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

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THE FIRST DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 1

1 сентября

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

A Word on the First Day of the Indiction, or of the New Year

Слово в первый день индикта, или нового года

September 1

The King of ages, our Lord God, "has put the times or seasons in His own power" (Acts 1:7),[1] Himself appointed various feasts in these times, for His glorification and for the rest of men from their worldly labors. Already in the Old Testament He commanded that the beginning of the seventh month be especially celebrated each year, so that people, freed from the vanity of daily life, might serve the one God on that day. For thus it is written in the books of Moses: "The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have rest; you shall do no work on that day in all your dwellings, and you shall offer a sacrifice to the Lord" (Lev. 23:24–31).[2] As once the Creator Himself, who in six days created the world by His Word, blessed and hallowed the seventh day, resting from the works of creation (Gen. 2:2–3; Ex. 20:11; Heb. 4:4); and as afterward He gave to man the commandment: "Six days you shall labor, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall do no work" (Ex. 20:9–10),[3] so He also blessed

1. See Dan. 2:21. – *Times*: long periods of time; *seasons*: years, short spans.
2. *Burnt offering*: the biblical name for a special kind of sacrifice. Whereas from other sacrifices only one part was burned, and the rest went to the benefit of the priests or of the offerers themselves, the sacrifice offered as a burnt offering was burned entirely. The burnt offering signified that the man offering it offers himself entirely to God, both soul and body, and it was a prefigurement of the sacrifice of Christ (cf. Heb. 9:9–14).
3. Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:13.

and hallowed the seventh month and commanded men to rest from their worldly labors at this time. Of this the Lord again commanded Moses, "saying, In the seventh month, when you gather in the produce of the land, you shall keep the feast of the Lord" (Lev. 23:39).[4]

For what reason, then, was this observance established?

In this very month, when the waters of the flood began to subside, Noah's ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat.[5]

In this month the holy prophet Moses came down from the mountain with his face shining with the Divine glory, and brought the new tablets on which the law given by the Lord Himself was inscribed.[6] (Ex. 34:29).

In this month the building of the Tabernacle of the Lord in the midst of the camp of Israel was begun (Ex. 35:1–35).[7]

In this same month the high priest, once in the whole year, entered into the Holy of Holies, "not without blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of ignorance of the people."[8]

In this month the people of God, humbling their souls with fasting and offering to the Lord a burnt offering, received cleansing from the sins they had committed during the year.[9]

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4. Autumn was the beginning of the new year from ancient times. Grounds for this may be found in nature itself. With the end of summer the harvest and the labors of the whole year ordinarily come to an end (Ex. 23:16). After the gathering of the fruits, as the goal of nature and of agriculture is attained, a new cycle of works and of new hopes for future fertility begins.

5. The account is given of Noah, the last patriarch of the antediluvian world, and of the universal flood (Gen. 5:29–32, 6–9). The holy Apostle Peter, in the salvation of people from the flood in Noah's ark, gives us to see a figure of our salvation through baptism into Christ (1 Pet. 3:19–22). – *Ararat*: the highest mountains of Armenia, rising on the border of Russia, Turkey and Persia, with two peaks: Greater Ararat, which the Persians call the Mountain of Noah, and Lesser Ararat.

6. *Tablets*: stone tablets on which the 10 commandments were inscribed by God Himself.

7. *Tabernacle* (booth, tent): the portable Jewish temple. It was built according to the pattern shown by God to Moses on Mount Sinai (Ex. 25:8–9, 40), and was called the tabernacle of meeting, because here the people gathered for worship, and the tabernacle of testimony or witness, because here God revealed Himself and His will to men.

8. *Holy of Holies*: the third, inner part of the tabernacle. Here stood the ark of the covenant, in which were kept the tablets of the law, a golden vessel (pot) with manna, and the rod of Aaron. Only the high priest entered here, on the day of atonement, which was performed once a year, with the blood of the sacrificial animal, and sprinkled this blood over the ark of the covenant, for the cleansing of the sins of the people (see Lev. 16:29–34). The meaning and significance of this rite are unfolded by the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 9:3–7, 8–15, 24–28, 10:1–39).

In this month the solemn consecration of the magnificent temple of the Lord, built by King Solomon, took place, and the Ark of the Covenant was brought into this temple (3 Kgdms. 8:1–66).

In this month all the tribes of the people of Israel gathered in Jerusalem from everywhere for the feast, fulfilling the commandment of the Lord: "It is a Sabbath of rest for you, and you shall humble your souls" (Lev. 23:32).[5413]

From this month they began to reckon the years, with a special count for every fifty years. When the people of Israel entered the promised land, the Lord commanded that people especially celebrate every fiftieth year; and not only they themselves took part in this celebration, but also their servants and cattle; even the very land on which the Israelites dwelt was commanded to be left in rest, not to be plowed, not to be sown, not to gather ears of grain, nor fruits of the vine or of the orchard: all this was given as food to the poor, and also to the beasts and birds. Of this it is written thus in the books of Moses: "Then you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land, and you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants; you shall not sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather the grapes of your undressed vines, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat; so you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove" (Lev. 25:9–11; Ex. 23:11). In this fiftieth year debts were forgiven to debtors, slaves were released to freedom, and each man especially watched over himself, lest he provoke the Lord by any sin, lest he grieve his neighbor. It was a year of universal forgiveness and cleansing from sins. This fifty-year cycle, by the Lord's command, was divided into seven yearly weeks (that is, seven times seven years), and every seventh year was called a Sabbath or rest. Concerning this the Lord gave through Moses such a command: "Six years you shall sow your field and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its produce; but in the seventh

9. This took place on the tenth day, which was called the Day of Cleansing or of Atonement. On this day the high priest presented two he-goats before the Tabernacle; by lot he slew one of them and offered it in sacrifice for the sins of the whole people, and over the other he confessed the sins of the people and commanded that it be sent away into the wilderness (Lev. 23:26–32; cf. Heb. 11:11–14).

year there shall be a Sabbath of rest for the land, a Sabbath to the Lord; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. And if you say, 'What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?' I will command My blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth produce for three years" (Lev. 25:3–4, 20–21). All these years, in which the Lord established festive rest both for men and for the land, also began, by the Lord's command, from the month of September. "And you shall sound the trumpet," said the Lord, "the year of rest in the seventh month" (Lev. 25:9), that is, in September,[10] since September, counting from March, the first month from the creation of the world, is the seventh month.

But the year began on the first of September not only according to the laws of the Old Testament, but also according to the pagan indiction. Concerning this indiction the following is related.

When Augustus,[11] the Roman caesar, gained the victory over Antony and Cleopatra,[12] who held the land of Egypt, and became the sole ruler of the whole universe, then, for the more convenient collection of taxes from all lands, he established an indiction of fifteen years.[13] Augustus divided this indiction into three periods, of five years each, so that during the whole indiction taxes were collected three times, in every fifth year. This law was issued chiefly for the remote borders of

10. "September," from the Latin, means "seventh."

11. When Octavian, the Roman caesar or emperor (d. A.D. 14), became sole ruler of the whole Roman Empire, the Senate conferred upon him the title of Augustus. The word means majesty, great, venerable, sacred. This title was afterwards bestowed upon the other Roman emperors as well.

12. From 42 to 31 B.C. the Roman world was governed by three commanders, called triumvirs: Octavian, Antony and Lepidus. They divided supreme power and the Roman provinces among themselves: Octavian received the west, Antony the east, and Lepidus Africa. Lepidus, however, was soon removed from participation in affairs of state, and then a struggle for power broke out between Octavian and Antony. The latter was wholly under the sway of the Egyptian queen Cleopatra, who had captivated him by her extraordinary beauty, and he spent his time in festivities and pleasures. Octavian took advantage of this and declared war on Antony and Cleopatra. In the naval battle at Actium (in 31 B.C.) Cleopatra fled and ended her life by suicide. Antony likewise acted in the same way, having lost his dominion over the world. Egypt was made a Roman province, and Octavian became the sole ruler.

13. "Indiction," or *indict*, is a Roman word and means proclamation, appointment, tax. The first day of the month of September was called the Indiction; this name has been preserved to this day in our church Typikon and serves to mark the beginning of the church year. The Christian indiction likewise consists of fifteen years.

the state, from which it was difficult to collect taxes every year, since the taxes collected even after five years barely reached the capital, Rome. Each five-year period was called a lustrum, that is, a bright time, because, rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's (Lk. 20:25), people at that time gave themselves to rejoicing and burned candles. The people did not burden themselves with the tribute, because the taxes were small and light, and were paid willingly. The indiction lasted fifteen years for the following reason. In the first five-year period tribute was paid in iron and copper, which were used for making swords, spears, helmets, shields, breastplates, and all kinds of military weapons; in the second five-year period a tax in silver was collected for the pay of the troops; and in the third five-year period gold was brought to Rome as tribute for the adornment of idols. When the fifteen-year cycle of the indiction was completed, they began it anew, and the first year of the indiction was called the new year. This custom was established from the first of September, because it was on this day that the victory over Antony was won and the sole rule of Augustus was proclaimed. The holy Church too accepted the custom of celebrating the beginning of the indiction on the first of September. This was established for the reason that at the time when the new year was celebrated in Judea and throughout the universe, our Lord Jesus Christ came to Nazareth,[14] where He had been brought up. It was on a Sabbath, and on this day the Jews were accustomed to gather in the synagogue and spend the time reading the prophetic books. The Lord, "as was His custom," also entered the synagogue[15] and stood up among the teachers. The book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him;[16] and He, opening the book, found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord

14. The small town of Nazareth lay in the northern part of Palestine, which was called Galilee. Its population was poor and was not held in esteem by the other Jews (Jn. 1:46). Yet here was the homeland of Joseph, the betrothed of the Holy Virgin; here was the Annunciation to the Theotokos; here passed the childhood and youth of Jesus Christ; here He was brought up; here too He dwelt at the beginning of His public ministry, for which reason He was called the Nazarene. From this time Nazareth, until then unknown, became the most renowned place in all Galilee. But in 1263 the Turks reduced it to complete ruin. Several centuries later it was rebuilt and for a long time was the poorest village. Today Nazareth has about 6,000 inhabitants, is under the special protection of Christian consuls, and serves as a place of pilgrimage from every corner of the Christian world.

is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor, He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to prisoners, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Is. 61:1–2).[17] And, closing the book and giving it to the attendant, He began to say that the prophecy just read was fulfilled in Him, that He is the true Messiah,[5422] sent from God the Father for the salvation of men and the renewal of their life. "And all bore witness to Him and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded from His mouth" (Lk. 4:16–22).

The feast of the new year was established by the holy Fathers at the First Ecumenical Council, in Nicaea.[18] This was at the very time when Emperor Constantine the Great, having defeated Maxentius,[19] enlightened the universe with the light of piety, uprooted idolatrous fest-

15. The synagogue (meaning "assembly," in Slavonic *sonmishche*) was the place of religious gatherings among the Jews. By the Law, worship was to be performed in the Tabernacle and afterwards in the Temple at Jerusalem. But during the captivity of the Jews the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed, and the Jews gathered for worship in private houses. These private gatherings gradually acquired fixed places and times, a settled order and arrangement, and in this way gave rise to the synagogues. In the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles, synagogues were spread wherever Jews lived, and in the larger cities there were several synagogues. Gatherings in the synagogues took place on Sabbaths and on feast days.

16. At the synagogue assemblies there were usually read specified portions of the Law, that is, the books of Moses, and of the Prophets, that is, the prophetic books of the Old Testament, and these readings were also explained, that is, speeches were delivered on what had been read and heard. Anyone who wished had the right to read and to explain, with the consent of the head of the synagogue (archisynagogos) and the elders. One who wished to read rose when he declared his intention, and stood while reading the appointed passage from the sacred books. When the Lord gave the sign that He wished to read and to give a discourse, the reading from the Law had evidently already ended, and the reading from the prophetic books was about to follow.

17. Speaking in the person of the Messiah, the prophet depicts the purpose of His coming into the world: to establish a new period in the life of mankind, a blessed time for those who receive the teaching of Jesus Christ in faith and who fulfil in their lives the great precepts of that teaching. "The acceptable year of the Lord" was the name the Jews gave to the Jubilee, or fiftieth, year (see above), which, owing to the proclamation of general liberty, was the most joyful of years, and the prophet took it to depict the time of the Kingdom of Christ, happy for redeemed mankind.

18. The First Ecumenical Council was convened by St. Constantine the Great (whose memory is kept on May 21) in 326 against the presbyter Arius and his associates, who preached the heretical teaching that Jesus Christ is not God. The Council, consisting of 318 bishops, condemned the Arian heresy, confirmed the dogma of the consubstantiality of the Son with God the Father, and composed the first seven articles of the Symbol of Faith, which the Orthodox Church still uses to this day. Nicaea is a city in Asia Minor, in antiquity rich and flourishing, now poor and sparsely populated. Having conquered it (for the second time) in 1330, the Turks destroyed its finest buildings and converted its churches into mosques.

ivals, delivered the Christian faith from grievous persecutions, and established his own indictions. Then the holy Fathers established the celebration of the new year as the beginning of Christian freedom, in commemoration of Christ's visit on this day to the Jewish synagogue and His preaching of the acceptable year of the Lord. From that time we too celebrate the first day of the month of September. But this is now a feast not of the Old Testament, but of the new grace.[5425] For on this day the Lawgiver Himself, who came down from heaven and bears within Himself the Spirit of the Father, revealed Himself to the world and inscribed the law of God not with a finger, but with His Divine tongue and most sweet lips, and not on tablets of stone, but "on tablets of flesh" (2 Cor. 3:3).[20] Building His Church, which the Old Testament tabernacle only foreshadowed,[5427] He offered to God the Father, for our sins, a sacrifice not without blood, namely Himself. The Great High Priest, who passed through the heavens (Heb. 4:14), having cleansed us from sins by His blood shed for us, made us holy temples, according to the word of the Apostle: "The temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (1 Cor. 3:17).[21]

Offering thanksgiving for all this to the Lord, we celebrate the year of the Lord acceptably: we have received from Him many ineffable blessings, so let us hasten to be acceptable to Him in turn. We celebrate an indiction that was not established by the Roman emperors, but or-

19. Maxentius was a Roman emperor (A.D. 306–312). He persecuted Christians and was notable for his cruelty. The Romans, driven beyond endurance, invited Constantine to their aid, and under the saving sign of the Cross he gained victory over the forces of Maxentius, who perished in the waters of the Tiber. In 313 the emperors Constantine and Licinius (who ruled the eastern part) issued an edict by which the Christian religion was declared a state religion, on an equal footing with the ancient pagan religion. But Licinius soon began, however, to persecute the Christians. Then Constantine turned his arms against Licinius and, having finally defeated him in September 323, became the sole ruler of the Roman Empire. This event was the immediate occasion for the establishment of the celebration of the New Year in September.

20. Cf. Ezek. 11 and Heb. 8:10.

21. See 1 Cor. 6:19. The Apostle says that Christians stand in a spiritual and mystical union with the whole Holy Trinity: God the Father, the Lord of all His creatures, sent into the world His Only-begotten Son, that He might by His precious blood redeem sinful men from the slavery of the devil; and the Holy Spirit, as the Steward of the house, leads the wandering servants into the house of God, joins them with Christ, and through the graces He bestows in the holy Sacraments builds each soul into a spiritual dwelling for the service of God with all the powers of soul and body.

dained by the Heavenly King of glory, Christ. Christ's indiction is His holy commandments, which we must keep and fulfil. Our King Christ does not require of us copper, iron, silver or gold, as David explained when he once said: "Thou art my Lord; my goods are not needed by thee" (Ps. 15:2)[22]. But in place of iron and copper, the Lord requires of us a firm and steadfast virtue, the Orthodox faith in God. For our faith is founded upon the blood of the saints tormented with iron and copper weapons, of whom each may be said that "the iron entered into his soul" (Ps. 104:18). The Heavenly King and our God has commanded us to believe in Him with a righteous heart and piously: "for with the heart man believes unto righteousness" (Rom. 10:10)[23]. Let us, then, also overcome the enemy with this faith, as with an iron weapon and a copper shield. Let us follow our holy forefathers, who "through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Heb. 11:33–34)[24].

In place of silver, our King Christ requires of us a second virtue, an unfailing hope in God. This virtue, more than silver, secures for a man a prosperous life. If one who has grown rich in much silver is assured of obtaining all worldly goods, and, trusting in his wealth, spends his days cheerfully, then how much more should one rich in unfailing hope in God, having placed all his trust in Him alone, obtain all that he desires, and live in joy, disregarding all the calamities and sorrows that come from the world, the flesh and the devil, and enduring them all with delight for the sake of the recompense in the life to come. Often

22. That is: You, Lord, have need of nothing; if anyone does good, he himself receives the benefit from it, while You gain nothing at all.

23. That is: justification through Christ the Savior is attained by a firm, heartfelt faith in Him and a whole-hearted devotion to the conviction of His descent to earth for our salvation and of His life-giving resurrection from the tomb.

24. Exhorting to patience and faith, the Apostle Paul explained why faith is so necessary for a Christian: it makes real what is hoped for and visible what is unseen; it produced great righteous men and worked in them, making them invincible in dangers and moving them to suffering. In particular, the words "stopped the mouths of lions" refer to the prophet Daniel (see Dan. 6:1–28); "quenched the power of fire" refers to the three youths in the Babylonian furnace (Dan. 3:1–100); "escaped the edge of the sword" refers to David and the prophet Elijah; "were made strong out of weakness" refers to Job and Hezekiah (4 Kgdms. 20:1–21).

silver deceives its master and, disappearing by chance, leaves him in poverty; and he who hoped to see abundance in everything until the end of his life suddenly lacks his daily bread. But he who hopes in the Lord "is as Mount Sion, which shall not be moved for ever" (Ps. 124:1)[25] "Hope does not put to shame, because the love of God has been poured out" (Rom. 5:5). It is this immaterial silver that the Lord desires of us and commands, that we should place our hopes not in transitory riches, "but in the living God" (1 Tim. 6:17), "the words of the Lord are pure words, silver tried in a furnace" (Ps. 11:7)[26]. He has truly promised us unspeakable eternal blessings in His Kingdom, that His exceeding goodness toward us, which we have believed with the heart, we should confess also with the mouth, "for with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10)[27]. Let us then, as good soldiers of Christ[28], encourage ourselves to greater struggles by the hope of recompense. For hope of reward rouses the warrior to battle, as Saint John of Damascus says of the passion-bearers: Thy martyrs, O Lord, established in faith and strengthening themselves with hope, overcame the torments of their enemies and received the crowns[29].

In place of gold, Christ our King requires of us the most precious virtue, unfeigned love for God and neighbor. By its high worth, love is always represented by the Teachers of the Church under the image of gold; for as gold is more precious than silver, copper and iron, so love is higher than hope and faith. "And now," says Scripture, "abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13)[30]. It is precisely this gold that the Lord desires of us and commands, that we should pray to Him unfeignedly, not only believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth, but showing forth this love in

25. Zion is the mountain on which Jerusalem is built.
26. The words of God are pure, free from every admixture of falsehood and deceit, like pure silver refined by fire.
27. For his salvation the Christian requires not only faith but also its expression, which, where faith abounds, manifests itself (is confessed) of its own accord.
28. The image of the warrior of Christ and his armor (Eph. 6:10–18).
29. Hymns of the 3rd tone at Vespers on Wednesday.
30. The Apostle gives preference to love as the virtue that combines within itself both the root of faith and the fruits of hope; but at the same time, by placing faith and hope beside it, he shows also their great worth.

deed. We must be ready to lay down our souls for Him and to accept death for the sake of His divine love for us. Moreover, we must love our neighbors as well, as the beloved disciple of Christ, John the Theologian, teaches. "My little children," he said, "let us love not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18)[31]. Such love is accepted for adornment by Christ our God Himself, the most beautiful, more than the sons of men, as the Wisdom of God Himself says: she was adorned and became beautiful before the Lord and men; this is concord between brothers and love between neighbors (Sir. 25:1–2)[32].

This is the Christian indiction which the Orthodox Church celebrates today, in place of the ancient pagan one, "putting off the old man with his deeds and putting on the new man, who is renewed after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:9–10). Let us then celebrate the New Year as the apostle advises: let us walk in newness of life, that we may serve "in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Rom. 7:6)[33]. Let us celebrate the indiction, obeying the commands of the Lord our God, given through Moses, in whose books is read today: "If you walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments and do them: then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and I will give peace in the land, and you shall chase your enemies, and I will look upon you, and bless you, and my soul shall not abhor you, and I will walk among you, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Lev. 26:3–4, 6–7, 11, 12)[5441].

Troparion of the Indiction, Tone 2:

O Creator of all creation, who hast set the times and the years in Thy power, bless the crown of the year of Thy goodness, O Lord,

31. The Apostle commands not feigned love, love in word only, but pure and true love, which is witnessed by the deed itself.

32. The word wisdom, as used in Holy Scripture, has a very wide meaning and sometimes signifies Christ Himself, the eternal and co-eternal Word of God (see Prov. 8:1–22, 36; and 1 Cor. 1:24, 30, etc.).

33. The Old Testament law, as a letter without any inner power, only binds man by its prescriptions without giving strength to fulfill them; now, however, when the Spirit of life has appeared, we must serve God in accordance with this new spirit of life, serving freely and joyfully, with hope in God's help.

preserving in peace the emperor and Thy city, through the prayers of the Theotokos, and save us.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

O Christ the King, who dwellest on high, Creator and Maker of all things visible and invisible, who hast made the days and nights, the times and the years, bless now the crown of the year, preserve and keep in peace the Orthodox emperor, and Thy city and people, O most merciful one.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable and God-Bearing Father Simeon the Stylite

Житие преподобного и богоносного отца нашего Симеона Столпника

In the land of Cappadocia[34], in the village of Sisan, there lived Christians Sosotion and Martha. God blessed their marriage with the birth of a son, whom they named Simeon and, according to the Christian custom, washed in the bath of holy baptism[35]. This youth was brought up not in bookish learning but in simplicity and guilelessness; yet the wisdom of God often dwells in simple people as well, and chooses them as its instruments, so as to put to shame the wisdom of this age (1 Cor. 15:21). Simeon, the future shepherd of the rational sheep[36], when he had reached thirteen years of age, began to tend his father's flocks of sheep. Like Jacob, Moses and David, who also tended sheep and were granted divine revelations, Simeon too was called by

34. Cappadocia is a region in Asia Minor. Cappadocia was formerly an independent state. From 363 to 370 B.C. it was first under Persian and then under Macedonian rule. Afterwards, until A.D. 16, it again had its own kings. In A.D. 17, under the emperor Tiberius, it was united with Pontus and Lesser Armenia and made a Roman province. At the end of the 11th century (1074) Cappadocia fell under Turkish rule, and to this day it belongs to them. In the times of St. Simeon Christianity flourished here. The great teachers of the Church, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, his friend St. Basil the Great, and St. Basil's brother St. Gregory of Nyssa, were natives of Cappadocia.

35. That is, over him the Sacrament of Holy Baptism was performed, which in Holy Scripture is called a "bath" (see Tit. 3:5; Eph. 5:26).

36. The Venerable Simeon was not in fact a shepherd of rational sheep, that is, he did not hold the priestly rank; he is so called because by his very life and teaching (discourses) he directed people to salvation.

God. Once, in winter, the sheep were not driven out to pasture for several days, because a great deal of snow had fallen[37]. Being free from work, the blessed youth went with his father and mother to church on a Sunday. Simeon listened attentively to what was sung and read in the church, and heard the Holy Gospel, in which the poor, the mourners, the meek and the pure in heart are called blessed[38]. He asked an honest elder standing beside him what these words meant. Instructed by the Spirit of God, the elder began to explain to Simeon and taught him at length, showing him the way to spiritual poverty, purity, the love of God and a virtuous life. The good seeds of the elder's teaching fell on good soil: for at once in Simeon's soul there arose an ardent striving toward God, and there grew a firm desire to walk the narrow way that leads to Him (Lk. 13:24; Mt. 7:14). He resolved in his mind to abandon everything at once and to strive only for what he had desired. Bowing to the honest elder and giving thanks for the useful instruction, Simeon said to him:

"You have now become for me a father and a mother, a teacher in good works and a guide to my salvation."

Immediately after this Simeon left the church and, without going home, withdrew to a place suitable for prayer. There he prostrated himself on the ground in the form of a cross[39] and, weeping, besought the Lord to show him the way to salvation. He lay there a long time praying, and at last fell asleep, and in his sleep he saw the following vision. He dreamed that he was digging a trench for some building. And then he heard a voice saying: "Dig deeper!" He began to dig deeper; then, thinking that it was already deep enough[40], he stopped, but again he heard a voice commanding him to dig still deeper. Again he began to dig, and when he paused once more, for the third time the same voice urged him to the same labor. At last he heard:

37. In the East livestock to this day graze the whole year round and are not driven out only in heavy snow and storm, when they remain in special enclosures.
38. The Gospel beatitudes are found in the evangelists: Mt. 5:3–12, and Lk. 6:20–23.
39. The ancient Christians, during prayer, fell face down on the ground, forming with their body the figure of a cross, that is, stretching out their arms to the sides; through this was expressed faith in the crucified Lord and the consciousness of human sinfulness.
40. That is, that he dug down to firm (bedrock) ground.

"Stop. Now, if you wish to build the edifice, build it, but labor diligently, for without labor you will succeed in nothing."

This wondrous vision was fulfilled in Simeon himself. In his profound humility he laid such a foundation for the perfecting of himself and of others that his virtues and ascetic exploits seemed to exceed the human nature[41].

After this vision Simeon rose and went to one of the monasteries located in his native land. The abbot[42] of this monastery was the blessed Timothy. Simeon fell to the ground before the monastery gates and lay there seven days, enduring hunger and thirst. On the eighth day the abbot came out of the monastery and began to question Simeon: whence he came, where he was going, what his name was, whether he had done some evil, and whether he had run away from his masters. Simeon, falling at the abbot's feet, said to him with tears:

"No, father, I am not such a one; I have done no evil to anyone, but I desire to serve God with all zeal. Have mercy on me, a sinner: bid me enter the monastery and be a servant to all."

Perceiving in him the calling of God, the abbot took him by the hand and led him into the monastery, saying to the brethren:

“Teach him the monastic life and the rules and statutes of the monastery.”

Having settled in the monastery, Simeon obeyed and served everyone without complaint. In a short time he learned the entire Psalter by heart. Though he was only eighteen years old, he had already been tonsured as a monk, and soon surpassed all the monks of that monastery in the strictness of his way of life. Some of the brethren partook of food only once a day, in the evening; others, every third day; but he ate nothing for an entire week.

Simeon’s parents sought him for two years, but could not find him, for God concealed him. They wept much for their son, and grieved so

41. The Blessed Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, who lived at the same time as St. Simeon, himself visited him during his sojourn on the pillar. He writes: "Though I could bear witness to his deeds with all men, I fear to set about the narrative, lest they seem to posterity fabulous and unworthy of belief, since they surpass human nature."

42. Abbot (from the Greek: leader) – the head of a monastic community.

deeply that his father died of sorrow. But Simeon, having found a Father in God, gave himself wholly to Him from his youth.

While living in the Lavra,[43] the blessed Simeon once went to a well to draw water. Taking the rope from the bucket,[44] a very stiff one woven from palm branches,[45] he wound it around his bare body, from his hips up to his neck, so tightly that it cut into his flesh. Ten days passed, and his body festered from the wounds, while countless worms swarmed in them. The brethren began to complain to the abbot:

"From where have you brought this man to us? It is impossible to bear him: a foul stench comes from him. No one can stand near him. When he walks, worms fall from him, and his bed, too, is full of worms."

The abbot was astonished when he heard this; but, having confirmed that all they had told him was true, he asked Simeon:

"Tell me, child, why does such a foul stench come from you?"

But Simeon stood before the abbot in silence, his eyes cast down. The abbot grew angry and ordered that Simeon's outer garment be forcibly stripped from him. Then they saw that the hair shirt[46] he wore was all stained with blood, and that the rope had cut deeply into his body, down to the very bones. The abbot and all who were with him were horrified. With great difficulty they could scarcely remove the rope from Simeon, for the rotted flesh came away with it. Simeon, patiently enduring these sufferings, said:

"Let me go, as a stinking dog: I have deserved these sufferings for my sins."

"You are only eighteen years old," the abbot said to him. "What sins can you have?"

43. Lavra (from the Greek: a part of a city, an alley) – a row of cells arranged within an enclosure around the dwelling of the superior, in the manner of alleys in a city. On the first and last day of the week the hermits gathered together for worship; 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 and important monasteries. The institution first appeared in Egypt and then in Palestine.

44. That is, from the bucket with which water was drawn from the well.

45. A rope of palm fronds, something like our bast rope.

46. A hair shirt – an undergarment woven of horsehair, worn by ascetics next to the bare body.

"Father," Simeon replied, "the Prophet has said: 'I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me' (Ps. 50:7)."

Hearing this answer, the abbot marvelled at Simeon's discernment, and wondered that so simple a youth could be so deeply imbued with the fear of God. Nevertheless, he began to persuade him not to inflict such torments upon himself.

"There is no profit," he said, "in undertaking what is beyond one's strength; it is enough for the disciple to be as his teacher (cf. Mt. 10:24)."

Much time passed before Simeon's wounds healed. But when Simeon recovered, the abbot and the brethren again observed that, as before, he was wasting his body away. Then, fearing that others, being more frail, might imitate him and become the cause of their own death, the abbot ordered Simeon to leave the monastery. Having left the monastery, Simeon wandered for a long time through the wilderness and over the mountains, until at last he found a waterless well inhabited by reptiles. Going down into the well, Simeon began to pray to God there.

Some time afterward, the abbot saw a vision in the night: it seemed that a great multitude of people, bearing weapons and candles in their hands, had surrounded the monastery and were crying out:

"Where is Simeon, the servant of God? Show us the one who is so pleasing to God and the Angels. If you do not show him to us, we will burn you and your whole monastery. Simeon is greater than all of you, and through him God will work many miracles on earth."

Waking from sleep, the abbot told the brethren of his dreadful vision and related the terror he had endured because of Simeon. He sent people everywhere to search for Simeon, and even went in search of him himself. Taking some of the brethren with him, the abbot went through the wilderness and among the caves, seeking the ascetic. Soon he met shepherds tending flocks of sheep, and, having questioned them, learned that Simeon was in an empty well. Hurrying to the well, the abbot called to Simeon:

"Are you here, servant of God?"

"Leave me, holy fathers," Simeon answered, "only for a little while, until I give up my spirit: my soul has grown faint, for I have angered the Lord."

But the monks forcibly drew him out of the well and brought him back to the monastery. After living there for a short time, the blessed Simeon secretly left the monastery and again wandered through the mountains and the wilderness. Led by the Spirit of God, he came to a mountain near the village of Talanissa, and, finding there a small cell hewn into the rock,[47] he shut himself within it. He remained in this cell for three years. There he called to mind how Moses and Elijah had fasted for forty days (Ex. 24:18; 3 Kgdms. 19:8), and desired to test himself with the same fast. At that time, the bishop of that country, named Bass, came to Talanissa, making the rounds of the churches in the towns and villages. Hearing of the blessed Simeon, the bishop came to him as well. Simeon began to beseech him to lock the door of his cell for forty days, giving him no food. But the bishop would not agree.

"It is not fitting," he said, "for a man to destroy himself by immoderate fasting, for this is a sin rather than a virtue."

"Then, Father," the Venerable replied, "place only bread and water for me, so that, if need arises, I may strengthen my body a little with food."

Bass did so: placing bread and water in the cell, he blocked the door with stones and went on his way. As soon as forty days had passed, he returned to the Venerable, removed the stones, opened the door, and entered the cell. There he saw the Venerable lying on the ground as though dead, while the bread and water still stood untouched where they had been placed; the great faster had not even touched them.

Taking a sponge, Bass washed and moistened the Venerable's lips, and as soon as he had somewhat revived, he gave him Communion of the Divine Mysteries. After this Simeon strengthened himself by taking a little food. The bishop recounted Simeon's great abstinence for the benefit of many brethren. From that time onward, the Venerable fasted in the same manner every year during the holy Forty Days: he neither

47. The word *cell* properly means a honeycomb cell.

drank nor ate anything, and passed the time in unceasing prayer, standing for twenty days and sitting for twenty, from utter exhaustion.

After spending three years in his narrow stone cell, Simeon climbed to the very summit of the mountain. And, so that he might not descend from there, he took an iron chain twenty cubits[48] long, fettered his feet with one end, and fastened the other end to the mountain. In this position the Venerable kept his gaze ever turned toward heaven, raising his mind to Him Who is above the heavens.

The chief shepherd of the Church of Antioch himself, the blessed Meletius, heard of the ascetic and came to visit him. Seeing that Simeon was chained to the mountain, he said:

"A man can govern himself even without bonds; it is possible to bind oneself to one place not with iron, but only by reason and will."

Hearing this, the Venerable hastened to heed the instruction he had received, and, desiring to be a willing prisoner of Christ, took off his fetters and bound himself by his will alone, "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).[49]

The fame of the holy ascetic spread everywhere. All began to come to him—not only those who lived nearby, but also people from distant lands, who had to make a long journey to reach him. Some brought their sick to him; others asked him to heal the sick lying at home. Some were themselves beset by troubles and sorrows; others suffered torments from demons. And none who came to the Venerable returned without consolation, but each received what he asked: one healing, another consolation, one a beneficial instruction, another some other help. All returned joyfully to their homes, glorifying God. Whenever someone received healing through his prayers, the Venerable would always say:

48. The cubit, or lakot, is a measure of length equal to 10.5 vershoks.

49. "Lofty things raised up against the knowledge of God" are bold thoughts against the truths of Revelation and the definitions of the Church. "Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" means compelling the reason to submit to the truth of Christ, to acknowledge its height and power.

"Glorify the Lord, Who has granted you healing, and never dare to say that Simeon healed you, lest a greater calamity befall you."

Like rivers, different peoples and tribes flowed to Simeon: they came to him from Arabia and Persia, from Armenia and Iberia,[50] from Italy, Spain, and Britain. Thus God glorified him who glorified God. When such a multitude had gathered to Simeon, and all sought to touch him and receive his blessing, the blessed man became burdened by such veneration and disturbance. He devised an unprecedented means of escaping the bustle of the crowds: so that those who came could not touch him, he planned to build a pillar and stand upon it. Having set up such a pillar, he made on it a narrow dwelling two cubits wide, and began to lead a life there of fasting and prayer. He was the first Stylite. The pillar was six cubits high, and St. Simeon stood upon it for several years. Later the pillar's height was increased to twenty cubits, and then to thirty-six. Thus the Venerable, by means of pillars of varying heights, ascended like a ladder toward the heavenly country, enduring hardships: in summer drenched by rain and scorched by heat, and in winter suffering the cold. His food was soaked lentils,[51] and his drink was water. Soon two stone enclosures[52] were built around his pillar.

The holy fathers who lived in the deserts heard of Symeon's manner of life, and they marvelled at his extraordinary ascetic labours, for no one before him had devised for himself such a manner of life as to stand upon a pillar. Wishing, however, to test him, they sent word to him:

"Why do you not walk in the way of our fathers, but have devised another, a new one? Come down from the pillar and follow the manner of life of the ancient desert-dwellers."

At the same time they instructed the messengers that if Symeon would not obey, they were to compel him by force to come down from the pillar; but if he obeyed and wished to come down, they were to leave him standing as he had begun, for then, they said, it would be clear that his new manner of life was from God. When the messengers came to

50. Iberia is present-day Georgia.

51. Soaked pulse – dried fruits, rice, wheat, etc., soaked or boiled.

52. These enclosures were built by the people who came to him from dry stones. Such enclosed places were called *mandras*, and since those who desired to labor under the guidance of St. Simeon settled in them, he is called "archimandrite" (for example, in the Service Menaion).

Symeon and announced the decision of the council of the holy desert-fathers, he at once set his foot upon the ladder, wishing to come down.

Seeing this, the messengers cried out:

"No, holy father, do not come down, but remain upon the pillar. Now we know that the work you have begun is from God. May He be your helper to the end."

Domnus,[53] Patriarch of Antioch, the successor of St. Meletius, also came to Symeon. Having seen his manner of life, he marvelled and conversed with him for a long time about what is profitable for the soul. Then the patriarch celebrated the divine service, and the two of them partook of the Divine Mysteries.

After this the patriarch returned to Antioch, while the venerable one devoted himself to still greater labours, arming himself against the invisible adversary. Then the devil, the enemy of all good, took the form of a bright Angel and appeared to the saint near the pillar, on a fiery chariot with fiery horses, as if descending from heaven, and said:

"Listen, Symeon! The God of heaven and earth has sent me to you, as you see, with a chariot and horses, that I may take you up to heaven, as Elijah was taken (4 Kgdms. 2:11); for you are worthy of such honour because of the holiness of your life, and the hour has come for you to taste the fruits of your labours and to receive the crown of praise from the hand of the Lord. Hasten, servant of the Lord, to behold your Creator and to worship Him who created you in His image; the Angels and Archangels, with the prophets, apostles and martyrs, also desire to see you."

The saint did not recognize the enemy's deception, and said:

"Lord! Is it me, a sinner, that You wish to take to heaven?"

Symeon raised his right foot to step onto the fiery chariot, but at the same moment he made the sign of the Cross over himself. Then the devil vanished with the chariot, like dust scattered by the wind. Symeon recognized the demonic deception, repented, and punished that foot with which he had wished to step onto the demonic chariot by standing on that one foot alone for a whole year.

53. St. Meletius was Patriarch of Antioch from 358 to 381, and Domnus II, or Domninus, from 441 to 448.

The devil, unable to endure such labour, struck the venerable one's foot with a grievous sore, and the flesh on the foot putrefied, a multitude of worms appeared, and pus with worms oozed from the wound down the pillar to the ground. A youth named Antonius[54] gathered the worms that fell to the ground and, at the command of the holy sufferer, carried them back up to him on the pillar. The saint, bearing the illness with great patience, like a second Job, laid the worms upon the wound, saying: "Eat what God has sent you."

At that time Basilicus, a Saracen prince,[55] having heard much about St. Symeon, came to him and, after conversing with him, received great benefit and believed in Christ. Seeing a worm that had fallen to the ground from the saint's wound, the prince took it in his hand and went away. The venerable one called him back and said:

"Why have you taken into your honourable hands a foul worm that fell from my rotting body?"

Basilicus, opening his hand, found in it a precious pearl, and said:

"This is not a worm, but a pearl."

"It has come to you according to your faith," said the venerable one.

And the Saracen, receiving his blessing, went away to his own land.

Many years passed, and the venerable one's mother, Martha, having learned of her son, came to see him, and, stopping at the entrance of the enclosure, wept bitterly. But Symeon did not wish to see her and sent word to her:

"Do not trouble me now, mother. If we are worthy, we shall meet in the next world."

She, however, desired still more strongly to see him; and the blessed one again sent to her, begging her to wait a little in silence.

She lay down before the door of the enclosure and there yielded up her spirit to the Lord. St. Symeon learned at once of her death and commanded that her body be brought to the pillar. Seeing his mother, he began to pray for her with tears. During his prayer, movements were observed in the body of the holy Martha, and a smile appeared on

54. Antony was a disciple of St. Simeon and wrote his Life.

55. Saracens – the inhabitants of Arabia. Originally this name designated a nomadic predatory tribe, and later Christian writers transferred the name to all Muslims in general.

her face. All who saw this marvelled, glorifying God. She was buried near the pillar, and the saint commemorated his mother in prayer twice every day. Soon afterwards the pillar was again changed for the saint, and a new one forty cubits high was erected for him. On this pillar the venerable one stood until his blessed repose.

Near the place where the venerable one led his wondrous life there was no water; it had to be brought from afar, and this caused great suffering to those who came to the venerable one and to their animals. The venerable one, seeing these sufferings from the lack of water, prayed fervently to God that He would send water, as once to thirsty Israel in the desert (Num. 20:2–10). And behold, about the tenth hour of the day the earth suddenly quaked and split open on the eastern side of the enclosure, where something like a cave was revealed, in which, beyond all expectation, there was much water. The saint commanded that the place be dug out a further seven cubits around, and water flowed from there in abundance.

A woman, feeling thirst at night, swallowed a small snake together with water. This snake grew in the woman's belly and became large. The woman took on a green appearance, like grass, and many physicians treated her but could not heal her. She was brought to St. Symeon. The blessed one said: "Give her to drink of the water here." And when the woman began to drink, a large serpent came out of her; crawling to the pillar, the serpent immediately fell apart into pieces.

Some people who were coming from afar to the venerable one, seeking to escape the heat, stopped under a tree to rest a little. Sitting there in the shade, they saw a pregnant doe passing by and cried out to her:

"By the prayers of St. Symeon we adjure you, stop for a little!"

And a wondrous miracle took place: the doe stopped. Thus even beasts became gentle and obedient at the name of the saint! The travellers seized the doe, killed her, skinned her, and prepared a meal from her flesh. But no sooner had they begun to eat than, struck by the wrath of God, they lost the human voice and began to cry out like deer. Running, they came to St. Symeon, bearing with them the skin of the doe as a testimony against their sin. They remained at the pillar for two years and could scarcely be healed and speak again like men; the

skin of the doe they hung on the pillar as a witness to what had happened.

On that very mountain where St. Symeon laboured, not far from the pillar, there settled a terrible serpent, because of which not even grass grew in that place. Once a branch about an elbow long pierced the serpent's right eye and caused it great pain. Then the serpent crept to the venerable one's pillar and, lying before the doors of the enclosure, bent itself entirely, as if showing humility and asking mercy of St. Symeon. When the saint looked upon it, at once the branch fell out of the eye, and the serpent remained there for three days, lying before the doors like a sheep. All came and went fearlessly, without any harm from it. When the eye was completely healed, the serpent went off to its lair. And all looked on and marvelled at that most wondrous miracle.

