that he would not be summoned to those newly arrived brethren for the meal; for of him they also relate that, when the brethren called him to eat with them, he went with weeping, as if unwillingly; for he did not desire to satisfy his belly, yet at the same time did not wish to disobey the brethren, lest he grieve them.

A certain monk, having heard of the virtuous life of the Venerable Pimen, came to him from a distant country in order to see him and learn from him. The elder received the monk with honor; having embraced one another, they sat down; the monk began to converse with the elder from Divine Scripture, about things hard to understand that are spoken of in Scripture, and about heavenly matters. But Father Pimen, turning his face away, remained silent and gave no answer to the visitor. The monk spoke from Scripture for a long time, but received no answer from the elder, for he kept silent; then the monk went out of the cell in sorrow and said to the elder's disciple:

"In vain have I undertaken so great and difficult a journey: I came here for his sake, but he has not said a single word to me."

Then the disciple went in to the elder and said to him:

"Father! This honorable man, renowned among the monks of his land, came for your sake: why did you say nothing to him?"

The elder answered:

"He is from above, and speaks of heavenly matters, while I am from below, and can speak only of earthly things. If the brother who came to us had spoken of the passions of the soul and the infirmities of the flesh,

I would have answered him; but since he speaks of heavenly matters, I can say nothing about them."

The disciple, going out from the elder, went to that monk and said to him:

"Know, Father, that the elder is unwilling to converse from Divine Scripture; but if anyone begins to speak with him about the passions of the soul, then the elder answers."

Moved, that monk went in to the elder and asked him:

"Abba! What am I to do, for I am in the power of the passions?"

Then, looking at him with a joyful face, the elder said:

"You have done well to come; now I will open my lips and fill them with good words."

And he conversed with him for a sufficient time about how to overcome the lusts that rise up against us. Greatly delighted by the God-inspired words of the elder, that monk gave thanks to God for granting him to see such an elder and to hear his conversation; and he returned to his own, rejoicing that he had gained great benefit for his soul.

Afterwards another monk, Abba Isaac, came to Father Pimen and found him sitting silent and as if in ecstasy. Waiting a sufficient time, but seeing that the elder did not come to himself, that monk made a prostration to the ground before the elder, saying:

"Tell me, Father, where was your mind?"

He, compelled to answer by his earnest entreaty, replied:

"My mind was where the Most Pure Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, wept, standing at the Cross; and I would wish always to weep thus."

Such a great man among the fathers, the Venerable Pimen, who had learned every virtue and was of benefit to all by both his life and his word, had such great humility in his mind that he often said with a sigh:

"I shall be cast into the place where Satan is to be cast!"

Yet the Lord exalted His humble servant to the places where the holy Angels dwell, to the dwellings of the righteous and venerable; after a life on earth filled with many years, the Lord settled him in the heavenly mansions, where years do not end[7]; there all the saints, standing before the throne of the glory of God, forever glorify the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God in the Trinity, to whom glory is offered also by us sinners, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

By the streams of thy tears thou didst cultivate the barren wilderness, and from the depths of sighs thou didst bring forth a hundredfold fruit of labors; and thou wast a lamp for the universe, shining with wonders. O Pimen, our Father, pray to Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thy holy memory of thy bright ascetic deeds, Venerable Father, hath come today, gladdening the souls of the faithful, O God-wise Pimen, our Venerable Father.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Kuksha the Hieromartyr and Pimen the Faster

Память преподобных Кукши священномученика и Пимена постника

There is no need for many words where deeds give clear testimony, as can be said of these blessed men; for the blessed Hieromartyr Kuksha, one of the fathers of the holy monastery of the Kiev Caves, was known to all, since he baptized the Vyatichi, who had previously been darkened by unbelief, and enlightened many with faith. This holy Kuksha worked many glorious miracles: he cast out demons, brought down rain from heaven, dried up a lake, and performed many

7. The Venerable Pimen reposed at the age of 110 years. His death took place about 450 A.D.

other wonderful works. At last, after many tortures, he was beheaded by the unbelievers together with his disciple.

At the same time, in the Pechersk monastery there labored the blessed Pimen the Faster, pleasing God; for his great fasting and labors he received from God so great a gift that he became renowned not only for healing the sick, but also for foreseeing the future and what was happening in distant and unknown places. This holy Pimen healed many who were ill, prophesied much, and foreknew his departure to the Lord two years before his death. The holy Pimen, having foreseen the beheading of the blessed Kuksha, who was far from him, cried out loudly in the midst of the Pechersk church:

"Our brother Kuksha has been put to death this very day!"

Having said this, Pimen reposed on the same day as the holy Kuksha and his disciple[8].

Thus these three together received a threefold joy, which "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man" (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9); this joy God, One in the Trinity, has prepared for all who love Him: to Him be glory, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of St. Liberius the Confessor, Pope of Rome

Память святого Ливерия исповедника, папы Римского

Saint Liberius ascended the episcopal throne after Pope Julius[9]. From the very beginning of his reign he was a zealous champion of Orthodoxy and a constant defender of St. Athanasius of Alexandria, who struggled against the Arians. The Emperor Constantius (who had inclined to the side of the Arians) could not, by threats or by flattery, through his courtiers or in person, compel St. Liberius to condemn St. Athanasius, and therefore to condemn Orthodoxy; for such steadfastness in Orthodoxy Liberius was sent into exile in Berea, in Thrace. But when Emperor Constantius was in Rome[10], the people,

8. The death of St. Kuksha the Hieromartyr and of Pimen the Faster took place about 1113 A.D.

9. Julius occupied the papal throne from 337 A.D. to 352 A.D. Liberius ascended the Roman throne on May 22, 352 A.D.

who respected and loved their archpastor, petitioned the Emperor for the return of Pope Liberius to Rome. Before his return to Rome, however, Liberius was summoned to the third Synod of Sirmium (the semi-Arian synod), where he was forced to subscribe to the decree of that council. Only after this, having received permission to return to Rome, did Liberius return there[11] after a two-year exile. Afterwards Liberius brought deep repentance for his act (which consisted in signing the decree of the third semi-Arian Synod of Sirmium), following the example of the holy Apostle Peter, who by sincere repentance atoned for his denial of the Lord. In Rome Liberius labored much for the benefit of Orthodoxy and at last reposed in the Lord[12].

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Father Hosius the Confessor, Bishop of Cordoba

Память преподобного отца нашего Осии исповедника, епископа Кордубского

This Venerable Father, withdrawing from worldly pleasures and adorning himself with all manner of virtues, was appointed to the see of the bishop of the city of Cordoba[13]. Zealous for the Orthodox faith, he went to the first Ecumenical Council, to expose the madness of Arius and to destroy his soul-destroying heresy. And when all had gathered for this Council, he, by his denunciations, vexed Arius and many others. After the Orthodox bishops had been removed from their sees by the Emperor Constantine[14] because they did not take part in the expulsion of Athanasius the Great[15] and did not become par-

10. Emperor Constantius reigned from 33 7 A.D. to 361 A.D. He was in Rome in the year 357, when the people approached him with a petition for the return of Liberius from exile.
11. Liberius returned to Rome in 358 A.D.
12. The death of St. Liberius took place in 366 A.D.
13. The city of Corduba, now Córdoba, was located in the southern part of Spain on the right bank of the river Baetis, now called the Guadalquivir.
14. An error or misprint has been allowed here in the Prologue. The Orthodox bishops were removed from their sees not by the Emperor Constantine, but by his son, the Arian Constantius.
15. Here is meant St. Athanasius the Great, Archbishop of Alexandria, the glorious defender of the Orthodox teaching on the Son of God against the false teaching of Arius. His memory is celebrated on May 2 and January 18.

takers of the false teaching of Arius, he too was sent into exile, where, having endured many sufferings, he died[16].

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Pimen (of Palestine)

Память преподобного Пимена (палестинского)

The holy Fathers Sophronius and John recorded concerning this St. Pimen in their book[17] as follows:

"Abba Agathonicus, abbot of the Lavra of our Venerable Father Sabbas, related to us," they relate, "the following:"

"I was going," related Abba Agathonicus, "once into the desert of Ruva, to Abba Poemen, who lived in a cave and fed on roots. Having found him, I told him of my thoughts, and since it was already evening, he left me alone for the night in the cave, while he himself went to another cave. That night it was very cold, and I suffered greatly from the chill. In the morning of the next day the elder came to me and asked me:

"How did you pass this night, my son?"

"I," relates Abba Agathonicus, "answered him:"

"Forgive me, Father! All this night I suffered greatly from the cold."

He said to me:

"I tell you the truth, my son: I did not suffer from the cold at all."

"Hearing this (Agathonicus relates), I was greatly amazed, for the elder was naked; then I asked him, saying thus:"

"Show me your love, Father: tell me why you did not suffer from the cold, being naked?"

And the elder answered me:

"A lion came, lay down beside me and warmed my body. Yet know, my son, that I shall be devoured by beasts."

16. The Venerable Hosius was exiled in 355 by Emperor Constantius for defending St. Athanasius at Sirmium. By threats, imprisonment and violence he was forced to sign the Arian confession of the Second Synod of Sirmium of 357, and, afterwards returned to Cordoba, he reposed in 359, though according to Stadler in 358, but before his death he again anathematized Arianism.

17. The reference is to the *Leimonarion* (or the Spiritual Meadow), that is, a collection of edifying accounts of the exploits of hermits (ch. 167).

Then I asked him:

"For what reason, Father, shall you be devoured by beasts?"

To this the elder answered me:

"When I lived in the world in my native land (both of them were from Galatia[18]), I was a shepherd of sheep. Once, when I was tending the sheep, a certain man was passing by my flock; my dogs attacked him and tore him to pieces. I could have saved him from the dogs, but I did not do so. And I learned, by the revelation of God, that I too must die in the same manner: namely, I shall be torn to pieces by beasts."

Of this the Venerable Pimen told Abba Agathonicus; and indeed it came to pass as he had said, for three years later it became known that the desert-dweller Pimen had been devoured by beasts[19]. His holy soul was numbered among the choir of the Venerable Fathers by the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom glory is offered forever.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Sabbas, in Venefalekh (the locality and the time of the life of the Venerable Sabbas are unknown).

On the same day, the memory of the holy Martyr Anthusa, who was cast into a well for confessing the name of Christ (the time of her struggles and the place of her death are unknown).

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18. Galatia – a region of Asia Minor.
19. The death of St. Pimen took place at the end of the sixth century.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 28

28 августа

New Calendar August 28 · Old Calendar September 10 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Moses the Ethiopian

Житие преподобного отца нашего Моисея Мурина

In the land of Egypt there lived a certain robber named Moses, an Ethiopian by birth,[1] dark of countenance. Originally he was the slave of a certain illustrious master, but on account of a murder committed by Moses, he was driven out by that master and joined the robbers; and these, seeing that he was strong and had a harsh disposition, chose him as their chieftain (leader). This is recounted concerning St. Moses so that his amendment may be seen, and that it may be known in what manner Moses from such an evil life came to repentance and God-pleasing conduct; for the sins of the saints (committed earlier) are not concealed, for the glorification of God's mercy, which separates the honorable from the unworthy and makes righteous men out of sinners.

Committing robbery, Moses together with his comrades carried out many thefts and bloodsheds, and performed many other abominable lawless and criminal deeds; for his cruelty Moses became renowned among all, for everyone feared him. Of his robber deeds the following is worth mentioning:

Moses harbored malice against a certain shepherd who tended sheep, because this shepherd, with his dogs (who guarded the flock), had once prevented Moses from committing a crime; seeing one day that this shepherd was pasturing sheep on the far side of the river Nile, Moses resolved to kill him. The river Nile was full of water (owing to the flood); Moses, tying his clothing, fastened it to his head, took a

1. That is, an Ethiopian.

sword in his mouth and set out to swim across this great river. The aforementioned shepherd, seeing Moses from afar as he was crossing the river, left the sheep and fled from that place; Moses, however, having swum across but not finding the shepherd, slew four of the largest lambs, then bound these lambs together with a rope, and then swam back across the river Nile, taking the lambs with him; having stripped these lambs of their skins, Moses ate their flesh (which was very tasty), and sold the skins and with the money he received drank wine.

For a long time Moses passed his life in such sinful deeds; but one day by chance he came to his senses, for God took pity on him and called him to repentance, since the Most Merciful and Lover of Mankind Lord does not seek the perdition of sinners, but awaits their turning to salvation. This sinner was moved in heart, repented of his evil deeds, abandoned robbery and his comrades, went to a desert monastery and surrendered himself to obedience and submission to the abbot and brethren, and most of all to God Himself; Moses shed many tears day and night, repenting of the sins he had committed earlier; all the labors and obediences entrusted to him he performed without sloth, and he became a renowned monk.

After some time Moses withdrew into a hermit's cell; here he lived alone, meditating on God and cleansing by warm repentance the lawless deeds he had committed before.

While Moses was living such a life of repentance, four robbers, who did not know that it was Moses, attacked him as he was in his cell. He, being alone, overpowered them, bound them, and, taking them on his shoulders like bundles of sheaves, brought them to the church at the monastery, and said to the brethren:

"What do you advise me to do with them? I must not wrong anyone, but they came to me, and I have taken them."

The fathers commanded him to untie those robbers and let them go free, saying:

"We must not kill anyone."

The robbers, however, understanding that it was Moses, who had formerly been their leader, marveled at such a change in his life and

glorified God; they themselves were moved, came to the fear of God, and, repenting, became renowned monks.

And not only these four, but other robbers as well, hearing of their leader Moses, that he had repented and become a monk, also abandoned robbery and all sinful deeds and became virtuous monks.

Thus Moses persevered in the labors of repentance. At first he was assailed by sinful thoughts, the demons of fornication kindling his lust and drawing him back toward his former dissolute life, as he himself later related to the brethren, saying thus:

"I endured such great torments, struggling against carnal desires, that I nearly broke my monastic vow."

Going to Abba Isidore the presbyter, in the skete, he told him of his sufferings from carnal lust. And St. Isidore said to him:

"Do not be troubled, brother! You are still a beginner (that is, you have only just begun to labor), and therefore the demons attack you fiercely, thinking to find in you your former disposition; to drive them away I advise you to keep a daily fast and abstinence and not to fill your belly completely. Just as a dog accustomed to gnawing bones thrown out by a butcher does not leave until the place of trade is closed; but when trade has ceased and there is no one left who could throw the dog anything to eat, then, wearied with hunger, it departs from that place; so too the demon of fornication stays near a man who feeds himself to satiety. But if you constantly keep fasting and abstinence, mortifying your earthly members and barring the door of satiety by fasting, not allowing satiety, which kindles sinful desires, to enter into you, then the demon, as if wearied from hunger, will depart from you in sorrow."

The servant of God Moses, going to his cell, shut himself in it and remained in daily fasting, eating very little bread after sunset; Moses labored greatly at handiwork, rising for prayer fifty times a day, performing it with genuflections.

Yet although Moses wearied his body with labors and fasting, the carnal desire that leads to sin did not disappear within him. Then he went again to Abba Isidore and said to him:

"Father! I cannot remain in my cell, for carnal passions overwhelm me."

The blessed Isidore, taking him, led him into the upper chamber of his cell and said to him:

"Look to the west!"

Moses looked and saw a multitude of terrible demons bustling about and preparing for battle.

Then Abba Isidore said:

"Now turn to the east and look."

Looking to the east, Moses saw an innumerable multitude of holy, light-bearing Angels, also preparing for battle.

And St. Isidore said to Moses:

"Those in the west raise up strife against the saints of God, while those in the east are sent by the Lord to help the good ascetics. Know, then, that those who help us are more than those who rise up against us."

Moses, strengthened by this vision and the words of the elder, returned to his cell and again began to exercise himself in the customary fasting and labors of prayer.

Yet even after this the battle did not leave him; on the contrary, Moses began to suffer still more from the enemy, being kindled by dreams during sleep. Therefore, rising, he went to another holy elder, very experienced, and said to him:

"What shall I do, Father? Visions in sleep darken my mind, kindling my flesh, gratifying passion and provoking me back to my former sinful way of life, troubling me with phantoms?"

The elder answered him:

"You suffer because you bear that abominable delusion, since you do not guard your mind from voluptuous dreams. Do, then, as I tell you: devote yourself to vigil, gradually grow accustomed to it, and pray with alertness; then you will be freed from that battle."

Moses accepted such good counsel from the experienced holy teacher, returned to his cell, and began to practice all-night vigil (that is, prayerful watchfulness throughout the whole night); he stood in the

middle of his cell all night and did not bend his knees in prayer, lest he give himself over to sleep, but stood upright, not closing his eyes.

The saint remained in such an ascetic feat for six years; but even in this way he could not be delivered from carnal desire, warring against the spirit; for God permitted this so that the Venerable One, having been tested like gold in the furnace, might receive the glorious crown together with the other sufferers.

After some time the valiant monk devised a new and arduous ascetic labor: going out of his cell at night, he would go round the hermits' cells of the desert elders, and, taking the water vessels that were empty beside the cells, he would bring water, and the elders did not know of it (the water was at a distance from that place). Some of the elders had their cells two furlongs[2] from the water, others three, four, and even more; and there were some who, owing to deep old age, could not carry water for themselves at all; for such Moses filled their vessels with water every night. This ascetic labor of St. Moses was hateful to the devil. By God's permission, the devil caused St. Moses the following affliction:

One night that blessed laborer bent over the well with the vessel of a certain elder, intending to draw water; at that moment the devil struck him with great force on the back with a certain piece of wood; the elder fell senseless and lay as one dead.

In the morning of the next day, monks came to that well to fetch water, and saw Moses lying half dead. The monks went to the great skete Abba Isidore and told him everything; he, coming with the brethren, took Moses and carried him to the church. And Moses was ill, as one paralyzed, and suffered so that he barely recovered after a year.

Then Abba Isidore said to him:

"Brother Moses! Do not increase your struggle with the demons beyond your strength, for in boldness it is necessary to keep measure."

The invincible warrior of Christ, Moses, answered:

"I will not end the struggle until the abominable dreams during sleep leave me."

2. *Poprishche* – a measure of length equal to approximately two kilometers.

Then Abba Isidore said to him:

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, these carnal desires now leave you; from now on you will be in peace. Draw near, then, with boldness and partake of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. Know that such a heavy carnal battle was permitted to you so that you would not become proud in your mind, supposing that by your fasting and ascetic labors you had overcome the passions, and so that you would not, in your pride, perish.

Hearing these words, Moses partook of the Divine Mysteries, went back to his cell, and struggled on in peace, free from the assaults that had troubled him before, living a strict, fasting, and silent life.

Some time later Moses was asked whether the passions still troubled him. Moses answered:

"Since the servant of Christ, Isidore, prayed for me, I no longer suffer from carnal desire."

After such great temptations the blessed Moses received peace of soul by the mercy of God, and from that time on he lived his life without carnal temptations. At the same time he received from God great power over the demons, so that he despised them as insects. He was filled with the holy grace of the Holy Spirit and became renowned among the ascetics.

Since St. Moses had become famous for his virtuous life, the prince (ruler) of that land heard of him and set out for the skete, wishing to see Abba Moses. The elder was told that the prince intended to come to him to see him; but Moses, leaving his cell, planned to flee into the marsh and the reeds. The servants who were with the prince met him and asked:

"Where is the cell of Abba Moses?"

He said to them:

"What do you want with him? That elder is foolish, very deceitful, and leads a sinful life."

Hearing these words, they were astonished and passed by. When they came to the church, the prince said to the clergy:

"I have heard of Abba Moses and came to receive his blessing. But we met a certain monk, who was going to Egypt, and when we asked

him where Abba Moses lived, he spoke ill of Moses, calling him a foolish, deceitful elder who leads a sinful life."

Hearing this, the clergy were greatly grieved and asked:

"What was the man like who spoke these reproaches against the holy man?"

They answered:

"He was a tall elder, gloomy of face, in poor clothing."

The clergy said:

"Truly, that was Abba Moses. But since he did not wish to show himself to you, and did not wish to accept honors from you, he told you evil things about himself, as though speaking of someone else."

Having received great spiritual benefit, the prince departed, glorifying God.

Thus the Venerable Moses avoided the glory and honors of men, and shunned conversation with laymen who came to him. Yet he was hospitable, for he received all wandering brethren who came to him with love, as is recorded of his love of strangers in the Paterikon.

Once, an order was given in the skete to all the desert-dwelling fathers:

"Fast all this week and keep the Pascha."

By chance some wandering brethren came to Moses from Egypt. The elder prepared a little cooked food for them; but when his neighbors saw the smoke, they said to the clergy:

"Moses has broken the order and is cooking food for himself."

But the clergy said:

"Let us rebuke him when he comes to the assembly" (for everyone knew of Moses' fasting labors).

When Saturday came, Moses came to the church for the common singing. And they said to him in the presence of all the clergy:

"Father Moses! You have broken a human commandment, but you have fulfilled the commandment of God."

It is also recounted in the life of the Venerable Arsenius:

A certain brother came from afar to the skete in order to see the Venerable Arsenius. Brought to Arsenius, the brother saw him but was

not granted to hear his words, for the elder sat in silence, looking at the ground.

After that, the wandering monk began to beg the brother to bring him to Moses, who had been a robber before his tonsure into the monastic life. The brother agreed to fulfill his request and led him to the Venerable Moses.

When they came to Moses, he received them with joy, offered them rest and refreshment with food, and, showing them great love, sent them away.

On the way the brother of the skete said to the newcomer:

"You have seen both Father Arsenius and Father Moses. Which of them is better, in your opinion?"

The brother answered:

"The better of them is the one who received us with love."

One monk, learning of this, began to pray to God, saying:

"Lord, tell me which of them is more perfect and deserves greater grace from You: he who hides from men for Your sake, or he who receives all, also for Your sake?"

In answer to his prayer this monk had the following vision: two ships appeared to him, sailing on some very great river. In one ship was the Venerable Arsenius, and the Spirit of God steered his ship, keeping him in great quietness; in the other was the Venerable Moses, whose ship was steered by the Angels of God, who put honey into Moses' mouth.

After a long time spent in fasting labors, the Venerable Moses was granted, by a certain revelation of God, the rank of presbyter. When he was raised to the first priestly degree, he was clothed in a stichar, and the bishop said to him:

"Behold, Abba Moses is now all white."

Moses said to the bishop:

"Master! What makes a priest: the external or the internal?" (that is, as if to say: "Does the garment that covers a man from without make him worthy of the priesthood, or the virtues within?")

The bishop, wishing to test Moses, so as to be certain whether he was truly a servant of Christ who had virtues within his soul, said to the clergy:

"When Moses enters the sanctuary, drive him out; then follow after him and listen to what he will say."

The clergy did so: they drove Moses out of the sanctuary, saying:

"Get out, Moor!"

He, going out and standing apart, began to reproach himself, saying:

"Good that they treated you so, dog, good that they treated you so, shadowy Ethiopian; for you are unworthy. How do you dare enter a holy place? You are not a man: how do you dare approach people and the servants of God?"

Hearing these words of the saint, the clergy reported them to the bishop. Then the bishop ordered Moses to be called back into the sanctuary again, and ordained him to the rank of presbyter. Then he asked him, saying:

"What were you thinking, Father, when, having been driven out, you were brought back again?"

Moses answered:

"I compared myself to a dog which, when driven out, runs away, but when called back, returns quickly."

And the bishop said:

"Truly this man is worthy of Divine grace, for God gives grace to the humble."

A similar trial had come to this father even earlier, when he was still a novice. When the brethren were all gathered in the skete, the fathers wished to test Moses' humility and began to belittle him, saying:

"Why does this Ethiopian walk among us?"

He, hearing this, kept silent.

When the brethren were about to disperse, they asked him, saying:

"Father Moses! Were you disturbed or not?"

He answered them with the word of the psalm: "I am troubled and cannot speak" (Ps. 76:5) (that is, I bear the humiliation in silence).

Having received the rank of presbyter, the Venerable Moses struggled on for fifteen more years. Having lived seventy-five years from his birth, and having gathered around himself seventy-five disciples, he died a martyr's death[3] in the following way:

Once, while among the brethren, he said:

"Behold, barbarians will come to the skete to cut down the monks. Rise and flee from here."

The brethren said to him:

"Why do you not flee from here, Father?"

But he said to them:

"For many years I have awaited the time when the word of my Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, will be fulfilled in me, who said: 'All who take the sword shall perish by the sword' (Mt. 26:52)."

To this the brethren said:

"We too will not flee, but will die with you!"

But he answered them:

"I have no need of this; let each do as he finds best."

Then the brethren fled from that place, and only seven monks remained with the Venerable. After some time the elder said to them:

"The barbarians are already near!"

One of the seven monks, frightened, ran out of the cell and hid in a certain place. The barbarians, entering the cell, slew St. Moses and the six monks who were with him. The monk who escaped death, hiding in a secret place, saw heaven opened and seven bright crowns descending from heaven.

After the barbarians had gone, that monk returned to the cell and found Moses and the other monks slain; their bodies lay in blood. Seeing this, the monk began to weep. Then the remaining brethren came and with tears buried the slain monks.

Thus ended the life of our Venerable Father Moses the Ethiopian, who from a robber became a monk and, by sincere repentance, pleased God, so that for him, as for a martyr, not only paradise but heaven itself was opened, and he was adorned with the crown of glory. By his

3. The repose of St. Moses the Black took place around the year 400.

prayers may Christ, the Man-loving Master and our God, lead us also onto the true path of repentance and grant us the Kingdom of Heaven, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be rendered honor and glory, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

Dweller in the desert, angel in the flesh, and wonderworker hast thou appeared, God-bearing, our Father Moses. Through fasting, vigil, and prayer thou didst receive heavenly gifts, and thou healest the sick and the souls of those who come to thee in faith. Glory to Him who gave thee strength; glory to Him who crowned thee; glory to Him who works through thee healings for all.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having struck the Moors and spat upon the faces of the demons, thou didst shine forth in the mind like the bright sun, enlightening our souls with the light of thy life and teaching.

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Father Sabbas of Krypetsk, Wonderworker of Pskov

Память преподобного отца нашего Саввы Крыпецкого, псковского чудотворца

Our Venerable Father Sabbas was born, received his upbringing, and took the monastic habit in foreign lands. It is not known from what country he came,[4] but it is known that he was not born in the Russian land; as a foreigner he came to the city of Pskov, to the monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos called Snyatogorsk.[5] Received by the abbot, he valiantly labored in monastic ascetic struggles, and for his virtuous life he earned the praise and glory of all. But not desiring glory from men, he went to the river Tolva, to the monastery of the Great Euphrosynus.[6] Venerable Euphrosynus received him and entrus-

4. According to the Menologion of Vershinsky, Venerable Sabbas was by origin a Serb.

5. The Theotokos monastery of Snyatogorsk was one of the most ancient monasteries of the Pskov region (mentioned in 1265); it was situated in the locality called Snyatnaya Gora, on the bank of the river Velikaya, at a distance of four versts from Pskov.

ted him with the duties of a monastery servant. Monk Sabbas fulfilled these duties zealously and with humility. After a short time, having asked the Great Euphrosynus for his blessing, he went into the wilderness, situated 15 *poprishches* from the monastery of Euphrosynus, by a lake called Krypets, and settled there in a wholly deserted place. Venerable Sabbas endured many temptations from the demons there. Soon he built a church in the name of St. John the Theologian on the site of his ascetic labors, established cells, and founded a monastery, after which no small number of brethren gathered around him. The fame of his virtuous life quickly spread everywhere, and Prince Yaroslav Vasilyevich of Pskov learned of him.[7] The prince held the Venerable Father in great esteem. He made large donations for the establishment of the monastery, gave lands[8] and lakes for the sustenance of the brethren, and often visited the monastery himself to receive the Venerable Father's blessing. On one occasion he came to the monastery with the princess, his wife. Venerable Sabbas received him with great honor, but did not permit the princess to enter the monastery; he blessed her outside the monastery gates and there granted her healing, for she was ill.