In that land there lived a leopard,[56] a large and very fearsome beast, which devoured both men and cattle. No one dared to pass by the place where the beast had settled, and it did much harm in the surrounding area. This was reported to the venerable one. He commanded that earth be taken from his enclosure and water from there as well, and, going around the place where the beast was, to sprinkle and scatter it from a distance. They did as the saint commanded. After a little time, seeing that the beast appeared nowhere, they went to look for it and found it dead, lying on the very ground that had been taken from the venerable one's enclosure. And all glorified God.

Soon another beast, more savage than the first, appeared in that land: a beast endowed with speech. This was a brigand from Antioch,[57] named Jonathan. He killed many people on the roads and in their houses, attacking villages and suburbs stealthily and unexpectedly. No one could catch him, although many lay in wait for him on the road; he was very strong and bold, so that no one was able to stand against him. When Antioch was thrown into commotion and soldiers were sent to seize him, the brigand, unable to escape the large pursuit, ran into the

56. A pard, or leopard – a predatory beast resembling a tiger, but with a spotted rather than striped skin and smaller in size.

57. During the lifetime of the Venerable there were several cities of this name; nearest to the place where he dwelt was Antioch of Seleucia (near the city of Seleucia Pieria).

enclosure of the venerable Symeon. Clutching the pillar, like the harlot clutching Christ's feet (Lk. 7:37–38), he wept bitterly.

And the saint called down to him from the height of the pillar:

"Who are you, whence are you, and why have you come here?"

He answered:

"I am Jonathan the brigand, who have done much evil of every kind, and I have come here to repent of my sins."

While he was speaking, soldiers came running from Antioch and began to cry out to the venerable one:

"Give us, father, our enemy, the brigand, for already beasts are prepared in the city to tear him to pieces!"[58]

But the blessed Symeon said to them:

"My children! It was not I who brought him here, but God, who desires his repentance, directed him to me. If you can enter inside, take him; I cannot bring him out to you, for I fear Him who sent him to me."

Hearing this, and not daring not only to enter the enclosure but even to utter a word against the saint, the soldiers returned in fear and told everything in Antioch.

The robber remained for seven days at the pillar, weeping a great weeping and, prostrating himself, prayed to God and confessed his sins. All who were there, seeing his repentance and his tears, were themselves moved to compunction. When seven days had passed, the robber called out to the saint:

"Father! Will you not bid me depart?"

"Are you not returning to your evil deeds?" said the holy father to him.

"No, Father," he answered, "my time has come."

And as he was conversing with him, he gave up his spirit to God. When the disciples of St. Symeon wished to bury the robber's body at the enclosure, military commanders came from Antioch and began to cry out:

"Give us, Father, our enemy, on account of whom the whole city has been thrown into confusion."

58. The execution of criminals by being torn apart by wild beasts took place usually in special buildings called circuses, and, as an inheritance from pagan times, was a public spectacle.

But the Venerable Father answered:

"He who brought him to me came with a multitude of heavenly hosts and took him to Himself, cleansed by repentance. Therefore do not trouble me."

Seeing the robber who had departed, the commanders were struck with terror and glorified God, who does not desire the death of a sinner. Returning to the city, they told of what they had heard from the Venerable Father and what they had seen.

Standing on the pillar as a candle on a candlestand, our Venerable Father Symeon appeared as a light to the world, enlightening the peoples who dwelt in the darkness of idol-worship and leading them to the light of the knowledge of the true God. Glory to the wondrous grace of God which worked in him! Standing in one place, the ascetic brought so many to faith as if he had traversed the whole world, teaching and preaching. For, like the sun, he sent forth the rays of his virtuous life and his sweet-speaking teaching, and enlightened the surrounding lands. At his pillar one could see Persians and Armenians receiving holy Baptism; the Ishmaelites[59] came in crowds, two hundred, three hundred, and sometimes a thousand at a time; crying out, they renounced the errors of their fathers, and bringing to the pillar the idols which they had venerated and worshipped from ancient years, they broke them at the pillar and trampled them underfoot. And having received the law of the true faith from the honey-flowing tongue of the Venerable Father, and having been granted to partake of the Divine Mysteries, they returned with great joy, enlightened by the light of the Holy Gospel.

A certain Saracen commander, whose kinsman was paralyzed, besought the saint to grant this sick man healing. The saint commanded that he be brought to the pillar and asked:

"Do you renounce the impiety of your fathers?"

He said:

"I renounce it."

And the saint asked again:

59. The Ishmaelites – descendants of Ishmael, son of the patriarch Abraham by Hagar: see Gen. 25:12 ff.

"Do you believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit?"

The paralytic confessed that he believed without any doubts.

Then the saint said: "Arise," and at once the young man stood up healthy, as though he had had no illness at all. And to show his recovery more clearly, the blessed one commanded that young man to take the commander himself, who was heavy of body, upon his shoulders and carry him to his camp, which he did, hoisting him upon his shoulders like a sheaf. Seeing this, all gave praise to God, who works wondrous miracles through His saint.

The Venerable also had the gift of prophecy, for he foretold two years in advance a drought and famine and a pestilence, and he said that in thirty days locusts would swarm, and all this came to pass. Once, in a vision, he saw two rods descending from heaven, one of which fell to the east and the other to the west. The Venerable told of this vision to those who were with him, and prophesied that the Persians and Scythians[60] would rise against the Greek and Roman realm. With many tears and unceasing prayer the Venerable entreated God to turn away His righteous wrath and not permit that chastisement to fall upon the Christians. And he prevailed upon God in this: for the whole Persian army, already prepared for battle, by God's will delayed setting out on campaign, and since internal strife broke out among the Persians, they abandoned their intention.

Once it became known to the Venerable that the Emperor Theodosius the Younger[61] had returned to the Jews a house of prayer which had been given to the Christians. Immediately he sent a letter to the emperor, and, not hesitating before the imperial person, threatened him with the wrath of God. Having read the letter, the emperor was afraid; he again commanded the Christians to receive back the house of prayer, deposed from his governorship the city prefect who had advised returning the church to the Jews, and sent to the Venerable a request asking him to forgive and to offer a prayer to God on his behalf. The wife of the same emperor, the Empress Eudocia, who after her husband's death had fallen into the Eutychian heresy[62], the Venerable admonished

60. The Scythians lived chiefly along the northern shore of the Black Sea.
61. He reigned from 408 to 450.

by his letters, and within four months he again turned her to piety. After her conversion, living yet four years in repentance, she was granted a blessed end in Jerusalem and was buried in the church of St. Stephen the First-Martyr, which she had built. Marcian[63], who received the kingdom after Theodosius the Younger, often visited the Venerable in secret and received much profit from him.

The Persian queen, having heard of the wonders and holiness of the Venerable Symeon, sent to him to ask for a blessing, and received from him blessed oil, which she regarded as a great gift and kept with honor.

The queen of the Ishmaelites, being barren, sent to the Venerable, asking him to pray for her, hoping that through his holy prayers she would become a mother. So it came to pass: for soon her barrenness was resolved, and she bore a son. Taking the infant, the queen set out on the way to the Venerable. But hearing that women could not see the Venerable, for he did not even admit his own mother to come to him, she sent the son in the arms of her slaves, commanding them to say:

"Behold, Father, the fruit of your holy prayers; bless this infant."

What can be said of the incomprehensible labors of the Venerable? They cannot be expressed, for they surpass human strength.

"I," says the blessed Theodoret, "marvel above all at his endurance: by night and by day he stands so that he is seen by all. It once happened that the doors and a considerable part of the upper wall fell apart from age, and until the wall and the doors were made anew, the saint was visible to all for a considerable time. Then they beheld a new and wondrous sight: at times he stood for long periods motionless, and at times he offered prayers to God, making frequent prostrations. One of those standing by the pillar related that he wished to count the prostrations which the ascetic made without ceasing, and, having counted one thousand two hundred and forty-four, he grew weary and, being unable to look up at the height of the pillar, ceased counting. The saint, however, did not grow faint from the prostrations; taking food only

62. Eutyches, condemned by the IV Ecumenical Council, taught that Jesus Christ had one nature – the divine – whereas the holy Church has always acknowledged and acknowledges in Jesus Christ two natures, unmingled and undivided: the divine and the human.
63. He reigned from 450 to 457.

once a week, and that very little and light, he became light and capable of frequent prostrations. From long standing there also opened on his other leg an ulcer that did not heal, and much blood flowed from it. But even this suffering could not divert him from contemplation of God."

The voluntary martyr bore all with courage, but he was compelled to show his ulcer. A certain priest from Arabia, a good man and inspired by God, came to him and began to say:

"I ask you in the name of the Truth Itself, which drew the human race to Itself: tell me, are you a man, or an incorporeal being?"

"Why do you ask me this?" said the Venerable to him.

"I have heard of you," the priest answered, "that you do not eat, do not drink, do not sleep; but this is not proper to a man, and a man cannot live without food, drink and sleep."

The Venerable commanded the priest to ascend to him on the pillar, and allowed him to see and touch the ulcer, covered with pus and worms. The priest, seeing the ulcer and hearing about the Venerable, that he partook of food only once a week, marveled at the endurance and the ascetic labor of the saint.

Amid such labors, working so many miracles and leading so virtuous a life, the Venerable was meek and humble, as though he were lower and more worthless than all people. For all, his face was equally bright and his word loving: for the nobleman as for the slave, for the rich as for the poor and for the very last outcast, for he had no partiality. And all could not be satisfied, both with the contemplation of his saintly-beautiful face and with his sweet-speaking conversation, for his lips were filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Possessing the gift of wisdom, every day he filled the hearts of his listeners with a river of teaching, and many, instructed by his teaching, left all earthly things and, like birds, rose upward: some departing to monasteries, others to the deserts, and some remaining to live near him.

The daily rule of the Venerable's life was as follows. All night and all day until the ninth hour he stood in prayer; after the ninth hour he spoke a discourse to those gathered at the pillar; then he heard the needs and petitions of everyone who came to him and healed the sick. Then he quelled the quarrels and disputes of men and restored peace;

finally, at sunset, he again turned to prayer. Bearing such labors, he did not cease to care for the peace of the Church, overthrowing pagan impiety, refuting Jewish blasphemies, uprooting heretical teachings; and kings and princes and all authorities he directed by his wise and profitable letters toward the fear of God, mercy and love, and he roused them to guard the Church of God, and he taught all much that was profitable to the soul. Thus, leading a wondrous life which seemed unbearable to human nature, he drew near to his end, being more than a hundred years of age. He stood on the pillar, as men worthy of full faith write, for eighty years. He was perfected in the virtues: he was an earthly angel and a heavenly man.

Of the blessed end of the Venerable his disciple Antony relates thus.

"One day," he says, "it was Friday, after the ninth hour, when we were expecting his customary teaching and blessing, that he did not look down upon us from the pillar; and likewise on Saturday, and on the Lord's Day he did not give us his fatherly word as was his custom. And I was frightened, and I climbed up the pillar, and I saw that the Venerable Father was standing with his head bowed low, as if in prayer, and his hands folded upon his breast. Thinking that he was at prayer, I stood in silence, and then, standing before him, I said:

'Father! Bless us, for the people have been surrounding the pillar for three days and three nights, awaiting your blessing.' But he did not answer me. And again I spoke to him:

'Why, Father, do you not answer your son, who is in sorrow? Have I in any way offended you? Stretch forth your hand to me, that I may kiss it.'

But there was no answer. Having stood before him for about half an hour, I began to doubt and thought: has he not already departed to the Lord? I bent my ear to him, and no breath could be heard, only a strong fragrance, as if from various fragrant spices, came forth from his body.

Then, understanding that he had fallen asleep in the Lord, I grieved greatly and wept bitterly. And approaching him, I laid and hid his relics, and kissed his eyes, his beard, his lips and his hands, saying:

'To whom are you leaving me, Father? Where shall I hear your sweet teachings? Where shall I be satisfied with your angelic converse? Or what answer shall I give about you to the people who await your blessing? What shall I say to the sick who will come here asking for healing? And who, seeing your pillar unoccupied, no longer bearing you as a lamp, will not weep? And when many come here from afar seeking you and do not find you, will they not cry out in lamentation? Woe is me! Now I see you, but tomorrow, whether I go to the right or to the left, I shall not find you!'

As I wept so over him, in the grief of my soul I fell asleep, and behold, the Venerable Father appeared, like the sun, saying:

'I shall not leave the pillar, nor this place, nor this blessed mountain. Go down and give the people your blessing, for I have already departed. So the Lord has willed it; and do not tell them, lest there be a rumor, but send word about me quickly to Antioch. As for you, it is fitting that you should serve in this place, and the Lord will reward you according to your labor.'

And I awoke from my sleep, and in trembling I said: 'Do not forget me, Father, in your holy rest,' and I fell at his feet and kissed his holy feet, and taking his hand, I laid it upon my eyes, saying: 'Bless me, Father,' and again I wept bitterly. Then, rising, I wiped away my tears, so that no one would learn of what had happened, and I went down and secretly sent a faithful brother to Antioch to Patriarch Martyrius[64] with the news of the repose of the Venerable Father. And soon the patriarch arrived with three bishops, and also the city governor with his troops, and a great multitude of people not only from Antioch but from all the surrounding cities and villages, and monks from the monasteries with candles and censers, and a very great multitude of Saracens soon gathered like rivers, for the news of the death of the Venerable Father had spread everywhere, borne as on the wind. The patriarch with the bishops ascended the pillar, and taking the honorable relics, they carried them down and laid them beside the pillar. And all the people wept; even birds in great numbers, in the sight of all, flew around the pillar

64. Martyrius was Patriarch of Antioch from 456 to 468.

with cries, as if mourning the departure of such a lamp to the world. The general lamentation could be heard for seven stadia[65], and the neighboring mountains, fields and trees seemed to grieve and weep together with the people, for everywhere the air was dark and dark clouds were drifting. And I saw an Angel who appeared beside the holy relics, and his face was like lightning and his garments were like snow, and with him were seven conversing elders; I heard their voices too, but what was said I did not understand, for fear and terror seized me."

On the day when the Venerable Simeon departed, his disciple and imitator of his holy life, the Venerable Daniel—shortly before the time when he was also about to ascend a pillar at the mouth of the Black Sea, near Constantinople—saw from the side where the pillar of the Venerable Simeon stood a multitude of heavenly hosts ascending from earth to heaven, and in their midst the joyful soul of St. Simeon being borne up. And not only the Venerable Daniel, but also the blessed Auxentius, summoned from the desert to the Council of Chalcedon[66], saw the same, being at that time in Bithynia[67].

When the honorable relics of St. Simeon were laid upon the prepared bier, the patriarch stretched out his hand, desiring to take a few hairs from the saint's beard as a blessed memento, and immediately his hand dried up. And only after fervent prayer by all to God and to the servant of God on his behalf was the patriarch's hand made whole. Taking the honorable relics of St. Simeon, they carried them to Antioch with the singing of psalms, and the whole city came out to meet them. There was a man there, mute and deaf for about forty years. As soon as he saw the holy body of the Venerable Father, at once the bonds of his hearing and his tongue were loosed, and he, falling before the holy relics, cried out: "You have come for good, servant of God, for behold, your coming has healed me."

The inhabitants of Antioch, receiving the body of the saint, more precious than gold and silver, carried it into the great patriarchal

65. A stadion – a measure of length, about 88 sazhens; seven stadia – about 1.25 versts.
66. The Council of Chalcedon, the Fourth Ecumenical Council, was held in 451.
67. Bethany is a village to the southeast of Jerusalem, a little over two versts away, at the foot of the Mount of Olives.

church[68], and many wonders and healings took place at his tomb. Some years later a church was built in the name of the Venerable Simeon the Stylite, and his holy relics were translated there.

The Venerable Father departed in the reign of Leo the Great[69], in the fourth year of that reign. This was the year 460 A.D. Emperor Leo sent to the Antiochians, asking that they surrender the relics of the Venerable Father for translation to Constantinople; but they, not wishing to lose such an intercessor, said to the imperial envoys:

"Since our city has no stone walls, for they have fallen, partly ruined by the wrath of the emperor and partly shattered by a great earthquake[70], it is for this very reason that we have brought in the holy body of Simeon, so that it may be a wall and a protection to us[71]."

On the place where the pillar of the Venerable Simeon stood, a beautiful cruciform church was built in his name, and a large monastery was established[72]. And the Venerable Father fulfilled his promise, which he had spoken to his disciple Antony in a vision, namely that he would not leave his place: for miracles and healings of the sick there did not fail. And on the day of his memory, every year a great star appeared over the pillar and illumined the whole land. Many historical writers bear witness to the appearance of that star, especially Evagrius Scholasticus[73], who saw it with his own eyes. The same Evagrius writes that this holy place was inaccessible to women, and every care was taken that no woman's foot would dare to touch the threshold, across which even the mother of the Venerable Father was not permitted to enter. It is told that one woman dressed as a man in order to enter the church of St. Simeon unrecognized, and when she touched the threshold of the church, she at once fell backward dead. If women did

68. The churches in the East called "Great Churches" are those located in the patriarchates and designated for the celebration of services by the patriarchs themselves.
69. Leo the Great reigned from 457 to 474.
70. Here is meant Antioch in Syria, once the magnificent capital of the Syrian kingdom, and now a poor town in Asiatic Turkey.
71. Some part of the relics of St. Simeon was afterwards transferred to the Venerable Daniel the Stylite, through his prayers, as is related in the Life of this saint, December 11.
72. In the 8th century St. John of Damascus composed a canon to the Venerable Simeon, and from Patriarch Germanus the Church received sacred hymns in honor of the Venerable.
73. Evagrius Scholasticus, who lived in the 6th century, wrote the "Ecclesiastical History."

come there, as Nicephorus writes[74], they still did not dare to approach the enclosure, but stood at a distance and offered their prayers, gazing upon the pillar.

And all who came in faith did not lose the grace of the Venerable Father, but received help and various healings and returned with joy, giving thanks to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one God in Trinity, to Whom be honor and glory and worship, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

A Word from the Meadow[75]

concerning Mina the deacon, who went out into the world, having cast off the monastic habit, and again through St. Simeon was clothed in it and was saved

George of Rhaithou[76] related to us about a brother there who had been a deacon, named Mina:

"He went out from the monastery, and what befell him I do not know, but he abandoned the monastic rank and became a simple man (a layman). After many days he went to the city of God, Antioch, and when he passed Seleucia[77], he saw from afar the monastery of St. Simeon the Stylite and said to himself: 'I will go and see the great Simeon, for I have never seen him.' When he approached the pillar and drew near enough for the saint to see him, Simeon learned from God that Mina had been a monk and had performed the deacon's service, and calling his attendant, he said:

'Bring me the scissors here.'

The attendant brought them. Simeon said to him:

'Blessed be the Lord, tonsure this one,' and he pointed to Mina with his finger, and many were standing about the pillar.

Mina, astonished at the words of the saint and seized with great fear, did not in the least contradict, understanding that God had re-

74. Nicephorus Callistus, who lived in the 14th century, wrote the "Ecclesiastical History."
75. The "Spiritual Meadow," a work of the monk John Moschus, contains accounts from the lives of eastern hermits.
76. Raifa is a village on the eastern shore of the Sinai Peninsula.

vealed to the elder concerning him. After his tonsure, the great Simeon said to him: 'Offer a prayer, deacon,' and when he had offered the prayer, the saint said to him: 'Go to Rhaithou, from where you came.'

When he began to say, 'I cannot endure the shame before the fathers,' Simeon said to him:

'Have faith in me, child: in what has just happened there is no shame for you, and the fathers will receive you in peace, and there will be joy and gladness among them at your return. And know that God will show a sign upon you by which you will learn that He has forgiven your sin, for His grace is unspeakable.'

When he came to Rhaithou, the fathers received him with open arms and kept him in the diaconal rank. But on one Lord's Day, when he was carrying the life-giving blood of the Great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, suddenly his eye fell out. And from this sign the fathers understood that the Lord had forgiven him his sin, according to the word of St. Simeon[5486].

A miracle performed by St. Simeon upon a presbyter

A certain presbyter was once sitting in the vestibule of a church, reading the Holy Gospel. And behold, an evil spirit came to him in the form of a dark and gloomy cloud, and, like a monastic hood, wrapped itself about his head; the light went out for him, his reason was taken from him, all his bones grew feeble, and he could not speak. Those who came in found him lying as one dead; and he remained in that sickness for nine years, unable to turn over on his other side unless someone helped him. His household, having heard of St. Simeon, went to the saint, carrying the sick man on a bed; but having come to within three furlongs of the monastery, they stopped there to rest. And to St. Simeon, standing at prayer, it was revealed concerning the presbyter. At midnight the saint called one of his disciples and said to him:

"Take water from here and go quickly; you will find a presbyter being carried on a bed. Sprinkle him with this water and say to him:

77. Seleucia was a seaport of Syria on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, to the west of Antioch, at the mouth of the river Orontes.

'Simeon, a sinner, says to you: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, arise, leave your bed, and come to me on your own feet.'"

The disciple went and did as the saint had said. The presbyter rose up completely healed, and, coming, he fell prostrate before the saint.

The saint said to him:

"Rise, do not be afraid! Although the devil has afflicted you for nine years, the loving-kindness of God has not allowed you to perish utterly. Because you conducted yourself without the fear of God, and even in a manner offensive to what is holy, within the sanctuary; and because, before the truth was made known, you listened to slanderers who secretly condemn their neighbors; and because you unjustly insulted those whom they slandered, excluding them from Communion in the Holy Mysteries; and in doing this you greatly grieved God, the Lover of mankind, and greatly gladdened the devil, for this the devil received power over you. But the loving-kindness and mercies of God have multiplied over you. Those whom you grieved by excluding them from Communion you will find sorely ill; they pray for you, that you, having recovered, may forgive them. And as God has shown mercy to you, so you show mercy to them, and taking earth from here, sprinkle it upon them."

And the presbyter went with joy, giving thanks to God, and did as the saint had commanded him. And at once those others also were healed, glorifying God.[78]

Troparion, Tone 1:

Thou wast a pillar of patience, Venerable, zealous of the forefathers: of Job in sufferings, of Joseph in temptations, and dwelling in the flesh as one bodiless; O our Father Simeon, pray to Christ God that our souls be saved.

78. In this narrative it is remarkable that those excommunicated by the priest through slander, although they were excluded from Communion of the Holy Mysteries without fault of their own, nevertheless fell into grave illness, and they themselves, as if forgetting their innocence, prayed for the recovery of the one who had excommunicated them, so that, having received his forgiveness, they might be able to partake of the Holy Mysteries. Such, therefore, is the power of the Holy Mysteries, that their deprivation, even though not through the fault of the one deprived, does not pass without effect upon him!

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Seeking the things above, and joining thyself to those above, and having made the fiery chariot a pillar, thou wast a fellow-dweller with the Angels, Venerable; praying with them unceasingly to Christ God for us all.

* * *

Commemoration of the Righteous Joshua the son of Nun

Память праведного Иисуса Навина

Joshua the son of Nun, after Moses, was the leader of the Hebrew people. He with the whole people crossed the river Jordan on dry ground, just as Moses had crossed the Red Sea (Josh. 3:14–17; Ex. 14:1–31). He saw face to face the commander of the heavenly hosts, the Archangel Michael (Josh. 5:13–16), and by the sound of trumpets he brought down the walls of the city of Jericho (Josh. 6:1–26).[79] During one battle with the enemy he stopped the sun until he had utterly defeated his foes (Josh. 10:12–14).[80] Having brought the people into the Promised Land, Joshua divided it among the Hebrews by lot, and died peacefully at the age of 110 years.[5490]

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Commemoration of the Cathedral of the Most Holy Theotokos at the Miasinsk Monastery

Воспоминание собора Пресвятой Богородицы, что в Миасинской обители

At the time when the heresy of the iconoclasts,[81] with the support of Emperor Leo the Isaurian,[82] who was himself the first icono-

79. The city of Jericho was situated on the western bank of the river Jordan, in a fertile valley, amid gardens abounding in palm trees, and therefore it was called the City of Palms. It was a royal city of the land of Canaan, rich and fortified, surrounded by a broad wall. When the Hebrews entered the promised land, it was the first to be subject to their conquest, and it was taken by them in a miraculous manner. Today, near ancient Jericho stands a small, poor and dirty village, Riha, with a few wretched huts and miserable inhabitants.

80. For the account of the miraculous prolongation of the day, through the prayer of Jesus, see Josh. 10:12–14.

clast, greatly grew in strength in the East, the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos, which was in the Miasinsk monastery, was cast into Lake Azur. Where precisely the Miasinsk monastery was located is reported in the Life of St. Acacius, Bishop of Melitene. In this Life we read the following. "At a distance of 18 furlongs[83] from the Armenian city of Melitene[84] there was a Greek place called Miasiny. It was a very beautiful, level, and wide valley between two hills stretching on both sides over a far distance. Through the middle of this valley flowed, toward the east, the swift and clear river Azur, which filled the whole valley around it with lakes. Here, in a particularly beautiful spot, stood an idol-temple and a garden of trees with excellent fruit. In this garden impure idolatrous sacrifices were offered. The holy bishop Acacius cleansed this place of idolatrous defilements and built here a church in the name of the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos. Having consecrated the newly built church, St. Acacius made the place where demons formerly dwelt a dwelling of holy Angels. There, where bloody sacrifices had formerly been offered in honor of the devil, the pure Bloodless Sacrifice began to be offered to the true God, and miracles were wrought through the icon of the Most Pure Mother of God." It is thus clear that the monastery, named after the place as Miasinsk, was established at the said church of the Most Holy Theotokos. Many years passed since the image of the Mother of God had been cast into the lake by the iconoclasts. In the reign of the right-believing Emperor Michael and his mother Theodora,[85] the icon rose to the surface of the lake and

81. The heretics who rejected and persecuted the veneration of icons, regarding it as idolatry, and likewise the veneration of the holy relics. The iconoclastic heresy arose in the Eastern Church at the beginning of the 8th century and for a long time prevailed in the East, until at last it was condemned at the Seventh Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 787. Finally, the veneration of icons was restored at the Council of Constantinople in 842.

82. He reigned from 716 to 741.

83. A poprishche was approximately 690 sazhens; consequently, 18 poprishches make about 23 versts.

84. Built by the Roman emperor Trajan; the chief city of the land of the same name, which was in Cappadocia, once part of Lesser Armenia.

85. The wife of the Byzantine emperor Theophilus the Iconoclast. After the death of the latter, during the reign of her son Michael III (reigned 842 to 867), at the Council of Constantinople in 842 the veneration of icons was restored and the Triumph of Orthodoxy was established, celebrated during the first week of the Holy Great Fast.

was found by the faithful on the 1st day of the month of September, in no way damaged by so long a stay in the water. On account of this miraculous event, an annual celebration was held in that monastery in honor and glorification of our Most Immaculate Lady, the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos.[86]

Troparion, Tone 1:

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, O favored one, refuge and intercessor of the human race; for from thee the Redeemer of the world was incarnate. For thou art alone both Mother and Virgin, most blessed and most glorified. Pray to Christ God to grant peace to the whole universe.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Forty Virgin Ascetics and of Ammun, their teacher

Память святых 40 дев постниц и Аммуна, учителя их

These holy virgins[87] were from Adrianople of Macedonia,[88] and, enlightened by the deacon Ammun, they believed in Christ. Vavdus, the governor of that city, summoned them to his judgment and subjected them to many torments, in order to compel them to worship idols. They prayed to God, and suddenly the idol-priest was lifted into the air by an invisible power, and after remaining there a long time, he fell to the ground and died. After this the tormentor ordered St. Am-

86. This event was even celebrated in Constantinople in the Chalkoprateia church of the Mother of God. The time of the finding of the icon is indicated in the manuscript and printed Slavonic calendars of the 17th century as the year 6364. From the creation of the world to the Nativity of Christ, according to the generally accepted reckoning, 5508 years have passed; but since in the historical chronicle of the printed calendars of the 17th century the count from the Creation to the Nativity is more often given not as 5508 years but as exactly 5500, here one must understand 864, not 856 A.D. Empress Theodora was at this time (855–867) already living a private life.

87. They suffered under the emperor Licinius, who co-reigned with Constantine the Great from 311 to 324 A.D.

88. Macedonia is a province of the Byzantine Empire, to the north of Greece. Adrianople was originally founded by the emperor Hadrian and named after him; it lies not far from Constantinople, in present-day Eastern Rumelia. In recent times this city, formerly very considerable, has fallen into decline. Half of its population is Bulgarian and Serbian.

mun to be hanged and his ribs scraped; then they placed a red-hot helmet on his head, but the holy martyr was miraculously delivered from it. Then St. Ammun was sent with the holy virgins to Heraclea,[89] to another tormentor. By his command ten of them were thrown into the fire, eight were beheaded with their teacher; some died, struck by the sword in the mouth and in the heart; six of them were stabbed with a knife; and the remaining six departed to the Lord after red-hot iron had been put into their mouths.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Callista and her brothers Evodius and Hermogenes

Память святых мучеников Каллисты и родных ее братьев Евода и Ермогена

These holy martyrs,[90] having received spiritual rebirth in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, were accused before a pagan governor of being Christians. Seeing that they were unshaken in confessing Christ, the governor condemned them to be beheaded with the sword, and they, having completed their martyric struggle, departed to the Lord.

* * *

NOTES

5413. The year of the Jews consisted of twelve lunar months. The month Abib or Nisan (Neh. 2:1; Esth. 3:7), corresponding to our March, was the beginning of the sacred year (Ex. 12:2, 13:4), while the month Tishri, the seventh in order, corresponding to our September, was counted as the first month of the civil year. The whole of it was a festive season. The first day, the beginning of the new year, was called the Feast of Trumpets (Ex. 23:24); the tenth day was the Day of Atonement; the fifteenth day was the Feast of Booths, instituted in memory of God's protection during the Israelites' wanderings in the wilderness, when they lived in tents or booths (Lev. 23:33–34; Num.

89. Heraclea was a city on the shore of the Sea of Marmara.

90. They suffered at Nicomedia, in the northwestern part of Asia Minor, the residence of the emperor Diocletian. The time of these saints' repose is not known precisely. Some refer it to the persecution of Diocletian (the beginning of the 4th century). In the Studite Typikon of Patriarch Alexis of the 11th century it is said that their relics were in the Studion monastery, and a service was celebrated for them on September 1.

29:12–39). In this same month the observance began of every seventh, or Sabbatical, year and of the fiftieth, or Jubilee, year (Lev. 25:9). Therefore the seventh month was called the Sabbath of Sabbaths, that is, the Feast of Feasts.

5422. "Messiah" is a Hebrew word and means the same as the Greek "Christ," that is, "anointed," and derives from anointing with holy chrism. Through this anointing, the gifts of the Holy Spirit were communicated to persons chosen or called by God to a particular ministry. Kings, prophets and high priests were called anointed ones. But this designation belongs above all to Jesus Christ, because upon Him were poured all the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Is. 11:1–2). To Him belong in the highest degree the holiness of the high priest, who is without sin and has an everlasting priesthood (see Heb. 7:10), and the knowledge of the prophet, who has enlightened the world with the highest heavenly teaching (see Lk. 1:79, 2:32; Mt. 4:16; Jn. 1:4–10, 8:12, 9:5, 12:35–36, 46), and the authority and power of the king, who possesses all the powers of heaven and earth and directs everything toward the great goals of human salvation (see Mt. 28:18; Lk. 1:33; 1 Cor. 15:25–26).

5425. The word *grace* (*blagodat*) occurs very often in Holy Scripture and is used in various senses (good pleasure, mercy, love), but it especially means the saving power of God, which, communicated to us through the merits of Jesus Christ, regenerates us into spiritual life and accomplishes our sanctification and salvation. It is called grace because it is the good gift of the Heavenly Father (see Eph. 2:8). The contrast between the Old Testament law and grace is set forth by the holy Apostle Paul in his epistles to the Romans, the Galatians and the Hebrews. The principal difference: the law of Moses prescribed commandments difficult to fulfil in their entirety and struck the transgressor with a curse, yet did not give him sufficient strength to attain the righteousness required by the law (Gal. 3:10); Christ's grace removes from man the curse of the law, justifies him before God and reconciles him to Him (Gal. 3:13; Rom. 5:9–10), forgives and cleanses sins, and gives strength to fulfil the New Testament law, so that it seems a good yoke and a light burden (1 Jn. 1:9; Mt. 11:30).

5427. According to the explanation of Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, the tabernacle represented the Church, gradually being established in the human race in general and in each believing soul in particular. The court, open to all the people, signified the external Church and the universal call to it; while the altar and the laver prefigured the Christian Mysteries of blood and water, which bring one into her and seal the union with her. The holy place, reserved for the priests, represented the internal Church, in which Christ is both the true light and the living bread, and the altar that lifts up to God the prayers and thanksgivings laid upon it by the faithful. The Holy of Holies, accessible only to the High Priest, signified the very throne and dominion of the Messiah, the God-Man, whom the tablets of the Law, the manna, and the rod of Aaron that budded here prefigured, and who serves for us as our redemption, justification, purification, and sanctification. In relation to our soul, the tabernacle, by its three parts, signified three degrees of our approach to God: outward purification, inward enlightenment, and mystical union with Christ.

5441. These words of Holy Scripture are read at worship on the day of the indiction in one of the prophecies (paremias), of which there are three. 1st paremia (Is. 61:1–9): the prophecy about Jesus Christ as the Anointed One, Teacher, Savior, and Restorer of all who suffer on earth, about the spread of His Church among the nations, and about the blessedness and glory of those who belong to it. It is precisely this prophecy, as we saw above, that the Savior Himself read in the synagogue at Nazareth. – The 2nd paremia (from Lev. 26:3–12, 14–17, 19–20, 22, 33, 40–41) contains the promises of the Lord to those who fulfill His commandments and the threats to transgressors; zealous fulfillment of these commandments is the chief condition of prosperity on earth, which we customarily desire for ourselves and our neighbors at the beginning of the new year. – The 3rd paremia (from Wis. 4:7–25) relates to the memory of St. Simeon the Stylite, who realized in his life the lessons of true wisdom and displayed the triumph of piety, celebrated in the Book of Wisdom. – In the 8th century St. John of Damascus wrote many hymns for the 1st day of September.

5486. The incident with the deacon Mina may be understood in the following way. For an unknown reason Mina voluntarily left the monastic life and the diaconate and spent his time as a layman. This willfulness on his part was, of course, a grievous sin, but at the same time, since no church judgment had been pronounced upon him, he could not yet be regarded as having lost the grace of the diaconate. Accordingly, the tonsure performed over Mina at the Venerable Father's command, as well as Mina's recitation of a prayer, that is, of the ektenias, was only a symbolic, visible reminder to Mina of the monastic life he had willfully abandoned and of his diaconal service; through this reminder the Venerable Father evidently wished to awaken repentance in Mina and, besides this, perhaps to free the brethren of the monastery from doubts about the possibility of Mina continuing his diaconal service. As for the loss of Mina's eye, it signified that Mina had been punished for his sin by God Himself and, consequently, was no longer subject to punishment (under the monastic rule and the canons of the Church).

5490. The activity of the Righteous Joshua the son of Nun as leader of the Hebrew people is set forth in detail in the Book of Joshua which bears his name. It follows the Pentateuch of Moses in the Bible and, forming a continuation of the history begun in the books of Moses, it tells of the conquest of the promised land, of its division among the tribes of Israel, and of the death of Joshua, and it embraces the period from 1556 to 1550 B.C. The Book of Joshua also has a typological and prophetic significance. The Apostle Paul calls Joshua a type of Jesus Christ (see Heb. 4:8–9). As he led Israel into the promised land, so Christ leads those who believe in Him into their inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven. The crossing of the Hebrews over the Jordan is the type of our baptism. Rahab, a Gentile who became an ancestor of the Savior (see Mt. 1:5), is a type of the Gentiles who entered the Church of Christ. In the Church's services three lessons from the Book of Joshua are read (January 5, on Holy Saturday, and at the feasts of the Angels).

THE SECOND DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 2

2 сентября

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

Life and Passion of the Holy Martyr Mamas

Житие и страдание святого мученика Маманта

The Holy Martyr of Christ Mamas was born in Paphlagonia.[1] His parents, Theodotus and Rufina, were people of distinction: both descended from a patrician family,[2] were held in honor, were wealthy, and shone with piety. They could not long conceal their faith in Christ and their fervent love for Him; they openly confessed their piety before all, and they converted many to Christ. For this they were denounced to Alexander, governor of the city of Gangra.[3] The emperor had given this governor the command to spread and establish, by every possible means, the veneration of the pagan gods, and to torment and put to death the Christians and all who did not obey this imperial decree.

Summoning Theodotus to his tribunal, Alexander began to compel him to offer sacrifice to the idols. But Theodotus would not even hear what the governor was saying. Alexander, although he was ready at once to hand the disobedient man over to torment, nevertheless restrained himself because of Theodotus's noble birth, for he had no right to dishonor and torture the descendants of patricians without special imperial permission. Therefore Alexander sent Theodotus to Caesarea in Cappadocia,[4] to the governor Faustus. This governor was as zealous

1. Paphlagonia was a province of the Roman Empire, situated in the south of Asia Minor.
2. The highest class in the Roman Empire, corresponding to our hereditary nobility, was called the patricians.
3. Gangra was the principal city of Paphlagonia.
4. The name of Caesarea was borne by several cities. Caesarea, the principal city of the Roman province of Cappadocia, was later destroyed by an earthquake.

in his godless impiety as he was cruel toward Christians. Seeing Theodotus, Faustus at once threw him into prison. The wife of Theodotus, the blessed Rufina, although she was pregnant at that time, followed her husband into prison and there endured sufferings for Christ. Theodotus knew the weakness of his body and saw the savage cruelty of the tormentor, but he preferred to die rather than to sin in anything against piety. Fearing that he would not have the strength to endure the grievous torments that lay ahead, he turned with fervent prayer to the Lord.

"Lord, God of Hosts," prayed Theodotus, "Father of Thy beloved Son! I bless and glorify Thee that Thou hast deemed me worthy to be cast into this prison for Thy name. But I beseech Thee, O Lord: Thou knowest my weakness; receive my spirit in this prison, lest my enemy boast over me."

God, Who "fashioned the hearts of them all and considers all their works" (Ps. 32:15), heard His faithful servant and soon granted him a blessed repose; releasing his soul from the prison of the body, He settled it in the bright mansions of heaven. The wife of Theodotus, the blessed Rufina, enduring in prison want and suffering, and overwhelmed with great sorrow for her husband, gave birth prematurely to a son. Gazing at the newborn and at the lifeless body of her husband, she prayed to God with contrition and tears:

"O God, who created man and fashioned woman from his rib, ordain that I too may go the same way my husband went, and, releasing me from this brief life, receive me into Thy eternal mansions! As for the infant born, Thou Thyself raise him as Thou knowest! Be for him both father and mother and the guardian of his life!"

Crying out thus in her grief to God, this honorable and holy woman was heard by Him and released from the bonds of the body, and she passed into eternal freedom, committing her soul into the hands of the Lord. The infant, however, remained alive amid his dead parents.

Then "the Lord, who keepeth the little ones" (Ps. 114:5), was pleased to reveal what had happened to a noble and pious woman named Ammia, who lived in Caesarea. In a dream-vision, He commanded her through His Angel to ask the governor for the bodies of the

saints who had died in prison, and to bury them with honor, and to take the infant and raise him as her son. Awakening, Ammia hastened to do what the Lord had commanded, and began to ask the governor for permission to take the bodies of the dead prisoners from the prison. God softened the cruel heart of the governor, and he did not hinder the wish of the honorable woman. And so Ammia, entering the prison, found the bodies of the two prisoners lying side by side, and between them a beautiful and joyful infant. Taking up the bodies of the saints, she buried them with honor in her garden, and she took the infant to her home. She was a childless widow and lived a chaste life. Having come to love the infant as her own son, she raised him in a Christian manner.

The infant grew, but until he was five years old he said nothing. The first word he spoke to Ammia, who had become for him as it were a second mother, was "mamma" (Greek: breasts, or mother), and from this word he was named Mamas. Ammia had him taught letters, and he soon surpassed his peers so greatly that all marveled at his understanding.

At that time the impious Aurelian[5] reigned in Rome. He compelled everyone to worship idols, not only grown men and women but even young children, and he paid especial attention to the children, hoping that, being young and unreasoning, they could easily be enticed and turned to every evil deed. Moreover, the impious emperor thought that children who from their early years had grown accustomed to eating sacrificial meat would in old age become still more zealous idolaters. Therefore he drew them into his impiety by various caresses. Many of the boys, and even youths, indeed yielded to the enticement and obeyed the imperial will. But those who were schoolmates of Mamas, following his teaching, did not carry out the imperial commands. For Mamas, though young in years and possessing "wisdom, which is gray hair to men, and an unspotted life, which is old age" (Wis. 4:9), proved to his companions the worthlessness of the pagan gods, lifeless and powerless, and taught them to know the one true God, whom he himself wor-

5. The emperor Aurelian reigned from 270 to 275 A.D.

shipped, and to offer to Him the spiritual sacrifice of a contrite spirit and a humble heart (Ps. 50:19).

At that time another governor, named Democritus, was sent from the emperor to Caesarea in place of Faustus. He was a great zealot of his impious and godless faith, and he breathed, as it were, persecution and murder against the Christians. It was reported to him about Mamas that not only did he himself not bow down to the gods, but he was also corrupting the other boys who studied with him and teaching them the Christian faith. Mamas was then in his fifteenth year. He was already an orphan again, for his second mother, Ammia, having left her adopted son, the Holy Mamas, a large estate as sole heir, had passed on to the heavenly riches prepared for those who love God.

Democritus, having heard of Mamas, sent for him, and when he was brought, first asked whether he was a Christian, and whether it was true that he not only did not himself worship the gods but was also corrupting his companions, teaching them not to obey the imperial command?

The young Mamas, like a perfect and mature man, answered fearlessly:

"I am the very one who counts your wisdom as nothing. You have strayed from the right path and wander in such darkness that you cannot even look upon the light of truth; having forsaken the true and living God, you have come to the demons and bow down to lifeless and deaf idols. But I will never turn away from my Christ, and I strive to convert to Him all whom I can."

Astonished at Mamas's bold reply, Democritus grew angry and ordered that he be led at once to the temple of their vile god Serapis,[6] and there be forced by violence to offer sacrifice to the idol. But Mamas, in no way fearing the governor's wrath, calmly replied to him:

"You must not insult me: I am the son of parents who were of a noble senatorial family."

6. Serapis was a pagan deity depicted as a man seated on a throne, with a scepter in his hands and an eagle at his feet; on his head was a basket, a symbol of abundance. He personified the masculine and generative power of nature. In the time of St. Mamas the veneration of this idol was especially widespread in the Roman Empire.

Then Democritus asked those present about the origin of Mamas, and learning that he was descended from ancient Roman dignitaries, and that Ammia, a noble and wealthy woman, had raised him and made him heir to her rich estate, he did not venture to deliver him to torments, for he indeed had no right to do so. Therefore, placing iron fetters upon him, he sent him to Emperor Aurelian, who was then in the city of Aegae,[7] and in a letter explained to him everything concerning Mamas. The emperor, receiving Democritus's letter and reading it, at once commanded that the young Mamas be brought before him. When the martyr stood before him, the emperor tried in every way to draw him to his impiety, now with threats, now with caresses, promising gifts and honors, and he said:

"Fair youth, if you approach the great Serapis and offer him sacrifice, you will live with us in the palace, you will be raised in royal fashion, and everyone will honor and praise you, and truly you will be happy; but if you do not obey me, you will perish cruelly."

But the young Mamas bravely answered him:

"O Emperor! Let it never be that I bow down to lifeless idols, whom you honor as gods. How senseless you are, bowing down to wood and insensible stone instead of the Living God! Cease to beguile me with flattering words, for when you think you are doing me a kindness, you are in fact tormenting me, and when you torment me, you are thereby doing me a kindness. Know, then, that all the benefits, gifts, and honors you have promised me would become for me grievous torments if I were to love them in place of Christ, while the grievous torments with which you threaten to deliver me for the name of Christ will be for me a great kindness, for death for my Christ is dearer to me than all honors and possessions."

So fearlessly did St. Mamas speak before the emperor. In a youthful body he possessed the mind and heart of a mature man, for the power of God can make even a small child a match for an invincible Goliath[8]: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise"

7. The city of Aegae was situated in the province of Cilicia, in Asia Minor, on the Gulf of Issus.
8. Goliath was the well-known biblical giant, a Philistine, who was considered invincible and who fell in single combat with David (1 Kgdms. 17:1–58).

(Ps. 8:3), and a child of tender years can be made so wise that he understands better than the elders. All of this was fulfilled in the young Mamas. The words of the lawless king did not persuade him, gifts did not allure him, and tortures did not frighten him; these he received with greater joy than great honors.

The enraged tormentor at once ordered that he be beaten without mercy. But St. Mamas endured the torments with such patience, as though he felt no pain at all.

The emperor said to him:

"Only promise that you will offer sacrifice to the gods, and you will at once be released from torment."

The martyr answered:

"Neither in heart nor with my lips will I renounce God and my King, Jesus Christ, even if you were to inflict on me ten thousand times more wounds. These wounds unite me with my beloved Lord, and I desire that the hands of my tormentors not grow weary, for the more they beat me, the more blessings they bring me from Christ, the Judge of the contest."

Aurelian, seeing that Mamas was not in the least afraid of suffering, ordered that his body be scorched with candles. But the fire, as if ashamed before the martyr's body, did not touch him, but turned upon the faces of the tormentors. The emperor was inflamed with anger and blazed with fury more fiercely than the martyr of Christ burned with material fire: for as much as the martyr paid no heed to the fire, so much more did the tormentor's heart burn. The emperor then ordered that St. Mamas be stoned. But this suffering was as pleasant to the martyr, embraced by love for Christ, as though someone had showered him with fragrant flowers. Then the emperor, seeing that he could achieve nothing, condemned the martyr to death and commanded that he be cast into the sea. Fastening a heavy lead weight about his neck, the emperor's servants led him to the sea. But here too the Lord did not forsake His servant, "for He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee" (Ps. 90:11). On the way to the sea an Angel of the Lord appeared, shining like lightning. Seeing him, the servants left St. Mamas and fled back in fear. The Angel, taking the martyr, untied the lead

and, bringing him to a high mountain in the wilderness near Caesarea, commanded him to dwell there.

St. Mamas began his life in the wilderness with fasting. On that mountain he fasted forty days and forty nights and appeared as a second Moses (Ex. 24:18), to whom a new law was given: for a voice and a staff came down to him from heaven. Taking this staff, Mamas, by command from above, struck the earth with it, and at once a Gospel appeared from the depths of the earth. After this he built a small church and prayed in it, reading the Holy Gospel. By God's command, wild beasts gathered to St. Mamas from that wilderness like sheep to a shepherd, and as if they were rational creatures they listened to him and obeyed him. His food was the milk of the wild animals, from which he made cheese, not only for himself but also for the poor: for, having prepared a great quantity of cheese, he carried it to the city of Caesarea and distributed it to the poor.

Soon the report of Mamas spread throughout Caesarea. Then Alexander, not the one mentioned above but another, who had at that time been appointed governor in Cappadocia, a cruel and very wicked man, having learned everything about Mamas, considered him a sorcerer and sent soldiers on horseback into the wilderness to find him and bring him to him. Coming down from the mountain, St. Mamas himself met the horsemen and asked whom they were seeking. Thinking that he was a shepherd pasturing his sheep on the mountain, they answered:

"We are seeking Mamas, who lives somewhere in this wilderness. Do you not know where he is?"

"Why are you seeking him?" Mamas asked them.

The soldiers answered:

"Information has been laid against him to the governor that he is a sorcerer, and so the governor has sent us to take him for torment."

Then Mamas said to them:

"I will tell you about him, my friends, but first come into my hut and, having rested a little from your labor, refresh yourselves with food."

The soldiers went with him into his dwelling, and he offered them cheese. As they began to eat, does and wild goats came, which were ac-

customed to being milked by the holy ascetic. Mamas milked them and offered the soldiers milk to drink, while he himself stood in prayer. And still more beasts gathered. Seeing them, the soldiers were frightened and, leaving their food, came to Mamas. He reassured them, and then declared that he was the very Mamas they were seeking. Then they said to him:

"If you yourself wish to go to the governor, then come with us; if not, then let us go alone, for we dare not lead you. But we ask you that the beasts not touch us."

Having reassured the soldiers, Mamas told them to go on ahead.

"Go," he said, "you first, and I will follow after you alone."

Withdrawing from there, the soldiers waited for Mamas's arrival at the city gates, for they fully trusted the words of so wonderful a man and could not even imagine anything evil of him. Mamas, taking with him a lion, followed the soldiers. When he entered the city gates, the lion remained outside the city; the soldiers, seizing Mamas, presented him to the governor Alexander.

The governor, seeing the saint, at once began to question him:

"Are you that very sorcerer of whom I have heard?" he said.

The saint answered:

"I am a servant of Jesus Christ, who sends salvation to all who believe in Him and fulfill His will, and who delivers wizards and sorcerers to eternal fire. Tell me: why have you summoned me to yourself?"

"Because," the governor answered, "I do not know by what sorceries and enchantments you have so subdued the wild and savage beasts that you live among them and, as I have heard, command them as though they were rational beings."

St. Mamas answered this as well:

"He who serves the One God, the Living and True, will by no means agree to live with idolaters and evildoers. Therefore I have preferred to live with beasts in the wilderness rather than with you in the villages of sinners. For the beasts are tamed and obey me not at all by sorcery, as you think, – I do not even know what sorcery consists of – but although they are unreasoning creatures, they know how to fear God and honor His servants. You, however, are far more senseless than the

beasts, for you do not honor the true God and dishonor His servants, tormenting and killing them without mercy."

The governor flew into a rage at hearing such words and at once ordered that the holy martyr be hanged, beaten, and his body raked with iron claws. But the martyr, although he was grievously wounded, bore this with such courage as though he felt no suffering at all: he neither cried out nor groaned, and only, raising his eyes to heaven with tenderness, awaited help from there, which he indeed received: for suddenly a voice came to him from heaven, saying:

"Be strong and of good courage, Mamas!"

Many of the believers present heard this voice and were still more confirmed in their faith. St. Mamas, wholly strengthened by that voice, gave no thought at all to the torments. The saint was tormented for a long time, his body being raked; at last they threw him into a prison for a time, while they prepared the furnace in which the governor intended to burn him. In the prison there were some forty other prisoners. When they were exhausted from hunger and thirst, St. Mamas prayed – and behold, through a small window a dove flew into the prison, holding in its mouth food, bright as pearls and sweeter than honey; laying it before St. Mamas, the dove flew away. That food multiplied for all the prisoners, as once the few loaves multiplied in the wilderness for a multitude of people (Mt. 14:19–20). Having tasted this wondrous food, the prisoners were refreshed. And again, by the prayer of St. Mamas, at midnight the doors of the prison opened and all the prisoners went out; only St. Mamas remained. When the furnace had been heated fiercely, the martyr was led out of the prison and cast into this fiery furnace. But God, who once cooled the Babylonian furnace for the three youths (Dan. 3:49–50), also cooled the fire for Mamas and made it cool for His servant in the midst of the blazing flames. The martyr, singing and glorifying God in that furnace, remained in it three days, until the furnace had cooled completely and the embers had turned to ash. After three days the governor, seeing that Mamas was still alive, was astonished and said:

"Can the power of this sorcerer be so great that even fire cannot touch him?"

Many of the people, seeing that the fire had not touched the saint in the least and had done him no harm, came to know the true God, and ascribing this miracle to Him alone, they glorified His power.

The mad governor, however, would not come to know the almighty God, but, bringing the martyr out of the furnace and seeing that the fire had not harmed him, ascribed this to sorcery and spoke many blasphemies against the truth. At last he condemned the martyr to be devoured by wild beasts. They brought the saint into the circus[9] and let loose a hungry she-bear against him; but she, approaching, bowed down to the saint and lay at his feet, embracing his feet. Then a leopard was let loose, but it too, with gentleness, embraced his neck, kissed his face, and licked the sweat from his brow. At this time a lion ran up – the very one that had come with the saint from the wilderness – and, leaping into the circus, spoke to the saint in a human voice (for God, to manifest His almighty power, opened the mouth of the beast, as once He opened the mouth of Balaam's ass) the following words:

"You are my shepherd, who pastured me on the mountain!"

And saying this, he at once rushed upon the people, of whom there was an innumerable multitude there, both pagans and Jews, both adults and children. By the will of God, the doors of the circus shut of themselves, and the beast tore to pieces a multitude of people there, so that the governor himself barely escaped. Very few of those in the circus escaped the fury of the lion, which seized and tore apart all of them with savagery. But the saint tamed the lion and sent it away into the wilderness. The governor, however, seized the saint again and kept him for some time in prison; then, bringing him out a second time into the circus, he released upon him the most ferocious lion. But this lion, too, at once became gentle and lay at the feet of the saint. Seeing this, the people gnashed their teeth at the saint in anger and cried out to the governor:

"Take away the lion, and we will stone this sorcerer!"

9. The circus was the name given to a square enclosed by a row of benches or by a wall. There, gladiators fought one another and with wild beasts. Christians were thrown into this square or arena, and afterward ravenous beasts, which were kept in special cages at the circus, were let loose here.

And they began to cast stones at the martyr. One of the pagan priests, at the command of the tormentor, struck the saint hard in the belly with a trident and pierced it, so that all his entrails fell out. Gathering them up and holding them in his own hands, St. Mamas went out of the city. A woman of the faithful collected his blood, which flowed like water, into a vessel. Having walked about 200 sazhens, St. Mamas found a cave in a rocky cliff and fell asleep in it. Here he heard a voice from heaven calling him to the heavenly dwellings, and with joy he gave up his spirit into the hands of the Lord, for whom he had zealously suffered[10].

Thus St. Mamas received the crown of martyrdom. His holy relics were buried by the faithful at the place of his repose, and there many healings and miracles took place, as is clearly seen from the words of St. Basil the Great, who, in his sermon to the people on the memory of the holy martyr Mamas, says:

"Remember the holy martyr, you who have seen him in a vision, you who among those living in this place have him as your helper, you to whom, calling upon his name, he has truly brought help, whom he has guided back from wandering in life, whom he has healed of infirmities, whose children, already dead, he has restored to life again, whose life he has prolonged: all of you, gathering together as one, offer praise to the martyr."

When Julian the Apostate[11], still in his youth and desiring to leave behind a monument of piety (though even at that time he was a wolf in sheep's clothing), began to build a magnificent church in honor of St. Mamas over his tomb (he did this not out of piety but out of vanity and hypocrisy), then truly one could see a most glorious miracle. For what was built by day was destroyed by night: the columns that had been set up turned into a heap; some of the stones could not hold properly in the wall, others became so hard that they could not be cut; others crumbled into dust; and the mortar and bricks were found each morning as

10. Mamas died in 275 A.D.

11. The emperor Julian reigned from 361 to 363 A.D. Having become emperor, he fell away from the Christian faith and made it the aim of his life to restore paganism. For this reason he is called the Apostate.

though scattered by the wind and blown from their places. This was a rebuke to Julian's impiety and a sign of his future persecution of the Church of God. Such a miracle took place at the tomb of the saint, for the saint did not wish a church to be built in his honor for those who were soon to face persecution for the true faith.

O Lord, by the prayers of Thy martyr Mamas, work with us a sign for good, and deliver us from those who persecute us, that we may glorify Thee with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever, amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

O holy one, by the staff given thee by God, preserve thy people in the life-giving pastures; and crush beneath the feet of those who sing to thee the invisible and untamable beasts, for all who are in afflictions have thee, O Mamas, as their fervent intercessor.

* * *

Life of St. John the Faster, Patriarch of Constantinople

Житие святого Иоанна Постника, патриарха Константинопольского

St. John was born in Constantinople[12]; he labored under the emperors Justin[13], Tiberius[14] and Maurice[15]. Originally he was a goldsmith; by his virtuous life he was a pious man, a lover of the poor, a lover of strangers, and God-fearing.

Having received into his house a monk of Palestine named Eusebius, John lived together with him. Once, when they were walking together, the monk was at John's right side. Suddenly he heard someone unknown to him say: "It is not fitting for you, father, to walk at the right side of the great one." This was a divine foreshadowing concerning John, that a great archpastoral ministry would be entrusted to him. Hearing this, the monk told the blessed Eutychius, Patriarch of

12. Constantinople was the capital of the Byzantine Empire, now Istanbul; it was founded by Constantine the Great on the site of the small town of Byzantium.
13. Justin II the Younger was an East Roman emperor who reigned from 565 to 578 A.D.
14. Tiberius was the successor of Justin II; he reigned from 578 to 582 A.D.
15. The successor of Tiberius; he reigned from 582 to 602 A.D.

Constantinople[16], who began to urge John to accept tonsure, since he considered him worthy to be in the clergy of the Church.

And so, in the church of St. Lawrence, while standing in prayer, St. John received the following revelation: in the sanctuary he saw a multitude of saints, and they all put on white and shining garments and sang beautiful hymns. Then out of the sanctuary came a man with a vessel from which he generously gave alms to the many beggars assembled there, yet the vessel did not empty. When one of the beggars cried out in the crush: "Lord, have mercy, until when will this vessel not be emptied!" the vessel at once became empty. This revelation made the venerable one ponder, and he marveled at the vision, which foreshadowed both his future rank and his great generosity to the poor.

After some time, the Patriarch of Constantinople Eutychius died, and by God's will John, as one worthy, was chosen and appointed for ordination, but he did not consent until he saw the following terrifying vision: on one side the sea could be seen rising up to the heavens, and a dreadful fiery furnace; on the other side, a multitude of Angels saying to him: "You refuse the throne? Let another have it, but you will be punished by all of us." After the Angels had said this to John with a threat, he, though against his will, obeyed and was made Patriarch of Constantinople. In this rank he led an ascetic and virtuous life until his death, as his miracles bear witness. He calmed a great storm at sea by prayer and the sign of the Cross. A blind man named John, from Gaza[17], he made to see, placing upon his eyes a portion of the Body of Christ with the words: "He who healed the blind from birth, may He heal you," and the blind man at once received his sight.

Once, by God's permission, there was a great plague in Constantinople. The venerable one prayed that God would turn away His

16. Eutychius was patriarch for the first time from 552 to 565; after him, St. John III Scholasticus was patriarch for five years; then Eutychius was again raised to the patriarchate and remained patriarch until his death, which occurred in 582, when St. John IV the Faster was raised in his place.

17. Gaza is situated on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea; in antiquity it was one of the five most famous Philistine cities and served as the southern boundary of the Canaanites in Palestine. In the New Testament, Gaza is mentioned only in the account of the conversion of the minister of the Ethiopian queen Candace (Acts 8:25). From the fourth century Gaza was already a Christian city, and in the seventh century it was conquered by the Muslims.

righteous wrath. He commanded one of his faithful servants to take two vessels, one full of small stones and the other empty, and to stand all day at the place where the dead were brought, and to count them, transferring the stones from the full vessel into the empty one. Having counted, the servant found on the first day three hundred and twenty-three of the dead carried past and reported this to the saint. St. John foretold that the plague would end; and this began to come to pass each day, for on the second day the servant standing and counting found fewer of the dead carried past, on the third day still fewer; and on Sunday, according to the saint's prediction and by his prayers, the plague finally ceased.

The abstinence of St. John was such that for six days he partook of no food, and on the seventh he ate a little of the garden fruits: either a melon, or grapes, or a fig. He fed himself thus throughout his episcopacy. He slept very little, and even that sitting; at the same time he tied a small cord to a candle and set a tub of water, so that when the candle burned down and the cord fell into the tub, a noise would arise and thus wake him. The saint remained constantly in prayer, and in many ascetic labors he struggled against the passions. Many times he turned back the invasion of foreign peoples and saved the city from destruction by his prayers and fasting; he preserved his flock from visible and invisible enemies; he was exceedingly merciful, a father to orphans, a provider for the poor, a defender of the wronged, a zealot for God, an eradicator of all malice. Once, on a Friday, it was announced to the saint that on the following day there would be a horse race; it was then the Saturday of Pentecost. And the saint answered: "Let there be no horse race on the holy Pentecost," and, falling on his knees, he prayed to God that, for the sake of fear and to put an end to such a thing, some sign might appear. And so, when all had gathered at the place where the races were usually held, and when the races had begun, suddenly a violent storm arose, with thunder and lightning, rain fell and great hail, so that everyone fled from the spectacle in fear.

The venerable one had power to cast out unclean spirits as well. Thus a wife who had a demon-possessed husband led him to a certain hermit, but he said to her: "Go to the most holy John, Patriarch of Con-

stantinople; he will heal your husband." Having done this, the wife received what she asked, and together with her husband, healed by the prayers of the venerable one, she went home with joy. And in general many sick people received healing from the saint. For many women, by his prayers, barrenness was lifted.

Having so wisely shepherded the rational flock, the venerable one, in venerable old age, attained a blessed end and passed from earth to the heavenly dwellings[18]. When the body of the saint lay already dead, the well-known governor of the region, Nilus, came to take his leave; bowing down, he kissed him. The saint, though dead, in the sight and to the amazement of all, whispered a few words into the ear of the governor Nilus, which the latter told no one. St. John was buried within the sanctuary of the holy Apostles, as one worthy of such honor, glorifying and blessing the wondrous God in the saints: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

* * *

On the same day, the memory of the 3618 martyrs who suffered at Nicomedia

В тот же день память 3618 мучеников, в Никомидии пострадавших

In the reign of the Roman emperors Diocletian and Maximian[19], 3,618 martyrs who had come from Alexandria suffered for Christ at Nicomedia[20]. After the murder of St. Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria, his murderers believed in the Lord, together with all their household and many others who desired to die for Christ. Taking with them their wives and children and all their kin, they went of their own accord to Nicomedia to suffer for Christ, and they appeared before the emperor, crying out: "We are Christians!" Hearing this, Diocletian was dismayed, and at first he sought by flattery to persuade them to re-

18. This took place on 2 September 595 A.D.
19. In 284 the Roman Empire was divided into an eastern and a western half: the first was governed by Diocletian, and the second by his friend Maximian; they reigned from 284 to 305 A.D.
20. Nicomedia was the capital of the eastern empire, the residence of the emperor Diocletian, a magnificent city in the region of Bithynia on the shore of the Propontis (the Sea of Marmara), in the northwestern part of Asia Minor.

nounce the Crucified; but when they would not obey, he commanded the soldiers to put them to the sword before his eyes and to cast their bodies into mountain chasms. Many years later, their honorable relics were uncovered, on account of the miracles of the holy martyrs that followed.

* * *



THE THIRD DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 3

3 сентября

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

Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Anthimus, Bishop of Nicomedia, and with Him of Many Others

Житие и страдание святого священномученика Анфима, епископа Никомидийского, и с ним многих

Saint Anthimus was born in the city of Nicomedia[1]. Even in his youth he displayed the marks of a man already perfect, and he was distinguished by his meekness. As he grew in body, so he grew in spirit. Having come of age, he began to stand out from all others by his virtuous life; and in those years of human life when the passions commonly spring up in a man like tares among the wheat, Anthimus was already a model of dispassion. His flesh was mortified in its sinful desires, and his spirit was filled with humility. Every kind of envy, wrath and sloth he had utterly uprooted from his soul, and he did not allow his body to be sated with gluttony and drunkenness. By his example he showed, on the contrary: temperance in all things, love and peace with all, prudence, and diligent care for the glory of God. For such a pious and virtuous life he was, in a short time, granted the priestly rank. In this rank Anthimus devoted himself with all his heart to God-minded prayer and soul-profitable labors, instructing everyone by word and deed in the saving path of virtue. When the archpastor of the Church of Nicomedia, Saint Cyril, died, Anthimus was raised to his place. His election as bishop, as befitted so worthy a man, was attested from on high: at his consecration a heavenly light illuminated the church, and a

1. Nicomedia – the capital of the eastern empire, the residence of the emperor Diocletian, a magnificent city in the region of Bithynia on the shore of the Propontis (Sea of Marmara), in the northwestern part of Asia Minor.

certain divine voice was heard from above. Having taken upon himself the governance of the Church of Nicomedia, Saint Anthimus, like a skilled helmsman in a storm, preserved it as a ship unharmed from being sunk. For although many Christians were drowned at sea for Christ's sake, they did not perish in impiety: the storm of idolatry did not sink them, nor did the depths of the infernal hell devour them; but through the instruction and governance of their holy archpastor Anthimus they attained the quiet and untroubled haven of heaven. This good shepherd of Christ led to God, crowned with martyrs' crowns, nearly his whole rational flock. When the idolaters opened a great persecution against the Christians throughout the East, and especially in Nicomedia, where at that time the impious emperors Diocletian and Maximian[2] were residing, Saint Anthimus instructed and strengthened all the faithful for the martyr's ascetic struggle.

"Now," he said, "it behooves us to show ourselves true Christians; now is the time of struggle; now let him who is truly a warrior of Jesus Christ step forth boldly to the battle. Here we are to suffer only a little for Christ, who suffered much for us; let us confess Him here before men, that there He may confess us before His Heavenly Father. Here before men let us glorify Him, that there He may glorify us before His Angels. Let us therefore glorify God in our bodies, by surrendering ourselves to torments; let us die a temporal death, that we may live forever; let us not fear those who kill us. For if they slay us, they will be the authors of our future blessedness: the Right Hand of the Master of our contest will crown our severed head with an incorruptible crown; our broken members will shine like the sun in His kingdom; the wounds we receive will multiply to us an eternal recompense; our bloody sufferings will lead us into the bridal chamber of the Heavenly Bridegroom.

2. Here is meant not Maximian, the co-reigning colleague of Diocletian, but Maximian Galerius, the son-in-law of the former, co-ruler of the first in the East of the Roman Empire, and after him his successor (305–311). The persecution of Christians under Diocletian began in 303. The cause of the persecution was Galerius, who persuaded Diocletian to issue a general law against the Christians. The law ordered that Christian churches be destroyed, the books of Holy Scripture burned, and Christians deprived of all civil rights and offices. The persecutions under Diocletian were distinguished, first, by the cruelty of the tortures and, second, by the great number of martyrs, who were put to death at one time, from ten to one hundred and more in a single day.

Let us therefore be ready to shed even our blood; let us become a spectacle of reproach and dishonor before the eyes of Angels and men."

Strengthened by such and similar words of the saint, very many of the faithful bravely gave themselves up to grievous torments for the sake of their Most Sweet Lord Jesus. One Christian, among those most fervent in faith, zealous for God, resolved upon a bold deed. When in Nicomedia there was read out an imperial edict on the slaying of Christians, written on paper, and then nailed up in a conspicuous place upon a wall, he, stepping forward before everyone, confessed Christ, and tearing down this edict from the wall, he tore it up, loudly denouncing pagan impiety; and thus he appeared as the first martyr in Nicomedia.

After this, very many of the nobles and of the court officials began openly to confess Christ, proclaiming themselves Christians: such were Dorotheus, Mardonius, Migdonius, Peter, Indes, Gorgonius[3], together with their numerous retinue; all of them voluntarily gave themselves up to torments for Christ, and many of them were destroyed by the tormentors through various forms of execution.

At the same time, to the Christians' most grievous sorrow, the following circumstance was added. For some unknown reason the imperial palace caught fire, and the greater part of it burned down. The impious pagans slandered the Christians, saying that out of hatred they had set fire to the imperial palace. Then the emperor's fury reached its extreme, and, becoming more savage than a wild beast, he destroyed the Christians in great numbers, condemning them now to beheading by the sword, now to burning by fire. Notwithstanding all this, the faithful, seeing the martyr's death of their fellow believers and knowing that the same awaited them, kindled with divine love gave themselves up to the tormentors to be burned by fire, as if into some pleasant and cool place. And the remaining numerous Christians were bound by the tormentors, placed in boats, and drowned in the depths of the sea. In his unbridled fury the emperor commanded that not only the living be

3. Dorotheus was a praepositus (an official); Peter and Gorgonius were court dignitaries. The relics of Gorgonius were translated to Rome. Migdonius bears the name of his place of origin: Migdonian, that is, Phrygian or Masian (in the western and northwestern part of Asia Minor). Indis was a eunuch. See about them further on in this same Life.

drowned, but that the bodies of the holy martyrs previously buried be dug up from the earth and cast into the sea, so that the surviving Christians might not venerate them. So cruel was the persecution, during which Saint Anthimus was sought out, "as a lamb to the slaughter" (Is. 53:7). Before tearing the shepherd apart, the wolves rushed upon his flock; but God's Providence and Protection preserved him in a village called Semana, so that he might first lead his rational sheep to God, and afterwards himself depart to Him, sealing with the outpouring of his blood the faith of the Church of Nicomedia. At that time, in the church, on the day of the Nativity of Christ, as many as twenty thousand holy martyrs were burned, and the remainder of Saint Anthimus's flock were cast into prison. The saint, by his frequent written epistles, which he secretly sent to the Christians, taught them and confirmed them in the faith; so that although he was not with them bodily, by the will of God, being removed from them for a time, he was nonetheless spiritually present with them in the prisons, supplying them with spiritual food through his letters. The sheep struggled openly, and their shepherd secretly, against the wolves; and the saint concealed himself, not fearing torments, but in order that by teaching and prayer he might establish the weaker in the faith, strengthen the feeble, make the fearful courageous, until he had presented them all to Christ, and afterwards surrender himself to the same torments.

One of the faithful, strengthened by Saint Anthimus, named Zeno, a soldier by profession, exposed before everyone the impiety of Emperor Maximian in the following manner. In Nicomedia, near the circus, there stood a temple of the pagan goddess Ceres[4]. Once Maximian, with his soldiers and all the people, was offering abundant sacrifice to the idol of this goddess. Zeno, during this impious festival, standing on an elevated place, cried out loudly:

"You are deluded, O Emperor, worshipping a soulless stone and a dumb tree, for this is the deception of demons, leading their worshippers to perdition. Know the truth, Maximian, and turn your bodily eyes,

4. Ceres, or Demeter, was the Roman and Greek goddess of fertility, agriculture and marriage. The immoral rites in honor of this goddess were especially widespread in Phrygia, which lay adjoining Bithynia.

together with the spiritual, to heaven: look, and from the contemplation of this most luminous creation understand concerning its Creator, what manner of Creator He is. Learn this from the observation of creatures; learn to honor that God who is well pleased not with the blood of irrational animals slaughtered and burned in suffocating smoke, but with pure souls and the pure heart of a rational creature."

Hearing this, Maximian commanded that Zeno be seized and, for such bold words to the emperor, be beaten with stones on his face and lips. The tormentors knocked out his teeth, tore his face, wore away his tongue which confessed Christ, and at last, barely alive, led him out of the city and, by the imperial command, struck off his holy head.

At this time Saint Anthimus, from his place of hiding, sent a deacon with his letters to Dorotheus, who was in prison, and to the others imprisoned with him for Christ, exhorting them to endurance, so that they might be ready with joy to die for the Life-Giver, the Lord. The impious seized this deacon and presented him, with Saint Anthimus's letters, to Emperor Maximian. The emperor read these letters and found in them what was unpleasant to him: the letters contained a heartfelt greeting of the saint to the martyrs, diligent compassion for them, a fatherly instruction to them, pastoral teaching, a hierarch's blessing upon their martyr's struggle, and encouragement to overthrow the idols. Greatly angered by all this, the emperor commanded that all the martyrs be brought out of the prison and presented to him for judgment. Casting upon them a haughty and savage glance, he rebuked them at length. Then he ordered the letters of Saint Anthimus to be read, for their reproach and condemnation.

"You believe the deceitful fables of this wicked man," he said, "and listen to his corrupt teaching, and not to the emperor's command!"

The faithful, hearing the letter being read, rejoiced deeply, and, shedding tears of joy, greeted Anthimus's deacon, standing at a distance, with a bright gaze, a joyful face and bowed head; and the words of Saint Anthimus which were read out for their reproof, they laid up in their hearts.

Then the emperor said to the deacon:

"Tell us, whence have you come? Who gave you these letters, which corrupt the people? And where is hidden he who sent you?"

The deacon, opening his mouth, filled with grace, began to speak as follows:

"He who sends these letters is a shepherd. But since he is far from his flock, he instructs it by letters and stirs it to piety; especially when he hears of the attack of many wolves upon the rational flock, he loudly tells the sheep what they must do. And he conveys to them from the Chief Shepherd these words: 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul' (Mt. 10:28). I have brought this letter to this flock of Christ in order to convey its contents to them; but where he who sent it is now, I will not say, for it would be great madness if I became a betrayer of my shepherd, through whom great benefit is brought to all, and who, even without my informing them of him, will soon be made manifest, for 'a city that is set on an hill cannot be hid' (Mt. 5:14)."

Enraged by these bold words, the tormentor condemned the holy deacon, whose name was Theophanes, to death. First they cut out his tongue, which had so graciously spoken, and then they killed him, stoning him and piercing him with arrows. After this the emperor ordered, by various painful executions, that the martyrs who had been brought to judgment also be put to death: St. Dorotheus was to be beheaded, Mardonius burned on a pyre, Migdonius thrown alive into a pit and buried in the earth, Gorgonius, Indis and Peter drowned in the sea with millstones hung around their necks, and all the rest destroyed by many other tortures. Thus, all of them departed to the Lord by different kinds of death. The bodies of the martyrs that had been cast into the sea were afterward caught by fishermen in their nets, and a maiden named Domna buried them. Learning of this, the pagans beheaded her with a sword while she was praying over the relics of the holy martyrs. At the same time Euthymius, who by his preaching had converted many to the confession of Christ and the martyr's struggle, there in Nicomedia also, after various tortures, received a martyr's death, being beheaded with a sword. After all this, the time had come for St. Anthimus also to suffer for the confession of Jesus Christ.

While he was hiding in the aforementioned village of Semana and secretly sowing the word of God and increasing faith in Christ, Maximian learned of him and immediately sent twenty soldiers to seize him. Arriving at this village, they met St. Anthimus and asked him:

"Where is Anthimus, the Christian teacher?"

Meeting the soldiers, Anthimus led them into his hut and said:

"I will tell you about Anthimus and deliver him into your hands, but first rest a little from the road."

Then he offered them food and set before them a modest meal, hospitably entertaining them. After this the saint revealed himself before them, that he was Anthimus.

"I," he said, "am the one you are seeking; take me, then, and lead me to him who sent you."

Hearing this, the soldiers were astonished and ashamed to lift their eyes to the venerable gray hair of Anthimus, for they had seen his cordial reception and friendly hospitality. And they began to consider among themselves that they must lead this innocent and good man, not toward his welfare in this life, but to the tormentor, to extreme sorrow and to the manifest death that would follow cruel torments. They pitied Anthimus and felt ashamed before him, and they said to the saint:

"We will not take you with us, but we advise you to hide; and we will say before Maximian that everywhere in the environs of Nicomedia we sought Anthimus and nowhere found him."

But Anthimus zealously kept the commandments of the Lord, and therefore he urged them to speak the truth, since he did not wish for lies to be told on his account, and moreover he was eager to suffer and die for Christ; so he went with them. On the way he preached to them the word of God, teaching them faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Not without effect did this seed of the word of God, sown by Anthimus, fall, but it fell on good ground: it took root in the hearts of the soldiers, flourished there and grew to their perfection in faith. When they reached a river, Anthimus offered a prayer over them and baptized them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Then they set out again on the road, conversing edifyingly, until they reached Nicomedia. When Anthimus entered the city, he was reported

to Maximian, and the emperor ordered that he be brought before him in bonds.

And so the saint, with his hands bound behind him, stood before the tormentor; for, as a witness to the truth, he had to appear before the tribunal of the impious pagans thus bound, as though he were a criminal; but he was free in soul, and he turned it toward heaven, whence he expected help. The tormentor ordered that all the instruments used in torture be brought, in order first to frighten Anthimus by their mere sight, reckoning that the saint, fearing them, would agree to fulfill the emperor's will. Then they began to question him:

"Are you that Anthimus who, deluded about a certain simple man named Christ, leads the common people into the same delusion, deceiving them and inciting them to resist our imperial command, and reviling and insulting our gods with countless abuses?"

Anthimus, laughing at the instruments of torture brought forth and at the emperor's words, said:

“Know, O emperor, that I would not answer your question at all, were it not that the divine Apostle counseled me to be ready ‘to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you’ (1 Pet. 3:15), for God promised to give ‘a mouth and wisdom, which all those opposing us shall not be able to gainsay nor resist’ (Lk. 21:15). And I was the first to mock your idols, which you call gods; and now I mock your great folly, that you hoped to tear me away from my Creator, who also honored you, an ungrateful creature, with His image. Why have you brought me bound to your judgment and laid before my eyes the instruments of torture? Do you wish to frighten me with them, so that I, in fear, will obey your godless command? But you cannot frighten one who himself desires to die for his Lord. Address this to those who are faint-hearted and timid, for whom this temporal life appears a great consolation and the loss of temporal life a great sorrow: frighten them, not me. For me this perishable body and this temporal life are as heavy bonds and a prison, not allowing my soul to pass to the desired God; and your threats and tortures are to me more pleasant than any earthly delight, since they will be followed by death, which,

freeing me from the bonds of the flesh, will transfer me to where all my desire is directed."

After the saint spoke these words, the tormentor ordered him struck on the neck with stones. Anthimus, receiving these blows with thanksgiving, as the beginning of sufferings for Christ and the foundation of the martyr's crowns, desired still greater sufferings, wishing to inherit the higher reward; and now mocking and deriding the tormentor, now provoking him to still greater wrath, so that he would order him to be tormented with the most grievous sufferings, he repeated the terrible prophetic word: "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens" (Jer. 10:11).

These words pierced the tormentor's heart with rage, and he ordered that the holy hieromartyr's feet be pierced through with red-hot sharp iron stakes. But this torment too was a joy to the saint, for he, rejoicing, glorified God, who had deemed him worthy to endure such sufferings for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then Maximian ordered sharp potsherds laid on the ground, the martyr placed naked upon them, and in that state beaten even harder with rods, so that his heart would be pierced with double pain: from above by the blows of the rods, and from below by the sharp potsherds. But the saint, even then, did not despair of his victory over the tormentor, singing: 'I thank Thee, O Lord, King of the ages, for Thou hast girded me with strength for battle and cast down beneath my feet those who rose up against me; Thou hast turned the backs of my enemies toward me, and I destroy those who hate me' (Ps. 17:40–41).

Then the tormentor devised another torture: heating bronze boots, they put them on Anthimus's feet. But divine grace from on high overshadowed the sufferer, strengthening him in his sufferings, and he heard a voice promising him soon the heavenly crown, and this voice filled his heart with bliss. From this divine consolation the saint began openly, before everyone, to take no notice of the torments, and his face was illumined with heavenly joy, as though he suffered no pain at all. Seeing this, the tormentor marveled and said of St. Anthimus that he

was a sorcerer and by some magic was overcoming the fiery force of the burning. They asked him why, being in such torments, he rejoiced.

"I rejoice thus," the saint answered, "because the present sufferings serve me as a firm hope of the promised blessings; and in a short time I will overcome your arrogant pride and prove that your gods are far more helpless than human strength, and you will repent of your malice forever, but in vain; and you will not depart from this life before you are condemned to eternal perdition."

Even more enraged by these words, the tyrant commanded that the saint be bound to a wheel, and that the axle of the wheel be set in rotation with him upon it, while his body was to be burned with fire. But when the servants began to carry out the imperial command, binding Anthimus to the wheel and kindling a fire beneath it, they themselves suddenly fell down as though dead. The wheel stopped, and the fire turned upon them and scorched them; and afterwards they related the following to the tyrant:

"When we began to turn the wheel and set fire to the one bound to it, three radiant men appeared beside us and said: 'Fear not, servant of God Anthimus!' And when they turned their gaze upon us, fear seized us, and the fire beneath the wheel turned upon our faces and burned us."

Hearing this, the tyrant was astonished, but he ascribed it all to sorcery. After this, St. Anthimus was taken down from the wheel, and the emperor threatened him with beheading by the sword if he did not offer sacrifice to the idols. The martyr, hearing that the sword awaited him, rejoiced and prayed fervently that God would grant him to depart quickly to his flock, which had ascended to heaven by the path of martyrdom before him, so that he too might say: "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me" (Is. 8:18).

But the impious emperor first commanded that the saint be cast into prison and bound with iron chains. As Anthimus was being led to the prison, he glorified and blessed God for everything. And behold, a light shone upon him from heaven, his chains fell apart, and the servants leading him fell to the ground in fear. But Anthimus raised them up and bade them carry out what they had been commanded. On reaching

the prison, the saint entered it and remained there among the criminals and robbers confined within; yet he rejoiced as though he had been brought to a feast or a wedding celebration. Offering the prisoners the spiritual food of the word of God and presenting them the drink of piety, he won them to Christ and joined them to His holy Church, teaching them the faith and good works; and there in the prison he regenerated them by the water of holy baptism. And that prison became a bright church, filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, where the faithful offered to God the sacrifice of praise day and night.

Learning of this, Maximian commanded that St. Anthimus be brought before him, and he sought by flattery to persuade him to worship the pagan gods, promising to make him the first of the priests of the idols. But Anthimus, with his accustomed boldness, answered the emperor:

"Even before your words, I am the highest priest among the priests of God[5]; and I am a priest of Christ the Shepherd-Chief, who clothed Himself in my flesh and came down from heaven for my sake. He served before God the Father as a redeeming sacrifice for men, died on the cross, was buried, and on the third day rose and ascended in glory into heaven, lifting up thereto all who believe in Him. I am His priest, and therefore I offer myself to Him as a living sacrifice. But your priesthood, and your sacrifices, and your so-called gods are darkness, and they shall go into everlasting darkness."

Hearing this, the tyrant condemned Anthimus to death. And the saint went to his death, filled with heavenly joy.

"Now," he said, "is the time of my gladness; now is the fulfillment of my desire; now the door of eternal life is opened to me, that, having departed from the body, I may enter to the Lord, and be satisfied when His glory shall appear before me."

Having reached the place of execution, where through temporal death he was to pass into unending life, the hierarch asked for time to pray; and having prayed, he bowed his holy head beneath the axe, by which, in accordance with the emperor's command, he was beheaded,

5. That is, the bishop.

and thus received the end of his martyrdom for Christ on the 3rd day of September. When evening came, some of the faithful came secretly to the place of execution, took with them the much-suffering body of St. Anthimus, and buried it with honor, glorifying the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, to Whom be glory forever, amen[6].

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having lived piously in the priesthood, and completed the path of sufferings, thou didst extinguish the services of the idols, becoming a champion of thy flock, O God-inspired one. Wherefore we honor thee now, crying out secretly: deliver us from calamities by thy prayers, O Anthimus of ever-blessed memory.