Venerable Sabbas lived many years, and in the year 1495, on 30 August,[9] he reposed in the Lord. His relics were uncovered in the year 1554 following an appearance of the Venerable Father to Isaiah, the hieromonk of the monastery he had founded, and to this day they bestow many healings upon those who come to them in faith, to the glory of Christ God, to Whom be glory now, always, and forever.

* * *

6. This was the Monastery of the Great Desert of the Savior on the river Tolva in the Pskov province, thirty versts from Pskov, founded by Venerable Euphrosynus around 1450. The memory of Venerable Euphrosynus is celebrated on 15 May. His commemoration is also placed under that date.

7. This was Prince Yaroslav Vasilyevich Obolensky, who governed Pskov.

8. In 1487 Prince Yaroslav Vasilyevich issued a grant of land to the monastery and ordered a bridge 1400 sazhens in length to be built across the bogs and swamps to the monastery of St. Sabbas. This bridge is still called Yaroslav's to this day.

9. Here in the Prologue a misprint must be assumed, since in all the accounts of Venerable Sabbas the day of his death is given as 28 August.

Memory of the Holy Righteous Anna

Память святой праведной Анны

The holy and righteous Anna was of the tribe of Asher and was the daughter of Phanuel. As her very name shows (Anna in Hebrew means "gracious"), she was a virtuous woman. For her pious life Anna was granted the gift of prophecy. Having reached deep old age, she, according to the words of the Gospel, "departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day" (Lk. 2:37).

Holy Anna belonged to the number of those pious Jewish women who awaited the coming of the Messiah with longing. To the temple had Joseph and Mary brought the Infant Christ, that the legal rite might be performed over Him. At this time Simeon the God-Receiver took the Infant Jesus into his arms and uttered his wondrous prophecy concerning Him, saying thus:

"Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Master, according to Thy word, in peace; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Lk. 2:29–32).

Then Simeon, turning to the Mother of the Lord, spoke to Her this prophecy:

"Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against (yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Lk. 2:34–35).

In these holy and solemn moments the holy righteous prophetess Anna was in the temple. At that time she was already eighty-four years old. Thus, at the close of her life, she had the happiness of seeing the Infant Jesus. Now she could die in peace.

Having heard Simeon's prophecy concerning Christ, she together with Simeon glorified the Lord and spoke of Him to all who were awaiting redemption in Jerusalem.[10]

10. The memory of St. Anna is also celebrated on 3 February together with the memory of St. Simeon the God-Receiver.

* * *



THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF AUGUST

August 29

29 августа

New Calendar August 29 · Old Calendar September 11 (civil dates)

Tale of the Beheading of the Holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John

Сказание об усекновении главы святого пророка, предтечи и крестителя Господня Иоанна

It was fitting that St. John, the Forerunner of the Lord God and of our Savior Jesus Christ, should precede both the Lord's birth and His death by his own death. Just as on earth he proclaimed the coming of the Lord, saying, "There cometh one mightier than I after me" (Mk. 1:7), so he was also to proclaim the Lord's coming to the holy forefathers' souls held in Hades; for the Forerunner John was to declare there that the Messiah awaited by the world had already appeared. And just as our Lord Jesus Christ suffered for the sins of men, so His Forerunner also received a martyr's death on account of Herod's lawlessness. This came about as follows:

Herod, called Antipas, son of the elder Herod who slew the infants of Bethlehem, an evil shoot from an evil root, who held power over Galilee, first took as wife the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, and lived with her for a considerable time. But afterwards, captivated by the beauty of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, he drew close to her, for she gratified his lust; at this adulteress's urging, he put away his first lawful wife and married his brother's wife, contrary to the law. For even if his brother had died, he could not have taken his wife, since a daughter born of that wife would have remained alive; the law commanded that a dead brother's widow be taken only when the dead brother left no children behind.[5293] It is reliably reported that Herod took his brother Philip's wife while Philip was still alive; thus he com-

mitted a great lawlessness, as a plunderer, an adulterer and an incestuous man.

Seeing the lawlessness committed by Herod, St. John the Baptist, the zealot of God's law, the rebuker of human sins and the preacher of repentance, did not keep silent, but rebuked Herod before the face of all, as an adulterer and a plunderer who had taken his brother's wife, and said to him:

"It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother Philip's wife."

Herod, unable to bear the rebuke, ordered John to be cast into prison and bound in chains. Herod's wife Herodias was especially enraged against the saint and greatly desired his death, but could not bring it about, for Herod himself protected the prisoner from his wife's murderous intent. Herod considered John a righteous and holy man; formerly he had listened to him with pleasure, and heeding his words had done much good; therefore Herod feared to give John over to death. Yet he feared not so much God as men, as the Evangelist Matthew says: "And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet" (Mt. 14:5). Herod feared that the people might rise against him and raise a rebellion; for this reason he did not dare openly to hand over to death the prophet and Baptist of the Lord, beloved and revered by all, but only tormented him in prison confinement, wishing to stop the mouth of his rebuker, which never ceased.

St. John remained in prison for a long time; his disciples gathered to him; John often instructed them in a virtuous life according to God's law, and proclaimed to them the Messiah who had already come into the world, and to Him he sent them, as is said in the Gospel: "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Mt. 11:2–3). He sent to inquire not because he himself did not know; for how could he fail to know Him whom he had baptized, over whom he had seen the Holy Spirit descending from heaven, of whom he had heard the voice of the Father bearing witness, and whom at last he himself had pointed out with his finger, saying:

"Behold the Lamb of God" (Jn. 1:36).

John sent his disciples to ask the Lord so that his disciples might see with their own eyes the glorious miracles which the Lord performed, and that they might be fully convinced that He (Jesus Christ) had come to save the human race.

After some time there came the day on which Herod was accustomed to celebrate his birthday. Having gathered all his princes, voivodes, elders and tetrarchs[1] of Galilee, Herod made a great feast for them (Mk. 6:21). During this feast Herodias's daughter danced, and by her dancing greatly pleased Herod and those reclining with him; at the instruction of her cruel mother she asked Herod for the head of St. John the Baptist and received what she asked, for Herod had sworn to give her whatever she should ask, even to half his kingdom. The wretched man did not wish to break his oath, did not wish to grieve the abominable mother of the dancer, but forgot the fear by which he had until then not dared to put John to death, and forgot also his holy life, and, like one drunk with wine, was inflamed with the intent to shed innocent blood. And at once he sent an executioner to the prison, ordering John's head to be cut off and brought on a platter.

Thus the Forerunner of Christ, for rebuking Herod's and Herodias's unlawful cohabitation, was beheaded in prison, late at night; for that abominable feast is called a supper by the holy Evangelist Mark: "Herod made a supper to his lords" (Mk. 6:21); this supper lasted far past midnight, and when all were already greatly drunk with wine and had sufficiently taken delight in the dancing of that shameless maiden, then was that unrighteous murder committed. And the head of St. John was brought on a platter into the midst of the feast, the blood still dripping, and (as some report) the head, even after being severed, uttered the same words of rebuke, saying to Herod:

"It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother Philip's wife."

Oh, how great a fear then seized all who reclined and stood at that supper, when they saw a human head carried on a platter as food, dripping blood, and moreover moving its lips and speaking words! And the dancer took this head with her bold hands and carried it to her mother.

1. Governors of provinces.

Herodias, taking it, pierced with a needle the tongue that had rebuked her lawlessness; after mocking it for a sufficient time, Herodias did not allow John's head to be buried with the body, for she feared that John might rise again if his head were joined to the body, and then he would begin again to rebuke her and Herod. The body of the holy Forerunner was taken from the prison by his disciples the same night and buried in Sebaste; the head of the Baptist Herodias buried in the earth, in her palace, in some dishonorable and hidden place. Concerning how that head of the Baptist was afterwards taken from there, it is written under the twenty-fourth day of February, when the Finding of this honorable head is celebrated.

After the slaying of the holy, glorious Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord John, the wretched Herod committed another crime, no less than the first; for he mocked our Lord Jesus Christ during His voluntary suffering for us, as the holy Evangelist Luke relates: "And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arraying him in a gorgeous robe, sent him again to Pilate" (Lk. 23:11).

Yet God's vengeance was not slow to fall upon the prophet-slayer and mocker of Christ; for, on the one hand, the blood of John cried out against Herod to God, as once the blood of Abel against Cain (Gen. 4:1–16); on the other hand, Herod's other lawlessnesses (especially his mockery of our Lord Jesus Christ) drew down upon him the righteous punishment of God; and indeed, after no long time, Herod lost his kingdom and his life, together with Herodias and the dancer. For Aretas, king of Arabia, avenging the dishonor and mockery done to his daughter, gathered soldiers and went out with them against Herod; likewise Herod, gathering his soldiers, went out to fight against Aretas. A fierce battle took place between the soldiers on both sides; Aretas's soldiers defeated Herod's soldiers; Herod suffered a heavy defeat; nearly all his soldiers were slain, and he himself escaped with great difficulty. After this Herod was deprived of his power and all his wealth by the Roman emperor, and was sent into exile with the adulteress and her daughter, first to Lyons, a Gallic city, then from there transferred to Ilerda, a Spanish city, and here he ended his life in privation and calamity; but

before his death he saw the death of the dancer, his daughter, who perished in the following manner:

Once, in winter, she wished to cross a river called Sikoris for some need; as she walked, the ice broke beneath her and she fell into the water, sinking up to her neck. By God's righteous judgment, the ice pressed upon her neck, so that she hung with her body in the water while her head was above the ice; and just as once she had danced with her feet upon the ground, so this time she could not reach the ground with her feet, but only made helpless movements in the water, like one dancing, while the swift current of the river swayed her; yet no one could give her help. And until that time the wretched woman hung in the water in such a position, until the sharp ice cut through her neck. Her abominable corpse, carried by the water under the ice, was not found; her head, however, was brought to Herod and Herodias as once the Forerunner's head had been, except that it was severed not by a sword but by ice. Thus the justice of God punished the dancer, who was guilty of the beheading of the honorable head of St. John.

After this the lawless murderer Herod perished "with a noise," together with the abominable Herodias; for they are reported to have been swallowed alive by the earth.

St. John, both during his life and after his repose, was the Forerunner of Christ the Lord. For, having gone before the descent of the Lord into hades, he proclaimed to those who were in hades the God who had appeared in the flesh, and gladdened the holy forefathers; with them he was led up out of hades after its destruction at the Resurrection of Christ. He was granted many crowns in the Kingdom of Heaven: as a virgin, as a desert-dweller, as a teacher and preacher of repentance, as a prophet, as the Forerunner and Baptist, and as a martyr. By his prayers may Christ, the merciful Lord and our God, also instruct us in the path of true repentance and grant us to attain the Kingdom of Heaven, to whom glory is offered together with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 2:

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with praises; but for thee the testimony of the Lord suffices, O Forerunner, for thou hast been shown to be truly the most honorable of the prophets, since thou wast counted worthy to baptize in the waters the One whom thou didst proclaim. Wherefore, having suffered for the truth with joy, thou didst also preach to those in hades that God had appeared in the flesh, who taketh away the sin of the world and granteth us His great mercy.

Kontakion, Tone 5:

The glorious beheading of the Forerunner was a certain divine dispensation, that he might also proclaim the Savior's coming to those in hades. Let Herodias therefore weep, who sought the lawless murder: for she loved not the law of God nor the life that endureth, but the false and the temporal.

* * *

A Word of St. John Chrysostom on the Day of the Beheading of the Head of the Holy Forerunner of the Lord John, 5295.

Слово святого Иоанна Златоуста на день усекновения главы святого Предтечи Господня Иоанна 5295.

Again Herodias rages, again she is troubled, again she dances, again she demands of the lawless Herod the beheading of John the Baptist. Once more Jezebel[2] plots to seize the vineyard of Naboth[3], and plots to drive holy Elijah into the mountains. And will not all[4] who have heard the voice of the Gospel be astonished together with me at the boldness of John, the folly of Herod, and the beast-like frenzy

2. Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, king of Israel, was distinguished by extreme impiety and a dissolute life. Blindly submitting to her influence, Ahab surpassed in impiety all his predecessors and gave himself over to the most shameful idolatry. He built in Samaria a temple to Baal, planted sacred groves, and allowed Jezebel to raise altars to the gods of Tyre and Sidon (3 Kgdms. 16:31–33). Jezebel maintained four hundred false prophets, who were fed from her table (3 Kgdms. 18:19).
3. Naboth was a pious Israelite from Jezreel. He would not sell Ahab his vineyard, which adjoined the royal court; for this, at Jezebel's instigation, Naboth was publicly falsely accused of blasphemy and treason, and stoned to death (for more detail see 3 Kgdms. 21:1–29).
4. The preacher addresses his hearers (the word was spoken in the church).

of the godless women? For what have we heard? "Herod sent and took John and put him in prison" (Mk. 6:17). For what? "For Herodias, his brother Philip's wife."

Who can sufficiently rebuke the madness of Herod, which was displayed because of his excessive subservience to women? Or who can describe the unheard-of audacity of wicked women? It seems to me that there is no beast under heaven that is like an evil wife (now I speak only of the evil woman, not of the good and chaste, for I know that there are many meek and well-mannered women, whose virtuous lives will be mentioned later, to the benefit and for the imitation of the virtuous, that we may love what is good and honorable). No beast in the world is like an evil woman. What can be more dangerous than the serpent among creeping things? Yet the lion and the serpent harbor less malice than a (wicked) woman, as the wisest Solomon also confirms my words, saying: "It is better to dwell in a desert land than with a contentious and angry woman" (Prov. 21:19; cf. Sir. 25:18). Let no one think that the prophet said this in mockery (of women): the very deeds attest with exactness the same thing: the lions in the pit were shamed by Daniel; but the righteous Naboth was slain by Jezebel. The whale preserved Jonah unharmed in its belly; but Delilah, having shorn and bound Samson, delivered him to the foreigners. Serpents, asps and vipers feared John in the wilderness; but Herodias beheaded him at a feast. Ravens fed Elijah on the mountain; but Jezebel rushed to kill him after he had done good by bringing down rain. This is what she said to him:

"If thou art Elijah, then I am Jezebel; let the gods do to me what they will, and let them increase my retribution, if tomorrow at this very hour thy soul is not put to death" (cf. 3 Kgdms. 19:2).

And Elijah was afraid, and went away for the saving of his soul, and hid himself in the wilderness, going forty days, and began to seek death for himself, saying:

"O Lord God! It is enough for me (of these sufferings): take away my soul from me, for I am in no way better than my fathers!"

Alas! The prophet Elijah was frightened of a woman; he who bore the rain of the whole world over the pagans was afraid of a woman; he who brought down fire from heaven, who by prayer raised the dead.

Yes, indeed, he was afraid. For no malice can be compared with the malice of an evil woman. The book of Wisdom also confirms my words, saying: "There is no head more venomous than the head of a serpent" (Sir. 25:17), and there is no malice greater than the malice of a woman!

O diabolical evil and most piercing weapon!

Of old in paradise the devil wounded Adam through a woman; through a woman he moved the meek David to the deceitful murder of Uriah; through a woman he drew the wisest Solomon into transgression; through a woman he blinded the most valiant Samson; through the fault of a woman he slew the sons of the priest Eli; through the fault of a woman he cast the most noble Joseph into chains in prison; through the fault of a woman he delivered John, the lamp of the whole world, to beheading.

Yes, why do I speak of men in general? Through the fault of a woman the devil turned even the saints away from the virtues; through a woman he cuts down all, kills all, defames all, humiliates all; for a shameless woman spares no one, honors no priests, is not ashamed before a Levite, is not restrained before a prophet. O evil, the most evil of all evils, an evil woman! If she is poor, she grows rich in malice; but if she has wealth, which aids her cunning, that is doubly destructive. A woman is an impatient creature, an incurable disease, an untamable beast. I have seen untamable asps tamed, and lions, unicorns and bears made tame; but an evil woman, when rebuked, grows angry, and when admonished with gentleness, grows proud. If her husband is clothed with authority, then she corrupts him by day and by night with her words, urging him to wickedness, as Herodias did Herod; if she has a poor husband, she urges him to anger and strife. If she is a widow, she dishonors everyone by herself; for she does not restrain her tongue with the fear of the Lord, does not look to the future judgment, does not hope in God, does not keep the laws of love. For an evil woman it is nothing to deliver her husband to death. For the wife of the righteous

Job advised him to give himself over to death through blasphemy, saying:

"Say some word to the Lord, and die" (Job 2:9).

O wicked disposition! O ungodly intention! The wife of Job showed no mercy, seeing her husband suffering in his bowels from a grievous sickness, like a coal scattering sparks; seeing his whole body covered with sores and consumed by worms; she did not incline to compassion, seeing him bent, very sick and exceedingly suffering, breathing rapid breaths through his painfully opened lips. She did not soften her heart, seeing him who once walked in royal purple now lying on a dunghill, naked in body. She did not recall the former customary tender conjugal relation, did not recall how much glory and good she had received from him before. But what does she say:

"Say some word to the Lord, and die."

O mercy of a woman! O remedy for sorrows! O law of conjugal love! Did he ever speak such words to you when you were ill? Did he not heal you of your sicknesses by his prayers and good deeds? Was it not enough for him that this temporal punishment was laid upon him, that you ask for him eternal torment through blasphemy (of the Lord)? Or do you not know that every sin will be forgiven men, but blasphemy, which is a sin against the Holy Spirit, will not be forgiven them either in this life or in the age to come? (Mt. 12:31)

Do you wish to see another woman like this one in her wickedness? Look at Delilah, who, having bound the mighty Samson, delivered him to the foreigners (Judg. 16:6); she delivered to the foreigners her husband, whom she loved, caressed, to whom she said that she loved him more than herself. The one she loved yesterday she now beguiles; the one she warmed with kisses yesterday she now, beguiling, delivers to death. Was he not handsome? Who was more handsome than he when, bearing seven locks on his head (Judg. 16:13–14), he showed the image of the sevenfold-radiant grace? Was he not manly? But who was more manly than he when he alone overcame on the way a fearsome lion, and with the jawbone of an ass alone struck down a thousand foreigners? But perhaps he was not virtuous? No, he was so virtuous that, once feeling thirst, he prayed for water (that God would send him wa-

ter), and out of the dead jawbone he held in his hands water gushed forth, with which he quenched his thirst. And so this fair, valiant, virtuous husband was bound as an enemy by his own wife and given into the hands of his foes. But how could a woman prevail over one so strong? By reason of the goodness natural to men: for, having deprived him by night of the secret of his strength, she bound him naked with a strong cord. Therefore divine wisdom commands you: "From her who lies in thy bosom keep the doors of thy mouth" (Mic. 7:5).

What animal, tell me, could conceive such a thing against its own male kind? What serpent intends to destroy its companion? What lioness will deliver her lion to be slain? You see that the Book of Wisdom rightly says, that "there is no head more venomous than the head of a serpent" (Sir. 25:17), and there is no malice greater than the malice of a woman!

I will speak plainly: he who has an evil wife should know that he has the retribution for his iniquities. That this word may not be without proof, listen to Wisdom, which declares that an evil wife is sent to a lawless husband for his evil deeds (Sir. 25:22–29).

Hitherto we have spoken of the wicked woman; here let us end this discourse. It is fitting now to call to mind also the good women, especially for the sake of those who are present here.

Why are these women called good? Because when they see virtues pleasing to God practised by others, they rejoice over them as over their own, and make the labours of those others their own, as a reward for virtue.

A virtuous and almsgiving woman was the Shunammite, who, with her husband's consent, prepared a place of lodging for Elisha, that he might have rest in her house (4 Kgdms. 4:9–10; cf. Lk. 4:25–26). She made for him a bed, a lamp and a table. The bed was not without covering, but was furnished with the fitting adornment of a prophet; the lamp was not without light, but had oil burning and shining; the table was not without bread, but was full of food.

In the same way, who could speak ill of that poor widow who received the prophet Elijah? She did not have many coins, yet she showed the riches of goodwill. She had neither wheat nor wine nor any other of

the earthly things; she had no field sown with wheat to bring her grain; her vineyard bore no sweet clusters for her; the plants did not yield sweet vegetables for her. How, then, could she receive and feed the prophet? Although she had not even a span of land to work, nor a vineyard of a cubit (that is, in area or volume), yet at harvest time she always walked along the field boundary and, bending to the ground, gathered the ears that fell from the sickles of the reapers; in this way she laid up for herself, each year, the needful quantity of food. To this widow Elijah came in a time of famine, when the whole earth was wasting away from lack of rain, when the heaven had shut itself, the air had grown hot, the clouds had been withheld; when there was neither grain nor flower nor shoot of any plant, nor the breath of a moist wind that waters and lifts up the growth of the young ears; when the rivers had dried up, the springs that fed the rivers had vanished from the heat, and the sea had become very salt, because fresh waters no longer flowed into it, the rain and the streams having failed. Then Elijah came to the poor widow. But you know how the widow suffers even in a good harvest. Yet the prophet left the rich, who had abundant stores of bread, and, coming down from the mountain, came to this widow. But why did Elijah, who had brought down fire from heaven by his word, not bring down bread for himself? Perhaps because he could not? No, he could, but he did not do so. Why, then? So as not to deprive the widow of the fruit of almsgiving, and so as to increase by blessing the vessel of meal and the small store of oil. For the prophet came not so much to be fed as to feed the poor woman, and to make manifest the virtue and goodwill hidden in her heart. So God acts: for, being able to feed all His servants who are with Him in the world, He asks for alms, so as to reveal the hearts well disposed by the deeds of their almsgiving. And when there is no one left who could feed them (His servants), then He feeds them either by birds, as Elijah on the mountain, or by foreign prophets, as Daniel in the den, or by a sea-monster, as Jonah by the whale, or He Himself sends food from Himself, as to our fathers in the wilderness; for when they had nothing they could take for their nourishment, then He sent them manna from heaven and brought water from the rock. But when His saints live in the world with other men,

God withholds His hand, though He sees them in sorrow; He leaves them, so that He may reward with grace those who desire to do good to them; for through this many might obtain salvation.

So Elijah came to the widow, who had nothing but a handful of meal, enough at most for one meal for herself and her children. What does the prophet say to her?

"Bring me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink."

When she went to fetch the water, he called after her:

"Bring me also in thy hand a morsel of baked bread."

She spoke of what she did not have, yet she did not conceal what she had, but declared it, saying:

"As the Lord liveth! Have I bread anywhere in a hidden place? I have nothing but a handful of meal and a little oil in the vessel."

It is remarkable already that, despite such scarcity, she did not hide the small remnant of food she had. How many there are now who, having much gold and silver, do not share with their friends when those ask of them? Even when they are entreated with love, they say they have nothing, being unwilling to give; but if, after long entreaties, they are moved to lend something to someone, then they take from those to whom they give a written bond more binding than iron, binding the hand that receives with a signature, in the presence of witnesses and guarantors. But that widow did not renounce her handful of meal at a single word.

What did the prophet say to her?

"Hasten and prepare cakes, first for me, then for thee and for thy children."

This prophetic word was a trial: a trial of the heart, a trial of goodwill. The heart of the blessed widow was as if in a vise, uncertain what to prefer: love for her children, or almsgiving to the prophet? And the widow preferred rather to wrong herself and her children and to receive the prophet, for she knew that "he who receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward" (Mt. 10:41); and he who gives a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple shall not lose his reward (Mt. 10:42).

But why did the prophet say, "Hasten"? Was he so hungry that he needed the widow's special zeal? No, in no way; but he mystically signified by this that a good deed must be done with zeal and joy, and not with sorrow and grief: "for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

"Hasten and prepare, first for me, then for thee and for thy children."

"Hasten," just as Abraham, when the Angels came to him, hastened to the herd and slaughtered a calf to receive the Lamb (Gen. 18:6); and as Sarah hastened to the cakes, that she might receive the bread hidden in the heavens.

Hasten and act as Abraham did with the sacrifices to God: not first thyself and then me, as did Cain, Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of the priest Eli, who dishonoured God by taking for their own use the first-fruits of the gifts offered to God.

The widow fulfilled the prophet's command with zeal.

And the prophet, having received the bread, small though it was, yet offered with great zeal, tasted of it and filled her house with blessings, for he said:

"The handful of meal in the jar shall not fail, nor the oil in the vessel, until the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth."

But why "until that time" (when the rain is sent)?

To show mystically that the old law ends when the new grace has appeared, like rain from heaven.

And indeed it happened as the prophet had said.

Do you see how the good women received the fruits of almsgiving? For good labours bring forth good fruits, and the root of chastity that does not decay.

You women have heard of the deeds of the wicked women and of the virtue of the good; love the one and shun the other; imitate those and avoid these, so that, following the way of the good women, you may be numbered with the company of the saints, in Christ Jesus, our Lord, to Whom belong glory and dominion for ever. Amen.

* * *

NOTES

5293. The ancient custom of levirate marriage, inherited from the forefathers among the Jews, consisted of the following, as described in the book of Deuteronomy: "If brethren dwell together and one of them dies, having no son, the wife of the dead man shall not go out to a stranger, but her husband's brother shall go in unto her and take her to himself as wife, and dwell with her; and the firstborn whom she bears shall stand in the name of his dead brother, that his name be not blotted out in Israel. But if he is not willing to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate, to the elders, and say: 'My husband's brother refuseth to raise up his brother's name in Israel; he will not marry me'; then the elders of his city shall call him and speak with him, and if he stands and says, 'I am not willing to take her,' then his brother's wife shall come to him in the sight of the elders, and loose his shoe from his foot, and spit in his face, and shall say: 'So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house [in Israel]'; and in Israel his name shall be called: the house of the unshod" (Deut. 25:5–10). The custom of levirate marriage, which among the Jews had its origin before the time of the patriarch Jacob, existed also among the Moabites; it was known as well to other Eastern peoples, such as the Persians and others. Its origin is explained in various ways; but the explanation is most probably to be sought in the strong desire of Eastern peoples to have children, with the aim of perpetuating their family and their name in posterity.

THE THIRTIETH DAY OF AUGUST

August 30

30 августа

New Calendar August 30 · Old Calendar September 12 (civil dates)

Our Holy Fathers Alexander, John and Paul, Patriarchs of Constantinople

Святые отцы наши Александр, Иоанн и Павел, патриархи Константинопольские

St. Alexander was a bishop (chorepiscopus[1]) under the most holy Metrophanes, the first Patriarch of Constantinople[2]; this Alexander was adorned with every virtue. When the First Ecumenical Council was convened at Nicaea, Alexander was sent to the council as a zealous champion of piety, for Patriarch Metrophanes could not attend the council on account of his old age and also of his bodily infirmities. Occupying the place of the patriarch at this council (that is, as his representative and substitute), Alexander zealously defended the Orthodox faith against the impious Arius. When the sessions of the council had ended and Alexander was already returning to Constantinople, an Angel of the Lord appeared to the blessed Metrophanes: this Angel announced to Metrophanes the nearness of his death and commanded him to appoint Alexander as patriarch after him. The Angel said to Metrophanes:

"Within ten days thou shalt receive the crown from God; and let thy concelebrant Alexander receive the patriarchal throne after thee."

The pious Emperor Constantine, together with many fathers, came to the most holy Patriarch Metrophanes, who was already lying on his deathbed. When Constantine asked him whom he would bless to receive the patriarchal throne after his death, Saint Metrophanes answered:

1. Chorepiscopus — a rural bishop, a bishop of the villages adjoining a city.
2. Metrophanes was Patriarch from 315 to 325.