* * *

On the same day, the suffering of the holy martyr Basilissa

В тот же день страдание святой мученицы Василисы

In the reign of the impious Roman emperor Diocletian, perhaps no other city shed so much martyr's blood as Nicomedia: in it so great a multitude of the faithful were slain for Christ that, in a single month alone, as many as seventeen thousand who received a martyr's death were counted, besides twenty thousand burned in the church on the day of the Nativity of Christ. And such innocent slaughter of the faithful during this cruel persecution continued not for one month but for a long time. Who could be able to count all the Christians who perished during this time, save only the one God, who numbers also the

6. The martyric death of St. Anthimus must be assigned to the year 303: in this year Diocletian ordered the church in Nicomedia to be burned together with all the Christians who were in it, issued a decree forbidding Christians to gather for worship, and afterward another decree commanding that bishops, presbyters and deacons be cast into prison and required to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, and in case of refusal, to be tortured and killed. The Byzantine emperor Justinian (527–565) built a magnificent church in honor of the Hieromartyr Anthimus on the shore of the Golden Horn, adorning it with marble and gold. The emperor Leo the Great founded a church for him near Xyloprokos. In the tenth century the head of St. Anthimus was in Nicomedia, where many miracles took place from it, and where the hair upon it constantly grew.

multitude of the stars! In Nicomedia also suffered St. Martyr Basilissa. Glory to almighty God, who displays His great power not only in grown men but also in little children! The holy martyr was only nine years old when she was brought to judgment before the hegemon, or governor, of Nicomedia, Alexander; before him this martyr-maiden, the undefiled bride of the Heavenly Bridegroom, confessed Christ so boldly that all were amazed at her prudence and free discourse with the tormentor, with whom she disputed about the Christian faith as a fully mature man would. The governor hoped to persuade her to honor his gods by flattery and promises, but the saint remained unyielding; then the governor commanded that she be struck on the face, and the holy maiden gave thanks to God for this. The governor then commanded that her clothes be removed and that she be beaten with rods; she offered an even greater thanksgiving to the Lord for this. This drove the governor to fury, and he commanded that she be beaten still harder; and when her whole body was covered as if by one continuous wound, she cried out: "O God, I thank Thee for all this." Then the governor commanded that her shins be pierced, that she be hung head downward, and that pitch, sulphur, oil and tin be cast upon a fire kindled beneath her, in the confidence that she would soon expire from grievous suffering and the foul smoke; but the saint, even amid these torments, as though in paradisal coolness, did not cease to sing praise to the Lord. Seeing that the saint treated with contempt the tortures he devised, the governor commanded that she be cast into a heated furnace. Signing herself with the sign of the Precious Cross, St. Basilissa entered the flame and remained in it for a long time without any harm. All those present were seized with terror and looked on this wondrous sight in bewilderment. Then, bringing her out of the furnace, they released two lions upon her to tear her to pieces; but the saint, having prayed, remained unharmed: the prayer of the maiden, like that of the prophet Daniel of old, shut the mouths of the lions (Dan. 6:1–100). Terror then seized the governor Alexander himself, who, having remained for a long time as though in a frenzy, at last cried out: "These are the judgments of God!" Then, falling down at the feet of the holy martyr, he cried: "Have mercy on me, servant of the heavenly King and God, and forgive me for all the tor-

ments; pray to your God that the Lord may not destroy me on your account, for from now on I too believe in Him." Then the holy martyr, glorifying loudly the merciful Lord, who had enlightened the governor's blindness and opened to him the knowledge of the truth, commanded the bishop Antoninus to explain the true faith to Alexander and, having instructed him in it, to baptize him. All the Christians present rejoiced sincerely at the conversion of the governor Alexander, who, after baptism, repented of his former impiety and of the torments he had inflicted upon Christians, and begged St. Basilissa to obtain forgiveness for him from the Lord. Through the intercession and prayers of the holy martyr, the governor Alexander, having fully believed, soon died, full of true repentance, and was buried with honor by the Christians; and the saint, after his burial, withdrew from the city a distance of three stadia (about 4 km). Here, feeling thirst and finding a stone, the saint stood upon it and turned in prayer to the Lord, and immediately water flowed from the stone. Having quenched her thirst, she went a little way from this place and, kneeling in prayer, gave up her spirit to God. Learning of this, bishop Antoninus came there and buried the saint near that stone from which, by her prayer, water had appeared. By the prayers of the holy martyr, pour forth, O Lord, also upon us Thy great and abundant mercy, amen.

On the same day, the memory of the holy hieromartyr Aristion

В тот же день память святого священномученика Аристиона

This holy Aristion was bishop of Alexandria by the sea, which lay between the cities of Issus and Antioch in Syria. He zealously preached about Christ and His saving sufferings, death and resurrection, and also taught the people that everything on earth is corruptible and transitory, while only the future heavenly blessings are eternal and incorruptible. For such teaching he was brought to judgment before the governor of the city of Alexandria and, after he confessed

Christ as the true God, was condemned to be burned, and in this martyr's contest he finished his blessed life.



THE FOURTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 4

4 сентября

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

Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Babylas, and with Him the Three Youths

Страдание святого священномученика Вавилы, и с ним трех отроков

The impious Emperor Numerian,[1] during his stay in the city of Antioch, held a great festival in honor of the idols. Among the sacrifices offered to the idols was the innocent blood of a little boy, the son of a king, whom Numerian had taken as a pledge of firm and unbroken peace with a foreign king. Numerian had once waged war against this king, and since neither could overcome the other, they concluded a peace between themselves, confirmed it by mutual oaths, and became friends. As a guarantee of the inviolable peace and friendship, the foreign king had given into Numerian's keeping his little son, so that he might take the place of a father to him and raise him as his own child. Receiving this royal youth with flattery, Numerian soon showed a murderous cruelty: he broke the peace with the king, disregarded his oath, scorned the friendship, and with his own hand slew the king's son in the temple of his abominable gods.

At that time the archpastor of the Church of Antioch was the holy and God-fearing Bishop Babylas. Chosen by the providence of God to the episcopal throne, St. Babylas "was an example to the faithful in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). While the idolatrous festival and the inhuman murder were taking place, the bishop gathered all the Christians who were in Antioch into the holy church, and there offered the bloodless sacrifice to the true God, praying for his rational flock that the soul-destroying wolves

1. Roman emperor, reigned from 283 to 284 A.D.

would not carry it off; at the same time he taught his rational sheep to be steadfast in the faith and not to fall away from the Church in times of calamity. Returning from the abominable and man-slaying sacrifice, the impious emperor made his way toward the Christian church, desiring to witness the celebration of the Divine Mysteries and threatening by his entrance to defile the Lord's holy place. Hearing that the impious emperor was coming to the church with his whole senate, the zealot of God's glory, the great hierarch Babylas, left the Divine sanctuary, went out to meet the emperor, and stopped in the church doorway. As the emperor approached the church, the hierarch cried out in a loud voice:

"It is not fitting for you, idolatrous emperor, to enter the holy place of the Living God and defile it with your presence."

Denouncing and reproaching the emperor for his idolatrous impiety, St. Babylas boldly barred the emperor's way and did not allow him to enter the church. And when the emperor came still closer to the church doors, St. Babylas, laying his right hand on the emperor's breast, thrust him back from the house of God, so that the emperor withdrew with great shame. Since he had servants and soldiers with him, he wished to force his way into the church, but the Divine power acting through St. Babylas did not permit the impious man to touch even the threshold of the church: Babylas's words were terrifying to the godless man, like the words of an Angel. Moreover, given the large crowd and the great number of believers, the emperor feared that discord and an uprising might follow. Therefore he, silently suppressing his vexation, returned angrily to his palace. But on the next day he ordered the church set on fire, and summoning the hierarch to him, he began to rebuke him for his bold act.

"O most wretched of all mortals!" said the emperor. "On whom did you rely when you dared to resist my sovereign power and forbid me to enter the church? Do you not know what a great evil it is to offend the emperor, and what punishments threaten whoever dares to dishonor the person of the emperor?"

St. Babylas answered fearlessly:

"I do not regard the earthly emperor, nor am I ashamed of his face, but I look upon the Heavenly King and hope in Him. I fear Him who

has appointed me shepherd of His sheep and commands me to guard them from the attacks of the wolf and not to allow the beast to enter the flock. I have not offended the emperor, for I know that such boldness would be madness; I have restrained the one who wished by his entrance to insult and defile the holy place of God. Therefore, in justice, you ought to thank me for restraining you from such an evil intention: by carrying it out you would have utterly destroyed yourself, for you would have infinitely offended your Creator, from whom to fall away is worse than any death."

"It would be more fitting for you," said Numerian, "to repent of your yesterday's boldness against us and to ask forgiveness, yet even now you vex us."

"We Christians ought not," answered Babylas, "to reproach or vex any person. We do not vex you either: for one must not dishonor the creature of God, made in the image and likeness of God. Yet if someone rises up against God and offers insult to His holy place, that person is not only unworthy of respect but is justly to be hated as an enemy of the Lord, according to the word of David: 'Do I not hate them that hate thee, O Lord, and am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: they are become enemies to me' (Ps. 138:21–22)."

"Cease your much speaking," said the emperor, "and listen to us: if you wish to be spared punishment for your crime and to receive forgiveness, then offer sacrifice to our gods and bow down to them."

"For the flock entrusted to me," answered the hierarch, "I am ready to bear any suffering, even to die."

And after a brief silence he said:

"I cannot renounce my God and serve false gods, whose lawlessness it is shameful even to think of."

"Once again I tell you," said the emperor, "cease your much speaking and offer sacrifice to the gods. If you do not do this, my power will destroy you as cruelly as you yourself are wicked."

Babylas answered:

"I wished to free you from the darkness surrounding you, that you might escape endless torments, but you are preparing for yourself still

greater torments and calling others to them as well. Truly I tell you: you cannot escape the hands of the Living God."

Then the tormentor pretended to be gentle and began calmly to question St. Babylas:

"Can you," he said, "explain to us what God is?"

Babylas answered:

"The being of God cannot be comprehended, even if you should use all your effort to do so; for God is the eternally existing King and Creator of all, ineffable, incomprehensible, not subject to examination by the human mind, the beginning and power of all things. He created the Angels and Archangels and all the other incorporeal beings; after them He created man and bestowed upon him countless blessings, appointed him king on earth in the likeness of how He Himself reigns in heaven, and placed him in Paradise. And so that man might understand his high calling and have a sign of how far he is above the animals, God brought them to him and commanded him to give them names. God created a helper for man and deemed him worthy to enjoy converse with Himself. Ungrateful man despised his Creator and treated His commandments with contempt, and he listened to his enemy, who had never done him any good and had only flattered him. Believing his flattering words, he was cast out of Paradise by the righteous judgment of God. But the good and kindly God, although He drove man away from Himself, nevertheless never ceases to show him kindness, plainly demonstrating that, despite our countless transgressions, He does not desire our destruction but in every way arranges our salvation."

Hearing such words, Numerian could not understand them. And how could his soul, which did not know grace and had not been instructed in the teaching of the faith, comprehend them? Yet, from shame before those standing around, lest they notice his incomprehension, he pretended that he had fully grasped everything Babylas had said, and praised him as a man who reasoned very well. Then he asked him again:

"And what is man?"

"Man," answered Babylas, "is an earthly and mortal being, yet higher than all mortal animals; gentle, and dear to his neighbors, although we have become fiercer toward one another than beasts are."

Marveling at Babylas's words, yet himself still pretending to be wise, Numerian swore by his gods that Babylas spoke the truth and would prove his wisdom if only he would offer sacrifice to the gods.

"Only one thing is lacking in Babylas," said the emperor, "namely that he should render honor to our gods. It is impossible that such a wise man should dishonor the gods and dare to speak against them."

And looking kindly at Babylas, he said to him:

"O wise elder! Offer sacrifice to the gods, and at once I shall regard you as a father to me. I swear by the gods that I do not lie, and I shall reward you with many estates in my kingdom."

With various caresses, promises of great honors and riches, the impious emperor sought to beguile this righteous man. But the true confessor of Christ remained unshaken in his faith. To the flattering words of the tormentor he answered:

"The beginning and foundation of every good is piety: without it all the blessings you promise me are only poverty, extreme grief, and the loss of even what I have."

Convinced that St. Babylas could not be persuaded to impiety, Numerian again flew into a rage and ordered his military commander Victorinus to put heavy chains on the neck and feet of the hierarch and to lead him through the city, so as to shame him before everyone. The lawless man hoped that this honored man, enjoying fame and respect from all, would be ashamed of such dishonor and agree to fulfill the emperor's impious desire. But when the chains were put on the saint, the emperor began to mock him:

"God is my witness," he said, "that it becomes you, Babylas, to walk in these chains: they are altogether fitting for your old age."

"O emperor," answered the hierarch, "you speak these words in mockery, but I will tell you the truth: these chains are as honorable to me as your royal crown is to you, and sufferings for Christ are as pleasing to me as your royal power is pleasing to you; and death for the immortal King is as desirable to me as your life is to you."

With St. Babylas there were three youths, own brothers. They were young in years but mature in mind, and Babylas, who had spiritually nurtured them, regarded them as his own children. Following their teacher, they did not forsake him even when he was bound in chains. Looking upon them, the emperor said to the saint:

"I think, Babylas, that these children, by calling you teacher, only increase your pride, and because of them you remain unyielding in your opposition to our will."

"If you wish to question these children," the hierarch answered him, "you will see that they are wiser than you yourself, and you will learn that they are the seeds of my teaching."

"Whose children are these?" asked the emperor.

"They are my spiritual children," answered Babylas. "I begot them through the Gospel, nourished them with instruction, and brought them up with admonitions, and so in their small bodies there stand before you great men and perfect Christians. Test them and you will see."

The emperor ordered Babylas to be led to the public square and cast into prison; the youths he summoned to himself, and first of all asked them whether they had a mother.

"For us, Babylas is both mother and father and teacher," the children answered. "We have loved him more than a mother: she only bore us, but he teaches us understanding and piety, and, caring for our souls, raises us to high virtues."

But the emperor at once commanded that the mother of these youths be sought out and brought to him. When she was brought, the emperor asked her what her name was, and whether she was truly the mother of these children.

She answered:

"My name is Christodoula; these children are indeed mine. I offered them to God as the first-fruits of my sufferings, and I hope that the wise Babylas, to whose care I entrusted my children, will carry them into the heavenly treasury."

Numerian was angered and commanded that the pious mother be struck on the cheeks, saying to her:

"Do not speak so boldly with the emperor."

The children, seeing their mother being struck, said:

"The emperor has lost his mind: he strikes a mother for speaking the truth."

After this the emperor began to ask the children what they were called and how old they were.

They said that the first of them was twelve years old and was named Urbanus, the second, Prilidianus, was nine years old, and the third, by name Apollonius, was seven years old.

The tyrant enticed them with gentle words and gifts, urging them to bow down to the idols. But they answered with one voice:

"We are Christians, and it is not fitting for us to bow down to idols. We have been taught to know the One God, who created heaven and earth. Him we worship, and not demons."

After many flatteries, seeing that the children were unyielding, the tyrant commanded that they be beaten, inflicting wounds equal to the number of years of each of them. Thus the first youth was given twelve cruel wounds, the second nine, and the third seven. The children endured the sufferings courageously and grieved only that they did not have more years, so as to receive more wounds for Christ.

"If you have decided to kill us even so," they said, "we will not bow down to false gods: we serve the One God, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Having released their mother and removed the children themselves to another place, the emperor again summoned Babylas.

"Behold," he said, "your children have already bowed down to our gods; it is fitting that you too should immediately bow down yourself."

"From the father of lies, the devil, you have learned to lie as well," Babylas answered the emperor. "I know that it is impossible, whether by enticement or by torments, to tear the children away from Christ, for I have taught them well to honor the One True God and to believe in Him."

Then the emperor commanded that both Babylas and the children be hanged on a tree and burned with fire.

Babylas, lifting his eyes to heaven, prayed to God that He would send to these little children His strength and grant them invincible endurance in the torments before them. And he exhorted them to bear

their sufferings courageously, promising them a great reward from Christ. The guileless children, together with their teacher, bore their sufferings valiantly, and the help of God strengthened them in endurance.

Having ordered the sufferers taken down from the tree and Babylas confined in chains in a house not far from the place of torment, the tyrant resolved once more to entice the children with flattery. He called them his own children, well-mannered and fair youths, and gave them gold and silver. But they said to him with one voice:

"Deceitful flatterer! Why do you spread before us the many-woven net of your enticements? Do you truly think to catch us as you catch birds? Be assured that you will have no success, though you apply all your effort; for we are guarded and covered by the power of Christ, and by His power your net will soon be destroyed, and we will receive deliverance."

Then the youths cried out:

"O our mother, piety, we shall not reject you! O our beloved teacher, Babylas, let us remain faithful to your teaching! For not only this one emperor, but even if many and more cruel emperors and tormentors were here, they could not tear us away from our God."

St. Babylas, confined not far away, hearing these words of his disciples, rejoiced with an unspeakable joy and gave thanks to God, who perfects His praise from the mouths of children.

Soon the emperor commanded that Babylas too be brought to him, and said to him:

"Are these not your own children, Babylas? I think they were born of you, for by their evil disposition they are very like you."

"Truly," answered the saint, "these youths are my children, but not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit: for to this time I have not been tempted by carnal desire, nor have I experienced married life."

"Stubborn Babylas!" said the emperor. "Why do you until now persist in your hardness of heart, tormenting yourself and us? Bring sacrifice to the gods quickly, so that we need no longer trouble ourselves, and you with your children may be freed from torments and be counted worthy of honors and gifts from us. What profit is there for you in vol-

untarily delivering yourself and these small children to torment and death? Does it not befit you, as a wise teacher, to care for the children as much as for your own life, so that they do not perish before their time, and, quickly withering, die in the very bloom of youth?"

But the God-wise Babylas replied:

"Does it not befit you, emperor, to have care for your kingdom, to arm yourself against enemies and wage war with them, rather than torment us who are innocent? You, having cast off all earthly cares, have hurled yourself upon us, and, forgetting the enemies who take captive the land, you make war on us and pursue us. And all this you do not for any benefit to your kingdom, but only to please your beast-like fury and savage temper."

Driven to fury by these words, the emperor condemned both Babylas and the children to death. The soldiers led the saints to the place of execution, and Babylas, meanwhile, sang the words of David:

"Return, O my soul, unto thy rest, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee" (Ps. 114:6).

Having reached the place where the saints were appointed to lay down their heads for Christ, Babylas, setting the youths before himself, brought them under the sword first. He feared lest one of them, remaining after him, might be afraid of death and turn away from the Lord. Therefore he sent the youths on ahead to heaven, comforting them and teaching them not to fear the sword's stroke, for they would receive eternal life from Christ. When the youths had received death by the sword, Babylas joyfully cried out:

"Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me" (Is. 8:18).

After this he himself bowed his neck beneath the sword. In doing so he enjoined those who would bury his body to lay with him in the coffin his chains and fetters:

"Let them," he said, "be the adornment of my body."

Beheaded, St. Babylas departed to the heavenly dwellings and stood with his children before the Father in heaven. His honorable body was buried together with his chains, as he himself had commanded when dying; with him were also buried the holy three infants.

Many years after this, the Emperor Constantius[2], son of Constantine the Great, made Gallus, brother of Julian and son of his uncle[3], co-ruler of his realm (for he had no children of his own). When Gallus arrived at Antioch, he transferred the relics of St. Babylas and of the three youths who suffered with him to the suburb of Antioch called Daphne. Concerning this place it is told that it received its name from a certain maiden, Daphne, who hid there from Apollo[4], as the pagan Greek tales relate. The place is very beautiful: it is planted with cypress trees and surrounded by groves of other tall trees, it occupied a wide expanse, was fertile, and had a swift-flowing spring of water. In the midst of Daphne rose a temple of idols, in which stood an artfully sculpted idol of the god Apollo. This idol gave answers to those who inquired of it, for a demon dwelt within it[5]. Here the pagans gathered, offered sacrifices to the idol, and performed various impious games and lawless deeds. The aforementioned Gallus, who was a pious Christian and strove to turn the pagans away from their lawlessness, wished to destroy the idol temple in Daphne, but feared that a revolt would arise among the Greeks, for many pagans remained there who were ready to die even for their impious gods. Therefore Gallus built a small church there and, as already said, transferred into it the relics of St. Babylas and of the three youths, placing them in a large stone reliquary. He hoped that the impious, gathering at that place, would little by little turn to Christ, seeing the miracles that flowed from the relics of the saints. After the murder of Gallus and the death of Constantius, Julian the Apostate[6] became emperor. During his campaign against the Persians he visited Antioch and entered the temple of Apollo. Having

2. Roman emperor, second son of Constantine the Great, until 361 A.D.
3. Julius Constantius, brother of Constantine the Great. These co-rulers were called Caesars.
4. Apollo was a god of the ancient Greeks and Romans; he was revered as the god of light, especially of the sun, also of intellectual enlightenment, poetry and music, the god of prophecy, the healer of diseases, and the guardian of all civil order.
5. That is, here was the so-called oracle, a place where, according to the beliefs of the ancient Greeks and Romans, the gods foretold the future to men by the rustling of sacred trees, the murmuring of water, and so on. These predictions had the character of obscure sayings, and their interpreters were priests, who, for the sake of their own advantage, maintained among the people crude superstitions and errors.
6. Julian Flavius, Roman emperor, named the Apostate.

offered a sacrifice before its idol, Julian inquired of it whether he would conquer the Persians. But the idol did not answer him, because from the time the relics of St. Babylas had been transferred to Daphne, the demon had departed and the idol had fallen silent, answering no question. Learning of this from the priests of Apollo, Julian commanded the "Galileans"[7] to take the stone reliquary with the relics of the saints from there. The Christians of Antioch gathered, all from least to greatest, and with psalms and hymns carried the relics of St. Babylas and of the three youths into the city. Surrounding the reliquary on all sides, the Christians sang: "Let all be put to shame that serve graven images, that boast themselves in idols" (Ps. 96:7). As soon as the relics of the saints had been carried from Daphne into the city, fire fell from heaven upon the temple of Apollo and consumed it together with the idol. Thus the impious were put to shame; the faithful rejoiced and glorified God. Glory to the Lord forever. Amen.

* * *

Life of the Holy Prophet Moses, Beholder of God

Житие святого пророка Моисея Боговидца

After the death of Joseph, the posterity of Jacob his father so multiplied in the land of Egypt over a period of several hundred years[8] that the whole land was filled with Israelites, and in time of war they alone could put up to six hundred thousand men under arms. Then the king of Egypt began to fear lest the people of Israel should join with the enemies of Egypt and, desiring freedom, take up arms against him. He set over the Israelites special overseers, charged with wearing them down by heavy labors. With especial cruelty they tormented the Israelites, compelling them to till the earth, to make bricks, and to build cities, both out of vanity and, above all, in order to destroy the Hebrew people as quickly as possible. But the more they

7. The followers of Christ were called Galileans, for Christ was called "Jesus the Galilean" (Mt. 26:69), because He spent His childhood and youth in Nazareth, an insignificant town of Galilee.
8. The death of the Patriarch Joseph should be dated approximately to 1923 B.C. The sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt lasted about 398 years, beginning from the settling there of Jacob with his family.

were embittered against the Israelites and wore them down, the more the Israelites multiplied, for they could not diminish the number of a people whom God Himself was pleased to multiply and exalt. And although the king gave a secret command to the midwives that at the very birth they should put to death the Hebrew male infants, they, fearing God, spared them. Then the king issued throughout the land of Egypt a merciless decree, by which anyone who observed a Hebrew male infant was to cast him into the river (Ex., ch. 1).

At that time there lived a man named Amram of the tribe of Levi, who had a wife of the same tribe, named Jochebed; to them had hitherto been born a son, Aaron, and a daughter, Miriam[9]. In that very cruel time, when newborn Hebrew infants were being destroyed, they had a second son; the child was so beautiful that his mother, knowing the savage law concerning the killing of all newborn Hebrew infants, grieved for the child and resolved to hide him in her house, which she did for three months. But afterward, since she could no longer conceal the infant, she took a basket, coated it with pitch, laid the child in it, and set it among the reeds at the river's bank. The infant's sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him (Ex. 2:2). And Pharaoh's daughter[10] went down to the river[11] to bathe, and her maidservants walked along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant to fetch it. Opening the basket and seeing in it a weeping infant, she took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrew children." The princess wished to adopt the infant and to find him a nurse from among the Hebrew women. According to the account of Josephus Flavius[12], many Hebrew nurses were brought to the found

9. Amram was of the tribe of Levi (son of the Patriarch Jacob), and was the son of Kohath, son of Levi (Ex. 6:20; Num. 3:29, 26:58–59). Jochebed was a daughter of Levi (Ex. 6:20; Num. 26:59).

10. That is, the daughter of the king of Egypt. The Egyptian kings were called Pharaohs.

11. Here the Nile is meant, the greatest river on the earth. Its length is estimated at 6000 versts; it flows in the northeast of Africa, beginning from Ethiopia, and empties into the Mediterranean Sea.

12. Josephus Flavius, the Jewish historian (born in 37 A.D.), author of the "Antiquities of the Jews," where he relates certain traditions about Moses which are not found in the sacred books of the Bible.

infant, but he would not take milk from them. Then Miriam, the sister of Moses, dared to approach Pharaoh's daughter and said to her:

"Shall I not go and call for you a nurse from among the Hebrew women, to nurse the child for you?"

Pharaoh's daughter answered her, "Go," and she brought her own mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said to her:

"Take this child and nurse him; I will pay you wages for it."

Jochebed took the infant, and he clung to her, sensing in her his mother. She nursed him in her house; and when the child had grown, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him and named him Moses, "because," she said, "I drew him out of the water" (the name in Egyptian signifies water) (Ex. 2:7–10).

In some ancient accounts[13] it is related that once Pharaoh's daughter brought Moses to her father, and the latter, playing with him, placed a royal crown upon his head, on which was a small image of an idol; but Moses, tearing the crown from his head, threw it to the ground and trampled it under his feet. A pagan priest, who had received a prediction from the magicians[14] that when a leader should be born among the Israelites, Egypt would suffer many plagues, advised Pharaoh to kill the infant, so that he might not, when grown, bring some calamity upon their land. But by God's good pleasure and providence, others rose against this, saying that the child had done it not intentionally, but in ignorance. To test his infant ignorance, they brought hot coals, and he took them and put them into his mouth, whereby he scorched his tongue and, as a consequence, became a stammerer.

When Moses came of age, the king's daughter appointed the most select Egyptian sages to teach him all the wisdom of Egypt, and he was mighty in words and deeds, surpassing in a short time his teachers and

13. The account of this is transmitted by George Cedrenus, a Byzantine writer of the late eleventh or early twelfth century, author of the so-called "Historical Synopsis," or collection of chronicle accounts from the creation of the world to 1059 A.D.

14. In antiquity the name "magi" (*volkhvy*) denoted wise men possessing high and broad learning, especially knowledge of the hidden powers of nature, the heavenly luminaries, sacred writings, and the like. They observed natural phenomena, interpreted dreams, and foretold the future; for the most part they were at the same time priests, and enjoyed great respect at royal courts and among the people. Such were in particular the Egyptian magi.

becoming the favorite of the king and of all his closest officials (Acts 7:21–22). But when he learned of his origin, that he was an Israelite, and came to know the One God, the Creator of the universe who is in heaven, in whom his people believed, he began to loathe the pagan impiety of Egypt (Heb. 11:24–26).

Some historians write[15] that when the Ethiopians waged war against Egypt, Moses, having already reached mature years, was chosen by the Egyptians as commander, and by his courage defeated the enemies. Yet the king of Egypt, instead of gratitude, hated him all the more, because some of the Egyptian priests, in their sorcery, prophesied that Moses would in the future bring calamities upon Egypt, and advised the king to kill him. Under the influence of their counsels, the king indeed contrived to kill Moses, but did not proceed to this at once, not wishing to offend his daughter, and hoping to find some fault in him or to await a more opportune time.

It happened that Moses went out to his kinsmen, the sons of Israel, and, observing their heavy labors, saw an Egyptian striking one of the Hebrews. Noticing that there was no one else near that place, he killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand. On the next day he went out again and, seeing two Hebrews quarreling, said to the one who had begun the quarrel:

"Why are you striking your neighbor?"

But he said:

"Who made you a ruler and judge over us? Do you intend to kill me too, as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?"

Moses, hearing this, was afraid and said to himself:

"Surely everyone has learned of this matter."

Pharaoh, hearing of it, sought to kill Moses; but Moses fled from Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian (Ex. 2:11–15).

Wearied from the long journey, Moses sat down by a well. And there came to the well seven daughters of the priest of Midian, Jethro[16], who were tending their father's flocks. They began to fill the troughs with water to give drink to the sheep. But shepherds of other flocks

15. Josephus Flavius, in the "Antiquities of the Jews," book 2, chapter 10.

came and drove them away. Then Moses arose and defended the maidens, drew water for them, and watered their sheep.

The maidens returned home and told their father that an Egyptian had defended them from the shepherds, and had even drawn water for them and watered their sheep. Jethro hastened to invite Moses to his house, received him there, and afterward gave him his daughter Zipporah in marriage. By her Moses had two sons. The first he called Risam, "because," he said, "I have become a sojourner in a foreign land"; and the second, Eliezer, saying, "The God of my father was my help and delivered me from the hand of Pharaoh" (Ex. 2:16–22).

After a long time, the king of Egypt died. And the children of Israel groaned because of their bondage, and their cry concerning their cruel yoke went up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And God looked upon the sons of men, and willed to deliver them (Ex. 2:23–25).

Moses was tending the sheep of Jethro, his father-in-law. One day he led the flock far into the wilderness and came to the mountain of God, Horeb.[17] And behold, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a thornbush,[18] and Moses saw that the thornbush burned with fire, but was not consumed.

Moses said:

"I will go and see this great sight: why the bush is not consumed."

But the Lord called to him from the midst of the bush:

"Moses, Moses!"

He answered:

"Here I am, Lord!"

16. The Midianites, or Madianites, were descendants of Midian, the fourth son of Abraham by Keturah; this was a numerous people composed of various Arabian tribes, who led a nomadic way of life. The land of Midian, where they had their principal dwelling place, was a desert region at the Elanitic Gulf of the Red Sea, on its eastern side, in Arabia. As a descendant of Midian, son of Abraham, Jethro and his family were worshippers of the true God.

17. Horeb is a mountain in the Arabian desert, the western height of the same mountain range whose eastern part is Sinai.

18. In Slavonic, "Kupina" (the burning bush) is a thorny acacia of the Arabian Peninsula, growing especially abundantly near the mountains Horeb and Sinai, a small shrub with sharp thorns. The bush that appeared to Moses, burning yet not consumed, prefigured, according to the teaching of the Holy Church, the Mother of God, the Virgin who remained incorrupt after the Incarnation and the birth of the Son of God from her.

And God said to him:

"Do not come near here; take your shoes off your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground."

And He added:

"I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

"I," the Lord said to Moses, "have seen the affliction of My people in Egypt, and their cry because of their taskmasters, and I know their sorrows. And I have come to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of this land and into a fruitful and spacious land, a land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Girgashites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.[5545] And now the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I see the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Therefore go: I will send you to Pharaoh, and you shall bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

Moses said to God:

"Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

"I will be with you," God answered him, "and this shall be the sign to you that I have sent you: when you bring My people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

Moses said to God:

"Behold, I shall come to the children of Israel and say to them: 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' And they will say to me: 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?"

"I am the Existing One,"[19] God answered Moses. "Thus shall you say to the children of Israel: 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,[20] has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and My memorial from generation to generation. Go, gather the elders of Israel, and say to them: 'The Lord God of your fathers appeared to me and said: I have visited you... And I

19. "The One Who Is," or in Hebrew Jehovah, is one of the names of God, by which is expressed the self-existence, eternity, and immutability of the Being of God.

will bring you out from under the oppression of Egypt.' And they will listen to you, and you shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him: 'Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, has called us. Therefore let us go into the wilderness, a three days' journey, that we may offer sacrifice to the Lord our God.' But I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to go. Then I will smite Egypt with wonders, and Pharaoh shall be compelled to let you go."

"But if they do not believe me," Moses objected, "and do not heed my voice, but say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you'?"

The Lord said, "What is that in your hand?"

He answered, "A staff."

The Lord said, "Cast it on the ground."

Moses cast it down, and the staff became a serpent. Moses fled from it, but God commanded him to take the serpent by the tail, and it became a staff again in his hands.

The Lord said:

"This shall be a sign for you, so that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, has appeared to you. And if they do not believe even this, do the following: put your hand into your bosom."

Moses put his hand into his bosom, then drew it out, and saw that it was white with leprosy,[21] like snow. The Lord told him to put his hand into his bosom again, and it became healthy once more.

"If they do not believe even this sign," said the Lord, "then take water from the river and pour it on the dry ground, and the water shall become blood on the dry ground."

20. Having chosen Abraham to preserve the faith on earth and having concluded His covenant with him, God afterwards repeated His promises to Isaac and Jacob. Hence these patriarchs are often mentioned together in Holy Scripture, not only as the forefathers of the Hebrew people, but also as the successors and keepers of the divine covenants and promises, as great ascetics of faith and piety, and as intercessors and advocates before God, who by their faith and virtues acquired special grace with God. Therefore their names are repeated and mentioned in Holy Scripture also at the appearances and revelations to the people of God, and in this sense God is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

21. Leprosy is the most terrible and loathsome of contagious diseases; it prevails chiefly in hot-climate countries, especially in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Arabia, India, and in the East generally. As the disease develops, the skin becomes white, then swells, dries, and is covered with scabs and sores with a foul odor; then the limbs of the body fall away, and for the most part those stricken with this disease at last die in dreadful torments.

Moses again begged God not to send him, for he was not eloquent, but slow of speech.

The Lord said:

"Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord God? Therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and will teach you what you shall say."

Moses continued to refuse and asked that someone more capable be sent in his place. Then the Lord was angry with Moses and said:

"Do you not have Aaron your brother? I know that he can speak in your place. Behold, he will come out to meet you, and when he sees you he will rejoice. You shall speak to him and put My words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what you must do. He shall speak to the people for you and be your mouth, and you shall be to him as God. And take this staff (which was turned into a serpent) in your hand: with it you shall work signs.[22]"

After this Moses returned to Jethro and said to him, "I will go to Egypt to my brothers and see whether they are still alive."

"Go in peace," Jethro answered.

And Moses went to Egypt without fear, for the king who had wanted to kill him, and all those who sought his death, had already died. At God's command Aaron came out to meet Moses and joyfully kissed him. Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord. When they came to Egypt, they gathered all the elders of Israel and told them all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses, and Moses performed signs and wonders before their eyes. The Israelites believed them and rejoiced that God had visited the children of Israel and looked upon their affliction.

After this Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh and said to him:

"Thus says the Lord God of Israel: Let My people go, that they may keep a feast to Me in the wilderness."

But Pharaoh said:

"Who is the God of Israel, that I should heed His voice? I do not know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go. And you, Moses and Aaron,

22. On the appearance of God to Moses and the calling of the latter, see Ex. 3:1–4:17.

why do you distract the people from their work? Go, each of you, to your own work."

And he immediately commanded the taskmasters over the Hebrews to oppress them more heavily with hard labor, and no longer to give them straw for making bricks, which from then on they were to gather for themselves; but the appointed number of bricks was not reduced.

"The Hebrews," said the king, "are idle; that is why they cry, 'We will go and offer sacrifice to our God.'"

After this the Hebrews were oppressed still more. As they had to find their own materials, they could not prepare the appointed number of bricks each day; so the Hebrew overseers were beaten, and no explanation of theirs was accepted. Then they cried out against Moses and Aaron, saying, "May the Lord judge you for making us hateful in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and for putting a weapon in their hands to kill us."

Moses turned to the Lord and said:

"Lord! Why have You brought this calamity upon this people? Why did You send me? For from the time I came to Pharaoh and spoke in Your name, he has dealt worse with the people."

The Lord answered Moses:

"Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh: by the might of My strong hand he will let the children of Israel go; indeed, he will drive them out of his land. Say to them: 'I, the Lord, will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians, and will save you; I will make you My people and will be your God, and I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for an inheritance.'"

Moses repeated these words to the children of Israel, but because of their faintheartedness and the severity of their labor, they did not believe Moses. Then the Lord commanded Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell him to let the children of Israel go from his land. Moses answered that if the children of Israel did not listen to him, how then would Pharaoh listen to him, since his own speech was unclear.

To this the Lord answered him:

"I have made you as a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall tell him everything that I command you, and your brother shall speak to Pharaoh, that he may let the Israelites go. But I will allow Pharaoh to show the full measure of his stubbornness and not to heed you. For this I will stretch out My hand upon Egypt and bring upon it a dreadful judgment through wondrous plagues; then all the Egyptians shall know that I am God! And I will bring the children of Israel out from among them. And if Pharaoh demands a sign from you, command Aaron to cast down his staff, and the staff shall become a serpent."

Encouraged by God Himself, Moses and Aaron again appeared before Pharaoh and his servants and did as the Lord had commanded them. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh, and the staff became a serpent. Pharaoh summoned the wise men and sorcerers of Egypt, and they did the same by their enchantments; but Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. And Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not heed them, as the Lord had foretold, and he would not let the Hebrews go. Then, at God's command, Moses and Aaron began to bring plagues upon the land of Egypt.[23]

On the following day, Aaron, at Moses' command, took his staff and struck the river water in the presence of Pharaoh and his servants, and all the water in the river was turned into blood. The fish in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink water from the river. The second plague was frogs[24]: Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt and brought up frogs from them, which invaded the houses, the bedchambers, the beds, the ovens and the kneading-troughs, and came upon the king, his servants and his people, and gave no one any rest anywhere. And the whole land of Egypt was covered with frogs; and when they died at Moses' command, the Egyptians gathered them into heaps, and the whole land stank from the dead and rotting frogs. The third plague was gnats upon the people and the

23. On the plagues of Egypt, see Ex. 7–12.

24. A kind of large tailless frogs. Toads in themselves are harmless and not dangerous, but very foul and repulsive; covering the land of Egypt in myriads, filling the marshes, the canals of the Nile, the fields and courtyards, and crawling into houses, bedrooms, onto beds, into ovens and kneading-troughs, they became a real scourge to the inhabitants.

cattle, upon Pharaoh and his house and his servants, and the dust of the land of Egypt became full of gnats throughout[25]. The fourth plague was dog-flies[26]. The fifth plague was a very grievous murrain upon the cattle throughout the land of Egypt. The sixth plague was festering inflamed boils upon men and upon beasts. The seventh plague was hail and fire mingled with the hail[27], and that hail struck down everything that was under the open sky: the grass, the trees, the cattle and the people. The eighth plague was locusts and caterpillars[28], which devoured all the vegetation of Egypt. The ninth plague was three days of darkness over the whole land of Egypt, so thick that even by fire there was no light, so that no one could see another for three days, and during that time no one rose from his bed. The tenth and last plague was the death of the firstborn of Egypt.

And all these plagues, of which not one did the least harm to the Israelites but only to the Egyptians, were brought by God through Moses and Aaron, because Pharaoh would not let the people of God go into the wilderness to serve God. For although he several times promised to let them go out of fear of the plague, when the plague abated he hardened himself again, and thus he did not let them go until the tenth plague. Before the tenth plague, however, the children of Israel, in accordance with what Moses had charged them, asked the Egyptians for

25. By *skinips* most interpreters understand here gnats, which in the East and in warm countries generally, especially near rivers, occur in innumerable multitudes, so that they often become a scourge of the land. According to other interpretations, these are various kinds of human and animal parasites.

26. The dog-flies are a kind of stinging flies or insects, supposedly especially harmful to dogs. But the Hebrew word that this expression replaces properly means a mixture, a multitude, and therefore here one should understand a multitude of harmful insects in general.

27. Some understand the seventh plague as the *khamsin*, the hot southern wind that brings to Egypt from the desert whole heaps of sand, often combined with devastating storms and at the same time with heavy hail. The khamsin is accompanied by terrible calamities for the inhabitants of Egypt.

28. The locust is an insect belonging to the class of jumping and herbivorous creatures. It is distinguished by its voracity, and therefore is counted among the most dreadful scourges of God in the East. It always flies in clouds with the east wind, devours on its way all vegetation, and nothing can withstand it, until the same wind drives it into the sea, where it perishes. Scripture often points to the locust as a special instrument of God's wrath. A caterpillar is one form of locust in its larval stage, before its wings have developed.

silver and gold vessels and costly garments, as much as they could carry away with them.

Afterwards Moses, by the command of the Lord, instituted for the children of Israel, in memory of their going out of Egypt, the feast of the Passover. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron:

"Let this month[29] be the first month of the year for you. Speak to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that on the ninth day of this month every family shall take for itself from the flock one lamb. The lamb must be without blemish, male, a year old. And let them keep it with you until the fourteenth day of this month. Then in the evening let them kill the lamb in each family. Then let them put of its blood on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat the lamb. Its flesh they must eat not boiled in water but roasted over the fire, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Leave nothing of it until morning, and do not break its bones, but what remains burn with fire. Eat in haste, girded and shod, with staves in your hands. It is the Passover of the Lord[30]. I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite every firstborn among the Egyptians, from man to beast, and when I see the blood upon your houses I will pass over you and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to smite them. And let this day be memorable, and keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations, as an everlasting ordinance[31]."

According to the command of God, in every family of Israel a lamb was set apart and prepared for the appointed time. All the children of Israel had their doors anointed with blood and shut; none went out of them until morning. At midnight the destroying Angel passed through Egypt and smote all the firstborn of Egypt, from the firstborn of

29. In Hebrew, the month Abib, or Nisan, corresponding to the second half of our March and the first half of April.

30. *Pascha*, in translation from the Hebrew, means passing over, the passing of something, deliverance, and hence the sacrifice of passing over, of deliverance. Pascha is the greatest of the Old Testament Jewish festivals, instituted in memory of the miraculous deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage. The Old Testament Pascha served as a prefiguration of the redemption of the human race from sin by the sufferings and death of the Divine Lamb, Christ, and was a great mystery of faith for the Jews (Heb. 11:28).

31. On the institution of the feast of Pascha, see Ex. 12:1–51, 13:1–16.

Pharaoh to the firstborn of the prisoner confined in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the cattle. But with the Jews everything was whole.

In the night Pharaoh rose up, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians, and a great cry arose throughout the whole land of Egypt, for there was no house where there was not a dead man. Immediately Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said:

"Rise up, go out from among my people, you and all the children of Israel, and go and perform the service to the Lord your God, as you have said; take both small and large cattle. Go, and bless me."

The Egyptians pressed the Israelites that they should leave their land quickly, for, they said, otherwise we shall all die because of them.

And the people of Israel took up their dough before it was leavened; their kneading-troughs, bound up in their garments, were on their shoulders, for, pressed by the Egyptians, they could not manage to prepare provisions for the road. They went out with silver, gold and precious things; with them there also went out many strangers, and small and large cattle. The number of all the men on foot, besides the household and other strangers, amounted to 600,000 persons. Moses took with him the bones of Joseph, who had died in Egypt and, before his death, foreseeing the future by a prophetic spirit, had adjured the children of Israel, saying: "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you" (Gen. 50:24–25).

The Lord God went before the Israelites, giving them light by day in a pillar of cloud and by night in a pillar of fire, so that they might travel by day and by night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the face of the whole people (Ex. 13:16–32).

When it was reported to the king of Egypt that the people of Israel had fled, his heart and the hearts of his servants were turned against this people, and they said: "What have we done? Why have we let Israel go, so that they no longer serve us?" Pharaoh harnessed his chariot and took his people with him, six hundred choice chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt, and captains over all of them. They pursued the Israelites and overtook them as they were encamped by the sea[32],

but they could not attack them: the Angel of God, who went before the camp of the children of Israel, went behind them, came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of the children of Israel, and was a cloud and darkness to the one, and gave light by night to the other, so that they did not draw near to one another. Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea with a strong east wind that continued all night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. The Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with the waters as a wall to them on the right hand and on the left. The Egyptians pursued them, and all the horses of Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen went into the midst of the sea. After the Israelites had been brought through the sea, Moses by God's command stretched out his hand over the sea, and by morning the water returned to its place, and the Egyptians fled to meet the water. And the Lord drowned the Egyptians in the midst of the sea: the returning water covered the chariots and horsemen of the whole army of Pharaoh that had gone into the sea after them, so that not one of them remained. And the Lord delivered the Israelites that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, whose dead bodies they saw on the shore of the sea, cast up on the dry land, so that not one of them remained. Then the Israelites saw the great hand which the Lord had shown against the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord and believed in Him and in His servant Moses (Ex., ch. 14). Moses and the children of Israel, rejoicing and exulting, sang a song of thanksgiving to the Lord:

"I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea..."[33] (Ex. 15:1–18).

32. The Israelites at this time were encamped at Pi-Hahiroth before Baal-Zephon (Ex. 14:9). Baal-Zephon was an Egyptian city by the Red Sea, on its western side at the northern edge. Pi-Hahiroth was a locality at the end of the northern (Heroopolitan) gulf of the Red Sea, east of Baal-Zephon, the so-called Agirud or Agrud; today it is a fortress with a spring of water so bitter that even very undemanding camels can hardly drink it.

33. Ex. 15:1–18. The words of this whole song of thanksgiving and praise are full of reverent exaltation and bear the seal of sacred majesty. This solemn song of the Israelites to the Lord occupies in our Orthodox Church the first place among the nine sacred songs that serve as the basis of the well-known canticle-canons sung daily by the Church in glory of God and His saints.

And Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, gathering the women of Israel, led choirs with them, taking a timbrel[34] in her hand; and all of them struck the timbrels and under her leadership sang the same song.

After this Moses led the Israelites from the Red Sea[35], and they entered the wilderness of Shur[36]; and they went three days through the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah and found a spring there, they could not drink from it, for the water was bitter. And the people murmured against Moses, saying: "What shall we drink?" Moses cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree; he cast it into the water, and the water became sweet[37]. And Moses led the Israelites during their journeys through various wildernesses for forty years, petitioning God for everything needful for them. When they murmured against Moses and Aaron about food, remembering the flesh which they had eaten in Egypt, Moses besought God, and the Lord rained manna upon them and sent them quails in abundance[38]. The Israelites ate this manna for forty years in the Arabian wilderness, until they entered the borders of the promised land of Canaan. When they murmured for thirst, Moses brought forth water for them from a rock: he struck the

34. The *tympanon* (timbrel) is one of the most ancient musical instruments, which even now is in great use throughout the East, and partly also in the West. It is a wooden or metal ring the width of a palm, covered with skin, around whose edges various small metal discs, rings, and jingles are usually hung. Now, as in antiquity, this instrument is chiefly the instrument of women, who, while singing and dancing, hold it in the left hand, shake it, and strike it in rhythm with the right hand.

35. The Red Sea, called in Slavonic *Chermnoe*, is a long narrow strait of the Indian Ocean, separating the Arabian Peninsula from Egypt and Asia from Africa. The Red Sea is very deep, even at a very short distance from the shore.

36. Shur was a desert between Palestine and Egypt, between the gulf of the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, extending to the southwest border of Palestine. Today it is the so-called desert of El-Djifar.

37. Ex. 15:22–25. Marah (in translation it means bitterness) was a place in the desert of Shur, on the eastern shore of the Red Sea. It is now thought that this locality, on the way from Ayun-Musa to Sinai, is at the mineral spring Hawara or Gawara, where the water is so unpleasant, bitter, and salty that it is considered by the nomadic Arabs the worst of springs.

38. Ex. 16:1–36. This took place in the desert of Sin in Arabia, near Sinai. *Manna*, in translation from the Hebrew, means "What is this?", for the Jews, seeing it for the first time falling from heaven as something small and snow-like, asked one another in perplexity: "What is this?" By manna cannot be understood any of the known kinds of natural manna, produced from small grains of a particular cereal plant. It was a special miraculous food, which God sent to the Israelites from heaven. Moses likens the taste of manna to the taste of flour mixed with honey or oil; it was also convenient for preparing various dishes.

rock with his staff, and a spring of water flowed out[39]. When the Amalekites attacked the Israelites, Moses raised his hands in prayer to God, and the Israelites began to overcome and defeat their enemies, whose armies they utterly destroyed with the sword[40]. And however often they provoked God in the wilderness, every time Moses besought the Lord for them, and the Lord, who wished to destroy them, would have done so had not Moses, His chosen one, stood before Him to turn away His wrath, lest He destroy them!

Meanwhile Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, having heard what God had done for Moses and the people of Israel when they came out of Egypt, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, and his two sons and set out with them for Mount Horeb, where the Israelites had pitched their tents. Moses went out to meet him and, after they had greeted one another, told him all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and all the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the hardships they had encountered along the way. Jethro rejoiced when he heard of the benefits God had bestowed upon Israel; he glorified God, who had delivered His people from the power of the Egyptians, confessed before all that the Lord was greater than all gods, and offered sacrifices to Him.

On the next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood before him from morning until evening.

Seeing this, Jethro remarked to Moses that he was needlessly wearying himself and the people, for this task was too heavy for him alone.

"Listen to my words," said Jethro. "Be a mediator for the people before God, and bring their cases before God; teach the children of Israel God's statutes and His laws, show them the way in which they must walk and the deeds they must do; and choose capable men for yourself, who fear God, truthful men who hate covetousness, and set them over

39. Ex. 17:1–7. This took place at Rephidim, in the Arabian desert, near Mount Horeb. After the miraculous bringing forth of water from the rock, Moses named that place Massah and Meribah (that is, "temptation and reproach"), because of the reproach of the sons of Israel and because they tempted the Lord, saying: "Is the Lord among us, or not?"

40. Ex. 17:8–16. The Amalekites were a nomadic people living in the south of Palestine, in stony Arabia, between Idumea and Egypt, in the deserts of Sin and Paran, to the north of the Sinai Peninsula.

the people as rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens, and as scribes. Let them judge the people at all times, and bring every important matter to you, while they judge all lesser matters themselves; so shall it be easier for you, and they shall bear the burden with you."

Moses heeded his father-in-law, after which Jethro soon took leave of him and returned to his own land (Ex. 18).

At the very beginning of the third month after the Israelites' departure from Egypt, they came into the wilderness of Sinai and encamped opposite the mountain. Moses went up Mount Sinai[41], and the Lord called to him from the mountain, commanding him to proclaim to the Israelites in His name: "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you, as it were on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My chosen people above all others, and you shall be to Me a holy kingdom and a holy nation."

The people declared their readiness to do all that God commanded. Then the Lord commanded Moses to sanctify the people and prepare them for the third day by cleansing themselves for two days. On the third day, in the morning, thunder was heard, lightning flashed, and thick darkness covered the mountain; the sound of a trumpet was heard, growing ever louder. All the people trembled. Moses led them out of the camp to meet the Lord, and they all stood at the foot of the mountain. The mountain was surrounded on every side by a boundary, which no one was permitted to cross under penalty of death. The people saw that Mount Sinai shook from its very foundations, and smoke rose from it as from a furnace, because the Lord had descended upon it in a thick cloud and in fire. Moses and Aaron, by God's command, stood upon the mountain in the sight of the people (Ex. 19:3–25).

41. Mount Sinai is in fact a group of mountains made of granite cliffs, cut and surrounded by steep and rugged valleys; the Arabs now call it Mount Tur, or Jebel Tur Sina. It lies almost in the middle of the known arms of the Red Sea, which form the Sinai Peninsula. It consists of three mountain ridges. The mountain proper, Sinai, at which the Israelites entered into covenant with God and received from Him the commandments of the Law, is the highest peak of the southeastern part of the middle ridge; the lowest, northwestern peak is Mount Horeb.

Then all the people heard the voice of Jehovah:

"I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; thou shalt have no other gods before My face. Thou shalt make thee no graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them, for I am the Lord thy God, a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto a thousand generations of them that love Me and keep My commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not leave unpunished him that taketh His name in vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work [in them], but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: thou shalt do no work therein, neither thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor [thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any] of thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy dwellings; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it. Honour thy father and thy mother, [that it may be well with thee and] that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, [nor his field,] nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, [nor any of his cattle,] nor anything that is thy neighbour's" (Ex. 20:2–17; Deut. 5:5).

After this the elders of Israel came forward before Moses and said:

"Behold, God has shown us His glory, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire... We feel that no mortal creature can hear the ever-living God, as we hear Him, and remain alive. You had better go near and hear all that our God shall say to you, and repeat it to us; we will listen and obey."

"Do not be afraid," Moses said. "God is testing you, that He may set His fear before you and keep you from transgressing His commandments."

Then Moses entered the darkness marked by the near presence of Jehovah, and there received from Him various laws concerning the ecclesiastical and civil ordering of God's people. Having come down from the mountain, he told the people all that the Lord had said, and wrote it all in a book. The next morning Moses built an altar of earth beneath the mountain and set twelve stones beside it, according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel, and offered to God burnt offerings and thank offerings from the bulls and goats that had been slain, on behalf of all the people, who thereupon promised to do all that the Lord had commanded (Deut. 5:23–31; Ex. 20:18–21, 24:1–11). Then the Lord said to Moses:

"Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give thee the tablets of stone[42], and the law and commandments which I have written for the instruction of the people."

Moses went up Sinai with his assistant in the work of ministry, Joshua the son of Nun[43], and the cloud covered the mountain, and the glory of the Lord rested upon it; the cloud covered Sinai for six days, and on the seventh the Lord called to Moses, and he went up to the very summit, where he remained forty days and forty nights. At this time he received instruction as to how to construct the tabernacle, or portable temple, in which the people were to offer sacrifices and lift up prayers to God. At the end of forty days the Lord gave him two tablets, on which all the ten commandments that the Lord had spoken aloud before all the people were inscribed by the finger of God (Ex. 24:12–18, 31; Deut. 9:9–11).

Meanwhile, when the people saw that Moses was long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and demanded that he make them a god to go before them, "for," they said, "something has happened to Moses." They brought him the golden earrings

42. That is, the stone tablets.

43. Joshua, the successor of Moses and leader of Israel, who brought the Hebrews into the Promised Land. His memory is commemorated on September 1.

of their wives and daughters, and Aaron made them an image of a calf out of the gold. The people said, "This is the god who brought us out of the land of Egypt." And the next day they offered sacrifices upon the altar before the calf, and began to drink, eat, and play[44]. God was angered with them, and told Moses that this stiff-necked people whom He had brought out of Egypt had turned aside from the way, transgressed God's commandments, and worshipped a false god. Moses began to pray for the people, and God heeded his intercession. When Moses and Joshua came down to the foot of the mountain, they saw the calf and the dancing. Moses burned with anger and, casting down the tablets, shattered them at the foot of the mountain before all the people. Then he took the calf they had made, broke it in pieces and ground it to powder, which he scattered upon the stream flowing down from the mountain; and, to the shame of the handmade deity, he made the Israelites drink that water. In answer to Moses' reproaches, Aaron excused himself by citing the unbridled and stubborn nature of the unruly people; and Moses saw that the people had no excuse. He stood at the gates of the camp and cried out:

"Whoever remains faithful to the Lord, come to me!"

And all the sons of Levi gathered to him. Moses commanded each of them to go through the camp and back again with a sword, killing everyone he encountered. Thus as many as three thousand of the guilty fell (Ex. 32:1–29; Deut. 9:12–17, 21).

On the next day Moses again went up the mountain, fell down before God, and, fasting forty days and nights, entreated Him for the sin of the people, saying:

"If Thou wilt not forgive their sin, then blot me also out of Thy book, in which are written those appointed by Thee for eternal blessedness."

44. It cannot, of course, be supposed that the Israelites intended to make a god of metal and ascribe to it their deliverance from Egypt, when God had only just given them His Law. No, they wished to serve Jehovah (Ex. 32:5), but, contrary to the clear prohibition of God (20:4), they were carried away by the example of the pagans, who worshipped deities in sensible images. The nearest example of this was before them in the Egyptians, who revered the black bull Apis, which represented the god Osiris, and cast an image of it in metal. Nevertheless, their transgression was idolatry and deserved severe punishment.

The Lord answered that He would blot out of His book those who had sinned against Him, and, commanding Moses to lead the people into the promised land, made known that He would no longer accompany them with His special favour. When the people heard this threat, they wept aloud, and all put on garments of repentance. Moses redoubled his prayers, and God restored His favour to the Israelites.

After this Moses was deemed worthy to behold the glory of the Lord on Sinai.

"My face," the Lord said to him, "thou canst not see, for man cannot see Me and live. But I will make all My glory pass before thee, and proclaim the name: Jehovah... And when My glory passeth by, I will place thee in a cleft of the rock and cover thee with My hand until I have passed by. And when I take away My hand, thou shalt see Me from behind, but My face shall not be seen by thee."

In this connection Moses received the command to write the words of the covenant in a book, and he took up again the tables, on which God once more inscribed the same ten commandments that had been written on the earlier ones.

The contemplation of the glory of God left its trace upon the face of Moses. When he came down from the mountain, Aaron and all the Israelites were afraid to approach him, seeing how his face shone. Moses called them to him and told them everything that God had commanded him. After this he laid a veil upon his face, which he removed only when he stood before God (Ex. 32:30–33, 33:1–6, 12–23, 34:1–8, 10–18, 22–24, 26–35; Deut. 9:18–19, 10:1–4; 2 Cor. 3:13).

Moses declared to the children of Israel the will of God concerning the tabernacle, and he set about its construction, entrusting the work to the craftsmen designated by God, according to the pattern he had seen on Sinai during his forty days' sojourn there. The Israelites, for their part, brought generous offerings of gold, silver, bronze, wool, fine linen, skins, wood, spices, precious stones, and everything each one could give. When the tabernacle was finished and consecrated, with all its furnishings, by the anointing oil, a cloud covered it and filled the whole tabernacle, so that Moses himself could not enter it. Moses placed inside the tabernacle the Ark of the Covenant, overlaid with gold[45], into which he put a golden pot of manna[46], Aaron's rod that budded[5574], and the tables of the covenant; and above the Ark he set the figures of two golden Cherubim[47], and he arranged everything necessary for the offerings and the burnt offerings. Then Moses established for the Israelites feasts and new moons[48], and appointed for them priests and Levites, choosing by God's command the whole tribe of Levi for the service of God and giving it into the charge of Aaron and his sons[49].

Many other signs and wonders did the servant of God Moses perform; much care did he bestow upon the Israelites; many laws and wise

45. The Ark, or, from the Greek, the Ark of the Covenant, the greatest holy object of the Tabernacle, was a chest made of shittim wood (the finest kind of cedar).

46. *Stamnos*, in Greek, means a jar or a vessel in general. In this golden urn was kept a portion of the manna by which the Israelites were miraculously fed during their forty years of wandering in the Arabian desert.

47. The depiction of the Cherubim in human form but with wings, and the placing of these images above the Ark of the Covenant, expressed that as higher spiritual beings they were deemed worthy of special nearness to God, stand before His throne and serve Him with reverence, penetrating into the mysteries of our salvation.

48. These feasts were the following: the Sabbaths, Pascha and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost (established in memory of the Sinai legislation and for giving thanks to God for the new fruits of the earth), the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the new moons, the beginning of each new month, which was consecrated by sacrifices. Besides these, the special festivals for the Israelites were the sabbatical year, the seventh year, and the jubilee, the fiftieth year.

ordinances did he give them. All of this is related in the sacred books that he wrote: in the Book of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. In these books his life and the labors he undertook during his governance of the children of Israel are described in detail.

When the Israelites came to the Amorite mountain at Kadesh-barnea[50], Moses told them that the land which the Lord had given them as an inheritance lay now before them. But the Israelites wished first to send spies to survey the land, and by God's command Moses chose from the leaders of Israel one man from each tribe, including Joshua, to view the land of Canaan. On their return the men sent reported that the land was abundant in fruit, pasture, cattle and bees; but some of them were frightened by the inhabitants of that country, who were of extraordinary stature and strength, and they urged the Israelites to return to Egypt, lest they perish at the hands of the Amorites. Joshua and the others, who encouraged the people to go up into that goodly land, the Israelites wanted to stone. But God, at the prayer of Moses, forgave the Israelites their sin, and those guilty of the rebellion were struck down by sudden death (Num. 13:1–34, 14:1–45; Deut. 1:19–46).

On the further journey the children of Israel again showed their faintheartedness; they began to complain and murmur against God. Then the Lord sent venomous serpents, whose sting was deadly, and many of the children of Israel died from them. The people humbled themselves and confessed that they had sinned against God and murmured against Moses. Then Moses prayed that the Lord would drive the serpents away from them, and the Lord said to him: "Make a serpent and set it upon a pole: whoever is bitten, let him only look upon it, and he shall live." Moses set upon the pole a bronze image of a serpent,

49. Num. 3:5–13, 8:5–22, 1:5–53. First Aaron and his sons received a special consecration for priestly service before God in the Tabernacle; afterwards the whole tribe of Levi was joined to them. The priestly service properly belonged to Aaron and his sons and their descendants; the high priesthood belonged to the eldest in his line; the other descendants were priests, and the rest of the tribe of Levi were called Levites in general, who served at the Tabernacle, performing the lower duties: they carried the Tabernacle and its furnishings, guarded them, assisted the priests in worship; some of them were singers and musicians, readers and judges in civil matters, and so on.

50. Kadesh, or Kadesh-Barnea, a place on the border of the Promised Land near Mount Seir, in the south of Palestine.

after which all who had been bitten and who looked upon this image with faith remained unharmed[51].

Thus Moses led the people of Israel on the way to the land of Canaan, saving them by his prayers and his wonders from various calamities and chastisements of God.

It had been determined that Moses himself should die outside the Promised Land. When the time of his death drew near, the Lord foretold to him his approaching repose and said:

"Go up into the mountain Abarim[52], which lies in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho, and look upon the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel for a possession, and die on that mountain, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor[53] and was gathered to his people, because you sinned against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah in Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because you did not show forth My holiness among the children of Israel. Before you you shall see the land which I give to the children of Israel, but you yourself shall not enter there" (Deut. 31:14–30, 32:1–52, 33:1–29).

Before his death Moses blessed the children of Israel, each tribe separately, prophesying concerning their future destinies (Deut. 3:23–28; Num. 27:12–23). After this, by God's command, he ascended the mountain, and the Lord showed him the whole land of Gilead as far as Dan, and the whole land of Naphtali, and the whole land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and the whole land of Judah, even to the Western Sea and the southern country, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palms, as far as Zoar[5582]. And there Moses, the servant of the Lord, died in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. His body was buried in the valley of the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor[54], and

51. Num. 21:4–9. The serpent lifted up in the wilderness, in the words of St. Gregory of Nyssa, is a sign of the mystery of the Cross, as the Word of God clearly teaches when it says: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (Jn. 3:14).

52. The Abarim is properly a chain of mountains running opposite Jericho on the far side of the Jordan, in the land of Moab. Moses saw the Promised Land from the summit of Mount Nebo; this peak bore the name Pisgah.

53. Mount Hor was on the border of Edom and Palestine, near Kadesh, south of the Dead Sea. Aaron died a year before the death of Moses.

no one ever learned the place of his burial. Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died; yet his sight had not dimmed, and his strength had not failed. The Israelites honored the passing of Moses with thirty days of mourning. And there arose no more a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders which he performed before the eyes of all Israel (Deut. 34:1–12).

By the prayers of the holy prophet Moses may the Lord deliver us also from all sorrow, and settle us in the eternal dwellings, having led us out of Egypt, this world of many afflictions! Amen.

Troparion, Tone 2:

Thou didst ascend to the height of the virtues, O Prophet Moses, and therefore wast thou granted to behold the glory of God. Thou didst receive the tables of the gracious Law, and bearing within thee the grace of the inscriptions, thou wast the honored praise of the Prophets and the great mystery of piety.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

The prophetic choir, with Moses and Aaron, rejoices today with gladness, for the end of their prophecy is fulfilled in us; today shines the Cross, by which Thou didst save us. By their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Theodore, Mian, Julian, and Chion

Память святых мучеников Феодора, Миана, Иулиана, и Киона

These holy martyrs lived in the reign of Maximian and were natives of the village of Kandavla[55]. For their confession of Christ they were seized and handed over to various tortures. First their bod-

54. Beth-peor was one of the cities of Sihon, king of the Amorites, on the eastern side, opposite Jericho.

55. By Maximian here is meant Maximian Galerius. Kandavla was a village near Nicomedia. The sufferings and death of the holy martyrs followed between 305 and 311 A.D.

ies were so severely scraped that their bones were laid bare. Then they were shut up in a bath-house heated to a great heat, whose doors were sealed with the imperial signet, so that the holy martyrs could not come out of it. But an Angel of God called them, and they came out unharmed, though the doors were sealed. The soldiers took them and led them out of the city. At the request of the saints they were granted time for prayer. They prayed for a long time and gave thanks to God that He had granted them to suffer torments for Christ. After this their bodies were cut into pieces, their knees were shattered, and at last they themselves were cast into the fire, where they joyfully yielded up their souls to the Lord.

* * *

Commemoration of St. Babylas of Nicomedia and with him 84 children

Память святого Вавилы Никомидийского и с ним 84 детей

While the Emperor Maximian was living at Nicomedia for the persecution of the Christians, many of them were hiding from the persecutors. And it was reported to the emperor that in a certain secret place there was an elder named Babylas, who was teaching the children to honor not the pagan gods but the crucified Christ. Soldiers were at once dispatched, and they brought St. Babylas and his disciples before the emperor, who asked him: "Why, old man, do you not only deceive yourself, worshipping a man crucified by the Jews and not bowing down to our gods, but also teach the same to foolish children?" St. Babylas answered the emperor: "The pagan gods are demons, but our God created heaven and earth. You, O emperor, and all your courtiers are blind, because you do not see the truth." Maximian ordered four soldiers to strike the saint on the face, on the ribs, and on the knees. In the midst of his sufferings, when his whole body was stained with blood, St. Babylas cried out to the Lord: "I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast made me, old and feeble, young and strong, stronger than the emperor himself!" Maximian commanded that he be struck on the shoulders and legs with stones. Then, when all his limbs

had been crushed, they put a heavy burden on his neck, fettered his feet with iron shackles, and shut him up in a dungeon. After that they brought before the emperor the young disciples of the saint, eighty-four in number, boys and girls. The emperor began to coax them tenderly to bow down to the idols. They, however, made him no answer, but often looked at one another. Seeing that they were silent, Maximian separated from them ten who were older and said to them: "Behold, you are wiser than the others; listen, then, to me, offer sacrifice to the gods, and for this you will live in my palace and receive from me many rich gifts." Then two of them, Ammonius and Donatus, answered him: "We are Christians, and we do not offer sacrifices to dumb and deaf demons." The emperor ordered them to be beaten. During the beating they unceasingly repeated: "We are Christians, and we do not serve your gods." The emperor then began to persuade the other children, but they firmly confessed their faith and refused to offer sacrifice to the idols. Seeing that the children could not be persuaded, the emperor ordered them cast into prison, and their teacher to be hanged and beaten with iron rods. When not even these tortures led them to renounce Christ, sentence of death was pronounced upon the holy children and their teacher, by which they were condemned to be beheaded with the sword. As he walked with his disciples to the execution, St. Babylas sang: "Behold, I and the children whom God has given me!" When they reached the place of execution, St. Babylas was executed first, and then all the children, his disciples. The faithful came by night, took their relics onto a ship, brought them to Byzantium, and laid them in three coffers, praising and thanking God.

Memory of the holy martyr Hermione

Память святой мученицы Ермионии

St. Apostle Philip, who baptized the courtier of the Ethiopian queen Candace (Acts 8:26–40), had four daughters, of whom St. Luke the Evangelist remarks that they were prophetesses and virgins (Acts 21:9). Of these, Hermione and Eutychia set out for Asia[56], seeking St. John the Theologian, but did not find him, for the Lord had

"translated"[57] him, as He once did Enoch (Gen. 5:24) and Elijah (4 Kgdms. 2:11). And they met Petronius, a disciple of the Apostle Paul, and became his disciples, imitating also his manner of life. St. Hermione was skilled in the healing art, and therefore many Christians began to come to her, and she healed them all by the power of Christ. At that time the emperor Trajan[58] was making war on the Persians. When it was reported to him that Hermione was a Christian, he commanded that she be brought before him, and he began to converse with her kindly, desiring to beguile her and turn her away from Christ. But she did not yield to his persuasions. Then the emperor ordered her to be struck on the face for a long time. Amid such torment the saint was granted a consoling vision: she beheld the Lord sitting on a judgment throne, resembling Petronius in face, conversing with her and strengthening her, and she endured her sufferings with joy. Having become convinced of her steadfastness, the emperor released her. She established a hostel in which she received the sick, healing them in soul and body, throughout the whole reign of Trajan. His successor, Hadrian, again commanded that she be brought before him for judgment, and, because of her steadfast confession of Christ the Savior, ordered that she be beaten without mercy. She, with prayer on her lips, endured this suffering. When the servants who were beating the saint grew weary, the emperor commanded other servants to pierce the soles of her feet with long nails. The saint endured this torment also, offering praise to God. Then they cast her into a cauldron of boiling pitch, tin, and sulphur. While she was in this cauldron, St. Hermione raised her eyes to heaven, prayed, and at once the fire went out, the tin poured away, and the saint remained unharmed. Hadrian ordered the cauldron to be heated still more fiercely, in order to destroy the holy martyr in it. But, to the great astonishment of all, she stood in the cauldron as if in dew. The emperor marveled at such a wonder and, rising from his throne, touched the cauldron with his hand, wishing to ascertain whether it

56. Asia was a province of the Roman Empire, in the west of the Asia Minor peninsula, with its chief city Ephesus.
57. That is, he took him alive into heaven.
58. Trajan, Roman emperor, reigned from 98 to 117.

had cooled. And behold, the skin of his hand and his nails were severely scorched. "Great is the Christian God!" cried the saint. The tormentor then commanded that a griddle be heated and the naked holy martyr placed upon it. But an Angel of the Lord scattered the coals and scorched with them many who stood around the griddle. The saint, standing upon it as upon green grass, sang and glorified the Lord. The emperor was struck with fear at seeing this most glorious wonder and ordered her removed from the griddle. Then the holy martyr made a show of wishing to offer sacrifice to the god Hercules[59]. The emperor led her gladly into the temple of idols. She prayed to the true God, and suddenly a loud thunder was heard, and all the idols in the temple fell and were broken. The emperor was greatly angered and commanded that Hermione be led outside the city and her head struck off. Two servants, Theodulus and Timothy, took the holy martyr and led her outside the city. Before executing her, they rushed toward her, wishing to commit violence against her, but suddenly their hands dried up. Then they believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, fell at the feet of the holy martyr, and asked her to pray for them, that the Lord would call them to Himself before her—which, by her prayer, came to pass. After this the saint prayed also for herself and peacefully fell asleep in that place. Some devout Christians took their relics and laid them in Ephesus, in an honorable place, glorifying God[60].

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NOTES

5545. By the land of Canaan are understood in some places the vast lands lying in the west of Asia along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea: in particular, the land on this side of the Jordan, Phoenicia, and the lands of the Philistines, the land beyond the Jordan being distinguished from the land of Canaan. In more recent usage, by the land of Canaan is ordinarily understood the whole Promised Land, all the lands occupied by

59. Hercules was a hero of ancient Greek legend, personifying physical human strength, and later revered by the ancient Greeks as one of the most favored gods.

60. The repose of the holy martyr occurred about 117 A.D. In the Life of Martyr Myropia under Emperor Decius, in the middle of the second century, it is said that St. Myropia had a particular zeal for the tomb of St. Hermione in Ephesus, and from her relics there never ceased to flow healing myrrh.

the Israelites on both sides of the Jordan. The land of Canaan was distinguished by extraordinary fertility and an abundance of pastures suitable for cattle-breeding, and in this sense it is called in Scripture a land flowing with milk and honey. The Canaanites were the original inhabitants of the land of Canaan, descendants of Canaan, son of Ham, divided into eleven tribes, of which five (the Hivites, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, and Hittites) lived in the country which the Israelites later occupied, or in the proper sense the Promised Land. The Hivites, a numerous Canaanite people, dwelt in the midst of the land of Canaan and partly in the south; the Amorites, the strongest Canaanite people in the time of Moses, spread widely also in the land of Canaan on this side of the Jordan, occupied the middle of that land and the Amorite mountain, and extended far both to the north and to the south; the Hittites dwelt in the highland regions near the Amorites and were likewise a strong and numerous people; the Jebusites in the time of Moses occupied the southern part of the Promised Land; the Girgashites dwelt to the west of the Jordan. The Perizzites were a people belonging to the ancient, native inhabitants of Palestine, and did not descend from the Canaanite tribe; they lived chiefly in the midst of Palestine, or the land of Canaan.

5574. The origin of Aaron's rod is recounted in the Book of Numbers. Once a dangerous rebellion arose against Moses and Aaron, headed by the Levite Korah and two Reubenites, Dathan and Abiram, joined by 250 leaders of the congregation. Korah, envious of Aaron, himself sought the high priesthood, and together with his accomplices began to say that the whole congregation was holy and that Moses and Aaron were vainly exalting themselves above all. The guilty were punished by the judgment of God: the cleft earth swallowed them up; but the rebellion continued, and the wrath of God struck down another 14,700 people. To prevent disputes over who should have the right to the priesthood, God commanded that a rod be taken from each of the twelve leaders of the tribes of Israel and placed in the Tabernacle, promising that the rod of the one He chose would blossom. On the next day Moses found that Aaron's rod had put forth blossoms and yielded almonds. Then Moses placed Aaron's rod before the Ark of the Covenant for safekeeping, as a testimony to future generations of the divine choice of Aaron and his descendants to the priesthood.

5582. The Gilead country is the land beyond the Jordan, from Mount Hermon to the river Arnon. The city of Dan lay in the north of Palestine and was the northern limit of the Promised Land. The land of Naphtali occupied the northernmost part of the land of Canaan. The tribe of Ephraim, at the division of the Promised Land, received the very middle of it. Manasseh's portion was the northern part alongside Gilead, which was later also taken by him. The tribe of Judah occupied the largest and most important part of the land of Canaan, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea, and from the river of Egypt to the borders of Ephraim. By the Western Sea is meant here the Mediterranean. The southern parts, that is, the south. Zoar was a city in the valley of Siddim, in the south of the Judean desert, on the eastern side of the Dead Sea. Thus was the whole country shown to Moses which, by the will of God, the Hebrews were to occupy.



THE FIFTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 5

5 сентября

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

Life of the Holy Prophet Zechariah

Житие святого пророка Захарии

The Holy Prophet Zechariah, a priest of the lineage of Ithamar, son of Aaron, had a wife, Elisabeth, who was also of the family of Aaron and was a kinswoman of Anna, the mother of the Most Holy Theotokos. The Holy Gospel bears witness of Zechariah and Elisabeth that they were adorned with all the virtues, passing their life's course blamelessly. The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke says of them: "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly" (Lk. 1:6). That their life was indeed pious is also witnessed by their holy offspring, the honorable and glorious prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John. Scripture says: "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Mt. 7:16): the fruit of a good tree truly cannot be evil, for, as the same Scripture says, "if the root be holy, so are the branches" (Rom. 11:16). Therefore the holy branch, John, could only have sprung from a holy root.

St. Zechariah, the father of the Forerunner, served as priest in Jerusalem in the reign of Herod.[1] He was of the daily course of Abijah, that is, of the family of Abijah, whose turn fell in the eighth week.

Concerning these courses the following is related.

King David, seeing that the family of Aaron had become very numerous, so that it was impossible for all of them together to perform

1. Herod, called in history the Great, son of Antipater, king of the Jews, was at first ruler of Galilee, but under the first Roman emperor Octavian Augustus, even before his own accession, in 40 B.C., he received the title of King of Judea and governed all Judea, which was then subject to the Roman state.

the service in the temple, divided the descendants of Aaron into twenty-four courses or orders, so that they might serve in the temple one after another, each performing his own week. In each separate course the king chose one most honorable man and made him the head of the order, so that each course had its own chief priest; and in each course there were more than five thousand priests. So that there should be no dispute among the chief priests as to who with his order should serve the first week, who the second, who the third, and so on to the twenty-fourth, they cast lots and made the distribution by lot; and they kept this established order by lot until the coming of the new grace, so that the descendants of each priest observed their turn by the lot that had fallen to their ancestor. The eighth lot fell to the priest Abijah (1 Chron. 24:10), among whose descendants was also St. Zechariah; therefore he performed the service in the temple during the eighth week together with his whole course, for he was the chief over the other priests of his order.

Once, when Zechariah, observing his turn, was serving before God, it was his duty by the custom of the priests to enter the temple of the Lord to burn incense; at that time there was a multitude of people at prayer. Entering the sanctuary, Zechariah saw an Angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. At the sight of the Angel, fear seized Zechariah; but the messenger of God calmed him, saying: "Fear not, Zechariah." And he comforted the righteous priest, announcing that his prayer was acceptable to God; the Lord, heeding it, would grant him mercy: He would bless his wife Elisabeth, loosing, despite her advanced age, the bonds of her barrenness, and she would bear a son, John, bearing the name of grace,[2] who by his birth would bring joy not only to his parents but to many people: "Many," the Angel added, "shall rejoice at his birth." The Angel also announced to Zechariah that his son would be great before the Lord not in body but in spirit; he would be an ascetic and would lead a life of abstinence such as no other; and indeed, the Son of God Himself bore this same witness of him: "For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking

2. The word "John" in Greek means "grace of God"; (Gr. form Ioannes of the Hebrew name Yohanan, "Yahweh is gracious").

wine" (Lk. 7:33). The Angel foretold that even in his mother's womb John would be filled with the Holy Spirit and would turn many of the sons of Israel to the true Lord God, that he would be the Forerunner of Christ in the spirit and power of the prophet Elijah,[3] and would prepare the people to receive the Lord and Savior.

Hearing all this, Zechariah was astonished and amazed, so that he did not dare to believe what was said; this seemed strange to him because Elisabeth was barren and they were both already of advanced age. And he said to the Angel:

"How shall I believe this? For I am old, and my wife has also grown old, and she has never had children?"

Then the Angel answered him:

"I am Gabriel, who stands before God; I have been sent to speak and to bring you this good news. And because you did not believe my words, you shall be mute and shall not speak a single word until all this is fulfilled."

Since Zechariah tarried in the sanctuary in conversation with the Angel, the people present in the church marveled at this. When Zechariah came out to the people, he was compelled to show by signs that he had become mute; then those present understood that he had had a vision in the sanctuary.

When his course was finished, Zechariah returned to his house, which was in the hill country, in Hebron, a city of Judah. This city was one of those given by lot to the descendants of Judah and designated for the dwelling of priests.[4]

When what the Angel had announced was fulfilled, and Elisabeth, until then barren, bore John, — Zechariah wrote this name on a tablet that was handed to him — the mouth of Zechariah was opened, his

3. That is, with the same unbending zeal and moral power with which the great zealot for God, the prophet Elijah, once acted.

4. Josh. 21:13; 1 Chr. 6:65. Hebron was one of the most ancient cities of the land of Canaan. It exists to this day and has up to ten thousand inhabitants, who are engaged in trade, tillage, the cultivation of fruit orchards and winemaking. The city lies a thousand feet higher than Jerusalem, in a deep and narrow valley, surrounded on both sides by mountains, in a richly cultivated and fertile region. All the surroundings of the city are covered with olive, pomegranate, fig and pistachio trees; Hebron is especially famed for its large and excellent vineyards.

tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, blessing God. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he began to prophesy, saying: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who have been since the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Lk. 1:68–79).

But then the time came when our Lord Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, and the magi who had come from the east following a wondrous star announced to Herod the newborn King. Then Herod, sending soldiers to Bethlehem to slay all the children, commanded that the son of Zechariah also be put to death, of whom he had heard much. Herod knew all that had happened at the birth of John, since all the events accompanying John's birth had aroused fear and astonishment among the neighboring inhabitants. All the Jews spoke of these wondrous events; the rumor reached Herod as well. All who heard laid these things up in their hearts and said: "What manner of child shall this be?" (Lk. 1:66). Herod, now recalling John, thought: "Is not this one to be the King of the Jews?" Resolving to kill him, the king separately sent murderers to the house of Zechariah, but the messengers did not find St. John. For when the godless slaughter of children began in Bethlehem, the cries and lamentation were heard in Hebron, a city of Judah, where the priests lived, since it was not far from Bethlehem; soon the people of Hebron, of course, learned the cause of such lamentation. Then St. Elisabeth, taking her son, the child John, who was then

already a year and a half old, fled with him into the mountains. St. Zechariah, at that time, was in Jerusalem, performing the customary service according to the order of his course. Hiding in the mountains, Elisabeth prayed to God with tears that He would protect her and her son. Seeing from the mountain soldiers who were searching carefully for the fugitives and were already not far off, she cried out in terror to a nearby rocky mountain: "Mountain of God, receive a mother with her son!" The mountain at once opened, enclosed them within it, and thus they were hidden from the murderers who were pursuing them. Not finding those they sought, the messengers returned to the king empty-handed. Then Herod sent a command to Zechariah in the temple that he give him his son John.

"I now serve the Lord God of Israel," St. Zechariah answered this, "and I do not know where my son is now."

The enraged Herod sent to him a second time and commanded that Zechariah himself be slain if he did not give up his son. The savage murderers rushed like beasts, seeking to carry out the king's order at once, and with fury they cried out to the priest of God:

"Where have you hidden your son? Give him to us, for the king has so commanded; if you do not give up your son, you yourself will perish a cruel death."

To this St. Zechariah answered:

"You will kill my body, but the Lord will receive my soul."

Then the murderers fell upon Zechariah and slew him between the temple and the altar, as the king had commanded them; the blood of the saint that was shed congealed on the marble and hardened like stone, as a witness and an everlasting condemnation of Herod; and Elisabeth, kept by God, remained with her son in the mountain that had opened. By God's command a cave was prepared for them there, a spring of water was revealed, and over the cave a palm tree grew up, on which fruit appeared in abundance. When mother and son wished to eat, the tree bent down, offering its fruit as food, and then straightened up again.

Forty days after the slaying of Zechariah, St. Elisabeth, the mother of the Forerunner, reposed in that cave, and St. John was nourished by

an Angel until the perfect age and was kept in the wilderness until the day of his appearing to the Israelites.

Troparion to the Holy Zechariah, Tone 4:

Clothed in the priestly vestments with wisdom, and according to the law of God offering the burnt offerings acceptable to Him, in a manner befitting the priesthood, O Zechariah, thou wast a lamp and a beholder of mysteries, bearing manifestly within thee the tokens of grace with all wisdom; and when thou wast slain with the sword in the temple of God, O prophet of Christ, pray with the Forerunner that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Today the prophet and priest of the Most High, Zechariah, the father of the Forerunner, hath set forth the table of his memory, feeding the faithful; for having mingled the drink of righteousness for all, he is perfected, as the divine mystic of God's grace.

Kontakion to St. Elizabeth, Tone 4:

As the full moon, thou hast received the light of righteousness from the mental Sun, Messiah; and in all the commandments of the Lord thou didst walk with Zechariah, O God-beloved Elizabeth. Wherefore, praising thee with worthy hymns, we magnify the All-merciful Lord, the Light that enlightens all.