"The Lord has revealed to me that after me my concelebrant Alexander shall receive the throne, truly worthy of election and of the gift of the Holy Spirit."

So it came to pass.

After the most holy Patriarch Metrophanes departed to the Lord, Alexander was enthroned as Patriarch of Constantinople, and he diligently shepherded the rational flock of Christ[3], driving away the wolves: heretics and pagans, for he had to wage a great struggle not only with the Arians but also with the Hellenic philosophers.

Thus once some of the Hellenic philosophers dared to approach the emperor and to accuse him that, having rejected the ancient faith of the fathers and the laws of Rome and Greece, he had accepted some new faith and new laws, which, as these philosophers said, led not to the strengthening but to the ruin of the kingdom. The philosophers asked the emperor to permit them to enter into a disputation about the faith with Bishop Alexander. The emperor permitted this disputation. The holy hierarch of God, Alexander, although he had not been trained in Hellenic philosophy, yet, filled with the Holy Spirit, did not refuse the disputation.

When the philosophers had gathered in great numbers and expressed the desire that all of them at once should enter into disputation with the Christian bishop, the hierarch proposed that they choose from among themselves one philosopher, wiser and more eloquent, and entrust to him the conduct of the disputation; the remaining philosophers could listen to the disputation.

"It is impossible," reasoned Saint Alexander, "for one man to answer you all, crying out and shouting at once."

The philosophers chose from among themselves one whom they considered the wisest and presented him to the hierarch, and they themselves prepared to listen attentively. Beginning the disputation, the most holy Patriarch Alexander said to that philosopher:

"In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ I command thee to be silent!"

3. Alexander was Patriarch from 325 to 340.

And immediately the philosopher's tongue was taken from him and he became mute, so that he could not say a single word.

Then the whole assembly of philosophers was seized with fear and shame, so that some of them fled in disgrace, while others believed in Christ. The philosopher who had lost the gift of speech made it known by signs that he acknowledged both his own error and the rightness of the Christian faith; then he fell down at the feet of the hierarch, and at once his tongue was freed from its dumbness: he began to glorify our Lord Jesus Christ aloud, after which he was baptized together with his other companions.

On account of this event the emperor and all the faithful rejoiced, and all glorified God, who had granted such wondrous power to His servant.

This holy Alexander later also put to death, by his prayer, the impious Arius.

The heretic Arius, some years after the First Ecumenical Council, was summoned to Constantinople; here, by his cunning, he deceived the pious Emperor Constantine in this way. Constantine asked him whether he believed as the holy fathers at the Council of Nicaea had commanded to believe. Arius, holding on his breast a sheet of paper with the writing of his heresy, struck his breast with his hand and said:

"I so believe!"

Thus this heretic, seemingly expressing agreement with the belief confirmed at Nicaea, but in his mind meaning that he believed as he had written with his own hand, which writing was on his breast. And the impious man swore before the emperor, saying that he "believed thus."

Not suspecting such cunning, the emperor believed the words of Arius and sent him to the most holy Patriarch Alexander, commanding him to receive Arius into ecclesiastical communion as an Orthodox man; at the same time a Sunday was appointed on which Arius was to be brought into the church for communion with the faithful.

However, Saint Alexander refused to receive Arius into communion, as the founder of the heresy.

Meanwhile Saturday passed and Sunday drew near. On the night before Sunday the bishop of God prostrated himself in prayer in the

sanctuary before the Holy Table. With tears he entreated God to take his soul from the body, so that he would not have to see the day on which Arius would approach ecclesiastical communion and receive the Holy Mysteries; or else, out of mercy toward His Church, to destroy Arius from among the living.

Saint Alexander prayed thus all night; morning came and the time of the Divine Liturgy drew near. From the imperial palaces Arius came out with great pride, making his way to the church; he was surrounded by court officials who sympathized with his heresy, and by a multitude of armed attendants.

When Arius came to the place called "the Forum of Constantine" (where there stood a marble column bearing a statue of the emperor), he was seized with great fear from the gnawing of his conscience; because of his fear Arius felt the need to relieve a bodily necessity, and began to seek some hidden place. Not far from there was a public latrine; going in there, Arius was suddenly struck by a fierce disease of the bowels, and the belly of the impious man burst open, like that of Judas (Mt. 27:1), so that all his entrails came out of him.

Thus terribly did the heretic perish.

Those standing nearby and awaiting Arius's exit, seeing that he did not come out for a long time, went in themselves and found him dead, lying in pus and blood. And at once the news of the terrible, unexpected death of the heretic Arius spread through the city; the heretics were put to shame, while the Orthodox rejoiced greatly that Christ, the true God, had shown vengeance upon His enemy and blasphemer; and above all the most holy Patriarch Alexander gave thanks to Christ God, thanking God for having shown mercy to His Church and saved it from that cruel wolf.

The pious Emperor Constantine the Great, learning of such a death of Arius, was yet more strengthened in the pious faith and until his own death defended the dogmas of the Council of Nicaea.

Such power before God had the righteous prayer of the great bishop of God, Alexander. Like a sharp weapon, it put to death the enemy of God and brought about the triumph of the Orthodox Church; of this Saint Gregory the Theologian[4] afterward made mention in his discourse to the people of Constantinople, speaking with approval and praise of Alexander, saying thus:

"Truly I say to you: you are the disciples of the glorious Alexander, the zealous champion and preacher of the Holy Trinity, who armed himself both by word and by deed against the heretical error. You remember his equal-to-the-apostles prayer, by which he destroyed the leader and director of the heretics in the place that was worthy of the most impious tongue, so that shame might be repaid with shame, and so that by a dishonorable death, sent according to his deserts, the deadly evil of heresy, which destroyed many souls, might be exposed for ever."

Saint Gregory spoke these words in praise of Saint Alexander and to the shame of the impious Arius, and therefore he mentioned the death of Arius, which occurred in a dishonorable place, by the prayers of Alexander; for just as Arius insulted the Son of God, blaspheming His Divinity, which is equal in power and co-eternal with God the Father, so he himself received a dishonorable death; thus the insult was avenged by an insult.

Saint Alexander shepherded the Church of Christ for a sufficient number of years, until he reached deep old age. When he was already at the point of death, his rational sheep surrounded the bed of their shepherd and asked him:

"To whom dost thou leave us, thy children, Father? Whom wilt thou appoint in thy place as our shepherd; who could, following in thy steps, firmly govern the Church?"

Alexander, pointing to two honorable men, namely Paul the presbyter and Macedonius the deacon, answered:

"If you desire to have a shepherd who is wise and adorned with virtues, choose for yourselves Paul; but if you want a shepherd only of

goodly appearance, shining with outward beauty, then choose Macedonius."

Having said this, the most holy Patriarch Alexander departed to the Lord, having lived ninety-eight years from his birth. After him the throne was received by Saint Paul, the first Patriarch of Constantinople with this name[5] (his commemoration is November 6).

Saint John, surnamed Cappadocian because he was a native of Cappadocia, succeeded to the throne of the Patriarchate of Constantinople after the unorthodox Timothy[6], toward the end of the reign of the heretical Emperor Anastasius[7]. He was elected against his own will, for he did not wish to accept so lofty a dignity, and he was raised to the patriarchal throne by the Orthodox people rather than by imperial authority. John had no rest from the impious emperor Anastasius until the day of the emperor's death, for he was hated and persecuted by him; for this emperor defended the heresy of Severus, the pseudo-patriarch of Antioch[8], an opponent of the council of the holy Fathers held at Chalcedon (the Fourth Ecumenical Council)[9]. This heretic Severus, following the teaching of Dioscorus and Eutyches, who had been excommunicated and anathematized at that council, acknowledged only one nature in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ: he maintained that the Word and the flesh, in the Incarnation, were merged into one nature, and he did not acknowledge two natures in the one Person of Christ, as the holy Fathers taught us to believe, and as the Church even now, in her theology, sings: "Being God by nature, and by nature having become man for our sake: not divided into two persons, but acknowledged in two natures without confusion"[10]. This vain-minded opponent of Orthodoxy mistakenly asserted that the Godhead of the Holy Trinity

4. St. Gregory the Theologian (of Nazianzus) was Patriarch of Constantinople for a short time (less than a year); he is known for his sublime writings, for which he received the name "the Theologian." His memory is January 25.
5. Paul (I) was Patriarch from 340; he was soon exiled and again restored in 347; he held the patriarchal see until 350.
6. Timothy (I) was Patriarch from 511 to 518.
7. Emperor Anastasius (Dicorus) reigned from 491 to 518.
8. Severus was Patriarch from 512 to 519.
9. In 451.
10. Dogmatikon, Tone 6.

suffered on the Cross together with the humanity of Christ; for this reason he added to the singing of the Trisagion such words as: "Who wast crucified for us, have mercy upon us."

From this accursed Severus arose the heresy of the Acephali, that is, the “headless,” so called because they did not acknowledge the authority of the Orthodox bishops over the churches subject to them, just as the head rules the other members of the body; but each of them considered himself a leader and teacher, according to his own opinion. After the unorthodox bishops and presbyters who defended this false doctrine had died, among those heretics neither baptism nor the Divine Liturgy was celebrated according to the usual order of the Church; they communicated instead from a lamb prepared in advance and kept for a long time, gathering on the days of holy Pascha and breaking the lamb into small particles. Then each of these heretics chose for himself whatever faith he wished; having arbitrarily assumed the authority of teaching, they taught others as well, preaching to them their false doctrine. Therefore very many heresies, contradicting one another, multiplied among these heretics; the Greek church historian Nicephorus Callistus mentions these heretics in the eighteenth book, in the forty-fifth chapter, observing as follows:

"Among such heretics was the impious emperor Anastasius, who did much harm to the Church of God, expelling the Orthodox bishops from their thrones; this emperor wished also to expel St. John, Patriarch of Constantinople, but the judgment of God overtook the heretic, and his life was cut off by death."

It would not be superfluous to mention here also the death of this impious emperor, which took place under such circumstances.

A few days before his death, this emperor saw in a dream a certain terrible man, who sat in glory on a high throne like a Judge, with many standing before him. This Judge held a book in His hand; opening the book, He found in it the name of Anastasius, and showing it to the emperor Anastasius, He said:

"I wished to allow you to live a longer time, but because of your impiety I will blot out fourteen years from your life."

Having said this, the Judge blotted out what was written in the book; and the emperor, seized with fear and trembling, rose from his sleep in alarm, summoned one of his closest counselors, named Amantius, who was in full agreement with him (and also in agreement with his heretical opinions), and related to him with sorrow that dream-vision. Amantius, having heard the emperor and being struck with terror at his account, said:

"This night I too had a terrible vision: it seemed to me that I was standing near your royal person, as a servant, when a great swine came up, seized me by my outer garment, threw me to the ground, and devoured me."

Relating to one another such terrible dreams and being struck with horror by them, they summoned a certain sorcerer, named Proclus, and told him their dreams, that he might interpret them. He told them that both of them would die soon.

And indeed, in a short time lightning struck the imperial palace and killed the emperor. Thus the impious one perished by an evil death.

After the death of the emperor Anastasius, Justin[11], a pious and righteous man, was chosen to the imperial throne. Amantius and the other impious men who had furthered the evil deeds of Anastasius and oppressed the faithful were put to death by just judgment. Thus their dream-visions were fulfilled in Anastasius and in Amantius.

After the destruction of these enemies, peace and tranquility came to the Church of Christ and among her pastors. The Most Holy Patriarch John, together with the newly elected pious emperor Justin and all the Orthodox people, rejoiced at the deliverance of the holy Church from the yoke of her persecutors, and they sang songs of thanksgiving in the church. Soon after this they (the emperor and the patriarch) summoned the nearest bishops (forty in number) to a local council, and they anathematized Severus, the pseudo-patriarch of Antioch, and all his fellow-thinkers, and at the same time they confirmed and glorified the Fourth Ecumenical Council, which had been held at Chalcedon.

St. John spent the remaining days of his life in ecclesiastical peace, diligently shepherding the flock entrusted to him and pleasing God;

having been on the throne for three years, John departed peacefully to the Lord[12].

St. Paul, who is now honored, the fourth Patriarch of Constantinople of that name, was a native of Cyprus; he received the patriarchal throne after Nicetas[13], the heretical iconoclast[14], in the reign of Leo[15], son of Copronymus. This St. Paul is mentioned in the Life of St. Tarasius[16].

Paul was a virtuous and pious man, but too weak-willed and timid, for seeing the great sufferings endured by many Orthodox for the holy icons at the hands of the impious emperor, he concealed his piety and entered into communion with the heretics, though he did not wish it. After the death of that impious emperor he wished to restore the pious custom of venerating the holy icons, but he could not do so, for he had no helper; meanwhile iconoclasm had grown strong throughout the whole city and also in the surrounding lands. For this reason Paul was greatly grieved; seeing that success was difficult to hope for, he resolved to leave his patriarchal throne, on which he had sat not more than four years; falling ill, he secretly left the patriarchal house and went to the monastery of St. Florus, where he received the holy schema.

Soon this became known everywhere, and all were in great astonishment.

Empress Irene[17] was greatly grieved by this event, learning that the patriarch had acted thus without telling anyone anything. Irene came to him with her son, the emperor Constantine, and asked him:

"Father? What have you done, and for what reason have you acted thus?"

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11. Justin I reigned from 518 to 527.
12. John was Patriarch from 518 to 520.
13. Nicetas I was Patriarch from 766 to 780.
14. The iconoclastic heresy appeared in the eighth century. The iconoclasts imprudently confused the veneration of icons with idolatry. The most zealous champions of iconoclasm were the emperors Leo III the Isaurian (717–741) and Constantine V Copronymus (741–775). This heresy was condemned at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, held in 787 in the city of Nicaea.
15. Leo IV (the Khazar) reigned from 775 to 780.
16. The memory of St. Tarasius is celebrated by the Holy Church on February 25.
17. The Empress Irene reigned from 797 to 802.

Paul answered:

"It was sickness and the expectation of approaching death that prompted me to take this holy monastic habit; but more than anything, the ecclesiastical disturbances and strife prompted me to leave the patriarchal throne; for the Church suffers, being thrown into turmoil by the iconoclastic heresy; through the long impious teaching of the heretics the Church has received a grievous wound, and I, wretched man, have already three times approved that heresy with my hand and my signature; I have not only failed to escape the snares of impiety, but have sunk into them with my tongue and my hand, for which I now grieve greatly; but what wounds and burdens my soul most of all is that I see all the lands subject to your rule, keeping firmly the Orthodox confession of faith, abiding in Orthodox teaching and rejoicing, shunning our church and driving us away from themselves as alien sheep, as the flock of Christ. For this reason I do not wish to be the shepherd of a heretical assembly, and I prefer rather to be in the grave than to lie under anathema from the holy four apostolic thrones[18]. But since God has placed in your hands the power of the scepter, that you may have royal care for the Christian flock scattered throughout the earth, turn your attention to the sorrow of your Mother, the Church, and do not allow her to remain any longer in inconsolable grief, but by all means take care that she receive again her former beauty. Do not allow any longer that abominable heresy, like some swine come out of the field, to lay waste and ravage the vineyard of Christ in your pious reign; do not allow the heresy to defile the vineyard of Christ with impious teaching. You have a skilled workman who can cultivate the cluster of the true confession, pressing it in the Divine winepress of the one Church. This workman will fill the cup of wisdom and prepare for the pious people the drink of Orthodox understanding."

They asked him:

"Father? Of whom are you speaking?"

He answered:

"I am speaking of Tarasius[19], your first counselor; I know that he is worthy to be steward of the Church, since he can, with the staff of his

reason, drive away heretical babbling and wisely shepherd the rational flock of Christ, gathering it within the one fold of Orthodoxy."

Having heard such words from Patriarch Paul, the pious Empress Irene and her son, the emperor Constantine, withdrew in sorrow. Paul, turning to some dignitaries who remained with him, said to them:

"Oh, how I wish I had not been upon that throne at the time when the Church was in turmoil because of the heretics condemned by the Ecumenical Sees. If the Seventh Ecumenical Council is not convened, and if the heresy of iconoclasm is not condemned, you will not be saved."

The nobles said to him:

"Why, then, when you were appointed patriarch, did you give written approval to iconoclasm?"

Paul replied:

"Since I then gave my signature, I now repent of this, and fear punishment from God because I was silent then out of fear and did not tell you the truth. Now, however, I repent, and say that you cannot hope for salvation if you remain in that heretical way of thinking."

A few days after this, the patriarch reposed in peace[20]. From that time, the citizens of Constantinople began freely and without fear to converse and dispute with the heretics concerning the holy icons, in defense of which no one had dared, since the time of Leo the Isaurian,[21]

to open his mouth.

Having learned all this concerning the three hierarchs commemorated today—Alexander, John, and Paul—let us glorify the one God in Trinity, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Set aflame with love for Christ, O glorious ones, and having taken up His precious Cross as a yoke, ye became imitators of His life and partakers of His divine glory: Alexander, wise in God, with

18. The patriarchal sees meant are those of Constantinople, Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria.
19. Tarasius was Patriarch of Constantinople (after Paul IV) from 784 to 806.
20. Paul IV was Patriarch from 780 to 784.
21. Leo III (the Isaurian), who reigned from 717 to 741, was a fierce iconoclast.

John the wondrous and Paul the glorious. Wherefore, standing before His throne, earnestly pray for our souls.

* * *

Life of St. Right-believing Prince Alexander Nevsky[22]

Житие святого благоверного князя Александра Невского

St. Right-believing Grand Prince Alexander Yaroslavich was born in 1219, on 30 May, in the city of Pereslavl.[23]

Alexander Yaroslavich's father, Grand Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich, was, according to the accounts of his contemporaries, a meek, merciful, pious prince, beloved by all. The mother of the Right-believing Alexander, Right-believing Princess Theodosia, by her piety and ascetic labors had, even during her lifetime, won from her contemporaries the name of a holy princess.[24] The childhood years of the Right-believing Prince Alexander passed under the care of his pious parents, who loved him tenderly.

According to the custom of that time, he began his studies early; and since, in a child's upbringing, the greatest care was then given to developing the fear of God and piety in his soul, the Right-believing Prince was taught first of all the sacred books—the Gospel and the Psalter, a sacred book beloved in Holy Rus', whose wise words our pious princes sought and found to be a comfort in the most grievous moments of their lives, when help or consolation could be expected from none but the Lord.

From his childhood, the Lord was preparing in the Right-believing Prince Alexander a lamp burning with faith and virtues. According to

22. Information about the life of the right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich is found in his ancient lives and in the chronicles. In Ancient Rus' five lives of the right-believing prince were composed; of these, the first, brief one was written by a contemporary of Alexander Yaroslavich, and the last, most detailed one, already in the seventeenth century, on the basis of the most ancient lives, successively supplementing one another.

23. Now this is a small town of the Vladimir Province (on the river Trubezh, where it flows into Lake Pereyaslavl), but at that time it was the principal city of the appanage principality of Pereyaslavl-Zalessky.

24. The right-believing Princess Theodosia, daughter of the famous Russian Prince Mstislav Mstislavich the Bold, reposed in 1244.

the testimony of the ancient biographer of the Right-believing Prince, he never gave himself over to childish games and amusements. His favorite occupation was reading the sacred books; his favorite repose, fervent prayer to the Lord, whose example he continually beheld in the person of his pious mother. He delighted his soul with the singing of church hymns, and strengthened and developed his bodily powers by fasting and abstinence.

Alongside book learning, much attention was also given in the princely families of ancient Rus' to physical training: the development of strength and agility, skill in wielding sword and spear, riding a horse, and the like; for a prince had to be experienced not only in spiritual labors but also in the labors of war. He had to be not only a warrior of Christ but also a warrior on earth, able to defend the holy Church by the power of the word and, when need arose, by the power of the sword. And the Right-believing Prince Alexander, an invincible knight, as his contemporaries called him, mastered this aspect of princely education to perfection, and was for his companions-in-arms not only a leader but also an example of martial valor.

Young princes were also prepared early for the governing duties that lay before them. Here, too, the Right-believing Alexander could look to his renowned father as a lofty example and model for imitation: a man who, according to the testimony of his contemporaries, suffered for the Russian land and laid down his life for the country entrusted to his rule by God.

But the Right-believing Prince Alexander was not long to live under his parents' roof and care; very early he had to set out upon the independent path of life.

Great Novgorod, then wealthy and possessing almost all of what is now the north of Rus', a "free" city which prescribed its own laws and customs, chose its own princes and dismissed them, offered the princely throne to the father of the Right-believing Prince Alexander, Yaroslav. Yaroslav Vsevolodovich accepted the offer, but could not reconcile himself to the subordinate position in which the prince stood among the Novgorodians. In 1228, angered by the Novgorodians' disobedience, Yaroslav Vsevolodovich withdrew to his own Pereslavl, leaving in

Novgorod, under the care of his trusted boyars, his two young sons, Theodore and Alexander. On 5 June 1233, the elder of the princes' sons died quite unexpectedly, just as preparations were being made for his wedding, and the Right-believing Prince Alexander was left alone in a city strange to him.

His position there was not an easy one. On the one hand, the freedom-loving Novgorodians wanted the young prince to remain subject to their will, to obey their wishes, and to respect their liberties and customs. On the other hand, Yaroslav Vsevolodovich, firm in his purpose, demanded that his son follow the same path as he himself had taken: that he seek to strengthen princely authority in Novgorod, without regard for the Novgorodians' outbursts of discontent. How much firmness of will, caution, and, at the same time, skill in dealing with people, and indulgence toward their views and habits, the young prince needed, if he was to carry out his father's plan while winning the trust and love of the Novgorodians, who were unwilling to surrender any of their liberties. He lived there as though between two fires, ever alert, and successfully surmounted every difficulty. His father was pleased with him; the Novgorodians grew to love him, called him "our prince," and took pride in having Alexander as their prince—a prince whom every Russian region would have wished to see as its own.

The Right-believing Prince Alexander won the minds and hearts of the Novgorodians not only through his intelligence and wise rule. They were drawn to the holy prince also by his rare qualities of soul and, alongside his spiritual beauty, by his extraordinary physical beauty, which amazed all who had seen the Right-believing Prince even once. The ancient Life of the prince preserves the following account of the irresistible impression made by the appearance of the Right-believing Prince Alexander.

A German knight named Andriash came to Novgorod. Struck by the wondrous beauty of the Right-believing Prince Alexander, upon returning to his homeland he conveyed his impressions to his countrymen in these words: "I have traveled through many lands and seen many people, but among neither kings nor princes have I met one who could compare with Prince Alexander."

The majestic appearance of the Right-believing Prince Alexander made the same impression upon Batu, the fearsome conqueror of Rus'. As for the Russian people who were contemporaries of St. Alexander, when describing their prince's appearance, they, like the German knight, could find no comparison among people of their own day. In beauty they compared the Right-believing Prince to the patriarch Joseph, whom Pharaoh set over all the land of Egypt; in strength, to Samson, the judge of the Old Testament; in wisdom, to King Solomon; and in courage and military valor, to the ancient Roman Emperor Vespasian.[25]

When the Right-believing Prince spoke to the people or gave orders to his warriors, his voice, remarks the contemporary biographer of the prince, sounded like a trumpet.

Yet the Right-believing Prince drew people to himself still more by his spiritual beauty, which seemed to his contemporaries as extraordinary as his physical beauty. "He was merciful beyond measure," the chronicler observed.

Mercy was a distinguishing, inherited quality of the princely family of the Right-believing Prince Alexander. It marked his parents, Yaroslav and Theodosia; by it his uncle, Grand Prince Yuri Vsevolodovich of Vladimir, won universal love; and it was enjoined by St. Alexander's ancestor, Grand Prince Vladimir Vsevolodovich Monomakh of Kiev, the great benefactor of ancient Rus', who drew all people to himself by his generosity and readiness to help everyone in need.

The events in Novgorod amid which the Right-believing Prince Alexander's youth passed must especially have helped develop in the holy prince this quality inherited from his forebears. Wealthy and given to trade, Novgorod, because its soil was not wholly favorable to agriculture, often suffered from crop failures and shortages of bread. At such times the price of bread rose terribly, and the poor were sometimes threatened with death by hunger. A similar calamity occurred in the first years of the Right-believing Prince Alexander's life in Novgorod.

In 1230, owing to an early frost, all the winter crops perished throughout the Novgorod region. No grain could be brought in, for

there was a general failure of the harvest in the other parts of Rus' as well. The Novgorodians could receive only slight help from their western neighbours, the German merchants with whom Novgorod carried on an extensive trade; but what the foreign merchants could bring was far too little. With bread in short supply, people began to eat moss, linden and pine bark, and acorns; then they turned to horseflesh, dogs and cats, yet even this food was not enough. Countless unburied corpses of those who had died of hunger lay about the streets, and there was no one to attend to their burial, for each lived in fear of the same dreadful death. Hunger seemed to stifle every human feeling in people's hearts. Brother refused bread to brother, father to son, mother to daughter. Parents sold their children into slavery merely to obtain that wretched morsel. At last, driven mad by hunger and despair, people began to eat human corpses, and some reached such frenzy that they attacked living people, killed them and devoured them. The roads and streets emptied; everyone feared to go out or to travel from home. No punishments halted those who were caught and convicted; hunger overcame the fear of punishment and of death. All civil order fell into ruin: robbery began, houses were set on fire in the search for hidden stores of bread, and fratricidal slaughter broke out. The Right-believing Prince Alexander, then still almost a child, lived through all these horrors together with the Novgorodians, and one can imagine how they affected his impressionable childish soul. But this calamity was not the only one. Similar disasters, though on a smaller scale, recurred more than once later on; recalling what had been endured, they instilled fear for the future as well.

In the Right-believing Prince these sufferings of the poor aroused a special compassion. According to the testimony of the ancient Life, Alexander Yaroslavich was a true friend of all who were in need and of the destitute, a father to widows and orphans, and a provider for the beggars and the infirm. Remembering the commandment of the Saviour not to lay up for himself treasures on earth, he generously gave to

25. Emperor Vespasian reigned from 70 to 79.

those in need, and no one left the prince's house unsatisfied in his request.

Alongside the dreadful calamities of God's chastisement, while living in Novgorod the Right-believing Prince Alexander also had occasion to witness many sufferings that arose from human arbitrariness and injustice.

The free city, which so prized its liberty, was not always and not equally just and solicitous toward all. At the popular assemblies, where all affairs of state were decided, under the influence of the rich there often passed resolutions that bore heavily upon the fate of the poor and rightly provoked murmuring and discontent on their part. The aggrieved could not always find protection among those in authority, since that authority, which carried out the decisions of the popular assemblies, usually belonged to the same wealthy men. And discontent often passed into open revolt; the opposing sides dealt cruelly with those whom they regarded as the chief culprits. On the Volkhov Bridge[26] dreadful scenes took place: living people were thrown into the river, and only the voice of the Novgorodian hierarch, calling men to forget enmity and malice and to cleanse themselves by prayer from the blood of their brethren, halted this fratricidal strife. In such cases the Novgorod prince could undertake nothing to calm the city; he was obliged to remain a detached witness of the horrors taking place, since his intervention, instead of quieting matters, might have provoked even greater irritation. By Novgorodian understanding, it was not the business of the prince to meddle in the internal affairs of Novgorod.

There were also times when the occasion for popular disturbances was given by the princes themselves, and especially by their boyars and druzhina men, who did not always deal justly with the local population. The Right-believing Prince Alexander took great care that his subordinates, in their relations with the people, gave no cause for discontent or complaint. He gave wise counsel to his druzhina men about how they should use their authority.

26. Novgorod is divided by the river Volkhov into two parts: the Sophia side, where the principal shrine is located — the church of Sophia, the Wisdom of God — and the Trade side, where the so-called Yaroslav's Court was.

"From God," he said, "we have received power over the people of God, and on the dread day of the Judgment of God we shall have to give an account of how we have used this power. Guarding yourselves with the fear of God, and remembering that day of universal recompense to each according to his deeds, conduct your judgments with all justice; do not regard the persons or the station of those who contend at law, but be equally attentive to the rich and to the poor. In punishing the guilty, be not cruel; temper punishment with mercy. Do nothing under the influence of anger, irritation or envy. Do not forget those in need; help all, and give 'unsparing' alms, that you too may earn the mercy of God."

Undoubtedly the Right-believing Prince Alexander did not confine himself to such admonitions, but, mindful of the precept of his wise forebear Vladimir Monomakh, who counselled the prince to look into everything himself and not to entrust to others what he could and ought to do himself, he watched closely over the conduct of his retinue. And thanks to this, peace and concord between the prince and the Novgorodians were almost never broken, and never once did the latter voice any reproach to the prince or to his druzhina men. "Our prince is without sin" – such was the Novgorodians' verdict on St. Alexander. They repeated this verdict even at those moments when, under the influence of ill-wishers, the customary accord seemed ready to collapse, when, forgetting the prince's services, the instigators of discord were ready to utter the words usual in such cases: "You, prince, are by yourself, and we are by ourselves," that is, we no longer need you; go wherever you wish.

But the Right-believing Prince Alexander had to deal not only with the difficult conditions of Novgorodian life. In the years of his youth the Lord sent a great trial upon all the Russian land as well. As early as 1223 a terrible conqueror, unknown until then, appeared in the south of Russia – the Tatars. The southern Russian princes suffered a dreadful defeat at the river Kalka,[27] after which, in the words of contemporaries, the Russian land was made sorrowful for a full 200 years. But

27. The Kalka is a river in southern Russia, flowing into the Sea of Azov.

the victor, as though satisfied with this victory, did not continue his advance, and left Rus' in peace for a time. In the north-east of Rus' the impending danger was not given its due attention; people did not think that the terrible enemy might appear again. Among the princes there were quarrels which weakened Rus' still further. And so, when, fourteen years after the rout at Kalka, the Tatars again appeared within the borders of Rus', they met almost no resistance on their devastating path. The Tatar commander Batu, having crossed the Kama and the Volga with his hordes, laid waste the Russian principalities one after another. Ryazan, Moscow and Vladimir, the royal city of north-eastern Rus' at that time, were left as nothing but ruins. The Grand Prince Yuri Vsevolodovich tried to stop the Tatars and gave them battle on the river Sit',[28] but he suffered defeat and himself perished in that unhappy battle.

Having laid waste the other cities they encountered on their way, the Tatars moved toward Novgorod. But, as a contemporary of these terrible events observes, through the prayers of the Novgorod hierarchs, princes and Venerable Ones, the Lord protected Great Novgorod and the Novgorod prince: when they were still 100 versts from Novgorod, the Tatars turned south and went to ravage the mother of Russian cities, the capital city of Kiev.

From the time of this invasion began a grievous period in Russian history, known under the name of the Tatar yoke. The Grand Princely throne was taken by the father of the Right-believing Prince Alexander, Yaroslav Vsevolodovich. Arriving at Vladimir, the capital of Rus' at that time, he found only ruins and corpses here. The prince began unceasing activity: the city was cleared of corpses, the scattered population was called back and calmed, and order was restored. But complete tranquillity did not come, since no one knew what the terrible conqueror would do next or how he would end his destructive raid. Everywhere people feared a new attack by the khan upon Rus' and a repetition of the former horrors. The population was so frightened that,

28. The Sit' is a tributary of the river Moloti, flowing through the Tver and Yaroslavl provinces.

according to a contemporary, at the mere word "Tatars" each person fled wherever he could, not knowing where he was running.

To calm the people, and to learn what relations the khan would have with Russia, Yaroslav Vsevolodovich went to the Horde to beg mercy of Batu. The Right-believing Prince had to endure much toil, grief and humiliation on that journey in order to win the favour of the dread khan. But Yaroslav Vsevolodovich succeeded in winning Batu's regard. The chronicler even reports that in the Tatar Horde the Russian prince was received with honour and, on sending him back to Rus', they gave him supreme authority over all the Russian princes.

The Russian people could now breathe somewhat more easily after the horrors they had endured and the anxious thoughts about the future. True, the Tatars demanded from the Russians a heavy tribute levied on every person and unquestioning fulfilment of all their demands; but they did not trouble them with raids, they kept at a distance from them,[29] and they left intact the order of Russian state life and, what was especially important, the Russian faith – the foundation of civil order in ancient Rus' and the pledge of its future revival, its liberation from the grievous yoke.

While living in Novgorod, far from the Tatars, the Right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich took no direct part in his father's work of restoring order in north-eastern Rus'. Indeed, he had no time to think of it. At the same time that north-eastern Rus' was threatened with ruin by the Tatars, the north-western Russian cities, Great Novgorod and Pskov, were menaced by an enemy no less dangerous: the Swedes, Germans and Lithuanians.

Taking advantage of the devastation of Rus' by the Tatars, and of the inability of the Grand Prince to bring aid to the Novgorodians and the men of Pskov, they increased their pressure on the border Russian cities and hoped to subject them to their power without great effort.

A terrible danger threatened the Russian north-west. What was at stake was not only the possibility of losing political independence and

29. After the conquest of Rus', the Tatars occupied the steppes along the rivers Volga and Don and here formed their Tatar kingdom, known under the name "the Golden Horde." The capital of the Horde was Sarai, on the lower course of the river Volga.

being cut off from the Russian land, but also the loss of the Orthodox faith. The Western enemy made a bold attempt against this age-old Russian holy thing, which not even the pagan conqueror had touched. For a long time the popes had called for the schismatics[30] to be fought with the sword and brought, through torrents of blood, into submission to the Pope and the Catholic Church. The Tatar devastation seemed to them a very favourable time for this, and it is not surprising that the call to struggle against Orthodoxy was sounded more insistently by the highest representative of the Catholic Church, and heard more attentively by some of his spiritual children. But in the person of the Right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich, the Lord raised up such a mighty and invincible defender of the Orthodox faith that the Catholics could do nothing against him.

The Right-believing Prince Alexander foresaw the inevitability of struggle and prepared himself for it. In 1239 he married the daughter of the Prince of Polotsk, Bryachislav, one of the frontier Russian princes, who was threatened by the Catholics even more than Novgorod was. In the person of his father-in-law Alexander thus gained a reliable, though not powerful, ally. The wedding took place in Toropets[31], and the wedding feasts in Torzhok and Novgorod. And as soon as the marriage celebrations were over, the Right-believing Prince Alexander at once set about an important task: the construction of fortifications on the borders of the Novgorod–Pskov lands, whence attacks could above all be expected. A series of fortresses was built on the river Sheloni. But the enemy did not allow these preparatory works for the fortification of the Novgorod–Pskov frontiers to be completed. Four years after

30. That is, schismatics. The Orthodox were so called by the Latins because the Russians did not acknowledge the authority of the pope and the dogmas introduced by the Roman Church.

31. The consort of the right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich, Alexandra Bryachislavovna, received as a blessing the wonder-working icon of the Mother of God. This icon, written, according to tradition, by the holy Evangelist Luke, was sent as a gift by the Greek Emperor Manuel to the right-believing Polotsk princess, the Venerable Euphrosyne (reposed May 23, 1173). In memory of her wedding in Toropets, Alexandra Bryachislavovna left this shrine here, and it is still preserved today in the Toropets cathedral church and is known under the name of the Korsun Icon of the Mother of God. The wooden church of the Holy Trinity, in which the right-believing Prince Alexander was married, has not survived to the present time. On its site there now stands an ancient stone church in the name of the Holy Trinity.

the Batu invasion, a stubborn struggle began with the Western enemy, which did not cease throughout almost the whole of the life of the Right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich. The Swedes were the first to begin the struggle.

At that time the Swedish throne was occupied by King Eric. The king's nearest relative, Birger, a valiant knight and commander who had already become famous for his bold raids on present-day Finland and the Novgorod possessions bordering on it, counted on succeeding to the Swedish throne after the childless Eric. He wished to win popular love by new victories, and, urged on by the Pope, he began a war against Rus'. With a large detachment of troops, which included, besides Swedes, Norwegians and Finns, and accompanied by Catholic bishops, Birger in 1240 unexpectedly appeared, to the surprise of the Russians, at the mouth of the river Izhora[32], and sent to Novgorod a bold challenge to the Right-believing Prince Alexander: "I am already in your land, laying it waste, and I wish to take you captive too. If you can resist me, resist." Birger was convinced that the Right-believing Prince Alexander could not resist and already triumphed in advance. And indeed, his attack was unexpected for the Novgorodians and found them unprepared to repel it. It was pitiful to see, remarks a contemporary, that the Grand Prince Yaroslav could not learn of the danger threatening his son and come to his aid in time, and that Alexander Yaroslavich could not warn his father of the danger. The Novgorod army had not been assembled. Alexander Yaroslavich had only a small retinue, which he hastily reinforced with Novgorodians. But he was not frightened by the enemy's bold challenge. Against him he sought protection and help above all from God. In the Novgorod church of St. Sophia, the Wisdom of God, the Right-believing Prince turned to the Lord with fervent, tearful prayer for help, asking Him to judge his dispute with the proud enemy and not to deliver His possession into the hands of the impious.

"O righteous God, great, eternal and almighty," prayed the Right-believing Prince Alexander, "Thou hast created heaven and earth, hast

32. The Izhora is a tributary of the river Neva.

appointed the bounds of the dominions of the nations, and hast commanded them to live without encroaching upon the lands of others. To the little flock of Thy faithful Thou hast given hope that they need not fear those who attack them. Look down upon us now also, most merciful Lord, and hear the proud words of this enemy, who boasts that he will lay waste Thy holy Church, destroy the Orthodox faith, and shed innocent Christian blood. Judge my dispute with him. Arise to help and defend us, that our enemies may not say: 'Where is their God?' In Thee, O Lord, do we put our trust, and to Thee do we send up glory, now and ever, and unto ages of ages."

With the same fervent prayer the Right-believing Prince then turned to the Intercessor of the Christian race, the Victorious Voivode, the Mother of God, and to the holy patrons of the Orthodox faith and the heavenly intercessors and prayerful advocates for holy Rus'—the Right-believing Princes Vladimir, Boris and Gleb, the Venerable.

At the end of the prayer the Right-believing Prince received the blessing of the Novgorod bishop Spiridon, bade his attendants give alms to the beggars and ask their prayers, and himself went out to his retinue, which was dismayed by its small number, in order to strengthen it for the coming exploit. "God is not in strength, but in righteousness," thus did the Right-believing leader encourage his companions. Then with this handful of brave men he quickly set off to meet the enemy, and here, on the bank of the river Neva, on the day, memorable for Rus', of the blessed memory of its enlightener, the Right-believing Prince Vladimir (15 July), the famous battle took place, for which Alexander Yaroslavich received the name of Nevsky.

To strengthen the defenders of the Orthodox faith for the exploit that lay before them, the Lord granted them a wondrous sign.

In the army of the Right-believing Alexander there was one Izhorian, Pelgusius, in holy baptism Philip, to whom Alexander Yaroslavich entrusted the night watch, as an experienced warrior who knew the locality well. Among his kinsmen, who held to paganism, the Christian Pelgusius was distinguished by a pious life: he spent his time in prayer, labours and fasting; and the Lord granted this pious warrior the following miraculous vision.

At sunrise Pelgusius heard from the direction of the river the noise of an approaching vessel, and, thinking it was the enemy, he doubled his vigilance. The oarsmen were covered as if by a mist that hid their faces. Only two warriors standing in the boat were visible. Their bright faces and garments seemed somehow familiar to Pelgusius; and suddenly he heard a voice confirming his supposition and dispelling all his doubts, filling his soul with joy. The elder of the warriors, addressing the younger, said: "Brother Gleb, bid them row faster; let us hasten to help our kinsman Alexander Yaroslavich." These were the Venerable Passion-bearers, the Right-believing Princes Boris and Gleb, whom the Right-believing Prince Alexander had invoked in prayer for help.

Pelgusius hastened to tell the prince what he had seen. Encouraged by this wondrous sign, Alexander Yaroslavich attacked the enemy that same day. The Swedes did not expect an attack, did not think that their opponent was so near, and did not know his number or his strength. A stubborn battle continued from morning until evening.

Inspired by their leader, the retinue of the Right-believing Prince displayed wonders of courage and astonished the enemies. Alexander Yaroslavich himself was throughout at the head of the combatants; he wounded the commander of the Swedes in the face. One of the retinue hewed down Birger's tent; another, carried away by the battle, leapt onto a Swedish ship, continuing to strike terrible blows with his sword at the enemies, who were dismayed by surprise and fear. Routed at every point, having lost their bravest comrades, the Swedes, despite their numerical superiority over the Russian army, did not dare renew the battle or remain on the field until morning. Filling two pits with the corpses of those who had fallen in the battle, and taking with them on their ships the more distinguished of the slain, they hastened that same night to withdraw from the inhospitable shores of the Neva. The loss on the Russian side was slight: only twenty men were killed, including one of the six warriors most distinguished in the battle—Ratmir.

But this glorious Neva victory was won not by the courage of the retinue and its leader alone. The Lord, who had encouraged the Russian warriors with a wondrous vision before the battle began, sent His help also during it. On the next day the participants in the battle saw

with astonishment a multitude of enemy corpses on the far side of the river Izhora, in an almost impassable place, where none of the Russian warriors had gone during the fighting. The angels of God invisibly helped the handful of defenders of the holy faith against the enemies who blasphemed it.

Having rendered thanks to the Lord for His wondrous help and for the victory won, the Right-believing Prince Alexander returned to Novgorod with great glory, joyfully greeted by the Novgorodians.

Holy Rus never forgot this glorious exploit of the holy prince and his company. In prayer she recalled the names of the warriors who fell in the battle, and she kept for the Right-believing Prince Alexander the title of Nevsky forever. The enemies, too, long remembered their defeat. But the Novgorodians, who above all should have cherished their prince's exploit, evidently soon forgot it. The danger passed, and before long they quarreled with the prince. Alexander Yaroslavich left Novgorod and went away to Pereyaslavl. Before long the Novgorodians had cause to repent of their ungrateful deed.

Hearing of the discord in Novgorod and of St. Alexander's departure from the city, the Livonian Germans resolved to take advantage of it and fell upon Pskov.[33] Having taken the Pskov border fortress of Izborsk, the Germans then advanced upon Pskov itself. The Pskovians could not withstand the siege, the more so since there was among them a traitor who secretly admitted the Germans into the city. The sacred city of St. Olga now became a German possession. German governors were set over the city; with the establishment of German order a change of faith was also to be expected, for the Germans resolved to open a Catholic bishopric in Pskov.

But the danger threatened not Pskov alone: the Germans advanced also upon Novgorod. Having seized in the winter the Novgorodian Vod

33. In Livonia (the present-day Baltic region) the Germans appeared in the second half of the twelfth century. In 1201 they built here the city of Riga, the capital of Livonia, and in the following year there was founded a special spiritual-knightly (half-monastic, half-military) Order, which set itself the goal not only of conquering the Livonian land but also of converting the local population to Catholicism by force of arms. In 1237 the Order of the Sword-Bearers united with another such Order — the Teutonic — which had earlier established its dominion along the lower course of the river Vistula.

district,[34] they built here the fortress of Koporye, took Tesov, thirty versts from Novgorod, committed robbery and murder, and seized captives and sent them off to Livonia. In Novgorod fear fell upon all; trade ceased, and they awaited a siege of the city. But the absence of a leader and commander meant that preparations for the defense of the city were made very poorly. Then the Novgorodians remembered their famous prince, repented of the wrong they had done to St. Alexander, and resolved by all means to persuade him to return to Novgorod. To this end the Novgorodians sent an embassy to Vladimir to Grand Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich, asking that he release the Right-believing Prince Alexander to Novgorod.

Yaroslav sent a host to Novgorod under his son Andrew. But the Novgorodians needed not Andrew but Alexander; they saw that he alone could deliver them from the calamity that had come upon them, and so they hastened to send to the Grand Prince a second embassy, headed by the archbishop, to beg once more that Alexander Yaroslavich be given the princely rule. The merciful prince did not recall the wrong the Novgorodians had done him, but hastened to the place where he was so sorely needed. With his arrival everything in Novgorod changed: preparations for the struggle against the enemy approaching the city went forward quickly and successfully, and all regained faith in success and were inspired to new exploits with their hero, the prince. Having completed the preparations for war, Alexander Yaroslavich set out with the Novgorodian and Lower-land regiments to liberate Pskov. The Germans were driven out of Pskov, and the Pskovians joyfully received their deliverer.

But the Right-believing Prince did not limit himself to driving the Germans out of Pskov. It was necessary to secure peace in the northwest of Rus, to chastise the enemy and to forestall the possibility of new attacks on his part. The Right-believing Prince resolved to punish the Germans for their assaults and plundering by an offensive movement into their own lands.

Having strengthened himself by prayer in the church of the Holy Trinity, before the reliquary of the relics of his kinsman the Right-be-

lieving Prince Vsevolod Mstislavich of Pskov, and accompanied by the prayers and good wishes of the Pskovians, Alexander Yaroslavich set out with his regiments for Livonia. The Germans did not expect so swift an attack and could offer no resistance: Livonia was laid waste by the Russian troops. On the return journey from Livonia to Pskov the Right-believing Prince halted on the shore of Lake Peipus, and here on April 5, 1242, took place the famous battle with the German knights, known in history under the name of the Battle on the Ice.[35]

The numerous host of knights was confident of victory. "Let us go and take the Russian prince Alexander captive; the Slavs must be our slaves," the knights said boastfully. But, trusting in the help of God and believing in the holiness and righteousness of the cause he defended, the Right-believing Prince did not fear these boastful words. Nor was he troubled by the first setback in the encounter with the knights. Light advance detachments, which the Right-believing Prince had sent to follow the enemy's movements, ran into the main German forces and were defeated. Some of them were taken prisoner; the others fled to the prince with the sad news of the misfortune. Then the Right-believing Prince halted his troops on the ice of Lake Peipus near the tract of the Raven's Rock at Uzmen,[36] and here began to prepare for the decisive battle.

His warriors were reinforced by fresh men from Novgorod, but even so, compared with the knightly host, the number was far too small. Yet this smallness was made up for by the warriors' inspiration and their fearless readiness to lay down their heads for the righteous cause and for their beloved prince. The commander had no need to bolster the warriors' fighting spirit; all understood the gravity of the impending event and went out to battle the proud enemy with self-sacrifice. "O our dear and honorable prince! The time has come; we shall all lay down

34. The Novgorod lands were divided into five parts, or pyatinas. The Vodskaya pyatina consisted of the lands situated around Lake Ladoga.

35. Lake Chudskoe is located not far from Pskov. Its other name is Peipus. Through a strait called the Warm Lake it is joined to Lake Pskov. The length of Lake Chudskoe is 90 versts, its width 47 versts; the length of Lake Pskov is 50 versts, its width 20 versts.

36. This tract is situated at the bend from Lake Chudskoe into Lake Pskov. It received its name from the multitude of ravens that circled there.

our heads for you," such inspired cries rang out from the ranks of the Russian warriors.

The knights began the battle first. Clad in iron armor from head to foot, they advanced upon the Russian host to crush it by their numbers. But here they met such a valiant resistance that they were astonished. Instead of the disorder or even flight of the enemy they had expected, they saw with terror how the ranks of the Russians closed more tightly, forming as it were a living wall. The knights were confused and halted. Then the Right-believing Prince Alexander, noticing the enemy's confusion, skillfully made an outflanking movement with part of his regiments and attacked from the side where the knights least expected an attack. A terrible melee ensued. The frightful din of blows of swords on shields and helmets, the crack of breaking lances, and the groans of the slain and drowning left the commanders no possibility of directing the battle or giving orders to the host. There was no orderly fighting. Feeling their defeat, the knights strained every effort merely to break through the Russian regiments that encircled them and to escape capture. But even this did not succeed. The ice on the lake was covered with blood, and in many places it could not bear the weight; it gave way, dragging down fighters and their weapons alike. The battle lasted until late evening. The losses of the knights were immense. Those who remained alive sought salvation in flight, but the Russians overtook them and slew them. For seven versts the lake was covered with corpses. Many knights were taken prisoner, still more perished, and of the once so formidable and numerous host almost nothing remained.

The victors returned solemnly to Pskov under their leader. Beside the horse of the Right-believing Prince walked fifty of the most distinguished knights; behind the Russian host came a multitude of common prisoners. The Pskovians joyfully welcomed their deliverer.

"The Lord, who helped the meek David to conquer the foreign peoples, helped our Right-believing Prince also to free the city of Pskov from the alien-tongued and the alien-born," this joyful cry rang out everywhere.

There was general joy and exultation everywhere; all understood how important this victory was, and what a service the Right-believing Prince had rendered to a frontier Russian city, which could not by its own strength defend its independence against the attacks of numerous enemies. The Pskovians were never to forget this exploit of the holy prince Alexander Yaroslavich. "O foolish Pskovians! If you forget the great Prince Alexander Yaroslavich, or turn away from him or from his children and his race, you will be like the Hebrews, whom the Lord freed from Egyptian bondage and fed in the wilderness with quail, and yet they forgot Him," says the contemporary chronicler, concluding his account of this glorious victory. With these words he seems to warn the Pskovians against the deed of their elder brothers, the Novgorodians, who so quickly forgot the victory on the Neva and showed not only their ingratitude but also their inability to understand and appreciate the exploit of their famous prince.

Having solemnly celebrated the liberation of Pskov, the Right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich with his regiments hastened to Novgorod, where he was met with no less rapture and joy than in Pskov.

For long the two Russian frontier cities remembered the glorious victory on Lake Peipus, and even at the end of the 16th century did not cease to recall in prayer the names of the warriors who fell in that battle. The glory of the victor spread far. On the shores of the Varangian,[37] Black and Caspian Seas, in Rome and in distant Asia, a contemporary biographer of the Right-believing Prince notes, people spoke of the glorious victories of Alexander Yaroslavich.

While in Rus they solemnly celebrated the victory, in Livonia the news of the rout of the knightly host quickly spread and filled everyone with terror. The Germans expected day by day that the Right-believing Prince Alexander would not delay in bringing his regiments to the capital of Livonia, Riga, and they did not hope with their own forces to repel the attack of the Russian prince and defend their new capital. The

37. In antiquity this was the name of the Baltic Sea.

Master (head) of the German Order hastened to send an embassy to the Danish king and asked him for help against the Novgorodian prince.

But Right-believing Prince Alexander neither considered nor desired conquest. Having completed his glorious work and delivered Novgorod and Pskov from the danger that threatened them, he departed for his own Pereyaslavl. Then the Germans, hearing that the prince had left Novgorod, hastened to send their envoys there, asking for peace and an exchange of prisoners. They renounced all their conquests and were ready to yield the Novgorodians part of their lands bordering the Novgorod territory, if only they could bring the Novgorodians to peace. And peace was concluded "on the whole will of Novgorod," that is, on the terms proposed by the Novgorodians themselves.

Thus ended the struggle with the Swedes and the Germans.

For the Russians, the Neva and Chud victories were of immense importance. The threat that foreigners might seize the outlying Russian cities, subject them to their rule, and compel the Russian people to exchange the holy Orthodox faith for Catholicism was no longer to be feared. God Himself judged the age-old dispute, shielded our fatherland from the machinations of the Latins, and set a limit to the spread of German dominion. By the mighty hand of His servant, Right-believing Prince Alexander, He sternly warned them not to invade another's borders or encroach upon the Russian holy treasure—the Orthodox faith. His defender, the right-believing, "invincible" Prince Alexander Yaroslavich, as his contemporaries called him, rendered a great service to Holy Rus'; and Holy Rus' has never forgotten, nor will ever forget, this great earthly feat of his.

Two powerful enemies from the west had been defeated and no longer seemed so formidable as before. But a new enemy appeared, not so dangerous, it is true, yet more savage—the Lithuanians, whose devastating raids afflicted the southwestern borders of the Novgorod and Pskov territories.

Along the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, on the plain between the mouths of the Vistula and the Western Dvina, a Lithuanian people, close to us both in origin and in language, had lived for several centuries. Poor and intellectually undeveloped, they had, in their first encoun-

ters with the Slavs, been compelled to acknowledge their superiority, submitted to the Russian princes on the borderlands, and paid them tribute. At that time the Lithuanians were divided into separate tribes, often at war with one another and possessing neither a state system nor order. But at the beginning of the 13th century, under the influence of the constant attacks of the knights of the Teutonic Order, the Lithuanian tribes, hitherto scattered, began to unite. Warlike princes arose among the Lithuanians, gaining ever greater power and influence in the land. At first the Lithuanian princes fought in alliance with the Russian princes against their common enemy, the Germans; but afterward they began to attack their allies as well. With small bands mounted on their hardy and swift horses, they raided the Russian border districts, laying waste the land and killing its people. The inhabitants of the outlying Novgorod and Pskov cities and villages lived in constant fear of sudden Lithuanian attacks. And since the Novgorodians and Pskovians, chiefly occupied with fighting the Germans and Swedes, kept mainly heavily armed troops and very few light, mobile forces—archers—they were unable to defend the lands bordering Lithuania. Here, too, Right-believing Prince Alexander came to their defense.

In the summer of that memorable year of the Battle on the Ice, news reached Novgorod of the predatory raids of the Lithuanians, and at once the right-believing prince began the struggle against them. In a single campaign he succeeded in scattering as many as seven enemy bands, operating separately from one another in different places. Many leaders of the Lithuanian bands were slain by the right-believing prince's regiments or taken prisoner. Now the Lithuanians, as the chronicler contemporary with these events relates, began to fear the name of Prince Alexander, yet they would not cease their predatory raids.

In 1245 they laid waste the environs of Torzhok and Bezhetsk and were already preparing to return to their homeland with the booty and prisoners they had seized. But beneath the walls of Toropets they were overtaken by the combined forces of the people of Novotorzhok, Tver, and Dmitrov. Defeated in the open field, they took refuge in Toropets. Then Right-believing Prince Alexander, with his small retinue and the

Novgorodians, hastened to the defense of ancient Toropets, the appanage of Prince Mstislav Mstislavich the Bold. On the very first day of the siege, the troops of the right-believing prince captured Toropets. The Lithuanians fled the city, but Alexander Yaroslavich's retinue overtook them, and they paid dearly for their raids. Eight of their leaders fell in battle; the survivors cast aside their plunder and escaped by flight.

But Right-believing Prince Alexander did not rest content with this victory. To teach the audacious enemy a lesson and secure the Russian borders against further Lithuanian raids and devastation, he pursued the fugitives with his own small retinue, despite the Novgorodians' unwillingness to accompany him on a further campaign. Near Lake Zhivets he overtook the fugitives and destroyed them all, to the last man. Then he made for Vitebsk, where his father-in-law Bryachislav ruled as prince, and, after a brief rest, set out once more against the Lithuanians, this time into their own territory. He defeated a new Lithuanian host near Usvyat and struck such fear into the enemy that for a long time they did not dare attack the Russian territories.

Thus Right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich valiantly guarded his northwestern appanage. By his extraordinary courage and military gifts, even in so grievous a time for ancient Rus' as the first years of the Tatar yoke[38], he was able not only to defend the ancient Russian northwestern regions, but also to secure them entirely, and at the same time to show the western enemy that Rus', though smitten by the Tatars, could still defend her independence and her faith.

The victories of the right-believing prince were celebrated not only in the Novgorod-Pskov land. News of them spread throughout all Rus' of that time, heartening the Russian people in a season of grievous trials. All eyes turned to the princely hero, who inspired hope for a better future. Northeastern Rus', languishing under Tatar rule, wished no less than Novgorod to see Right-believing Prince Alexander upon its grand princely throne, and was better able than the Novgorodians to appreciate his work.