* * *

Memory of the holy martyrs Urvan, Theodore and Medimnus, and of the many with them

Память святых мучеников Урвана, Феодора и Медимна, и многих с ними

In the reign of the impious Valens[5], the Arians in Constantinople held great power and extended their authority, since the emperor, blinded by the same heresy, aided them. Raising a persecution against the Orthodox Christians, they expelled Bishop Evagrius and

5. Valens – Roman emperor 364–378 A.D., who ruled the eastern half of the empire, a zealous patron of the Arians.

grievously oppressed the faithful: some they beat, others they cast into prisons, from others they plundered their possessions; in a word, they oppressed them in every way. Grieving greatly over this, the faithful, gathering secretly, resolved to send to the emperor, who was then in Nicomedia, a petition that he, if it was impossible to deliver them altogether from the Arians, should at least command that their oppression be lessened, so that the people might not perish utterly. For this business they chose up to seventy worthy men of the clerical rank, steadfast in the faith, strong in speech, distinguished for their understanding, headed by Urvan, Theodore and Medimnus. Setting out on the way, they reached Nicomedia, and standing before the emperor, earnestly besought him to have mercy upon them and to protect them from the hands of the Arians. The emperor was greatly enraged against them; yet he did not show that he was angry, but secretly sent them to the eparch[6] Modestus, commanding him to seize them and put them to death. The eparch, seizing them, feared however to execute them openly before all, and, lest there be talk among the people, ordered them all to be placed on a ship, and spread the rumor that those seized were being sent into exile; and meanwhile he instructed the shipmen that, when they were in the midst of the sea, they should go down into a boat and set fire to the ship with the seventy men, which they also did: sailing into the Astacian gulf, they set fire to the ship with the holy martyrs, having descended beforehand into the boat that had been prepared for that purpose, and returned to the eparch, reporting to him the death of those men. As a candle the ship caught fire and sped swiftly over the sea, for it was driven by the wind; the vessel, enveloped in flame, reached a place known by the name Dakidis; putting in there, the ship burned utterly, sending up from the burning bodies of the holy martyrs smoke like incense smoke rising to God. Thus the saints died, and upon them was fulfilled the word of Scripture: (Ps. 65:12). Burned by fire upon the water, these holy men dwelt in the heavenly abode[7],

6. Eparch – a Greek word meaning "commander." This was the title of the governors of Roman provinces.
7. This was in 370.

where, standing before the throne of the Lord, they pray for us; by their prayers, O Lord, grant us also to receive eternal life. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the holy martyr Avdius

Память святого мученика Авдия

This holy martyr lived and suffered in Persia. Because by his teaching he brought many to faith in Christ, the chief of the magi commanded that he be seized and compelled to bow down to the sun and fire and to renounce Christ. For his steadfast confession of the true God he endured beating on the loins with thorn-staves covered with sharp prickles. Four soldiers beat him so long that he was carried home half-dead, where he soon yielded up his holy and blessed soul to God, glorifying and thanking Him, and rejoicing that he had been counted worthy to suffer for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ[8].

* * *

Memory of the holy martyrs Fifail and Fivea

Память святых мучеников Фифаила и Фивеи

These holy martyrs boldly confessed before all Christ, the true God, the Creator and Preserver of all, and called the idols deaf images. They converted many to the true faith. The pagans seized them and tormented them greatly. At last, St. Fifail was hanged on a tree and sawn with a saw, and his sister Fivea was slain by a blow of a spear to the neck. Both of them committed their holy and blessed souls into the hands of God, with a hymn of praise upon their lips[9].

* * *

Murder of the holy Prince Gleb

Убиение святого князя Глеба

8. The holy martyr Avdius suffered in the reign of the Persian king Izdigerd (408–420).
9. They suffered at the beginning of the second century, in the reign of the emperor Trajan.

Sviatopolk, the brother of the holy Prince Gleb, lured him by deceit out of Murom, sending word to him: "Your father is at the point of death and calls for you." At that time Sviatopolk had already slain Gleb's brother, St. Boris, and began to plot the murder of St. Gleb as well[5599]. He had the impious intention of killing all his brothers, in order to take the whole power into his own hands, but the end of this crime was eternal torment, according to the word of the prophet: "The impious man is ensnared by the works of his own hands" (Ps. 9:17). While Prince Gleb was already on his way to Kiev and was near Smolensk, on the Smiadyn[10], the accursed murderers sent by Sviatopolk overtook him, in their malice like fierce beasts. St. Gleb expected a greeting from them, but they were plotting against his life and suddenly surrounded him on all sides. Then the cook of St. Gleb, a native of the Torks[11], stabbed his master with a knife, on the fifth day of the month of September[12]. His body was cast into an empty place. But the Lord God did not forsake His servant, but glorified him, as once He glorified the first martyr St. Stephen[13]: at times over the place where the body of the holy prince lay a pillar of fire was seen, at times burning candles appeared, or the singing of Angels was heard. Those who saw these signs reported them in the city, whose inhabitants took the body of the saint and carried it to Vyshgorod[14].

* * *

10. The Smiadyn is a small tributary of the Dnieper, at Smolensk.

11. The Torks were one of the nomadic peoples of Asiatic origin4 who, in ancient Rus' divided into appanages and governed by veche assemblies, dwelt chiefly in its southwestern regions.

12. The repose of St. Gleb, the right-believing prince, took place in 1015. At his holy baptism Gleb was named David.

13. Concerning the glorification of the honorable relics of the holy First-martyr Stephen, the Chet'i-Minei relates, among other things: "At night a light appeared over the relics of the saint, and a strong fragrance issued from the reliquary (shrine of the relics), and angelic singing was heard in the air." See August 2.

14. Vyshgorod was an ancient and formerly important Russian town, fifteen versts from Kiev up the Dnieper. It served as a strong fortress for Kiev from the north and was a favorite residence of the great Kievan princes, especially of Vladimir the Great. The relics of St. Prince Gleb were translated to Vyshgorod and laid there together with the relics of St. Prince Boris during the reign of Yaroslav the Wise in Kiev, in 1019. In 1072 a festival was established in honor of the holy princes. Their relics were lost during the invasion of Kiev by Batu, Mongol khan, in 1240.

Feast of the holy Apostle Peter at Afira

Празднование святому Апостолу Петру в Афире

Of this church of the holy Apostle Peter mention is made in the Life of St. Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople (April 6), where it is said that, before the election of this Patriarch in 552, the Emperor Justinian[15] had a vision, which he disclosed to others under oath: in a dream he saw himself in the church of the holy Apostle Peter at Afira[16]; the holy Apostle himself appeared to him, and, pointing to St. Eutychius, said: "Let this man be appointed bishop over you."

* * *

Memory of the holy martyrs Juventinus and Maximus

Память святых мучеников Иувентина и Максима

The holy martyrs Juventinus and Maximus, soldiers, suffered under the Roman emperor Julian the Apostate, under whom they held the office of shield-bearers. Once Julian, coming to Antioch, sprinkled with idol-offering water all the food and drink sold in the market, desiring in this way to make the Christians partakers of his impious sacrifices. At that time these two servants of Christ, being present at a feast with other soldiers, spoke with grief with them about the lawlessness of the emperor, and repeated the words of the holy three youths, once spoken in Babylon: "And He delivered us into the hands of lawless enemies, most hateful apostates, and to an unjust king, the most wicked on all the earth" (Dan. 3:32).

One of those who feasted reported these words to the emperor the next morning.

Then the emperor summoned the holy soldiers and asked:

– What were you saying yesterday at the feast?

They answered the truth, and repeating the same words, rebuked the emperor and reproached him for his lawless apostasy.

The emperor, falling into a rage, first commanded that they be beaten without mercy and cast into prison; then at midnight he sent an

15. Justinian the Great was the famous Byzantine emperor; he reigned from 527 to 565.

executioner into the prison, who put them to death in the darkness of the dungeon.

NOTES

5599. Gleb was the younger son of St. Vladimir the Great, Equal-to-the-Apostles, by his Christian marriage to the Greek princess Anna. He was prince of ancient Murom, the center of the northern Rostov-Suzdal region (today a fairly insignificant district town in Vladimir Province). Boris, St. Gleb's full brother by the same mother, was prince of Rostov (Rostov is today a district town in Yaroslavl Province). He was fratricidally put to death by hired assassins shortly after Vladimir's death in 1015, on the river Alta, where he had halted his camp while returning from a campaign against the Pechenegs. Sviatopolk was the son of Vladimir by the widow of Vladimir's brother Yaropolk; for his crime he remained known in history as "the Accursed." After the murder of Boris and Gleb he was defeated by Yaroslav the Wise, who drove him out of Kiev. He fled to Poland and afterwards perished "by an evil death" in the desert between Poland and Bohemia.

16. The city of Afira, or Afir, stood at the mouth of the river Afira on the Sea of Marmara, and was also called Poros. It lay 24 thousand paces from Constantinople.

THE SIXTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 6

6 сентября

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

Commemoration of the Miracle of the Holy Archangel Michael at Chonae

Воспоминание чуда святого Архистратига Михаила в Хонех

In the Phrygian city of Colossae[1], near the city of Hierapolis[2], there stood a church of the holy Archangel Michael over a spring of miraculous water. The sick received many healings from the water of this spring—even more than at the pool of Siloam[3]. At that pool, the Angel of the Lord descended only once a year and troubled the water, but here the grace of the leader of the Angels was ever present. There, only the first person to enter the pool after the water had been troubled was made well; here, all who came in faith, the first and the last, were made well. There, porticoes were needed for the sick to stay in while awaiting healing for a long time, since some received health only after

1. Colossae – a city in the southwestern part of Phrygia, on the river Lycus, near Laodicea and Hierapolis. In the 10th year of the reign of Nero (A.D. 64) Colossae was destroyed by an earthquake; afterward it was rebuilt, but never again attained its former glory. Later it was called Chonae. Today it is a small village on one of the slopes of Mount Chonas, beside which the ruins of the ancient city of Colossae still survive. One of the epistles of the Apostle Paul is written to the inhabitants of this city. – The church of St. Archistrategus Michael has existed in this city since ancient times.

2. Hierapolis (from the Greek, "holy city") – a city in Asia Minor, in Phrygia. It stood not far from the cities of Colossae and Laodicea, almost at the confluence of the rivers Maeander and Lycus. The modern name of the city is Rambuk-Kalesi (City of Cotton). Hierapolis once had a bishop who was present at the First Council of Nicaea in 325. In Hierapolis, as we see from the narrative presented here, St. Apostle Philip taught and died a martyr's death.

3. Siloam – the spring or pool of Siloam, and the bathing place established beside it, were located on the southeastern side of Jerusalem at the foot of the mountains Zion and Moriah. The spring of Siloam is mentioned three or four times in Holy Scripture, and among others in the Gospels of John and Luke. (See Jn. 5 and 9:7–11; Lk. 13:4).

38 years; here, the sick were made well in a day, or in an hour. The origin of this spring is related as follows.

When the whole universe was darkened by the gloom of pagan polytheism, and people worshipped the creature rather than the Creator, at that time the pagans in Hierapolis venerated a huge and fearsome viper[4], and the whole country, blinded by demonic delusion, worshipped it. The impious built a temple in honor of this viper, where they kept it and, offering it many and various sacrifices, fed this venomous viper that harmed so many. The one true God, desiring to illumine the world with the light of His knowledge and to guide erring people onto the true path, sent His holy disciples and Apostles throughout all lands to preach the Gospel to all people. Two of the Apostles, St. John the Theologian and St. Philip, came, one to Ephesus[5] and the other to Hierapolis, and labored there in the preaching of Christ. At that time there was in Ephesus a wonderful temple and an idol of the famous pagan goddess Artemis[6]. Taking up the spiritual sword—the word of God—against the servants and worshippers of this goddess, St. John the Theologian conquered them: by the power of the name of Christ, he destroyed the temple and reduced the idol to dust, and thereby brought the whole city to the holy faith. After the destruction of the idol of Artemis, St. John the Theologian went from Ephesus to Hierapolis to aid his fellow-laborer, the holy Apostle Philip. At that time the holy Apostle Bartholomew and Philip's sister Mariamne were there also. Together with them, St. John the Theologian labored for the salvation of the people. First, they took up arms against the viper, to which foolish people offered sacrifices, honoring this creature as God. By their prayers they killed the viper and converted those who worshipped it to

4. Echidna – a poisonous snake, about 12 feet or more in length. Its bite is very dangerous and in most cases ends in swift and inevitable death. In Holy Scripture serpents in general are presented as terrible and dangerous animals, with which man must constantly live in enmity. They serve as an image of everything that, by its nature, causes harm and destruction (Eccl. 10:11; Prov. 21:31–33; Mt. 7:10).

5. Ephesus, on the Aegean Sea, was an important commercial city in Asia Minor.

6. Artemis – otherwise Diana – a well-known pagan goddess among the Greeks, who personified the moon and was considered the patroness of forests and hunting. The worship of this goddess was carried out with great magnificence and splendor; she was especially honored in the city of Ephesus.

the one true God, who created heaven and earth. Standing at a certain place called "Cherotopa," they prophesied that the grace of God would shine forth there, that the Commander of the heavenly hosts, the holy Archangel Michael, would visit this place, and that miracles would be wrought there. All this soon came to pass. When St. John the Theologian set out to preach the Gospel in other cities, and the holy Apostle Philip suffered at the hands of the impious, while Bartholomew and Mariamne also departed for other lands, a spring of miraculous water appeared in that place, according to the prophecy of the holy Apostle. Thus were the words of Scripture fulfilled: "The waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. And the mirage of waters shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the dwelling place of jackals, where they lie down, there shall be a place for reeds and rushes. And there shall be a great highway there, and it shall be called the holy way"[7] (Is. 35:6–8). Not only the faithful but also unbelievers began to come to this spring, for the miracles wrought there summoned everyone as with a loud-sounding trumpet; and all who drank and washed in this spring were healed of their ailments, and many, having received health, were baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity.

At that time there lived in Laodicea[8] a certain pagan whose only daughter had been mute from birth. Her father grieved greatly over this and made every effort to cure her muteness, but, having achieved nothing, fell into deep despondency. One night, as he slept on his bed, he beheld in a vision an Angel of God, shining like the sun. This vision was granted to him not because he was worthy, but so that through it he might come to the knowledge of the truth and bring others with him

7. In this place the Prophet Isaiah points to the great consequences that will accompany the coming of the Savior into the world. Then "water will flow (break forth) in whole streams in the wilderness, and therefore a thicket or valley will appear in the dry land," and then "the waterless region will be turned into lakes, and springs of water will appear on dry ground: (so that) there birds will rejoice, there reeds will grow, and there will be meadows."

8. Laodicea – the principal city of Phrygia, in its southwest, not far from the city of Colossae, on the river Lycus. The Church of Laodicea was one of the seven famous churches of Asia Minor mentioned in the Apocalypse. In church history Laodicea is known for the council held there (around 365), which left detailed rules concerning the order of worship, the moral conduct of clergy and laity, and various errors of that time.

to God. Seeing the Angel, he was afraid, but at the same time he heard these words from him:

"If you wish your daughter's tongue to be loosed, bring her to my spring, which is at 'Cherotopa,' near Hierapolis. Give her to drink of the water of this spring, and then you will see the glory of God."

When he awoke, the man marveled at what he had seen and, believing the words spoken to him, immediately took his daughter and hastened to the miraculous spring. There he found many people drawing this water, being baptized in it, and receiving healing from their illnesses. He asked them:

"Whom do you call upon as you wash in this water?"

They answered him:

"We call upon the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and we call upon the holy Archangel Michael for help."

Then the man raised his eyes to heaven and lifted his hands, saying:

"Father and Son and Holy Spirit—God of the Christians—have mercy on us! Holy Michael, servant of God, help and heal my daughter!"

With that, he drew water from the spring and poured it in faith into his daughter's mouth; immediately her tongue, bound by muteness, was loosed to the glorification of God, and she spoke clearly:

"God of the Christians, have mercy on me! Holy Michael, help me!"

All who were there marveled at the power of God and, glorifying the Holy Trinity, extolled the help of the holy Archangel Michael. The pagan, seeing that his daughter had been healed, rejoiced exceedingly and was baptized without delay, together with his daughter and all his household who had come with him. In token of his gratitude, he built a beautiful church over the miraculous spring in the name of the holy Archangel Michael, Commander of the heavenly hosts. Having adorned this church with great magnificence and prayed much in it, the pagan returned to his home.

In the 90th year after the building of this church, a ten-year-old boy named Archippus came there from Hierapolis. His parents were zealous Christians and had brought up their son in piety. Archippus began to live by the church of St. Michael the Archangel, serving there as a sac-

ristan. The boy adopted this rule of life: from the time he settled by that church, serving God, he ate and drank nothing from the fare of this world—not meat, nor wine; he did not even eat bread, but lived on nothing but wild greens, which he gathered and cooked himself. He took food only once a week, and even then without salt; for drink, he had only a little water. Through such abstinence the boy mortified his flesh, and he steadfastly remained in these virtues from his youth until old age, with all his soul cleaving to God and resembling the life of the bodiless ones. His clothing was very poor: he had only two sackcloth garments[9], one of which he wore on his body and the other with which he covered his bed, strewn with sharp stones. He covered it with sackcloth so that those entering his dwelling would not see that he slept on sharp stones; his pillow was a small sack filled with thorns. Such was the bed of this blessed ascetic. His sleep and rest were as follows: when he felt the need for sleep, he would lie down on the stones and sharp thorns—so that this was more wakefulness than sleep, and his rest more torment than repose. For what rest is it for the body to lie on hard stones, and what kind of sleep is it when the head rests upon a sharp thornbush? Every year Archippus changed his clothing: with the sackcloth garment he had worn on his body he covered his bed, and the one that had been on the bed he put on himself; after a year had passed, he changed the garments again. Thus, finding rest neither by day nor by night, he mortified his body and guarded his soul from the snares of the enemy. As the blessed Archippus traversed this narrow and sorrowful path of life, he cried out to God in prayer:

"Do not permit me, O Lord, to rejoice on earth with vain joy; let my eyes see none of the good things of this world, and let there be no comfort for me in this temporal life. Fill my eyes, O Lord, with tears of the spirit; grant contrition to my heart, and make straight my paths, that to the end of my days I may mortify my flesh and subdue it to the spirit. What benefit will this frail flesh of mine, formed from the earth, bring me? In the morning it blossoms like a flower, but in the evening it with-

9. Sackcloth – a sack of coarse cloth or burlap; a garment of mourning, a hair shirt.

ers! But grant me, O Lord, to labor diligently for what is profitable for the soul and for eternal life."

Praying and meditating thus, the blessed Archippus became like an Angel of God, living a heavenly life on earth. And the saint cared not only for his own salvation, but also for the salvation of others, for he converted many unbelievers to Christ and baptized them. The impious pagans, seeing all this, envied the blessed man and, unable to endure the most glorious miracles manifested at the holy spring, hated this righteous man who lived there. They often attacked St. Archippus, pulling him by the hair and beard, throwing him to the ground and trampling him underfoot; and, after subjecting him to various torments, they drove him away. But, being firm in spirit like adamant[10], the blessed Archippus endured all this bravely at the hands of the idolaters and did not depart from the holy church, serving God in holiness and guilelessness of heart and caring for the salvation of human souls.

Once the impious pagans gathered in a great multitude and said to one another:

"If we do not bury this spring with earth and kill that man clothed in rags, then all our gods will be utterly dishonored on account of those who are healed there."

Thereupon they set out to bury the wonder-working water with earth and to kill the innocent man, the blessed Archippus. Approaching the holy place from two sides, some of them rushed toward the church and the spring, while others hastened to the dwelling of the blessed Archippus, to kill him. But the Lord, who cares for the fate of the righteous and does not give them into the hands of sinners, preserved His servant from those murderers: suddenly their hands grew numb, so that they could not even touch the Venerable Man. And from the water there appeared a marvelous sign: as soon as the impious drew near the spring, a fiery flame at once came forth from the water and, rushing upon the lawless, drove them far from the spring; thus these transgressors fled in shame from the spring and from the Venerable Archip-

10. Adamant (diamond) – a stone of such hardness that it scratches other stones without itself receiving harm from them. This name in ecclesiastical literature is applied to many Fathers and teachers of the Church who were renowned for the steadfastness of their faith or character.

pus, having done him no harm whatever. Yet they were not brought to their senses by this sign: gnashing their teeth, they did not cease to boast that they would destroy that spring and the church and the minister of the church. In that place there was a river named Chrysos, which flowed along the left side of the church. The lawless devised to turn it onto the holy place, so that the holy spring, mingling with the river water, would lose its wonder-working power. But when they began to carry out their evil design and directed the course of the river toward the spring, so that it would flood it, then the river, by the command of God, changed the direction of its streams and flowed along the right side of the church. And once more the impious returned home in shame.

There were also two other rivers, flowing from the east and approaching that holy place at a distance of three stadia; the name of one river was Likokaper, and of the other Kufos. Both of these rivers, meeting at the foot of a great mountain, joined together and, turning to the right, flowed into the land of Lycia[11]. The all-deceitful devil suggested an evil design to the impious people: he taught them to turn the waters of both those rivers onto the wonder-working place, as a result of which the temple of the holy Archangel Michael was to be destroyed, the holy spring was to be flooded, and St. Archippus was to be drowned. The location was very suitable for directing the water there, for the rivers issued from the summit of the mountain, while the church stood at the very bottom. Having come to an agreement, the impious gathered in great numbers from all the cities into the village of Laodicea and proceeded to the church. Near the church sanctuary there was an enormous stone; from this stone they began to dig a deep and wide trench as far as that mountain beneath which the rivers joined together. Then, with great labor, they dug out the trench along which the water might be directed upon the church, and they dammed those

11. Lycia – a province of Asia Minor. It borders on Pisidia to the north, on Pamphylia to the east, on the Pamphylian or generally the Mediterranean Sea to the south, and on Caria to the west. Among the cities of Lycia, Patara and Myra are mentioned in Holy Scripture. The Apostle Paul stayed briefly in Patara, returning after his third journey to Jerusalem (Acts 21:1). The cities of Patara and Myra are especially known to believers through the history of St. Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra. Lycian Patara was his homeland, and in Myra he was bishop.

rivers so that more water would accumulate; for ten days the impious toiled at this vain work. Seeing the work of the impious, the Venerable Archippus fell prostrate upon the ground in the church and, with tears, prayed to God, calling upon the swift intercessor, the holy Archangel Michael, that he would preserve the holy place from being flooded and would not allow the enemies, who sought to destroy the Lord's holy place, to rejoice.

"I will not depart from this place," said the blessed Archippus, "I will not go out from the church, but even die here, if the Lord permits this holy place to be flooded."

After ten days had passed, when the water had risen greatly, the impious dug open the place through which the water was to rush along the path prepared for it, and they released the rivers upon the holy temple at the first hour of the night; they themselves withdrew from there and stood on a high place to the left, wishing to see the flooding of the holy place. Then the water, rushing downward, roared like thunder. The Venerable Archippus, being in the church at prayer, heard the noise of the water and prayed all the more fervently to God and to the holy Archangel Michael, that this holy place might not be flooded and that the impious enemies might not rejoice but be put to shame; and that the name of the Lord might be glorified, and the power and intercession of the Angel might be magnified. And he sang the psalm of David:

"The rivers have lifted up, O Lord, the rivers have lifted up their voice, the rivers have lifted up their waves. But above the noise of many waters, above the mighty waves of the sea, the Lord on high is mighty. Thy testimonies are very sure; holiness becomes Thy house, O Lord, for length of days" (Ps. 92:3–5).

As the blessed Archippus was singing this, he heard a voice commanding him to go out of the church. Going out of the church, he saw the great intercessor and guardian of the Christian race, the holy Archangel Michael, in the form of a beautiful and resplendent man, as he once appeared to the prophet Daniel (Dan. 10:1–21). The blessed Archippus, being unable to look upon him, fell to the ground from fear.

The Archangel said to him:

"Do not be afraid; rise, come hither to me, and you will see the power of God over these waters."

The blessed Archippus rose and, approaching the voivode of the heavenly hosts with fear, stopped at his command on the left side; there he saw a pillar of fire rising from the earth to heaven. When the water drew near, the Archistratigos raised his right hand and, tracing the sign of the cross upon the surface of the water, said:

"Stop there!"

And at once the waters turned back. Thus the prophetic words were fulfilled: "The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee and were afraid" (Ps. 76:17). The rivers stood like a stone wall and rose up on high, like a lofty mountain. After this the Archistratigos, turning toward the temple, struck with his staff the enormous stone standing near the sanctuary and traced the sign of the cross upon it. At once a great thunder was heard, the earth shook, and the stone split in two, forming within itself a huge chasm. At this the Archangel Michael spoke the following words:

"Let every opposing power be destroyed here, and let all who come here in faith receive deliverance from every evil!"

Having said this, he bade Archippus pass to the right side. When the Venerable Man had gone there, the holy Michael cried out with a loud voice to the waters:

"Enter into this chasm!"

And at once the waters with a roar poured into the stone cleft and from that time flowed constantly through the stone by that path. The enemies, who stood on the left side and expected to see the holy temple flooded, were turned to stone with fear. Having preserved from flooding his temple and the Venerable Archippus, the holy Archistratigos Michael ascended into heaven, and the blessed Archippus gave thanks to God for that glorious wonder, glorifying the great guardian, the Archistratigos Michael, for his great intercession. Then all the adversaries were put to shame, and the faithful had great joy; and coming to the Angel's temple and the wonder-working spring, they together with the Venerable Archippus offered praise to God. From that time they established the observance of the feast on the day on which the wonder took

place through the appearance of the Angel. The Venerable Archippus lived many years in that place, diligently laboring for God, and he reposed in peace at the age of 70 years from his birth. The faithful buried him in that very place, which, on account of the aforementioned wonder, was named "Chone," that is, "immersion"[12], because there the waters were submerged into the stone.

It is also fitting to mention other wonders of the holy Archistratigos Michael, benefactor of the Christian race.

Between the Adriatic Sea and the mountain called Garganus[13] there is the city of Sipontum, standing at a distance of 12 thousand feet[14] from the mountain. In that city there was a rich man whose herds grazed beneath Mount Garganus. Once one of his oxen went missing, having strayed from the herd. He long searched for this ox with his servants and at last found it on the summit of the mountain at the door of a cave. Angered and weary from the search, that man took a bow and arrow and shot at his ox, intending to kill it. Suddenly the arrow, turning back, struck the one who had shot it. Those who were with him, seeing this, were afraid, and not daring to approach that cave, returned to the city and told there what had happened. Learning of this, the bishop of that city turned in prayer to God, asking Him to reveal this mystery to him. And there appeared to him in a vision the Archangel Michael, who declared that he had chosen that place for himself, guards it, and desires to visit it often and to help people who come there with prayer. The bishop announced this vision to the people and prescribed a three-day fast for the whole city, after which he went with his clergy and all the people to that mountain. Ascending it, they found in the rock a cave with a narrow entrance and did not dare to enter within, but offered their prayer before the door. From that time people often came there and prayed to God and to the holy Archistratigos Michael.

Once the Neapolitans[15], still unbelieving, gathering their forces, suddenly approached the city of Sipontum with the intention of taking

12. "Chonas" (Greek) – an opening, a hollow, a cleft.
13. Garganus – a limestone mountain on the eastern coast of central Italy. Mount Garganus is mentioned by ancient pre-Christian writers such as Strabo, Mela, Virgil and others.
14. A *foot* (*stopa*) is a measure of distance; by our reckoning it is about four vershoks. Twelve thousand feet make up about two versts.

and destroying it. The citizens were in great fear. Then the bishop commanded the inhabitants of that city to observe a three-day fast and prayers for deliverance from the enemies surrounding them. On the eve of the day appointed by the enemies for the final destruction of the city, the voivode of the heavenly hosts, the holy Archistratigos Michael, appeared to the bishop in a vision and said:

"Tomorrow at the fourth hour of the day, bid your citizens arm themselves and go out of the city against the enemies, and I will come to your help."

On waking, the bishop told all the people of this vision, and greatly gladdened them with the victory over the pagans that God had foretold. When the fourth hour of the day came, a loud thunder was heard, and, lifting up their eyes, all saw a cloud descending upon Mount Garganus. At the same time there appeared, as once upon Sinai (Ex. 19:1–25), fire, smoke, lightning and thunder, so that the whole mountain shook and was covered with clouds. The enemies, seeing this, were struck with terror and turned to flight; and the citizens, perceiving that there had come to their aid their good keeper and swift defender, the Holy Archangel Michael with his heavenly hosts, opened the city gates and pursued the enemies, smiting them down like stalks of grass. They pursued them from behind, while the holy Archistrategos Michael struck them from on high with thunder and lightning; that day, six hundred men died from the thunder and lightning. The citizens of Siponto pursued the enemies as far as Naples, and, having defeated them with the help of the Voivode of the heavenly powers, they returned to their city in triumph. From that time the Neapolitans, having known the mighty right hand of Almighty God, received the holy faith. The citizens of Siponto, gathering together with their bishop and clergy, went to the mountain on which the awesome manifestation had occurred, desiring there to give thanks to God and to their helper, the holy Archistrategos Michael and all the heavenly powers. When they drew near the doors of that cave, they found on the marble the print of a small human foot, im-

15. That is, an inhabitant of Naples. Naples, the chief city of the province of the same name in the Kingdom of Italy, lies on the northern shore of the Gulf of Naples.

pressed as clearly as if upon marshy ground. Then they said to one another:

"Truly, the holy Archistrategos Michael has left here a sign of his visitation, for he himself was here, delivering us from our enemies."

Bowing down, they kissed that footprint, and, having performed a moleben, they rejoiced that they had such a keeper and defender, and gave thanks to God. In that place they resolved to build a church in the name of the holy Archistrategos Michael. When they set about the construction, the Archistrategos Michael appeared again to the bishop and said:

"You need not trouble yourselves about a church building: without your labor I have prepared for myself a temple there; only enter into it. And on the next day, celebrate the Divine Liturgy in it and give the faithful the holy Divine Mysteries."

After this vision, the bishop commanded all the people to prepare themselves for the reception of the holy Mysteries, and went with them, singing moleben. When they came to that holy place where the holy footprints had appeared on the marble, they found in the rock a small church hewn out, in the form of a cave; its walls were not smooth, and its height varied: in one place one could reach it with one's head, while in another place it was impossible to reach even with one's hand. From this it became clear to the people that God seeks in the church not precious stones but a pure heart. The Holy Table in this church was covered with a purple covering; the bishop celebrated the holy Liturgy upon this Holy Table and gave the faithful the Most Pure Mysteries. In the sanctuary, on the north side, water began to flow from above — pure, sweet, very clear, and wonderworking; all the sick who tasted it after receiving the holy Mysteries were healed, and many other countless miracles were wrought in that church through the prayers of the holy Archistrategos Michael. The bishop built cells beside the church and placed there priests, deacons, singers and readers, so that the church service might be celebrated there daily to the glory of God and in honor of the holy Archistrategos Michael.

Let us also mention a miracle that occurred on Mount Athos.[16] In the times of the pious Bulgarian tsars there lived a certain rich and noble man named Dochiar. Once, desiring to please God, he wished to become a monk. Taking much gold, he went to the holy mountain to visit the monasteries there and to seek a suitable place for settling. Having gone around many monasteries and distributed much alms, he left the Lavra of the Blessed Athanasius and went from Thessalonica[17] along the shore of the sea. Here he found a very beautiful place with sweet water and rich vegetation; no inhabitants were yet in that place. This place greatly pleased him, and he resolved to settle here and build a monastery. Setting to the work with zeal, he soon fulfilled his desire. First he built a beautiful church in the name of St. Nicholas, and then he established a monastery and enclosed it with stone walls. Having put all this into proper order, he himself took the monastic habit in that monastery. But amid the multitude of buildings, his gold proved insufficient, so that he could not adorn the church with fitting splendor. Placing his hope in the help of God, he said:

"If the Lord God wills to glorify this place, He Himself will provide for the adornment of the church; may His will be done!"

Opposite the holy mountain there is an island called Lug, at a distance of one day's sea voyage; there shepherds lived and pastured their flocks, for that place was very suitable for pasture. On this island, in an uninhabited spot, a tall stone pillar had been set up; on the pillar stood a stone idol, on which was written in Greek: "Whoever strikes me upon the head will find a multitude of gold." Many tried to learn whether this was true, and they struck the head of the idol, but found nothing. It happened at that time that a youth was tending oxen near the said pillar; the youth was very intelligent and literate. Having read the inscription made upon the pillar, he struck the idol upon the head, as others

16. Mount Athos is a narrow, mountainous peninsula jutting out into the Archipelago. Mount Athos (also Athos) is one of the most revered holy places of the Eastern Orthodox world, and is visited each year by thousands of pilgrims. At present there are twenty large monasteries on Athos, several sketes, and a multitude of individual cells.

17. Thessalonica (also Salonica) is the capital of one of the regions of Macedonia. In Thessalonica the Apostle Paul preached the Gospel; two of his epistles were written for the inhabitants of that region and city.

had done, in order to find the gold — yet he found nothing. Then he thought that perhaps the gold was buried in the earth, and at sunset he noticed where the shadow of this pillar ended on the ground; and in the place where the shadow of the idol's head ended, he began to dig the earth, seeking the treasure, but here too he found nothing. When the sun rose, he again watched where the shadow of the pillar ended, and there he began to dig. As he dug, he heard some sound in that place, and, understanding that a treasure was hidden there, he dug still more eagerly and dug down to a millstone, so large that it was impossible for him even to lift it. Reaching his hand through a hole in the stone, he found there much gold, and in perplexity did not know what to do with it.

"If I tell anyone about the gold," he thought, "they may kill me for its sake."

God, heeding the prayers of the aforementioned elder who was concerned with the adornment of the holy temple, inspired the youth to go to the holy mountain to one of the monasteries and tell the abbot about the treasure found. The youth did so. Taking several gold coins as proof of his find, he came to a village lying near the sea and hired a man there who would ferry him to the holy mountain. By God's providence, he landed at the quay of the aforementioned, newly built monastery, named after its builder Dochiar. The ferryman returned to his village, and the youth went to that monastery. Seeing the abbot there, he told him in detail about the treasure he had found. The abbot perceived in this the work of God; he called three monks and, having related to them what he had heard from the youth, sent them with him to bring the gold found to the monastery. The monks hastened off in a boat, and having sailed to the island, they came to the pillar near which the gold had been buried. When they rolled away the millstone, they found under it a cauldron full of gold, and were greatly rejoiced. But the age-old enemy of the human race, the hater of all good, the devil, implanted an evil thought in one of these monks, and he said to another monk:

"Brother, what need have we to carry this gold to the abbot! God has sent it to us: with this gold we ourselves will build dwellings for ourselves and raise a monastery."

When the other objected: "How shall we conceal this gold?" — he answered:

"All this is in our power: we can cast this youth into the sea, and then there will be no witnesses against us."

Having agreed thus, they told the third monk of it; but he, being God-fearing, said:

"No, brethren, do not dare to do this: do not destroy the lad, and do not destroy your own souls for the sake of gold."

But they, not heeding his admonition, began to compel him to be of one mind with them, and at last said:

"If you are not with us, we will destroy you together with the lad."

The brother, seeing their unconquerable evil intent, feared lest they destroy him too, and said:

"If you have so decided, then do as you wish; but I swear by the name of God that I will tell no one of this, and I will claim no gold from you."

Having thus confirmed his word with an oath, he fell silent. They took the gold and the stone with which it had been covered, carried them into the boat, and, seating themselves therein with the boy, sailed toward the monastery. When they had reached deep water, they fell upon the boy and began tying the stone around his neck. The boy understood what they intended to do to him, and with weeping and lamentation began to beg them not to destroy him; but it was in vain. Those wicked monks, with hearts turned to stone and souls devoted to gold, neither feared God, nor were moved by the boy's tears, nor heeded his humble entreaty. Seizing him, they cast him with the stone into the depths of the sea, and he at once sank to the bottom. It was night when this wicked deed was done. The merciful God, looking down from on high upon the boy's bitter weeping and seeing his innocent drowning, sent the guardian of the human race, the holy Archangel Michael, to take the drowned boy from the bottom of the sea and bring him alive into the church. And so it came to pass. Suddenly the boy was found near the Holy Table, with the stone hanging from his neck. When the time came for the service of Matins, the ecclesiarch[18] entered the church to light the candles and begin ringing for the Matins service. At that moment he heard a human voice and a groan in the sanctuary; greatly frightened, he went to tell the abbot. The abbot called him fearful and fainthearted and bade him go to the church again. On entering it a second time, he heard the same voice once more and returned again to the abbot. Then the abbot himself went with him to the church and, hearing the voice, entered the sanctuary. There he found the boy lying near the Holy Table, with a stone tied to his neck; seawater was still running from his clothing. The abbot recognized the boy and asked:

"What has happened to you, my son, and how did you come here?"

The boy seemed to awaken from sleep and said:

"Those wicked monks whom you sent with me to recover the gold that had been found tied this stone around my neck and cast me into

18. The *ekklesiarch* (Greek: head of the church) was obliged to oversee the church building and its cleanliness, as well as the order of worship in the monastery, in accordance with the instructions of the church Typikon.

the sea. When I sank to the bottom, I saw two men shining like the sun and heard them speaking to one another. One said to the other, 'Archangel Michael! Bring this boy to the Monastery of Dochiar!' When I heard this, I lost consciousness, and I do not know how I came to be here."

Hearing the boy's account, the abbot marvelled and glorified God, who works wondrous and most glorious miracles. Then he said to the boy:

"Remain here, my son, until morning, when the wickedness will be exposed."

Then he went out and locked the church, charging the ecclesiarch to tell no one of this; and he ordered that Matins be served in the narthex. He further instructed the ecclesiarch:

"If anyone asks why Matins is sung in the narthex and not in the church, answer that the superior has so commanded."

At daybreak those murderers came to the monastery, having hidden the gold elsewhere. Seeing them, the abbot went out to meet them with the other brethren and asked:

"Why did four of you set out yesterday, but only three return now? Where is the fourth?"

They replied angrily:

"Father, the boy deceived both you and us, saying that he had found gold. He could show us nothing, for he knows nothing himself, and has hidden somewhere out of shame. We searched for him a long while, but could not find him, and have returned to you alone."

The abbot answered, "May the will of God be done," and went with them into the monastery. Bringing them into the church, where the youth lay, water still running from his clothing, he showed him to them and asked:

"And who is this?"

When they saw the youth, they were horrified and stood as if turned to stone. For a long while they could make no answer; at last, though unwillingly, they confessed their wicked deed and told where they had hidden the gold they had found. Then the abbot sent more trustworthy brethren, who brought the gold to the monastery. News of this won-

drous event spread throughout the Holy Mountain, and monks from all the monasteries gathered to behold this most glorious miracle. Having assembled in council, they renamed that church in honor of the holy Archangel Michael, and built another church in honor of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker. They cursed and expelled from the monastery the two wicked murderers, but declared the third monk innocent, since he had not consented to the boy's drowning and had refused to take part in the crime. The boy who had been saved from drowning took the monastic habit and became a good ascetic and strict monk. After this, the abbot used the gold brought to him to adorn the church magnificently and built a very beautiful narthex anew. The stone with which the youth had been cast into the sea was set into the wall, so that all might know of the miracle that had been revealed. When the abbot reposed, the monk who had been saved from drowning was appointed abbot in his place. Having lived in a manner pleasing to God, he too departed to the Lord, borne in the hands of the holy Archangel Michael, just as he had formerly been carried by him from the sea into the church.

For all these things, let us glorify the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and magnify forever the holy Archangel Michael.

Troparion to the Archangel, Tone 4:

O chief commander of the heavenly hosts, we, the unworthy, ever beseech thee: by thy prayers shelter us beneath the wings of thine immaterial glory, preserving us who fall down before thee with fervent supplication and cry: Deliver us from tribulations, O commander of the powers on high.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

O Archangel of God, minister of divine glory, commander of the angels and guide of mankind, ask for us what is profitable and great mercy, for thou art the Archangel of the bodiless hosts.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Romilus

Страдание святого мученика Ромила

St. Romilus lived during the reign of Emperor Trajan[19] and was the foremost dignitary in the entire imperial household.

It happened that Trajan, while in the eastern lands with a great army to subdue the Iberians, Sarmatians, Arabs, and other peoples,[20] resolved to count his soldiers. Among the ranks he found eleven thousand men who confessed Christ and rejected the worship of idols. Trajan sent them all away in disgrace to Armenia, hoping that this would compel them to renounce Christ and offer sacrifices to idols, whereupon they might return to military service and receive again their former honors in the army.

Then Romilus, as commander of the army, came before the emperor and rebuked him for his godlessness and folly, in that, having gone forth to war, he was himself diminishing his army. Romilus confessed that he was a Christian, ready to die for the name of Jesus Christ, his Lord.

Trajan was greatly angered with the saint, ordered him to be cruelly beaten, and condemned him to death. At that time the precious head of the holy Martyr was also cut off.[21] The Christians sent into confinement were likewise put to death in various ways: nine thousand of them were crucified in the desert near Mount Ararat in Armenia, while the rest died amid other torments.

* * *

19. Trajan was a Roman emperor who reigned from 98 to 117 A.D. He was one of the best Roman emperors. Yet he too persecuted Christians, and issued two laws which contributed considerably to the beginning of open persecutions of Christians: one of them forbade all secret assemblies, and the second established that all who obstinately refused to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, on account of their confession of the Christian faith, were to be put to death.

20. The Iberians are the present-day Georgians. The Savromatians or Sarmatians lived next to the Iberians, from the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea and further eastward; the Arabs lived on the Arabian Peninsula.

21. The blessed end of the holy martyr took place around the year 107 or the year 115, at the time when the Emperor Trajan was with his armies in the east.

Passion of the Holy Martyr Eudoxius

Страдание святого мученика Евдоксия

St. Eudoxius lived during the reign of Diocletian, a cruel persecutor of the Church of God. This emperor issued an impious decree forbidding the worship of the One True God throughout his empire and requiring that the honor due to God be rendered to mute, lifeless idols. When this decree was published, many of the faithful fled to deserts and mountains, preferring to live there among wild beasts rather than in cities among lawless people. Likewise, many persons of rank and noble birth left their offices and homes and hid in unknown places. Among them was the military commander Eudoxius, a faithful servant of Jesus Christ. Leaving his post, he hid with his wife and children from the impious, in order to escape the emperor's wrath. Meanwhile, soldiers sent by the governor of Melitene, before whom St. Eudoxius had been slandered, sought him everywhere. In one place the soldiers encountered Eudoxius, dressed in poor clothing, and asked whether he knew where the commander of the army, Eudoxius, was.

The saint understood that they were seeking him in order to deliver him up to torture, and said to them:

"Come to my house, eat my bread and rest from your journey; then I will show you Eudoxius, for I know where he is hiding with his household."

The soldiers agreed and went with the holy Martyr.

Eudoxius welcomed them, entertained them well, and then declared that he was the very man they sought.

The soldiers, astonished at the saint's conduct, replied:

"For the kindness you have shown us, we will not take you. We shall tell the man who sent us that we searched for a long time but did not find you. But hide yourself, lest someone else learn of you and report you."