38. At this time north-eastern Rus' could scarcely give support and help in Alexander Yaroslavich's struggle against such powerful enemies as the Swedes, the Germans and the Lithuanians.

The events of 1246 brought the activity of Right-believing Prince Alexander in northwestern Rus' to a temporary end, summoning him to the northeast. In that year the father of Right-believing Prince Alexander, Grand Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich of Vladimir, died a martyr's death in the Horde[39]. According to the ancient Russian order of succession, the right to the grand princely throne belonged to the deceased prince's brother, Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich. But supreme authority and the right to distribute the princely seats now belonged to the Tatars, and in order to receive the Khan's confirmation, Svyatoslav had to appear in person in the Horde. That same year, Svyatoslav's nephews, Andrei and Alexander Yaroslavich, also set out for the Horde to pay homage to the Khan.

News of the brave Novgorod prince and his renowned victories reached the Khan as well. Batu wished to see the right-believing prince, of whom so much was being said, and demanded that he appear before him in the Horde without delay.

"God has subjected many peoples to me; will you alone refuse to submit? If you would preserve your land, come and pay me homage," Batu ordered Alexander Yaroslavich to be told.

It was impossible to disobey the command of this fearsome ruler, and the right-believing prince hastened to set out on the long journey.

He did not know what awaited him there. His father had been received with honor, but that honorable reception had been purchased at the price of a whole series of humiliations and insults. The princes were made to pass through purifying fires, bow down to a bush and to the shadows of dead Khans, and the like. Not all the Russian princes consented to fulfill these demands, so humiliating for a Christian, and for their disobedience paid with their lives. The example of the Russian martyr-prince Michael Yaroslavich of Chernigov was surely well known to Right-believing Prince Alexander. Yet his father's example also showed that obedience and fulfillment of all the Khan's demands did not always bring safety. The Tatars poisoned Yaroslav Vsevolodovich, who had been received with honor on his first visit to the Horde, when he

39. Yaroslav Vsevolodovich was slandered before the khan by certain ill-wishers of the prince. The Tatars poisoned him.

came there a second time. And Right-believing Prince Alexander resolved to refuse to perform pagan rites, even if this refusal should cost him his life. Could the courageous defender of the Orthodox faith, chosen by the Lord from his youth as a vessel of piety, have acted otherwise?

Having received the Holy Gifts and the blessing of the archbishop, he set out from Novgorod for the Horde.

When the right-believing prince arrived in the Horde and, before being presented to the Khan, was ordered to perform the rites customary among the Tatars, he refused to obey. “I am a Christian,” he said, “and it is not fitting for me to bow down to a creature. I worship the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the one God glorified in the Trinity, who created heaven, earth, and all that is in them.” The calm, firm answer of the holy prince astonished the Khan’s courtiers; but they were still more amazed when Batu, hearing that Alexander Yaroslavich was unwilling to perform the Tatar rites, instead of issuing the customary order in such cases, “Death to the disobedient,” commanded that the holy prince no longer be compelled and that he be brought to him as quickly as possible.

"Emperor," said the Right-believing Prince to the khan, bowing before him, "I bow to you, for God has honored you with a kingdom; but to a creature I will not bow. I serve the one God; Him I honor and to Him I pay worship."

Batu gazed for a long while upon the fair and manly face of Alexander Yaroslavich, and at last, turning to the courtiers about him, said: "What they told me of him was true: there is no prince his equal." The Right-believing Prince was likewise received with honor by the khan's wife.

Batu was not an independent sovereign; he counted only as deputy of the Great Khan, who lived in Kara-Korum, on the mountainous fringe of the Asian desert of Gobi, beyond Baikal. Having paid homage to his immediate lord, the Khan of the Horde, the Russian princes were also obliged to journey to pay homage to the supreme ruler of the Mongols in his distant capital. This far and exceedingly arduous journey, by

Batu's command, was also to be undertaken by the Right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich.[40]

He was graciously received by the lord of Asia and for some time remained in the capital of the Mongols, closely studying the character of these rulers of Rus'. Only in the year 1250 did Alexander Yaroslavich and his brother Andrew return to Rus'. The khan gave Andrew the grand-princely throne, and to Alexander Yaroslavich he left Kiev and Novgorod. But Kiev, the mother of Russian cities, the most ancient capital of Rus', after the Tatar devastation presented nothing but ruins. The population of the Kievan region had scattered before the Tatars, part to the south-west, into what is now Galicia, part to the north-east, into Vladimir Rus'. There was nothing for Alexander Yaroslavich to do in Kiev, and therefore, after remaining for some time in Vladimir, he returned to Great Novgorod.

The Novgorodians greeted him with joy; but this joy was soon clouded by sorrow and anxiety: the Right-believing Prince, worn out by the arduous journey and by what he had endured in the Horde, fell dangerously ill. With anxious sympathy the Novgorodians followed the course of their prince's illness; from morning till evening the churches were filled with people fervently praying for the recovery of the Right-believing Prince. And the Lord did not reject the prayer of the people: the Right-believing Prince recovered from his grievous sickness.

The Novgorodians now enjoyed peace. Their western neighbors, remembering the famous victories of Alexander Yaroslavich, did not dare to renew their attacks, and only the Norwegians occasionally made raids upon the border lands of Novgorod. The Right-believing Prince wished to secure his domain also against Norwegian attacks; he wished to draw the Norwegians into an alliance with the Novgorodians. To this

40. One may judge the difficulty of this journey from the descriptions of the Central Asian deserts given by modern travelers. "A gloomy, heavy impression is made upon the soul of the traveler by the boundless expanses of steppe, bereft of all vegetation. The animals flee from these terrible deserts. Even lizards and insects are met with rarely. Under one's feet there constantly appear the bones of perished horses, mules and camels. The ground grows hot from the unbearable heat, and the sun burns pitilessly from sunrise to sunset. No breeze stirs the air, nor gives even a moment's coolness. Only now and then a hot whirlwind rushes past, driving before it whirling columns of salt dust. During a storm this salt dust covers the travelers and blinds their eyes."

end an embassy was sent to the Norwegian king Haakon, which was at the same time charged with proposing that the king enter into family ties with Alexander Yaroslavich, by giving his daughter Christina in marriage to Alexander's son Basil.

The proposed marriage did not take place, but the chief aim of the embassy was attained: the Norwegian king in turn sent envoys to Novgorod to conclude a treaty with the Novgorodians, and from that time the Norwegian raids ceased. Soon after the conclusion of this treaty Alexander Yaroslavich forever left the Novgorodian princely throne.

Andrew Yaroslavich, who received the grand principality, had neither the caution nor the statesmanlike wisdom that distinguished his elder brother. He paid little attention to government, spent most of his time in various amusements, surrounded himself with inexperienced counselors, and did not know how to get along with the Tatars. In the Horde he was regarded as a disobedient prince, and Batu's successor Sartak resolved to punish the Russian prince. He sent against him his hordes under the command of Nevryuy. As soon as Andrew Yaroslavich heard of the approach of the Tatars, he fled from Vladimir, first to Novgorod, and then, when the Novgorodians refused to receive him, to Sweden.[41] The population had to pay for the imprudent actions of the grand prince. It was to defend them that the Right-believing Prince Alexander came forward.

To spare the homeland from Tatar devastation, Alexander Yaroslavich went to the Horde, and not only succeeded in appeasing the khan's wrath, thereby halting the bloodshed that had begun in Rus', but also received from the khan a yarlyk for the grand principality. From this time began the Right-believing Prince's ascetic service to his homeland, to which he devoted all his strength, striving to lighten the burden of the Tatar yoke.

Alexander Yaroslavich spared no means from his princely treasury for the ransom of captives whom the Tatars led off in masses to the Horde. He also took care that those who remained in captivity should

41. Afterwards the Right-believing Prince Alexander reconciled Prince Andrew with the khan. Andrew returned to his homeland and received Suzdal to govern.

not be deprived of the chief consolation in their sorrow: prayer and divine services. Together with Metropolitan Cyril he obtained from the khan permission to establish a Russian eparchy in the capital of the Horde, Sarai.

But it was not only the captives who needed the care of the Right-believing Prince. After Nevryuy's invasion North-eastern Rus' was again laid waste, and the Right-believing Prince Alexander hastened to restore the ruined churches, to gather the scattered people, and to help them settle on the sites of their burned homes. Like a father, a contemporary of the holy prince remarks, he cared for the people; and thanks to this care, peace and order were gradually established in the grand principality. The Right-believing Prince wished not only to bring peace to the population, but also to ease its grievous condition, to weaken, as far as possible, the very yoke of the Tatars.

Without altering the Russian state order, leaving inviolate the holy faith and the church organization, the Tatars for this laid a heavy tribute upon Rus'. They took everything that was best and most valuable, and in their demands they did not consider whether their tributaries were able to pay the taxes in the amount required of them. The Tatars took a poll tax, without distinguishing rich from poor; insolvent tributaries they seized without any pity and carried off to the Horde, reducing them to slavery.

In the year 1257, in order to determine more exactly the revenues that could be drawn from Rus', the Tatars sent their officials to count all the Russian people. The grand prince well understood that however burdensome this measure might be, it was necessary to submit, lest by resistance a still worse fate be brought upon them by the Tatars. But not everyone thought so.

At the insistence of the prince the census in Vladimir-Suzdal Rus' proceeded calmly, and Alexander hastened to the Horde to incline the khan to mercy, the khan being pleased with the obedience of the Russian people and their prince. But in the Horde it was decided to include Great Novgorod in the count as well, where hatred of the enslavers of Rus' was especially strongly developed. Knowing of this agitation

among the Novgorodians, the grand prince returned homeward with a heavy and anxious heart. And his fears were justified.

As soon as in Novgorod they heard of the census being prepared, a ferment began among the people; they began to hold veche assemblies and resolved to die rather than submit to the khan's demand. The Novgorodians did not wish to consent to the enumeration, both because Novgorod had not been conquered by the Tatars, and because many thought that for this reason the Tatars had no right to dispose of the region of Holy Sophia as they pleased. "Let us die for holy Sophia and for the Angelic houses (the holy monasteries)," cries rang out in the streets of the city, and the townsfolk prepared for revolt.

Alexander Yaroslavich, to avert a terrible Tatar vengeance from Novgorod, hastened there. He hoped that the Novgorodians would heed his prudent counsel. But even before the prince's arrival, dissension broke out in the city: while the common people wished to fight the Tatars, the wealthy preferred to pay the required tribute so as not to provoke either the Tatars or the grand prince. Alexander Yaroslavich took advantage of this, and by his firmness succeeded in persuading the Novgorodians to submit to the census. However, the appearance of the Tatar officials and the abuses that occurred during the census, committed not only by the Tatars but also by the well-to-do Novgorodians, again stirred up unrest in Novgorod. On this occasion the Novgorodian prince Basil Alexandrovich also took the side of those in revolt, but, fearing his father, he fled to Pskov.

The Right-believing Prince Alexander ordered the disobedient son seized and, depriving him of his rule in Novgorod, sent him to Suzdal Rus'. The instigators of the revolt were also severely punished; and since even after these strict measures the Novgorodians would not calm down and agree to the khan's demands, the Right-believing Prince Alexander, together with the Tatars, immediately left Novgorod, leaving the Novgorodians themselves to reckon with the khan's wrath. The grand prince's departure acted more powerfully than any persuasion: the Novgorodians submitted, received the khan's officials, and thus the devastation of Novgorod by the Tatars was averted.

But scarcely two years passed, and again in Rus' there began disturbances against the Tatar tax collectors, threatening to break into open revolt and to embrace nearly all the cities of North-eastern Rus'. The occasion for these disturbances was the following circumstances.

The new khan, Berke, on account of the abuses permitted by the tax-collectors, who concealed part of the sums they gathered, handed the collection of the tribute over to the Khivan merchants, or *besermens*. These, naturally, with a view to gain, collected far more than the sum they had paid the khan, and inflicted still greater oppression on the people than had the former Tatar collectors. The people could not bear these oppressions, and in various localities an uprising began. But the uprising reached its height when among the collectors there appeared a monk who had apostatized from the Orthodox faith, named Zosimas, who not only oppressed his own countrymen but also boldly reviled the Orthodox faith. The people could not endure these insults, and in Yaroslavl they killed the hated apostate; and after this a revolt began also in other Russian towns of the principalities of Rostov and Suzdal. They drove out the Tatar collectors and beat to death those of them who were especially hated. Rumors spread that Grand Prince Alexander himself had sent letters to the towns bidding them "strike the Tatars," and was preparing to place himself at the head of the popular movement.

Reprisals against the khan's collectors were bound to call down a terrible vengeance from the Tatars. Once again the Grand Prince had to hasten to the Horde, to avert from Rus the coming calamity. A heavy labor lay before the right-believing prince. But at this moment of terrible unrest in north-eastern Rus, matters were also troubled in the north-west, within the bounds of Novgorod and Pskov.

After the Battle of the Neva and the Battle on the Ice, the western enemies did not dare to attack Rus. Having convinced themselves that it was impossible to conquer the hero of the Neva, they resolved to try another means of subjecting him to themselves.

In 1248 Pope Innocent IV sent to Alexander Yaroslavich an embassy headed by two learned cardinals, Gald and Gemont. In the letter that the envoys were to deliver to the Russian prince, the pope wrote:

"We have heard of you as a wonderful and honorable prince, and that your land is great, and we have sent to you two of our cardinals, that you might hear their teaching." Expressing feigned sorrow that the great land of the Russian prince was not subject to the Roman Church, the pope urged Alexander Yaroslavich to submit to his authority and to take care to bring his people to the Latin faith. Insisting that salvation and the true faith could be found only in the Latin Church, the pope also pointed out the earthly advantages that his submission to papal authority would bring to the prince. At the same time he sought to assure him that this submission would in no way diminish the Russian prince, the more so, the pope added, since "we shall regard you as the best among Catholic sovereigns, and shall always with especial zeal strive for the increase of your glory." Finally, knowing how dear to the right-believing prince was the memory of his father, the pope falsely reported in his letter that Yaroslav Vsevolodovich, too, had expressed a sincere desire to subject the Russian Church to the pope, and that only the untimely death of Yaroslav had prevented him from carrying out this intention.

But all these stratagems of the pope had no success whatever. To Innocent's lengthy message Alexander Yaroslavich gave a very brief answer, at the same time strong in its persuasiveness: "What took place from the creation of the world to the Flood, and from the Flood to the division of tongues and to Abraham, from Abraham to the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and to the crossing of the Red Sea and to the death of King David, from the beginning of the reign of Solomon to the Roman emperor Augustus, under whom Christ, the Savior of the world, was born, and to the passion, resurrection and ascension of the Lord, and to the First Ecumenical Council and the other seven Ecumenical Councils – all this we know well, and we have no need of your teaching and will not accept it."

The popes retaliated: they began to raise the Swedes and the knights against the disobedient Russian prince; but these new campaigns, too, were unsuccessful.

In 1256 the Swedes made an attempt once again to seize the Finnish coast, and, in alliance with the Danes and the Emi,[42] began to build a fortress on the river Narova. Then the Novgorodians sent envoys to the Grand Prince asking for help, and also dispatched men throughout their own volost to gather an army; and the enemy, frightened by these preparations, hastened to withdraw across the sea. In winter the right-believing prince came to Novgorod, and together with the Novgorodians and his own regiments marched against the Emi, into Finland, to strike terror into the Finns and to forestall the possibility of further attacks on the Novgorodian borderlands. The road through an unfamiliar country was extremely difficult: because of blizzards the army saw neither day nor night; but despite the difficulties, the campaign was very successful: the Russians laid waste the land of the Emi, and the enemy did not dare even to think of resistance.

In 1262 hostile encounters with the Germans began. The Grand Prince was preparing a campaign against the Germans, but a revolt against the Tatars obliged him to hasten to the Horde. The Russian army, under the command of the Grand Prince's brother, Yaroslav, and his son, Prince Demetrius Alexandrovich, once again won a series of brilliant victories: the city of Yuryev, an ancient Russian town, a foundation of Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise, was taken, and with great booty and a multitude of captives the army returned to Novgorod.

Meanwhile the right-believing Grand Prince Alexander arrived safely at the Horde, and the Lord helped him to appease the enraged khan. The latter not only pardoned the Russians for the slaughter of the Tatar collectors, but, at the intercession of St. Prince Alexander, granted them also a new mercy: he freed them from the heavy obligation of bearing military service in the Tatar regiments.[43]

The right-believing prince hastened to return to his homeland with the joyful news. But the Russian people were not to hear this joyful news from the prince's own lips. This was already the last labor of the right-believing prince. Wearied by the hardship of the journey and by

42. The Em' are a Finnic tribe.

43. At this time a campaign deep into Asia was being prepared, in which all the peoples subject to the khan were to take part.

the anxieties he had had to endure, the right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich fell dangerously ill on his return from the Horde, at Gorodets.[44] Foreseeing his blessed end, he called his companions to him and addressed them with a final farewell discourse, which drew bitter tears from all at the thought of the approaching loss. Then the right-believing prince summoned the hegumen and received monastic tonsure, exchanging his princely name for the monastic name Alexis. Having received the Holy Mysteries and taken leave of the monks who surrounded him, the right-believing prince, now a monk, quietly passed over into the eternal dwellings, commending his pure soul to the Lord, Whom he had so ardently served in his earthly life. This was on 14 November 1263. He died in the flower of his years, not yet having reached the age of forty-five. Unconquered in battle, he was worn out by the burden of the Grand Princely crown, which in that heavy time for Rus was indeed a crown of thorns, demanding constant exertion of strength and giving in return to the Grand Prince only grief and anxiety.

In Vladimir they soon learned of the blessed end of the Grand Prince, before the messengers arrived from Gorodets. The Lord miraculously revealed this to the then Vladimir hierarch, Metropolitan Cyril of all Rus.

As the hierarch, surrounded by the clergy, was offering fervent prayers for holy Rus and for its Grand Prince, he was granted the following miraculous vision: he saw the Angels of God bearing the blessed soul of the right-believing Prince Alexander up to heaven. Struck by this vision, the hierarch remained silent, and then, coming out onto the ambo, announced the sorrowful news to those at prayer: "Brethren, know that the sun of the land of Rus has already set." When the people listened to these words in bewilderment, the hierarch, after a short pause, explained the meaning of what he had said: "Now has departed the right-believing Grand Prince Alexander Yaroslavich." Horror seized everyone at this sorrowful news. The church resounded with cries of grief and despair; "We are perishing," the worshippers repeated

44. Gorodets on the Volga is a village of the Nizhny Novgorod Province.

with one voice. The depth of sorrow caused by the death of the right-believing prince may be judged from the words of a contemporary of the holy prince, with which he begins his account of his death.

"Woe to you, poor man! How can you describe the death of your lord! How shall your eyes not fall out of their sockets together with your tears! How shall your heart not break from bitter sorrow! A man can forget his father, but he cannot forget a good lord; if it were possible, one would lie down with him in the grave."

The same feeling was experienced by all the eyewitnesses of this sorrowful event. As soon as they heard in Vladimir that the body of the right-believing prince was approaching the city, everyone hastened to meet it. Metropolitan Cyril, together with the clergy, met the body of the departed prince at Bogolyubovo. An innumerable multitude of people — rich and poor, adults and children — filled all the surroundings. And as soon as the coffin came into view, all rushed forward irresistibly, each striving to kiss the reliquary in which the body of the right-believing prince lay. The weeping of the people drowned out everything: the voices of the clergy and the singers could not be heard; according to a contemporary, it seemed that the earth itself might quake from the groans and cries.

On 23 November, in the cathedral church of Vladimir, the rite of burial was solemnly performed by the Metropolitan and the sacred order, in the presence of a great crowd of people. The Lord sent consolation to those who mourned the death of the right-believing prince. During the celebration of the funeral rite the following miracle took place.

When the steward of Metropolitan Cyril, Sebastian, drew near the coffin and wished to loosen the hand of the departed to place in it the "letter of farewell" (the prayer of absolution), the Right-believing Prince, as if alive, himself stretched forth his hand, took the scroll, and then folded his hands again crosswise upon his breast. Holy awe seized all who were present. All marvelled and glorified the Lord, who had shown such a wondrous sign. Reverently taking the reliquary with the body of the Right-believing Prince, they buried him in the monastery church of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos.

By the command of Metropolitan Cyril, the miracle that occurred at the burial was made known to all, and thus throughout all pious Rus', which mourned its prince-guardian who had laid down his life for holy Rus', together with the grievous tidings of his untimely death there spread also the consoling tidings that in the person of the Right-believing Prince Alexander, Rus' had acquired a new intercessor and defender before the throne of the Most High. How much consolation these tidings brought to the sorrowing souls of the Russian people, who were anxiously looking toward the near future!

The whole life of the Right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich was devoted to the service of his fatherland. By his unparalleled bravery and military valor he preserved his north-western appanage from the constant claims upon it of the western Catholic peoples; by the strength of the sword and by wisdom he guarded the Orthodox Church both from the attacks of the Latins and from the intrigues of the Roman popes; by caution and wise governmental activity he lightened the heavy Tatar yoke, made it possible for Russian people to bear it more easily, sustained in them faith in the might of Rus', instilled hope of better times, and compelled the conquerors themselves to treat the subjugated land and its prince with respect. This great service of the Right-believing Prince was admirably defined by his contemporary biographer in the following words: "He labored much for the Russian land, and for Novgorod, and for Pskov, and for the whole Grand Principality, giving his life, and for the Orthodox faith."

But even after his repose the Right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich did not cease his great service to the Russian land; he always appeared as an intercessor and a swift helper in the most difficult moments in the life of our fatherland.

For more than two hundred years after the repose of the Right-believing Prince, our homeland bore the heavy yoke of the Tatars. She suffered many calamities and threats from the Tatars, until under the wise rule of the descendants of the Right-believing Prince Alexander, the princes of Moscow,[45] she grew strong, entered into struggle with

45. The progenitor of the Princes of Moscow was the youngest son of St. Alexander Nevsky, Daniel Alexandrovich.

her oppressors, and not only cast off their yoke but also brought under her own dominion the once formidable Tatar kingdoms. One hundred and twenty years after the repose of the Right-believing Prince Alexander, in the reign of the Grand Prince of Moscow Demetrius Ivanovich Donskoy, the Russians for the first time gained a victory over the Tatars on the banks of the River Don.[46] This victory cost the Russians dearly, yet it was also precious to them, for it raised the spirit of the people and inspired confidence that the time of Tatar domination was passing. And at this important historical moment, to the aid of Holy Rus came her heavenly protector, the Right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich. This is what is related in the ancient Life of the Right-believing Prince concerning the wondrous help he gave to his kinsman, the Grand Prince Demetrius Ivanovich.

In the monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos at Vladimir, where the relics of the Right-believing Prince rested, a God-fearing monk who led a pious ascetic life prayed with tears to the Lord in the vestibule of the church at night, asking deliverance for Rus' from the hordes of the Tatar leader Mamai. In his prayer he called upon the Right-believing Prince Alexander to aid Grand Prince Demetrius. And during his prayer he saw that before the coffin of the Right-believing Prince the candles lit of themselves, then two radiant elders came out of the sanctuary, and, approaching the saint's tomb, said: "Arise, hasten to the aid of your kinsman, the Right-believing Prince Demetrius Ivanovich." And the holy Prince Alexander immediately arose and became invisible. Struck by this miracle, the monk was silent, and only after it was learned that the famous Donskoy victory had taken place at just that time did he report his vision to the Bishop of Vladimir. By the bishop's command, the relics of the Right-believing Prince were then examined, and they were found incorrupt. A multitude of the infirm came with prayer to the newly revealed servant of God, and at the reliquary of his holy relics many healings took place.

The famous Donskoy victory, one of the most joyful moments in the life of our forefathers during the heavy epoch of the Tatar yoke, did not

yet free Rus' from foreign power. The Horde was weakened, but Rus' was still not strong enough to defend its independence. Tatar dominion continued, only it had already lost its former character. And the Tatars themselves saw that the Moscow princes had created out of the formerly disunited Russian principalities a strong, unified state, which would not fail to make use of its strength, and also of those dissensions and divisions which then existed among the Tatars and had weakened their former might. A hundred years passed after the Donskoy victory, and the great-grandson of Demetrius Ivanovich Donskoy, the Grand Prince John III, without battle succeeded in destroying the Tatar yoke and freeing Rus' from two centuries of domination by Asiatics. Now the former relations between Russians and Tatars had finally changed. Rus', which in the time of the Right-believing Prince Alexander Nevsky had been an obedient tributary of the Tatar khan, now began its offensive movement against the Tatars and gradually subjected them to its power. The once formidable Tatar kingdoms one after another entered the composition of our state, and only fragments of the memory of the domination of the conquered aliens over Rus' remain preserved in popular memory. In this prolonged and stubborn struggle with the Tatars our fatherland was likewise never left without the help and protection of its heavenly defender, the Right-believing Prince Alexander Nevsky.

In 1552, setting out on the campaign to conquer the Kazan kingdom, Tsar John Vasilyevich prayed at Vladimir before the reliquary of the relics of the Right-believing Prince Alexander, calling upon him for help. As if in pledge of his aid, the Right-believing Prince manifested the following miracle.

Together with the tsar his boyars also prayed, among them the future chronicler of the miracles of the Right-believing Prince. When he, with the others, venerated the relics of the saint, he placed three fingers of his diseased hand into the opening (aperture) of the reliquary. It seemed to him that he had dipped them in some fragrant ointment, and

46. The Grand Prince of Moscow Dimitri Ivanovich of the Don reigned from 1363 to 1389. The famous Battle of the Don with the Tatars, for which the Grand Prince received the name "of the Don," took place in 1380, on September 8.

when he withdrew his hand, not a trace of his former ailment remained. All who were present at this wondrous healing reverently glorified the Right-believing Prince Alexander, who had been granted by the Lord the gift of healing, and with hope in his aid they set out on their further journey.

The Kazan campaign ended successfully. The Tatar kingdom, situated near Moscow and for a century disturbing the frontier Russian regions with its raids, submitted to the Moscow tsar. In place of the Tatar mosques holy churches appeared, the preaching of the holy Gospel began in this Mohammedan land, and our forefathers could now look ahead calmly. After Kazan, the other Tatar kingdom, Astrakhan, was also annexed, and the queen of Russian rivers, the Volga, with all its riches, along its entire length became a Russian river. The Russians successfully began to extend their power in the far east, in Siberia, gradually advancing toward the shores of the Great Ocean. But in the south, in the Crimea, there remained a strong enemy, the Crimean Tatars, with whom the Russian state had long to wage struggle.[47] Ally of the Moscow sovereign until the annexation of Kazan and Astrakhan to Moscow, the Crimean khan now, seeing the strengthening of Rus', began a struggle with it, the more dangerous for us because it was supported by the supreme defender of Islam, the Turkish sultan. And during this struggle the heavenly protector of Rus', the Right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich, did not cease to pour forth his help.

In 1571, during the attack on Moscow by the Crimean Khan Devlet Giray, an elder of the Nativity Monastery in Vladimir, Antony, a man of prayer and fasting, while praying before an icon of the Mother of God that the terrible invasion of the Khan might be turned away from the homeland, was granted the following miraculous vision. As he grieved over the calamities that had befallen his homeland, he suddenly saw two youths in bright garments approaching the monastery on white horses with the speed of lightning. Dismounting, they left their horses at the monastery gates and entered the church (these were the right-believing Princes Boris and Gleb). Elder Antony followed them.

47. To Empress Catherine II in 1783.

As soon as the right-believing princes entered the church, the royal doors opened and the candles were lit. Approaching the shrine of the right-believing Prince Alexander, Sts. Boris and Gleb addressed him with the following words: "Arise, our brother, Grand Prince Alexander; let us hasten to the aid of our kinsman, the right-believing tsar John Vasilyevich." The right-believing Alexander immediately rose and went out of the church with them to the monastery gates. There stood three white horses, made ready for battle, and the right-believing princes mounted them. Setting out, they said: "Let us go to the cathedral church of the Most Pure Mother of God and call with us our kinsmen, the right-believing princes Andrew[48], Vsevolod[49], George[50] and Yaroslav[51]."

The elder followed them. And here, as in the monastery church, at the entrance of the holy princes the royal gates opened; the right-believing princes rose from their tombs and, miraculously, through the city wall, made their way through the air toward Rostov, with the words: "Let us go to Rostov to Tsarevich Peter[52]; let him too help us." With the help of these heavenly warriors the victory over the Crimean Khan was won.

Thus did the right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich guard his fatherland from the Tatars, his whole earthly life having been devoted to that same care: the preservation of Holy Rus' from the dread conqueror.

The heavenly protector of the Russian state, who during his life was distinguished by great mercy and helped every dispossessed and suffering person, the right-believing Prince Alexander, even after his repose did not cease to pour forth his favors upon all who were in need and

48. Andrew Yuryevich, Grand Prince of Vladimir (1169–1174).
49. Vsevolod III, Grand Prince of Vladimir (1176–1212).
50. George or Yuri Vsevolodovich, uncle of the Blessed Prince Alexander, Grand Prince of Vladimir (1219–1238).
51. Yaroslav Vsevolodovich, father of the Blessed Prince Alexander, Grand Prince of Vladimir from 1238 to 1246.
52. St. Peter, Tsarevich of the Horde, nephew of Khan Berke, moved by the words of Cyril, Bishop of Rostov, who had been in the Horde, secretly left his kinsfolk, went to Rostov and was baptized. He died in 1290, having received the monastic tonsure before his end. His memory is celebrated on June 29.

who turned to him in prayer for help. At the shrine of his holy relics the sick received healing, and the sorrowing and afflicted received gracious consolation and aid. Not all of these miracles were recorded, but even the small part of them that was described by the ancient biographers of the holy prince clearly shows what an abundant wellspring of healings and miracles flowed from the holy relics of the right-believing Prince Alexander, and what a precious vessel of God's mercy Holy Rus' acquired in her heavenly patron and leader. Many times, even before the institution of the feast of St. Alexander, the monks of the Nativity monastery were granted to see heavenly signs foreshadowing the holiness and God-pleasingness of the right-believing prince; more than once both they, the monastery, and the city of Vladimir received heavenly help from the holy prince.

In 1491 a terrible fire broke out in Vladimir, during which the church where the relics of the right-believing Prince Alexander rested was also burned. During this fire the worshippers saw the right-believing prince, as if on horseback, rising into the air toward heaven. And after the fire it was found that, although the entire interior of the church had been burned, the relics of the right-believing prince remained undamaged by the fire.

In 1541, after the feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, after the conclusion of Vespers, candles before the shrine of the relics of the right-believing Prince Alexander lit themselves, and many of the brethren and of those praying observed this with astonishment. The monastery sexton, out of simplicity, saw nothing unusual here, went up and extinguished the candles. Then the matter was reported to the abbot, Archimandrite Euphrosynus, and when he approached the tomb and touched one of the candles, he noticed that a special warmth was spreading from it. Everyone understood this miracle as a special sign of the holiness of the right-believing Prince Alexander.

Elder David, a monk of the Nativity monastery, was seriously and long ill. Lying on his bed and shedding tears, he prayed to the right-believing Prince Alexander for healing. Soon he felt relief and redoubled his prayer. At the conclusion of his prayer he received complete healing from his illness.

A monk of the same monastery, surnamed Krasovtsev, had been paralyzed for a long time. He was brought to the shrine of the relics of the right-believing Prince Alexander, and as he looked upon it with tenderness, shedding warm tears and recalling his sins, he felt strength return to his paralyzed limbs, and soon he was completely healed.

A monastery servant, Terenty, was afflicted with demonic possession. When he was brought to the shrine of the relics of the right-believing prince and prayer was offered for him, he at once became meek and began to give prayerful thanks to God and His saint for his healing.

The ancient biographers recorded still more healings that took place among lay people of various conditions and ages.

A certain boyar's son, Semyon Zabelin, living in Pskov, was so ill that he could not move either his hands or his feet, and could not eat or drink at all. Having a deep faith in the right-believing Prince Alexander, of whom a reverent memory had always been preserved in ancient Pskov, he asked his household to take him to Vladimir to pray before the shrine of the relics of the right-believing prince, and here, during his prayer, he received healing from his illness.

Another boyar's son, Golovkin, was struck by the same kind of illness; he did not hope for recovery and thought only of death. He had given nearly all his possessions to physicians, but received no help or benefit from their treatment. And so, through the intercession of the right-believing Prince Alexander at the shrine of his holy relics, he received from the Lord what medical skill could not give him: complete healing from his incurable illness.

From a village of the Vladimir district a paralyzed woman was brought and laid on the steps near the holy relics of the right-believing prince. During fervent prayer to the saint of God for healing, she suddenly felt the holy prince, miraculously appearing to her, take her by the hand and raise her up from her sickbed.

The Vladimir nobleman Maxim Nikitin had a son, the youth John, who was mute and paralyzed. His parents, with faith in the right-believing prince, brought their unfortunate son to the Nativity monastery, and here he received healing.

Many, through the intercession of the right-believing Prince Alexander, received healing from blindness. Thus a blind man from the city of Vladimir, David Iosifov, suddenly saw light in the church during the reading of the Gospel. Deeply stirred by the hope of healing that flashed within him, he redoubled his prayer to the saint of God and asked to be led to the shrine of his holy relics. When, there at the holy relics, he was sprinkled with holy water, he regained his sight completely.

From the village of Krasnoe in the Vladimir province a woman who had lost her sight was brought, and at the shrine of the holy relics of the right-believing prince she received complete healing, as though she had never been ill at all.

Mercy also flowed many times from the wonderworking relics of the right-believing prince upon those who suffered from the dreadful illness of demonic possession. Here are some cases from among those recorded by the ancient biographers.

A demoniac was brought to the monastery from the village of Staroye; by his terrifying appearance he filled everyone with dread: he uttered dreadful words and, like a beast, flung himself upon people. He was brought to the monastery bound, and during a moleben he received healing.

Another demoniac did not even recognize his closest relatives, tore out his own hair, bit his tongue; his body was covered with wounds from the blows that he himself inflicted upon himself. Through the intercession of the right-believing Prince Alexander he was granted complete healing from his terrible illness.

In the monastery village of Ugryumova, in the Vladimir district, the peasant Afanasy Nikitin suffered fits of mental derangement, so that he did not recognize those around him, refused food, and altogether lost his sleep. Suddenly, in a moment of lucidity, he began to ask his household to take him to the Nativity monastery, to the relics of the right-believing Prince Alexander. His relatives fulfilled his wish, and on the way to the monastery the sick man felt himself healthy; and, arriving at the monastery, he told everyone with heartfelt tenderness how the holy

Prince Alexander had appeared to him and how he himself had directed him to seek healing at the shrine of his holy relics.

Such were the mercies that the sick and afflicted in soul received through faith in the right-believing prince! And the memory of the benefactions of God's servant and of his earthly exploits for the glory of our fatherland never faded among our forefathers. The life of the Right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich became, immediately after his death, the subject of edifying accounts. Following the Life written by a contemporary of the Right-believing Prince, other, more detailed Lives appeared, composed in various places of the Russian land and especially in those where the holy prince had lived and done good: in Vladimir and in the Novgorod-Pskov region. Every feature of the life and work of this sufferer for the Russian land, that bright star which illumined the path of our forefathers in the darkest and heaviest period of the Tatar yoke, was carefully preserved for the edification of posterity. Simultaneously with the biographers, the ancient Russian chroniclers also recorded accounts of the life of the Right-believing Prince in their works, and thanks to this, of none of the princes of North-Eastern Rus' have so many records and accounts come down to us as of the Right-believing Prince Alexander.

Almost immediately after the blessed repose of the holy prince, his Church glorification also began. The very miracle which occurred at his burial clearly bore witness to all of his sanctity and God-pleasing life; other miracles, which poured forth unceasingly, as from an inexhaustible spring, from the shrine of his holy relics, bore witness to the same. In 1547, at the desire of Tsar John Vasilyevich, a Church council took place in Moscow under the presidency of the renowned Metropolitan of All Rus', Macarius, at which it was established that the saints who had previously been venerated only locally should be celebrated throughout all Russia. At this council the all-Russian feast in honor of the Right-believing Prince Alexander Nevsky was also established, and by the metropolitan's directive a service (for 23 November, the day of the repose of the Right-believing Prince) and a new, more extensive Life were composed. At the beginning of the seventeenth century there was

also a church in Moscow in honor of the Right-believing Prince Alexander.

In 1724 a new feast was also established – 30 August, on the occasion of the translation of the relics of the Right-believing Prince from Vladimir to St. Petersburg.

On the banks of the Neva, some 500 years after the death of St. Alexander, new brilliant victories were won by Emperor Peter I over Russia's old enemy, the Swedes. Here in 1703 the foundation was laid for the new capital of the Russian state, and in 1717 for a new Russian holy place – the Alexander Nevsky Lavra. Emperor Peter I desired that the relics of the Right-believing Prince be transferred from Vladimir to St. Petersburg, and as soon as Russia felt itself firm in the newly conquered land, an order was issued for the translation of the relics. The Emperor himself drew up a detailed decree on how this translation was to be carried out, and he himself closely followed the arrangement of the new monastery and church where the holy relics of the Right-believing Prince Alexander were to be laid. But the wars with the Swedes and the Turks delayed the execution of this order, and only in 1723 was work on it begun.

Vladimir solemnly escorted its memorable shrine, which for nearly five centuries had constituted the precious adornment of this ancient city. From 10 to 11 August an All-night Vigil was celebrated in all the churches, and the next morning the Divine Liturgy. The clergy of the city and of the surrounding monasteries, with a great concourse of people, went to the Nativity Monastery, and after a moleben the shrine with the holy relics was carried out of the church on the hands of the clergy and conducted beyond the city. On 17 August the relics of the Right-believing Prince were met in Moscow with even greater solemnity, and then the Church procession proceeded through Tver and Novgorod to St. Petersburg. The translation of the relics of the Right-believing Prince Alexander was a general Russian celebration. Services were held in all the towns and villages, and crowds of people accompanied the shrine along the whole route. It was intended to bring the holy relics into St. Petersburg on 30 August, the day on which the recently concluded Peace of Nystad with the Swedes was celebrated. But the

distance of the journey did not allow this plan to be carried out exactly, and only on 1 October did the holy relics arrive at Shlisselburg. By the emperor's order they were placed in the cathedral church of the Annunciation there, and their transfer to St. Petersburg was postponed until 30 August of the following year (1724).

The reception of the shrine in St. Petersburg was distinguished by especial solemnity. The Emperor arrived with his suite by galley at the mouth of the river Izhora. Having reverently placed the holy relics on the galley, the Sovereign ordered his nobles to take up the oars, while he himself, standing at the stern, steered the rudder. In Petersburg a special landing had been built, where the galley with the holy relics came to rest. Accompanied by the clergy and the people, the most distinguished nobles carried the shrine with the holy relics. The pealing of bells and the firing of cannon increased the solemnity. The relics were placed in the church dedicated to the Right-believing Prince. On the following day the celebration continued in the Alexander Nevsky monastery: the Sovereign distributed to those present the plan of the buildings projected for the monastery, and at that same time it was established to celebrate the translation of the relics on 30 August forever.

Thus the cherished desire of the emperor was fulfilled. It was not granted to him to complete the plan he had drawn for the arrangement of the new monastery: six months after this celebration Peter died. But Peter's successors completed what he had begun. His daughter, Empress Elizabeth Petrovna, made a magnificent silver shrine, in which the holy relics rest to this day. Empress Catherine II commanded that a new cathedral be built in place of the old one, and on 30 August 1790 the new church was consecrated and the relics of the Right-believing Prince were transferred into it.

And now the Right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich still keeps the domain entrusted to him by God – our fatherland. And now he is near to and swift to hear all who call upon his holy name in faith; he pours forth his mercy and intercedes before the throne of the Almighty God – to Him who glorifies His saints be honor and glory unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Thou wast the most honorable offshoot of a pious root, O blessed Alexander, for Christ revealed thee as a divine treasure of the Russian land, a new wonderworker, illustrious and well-pleasing to God. And today, having gathered in memory of thee in faith and love, rejoicing in psalms and hymns, we glorify the Lord who gave thee the grace of healings: Entreat Him to save this city, and to make thy kinsmen in power God-pleasing, and to grant salvation to the Russian sons.

Another Troparion, Tone 4:

Recognize thy brethren, O Russian Joseph, not in Egypt but reigning in heaven, O Right-believing Prince Alexander, and receive their supplications, increasing the grain of thy people by the fruitfulness of thy land, guarding the cities of thy dominion by prayer, and aiding thy Right-believing heirs, our emperors, against their adversaries.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As a most bright star that rose in the east and came to the west, we honor thee: for thou dost enrich this whole land with wonders and goodness, and dost enlighten with faith those who honor thy memory, O blessed Alexander. Wherefore today we thy people celebrate thy repose: intercede that thy fatherland be saved, and the realm of our Orthodox Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich, and all who run to the shrine of thy relics, and who faithfully cry out to thee: Rejoice, thou foundation of our city.

Another Kontakion:

As thy kinsmen, Boris and Gleb, appeared to thee from heaven to help thee as thou didst contend against the Swedish Vaigir and his warriors, so now too, O blessed Alexander, come to the help of thy kinsmen and subdue those who fight against us.

* * *

Memory of Our Venerable Father Alexander of Svir

Память преподобного отца нашего Александра Свирского

The blessed Alexander was born[53] in the domains of Great Novgorod[54], in the Obonezh region[55], which lay along the river Oyat[56], in a village called Mandera, situated opposite the Ostrovsky Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos of the Honorable Entrance[57]. He was born of a father named Stephen and a mother named Vasilissa, through a certain manifestation of Divine Power[58], and was sanctified by holy baptism. When the time came to teach him letters, his parents gave him to be instructed in the Divine Scriptures. But at the time when his fellow pupils were making successful progress in their learning, he acquired it slowly. This was by a special providence of God, so that he might receive understanding from God and not from men, which afterwards came to pass. Once he came into the church, and falling before the icon of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Most Pure Mother, he began with tears to pray that understanding for the study of the Divine Scriptures be given to him. And his prayer was immediately answered: he heard a voice which said to him: "Arise, fear not. Thou shalt receive what thou hast asked."

The joyful youth arose and came to his father. His father and mother noticed his spiritual joy and surmised that it arose from the mani-

53. The Venerable Alexander was born in 1448, on June 15.

54. The territory of Great Novgorod occupied a vast corner of north-western Rus', reaching in the north to the White Sea and extending in the east beyond the Ural range. It embraced the present provinces of Novgorod, St. Petersburg, part of Olonets, Arkhangelsk, Perm, part of Vyatka, Vologda, part of Yaroslavl, part of Tver and Pskov, and until the beginning of the eighteenth century it was divided into five parts, or pyatinas.

55. Here is meant the Obonezhye, or the Obonezh pyatina, the largest of all the Novgorodian pyatinas. It stretched north and north-east from Novgorod, on one side between the River Volkhov and Lake Ladoga, and on the other between Lake Ilmen and the Rivers Meta and Mda. Since it embraced Lake Onega on all sides, it received its name from this.

56. The River Oyat is the left tributary of the River Svir, and lies in the present Olonets Province.

57. The Monastery of the Entrance of the Theotokos stood on the River Oyat. In 1581 it was utterly burned by "German men," so that six brethren lived beyond the monastery in a wasteland, on an island.

58. The birth of children to the parents of the Venerable Alexander had prematurely ceased, and they prayed to God for the restoration of their ability to bear children; after this a son, Amos, was born to them, who afterwards became the Venerable Alexander.

festation of God's mercy toward him, and thinking so, they thanked God for it. From that time the blessed youth began to show rapid progress in learning, listening attentively to the reading of the Divine books, and obeying his parents in all things. At the same time he kept so strict a fast that he took only one meal a day, of bread alone and that in moderation, and at night he slept very little. His parents were astonished at this, and his mother, admonishing him, once said to him:

"My son! Why are you wearing yourself out so? Take your food with us and sleep as we do." But the youth answered his mother:

"Why do you say this to me, Mother, turning me away from the abstinence that is pleasing to me? For the Scripture says that food and drink do not bring us near to God (1 Cor. 8:8). Let me proceed as I have begun."

Marvelling at this wise answer of her son, and seeing especially that he had a sincere desire for such ascetic labour, the mother said to him:

"Do as you wish, my son, and proceed accordingly."

But the wondrous youth felt a greater attraction to ascetic labours than to visible goods; he considered an abundance of possessions a shadow, and looked upon everything that is human on earth as vain and worthless.

When he had reached full age, his parents wished to join him in lawful marriage, but the God-loving youth avoided this. He always desired and thought of withdrawing from the world and attaining what he desired. Taking his father's blessing, as though to go to a village not far away, he left his native home and, guided by God, or rather having an Angel as his companion, came to the monastery of the Holy Savior, of His Godlike Transfiguration, on Valaam.[59] He entreated the abbot of that monastery to tonsure him into the monastic life. At that time he was twenty-six years old. Having entered the monastery, he devoted himself with such zeal to the labours of a virtuous life that everyone began to speak of him. Burdened by such renown, he asked the abbot there for a blessing and, taking with him nothing but the necessary clothing, left the monastery at night. He came to the place where he

59. Valaam is an island in Lake Ladoga, near its northern shores, now known as a monastery famous in the north of Russia for its good order.

had first wished to settle when he had gone away from his parents. This place was on the shore of a lake,[60] four miles from the river Svir. Here the Venerable built himself a small cell, which he used for brief rest from his labours.

Once he went around the surrounding areas, seeking a place where he could build himself a dwelling, and he saw a beautiful place, illumined by a certain Divine light, on which the monastery still stands to this day. When he was here, and it once happened that he came out of his cell to the lake to draw water, a voice was heard from heaven, which called him by name and said to him: "Since thou hast been a keeper of My commandments, for this I shall gather to thee an innumerable multitude of people; thou, however, do not reject them, but receive them with outstretched arms and be to them a teacher unto salvation."

Hearing these words, the Venerable fell prostrate on the ground and offered a prayer of thanksgiving to God, after which, having drawn water, he returned to his cell.

Some time after this, the Venerable's own brother, named John, who was seeking him, came to him. Seeing his brother, the Venerable rejoiced, and they both set to work to make a more spacious dwelling, since they wished to live together. But soon the Venerable's brother died, and Alexander, after chanting funeral hymns over him, buried him. After this the Venerable again devoted himself to strict fasting, and the number of brethren increased. They, living in silence, dwelt apart from one another and each imitated the Venerable according to his strength.

Thus the Venerable passed his life, and he attained to the point where by his prayer he drove away demons, and had Angels as his companions. Once he was granted to see God Himself, appearing to him in three Persons, and to converse with Him about how to build a church, establish a monastery and gather the brethren. When he then prayed about where to set up the church, the Angel of the Lord pointed out to him the place for it. The brethren constrained him to accept the priest-

60. This lake bore the name of Roshchnessky.

hood, and after some time he built a church in the name of the Holy Trinity and consecrated it, after which the number of brethren increased still more.

Although the Venerable accepted the office of abbot over the brethren, he did not change his rule, and, being abbot, he gave everyone an example of humility, remembering the words of the Lord who said: whoever wishes to be first, let him be last of all and servant of all (Mk. 9:35; cf. 10:43). Therefore the Venerable humbled himself, striving to be less than all, and served everyone. He gave an example to all and laboured, going out to work before all others. Always he did everything himself with his own hands: he went to the kitchen, kneaded dough and baked loaves; sometimes he carried water from the lake, chopped wood and carried it to the monastery. Sometimes he came to the mill where the monks ground rye, and at the time when they were still asleep, he took the rye prepared for grinding, and having ground the portion assigned to each monk, he set the ground flour in its place, and then went back to his cell. He came to the church before all others and left after all. No one ever saw him lying down, even on a mat, or pouring water over his body. His clothing was a cassock made of coarse cloth, so worn that many patches had been sewn onto it. Many foolish people mocked him and reviled him, but he received such reproaches from them with joy.

After some time, by the will of God, the Venerable built a stone church in the name of the Most Holy Life-Giving Trinity,[61] enlarged the monastery, had cells built on four sides, and in the middle built a large church with a refectory, and arranged everything else that was useful for the needs of the brethren.

Thus the Venerable passed his life in a God-pleasing manner, and until the end of his days continued his labours, for which he received from God the gift of working miracles even during his lifetime. At last, sensing that the time of his departure to God was approaching, he summoned the brethren and said to them:

61. This church was consecrated in 1526 by the blessing of Archbishop Macarius.

"Brethren! Now the end of my life is drawing near, and I am departing from this life. I commend you to God. May He keep you and establish you in His love."

Having said these words, the Venerable instructed the brethren to keep love among themselves, to be forbearing with one another and to exercise themselves in the other virtues. In conclusion he enjoined them that, even after his death, none of them should keep any intoxicating drinks in his possession. When the hour came in which the soul of the Venerable was to depart to God, he raised his hands to heaven and offered a prayer, concluding it with the words:

"Lord! Into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Thus, with prayer on his lips, the Venerable gave up his honourable soul to the Lord. This took place in the year 1533, on the 30th day of the month of August. His total years of life were 85. His honourable body was buried with honour at the church of the Divinely Beautiful Transfiguration, on the right side by the sanctuary. It gives many healings to those who come with faith to the holy tomb of the Venerable[62].

Troparion, Tone 4:

From thy youth, O God-wise one, thou didst settle in the wilderness with spiritual desire, and thou didst zealously long to walk in the footsteps of Christ alone. Wherefore the orders of the Angels, beholding thee, marvelled how, though in the flesh, thou didst wrestle with invisible foes, O wise one, and by abstinence didst defeat the ranks of the passions; and thou didst appear equal to the Angels on earth, O Venerable Alexander. Pray to Christ God that He may save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As a many-radiant star, today thou didst shine forth in the lands of Russia, O Father, when thou didst settle in the wilderness and didst desire zealously to follow the footsteps of Christ; and taking

62. The Venerable Alexander was venerated as a saint from 1547, and at that time a service was composed for him; in 1559 a side-chapel in his honor was built in Moscow. His relics were uncovered on April 17, 1641, and in 1643 Tsar Michael Feodorovich made for them a silver reliquary, in which they rest to this day.

upon thy shoulder His holy yoke, the honourable Cross, thou didst mortify by thy labours the wanton movements of thy flesh. Wherefore we cry to thee: Save thy flock, which thou hast gathered wisely. Therefore we call to thee: Rejoice, Venerable Alexander, our Father.

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Father Christopher

Память преподобного отца нашего Христофора

Concerning this Venerable Christopher, John and Sophronius, the writers of the book called the *Leimonarion*, relate as follows:

"When we were in Alexandria, we came to Abba Theodulus, who was in the monastery of St. Sophia in Pharan; the elder told us, saying: 'I was tonsured into the monastic life in the coenobium of our Venerable Father Theodosius; this coenobium is in the desert of the holy city of Christ, Jerusalem. There I met an elder of great stature, named Christopher, a Roman by birth. Once I bowed down to him, saying: "Show me love, Father, tell me what your labours were from the days of your youth."'

After I had entreated him much, the elder understood that I asked him for the sake of (spiritual) benefit; then he told me about himself, saying thus:

'When I renounced the world, child, I had a great love and zeal for the monastic labour:

by day I exercised myself in the service of God, and in the evening, when it was already late, I went into the cave in which the Venerable Theodosius and the other holy fathers had previously been accustomed to pray. Entering the cave, I made a hundred prostrations, and on each step I fell prostrate before God: and there were eighteen steps in all. Having entered within the cave, I spent the time in prayer until they struck the board calling to the morning chanting; only then did I come out of the cave and go towards the church.

In such labour I remained for eleven years, never changing this rule, struggling with great fasting and guarding my thoughts, labouring in

body in all the services entrusted to me, and experiencing great privation because I possessed nothing.

Once at night, when I came to the cave, I began to make my usual kneeling prostrations on the steps; having reached the last step, I stopped—suddenly I found myself in an ecstatic state: I saw that the whole cave was filled with lamps, some of which were burning, and others not burning. I also saw two men of light-like appearance, walking in white garments and lighting the lamps, and I asked them:

"For what reason have you placed these lamps here, so that I cannot enter in and pray?"

They answered me:

"These are the lamps of the fathers who serve God."

Then I asked them again:

"Why, then, do some of the lamps burn while others do not?"

They answered me:

"Those who serve the Lord lit their lamps with zeal, but the slothful did not light their lamps."

Then I said to them:

"Show me love, and tell me: is my lamp burning or not?"

They answered me:

"Labor and pray, and then we shall light it."

But I said:

"I always pray, and I have done nothing else up to this time."

After these words I came to myself and saw no one any more. Then I said to myself:

"O Christopher! You must undertake still greater labors, so that you may light your lamp!"

On the morning of the following day I went out of the monastery and set off for Mount Sinai, taking nothing with me except the clothing in which I was dressed. After I had dwelt on Mount Sinai for fifty years, struggling in many ascetic feats, a voice came down to me, saying:

"Christopher! Go back to your monastery, in which you labored earlier, that you may rest there together with your fathers."

Having related this about himself, the Venerable Christopher lived for a little time after this and committed his holy soul into the hands of God.

Then the same Abba Theodulus related to us (John and Sophronius relate) concerning the same Father Christopher that at another time, before his repose, the Venerable Christopher related this:

"Once in the daytime I went out (he said) from my monastery and went to the Holy City of Jerusalem, to worship and kiss the life-giving Cross of the Lord. And when I was there, I worshipped and was already leaving, when I saw a certain brother standing at the gate, in the midst of the church courtyard, neither entering nor leaving. I also saw two ravens flying fearlessly before his face and not allowing him to enter. I understood that those ravens were demons. Then I said to the one standing there:

'Tell me, brother, for what reason are you standing in the middle of the gate and not entering?'

He answered me:

'Forgive me, Father, I am beset by thoughts. One thought says to me: go and worship the honorable Cross and kiss it; another thought says: no, do not go, but go first and accomplish your business; at another time you will come and worship.'

When I heard this (says St. Christopher), I took the brother by the hand and led him into the church, and at once those ravens disappeared. I proposed that he worship the honorable Cross and the Holy Sepulchre of the Lord, and afterward I dismissed him in peace."

This Venerable Christopher related to me (says Theodulus), since he saw that I was much occupied with the affairs of the monastery but gave little diligence to prayer, so that I might know that the spiritual service must be performed first of all, and afterward the labor necessary for bodily needs.