The soldiers were already preparing to leave, but the saint detained them, saying:

"Wait for me, brethren, and I will go with you. It is no longer fitting for me to hide, for God Himself is calling me to the contest of martyr-

dom, that I too may be a confessor and bear witness to His holy name. If God had willed that I remain undiscovered, not only would you not have met me on the road, but you would not even have been sent to seek me, nor would I have encountered you. All that has happened is a sign of God's good pleasure, that I should suffer for Him even unto the shedding of blood."

Then, calling his wife, whose name was Basilissa, his children, household, and friends, Eudoxius said to them:

"There was a time when I hid; now the time has come to reveal myself and willingly give myself into the hands of the torturers for Jesus Christ, who gave Himself to suffering for us. And so I go; as my Lord wills, so shall He order all things concerning me and help me. But I leave you under His protection."

Then, having given various instructions concerning the household, the saint admonished his children and servants how they should live virtuously without him, in the fear and love of God; and to his wife he bequeathed that she should not weep or lament when she heard of his death, but should spend that day in great joy and gladness, giving thanks to God that He had vouchsafed to make His servant worthy of the martyr's crown.

Having taken leave of his household, and having put on the clothing befitting his rank, together with arms and the military belt, as was proper for the commander of an army, the saint left his house, his wife and children, his servants, his friends and all his property, forsaking everything for the love of his Lord.

Touching was that parting, when a wife was losing her husband, children their father, friends their beloved friend! All wept bitterly as they took leave of him, for they knew that he would not return to them. Only one thing served them for consolation in their sorrow: that Eudoxius desired to suffer for Christ, to be a victorious martyr, and to stand before Christ his Lord with the martyr's crown.

Thus, having taken leave of all his own, the blessed Eudoxius set out on his way with the soldiers, while Basilissa, his wife, followed him from afar, desiring to see his sufferings. With her went also two be-

loved friends of Eudoxius, Zeno and Macarius, for whom too the martyr's crown had been prepared by the Lord.

When the blessed Eudoxius was brought before the governor, the latter, greeting him graciously, said:

"We have summoned you so that you may fulfill the imperial command and offer sacrifices to the gods, who ought to be worshipped, above all to Zeus, the father of all gods, and to Apollo, the sun-like, and to the beloved goddess Artemis."

St. Eudoxius answered:

"I know that sacrifice must be offered to the One God, glorified in three Persons, the God who created the world and grants life and salvation. To Him I shall offer the sacrifice of praise, and not to those whom you call gods, when they are trees and stones and in no way differ from any lifeless thing."

The governor spoke again to Eudoxius:

"I command you to render due honor to the gods; but you, as I see, not only despise the gods, but regard the emperor himself as nothing. I have heard that you are introducing some new faith and drawing many into it."

Speaking thus, the governor looked at the multitude of soldiers standing about and said with anger:

"Whoever does not carry out the imperial command will be deprived of his military garb, as unworthy to wear it; and let him know that the honor of his military rank will be taken from him."

Thus spoke the lawless governor, wishing to shame St. Eudoxius, for he hoped that no one would yet be found opposing the imperial command, and that Eudoxius alone would remain disobedient, and therefore, out of shame, would obey the imperial command so as not to lose the honor of his rank. But instead of this, the tormentor himself was put to shame. Even during his speech, St. Eudoxius took off the belt that was the sign of his command and threw it into the face of the governor. Seeing this, many soldiers, to the number of one thousand one hundred and four, who had been secret Christians, kindled with zeal for God, did the same as their commander Eudoxius: taking off their milit-

ary insignia, they threw them at the governor, being ready to lose even their bodies, laying down their souls for the name of Jesus Christ.

The tormentor, seeing so great a multitude of confessors of Christ suddenly revealed, was thrown into confusion, and, breaking off the interrogation of them, at once sent word of what had happened to the emperor Diocletian, asking for instructions as to how he should proceed. The emperor soon sent him this reply: the commanders were to be subjected to cruel tortures, but the lower ranks were to be left in peace.

Receiving the imperial command, the governor took his seat in the court, ordered Eudoxius to be brought before him as the chief commander, and again began to speak to him:

"I advise you, Eudoxius, to give up your evil obstinacy and mad resistance and to offer sacrifice to the gods of your own accord; but if you do not agree, you will have to do it against your will, compelled by severe torments."

At this the governor began to enumerate imprisonments, dreadful dungeons, wounds, the flaying of the body, burning with fire, and other cruel tortures that struck terror at the mere mention of them.

The martyr answered:

"You mock me, governor, in saying this. I count your torments as children's scarecrows, for I hope for the future recompense which I shall receive from the generous Lord of the contest, Christ. I fear not that fire of which you have spoken, but that which never goes out, and the gnashing of teeth and other fierce torments that are prepared for the disobedient to the true God and for those who reject Him. Your tortures, compared with these, are children's toys, and the fire with which you threaten me is colder than water compared with the fire of Gehenna. Your sword," the saint continued, "will be to me a key to the doors of the desired land, where, instead of this visible sun that quickly sets, I shall see the unsetting and unfading light, and instead of temporal goods I shall inherit eternal blessings. Let it be known to you that I will not bow down to your gods, for it is great madness to hold as gods trees, stones, gold and silver shaped by the hand of an artist."

Hearing such an answer from the saint, the governor said to him:

"The fault for your mad answer lies in my indulgence, with which I have allowed you so boldly to dishonor the gods, the emperor and myself; I can still endure dishonor to myself, but the dishonor of the gods and the emperor it is no longer possible to bear."

After this the governor ordered the saint to be stretched by the hands and feet and pitilessly beaten with a stiff thong, then hung up and his body flayed with sharp iron instruments. After these tortures the saint was thrown into prison.

After some days he was brought again for interrogation, and the tormentor found Eudoxius as unshaken in the faith as before, like an unyielding pillar and an impregnable city; therefore he commanded that the martyr be beaten on the neck with iron rods and that all his limbs be dislocated from their joints, a torment heavier than death itself.

After this the tormentor condemned Eudoxius to be beheaded with the sword.

As the saint was being led to the place of execution, the holy martyr prayed thus:

"O God, who didst look upon the offerings of Abel and Abraham, who didst graciously accept the long-suffering of many martyrs, look with Thy merciful eye also upon my offering, and do not reject my blood, which I offer Thee with warmth of soul from a loving heart."

While praying thus, Eudoxius saw his wife, who was following him weeping, and asked her whether everything had been done as he had commanded, and bade her, only after his beheading, to take his body and bury it in the place called Amimna; then again he gave her the instruction not to weep for his death, but to honor that day with bright clothing and to adorn herself with various precious jewels.

Then, seeing his friend Zeno weeping for him, Eudoxius said to him also:

"Beloved Zeno, do not weep: the God whom we serve will not separate us, but as in one boat we shall sail together into eternal life."

These words so strongly affected Zeno that he began to cry out loudly:

"I too am a Christian, and I confess Christ, and I desire to die for Him."

At once he was seized by the impious servants, and he was reported to the governor. The latter commanded that he too, together with Eudoxius, be beheaded with the sword. When they were brought to the place of execution, Zeno was first beheaded with the sword, while Eudoxius prayed for him; having sent his friend ahead to heaven, Eudoxius bowed his head under the sword and received a blessed end.

Together with them were also beheaded other martyrs who had boldly confessed Christ, and their bodies were cast out unburied. But Basilissa, the wife of Eudoxius, fearlessly took his body and buried it with honor in the place that he himself had indicated.

For this act she was seized and brought before the governor, before whom she openly confessed God and reviled the idols and their worshippers, desiring by the same path of torment to follow her husband quickly to the Lord.

However, the tormentor said to her:

"I know that you would wish to go after your husband, so as to have praise from the Galileans (that is, the Christians); but although you deserve death, I will not put you to death."

Basilissa answered the tormentor:

"My Lord Jesus Christ knows this my desire and will accept it in place of the deed itself; if I am not tormented by you, I shall nonetheless not be deprived of blessedness with my husband before the Lord God."

After such words the governor drove her away from him.

Seven days later St. Eudoxius appeared to her in a dream and said:

"Tell our friend and steward Macarius to go to the court and follow our example; we are waiting for him."

As soon as Basilissa told Macarius of this vision, he at once went to the governor and declared himself a Christian and a disciple of Eudoxius. The governor, seeing him and hearing from him so bold a confession, commanded that his head also be cut off with the sword. (In the year 311.)

Thus Macarius also went after Eudoxius and Zeno to the good Lord of the contest, Christ our Lord. Basilissa too pleased Him, having died in the true faith, and stood among the host of saints before the throne

of the glory of God, glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

Memory of the Hieromartyr Cyril, Bishop of Gortyna

Память священномученика Кирилла, епископа Гортинского

This blessed Cyril lived in the reign of the emperor Maximian, under the governor Agrippinus. Adorned with every virtue, he lived only ninety-five years. Once he set out, accompanied by two of his servants, Theophanes and Theoctistus, to a certain monastery. On the way there he saw pagans offering oxen and sheep in sacrifice to idols; he sighed over such madness and reproved the idolaters. For this they seized him and put him in prison. When St. Cyril was praying to God there at midnight, he heard a heavenly voice: "Cyril, go to Rome!" The next morning the doors of the prison were found open, and all the idols around lay broken. St. Cyril reached the monastery, and here he saw in a vision the Venerable Philoxenus, who said to him: "You shall receive two crowns: one of a hierarch and the other of a martyr." Then the saint went to Rome and here strengthened the faithful by his preaching. When persecution began, he resolved to go to Jerusalem. On the way there, at the island of Maleon, a man in white garments appeared to him and bade him not to pass by the island of Crete, which he did. In the Cretan city of Gortyna he was made bishop; he was then sixty years old. When persecution of the Christians broke out again, the hierarch was brought to trial before the governor, who began to persuade him to renounce Christ; and since the holy confessor would not yield to his exhortations, he was sentenced to beheading by the sword. Then they put a horse's bit into his mouth and, seating him on a cart (since in his old age he could not walk), they drove him away. When they brought him to a place called Raxa, a voice was heard from heaven: "Thus far!" The cart stopped, and the saint's head was cut off.

Life of the Venerable David

Житие преподобного Давида

The holy and Venerable David was formerly a robber, and living in the desert of Hermopolis[22], he caused much evil, killed many, and was as malicious and cruel as anyone. Under his command he had more than thirty men who robbed together with him. Once, sitting with them on a mountain, he began to reflect on his life, and remembering how many evils and calamities he had inflicted on people, he greatly feared God. Leaving all the robbers who were with him, he went to a monastery.

When David knocked at the gate, the doorkeeper came out and said to him:

"What do you want?"

David answered:

"I want to become a monk."

The doorkeeper went and told the abbot about him. The abbot came out to him, but seeing that he was an old man, he said:

"You cannot be here, because the brethren labor much and live in great abstinence; but you are of a different disposition and cannot keep the monastic commandments."

David continued to beg to be received into the monastery.

"Whatever you command me, I will do," he said, "only receive me."

The abbot refused, saying:

"You cannot live with us."

Then David said to the abbot:

"Know, Father, that I am David, the leader of the robbers; I have come to you so that I may weep for my sins. But if you will not receive me, I solemnly promise you that I will go back, bring with me my robbers, slay all of you, and lay waste your monastery."

Hearing this, the abbot received David into the monastery and tonsured him to the monastic rank. And David began to labor in abstinence and to train himself in humility. Before long he surpassed the other monks of the monastery in virtue and served everyone for their benefit by his life and his word.

22. The Hermopolite Desert was located in Egypt and received its name from the ancient Egyptian city of Hermopolis.

Once, when David was sitting in his cell, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to him, saying:

"David, the Lord has forgiven your sins, and from now on you will work miracles."

David answered the Angel:

"I cannot believe that the Lord has so quickly forgiven me my sins, for they are very grievous and more numerous than the sand of the sea."

The Archangel said to him:

"I am the Archangel Gabriel, who did not spare even Zachariah[23] when he did not believe my words, but bound his tongue as a punishment, so that he would believe what I had said. Shall I spare you? Therefore, from now on you shall be mute!"

David bowed and said to the Angel:

"When I was a robber, doing lawless deeds and shedding much blood, you did not bind my tongue, which did not give glory to God. And now, when I have desired to serve the Lord and bring Him praise, you bind my tongue so that I may not speak words!"

Then the Angel said:

"Speak, but only when you glorify God and pray to Him during the prayer rule; and all the rest of the time be silent!"

Having so chastised him, the Angel departed from him. David gave thanks to God for the forgiveness of his sins. After this, by the grace of God, he worked many miracles: he restored sight to the blind, raised up the lame, and healed the demoniacs. He sang hymns to God in the church during prayer, but could utter no other words. Having lived thus for many years to the edification of all, he reposed in the Lord[24], and now, standing before Him, he ceaselessly prays for us.

By his prayers may we too receive the mercy of the Lord. Amen.

* * *

23. The priest Zacharias, father of St. John the Forerunner, is meant here. See Lk. 1:11–22.
24. He lived and reposed in the 6th century.

Commemoration of the holy martyrs Cyriacus, Faustus and Avivus.

Память святых мучеников Кириака, Фавста и Авива.

These holy martyrs suffered under the emperor Decius[25], in Alexandria[26], in the same persecution during which St. Fabian[27], Pope of Rome, and St. Alexander of Alexandria[28] were martyred. They were brought before the governor of the city, Valerius, and for their steadfast confession of the name of Christ and their bold reproof of idolatrous flattery and vanity, they were beheaded by the sword. Thirteen other martyrs were slain with them. Some Alexandrian Christians took their relics and reverently placed them in their city, to the glory of the true God, our Christ.

* * *

25. Decius was a cruel persecutor of Christians; he reigned from 249 to 251.
26. Alexandria was a city famous for its learning, its political importance and its trade, founded by Alexander the Great in Egypt around 333 B.C.
27. St. Fabian was pope of Rome in 236–250.
28. St. Alexander was patriarch of Alexandria in 212–250.

THE SEVENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 7

7 сентября

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

Passion of Holy Martyr Sozon

Страдание святого мученика Созонта

Maximian[1], governor of Cilicia, spreading the impious idolatrous polytheism by imperial command, came to the city of Pompeiopolis and, celebrating the golden idol there, offered many sacrifices. At that time there was present a youth, a native of Lycaonia[2], named Sozon, a Christian in faith, good of disposition and filled with good works, for he was instructed in the law of the Lord day and night. He tended flocks of dumb sheep, but at the same time he also led the rational sheep of Christ to good pasture. Wherever he was with his sheep, other shepherds, youths and men gathered about him; and he taught them the knowledge of the One God, and brought many to holy baptism, for the grace of the Holy Spirit was upon him. Once, while tending his sheep beside a spring where a great oak stood, Sozon fell into a sweet sleep and saw a divine vision calling him to the martyr's struggle and announcing that this place would bring benefit to many, for it would be sanctified by grace descending from above, and many would find salvation there and glorify the Holy Trinity. Rising from sleep, this good shepherd entrusted the sheep to others and, leaving on that spot his bow and three arrows as a memorial, set out for the city of Pompeiopolis. There he saw impiety increased and the holy faith

1. In some ancient Menologies (of Emperor Basil and others) "Maximian" is given instead of "Maximus." It is thought that this was Numerius Maximus, who was governor of Cilicia in 304 A.D.

2. In the Menologion of Emperor Basil the birthplace of the martyr Sozon is named as Lycia; in the Prologue, as in the Chet'i-Minei, Lycaonia; according to the martyrological acts it is Cilicia, where there was a seaside city Pompeiopolis, in antiquity Soli.

trampled, and he grieved in his heart over it. Entering the shrine where the golden idol stood, he broke off its hand, shattered it and distributed the gold to the poor. The removal of the golden hand from the idol caused great tumult in the city, and many were interrogated and tortured. But St. Sozon, not wishing that anyone else should suffer for him, himself came to the governor Maximian and declared that he was the culprit of that deed. "I took the hand of your god," he said, "shattered it and gave away the gold to those in need." When they began to question him how he had dared to act thus and to dishonor their god by taking away and breaking his hand, he answered:

I did this in order to see the powerlessness of your god. For when I took his hand away, he offered me no resistance, said nothing, showed no pain, uttered no groan. Indeed, being dumb and senseless, how could he resist? If he were the true and living God, he would have withstood me and would not have allowed me to do him harm. But I, knowing that this is an idol and not a god, shattered his hand, and would even have shattered all of him, so that you would not worship the work of human hands, which, though it has eyes, and ears, and mouth, and hands, and feet, yet does not see, does not hear, does not speak, does not feel, does not walk, and cannot help itself in anything when it is struck or broken into pieces.

The governor, hearing this, commanded that Sozon be tortured without mercy. First they hung him upon a tree and scraped his ribs with iron claws; then they put him into iron boots with sharp nails inside them and led him through the city; the saint, walking in them, glorified God. Then they hung him again upon the tree and beat him severely with iron clubs, so that not only his flesh but his bones were shattered. In these torments the saint gave up his spirit to God[3]. Seeing that he was already dead, the tormentors, taking his body down from the tree, by the governor's command kindled a strong fire to burn the body, fearing lest it become an object of veneration for the faithful. And when this much-suffering body was cast into the fire, suddenly lightning flashed, thunder crashed and a heavy rain with hail fell, so that

3. According to the Greek Synaxarion of the Athonite Nicodemus, the sufferings and death of St. Martyr Sozon followed in 288. According to other reports, this occurred around 304.

the fire was immediately extinguished; the people present fled in fear, and the body of the saint remained whole. When night came, the faithful wished to take the holy relics and could not, for there was great darkness, and they grieved greatly over it. But at midnight light from heaven shone upon the relics, and the faithful, taking them, buried them with honor. From the martyr's tomb many miracles flowed, and not only from the tomb but also from the spring that flowed beneath the oak, where the saint had once had his vision in sleep, various healings were granted to the sick by the grace of Christ and through the prayers of the holy martyr. Therefore afterwards a church was built there in his name, for the glorification in it of the True God, the Trinity in Unity. Glory to the Lord forever, Amen.

Kontakion of the Saint, Tone 2:

Let us today, gathered together, loudly praise Sozon, the true and God-wise martyr, the skilled athlete of piety, the mystic of grace, the most bounteous giver of healings; for he intercedes with Christ God for us all.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Apostles Evodus and Onesiphorus

Память святых Апостолов Евода и Онисифора

Holy Evodus, one of the seventy Apostles, was the first bishop in great Antioch after the holy Apostle Peter, and a great preacher of the Word of God. St. Ignatius the God-bearer mentions him in his epistle to the Antiochians in these words: "Remember your blessed father Evodus, who was appointed to you by the Apostles as first shepherd; be his true sons and not adulterers, that your father may not be ashamed of you." This holy Evodus wrote that the Most Holy Virgin, at fifteen years of age, bore Christ, the Savior of the world. "At three years of age," he writes, "she was brought into the Temple of the Lord, where she abode eleven years; and when she had reached fourteen years of age, she was given by the priests to Joseph to keep her. With

him she remained four months, when she received the joyful tidings from the Angel, and at the end of her fifteenth year she bore Christ, the light to the world." Besides this, St. Evodus left many other useful writings, but all of them perished in those calamitous times when the Church of God was subjected to persecution, and therefore they have not come down to our time. At present only a book entitled "The Luminary" is known, of which, however, there is mention only in the ancient historian Nicephorus[4]. About St. Evodus himself there is information in the Roman martyrologies[5], where it is said that he shed his blood for Christ and died a martyr's death. Some assert that the saint suffered in Antioch under the emperor Vespasian[6]. At that time, they say, a great disturbance was caused in one city by a certain Jew named Antiochus; having renounced his faith, he began to offer sacrifices to idols, and many Jews were slain for not worshipping idols. Then very many Jews embraced the Christian faith, and they had as their bishop the blessed Evodus, who, as their leader and shepherd, was soon put to death[7].

Holy Onesiphorus likewise belonged to the company of the seventy Apostles. Of him the Apostle Paul says in his epistle to Timothy: "The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain, but when he was in Rome he sought me diligently and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day; and how much he served me at Ephesus, you know very well" (2 Tim. 1:16–18). This Onesiphorus was bishop in Colophon[8] and suffered for the faith, receiving a martyr's death. Of his martyrdom there bear witness the martyr acts, in which it

4. Nicephorus Callistus.

5. Martyrologies, or martyrial acts, are collections of the most ancient accounts of the sufferings of the martyrs. The beginning and first foundations of the martyrial acts are the records of the interrogations, condemnations and executions of the martyrs by the pagan authorities. From the time of the persecution of the Roman emperor Decius Trajan (250 A.D.) formal church acts concerning the fate of the martyrs began to be kept in Rome and in other localities, but of these only insignificant fragments have come down to us.

6. Vespasian: Roman emperor, reigned from 70 to 79 A.D.

7. The blessed repose of St. Evodus occurred in 66 A.D.

8. Colophon: an ancient city of Lydia, in the northwestern part of Asia Minor. Its ruins have been discovered in recent times.

is related that St. Onesiphorus, after many tortures, was torn apart by wild horses and, together with Evodus, took his place in the company of God's confessors in the heavenly abodes.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Eupsychius

Память святого мученика Евпсихия

Holy Eupsychius was born and brought up in Caesarea in Cappadocia. In the reign of the emperor Hadrian[9], an accusation was lodged against him that he did not honor the pagan gods but worshipped Christ. In consequence of this accusation Eupsychius was seized by the governor of Cappadocia and subjected to torture: his body was scraped with iron claws until his ribs were laid bare. After the sufferings of St. Eupsychius he was thrown, barely alive, into prison. Here he turned to the Lord with fervent prayer, and during this prayer an Angel appeared and by his touch healed the martyr's wounds.

Soon after this St. Eupsychius was released from prison to freedom. This release came about by the will of God, so that the wealth which Eupsychius possessed should not fall into the hands of impious men but should be given to the poor. And indeed St. Eupsychius distributed all his property, which had been gathered by his forefathers, to the beggars and the needy, and he gave some part to his enemies who had slandered him, and thus honored with gifts the authors of his sufferings as though they were his benefactors.

Afterwards, when the prince Sapricius ruled in Caesarea, St. Eupsychius was again seized. He was hanged and scraped for a long time, after which he received a martyr's end by beheading with the sword. It is related that from the wounds of his body, instead of blood, milk and water flowed out.

* * *

9. Hadrian: Roman emperor, reigned from 117 to 138 A.D. Although he did not raise a special prolonged persecution against the Christians, nevertheless many Christian martyrs suffered under him, and he himself had a leaning toward superstition and the mysterious pagan teachings.

Life of our Holy Father John, Archbishop of Novgorod

Житие святого отца нашего Иоанна, архиепископа Новгородского

The new Russian wonderworker, St. John, was born in Great Novgorod. His parents, Nicholas and Christina, were pious people. Therefore both he and his brother Gabriel were brought up in the fear of God. From his youth St. John dedicated himself to God and led a virtuous life; when he came of age, he was ordained priest to the church of the Hieromartyr Blaise. The newly ordained priest served the Lord with even greater zeal, faithfully and strictly keeping all the commandments of God. Meanwhile, the parents of St. John died. Earlier he had loved a quiet and tranquil life and had even intended to take monastic tonsure; now, having consulted with his brother Gabriel, St. John resolved to found a new monastery with the means left by their parents. At first they built a wooden church in honor of the Most Pure Mother of God, in memory of her glorious Annunciation, and founded a monastery; then they conceived the plan of erecting a stone church as well. The brothers began with eagerness to carry out their good intention: they diligently began building a stone church and had already brought it halfway, but were obliged to stop, as their means were exhausted; the Blessed John and his brother Gabriel were greatly saddened by this, and their grief was great. And so, finding themselves in such a difficult situation, yet at the same time keeping firm faith and great zeal toward the Most Pure Mother of God, they turned in prayer to this swift helper and consoler of all who are in sorrow:

"O our Sovereign Lady!" the brothers prayed. "Thou knowest our faith and our love for Thy Son and our God; Thou seest our zeal with which we turn to Thee, our Lady; we beseech Thee, help us complete this church. All our hope we place in Thee, O Theotokos; forsake not us Thy servants, O Sovereign Lady, and put us not to shame: we have begun to build this church, but we cannot finish its construction without Thy help."

Thus they prayed to the Theotokos and poured out their sorrow before her. Their fervent petition was heard. The Queen of Heaven appeared to them in a dream and said:

"Why do you, My beloved servants of God, fall into such sorrow and give yourselves over to such lamentation because the building of the church has been delayed? I will not leave your prayer unanswered, for I see your faith and love: in a short time you will have means, which will be not only sufficient for the construction of the church, but there will even be a surplus. Only do not abandon the good work and do not grow cold in faith."

This vision, which both brothers were granted, gave them strength and cheer; rising from sleep, they were filled with great joy. After Matins the brothers told each other what they had seen, and their hope grew still stronger. By God's providence, early that same day they went out of the monastery, and suddenly they saw before the monastery gates a beautiful horse, on which was a bridle overlaid with gold; the saddle too was bound with the same metal. The horse stood quietly and motionless, but there was no rider to whom it could belong. The brothers marveled greatly at the beauty and rich adornment of the horse; for a long time they waited to see whether its master would come from somewhere. However, no one appeared, and the horse stood motionless in the same place. Then they approached it more closely and saw that on both sides of the saddle hung two tightly stuffed bags. Understanding that this had been sent to them from above, they took the bags from the horse, and at once the horse became invisible. The brothers untied the bags and found that one was filled to the top with gold, and the other was full of silver. Amazed at such care of God and the Most Holy Lady for them, they began to offer up fervent prayers of thanksgiving. Soon, with God's help, they completed the church and adorned it splendidly; then they bought many villages to support the monastery, and, despite this, they still had a considerable amount of money left, which they gave to the abbot and the brotherhood. In this monastery they themselves received monastic tonsure as well, John being named Elias and Gabriel being named Gregory; their life passed in

a God-pleasing manner, in fasting and prayer, filled with various monastic labors and ascetic feats.

When the holy Archbishop of Novgorod Arcadius died, the Blessed Elias was summoned from the monastery and, against his will, raised to the archiepiscopal throne. Considering himself unworthy of such a rank, Elias refused it; but the prince, the secular and spiritual authorities, and all the citizens of Novgorod, guided by God Himself, unanimously chose Elias for archpastoral service, for he was pleasing to God and to men. With fervent entreaties and petitions everyone persuaded the humble monk to ascend the archiepiscopal throne; everyone demanded this. At last, against his own wish, he yielded to the will of the citizens, and he was ordained Archbishop of Novgorod by the most holy John, Metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia. He faithfully shepherded the flock of Christ's sheep, living in holiness and righteousness[10]. During his archiepiscopate, Prince Roman of Suzdal, together with many other princes of the Russian land, seventy-two in number, rose up against Great Novgorod, intending to lay it waste and to take captive and put to death their own kinsmen and co-religionists. They came to the city with a great army and, encamping around it, pressed it hard for three days. The citizens, seeing the great number of besiegers, lost heart; their strength was failing, they grieved and were troubled greatly, expecting help from nowhere but God, and they prayed only for His mercy and trusted in the prayers of their holy hierarch. He, as a truly good shepherd, seeing the wolves drawing near, ready to ravage his flock, stood guard, watching with unsleeping eye toward God, and with his holy prayers, as with walls, he protected the city. When on the third night he, as was his custom, was standing in prayer before the icon of the Lord Jesus Christ and with tears was asking the Lord for the deliverance of the city, he heard a voice saying to him:

"Go to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ on Ilyinskaya Street, take the icon of the Most Pure Mother of God and carry it out onto the city walls against the enemies; then at once you will see the city's salvation."

10. There is a report that John took part in one of the councils, where he "showed great corrections."

Hearing these words, Elias was filled with ineffable joy and spent that whole night without sleep; in the morning he gathered everyone and told them of what had happened. Hearing this, the people glorified God and His Most Pure Mother and, as if having received some help, took heart; the archbishop sent his protodeacon with the clergy, bidding them bring to him that precious icon, while he himself with the consecrated council began to celebrate a moleben in the great church of St. Sophia, the Wisdom of God. The messengers, arriving at the Church of the Savior, where the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Theotokos was, first, as was customary, bowed down before it, then wished to take the icon, but could not even move it from its place; however many times they tried to lift the icon, they still did not succeed. Then they returned to the archbishop and told him of this wondrous manifestation. Taking everyone with him, the archbishop went to the Church of the Savior; on arriving there he fell on his knees before the icon of the Sovereign Lady and prayed thus:

"O most merciful Lady, Virgin Theotokos, Thou art the hope, the expectation, and the intercessor of our city; Thou art the wall, the covering, and the refuge of all Christians, and therefore we sinners also place our hope in Thee. Pray, O Lady, to Thy Son and our God for our city; deliver us not into the hands of our enemies for our sins, but hear the weeping and sighing of Thy people; spare us, as Thy Son once spared the Ninevites for their repentance; show Thy mercy upon us also, O Sovereign Lady."

When he had finished his prayer, the hierarch began the moleben, and when the clergy sang the kontakion "Intercession of Christians, unashamed," suddenly the precious icon of the Most Pure Theotokos moved of itself. All the people, seeing such a striking miracle, cried out with one voice: "Lord, have mercy!" And the most holy archbishop, taking the precious icon in his hands and reverently kissing it, set out with the people, singing the moleben, and raised the icon onto the city wall and set it facing the enemies. At that time the adversaries pressed the city ever more fiercely, loosing upon it a cloud of arrows. And then the Most Holy Theotokos turned her face away from the enemies and cast her gaze upon the city, which was a clear sign of the great mercy of the

Sovereign Lady shown to people suffering in the siege. The archbishop, looking at the holy icon, saw tears in the eyes of the Mother of God; taking his phelonion, he began to gather in it the tears dripping from the icon, exclaiming:

"O glorious miracle, tears flow from dry wood! By this, O Queen, Thou givest us a sign that Thou dost pray with tears to Thy Son and our God for the deliverance of the city."

And all the people, seeing the Most Holy Theotokos shedding tears, cried out to God with sobbing and heartfelt tenderness. Suddenly fear fell upon the enemies, darkness covered them, the wrath of God threw them into confusion, and they began to slay one another. Noticing the confusion of the enemy, the inhabitants of Novgorod opened the city gates and rushed upon their adversaries with weapons in hand; some of them they cut down with swords, others they took alive as prisoners, and thus, with the help of the Most Holy Theotokos, they defeated all the hostile regiments. From that time God's Hierarch St. Elijah established in great Novgorod a solemn feast of the wondrous Sign of the Most Holy Theotokos, and he named that day the day of deliverance and the day of retribution, for by the prayers of the Most Holy Theotokos God sent deliverance to the citizens and punishment to those who had presumptuously risen against their brethren of the same tribe and the same faith and had waged civil war. From that time great Novgorod, governed by its good shepherd, enjoyed complete peace and deep quiet. Occupying the archiepiscopal throne for several years, the blessed Elijah, in zealous care for the greater glorification of the holy name of God, built beautiful churches; the number of all the churches he raised reached seven.

The first church, which he founded even before his tonsure as a monk, was in honor of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos; the second, in memory of the Theophany of the Lord, was built already during his hierarchy; the third was in the name of the holy Prophet Elijah; the fourth in honor of Venerable Theodore, Abbot of Stoudios; the fifth of the holy Three Youths, Ananias, Azarias and Misael, and of the holy Prophet Daniel; the sixth of the holy Righteous Lazarus, the Four-

Days-Dead; the seventh was dedicated to the holy Wonderworker Nicholas.

In raising churches Elijah was also renowned for his God-pleasing life: he was very merciful to all, distinguished by unusual meekness and unfeigned love; he was as it were a sun in the Church of Christ, pouring forth light by his good deeds, driving away the darkness of wickedness and crushing the head of the prince of darkness, the devil, who always nourishes enmity and envies the salvation of men. St. Elijah also had such power over unclean spirits that by his word he could bind them, as the following wondrous account bears witness.

Once the hierarch, as was his custom, stood at midnight in prayer in his cell. A demon, wishing to frighten the saint, entered a washbasin that hung in his cell and, stirring the water, began to make a noise. The hierarch, understanding that this was the work of the devil, approached the vessel and signed it with the sign of the Cross, and by his command he bound the demon in the washbasin so that it languished there a long time, unable to come out; at last, no longer able to bear the torment, since the power of the sign of the Cross burned it, the demon began to cry out in a human voice.

"Woe is me! The power of the Cross burns me; I can no longer endure such suffering. Release me quickly, holy servant of God."

Elijah asked:

"Who are you, and how did you come in here?"

The devil answered:

"I am the wicked demon, and I came to disturb you, for I thought that you, as a man, would be frightened and cease praying; but you have shut me up in this vessel, and now I suffer greatly. Woe to me that I was deceived and entered here. Let me go, servant of God; from now on I will never come here again."

Thus the demon cried out for a long time.

At last the hierarch said:

"For your shameless presumption I command you this very night to carry me to Jerusalem and set me down by the church where the Lord's Tomb is; from Jerusalem you must at once bring me back here to my cell the same night, and then I will release you." The demon

promised in every way to fulfill the saint's will, if only the blessed one would let him out of the vessel. The hierarch released him with the words:

"Turn into a saddled horse and stand before my cell."

Like darkness the demon came out of the vessel and, at the hierarch's command, became a horse. The blessed Elijah, going out of his cell, sat upon the demon, and that same night found himself in the holy city of Jerusalem, near the church of the Holy Resurrection, where the Lord's Tomb is. Here the servant of God forbade the demon to leave that place; and the demon stood as if fastened there, having no power to move, until Elijah had made obeisance to the Lord's Tomb and to the honorable wood of the holy Cross. Approaching the church, the hierarch knelt before its doors and began to pray; suddenly the closed doors opened of themselves, and at the Lord's Tomb candles and lamps were lit. The archbishop, offering thanksgiving prayers to God and shedding tears, bowed to the Lord's Tomb and reverently kissed it; he also bowed to the life-giving wood and to all the holy icons and places. Having fulfilled his desire, he went out of the church, and again the church doors closed of themselves; the demon stood in the place where he had been ordered, in the form of a saddled horse. Sitting upon him, John again that same night arrived at great Novgorod and found himself in his cell. As he departed from the hierarch, the demon begged him not to tell anyone how he had served him, how he had been bound by oath, and how he had obeyed like a captive.

"But if you tell anyone," the unclean spirit added, "how you rode upon me, I will not cease to plot against you, and I will bring upon you a grievous temptation."

Thus the demon threatened, and the hierarch signed himself with the sign of the Cross, and at once the demon vanished from him like smoke.

At one time St. John was holding a spiritual conversation with honorable men: abbots, priests and pious citizens; he told the lives of the saints, spoke much of soul-profiting ascetic labors, and, among other things, related what had happened to him, namely his journey to Jerus-

alem; but in telling it he did not name himself, speaking as though of someone else.

"I," he said, "know a certain man who in one night went from Novgorod to Jerusalem; having made obeisance to the Lord's Tomb and to the life-giving wood of the Lord's Cross, he returned again that same night to great Novgorod; during his journey he rode upon a demon whom he had bound by his prohibition, making him as it were his captive."

The listeners were greatly astonished at the saint's account, while the devil gnashed his teeth at the archbishop, saying:

"Since you have told the secret, I will bring upon you such a temptation that you will be condemned by all your citizens as a fornicator."

And from that time the demon, by God's permission, actually began to work his crafty plots against the hierarch, seeking to deprive him of his good name. He showed to the people who came in great numbers to John to ask for his blessing various visions in the saint's cell: now a woman's shoe, now necklaces, now some women's garments. The people who came to the archbishop, seeing this, were scandalized and began to think about the saint, whether he kept a harlot in his cell; greatly troubled by this, and discussing among themselves what they had seen, they said to one another:

"It is unworthy for a fornicating man to occupy the apostolic throne."

When once the people gathered and went to the saint's cell, the demon turned himself into a girl, who ran before the people as though departing from the cell of the blessed one. Those who saw this cried out and gave chase to the girl to seize her, but the demon ran behind the saint's cell and became invisible. Hearing the people's cry and noise, the hierarch came out of his cell and asked those gathered:

"What has happened, my children? Why do you make such a noise?"

They shouted at him, began to revile and reproach him as a fornicator, seized him, mocked him, and not knowing how to deal with him further, they began to consult among themselves:

"Let us take him to the river and set him on a raft, so that he may float out of the city along the river."

Having taken counsel, they led the holy and chaste hierarch of God to the great bridge over the river Volkhov and set the hierarch on a raft. Thus the word of the wicked devil came true, who, boasting, had said:

"I will bring upon you such a temptation that you will be condemned by all as a fornicator."

Now, seeing such dishonor done to the saint, the wicked enemy of the human race rejoiced greatly; but by God's providence the innocence of the righteous one prevailed and put the deceitful enemy to shame; for when the saint was set upon the raft, the raft did not float downstream but upstream, against the current, although at the great bridge the current of the water was very strong, and no one was pulling the raft, but it moved by the will of God and made its way to the monastery of St. George, which was at a distance of three stadia from the city. Seeing such a miracle, the people were struck with awe; forgetting their malice, they tore their garments and with weeping said:

"We have sinned and done an unrighteous deed, for we, the sheep, have unjustly condemned you, our shepherd."

Going along the bank, they begged the hierarch to forgive their transgressions and return to his throne.

"Forgive us, Father," they cried, "we sinned against you in ignorance; do not remember our malice and do not abandon your children."

Likewise the whole clergy, running ahead and bowing to the ground before the blessed one, begged him with sobs to return to his throne. But the archbishop, like the first martyr Stephen, prayed for those who had wronged him, saying:

"Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge!"

Coming to shore half a stadium[11] from the aforementioned monastery, he descended from the raft and stepped onto land. The people, falling down before him with weeping, begged his forgiveness, and there was great rejoicing when the hierarch granted them pardon; they rejoiced even more that the Lord had revealed his blameless and pure life. The meek shepherd, granting forgiveness to all, related how he

11. Otherwise, 345 sazhens, or about two-thirds of a verst and a little more.

had been in Jerusalem, how he had ridden upon a demon, and how the devil had sought to terrify him. All, hearing this, glorified God.

Thus the hierarch returned to his throne with great honor and glory, and began to teach the people:

"Children, do every deed with discretion, lest the devil beguile you, lest your virtue be darkened by an evil deed, and lest you provoke the Lord, the Master, to anger."

After all that has been described, the hierarch lived a short time longer. Learning of the approach of his death, he laid aside his archpastoral omophorion and received the schema, being given the name John, which he had borne before his tonsure as a monk. In this angelic image he peacefully reposed in the Lord[12]. His body was buried in the church of St. Sophia, the Wisdom of God[13]. After him was raised to the archpastoral throne his own brother Gregory, who also faithfully shepherded the verbal flock.

Glory to our God now and ever, and unto ages of ages! Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

Today the most glorious great Novgorod shines brightly, having within itself thy relics, O Hierarch John, which, like rays of the sun, send forth healings to those who with faith draw near to the shrine of thy relics. Pray to Christ God that He deliver this city unharmed from barbarian captivity, from civil strife, and from the burning conflagration, O God-wise Hierarch and wonderworker, heavenly man and earthly angel; that we who have gathered in love for thy memory may celebrate brightly, rejoicing in songs and

12. September 7, 1186.

13. In 1439, during the archiepiscopate of Euthymius, the relics of St. John were uncovered. With the passage of time the citizens forgot about the holy archbishop and did not even know his tomb. In this same year a small stone in the vestibule of the Sophia church broke loose from its place and fell onto the tomb of the venerable one, so that the large stone burial slab was broken. This seemed remarkable; therefore the broken slab was removed, and beneath it were found the incorrupt relics of this saint of God; but no one knew what the name of this ascetic was. Then John himself appeared in a dream to Archbishop Euthymius and named himself. From that time the local veneration of St. John began; the common celebration of the memory of this ascetic was established by Metropolitan Macarius in 1547.

hymns, and glorifying Christ, who has granted thee such grace of healings, and a protection and establishment to great Novgorod.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Rejoice, O honorable Church of Christ, manifestly, in the memory today of the much-renowned hierarch John, who shone forth from great Novgorod, astonished the whole land with his renowned miracles, and was adorned with all the virtues; for after his repose his honorable body was found incorrupt, sending forth great miracles. Wherefore we cry to him: O most blessed one, pray to Christ God without ceasing for us all.

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THE EIGHTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 8

8 сентября

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

A Discourse on the Nativity of the Theotokos

Слово на Рождество Богородицы

The Lord, who dwells in the heavens, desiring to appear on earth and dwell among men, first prepared there a place for the dwelling of His glory—His Most Pure Mother. For it is the custom of kings, when they wish to come to some city, to have a palace prepared in it for their sojourn. And just as the palaces of earthly kings are built by the most skillful craftsmen from the most precious materials, on the highest site, more beautiful and spacious than all other human dwellings, so was the palace of the glory of the King of Heaven to be built. In the Old Testament, when God desired to dwell in Jerusalem, Solomon[1] built Him a temple (3 Kgdms. 5:1–18, 7:1–51; 2 Chron. 2:1–18, 3:1–17, 4:1–22) through the most skillful builder, Hiram,[2] who

1. Solomon, king of Israel, the youngest son and successor of King David the psalmist, reigned with great glory from 993 to 953 B.C. He strengthened the borders of the kingdom, put down internal disorders, and established a flourishing trade with neighboring states. The age of Solomon was the most brilliant for the sciences and the arts. The fame of his riches, and still more of his wisdom, spread far beyond the bounds of the kingdom of Israel. The name of Solomon later became a synonym for the wise man. His God-inspired writings (the Book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs) will forever remain a school of wisdom and virtue for all people. The end of Solomon's life was overshadowed by his fall; yet at the very setting of his days he came to know the vanity of all earthly things.