Having learned of this, the blessed Fathers John and Sophronius wrote it down for the benefit of those who read and hear, to the glory of Christ our God.[63]

63. The Venerable Christopher ascetically labored in the fifth century.

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Father Phantinus

Память преподобного отца нашего Фантина

This Venerable Father was born in Calabria[64], the son of George and Vriena. From his early years he dedicated himself to the service of God. Given over to a certain monastery[65], and having received monastic tonsure, he exercised himself in every kind of virtue and became so skilled a doer of the commandments of God that he was counted worthy of great divine revelations. Wandering through deserts and mountains, he remained for twenty days without food, and for four years he lived in complete nakedness. Oppressed by many afflictions from the Saracens[66], he bore them patiently for sixty years; then, taking his disciples Vitalius and Nicephorus, he set out with them for the Peloponnese[67]. He often came to Corinth[68] and was a helper in the work of salvation for many. He also went to Athens[69], where he prayed in the church of the Theotokos, after which he set out for Thessalonica[70] and was there a witness to the miracles from the relics of the Great Martyr Demetrius. He lived here eight years in the customary abstinence, observing the accepted rule, and in deep old age he ended his life.[71]

* * *

64. Calabria, an ancient Roman province, lay in the southern part of the Apennine peninsula.
65. In one Prologue it is said that the Venerable Fantinus entered a monastery at the age of eight.
66. The Saracens, properly speaking, were the inhabitants of Arabia. Originally this name was given to a predatory tribe nomadizing in Arabia, but afterwards Christian writers transferred the name to all Arabs and Muslims in general. The African Saracens attacked Sicily and Calabria about 828.
67. In antiquity the Peloponnese was the name of the southern part of the Balkan peninsula. According to the Menologion of Emperor Basil, the Venerable Fantinus went from Calabria to Thessaly and, having visited Athens (and, probably, Corinth), dwelt for a rather long time in its chief city, Larissa, at the tomb of St. Achillius, whose memory is celebrated on May 15.
68. Corinth was a famous city of ancient Greece. It lay in ancient Argolis, near the shores of the Gulf of Corinth.
69. The city of Athens, the capital of ancient Greece, was situated in Attica, near the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.
70. Thessalonica is a city in Macedonia. It was situated on the very shore of the Aegean Sea.
71. The Venerable Fantinus reposed in the late ninth or at the beginning of the tenth century.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the uncovering of the relics of the holy right-believing Prince Daniel Alexandrovich of Moscow, in 1652. His relics rest in the Danilov Monastery in Moscow (the memory of the repose of the holy right-believing Prince Daniel is celebrated on March 4).



THE THIRTY-FIRST DAY OF AUGUST

August 31

31 августа

New Calendar August 31 · Old Calendar September 13 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage

Житие и страдание святого священномученика Киприана, епископа Карфагенского

St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, belongs to the number of the most remarkable Fathers and Teachers of the Church of the third century. It fell to him to live and to act in such a time when the Church of Christ was beset both by persecutions from without, from the pagans, and by internal dissensions, from heretics and schismatic teachers. St. Cyprian presented in himself a model both of a courageous archpastor who suffered for the name of Christ and laid down his soul for his flock, and of a wise organizer of the inner life of the Church. He left numerous writings, in which he touches upon a variety of theological questions and in which he resolves nearly all the perplexities that arose in his time concerning the inner good order of the life of the Church. For this reason his life and the history of his sufferings appear especially instructive.

Cyprian was born at the beginning of the third century.[1] His parents were pagans and belonged to the number of the noble and distinguished citizens of the city of Carthage. His original name was Thascius Cyprianus. In his youth Cyprian received a good secular education. He achieved very considerable success in eloquence, for which reason he was chosen as a teacher of rhetoric in the school of Carthage; for the same reason many chose him as their advocate in the conduct of legal cases. It may be supposed that Cyprian inherited a considerable for-

1. Cyprian was born, as is supposed, about 200 A.D.

tune; besides this, the profits of the advocate's office furnished him with abundant means for a luxurious life, so that at first, being a pagan, Cyprian led a sinful life. The consequence of this was that Cyprian, as he himself remarks, "yielding to (his) passions, involuntarily favored his own misfortune, as though it were by nature his portion."[2]

Cyprian led such a sinful life until it pleased the grace of God to overshadow his soul and call him to salvation. It is thought that Cyprian remained a pagan until his full maturity, in all likelihood until the age of forty-six.[3]

At the beginning of the third century there were already many Christians in Carthage. Cyprian knew of this; he could not but take an interest in the lofty Christian teaching, for he was endowed by nature with an inquiring and noble mind. Even before his conversion to Christianity, Cyprian became acquainted with some writings of Tertullian,[4] and this set him on the path of truth.

Even while still a pagan, Cyprian began to feel revulsion for the pagan way of life. He was conscious of the ruinous and sinful character of the gladiatorial spectacles, where the murder of some gave pleasure to others; Cyprian also felt aversion for the pagan tragedies and comedies, which preserved in people's memory past crimes and corrupted them. Even while still a pagan, he looked with grief upon the injustices and oppression on the part of judges, and upon the deceptions and quarrels among private persons; even while still a pagan, he understood that nobility, honor and wealth, which seem so alluring and seductive to many, in fact fill the soul only with empty and tormenting fears and anxieties. All this led Cyprian to the conviction that one cannot be saved in paganism, that the pagan religion cannot give man peace of soul and deserves not the least attention in comparison with the Christian religion.

But the awareness of the depth and universality of moral corruption held back Cyprian's conversion to Christianity for a time. He often reflected on his moral fall, on the necessity of correcting himself and beginning a new life in Christianity; but at the same time he was at first

2. "Letter to Donatus," ch. 4.
3. The year 246 is usually taken as the time of Cyprian's conversion to Christianity.
4. Cyprian was acquainted with the "Apology" of Tertullian.

afraid of the lofty demands of Christianity; he considered the spiritual rebirth bestowed in Christianity to be very difficult, for he had already spent many years in paganism. He eloquently expresses his doubts and perplexities on this score in his "Letter to Donatus." Cyprian says here: "Is it possible to put off all that one was before, and with the same bodily constitution to become another person in mind and heart?... Is it possible to cast off that which, having been born of deep matter, hardened together with it, or which by long habit became rooted together with the years?... Will he who is accustomed to splendid feasts and refined dishes ever learn thrift? Will he who has always worn precious garments adorned with gold ever put on ordinary and simple clothing? No," Cyprian reasoned, "the son of luxury, accustomed to honors, will never resolve to be a private and undistinguished man. Always accompanied by his servants, surrounded as a mark of honor by a numerous crowd of people who grovel before him, he considers it a punishment when he is alone. Being a captive of constant amusements, he is accustomed to give himself over to drinking wine, is puffed up with pride, is inflamed with anger, plots robbery, yields to cruelty, is carried away by lust. Thus I often reasoned with myself," writes Cyprian, "for I myself was subject to many errors."[5]

In a state of such moral struggle and indecision, Cyprian could not but feel the need for outside help and counsel; and to resolve his doubts Cyprian turned to a certain presbyter of Carthage named Caecilius. Caecilius succeeded in persuading Cyprian of the extreme absurdity of pagan polytheism and of the fact that the most evil inclinations of man can be changed by the all-powerful grace of God. Thus Cyprian firmly resolved to become a Christian.

According to the custom that existed in the ancient Church, before baptism Cyprian had to spend some time in the state of so-called catechumenate.[6] It is not known how long Cyprian spent in the catechumenate; it may be supposed that it was not long.

Having resolved to become a Christian, Cyprian in fact proved the sincerity of his resolution by a change in the very manner of his life.

5. "Letter to Donatus," chs. 3 and 4.
6. Catechesis is oral instruction in the truths of the Christian faith.

Even while in the catechumenate, Cyprian sold all his estates and distributed the money he received to the poor, keeping nothing for himself. After this, the presbyter Caecilius, who was overseeing the spiritual life of Cyprian, could no longer doubt the sincerity of his disciple's conversion. Soon after this, of course, Cyprian's baptism had to follow.

The living sense of spiritual transformation granted in the sacrament of baptism strongly affected Cyprian. This is how he describes, in a letter to his friend Donatus, the saving effects of the sacrament of baptism:

"When the life-giving waters of baptism washed away the stains of my former life, and the heavenly light was poured into my cleansed and justified heart; when, having received the Spirit from heaven, I became a new man, then in a wonderful way I became fully convinced of what I had earlier doubted; mysteries began to be revealed, darkness to disappear; what had seemed difficult became easy, the impossible became possible... In the receiving of heavenly gifts there is no measure. Only let our heart thirst and be open, and we have faith sufficient to receive grace. It grants the power to destroy the poisonous force of sin by sober purity, a blameless mind, a clean word, unfeigned virtue; it cleanses the defilements of corrupted hearts, restoring them to health; it gives the power to reconcile enemies, to calm the restless, and by fearsome exorcisms to compel the unclean spirits that dwell in man to confess themselves. The image of the gracious action upon those in whom evil spirits dwell is invisible, the blows by which it strikes the latter are imperceptible, but the punishment is visible and striking. Thus the Spirit of grace, dwelling in us, begins to show its mighty power, and although we have not yet changed our body with its members into another, our eye is no longer darkened by the gloom of this age. What power, what strength of the Spirit! He who has been cleansed and abides in purity not only preserves himself from worldly temptations, not only is not ensnared by any net of the enemy who attacks him, but is strengthened in his powers to such a degree that he rules over the whole host of the adversary as a lord."[7]

7. "Letter to Donatus," chs. 4 and 5.

Thus the grace of God, soon after the baptism of Cyprian, was made manifest in him by an inner spiritual rebirth. Although, as was mentioned above, he had already changed his way of life before baptism, while in the state of catechumenate, nevertheless, by his own confession, his faith received full firmness, and his will its complete strength and steadfastness in baptism. He was baptized, probably at the feast of Pascha or of Pentecost.[8]

After baptism Cyprian began to lead a life of strict virtue. He presented to all an example of non-acquisitiveness, for, feeling compassion for the destitute and poor, he did good to them, distributing all that he had. The principal occupations of St. Cyprian after baptism were prayer and the reading of Holy Scripture.

In performing works of mercy and doing good to all who were in need, Cyprian could not but cherish a special love and gratitude toward his teacher, the presbyter Caecilius, who had opened to him the mysteries of the Christian faith and had helped in his conversion to Christianity. And the presbyter Caecilius, seeing in Cyprian so much devotion and affection toward himself, before his death found no one else, besides him, to whom he could entrust with greater confidence and hope the care and concern for his remaining family.

After his conversion to Christianity, Cyprian lived in one house with Caecilius, for he had given all his possessions to the poor; and both of them, Cyprian and Caecilius alike, led lives of strict virtue.

About a year or a little more after his baptism, Cyprian was ordained to the rank of presbyter of the Church of Carthage.

In the rank of presbyter, St. Cyprian began to labor in piety with still greater zeal. According to the testimony of the deacon Pontius,[9] Cyprian, as a presbyter, did much in imitation of the righteous men of old, and himself became worthy of imitation.

Shortly after this, the Bishop of Carthage, Donatus, died. St. Cyprian was unanimously chosen by the whole people to the vacant episcopal

8. These days in the ancient Church, by reason of their solemnity, were considered especially suitable for the baptism of converted pagans.
9. The deacon Pontius left a biography of St. Cyprian.

see. Thus Cyprian remained in the rank of presbyter for no more than a year.

At first Cyprian refused such an honor, considering himself unworthy to accept so high a ministry. He said that there were presbyters older than he in years and more worthy than he. But the people, who loved their good shepherd, insistently demanded the ordination of St. Cyprian as bishop. When the time appointed for the ordination came, the Christians surrounded the house in which Cyprian was staying, and would not leave the entrances and exits they had occupied until Cyprian agreed to go with the Christians to the church. In spite of his great humility, Cyprian had to yield to the love of the brethren; he came to the church and, to the joy of all, was ordained bishop.

Thus St. Cyprian was set, like a lamp, upon a lampstand, that he might shine before the world by his virtues.[10]

In the episcopal rank, Cyprian first of all turned his attention to the good order of the Church. It should be noted that at that time there were many Christians who only called themselves Christians, but in reality led lives unworthy of a true Christian. Since the persecutions of Christians by the pagans had ceased long before, and the Church had enjoyed nearly forty years of peace, some Christians frivolously allowed themselves deviations from strict Christian customs. Here is how Cyprian himself describes the moral failings of his time:

"Each man was concerned with increasing his property. Among the priests there was not the piety that their vow had led one to expect; among the ministers (clerics) there was no pure faith, in works no mercy, in conduct no order.[11] Many Christians did not firmly keep the truths of the Christian faith and fell away from Christ. Rash oaths were often sworn, the presidents were despised and disobeyed, and there was slander and mutual enmity."[12]

In view of all this, St. Cyprian in the episcopal rank had to labor very much for the internal good order of the Church.

10. Cyprian was ordained to the episcopal rank, probably at the end of 248 A.D.
11. "On the Lapsed," ch. 6.
12. "On the Lapsed," ch. 6.

Shortly after his ordination as bishop, St. Cyprian set about eradicating the disorders that had crept into the life of the Christians.

Cyprian first of all turned his attention to the clergy, to the very pastors of the Church, who were the leaders of the people. Cyprian did not admit anyone, even to the lower degrees of ministry in the clergy, without a prior careful examination of each man's abilities and conduct; he required a certain preparation from those who desired to take up service in the Church. He himself examined candidates in their knowledge of Christian teaching in the presence of the presbyters, as is known in the case of Optatus, whom Cyprian at the beginning of his episcopate appointed teacher of the catechumens.

At the same time Cyprian also cared for the correction of morals among the Christians. The deacon Pontius speaks of St. Cyprian's episcopal ministry in these words: "What piety he had! What vigilance! What mercy! What strictness! So much holiness and grace flowed from his lips that he astonished all who saw him."

St. Cyprian was honorable in his outward appearance and comely of face, for the holiness dwelling within his soul was reflected also in his face. As wisdom, according to the word of Ecclesiastes, and holiness adorn the countenance of man (Eccl. 8:1); in this man of God, St. Cyprian, there was both: he was both wise and holy. He wore clothes neither too rich nor too poor, for the saint avoided pride and self-exaltation, yet he did not wish to bring dishonor upon the archpastoral rank. His character was very restrained: he was neither too severe nor too gentle and meek beyond measure; where punishment was needed, he displayed his anger, though mercifully, and for this he was respected and honored by all. Besides this, St. Cyprian showed great mercy and compassion toward all who were wronged and in distress: he was a helper to orphans, travelers, the poor, and the sick.

In his archpastoral arrangements and actions St. Cyprian showed such discernment and wisdom that the presidents of other Churches also sought his counsel.

Thus, for example, Rogatian, Bishop of Novo, asked St. Cyprian's advice concerning an offense committed against him by a certain deacon. Cyprian answered:

"If the deacon continues to disobey you and to offend you, you may, by the right of your authority, either deprive him of his rank or cut him off from communion; yet," he added, "we would much rather that you cover the wrongs and insults with gentle patience than punish them with sacred authority."

Another bishop, Eucratius, asked Cyprian:

"Should one admit to ecclesiastical communion a stage-player who, even after he became a Christian, taught young people the art he had practiced as a pagan?"

Cyprian answered this:

"Poverty cannot excuse this stage-player (now a Christian); he may be supported by church offerings, if only he will be willing to be content with a more modest maintenance, but without sin. Therefore persuade him to be content with the church's support; but if your church offerings are insufficient for the sustenance of those who labor, let him come to us, and from us he will receive what is necessary for food and clothing."

St. Cyprian gave many other counsels to all who inquired of him, for he did not wish to hide his wisdom and understanding, but strove to be useful to all.

By God's will St. Cyprian spent only a few years in the peaceful governance of his diocese. Shortly after Cyprian took up the episcopal throne over the Church, the persecution of Decius broke out like a storm.[13] Soon after this impious emperor ascended the throne, he issued a decree by which all Christians were compelled to accept the pagan religion and to offer sacrifices to the gods.

Long before the beginning of this persecution, Cyprian had been informed by the Lord, in a vision, of this calamity: Cyprian saw an old man, at whose right hand sat a youth filled with a certain confusion, indignation, and sorrow, while at the left someone held a net and threatened to seize with it the people standing around. Cyprian was amazed at this vision. It was explained to him in this sense: the one seated at the right grieves and sorrows because Christians do not keep

13. Emperor Decius reigned from 249 to 251 A.D.

His commandments, while the one at the left rejoices that an opportunity is opening and permission is given to pour out his fury upon the people. St. Cyprian understood that the persons who appeared to him in the vision were God the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the ancient enemy of the world, the devil.

By this persecution the Christians were tested, like gold in the fire, so that the luster of Christian virtues might be shown everywhere more brightly and powerfully.

When the emperor's decree arrived at Carthage, the pagans wished first of all to subject Cyprian to torment. Him, as the most widely known for his virtues and for his influence upon the Christians, the pagans intended to deliver to torments first of all, in order to frighten the rest of the Christians. But since the time for St. Cyprian's struggles had not yet come, he resolved to withdraw for a time from Carthage, so that from a place unknown to the pagans he might by his exhortations and instructions sustain the faith of the Christians and encourage them to confess the name of Christ steadfastly. Having resolved to withdraw from Carthage for a time, Cyprian wrote an epistle to his presbyters and deacons, as well as to the presidents of the Church of Rome. In this epistle Cyprian reported that he was withdrawing from Carthage so that his presence would not increase still further the fury of the persecution; that, although bodily absent from his flock, he was present with them in the Lord; and that he had written thirteen epistles to comfort the strong, encourage the weak, remove various disorders in the inner life of the Church, and calm the souls of the wavering.

Cyprian explained his action thus: "The first degree of victory consists in confessing the Lord after being taken by the hands of the pagans. The second degree of glory consists in saving oneself for the Lord by a prudent withdrawal. One is public confession, the other private. One overcomes the civil judge, the other is more pleasing to God as Judge, for it preserves a pure conscience in the purity of the heart. In the one case a more lively firmness is displayed, in the other a more confident caution. One, when his hour approaches, proves already ripe for death; for another, perhaps, it is deferred—for example, for the one who, having left his inheritance, withdrew precisely for this reason,

that he might not fall away, but would certainly confess himself a Christian had he too been taken (by the pagans)."

Without doubt, by his temporary withdrawal Cyprian rendered the Church a greater service than he could have rendered it by an immediate acceptance of martyrdom.

Before his departure, St. Cyprian divided among all the clergy who remained in Carthage the church moneys that had hitherto been under his administration, so that relief might be more conveniently given to the needy and the poor. The clergy, for their part, willingly reported to their bishop all information concerning the condition of his flock, and obeyed him just as though he were personally present. It may justly be said that he alone was capable of governing the Church of Carthage in so difficult a time.

His biographer, the deacon Pontius, remarks: "Let us suppose that he (Cyprian), had he not then (that is, had he not hidden himself from Carthage) been granted a martyr's death... Who would have taught the fallen to repent, the heretics the truth, the schismatics unity, the children of God the keeping of peace and prayer?"

St. Cyprian thus remained in constant communication with his flock, and sent frequent letters and messages to the presbyters, deacons, martyrs and confessors. To the first he said that he would come to them as soon as God showed him that such was His will. He asked them to take care of the widows, the sick, the strangers and all the needy. Although he had left a certain sum of money for this purpose, fearing that perhaps it had all already been spent, he sent his servant Narik with a fresh offering of money. Cyprian was most concerned that the Christians should not lose heart amid the storm of afflictions. With no less warmth of spirit St. Cyprian also wrote to the confessors and martyrs. He strengthened their courage and extolled their faithfulness; he exhorted all Christians to see to it that due honors were paid to the bodies of the martyrs after their death, and that every possible relief was given them during their sufferings.

Of the holy confessors, Cyprian spoke with great praise. He urged his clergy to take care that, just as there was no lack of glory for the confessors, so there should be no lack of help for them either; and he

asked that he be informed of the days of their death, so that he might offer oblations and sacrifices in their memory.

In the first period after St. Cyprian's departure from Carthage, the fury of the pagans persecuting the Christians somewhat abated. But after some time it grew even stronger. To compel the Christians to renounce the faith they professed, the pagans devised various cruel tortures and torments. The confessors of the name of Christ were struck with whips, beaten with rods, torn with iron instruments, and burned with fire. The prisons overflowed with Christians; some of the imprisoned soon received the victors' crowns, while others were close to receiving those crowns, for they were inspired with the same courage and hastened with the same zeal to the contest. But there were also Christians who could not endure the tortures and offered sacrifices, or burned incense to the idols, or for money bought from the city governors certificates stating that they had offered sacrifice to the idols and had renounced Christ, although this had not in fact happened. Some even offered sacrifices to the pagan gods voluntarily, without any demand. Others, when night came, were dismissed home by the pagan judges and were not compelled to offer sacrifice, but they themselves asked permission to offer sacrifices in the evening, not deferring them until the next day. There were also many who persuaded their friends to renounce the Christian faith in the same way they had done themselves.

Bitter and grievous it was for St. Cyprian to hear of the fall of the weak members of his flock! He called their fall the tearing away of a part of his own heart. Later, writing on this occasion, he said: "I grieve, brethren, I grieve with you, and my sorrow is not lightened by my own safety and my own health; as a shepherd I am wounded by the blow dealt to my flock. My heart is joined to each of you; with each of you I suffer and die! The blows of the cruel enemy have struck my body too! And the sword has pierced my soul! My heart, withdrawn and free from persecution, has found no peace; love has struck me, when my brothers are struck."[14]

14. "On the Lapsed," ch. 4.

About this time another circumstance occurred that caused St. Cyprian no small grief.

It must be noted that in antiquity, in the Church of Carthage as in other churches, it was the custom for the confessors to give the lapsed special intercessory notes, or "letters of peace," by which the sinners were more readily admitted to communion with the faithful. And now many of those who had fallen away from Christ placed great hope in the intercession of the confessors and martyrs. But many confessors, through excessive indulgence toward the fallen, paid no heed to the quality of their repentance and gave these intercessory notes ("letters of peace") without proper examination and caution. Only a few confessors asked the bishop to grant peace to some of the lapsed after the end of the persecution, upon the bishop's return, and after a careful examination of the moral state of the lapsed. Such indulgence toward the fallen was shown at a time when the persecution still raged in Carthage; consequently this indulgence could weaken the firmness of faith even in other Christians who had not yet been subjected to persecution.

When St. Cyprian learned of all this, he sent three letters to Carthage: to the clergy, to the confessors, and to the people. And since the chief violators of the ancient church order had proved to be the presbyters, Cyprian rebuked them most of all in all these letters; to everyone in general, both clergy and people, Cyprian urged that they await a conciliar decision on the reception of the lapsed into the Church, and he promised to convene the council itself after the end of the persecution and upon his return to Carthage. Cyprian asked the confessors to pay particular attention to the deeds and merits, and to the kind and nature of the fall of each of those for whom they would offer their intercession.

But none of these letters of St. Cyprian had full success. True, the presbyters, obedient to their pastor, ceased admitting the lapsed to communion in the Church on a par with the faithful, and exhorted them first of all to atone for their sin by sincere repentance; but some of the lapsed, even after this, were unwilling to repent, did not wish to await the resolution of their case until the end of the persecution, and demanded the immediate absolution of their sins.

Nevertheless St. Cyprian did not relax his demands even after the news of such disobedience on the part of some of the lapsed Christians.

Guarding the order of the Church with such firmness, St. Cyprian, from his place of withdrawal, also opened a correspondence with neighboring bishops, in order to confirm his demand for repentance from the lapsed even more strongly by their agreement. In reply to his letters, the bishops reported that they fully approved his demands, and wrote to him that under no circumstances should he depart from his decision before the council that was to be held after the end of the persecution.

While the neighboring bishops openly confirmed and approved St. Cyprian's demands regarding the lapsed, the confessors declared their disagreement with him. One of them, Lucian, wrote a letter to Cyprian on behalf of all, in which he informed Cyprian that all the confessors had granted peace to the lapsed; this same Lucian wrote a similar letter to the Roman confessor Celerinus.

Encouraged by such patronage from the confessors, the lapsed in several cities of the African province rose up against their leaders and with threats demanded of them peace that, as they assured them, had already been granted by the confessors and martyrs. In Carthage itself, the turbulent laity after this began with great boldness to demand reconciliation with the Church.

Meanwhile St. Cyprian exhorted the clergy and the people to act as he had earlier prescribed.

In view of this, the better-disposed among the lapsed completely humbled themselves and promised full obedience to the bishop. Shortly after this, some of them were already writing to St. Cyprian that they acknowledged their fall, were performing the penance prescribed by the church canons, did not desire a hasty and untimely reconciliation with the faithful, but awaited the return of their bishop, saying that reconciliation in his presence would be more pleasing to them.

Shortly after this it was revealed to Cyprian in a vision that peace would soon be restored in the Church, that only for some would the persecution continue for a short time longer, and that, in proportion to their zeal in prayer, the restoration of peace could be hastened.

And indeed, Cyprian's vision was borne out by the events themselves. The persecution of the Christians in Carthage, though still continuing, was weakening; the pagans began to allow the confessors of the name of Christ to enjoy ever greater freedom. Those imprisoned in the dungeons were released, and those sent into exile returned to their homeland.

The persecution, however, had not yet ended, and the glorious archpastor, St. Cyprian, still had many cares and troubles before him. During Cyprian's absence from Carthage there arose a need for presbyters and clergy. Cyprian chose four deputies, as it were, to whom he entrusted the careful examination of the age, condition, and merits of those persons who were to be advanced by Cyprian to this or that hierarchical rank. These deputies were chosen from among the two bishops of the dioceses nearest to Carthage, Caldonius and Herculanus, then Rogatian, a presbyter and confessor of Carthage, and the cleric Numidicus.

These persons at once set about fulfilling the requirements of their bishop. But in carrying out the task entrusted to them, they met strong opposition from those who did not like Cyprian's so lawful and necessary solicitude in choosing worthy servants of the Church. One such man was a layman named Felicissimus, and the presbyter Novatus; joined to them were four other presbyters, who feared the just judgment of Cyprian upon themselves. They, and especially the presbyter Novatus, induced Felicissimus to open a rebellion against his bishop.

When all this became known to Cyprian, he pronounced excommunication upon Felicissimus and threatened to subject all his accomplices to the same punishment; and the letter which Cyprian wrote on this occasion he commanded to be read to the people and sent to the clergy at Carthage. For the time being there were only six fierce adherents of Felicissimus, who were then and there excommunicated from the Church; but since new supporters of Felicissimus were found, the disturbance raised by him had not yet been quelled.

Cyprian intended to return to Carthage for the feast of Pascha, but in view of the fact that the disturbance of Felicissimus and his supporters had not yet ended, he, not wishing to increase the confusion by his appearance, resolved to spend the feast of Pascha in the place of his re-

treat; and so that in his absence his enemies might not gain still greater success, he admonished his flock in writing not to trust the pernicious words of the agitators.

St. Cyprian suffered deeply at this time for his flock. His grief was expressed in a letter written on this occasion:

"How I am tormented now," he wrote to the Christians of Carthage, "that I cannot come to you myself and personally exhort each of you, according to the teaching of the Lord and His Gospel. Was the two-year exile and bitter separation from you not enough for me; was the grief and sorrow that constantly tormented me without you not enough; were the tears, shed day and night, not enough, over the fact that the shepherd whom you chose with such love and fervor cannot greet you in person, nor be in your embrace? For our heart, wasting away with sorrow, a still greater grief has come. In such anxiety and need I myself cannot soon come to you... But from here I urge and beg you, beloved brethren: do not trust pernicious speeches, do not heedlessly listen to deceptive words, do not choose darkness instead of light, night instead of day, famine instead of food, thirst instead of drink, poison instead of medicine, death instead of health... Those who themselves do not have peace will not bring us peace... Let no one turn you aside from the paths of the Lord. Let those perish who have desired their own perdition; let those remain outside the Church who have separated themselves from the Church; let those alone not be with the bishops who have rebelled against the bishops... I beg you: separate yourselves from such men, and follow my counsel. Each day I pour out constant prayers before the Lord for you; I desire to reunite you with the Church; I ask God only for peace first for the Mother (the Church), and then for her children. Join your prayers and supplications to my prayers, your tears to my weeping"[15].

Exhorting in such a moving way those who could understand in his words the voice of fatherly love, St. Cyprian threatened punishment, excommunication from the Church, to those who would not be willing to obey him.

15. Letter 40.

This letter, of course, kept the well-intentioned on the side of the bishop.

Soon after this, when Novatus, through his accomplices and without the consent and knowledge of St. Cyprian, ordained Felicissimus a deacon, Cyprian wrote two more letters to the clergy and people concerning this unlawful ordination. These were the last letters from the place of his retreat. The disturbance of Felicissimus was brought to an end already at the council which took place, after Cyprian's return, at Carthage[16].

Soon after returning to Carthage, Cyprian presided over this council, which took up two questions: the schism of Felicissimus, and the admission of the lapsed to communion with the faithful.

The fathers of the council, after many and lengthy deliberations, unanimously decreed that communion with the Church should not be refused to the lapsed, lest they despair of the mercy of God and begin to live as pagans; but neither should they be admitted to communion prematurely: their reunion with the Church must be preceded by a long penance, prayer to God joined with tears, and an examination of the moral state of each of them. At the same time, according to the differences among the lapsed, various degrees of penance were appointed. Felicissimus and his like-minded companions, as those who had rebelled against the authority of the bishop, were excommunicated from the Church.

But Cyprian's enemies did not calm down. The presbyter Novatus soon set out for Rome, and there, having betrayed Felicissimus, joined the party of Novatian[17], as a result of which he caused many disturbances both in the Roman and in the Carthaginian churches. Felicissimus, together with his like-minded companions, a year later raised a new rebellion against the holy hierarch of God, Cyprian.

Novatian began to spread in Rome a false teaching, asserting that the lapsed should on no account be received into communion, even if they brought repentance; at the same time, Novatian attempted to

16. This council took place in 251 A.D.

17. Novatian was a Roman presbyter; he had earlier written to Cyprian in the name of the entire Roman clergy concerning the reception of the lapsed into the Church.

usurp the honor of the episcopate from Cornelius, a presbyter of Rome lawfully elected as bishop. Thanks to the assistance of Novatus, who had come to Rome, Novatian succeeded in inducing three Italian bishops to ordain him as bishop.

St. Cyprian, with truly Christian wisdom, strove to cut off at the root all the discords and disturbances in the Church. By a circular letter to the African bishops, Cyprian made known the lawful ordination of Cornelius as bishop and the unlawful actions of Novatian. The holy hierarch of God never ceased to instill in all the truth that where one bishop has been lawfully elected and ordained, another bishop may not be appointed, and he urged the disturbers of the peace of the Church to abandon their destructive discord and disputes and to return to the bosom of the one true universal Church. To protect the faithful from the scandal of the schismatic teachers Novatian and Felicissimus, St. Cyprian wrote the book *On the Unity of the Church*.

Cyprian's trials did not end with this. There were men who continued to sow in the Church the tares of discord and rebellion. Thus a certain heretic, Privatus, joining the party of Felicissimus, obtained the unlawful ordination of Fortunatus as bishop of Carthage. However, after the admonitions of Cyprian, the supporters of Fortunatus began to leave him and returned to the peace of the Church.

In order finally to remove all the discords and disagreements engendered by the enemies of the peace of the Church, the holy hierarch of God, Cyprian, resolved to convene a local council at Carthage. Several such councils were held at Carthage. At this council many questions touching the inner life of the Church were decided, such as the reception of the lapsed, the baptism of heretics, and the like. Little by little the disturbance raised in the life of the Church by the disobedient members of the Church subsided, and peace and quiet were restored in the Church.

The Lord was pleased to visit St. Cyprian with yet another trial: in place of the calamities of persecution from the pagans, there came a natural calamity, a plague.

The calamity, which broke out unexpectedly, was equally grievous for Christians and for pagans. The pestilence raged without interrup-

tion for a considerable time in every province, in every city, and in nearly every family.

The common disaster called Cyprian to the most self-sacrificing and noble activity. While the pagans only grew still more steadfast in their selfishness, while they, seemingly wholly given over to fear, which made them abandon their dearest relatives and leave the dead unburied in the streets, the Christians, guided by Cyprian, remained unshaken. Cyprian himself did not confine himself to exhortations, but by his personal example set a model for all Christians to imitate.

The plague was accompanied by its usual terrible companions, drought and famine; besides this, hordes of barbarian Numidians roamed along the borders of the Roman Empire and made raids in which they carried off many captives; the Christians of Carthage, guided by St. Cyprian, contributed money to ransom at least some of these captives.

Thus, during the terrible public calamity, Cyprian took every measure to alleviate in every way the lot of those who suffered.

Despite this, among the pagans there were people who dared to assert that the plague, like the other public calamities, had been sent by the pagan gods because the Christians did not worship them. Such rumors were spread especially by a certain Demetrianus, one of the judges of Carthage. After him other pagans also repeated this slander against the Christians.

St. Cyprian refuted this error by writing a special treatise on the subject. "The calamities of the world," he wrote to Demetrianus and to all who shared his views, "have their cause in the corruption of men; these calamities were foretold by the prophets as punishments for the vices which are especially widespread among the pagans, and which of themselves always ruin the welfare of peoples as of individuals. The pagan gods," Cyprian argued, "cannot defend themselves, and thereby clearly prove their dependence upon Christians, since they are cast out of men by Christians[18]; we Christians," said St. Cyprian, "although we too are subject to external calamities, yet, by bearing them without

18. Meaning the expulsion of demons who had taken up residence in people.

murmuring and by hope in the life to come, we do not suffer from misfortunes."

Meanwhile the time of St. Cyprian's sufferings was drawing near. The Emperor Valerian[19] ascended the throne and raised a cruel persecution against the Christians.

The news of the new persecution of the Christians soon reached also the African Church and, as usual, while it terrified the faint-hearted, it kindled the steadfast in the faith to courageous endurance. "What ought we to be more concerned about than to prepare by unceasing exhortations the people entrusted to us against the arrows of the devil," wrote St. Cyprian at that time to Fortunatus, Bishop of Tuccabor. But besides oral and written exhortations, St. Cyprian also set an example in deed of fearless confession of his faith before the pagans.

After the persecution against the Christians had been proclaimed, the proconsul of Carthage, Aspasius Paternus, received an imperial decree which ordered that Christians be compelled to worship idols; at the same time Christian bishops were subject to exile and Christian assemblies were forbidden. The proconsul intended first of all to compel St. Cyprian to renounce the Christian faith, and therefore first of all summoned him for interrogation.

When Cyprian came, the proconsul asked him:

"The emperor has commanded me to compel all Christians to worship the idols: what do you say concerning this?"

St. Cyprian answered:

"I am a Christian and a Christian bishop; I know no other gods but the One True God, who created the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all that is in them; we Christians serve this God day and night."

The proconsul said:

"So you will persist in your decision?"

Cyprian answered to this:

"A good decision, known to the Lord, must remain unchanged." The proconsul said:

19. Emperor Valerian reigned from 253 to 259 A.D.

"In that case, in accordance with the emperor's command, you must go into confinement." Cyprian answered the proconsul:

"I will gladly go into confinement."

After this the proconsul asked Cyprian further:

"I have the emperor's command not only concerning bishops but also concerning priests; therefore, tell me, which priests are there in this city?"

To this Cyprian answered:

"Your laws forbid informing (denunciations); therefore I cannot disclose and declare the priests to you, but if you search for them, you will certainly find them in the city."

The proconsul said further:

"I have also been charged to see that the Christians have no assemblies anywhere and that they perform their services nowhere."

St. Cyprian answered the proconsul:

"Do as you have been commanded."

Soon after this St. Cyprian was sent into exile at Curubis[20]. The deacon Pontius, who wrote the life of St. Cyprian, voluntarily accompanied him to the place of confinement.

On the very first day after arriving here, St. Cyprian had a vision during the night which foreshadowed his martyr's death. Cyprian related this vision to the deacon Pontius, telling the following:

"Scarcely had I dozed off a little when I saw a certain youth, unsightly and ill-favored, who led me into the praetorium for judgment; it seemed to me that I had to appear before the judgment of the governor. The governor, looking at me, said nothing to me, but immediately wrote something. I did not know what he wrote; but I saw another youth, fair of face, standing behind the governor; this youth watched as the governor wrote, and read to himself what the governor had written. Having read what was written, that youth by a sign of the hand made me understand that there had been written concerning me a sentence of death, for I was to be beheaded by the sword. For my part too I made a sign with my hand to the youth that I understood what he was explain-

20. Curubis was several days' journey from Carthage.

ing to me; at the same time I began with zeal to beg the judge to grant me one more day of life, so that I might arrange all my affairs. While I was begging this of the judge, the latter, making no answer to me, but as if in reply to my request, began to write something. The youth standing behind the judge, watching what the judge wrote, by a sign of the hand explained to me that my life would be prolonged by one more day. I rejoiced greatly at this, yet I was in great fear and confusion."

St. Cyprian interpreted this vision concerning himself to mean that it had been predestined by God that he should die by beheading for confessing the name of Christ. The one day of life granted him, according to this vision, Cyprian interpreted as one year. And indeed he died a martyr's death for confessing the name of Christ, being beheaded with the sword, a year after that vision.

While in exile, St. Cyprian spent all his time in contemplation of God, preparing himself for death. In his banishment Cyprian wrote many God-inspired works; to all who came to him for edifying conversation he gave instruction, asking all to be steadfast in the faith, not to fear the threats of the tormentors and the sufferings for confessing the name of Christ; he exhorted Christians not to attach themselves to the temporal and quickly passing pleasures of this life, but to seek eternal life.

While in exile, St. Cyprian patiently bore all privations for the sake of the name of Christ, counting his banishment as his homeland. For to a Christian who has placed all his hope in God, the fatherland and the native home is a sojourning, according to what is said: "I am a stranger with Thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were" (Ps. 38:13); on the other hand, for such a Christian the place of exile and wandering is also his fatherland, for in every place he sees God present near him, according to what is said: "I have set the Lord always before me" (Ps. 15:8).

Another year passed, and in place of the above-mentioned Aspasius Sterna, Galerius Maximus was appointed proconsul. At this time the Emperor Valerian issued an even more cruel decree for the persecution of the Christians, namely: Valerian demanded that all Christian bishops, presbyters, and in general all leaders of the Christians be deprived

of their offices and property, and in case they continued to remain Christians, they were to be put to death.

The emperor's command became known in Africa when the proconsul Galerius Maximus was absent in the township of Utica, whither a multitude of Christians had been banished from various places. The proconsul wished to begin the persecution of the Christians here as well, and sent his soldiers here to bring St. Cyprian.

Always ready to accept a martyr's death with complete calm and fearlessness, St. Cyprian nevertheless considered it fitting and useful to accomplish the feat of martyrdom in the midst of his flock. Reasoning thus, and at the same time following the counsel of his friends, who informed him of the dispatch of guards after him, Cyprian hid for a time in an unknown place, but only until the proconsul's return to Carthage. And so that this temporary withdrawal would not be subject to reproach, Cyprian wrote a letter to the clergy and people, in which he explained the reason for his departure; in this same letter Cyprian gave instructions to the clergy and flock for the last time.

As soon as the proconsul Galerius Maximus arrived in Carthage, Cyprian at once came out of his place of retreat. Soon after this the proconsul sent two honorable men, ordering them to take Cyprian. Cyprian went out bravely to the martyr's feat and set out together with the two men mentioned in a chariot to the proconsul. But since, by the proconsul's command, the trial of God's hierarch was postponed until the following day, Cyprian was taken for the night to the house of one of those men who had been sent by the proconsul to take Cyprian. Here the hierarch spent his last night, and, out of compassion and trust toward him, he was left almost without a guard.

Meanwhile a rumor spread through the city that Bishop Cyprian had been brought back from exile in order to receive a martyr's death; and at once the Christians hastened to the house in which Cyprian was staying, desiring to see for the last time their shepherd and teacher. In doing so the Christians showed even greater love and devotion toward St. Cyprian than at the time of his election as bishop. They did not wish to part with their beloved archpastor until his death, and therefore they spent the whole night without sleep before the doors of his house.

Christians acted thus not in order to free St. Cyprian from the hands and power of the pagans, but in order to be granted by him, as by their spiritual father, a last blessing.

In the morning of the following day Cyprian was brought out of that house and presented to the proconsul for interrogation.

The proconsul asked Cyprian:

"Are you Cyprian?"

Cyprian answered:

"Yes, it is I."

The proconsul then said:

"Is it you who, as a bishop, stand at the head of those mad people who call themselves Christians?"

Cyprian answered:

"Yes, I am bishop of the people of Christ."

The proconsul continued the interrogation, saying:

"Most pious and glorious emperors command you to offer sacrifice to the gods."

To this Cyprian answered:

"In no wise will I do this."

The proconsul said:

"Consider well, and choose that which you find more profitable for yourself."

To this the hierarch of God answered:

"Do as you have been commanded. As for me, in a matter so plain to me, I see no need for deliberation."

After this the proconsul took counsel with the other judges who were present at the interrogation, and, rebuking Cyprian for his disregard of the idols, pronounced the decisive sentence that he be beheaded with the sword, saying thus:

"Cyprian, Christian bishop, shall be beheaded with the sword."

The hierarch of Christ, hearing such a sentence pronounced upon himself, rejoiced, and said aloud:

"Thanks be to the Lord!"

The people, who had witnessed all that took place, turned to the proconsul and began to cry out:

"We also wish to die with him!"

And there was great tumult among the people.

Meanwhile Cyprian was led to the place of execution. Christians followed the hierarch of God there, shedding tears at the sight of their shepherd being led to death.

Arriving at the appointed place, the hierarch of God took off his outer garment, knelt down, and began to pray to God. Having prayed for a sufficient time, the hieromartyr of Christ gave peace and blessing to all, and commanded his friends to give the executioner twenty-five gold coins, performing a benefaction even at death; then he bound his eyes with a linen cloth (a towel), and gave his hands to be tied by a presbyter and a subdeacon who stood beside him. Meanwhile some of the Christians spread handkerchiefs and linen cloths before the hierarch, so as to receive upon them the blood of the hieromartyr of Christ as a precious treasure. At last the hierarch of God bowed his head and was beheaded with the sword.

Thus the hierarch of God ended his life, suffering for the glory of Christ, our God.[21]

The honorable body of the hierarch of Christ was carried by night, with candles and fitting chanting, to the private cemetery of a certain procurator, Macrobius Candidianus, and was there laid to rest. Afterward, in the reign of King Charlemagne, the relics of the hieromartyr Cyprian were transferred to France, to the city of Arles, and in the reign of King Charles the Bald to the city of Compiègne, to the monastery of St. Cornelius.

The impious persecutors, however, did not go unpunished; within a short time the just judgment of God overtook them.

Some days after the martyr's death of St. Cyprian, by the judgment of God, the proconsul Galerius Maximus was taken from among the living. The emperor Valerian, who had persecuted the Christians with cruelty, suffered a crushing defeat in war with the Persians and perished in prison, having been captured by the enemy.

St. Cyprian left behind a very great number of writings, in which he set forth both doctrinal and moral truths. The greater part of them con-

sists of letters (Cyprian wrote some eighty letters in all); in addition, Cyprian wrote many separate treatises or works. The subjects of his writings were: the shepherd of the Church and virgins, the suffering and the fallen, pagans and Jews, heretics and schismatics. For the pastors of the Church Cyprian wrote the "Book on Zeal and Envy," a fruit of the truly apostolic spirit, with directives on how one ought to act for the peace and benefit of the Church. For virgins, the "Book on the Conduct of Virgins." Love for the suffering prompted St. Cyprian to write three remarkable works: "On the Excellence of Patience," "On Mercy," and "On Mortality." The "Book on the Lapsed" contains edifying discourses on repentance. Among the apologetic works of St. Cyprian, in which he defended Christianity against the attacks of the pagans, are the "Book to Demetrianus" and "On the Vanity of Idols." The "Three Books of Testimonies against the Jews" contain a kind of brief outline of the faith and practice of Christianity, and a rebuke of the obstinate Jews. For the refutation of heresies and schisms Cyprian wrote the "Book on the Unity of the Church" and the "Book to Donatus on Baptism." In the work "To Fortunatus: An Exhortation to Martyrdom," Cyprian calls all Christians in general to firmness of spirit in enduring persecutions. St. Cyprian left many other glorious writings. According to the observation of the blessed Jerome, the writings of Cyprian were better known than the sun itself; from his works the fathers of the Ecumenical Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon[22] drew testimonies for the defense of the Christian faith against the attacks of heretics and for the exposure of their error.

The teaching on the Church is expressed more thoroughly and in greater detail in the works of St. Cyprian. In brief, St. Cyprian's reasoning on this question was as follows:

The Church is a society of men founded by the Lord Jesus Christ and organized and confirmed by the apostles, which, both in its inner and outer aspect, represents a single whole, headed by the one Head, our Lord Jesus Christ. As the inner unity of the Church is grounded in the unity of faith and love, so its outer unity is grounded in the hier-

21. The repose of St. Cyprian occurred in 258 A.D.
22. The Third Ecumenical Council took place at Ephesus, and the Fourth at Chalcedon.

archy (and in it, preeminently, the authority of the bishop) and in the Church's sacraments. Outside this one true and saving Church, in St. Cyprian's view, there is and can be no salvation; only this one Church is the truly apostolic Church, and therefore infallible. "We follow," reasons St. Cyprian, "that which we have received from the apostles, and they handed down to us only one Church. Only the one Church, which has received the grace of life, both lives forever and gives life to the people of God."[23] It is in this one true Church, which has received the grace of life, that all the divine blessings are concentrated, and in it alone is salvation possible. "That the Church is one," reasons St. Cyprian, "is declared also by the Holy Spirit in the Song of Songs, speaking in the person of Jesus Christ: 'One is she, my dove, my undefiled; one is she to her mother, chosen of her that bare her' (6:8); and of her again He says: 'A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed' (4:12, 15). If the bride of Christ, who is the Church, is 'a garden enclosed,' then what is enclosed must not be opened to strangers and outsiders. If she is 'a fountain sealed,' then he who stands outside and has no access to the fountain can neither drink from it nor be sealed by it. If the Church is the only well of living water, then one who stands outside the Church cannot be sanctified and made alive by that water, the use and drinking of which is granted to those within the Church. The Lord calls loudly that everyone who thirsts should come and drink from the fountain of living water flowing from Him. Where then should the thirsty one go? To the heretics, who have neither fountain nor river of life-giving water at all, or to the Church, which is one, and by the word of the Lord founded upon one man, who also received its keys? She alone keeps and possesses the full authority of her Bridegroom and Lord. The true, saving, and holy water of the Church can neither spoil nor be defiled, since the Church herself is incorruptible, pure, and chaste."[24]

In the Church of Christ is contained the whole fullness of life and salvation. Just as during the flood salvation was possible only in the ark of Noah, or, at the destruction of Jericho, only in the house of Rahab

23. Letters 71 and 73.
24. Letter 73.

(Josh. 2), so too the Church is the one place of salvation for men. "God's house is one," reasons St. Cyprian, "and no one can be saved anywhere except in the Church. Let them not imagine that they can inherit life and salvation without obedience to the bishops and priests."[25]

Those who are outside the Church, who separate themselves from her unity and communion with her, do not have true life. "It is evident," observes St. Cyprian, "that among the dead are counted those who are not in the Church of Christ, and that one who does not himself live cannot give life to another."[26]

But faith alone, without love, cannot be a fully strong and durable bond of all the members of the Church. "It is not enough," reasons St. Cyprian, "to receive something; it is more important to be able to keep what has been received. Faith itself and saving regeneration are life-giving not because we have received them, but chiefly because we have kept them."[27] Only a sincere, living, and active faith, joined with love, gives a man the right to enter into a living union both with Christ and with the whole Christian brotherhood: where either one or the other is lacking, there is no life with Christ, and there, consequently, is no salvation.

Love constitutes, in St. Cyprian's reasoning, the foundation of all the virtues. "Love," reasons St. Cyprian, "is the bond of brotherhood, the foundation of peace, the strength and confirmation of unity; ... it precedes beneficence and martyrdom, and it will abide forever with us with God in the Kingdom of Heaven."[28]

St. Cyprian sets forth many other soul-saving truths in his writings, to the glory of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

* * *

Memory of St. Gennadius, Patriarch of Constantinople

Память святого Геннадия, патриарха Константинопольского

25. Letter 62.
26. Letter 71.
27. Letter 6.
28. "On the Virtue of Patience," ch. 15.

St. Gennadius received the throne of the Patriarchate of Constantinople after St. Anatolius[29] in the reign of the emperor Leo the Great.[30] Of his God-pleasing life there is testimony in the book called the "Limonarion"; in that book the venerable fathers Sophronius and John relate as follows.

"We came," they say, "to a coenobium[31] called Salama, nine stadia from Alexandria, and there we found two elders who had formerly been presbyters of the Church of Constantinople. These presbyters told us about the Blessed Gennadius, Patriarch of Constantinople, that he was exceedingly meek, kept bodily purity, and was distinguished for abstinence. They also said of him that many caused him great distress on account of one clergyman, who sinned very grievously, by the name of Charisimus. This clergyman served at the church of the holy martyr Eleutherius, and of him they said that he not only lived in idleness, negligence and sinful impurity, but also went out to robbery and practiced sorcery. Having summoned this clergyman, the patriarch began to admonish him, correcting him paternally in a spirit of meekness; but seeing that he remained incorrigible, he ordered him to be lightly punished. When he still remained incorrigible and the punishment had no effect on him, the patriarch sent one of his servants to the martyr's church where Charisimus was serving, to beseech the martyr himself either to correct the clergyman of his church who was given over to sins, or to cut him off from the Church. The messenger, coming into the church, stood before the sanctuary, and stretching out his hand toward the martyr's tomb, said:

"Holy martyr Eleutherius! Patriarch Gennadius announces to thee through me, a sinner, that the clergyman Harisimus, who serves in thy church, commits many lawless deeds and creates scandals; therefore either correct him, or cut him off from the Church."

After this, on the following morning, Harisimus was found dead.

29. Anatolius was Patriarch from 449 to 458 A.D.

30. Leo the Great reigned from 457 to 474 A.D.

31. Coenobia (from Greek koinos, common, and bios, life) are the cenobitic monasteries, in which the brethren are maintained at the expense of the monastery and in return offer their labor for the common benefit of the monastery.

From this one can see how pleasing to God and to His saints the Blessed Gennadius was, for his word, addressed to the holy martyr through the messenger, was heard and fulfilled in deed very quickly.

In the time of this St. Gennadius a church in honor of St. John the Forerunner of the Lord was built in Constantinople by a certain senator named Studius, who had come from ancient Rome; a monastery was also established, called the Studite (after the senator Studius); in this monastery the order of the unsleeping ones was instituted.

In the time of Patriarch Gennadius the church steward was the Venerable Marcian. This Marcian, having taken off his last garment, gave it to a beggar; and they saw this Venerable Marcian wearing an imperial purple beneath his phelonion, as is told in his Life[32]. In the time of this same patriarch the holy Stylite Daniel also labored, whom he ordained presbyter.

In the days of the holy Patriarch Gennadius the following miracle took place in Constantinople.

A certain icon-painter dared to paint an image of Christ the Savior in the likeness of the pagan god Zeus[33]; and immediately a punishment of God overtook the icon-painter, for his hand, which had dared to depict the Lord in such a form, withered. He, feeling upon himself so swift a vengeance of God, hastened to the Most Holy Patriarch Gennadius and brought him repentance, confessing before all, with weeping, his sin. The Most Holy Patriarch prayed to the Lord for him and healed his hand, so that it became healthy as before.

The holy Patriarch Gennadius had the custom of not ordaining to the presbyterate (a candidate) until he had learned the whole Psalter by heart; for this great hierarch of God zealously cared for the strict observance of the church order; he knew that this order could be carefully fulfilled only when all priests and clergy were taught book-learning and were able to understand the Divine Scripture intelligently. For a presbyter untaught in books could not teach others; he could not correct and instruct on the path of salvation, not knowing the saving path

32. His memory is celebrated by the holy Church on 10 January.
33. Zeus was regarded by the ancient Greeks as the supreme god and progenitor of the other gods (and of men).

himself. Of such a one the words of Christ are fulfilled: Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch? (Lk. 6:39).

The holy Gennadius convened in Constantinople a local council, partly for the eradication of the heresy of Eutyches, partly for the good ordering of the Church; at this council simony (bribe-taking), which had spread among the hierarchs, was forbidden.

The holy Gennadius guarded the rational flock entrusted to him for thirteen years; he reposed in the Lord in the reign of the same Leo the Great[34].

Shortly before the day of his death, when the holy Gennadius was praying by night in the church, a certain demonic apparition appeared to him; the holy Gennadius drove off this apparition with the sign of the Precious Cross; the devil, fearing the sign of the cross, fled, and said: "I depart from here completely and will not do harm to anyone here as long as you live; but after your death I will come back again and will disturb the Church by every means, leading many into perdition."

The holy Gennadius, shedding unceasing tears until the day of his death, prayed to the Lord that He would preserve His Church so that it be unconquered by the gates of hell. And just as during his life he was a zealous intercessor before the Lord for the holy Church, so also after his repose he offers his unceasing supplications for the Church, standing together with the other holy hierarchs before the Head of the Church, Christ, our Master, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit glory is offered forever.

* * *

Placing of the Precious Belt of the Most Holy Theotokos

Положение честного пояса Пресвятой Богородицы

34. St. Gennadius was Patriarch from 458 to 471 A.D. Several theological writings are attributed to St. Gennadius. Gennadius of Massilia remarks of St. Gennadius: "A man eloquent, of keen mind, so enriched by reading the ancients that he explained the prophet Daniel word for word, and composed many homilies." All these writings are now unknown; only his encyclical letter against simony, confirmed at the council of 459 A.D., has come down to us.

The precious belt of the Most Pure Mother of God, when it was brought to Constantinople, was placed in a golden reliquary under the imperial seal, in the church built by the pious emperor Theodosius the Younger; this church was built in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos on the site called Chalkoprateia, which means "the Copper Market."

Many years after this, in the reign of Leo the Wise, it happened that his wife Zoe was tormented by an unclean spirit; on this account the emperor and his kinsfolk were greatly grieved; and they all began to offer fervent supplications to the Lord for the suffering empress.

After this the empress Zoe had a divine vision, signifying that she would receive healing if the belt of the Most Holy Theotokos were laid upon her.

The empress told her husband, Emperor Leo, about this vision. Immediately the emperor besought the patriarch to open the belt of the Most Holy Theotokos: the seal was removed and the reliquary opened; and the precious belt of the Most Holy Mother of God was found whole, in no way damaged by time; all kissed it with reverence. And as soon as the patriarch spread it over the empress, she was immediately freed from demonic torment and received complete healing from her infirmity.

Then all with joy glorified Christ God and His Most Pure Mother, and, singing songs of thanksgiving and praise, again placed the precious belt in the same golden reliquary, sealed it with the imperial seal, and established the celebration in honor of the Most Blessed Virgin Theotokos, in memory of the miracle wrought by her precious belt, by the grace, mercy and love for mankind of Christ our God, born of her.

Troparion, Tone 8:

O Theotokos, Ever-Virgin, protection of mankind, thy robe and thy most pure girdle thou didst bestow upon thy city as a mighty safeguard, remaining incorrupt through thy birth without seed; 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 2:

Thy womb, O Theotokos, which received God, did embrace thy precious girdle, the unassailable stronghold of thy city, and a treasury of good things that never fails, O Ever-Virgin who alone didst bear.

Another Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thy temple, O most-hymned one, celebrates today the placing of thy precious girdle, and fervently cries out to thee: Rejoice, O Virgin, praise of Christians.



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