2. Two persons named Hiram are known in biblical history, both of whom had a close connection with the building of the Temple of Jerusalem: 1) the king of Tyre, who was on friendly terms with Solomon and made himself famous by remarkable buildings; he sent Solomon cedars and cypresses, carpenters and craftsmen for the building of the Temple; and 2) the Tyrian architect, according to whose design the vessels for Solomon's Temple were made. Here it is more natural to understand the latter. He possessed the art and skill to produce all kinds of work in gold, silver, copper and iron, and in stones and wood, and in yarn, fine linen and purple cloth. See 3 Kgdms. 7:13–40 and 2 Chron. 2:13–14, 4:11, 16.

was filled with craftsmanship, understanding, and knowledge for every work. Solomon built the temple from the most precious materials: from excellent stone (3 Kgdms. 5:17–18), from fragrant trees, cedar and cypress (2 Kgdms. 6:9–10), brought from Lebanon,[3] and from pure gold, on the highest site, Mount Moriah.[4] The temple was made more beautiful still by the images of Cherubim and various trees and fruits carved upon its walls (3 Kgdms. 6:18–35, 7:18–22, 29–42). The temple was so spacious that the whole multitude of the people of Israel could gather in it without crowding, and the glory of the Lord descended upon it in fire and cloud (3 Kgdms. 8:10–11). Yet this temple was insufficient to contain within itself the God who cannot be contained. Solomon built Him a temple, but the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands. "What house will you build for Me, says the Lord, or what place for My rest?" (Acts 7:49). And so God was well pleased that, at the beginning of the grace of the New Testament, a temple not made with hands should be built—the Most Pure, Most Blessed Virgin Mary. By what builder, then, was that temple built? Truly, by the wisest of all, by Wisdom herself, the Wisdom of God, as Scripture says: "Wisdom has built herself a house" (Prov. 9:1); and all that is created by the Wisdom of God is beautiful and perfect. And since the Wisdom of God created an animate palace for the Word, there was built a perfect temple for the perfect God, a most radiant palace for the most radiant King, a most pure and undefiled bridal chamber for the most pure and spotless Bridegroom, an immaculate dwelling for the immaculate Lamb. Of this there is a faithful witness in heaven, who says to her: "You are altogether beautiful, my beloved, and there is no blemish in you!" (Song of Songs 4:7). And St. John of Damascus writes: "She is altogether a bridal chamber of the Spirit, altogether a city of God, a sea of graces, altogether good, altogether near to God" (Discourse 1 on the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos).

From what materials, then, was this palace built? Truly, from the most precious: for she came forth, as from a precious stone, from the

3. Lebanon is a mountain range in the northern borders of Palestine, on the boundary between Judea and Syria, which separates Phoenicia from the latter, along the whole extent of which it stretches; it is famous for its fine trees, especially cedars, cypresses and oaks.

royal line of David, who, with the stone placed in his sling—a prefiguration of the Stone, Christ—struck down Goliath[5] (1 Kgdms. 17:39–51); and, as from the fragrant trees, cedar and cypress, the Virgin Theotokos was born of a priestly line, which offers fragrant sacrifices to God. Her father, St. Joachim the Righteous, was the son of Barpaphir, who traced his descent from Nathan, the son of David; and her mother, St. Anna the Righteous, was the daughter of the priest Matthan, of the tribe of Aaron. Thus, by her father the Most Pure Virgin was of royal lineage, and by her mother of the high-priestly lineage. O, from what most precious materials—I mean, from what most honorable ancestry—was the animate palace of the King of glory built! And just as the stone and wooden structures of Solomon's temple acquired special worth from the pure gold with which they were gilded, so at the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos the nobility of her royal and priestly descent was rendered yet more worthy of honor by the chastity of her holy parents, which is more precious "than gold; she is more precious than costly stones, and nothing that you desire is equal to her" (Prov. 3:15). For the Most Holy Virgin was born of chaste parents, which surpasses all nobility. Concerning this, St. John of Damascus, addressing the holy righteous Forefathers of God, says:

"O blessed spouses, Joachim and Anna! Truly, by the fruit of your womb you were shown to be blameless, according to the word of the Lord: 'By their fruits you shall know them' (Mt. 7:16, 20). You ordered your life as was pleasing to God and worthy of her who was born of you. For, living chastely and righteously, you brought forth the treasure of virginity—I mean the Virgin: a Virgin before birth, a Virgin in birth, a Virgin after birth, and ever a Virgin, the only one who remains ever-virgin in mind, soul, and body. It was fitting that virginity, born of chastity, should be offered in the flesh to the Only-begotten Light Himself. O pair of pure and rational turtledoves, Joachim and Anna! Having

4. Moriah is a mountain near Jerusalem. This mountain is one of the hills on which Jerusalem is built; it lies to the northeast of Zion.

5. In this event the Holy Fathers Ephraim the Syrian, Augustine and others see features prefiguring Christ: David slew Goliath with a stone cast from a sling, "in the image of Christ; Goliath in the image of the devil: the devil was struck by the Word of God and by humility, and at last on Golgotha was utterly crushed."

chastely observed the law of nature, you were divinely deemed worthy of gifts beyond nature, and gave birth to the Virgin, the Mother of God, for the world. Having lived piously and righteously in human nature, you brought forth a Daughter higher than the Angels and now reigning over the Angels. O most beautiful and sweetest Daughter! O lily that grew amid thorns from a noble royal root! Through you the kingdom of the priesthood has been enriched"[6]. In these words St. John of Damascus clearly shows of what parents the Mother of God was born, and from how precious materials the palace of the King of Heaven was fashioned.

Upon what place, then, was this living chamber built? Truly, upon the highest; for the Church bears this witness concerning her: "Verily thou art higher than all, O pure Virgin"[7]—higher, however, not in place, but in virtues and in the height of God's gifts. The place where the most blessed Virgin was born was a small town in the land of Galilee, called Nazareth, dependent upon the great city of Capernaum[8]; its inhabitants were despised, wherefore it was said also of Christ: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (Jn. 1:46). But the Lord, "Who, dwelling on high, stoops down to look upon heaven and earth" (Ps. 112:5–6), was well pleased that His Most Pure Mother should be born not in Capernaum, which in its pride had exalted itself to heaven, but in humble Nazareth; for "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Lk. 16:15), while that which they despise and abase is high and precious in His sight. The very name of Nazareth here portrays the height of the Most Pure Virgin's virtues. For just as, in His Nativity, the Lord through Bethlehem, which means "house of bread"[9], secretly prefigured that He is the bread which came down from heaven[10] to give life and strength to men, so also, at the

6. Word of St. John of Damascus on the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos.

7. From the service of the Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos. Canon, Irmos 9.

8. Capernaum is a town on the northwestern shore of the Lake of Gennesaret or Sea of Tiberias, belonging to Galilee, on the boundary between the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun. It lay on a headland, not far from where the Jordan flows into the sea. During the earthly life of the Savior, Capernaum was distinguished by flourishing prosperity and wealth. In the wars with the Romans Capernaum was completely laid waste, and today only a few fishermen's huts and some wretched ruins remain there.

Nativity of His Most Pure Mother, through Nazareth He portrays exalted things; for the name "Nazareth" means a flourishing, enclosed, crowned, and hidden place[11]—and all these things clearly prefigure the Most Holy Virgin. She is the flower that sprang from the barren and aged womb of a dry tree, a flower that fadeth not, ever blooming in virginity, a fragrant flower that gives forth the fragrance of the one King—the flower that bears fruit, Christ God the Lord, the one fragrant apple. She is sanctified by the grace of the Holy Spirit, Who came upon her and overshadowed her, and is holier than all the saints, for she gave birth to "the holiest Word of all the saints"[12]. She is set apart from the number of sinful children of earth, being pure and spotless; and not only is she herself free from sin, but she also turns sinners away from iniquity, as the Church cries to her: "Rejoice, thou who dost deliver from defiled deeds"[13]. She is crowned with glory and honor: crowned with glory, for she sprang from a royal root; crowned with honor, for she came of a priestly lineage. Crowned with glory, for she sprang from chaste parents; crowned with honor, for she was honored by the Annunciation and the ministry of the Archangel. Crowned with glory as the Mother of God—for what can be more glorious than to give birth to God? Crowned with honor as the Ever-Virgin—for what can be more honorable than to remain a virgin even after childbirth? Crowned with glory, "more glorious than the Seraphim," as one who loved God with seraphic love. Crowned with honor, "more honorable than the Cherubim"[14], as one who surpassed the Cherubim in wisdom and knowledge of the Godhead. "Glory and honour and peace to every man that worketh good," says the Apostle (Rom. 2:10). But can any child of earth be found more virtuous than the Most Pure Virgin? She kept all the

9. Bethlehem is a small, insignificant town in the tribe of Judah, not far from Jerusalem, about two hours' journey to the south, so named, probably, for the fertility of the land; it is the place of the Nativity of Christ.

10. According to the word of the Savior Himself, who said of Himself: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (Jn. 6:51).

11. Nazareth, in translation from the Hebrew, may mean either *offshoot*, *shoot*, *branch*, *bush*, or *a fenced-in*, *hidden* place.

12. Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos, Kontakion 13.

13. Akathist, Ikos 5.

14. From the prayer to the Theotokos "It is truly meet".

Lord's commandments, fulfilled all the Lord's will, observed all His instructions, hid all His words in her heart, and showed her neighbors every work of mercy. Therefore was she worthily crowned, as one who wrought all good things. She is also a kind of treasury; for she guarded the treasure of her virginal chastity with such care that she would not entrust it even to an Angel; for when she saw the Angel, she was troubled at his words and wondered what this greeting might mean (Lk. 1:29). All this Nazareth prefigured in the Most Pure Virgin by its name. And who would not say how high that chamber of Christ was raised by virtues and the gifts of God? She is high, for she was given from heaven, though born on earth of children of earth—from heaven; for, as some God-enlightened men say, the Archangel Gabriel, who announced to Zacharias the birth of John, announced to Joachim and Anna the conception of the Most Holy Theotokos, and brought her most blessed name from heaven, saying to her barren mother: "Anna, Anna! Thou shalt give birth to a most blessed Daughter, and Her name shall be called Mary." Thus, without doubt, she may be called the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God (Rev. 21:2), the tabernacle of God. High is this tabernacle of God, for, having given birth to Christ the King, she was exalted above the Seraphim. O height inaccessible to the thoughts of men!

And what is the beauty of that spiritual chamber of Christ? Hear the same sweet-speaking John of Damascus, who speaks thus concerning her: "She was presented to God, the King of all, clothed in the comeliness of virtues as in a robe of gold, adorned with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and her glory is within her; for as, in the case of every woman, her glory is her husband, who comes from without, so the glory of the Theotokos is within her—that is, the fruit of her womb"[15]. And again, addressing her, Damascene says: "O Virgin, full of God's grace, holy Church of God, whom that Solomon, the wise Creator of the world, fashioned spiritually, and in whom He dwelt! She is adorned not with gold, nor with lifeless stones, but, in place of gold, she shines with the Spirit, and in place of precious stones she has the pearl of great

15. Word on the Nativity of the Theotokos.

price, Christ[16].” Such is the adornment of that chamber, far more beautiful than what was in Solomon’s Temple, where likenesses of Cherubim, trees, and flowers were depicted. Yet in this living Church also, in the Most Pure Virgin, the image of the Cherubim is clearly seen; for by her Cherubic life she not only equaled the Cherubim, but surpassed them. If the Church is wont to call certain other saints Cherubim, singing, “What shall we call you, O saints? Cherubim, for Christ hath rested upon you”[17], then all the more is the Virgin Theotokos a Cherub, for Christ rested in her with His body, and God sat upon her most pure arms as upon a throne: the Virgin became a Cherubic throne. She also bears within herself the likeness of fruitful trees, having spiritually become a fruitful olive tree in the house of God and a flourishing palm tree (Ps. 55:10); wherefore today she is called a life-bearing garden, as the Church sings: “From a barren root Thou hast caused a life-bearing garden to spring forth for us, His Mother, the God of wonders”[18]. All this is spoken of her spiritual beauty. Yet she was not without bodily beauty either, as many teachers of the Church bear witness, saying that throughout the whole world there was not, nor shall there ever be, a maiden so beautiful as the Virgin Theotokos; when St. Dionysius the Areopagite[19] beheld her, he would have called her God, had he not known the God born of her. For the divine grace with which she was filled within shone forth upon her most radiant face also. Such a chamber did the King of Heaven prepare for Himself on earth: a chamber beautiful in soul and body, “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:2), and moreover a spacious chamber: “Her womb He made more spacious than the heavens”[20], and in her was contained “Christ God, Whom nothing can contain.”

The chambers of kings are customarily built spacious, so that they may contain not only the king, but also a multitude of servants standing

16. Ibid.
17. Octoechos, Martyrikon at the Aposticha on Friday, Tone 8.
18. Service of the Nativity of the Theotokos, 1st sticheron at "Lord, I have cried".
19. Dionysius the Areopagite was a member of the Areopagus of Athens, converted to Christianity by the Apostle Paul (Acts 17:34); he was the first bishop of Athens and wrote epistles to many persons and churches. He sealed his service with a martyr's death about the year 96, in the reign of Domitian. His memory is October 3.

before him and people coming to him from every side. The spacious dwelling of the Word, the Most Pure Virgin, is roomy not only for God the Word, as King, but also for us, the servants of God who hasten to Him who dwells in her: she contains God in her womb, and us in her tender mercy. The chosen vessel of God, the holy Apostle Paul, moved by love, said to his beloved children: "Our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us" (2 Cor. 6:11–12). But in which of the saints can such spacious compassion be found as Mary's, and God's? Here the chaste find room, and the sinner is not straitened here. The penitent has his place in her, and for the despairing and the unrepentant she is an unhindered refuge, just as Noah's ark served as a refuge not only for clean but also for unclean animals. In her tender mercy all who sorrow, are wronged, hunger, wander, are tossed by storms, or are sick find room without constraint; for that womb which bore the good God for us cannot but be merciful. The palaces of earthly kings are guarded by many armed sentries, who do not admit everyone who wishes to enter, but hold them back, carefully inquiring whence and why they come. But the living chamber of Christ, though surrounded by Cherubim and Seraphim and innumerable hosts of Angels and all the saints, nevertheless allows no one to hinder entrance through the doors of her tender mercy, should anyone desire it: neither do the guards repel, nor do the soldiers drive anyone away or inquire why he comes; but everyone enters freely with a prayer and receives a gift according to his needful petition.

Let us therefore have recourse to the mercy of her who was born of a barren womb, with this greeting:

Rejoice, all-spotless chamber of the King of all! Rejoice, dwelling of God the Word, to Whom, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and to thee, Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, Bride of the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory from us mortals unto the ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Thy Nativity, O Virgin Theotokos, hath proclaimed joy to all the universe; for from thee hath shone forth the Sun of Righteousness,

Christ our God. Having loosed the curse, He gave the blessing; and having abolished death, He bestowed upon us life eternal.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Joachim and Anna were freed from the reproach of childlessness, and Adam and Eve from the corruption of death, O Most Pure One, by thy holy Nativity. Thy people, delivered from the guilt of their transgressions, celebrate it, crying unto thee: The barren woman giveth birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of our Life.

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20. Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, from the hymn "In thee rejoiceth".

THE NINTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 9

9 сентября

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

Life of the Holy and Righteous God-bearing Ancestors Joachim and Anna

Житие святых и праведных Богоотец Иоакима и Анны

The Holy Righteous Joachim was of the tribe of Judah, of the house of King David. His genealogy is as follows: to Nathan, son of David, was born a son, Levi; Levi begot Melchi and Panthir; Panthir begot Barpanthir; and Barpanthir begot Joachim, the father of the Mother of God.

The Holy Joachim lived in the city of Nazareth of Galilee and had a wife named Anna, of the tribe of Levi, of the family of Aaron, the daughter of the priest Matthan, who lived before the reign of Herod, son of Antipater. This priest Matthan had as his wife Mary, of the tribe of Judah, from the city of Bethlehem, and three daughters: Mary, Sovia and Anna. Of these, Mary was the first to marry, in Bethlehem, and bore Salome; then Sovia married, likewise in Bethlehem, and bore Elisabeth, the mother of John the Forerunner; the third, as we have already said, the mother of the Most Holy Theotokos, was given in marriage to Joachim in the land of Galilee, in the city of Nazareth. These spouses, Joachim and Anna, being of a noble family, were instructed in the Law of the Lord and were righteous before God. Having material wealth, they were not deprived of spiritual riches. Adorned with all the virtues, they blamelessly kept all the commandments of the Law of God. On every feast the pious spouses set aside two parts of their possessions: one they gave for the needs of the Church, and the other they distributed to the poor.

By their righteous life Joachim and Anna so pleased God that He granted them to be the parents of the Most Holy Virgin, the preelect

Mother of the Lord. From this alone it is evident that their life was holy, God-pleasing and pure, since there was born to them the Daughter, the Most Holy of all saints, who pleased God more than all, and more honorable than the Cherubim. At that time there were on earth no people more pleasing to God than Joachim and Anna, on account of their blameless life. Although at that time many could be found who lived righteously and pleased God, these two surpassed all in their virtues and appeared before God as the most worthy that the Mother of God should be born of them. Such mercy would not have been granted them by God had they not truly surpassed all in righteousness and holiness. But just as the Lord Himself was to be incarnate of the Most Holy and Most Pure Mother, so it was fitting that the Mother of God should come of holy and pure parents. Just as earthly kings have their purple robes made not of plain material but of cloth woven with gold, so the Heavenly King willed to have as His Most Pure Mother one in whose flesh, as in a royal purple, He should be clothed, born not of ordinary unrestrained parents, as if of plain material, but of chaste and holy ones, as if of cloth woven with gold; the prefiguration of this was the Old Testament tabernacle, which God commanded Moses to make of scarlet and crimson material and of fine linen (Ex. 27:16). This tabernacle prefigured the Virgin Mary, in whom God dwelt and with whom He would dwell among men, as it is written: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them" (Rev. 21:3). The scarlet and crimson material and the fine linen of which the tabernacle was made prefigured the parents of the Mother of God, who came forth and was born of chastity and abstinence, as of scarlet and crimson garments, and of their perfection in fulfilling all the commandments of the Lord, as of fine linen.

But these holy spouses, by the will of God, were for a long time childless, so that in the very conception and birth of such a daughter might be shown the power of the grace of God, the honor of the One born, and the dignity of the parents; for for a barren and aged woman to give birth is impossible except by the power of the grace of God: here it is no longer nature that acts, but God, who overcomes the laws of nature and destroys the bonds of barrenness. To be born of barren and

aged parents is a great honor even for the one born, because she is born not of unrestrained parents but of continent and aged ones, such as Joachim and Anna, who lived fifty years in marriage without having children. Finally, through such a birth the dignity of the parents themselves is revealed, since after long barrenness they bore joy to the whole world, thereby resembling the holy patriarch Abraham and his pious wife Sarah, who bore Isaac in old age according to God's promise (Gen. 21:2). Yet, without doubt, it may be said that the nativity of the Theotokos is higher than the birth of Isaac by Abraham and Sarah. As the born Virgin Mary herself is higher and more worthy of honor than Isaac, so much greater and higher is the dignity of Joachim and Anna than that of Abraham and Sarah. They did not attain this dignity at once, but only by diligent fasting and prayer, with sorrow of soul and grief of heart they besought God concerning this: and their sorrow was turned into joy, and their disgrace appeared as the forerunner of great honor, and diligent supplication was the guide to receiving blessings, and prayer the best intercessor.

Joachim and Anna for a long time grieved and wept that they had no children. Once, at a great feast, Joachim was offering gifts to the Lord God in the Temple at Jerusalem; together with Joachim all the Israelites were also bringing their gifts as sacrifice to God. The high priest at that time, Issachar, did not wish to accept the gifts of Joachim, because he was childless.

"It is not fitting," he said, "to accept gifts from you, for you have no children, and consequently no blessing of God: surely you have some secret sins."

Also a Jew of the tribe of Reuben, who was bringing his own gifts with the others, reproached Joachim, saying:

"Why do you wish to offer sacrifices to God before me? Do you not know that you are unworthy to bring gifts together with us, for you will leave no offspring in Israel?[1]"

These reproaches greatly grieved Joachim, and in deep sorrow he left the house of God put to shame and humiliated; the feast became for him a time of sadness, and festive joy was changed into grief. Sorrow-

ing deeply, he did not return home but went into the wilderness to the shepherds who tended his flocks, and there he wept over his barrenness and over the insult and reproaches made against him. Remembering Abraham, his forefather, to whom God in advanced age had granted a son, Joachim began earnestly to beseech the Lord that He would grant him the same favor, hear his prayer, have mercy on him and take from him the reproach of men, granting fruit of his marriage in old age, as once to Abraham.

"May I be able," he prayed, "to be called the father of a child, and not to be childless and rejected by God, suffering the reproaches of men!"

To this prayer Joachim added fasting, and for forty days he did not eat bread.

"I will not eat," he said, "and I will not return to my house; let my tears be my food, and this wilderness my home, until the Lord God of Israel hears and takes away my reproach."

In the same way his wife, being at home and hearing that the high priest had refused to accept their gifts, reproaching her for barrenness, and that her husband, in great sorrow, had withdrawn into the wilderness, wept inconsolable tears.

"Now," she said, "I am more unhappy than all: rejected by God, in reproach among men, and abandoned by my husband! Over what shall I weep now: over my widowhood, or over my childlessness, over my orphanhood, or over the fact that I have not been counted worthy to be called a mother?!"

So bitterly did she weep all those days.

Anna's maidservant, named Judith, tried to comfort her, but could not: for who can comfort one whose sorrow is deep as the sea?

Once Anna, sorrowful, went into her garden and sat under a laurel tree; she sighed from the depths of her heart, and raising her tear-filled

eyes to heaven, saw in the tree a bird's nest with little nestlings. This sight caused her still greater sorrow, and weeping, she began to cry out:

"Woe is me, childless! Surely I am the most sinful of all the daughters of Israel, that alone among all women I am so humiliated. All bear the fruit of their womb in their arms, all are comforted by their children; I alone am a stranger to this joy. Woe is me! The gifts of all are accepted in the house of God, and they are shown honor for bearing children; I alone am rejected from the house of the Lord my God. Woe is me! To what shall I be compared? Not to the birds of heaven, nor to the beasts of the earth: for these too bring forth their offspring to Thee, O Lord God, while I alone am barren. Not even with the earth can I compare myself: for it brings forth and nourishes seed, and bearing fruit blesses Thee, the Heavenly Father; I alone am unfruitful on the earth. Woe is me, O Lord, O Lord! I alone, sinful, am deprived of offspring. Thou, who once gavest Sarah, in deep old age, a son Isaac (Gen. 21:1–8), Thou, who didst open the womb of Anna, mother of Thy prophet Samuel (1 Kgdms. 1:20), look now upon me and hear my prayers. O Lord of Hosts! Thou knowest the reproach of childlessness: end the sorrow of my heart and open my womb, and make me, barren, fruitful, that what I bear we may offer Thee as a gift, blessing, praising, and together glorifying Thy mercy."

When Anna cried out thus with weeping and sobbing, there appeared to her an Angel of the Lord, who said:

"Anna, Anna! Thy prayer is heard, thy sighs have passed through the clouds, thy tears have appeared before God, and thou shalt conceive and bear a most blessed Daughter; through Her all the tribes of the earth shall receive blessing, and salvation shall be granted to the whole world; her name shall be Mary."

1. Already to the patriarchs of the people of Israel God had repeatedly given the promise of the multiplication of their offspring; therefore the Israelites looked upon numerous posterity as the highest happiness and blessing of God. On the other hand, according to the ancient promise of God, the Israelites hoped to find in their posterity the "Seed of the woman" promised by God—the Messiah. That is why childlessness was regarded among the Jews as a grievous misfortune and a punishment of God for sins, and people who had no children the Jews regarded as great sinners.

Hearing the Angel's words, Anna bowed down before God and said:

"As the Lord God lives, if I bear a child, I will dedicate him to the service of God. Let him serve Him and glorify the holy name of God day and night all the days of his life."

After this, filled with unspeakable joy, St. Anna quickly went to Jerusalem to give thanks to God there with prayer for His merciful visitation.

At the same time an Angel also appeared to Joachim in the wilderness and said:

"Joachim, Joachim! God has heard thy prayer and is pleased to bestow upon thee His grace: thy wife Anna shall conceive and bear thee a Daughter, whose birth will be a joy to the whole world. And here is a sign to thee that I announce the truth to thee: go to Jerusalem, to the Temple of God, and there, at the Golden Gate, thou shalt find thy spouse Anna, to whom I have announced the same."

Joachim, astonished at such an Angelic announcement, glorifying God and thanking Him with his heart and lips for His great mercy, hastened with joy and gladness to the Temple at Jerusalem. There, as the Angel had told him, he found Anna at the Golden Gate, praying to God, and related to her the Angelic announcement. She too told him what she had seen and heard of the Angel who had announced to her the birth of a daughter. Then Joachim and Anna glorified God, who had shown them so great a mercy, and, having worshipped Him in the holy Temple, returned to their house.

And St. Anna conceived on the ninth day of the month of December, and on the eighth of September she bore a daughter, the Most Pure and Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the beginning and intercessor of our salvation, at whose nativity both heaven and earth rejoiced. On account of Her birth Joachim offered great gifts, sacrifices and whole burnt-offerings to God, and received the blessing of the high priest, of the priests, of the Levites and of all the people, because he had been granted the blessing of God. Afterwards he prepared a plentiful feast in his house, and all glorified God with gladness.

Her parents guarded the growing Virgin Mary as the apple of their eye, knowing, by a special revelation of God, that She would be a light

to the whole world and the renewal of human nature. Therefore they brought Her up with such careful attentiveness as befitted Her who was to be the Mother of our Savior. They loved Her not only as a daughter so long awaited, but also revered Her as their Lady, remembering the Angelic words spoken concerning Her, and foreseeing in spirit what was to be accomplished in Her. She, filled with divine grace, mysteriously enriched her parents with the same grace. As the sun illumines the stars of heaven with its rays, imparting to them particles of its light, so the God-chosen Mary, like a sun, illumined Joachim and Anna with the rays of the grace given to her, so that they too were filled with the Spirit of God and firmly believed in the fulfilment of the Angelic words.

When the maiden Mary was three years old, her parents led Her with glory into the Temple of the Lord, accompanied by burning lamps, and dedicated Her to the service of God, as they had promised. Some years after the introduction of Mary into the Temple, St. Joachim died at the age of eighty. St. Anna, remaining a widow, left Nazareth and came to Jerusalem, where she dwelt near her Most Holy Daughter, praying unceasingly in the Temple of God. Having lived two years in Jerusalem, she fell asleep in the Lord, being 79 years of age[2].

O how blessed are you, holy parents, Joachim and Anna, for the sake of your Most Blessed Daughter!

Doubly blessed are you for the sake of her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom all the nations and tribes of the earth have received blessing! Rightly has the holy Church named you God-bearers[3], for we know that from your Most Holy Daughter was born God. Now standing near Him in heaven, pray that some part of your unending joy may also be imparted to us. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

2. The Church celebrates the memory of the repose of the righteous Anna on July 25.
3. The Church every day, at the conclusion of the Divine services, at the dismissal, asks for those leaving the church mercy and salvation from the Lord through the prayers of the Mother of God and of the holy righteous God-parents Joachim and Anna; and annually it celebrates their memory on the day after the Nativity of the Mother of God, for after the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God it is fitting to glorify also her holy parents.

Ye who were righteous in the grace of the law, Joachim and Anna, brought forth to us the God-given Infant; wherefore the Divine Church today keeps bright festival, celebrating with joy your honorable memory, glorifying God who hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Anna today rejoiceth, the bond of barrenness being loosed, and nourisheth the Most Pure One, calling all to sing that from her womb God hath given to mankind One Mother, who knew no wedlock.

* * *

Passion of St. Severian the Martyr

Страдание святого мученика Севериана

In the reign of the impious emperor Licinius, at the time when Agricolaus, governor of Sebaste[4], had seized and cast into prison forty holy martyrs, there lived in that region a certain man named Severian, of noble birth.

Severian was a Christian. Often visiting the forty martyrs in prison, he strengthened them for the martyr's struggle for the name of Christ; and they were so kindled with love for their Lord that not even the cold Sebaste lake could extinguish in them this divine love. Standing, at the command of the lawless governor, in the waters of the lake, they together confessed before their tormentor the name of Jesus Christ, and there died a martyr's death[5].

After the passion of the Sebaste martyrs, when, in place of Agricolaus, Lysias, a cruel and savage man who like a wild beast destroyed the faithful and shed Christian blood, had been appointed by the same impious emperor Licinius, the time came for St. Severian also to come

4. Sebaste is a city in Armenia.

5. The Holy Martyrs of Sebaste suffered in 320. Their memory is March 9. In their Life it is related that for their steadfast confession of the faith they were tormented, then sentenced to spend the night in a lake that had frozen over, in a sharp north wind, and on the next day, after new grievous tortures, they were burned.

forward to the same contest and the same struggle to which he had stirred up others by his word.

Slanderers came before the governor of the region and began to say to him:

"The honor of our great gods is diminished in this city through Severian: he not only does not honor or worship them himself, but also advises many others to dishonor and despise them. Believing himself in the Crucified One, he teaches others the same faith, and already not a few people have turned away after him, so that if you do not destroy him, soon the whole city will follow his faith; and the gods will be angry with our city and withdraw their favor from it, and the emperor, when he hears of this, will not spare us."

Having heard this, the governor Lysias sent his servants to seize Severian and bring him to him. But the soldier of Christ, not waiting for those sent until they came and took him, anticipated their arrival, went himself, and, standing before Lysias, spoke to him boldly and fearlessly:

"Is it not enough for you, governor, that you alone are perishing, that you want to destroy our souls too, and, as some gain, deliver them into the power of demons? But know that you have fallen here upon men of courage, not upon the faint-hearted and timid, for to me, as my divine teacher Paul says, 'to live is Christ, and to die is gain' (Phil. 1:21)."

The governor Lysias, having heard these words, was silent for a little; then, glancing at the servants standing before him and pointing his hand at Severian, he said to them in fury:

"Take him and beat him with rough sinews — let him learn with what humility one ought to speak to a governor."

When the saint was tortured, he rejoiced that he had been granted to suffer for Christ, and he sang the words of the Psalm which were as it were a comfort to him in his sufferings: "The plowmen plowed upon my back; they made long their furrows" (Ps. 128:3)[6].

6. The prophetic word here refers to the scourges and wounds which the godless tormentors inflicted upon the victorious martyrs.

The tormentor, seeing that his servants were already wearied, and that on the face of the martyr there was the same radiance and courage, ordered them to stop beating him, and then, turning to him, said:

"Behold, now by your wounds you can know that your Christ brings you neither joy nor well-being in life."

The martyr answered:

"If the eyes of your soul were not darkened by the gloom of godlessness, I could then reveal to you how many blessings my sufferings are obtaining for me from Christ. But now, with your impiety, what can I accomplish — as if lighting a candle before a blind man and singing a song before a deaf one? O judge! If you were not so blind and deaf, you would know the grace of Christ and the strength that sustains me."

These and many other words of the holy martyr roused the governor to still greater anger. Hanging the martyr on a tree, he ordered his body to be scraped with iron claws. And St. Severian, amid his fierce sufferings, prayed to God thus:

"O Jesus Christ, Thou who once wert hanged upon the cross, who didst cast down the pride of the enemy and art glorified even now for all Thy wondrous deeds, come and help me, crush the strength of the all-wicked tormentor, heal my mangled limbs, and grant me to accomplish the martyr's struggle bravely!"

And the servants who tortured the saint were changed; at last, having tormented him long, they led him, by the governor's order, to prison. Going to the prison, the holy martyr showed himself an eloquent orator and, as if not feeling his sufferings, boasted of the wounds he had borne for Christ. As he walked through the city, pointing to his sores, with a radiant face and sweet lips he spoke thus, addressing the multitude of people who looked upon him:

O people, look upon me and understand in what blessedness I find myself today! You think, I suppose, that I am now the most unhappy and poorest of men, since I have lost not only my temporal honor and wealth but even my health itself. Yet I am happier today than all of you. For my wounds, received for the Name of Christ, are dearer to me than every earthly joy; the blood I have shed and its staining are more precious than the royal purple; and the suffering itself for my Lord is in-

comparably more pleasing to me than all the earthly pleasures which you love so much. And my high rank and wealth, what were they but vanity and dust and the delusion of this world, which I shake off like mud from my feet as I ascend to the higher dignity of martyrdom and receive the wealth that never fails? To be named a martyr is more glorious for me than any royal rank, and the loss of wealth for Christ's sake is more precious than the treasures of all earthly kings. And as for health, strength and beauty, which I once possessed, what are they but sickness, weakness and deformity? Had the members of my body not been wounded now for Christ and not been stained with blood, they would not have been my members but only bonds and a prison for my soul; but now that they are tormented for Christ, they are truly my limbs. Now, when my flesh is being put to death, it is healthy and strong; my beauty is with me even now, although I have no human appearance and present as it were one single wound, for Christ too was wounded from head to foot. "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body" (Col. 1:24). But you, looking upon my wounds, think upon the reward for them: the good things which the Immortal King gives even now to those who suffer for Him, and prepares for them in heaven for eternal blessedness, can be neither grasped by the mind nor expressed in words. To suffer for Christ is already a delight, and to die for Him is more desirable still. O friends! If there is anyone here from among our own, if any of the faithful servants of Christ is among this unbelieving people, then, looking upon me as I suffer, strengthen your heart, take courage and be fearless. Let no torment separate you from the most sweet Name of Jesus Christ; let neither the stroke of swords, nor the kindling of furnaces, nor the rage of beasts frighten you! Let neither the flattery of the tormentor nor his promises of gifts and dignities beguile you. Trample all this underfoot as rubbish, that you may reign with Christ.

While Severian was speaking thus, a great crowd followed him. Listening to him, the people escorted the holy martyr all the way to the prison. Cast into it, the soldier of Christ rejoiced as in a bright chamber, and kissed the place where the forty holy martyrs had been con-

fined, to whom he had often come before to converse. He remained in the prison five days, and then was again brought to trial.

At the trial Lysias, like a wolf in sheep's clothing, began as it were to feel pity for the saint, and thus began to speak to him deceitfully:

"All the gods see, Severian, how I grieve for you, and I greatly marvel that you, a man so distinguished, comely and esteemed, should of your own will be deprived of this joyful world. I would praise your strength and courage, but only if you had directed them against enemies; to struggle with iron and fire, with beasts and stones, and so to destroy yourself, is truly the work of madness. And see, your strength is already broken and your body torn to pieces."

Speaking thus, the lawless tormentor wished by guile to beguile the true servant of Christ, but he bravely answered:

"Spare not my body, covered with wounds, but increase my sufferings still more. Not only strike me and flay my body, but hurl stones at me, burn me with fire, and do everything you wish and are able to do. You will never turn me away from my Lord. You will sooner grow weary of tormenting me than I shall of suffering for the Name of Christ."

Then the tormentor, laying aside his guile, gave himself over to his usual fury and commanded that Saint Severian be struck on the mouth with stones, saying at the same time:

"Do not carry the name of Christ upon your tongue, and do not vex the ears of the rulers with the mention of that name."

The holy martyr, with his mouth already broken by the blows, answered the tormentor:

"Unhappy man, if you have made a dwelling for demons in your soul, then surely your hearing can no longer bear the name of Christ!"

Lysias commanded that the martyr be hung again on a tree and flayed with iron claws. Severian, cruelly tormented, said:

"There is only one wound I consider cruel, the one that cuts off from Christ. All these wounds are for me a delight rather than a suffering, for while they detach me from all that is earthly, they unite me with Christ."[7]

And the governor again said to him:

"Severian, offer sacrifice to the gods, and you will be freed from torment."

To this the soldier of Christ made him no answer; he only said quietly:

"The present temporal sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

Lysias, considering it an insult to himself that the martyr had made no answer to his words, devised for him a new torment: taking the saint down from the tree, they led him to the city wall, and, tying heavy stones, one to his neck and another to his feet, and binding his body with a rope, hung him high over the wall.

Hanging thus, the saint committed his righteous soul into the hands of Christ the Lord, the Author of the contest,[8] and some of the Christians, taking his honorable body down from the wall during the night, carried it to the place of the martyr's former dwelling. When they, bearing him reverently and singing psalms, drew near to the village where Severian's house was, almost all the inhabitants came out to meet the holy relics: old and young alike hastened, outrunning one another, and thereby sought as it were to anticipate the blessing from the much-suffering servant of God. Only the wife of one of Severian's slaves remained at home, weeping over the body of her husband, who had just died and still lay unburied in the house. And she wept over him, speaking to him as to one alive:

"Behold, our master is drawing near the house, and everyone has gone out to meet him; only you have not gone out, and I stayed for your sake. Therefore, rise up to meet your master."

No sooner had she said this than the dead man rose at once, as if from sleep, went to meet those carrying the holy relics, and, falling down before them, kissed with joy the body of his master. And all the

7. The meaning of the expression is that the holy martyr, like the Apostle Paul, feeling still in his flesh a lack of the sufferings and afflictions which Christ endured, seeks an occasion to supply it, and rejoices that he has found such an occasion in sufferings for the confession of the name of Christ.

8. The martyric death of Severian followed in 320, in the same persecution as the forty Martyrs of Sebaste, but only half a year later.

people, seeing that the dead man had risen when the holy body was brought into their village, were struck with this miracle, glorified the Lord, and began to kiss the honorable relics with still greater zeal.

Concerning the burial of the body of the holy martyr, a disagreement arose among the inhabitants of that village: some wished to bury him in one place, others in another. On the relics of Severian there lay a wreath woven of beautiful flowers; suddenly, from no one knew where, an eagle appeared and seized this wreath; flying off a little way, the eagle again alighted on the ground. All who saw this followed the flight of the eagle, and when they came up to it, it flew on slowly further with the wreath; the people also went after it. And thus the eagle led the pious inhabitants to a nearby wilderness, and here, alighting upon a high, beautiful mountain and laying the wreath upon it, it vanished from their sight. The people, finding the martyr's wreath on the mountain, concluded that the Lord was pleased to have the holy body of Severian rest there; and, taking the relics, they buried them with due honor on that mountain; and many healings took place at the tomb of the martyr of Christ.[9]

The aforementioned slave, who had risen at the translation of Severian's holy relics, lived yet fifteen years more, constantly staying beside the tomb of his master.

For all this let glory be to God, the One in the Trinity: to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages! Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Blessed Nicetas, a Secret Servant of God, whom the Deacon Sozon Saw

Память блаженного Никиты, тайного угодника Божия, которого видел диакон Созонт

The secret servant of God, the blessed Nicetas, called the chartularius,[10] was born and raised by noble parents in Constantinople;

9. The translation of the holy relics of the martyr took place fifteen years after his death.
10. In the Greek Church the chartularii were clerks attached to church officials. The life and ascetic labors of the Blessed Nikita, a secret saint of God, belong to the twelfth century.

living in the world and serving God in secret, he so pleased Him that the church doors would open of themselves when he came in the middle of the night to pray, and a lamp lit not by human hands would give him light, and he was able to show the deacon Sozon a dead priest as if alive, concerning which there exists the following account.

A certain pious priest and a devout deacon had conceived love for one another in God, but after some time both, under the influence of a demonic suggestion, changed their love into enmity. The deacon's name was Sozon, but the priest's name has remained unknown. For a long time they remained in enmity, and while in these feelings the priest happened to die. Then the deacon began to be troubled in mind and to be tormented in conscience, because he had not ended his enmity with the priest nor destroyed his wrath by forgiveness. Therefore he set out to seek a wise spiritual father to whom he could open his conscience, and he wandered through the desert places, seeking a physician for the sickness of his heart; at last, finding a certain elder great in virtues, he confessed to him his sin of wrath and the enmity he had borne against the priest, and asked forgiveness.

The elder said to him: "Everyone who asks receives, and whoever seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened" (Mt. 7:7; Lk. 11:10–11). You do well, brother, to be concerned for the swift resolution of this great sin; may the Lord help you, since it is not my business to reconcile you, child, with the deceased. Nevertheless, return to Constantinople, whence you came; arriving there by night at the great church of Holy Sophia[11], stand before the great and beautiful doors, and whomever you first see approaching the doors, bow to him, tell him about us, and give him this sealed letter; from him will come the correction of your sin.

The deacon, fulfilling the command of his spiritual father, went into the city, reached the church doors of Holy Sophia by night, and stood waiting for the arrival of the unknown person. And behold, he saw a

11. Here is meant the most majestic and splendid cathedral in the name of St. Sophia—the Wisdom of God—built by the Byzantine emperor Justinian the Great in Constantinople in 537. In 1453, after the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, the Cathedral of St. Sophia was turned into a mosque.

man approaching the doors; it was the blessed Nikita, of whom this narrative speaks. The deacon bowed to him, kissed him, handed him the elder's letter, and laid out his sorrow. The man, listening to the deacon's confession, having considered and read the elder's letter, was moved to tears and said:

"How can I venture upon a deed that exceeds my strength? Yet, trusting in the prayers of the one who sent you, and as far as God will help me, I will proceed to what has been entrusted to me." Having said this, he stood before the doors and, raising his hands to heaven, began to pray in a whisper. Then, kneeling and laying his head on the ground, he prayed quietly, and after some time, rising, he said:

"Lord, open to us the gates of Thy mercy!"

At once the vestibule of the church opened of its own accord, and the blessed Nikita, taking the deacon, entered the narthex and, approaching the very church doors, said to him: “Stand here motionless.” He himself made a bow on the threshold of the church; the doors opened, and he went inside. When he stood praying in the middle of the church, a lit lamp descended from the church ceiling above the head of that man and illumined the whole church; then he went to the table of oblation, and there the doors opened by themselves; bowing his head and praying silently, he came out to the deacon, and again all the doors closed of their own accord. Seeing this, the deacon was terrified and did not dare approach that man, for great fear seized him; moreover, the face of the man seemed to the deacon like the face of an Angel, glorified by prayer. And it occurred to the deacon: is this not an Angel? But this did not escape that man, and he said to the deacon:

"Why are you troubled in your thoughts about me? Believe that I too am a man of blood and flesh, born in an honorable house and raised in this city. The grace of God, if it so wills, is effective even in weakness. Come, let us go on the road before us!"

After this he set out toward the marketplace, and the deacon followed him. When they reached the church of the Most Holy Theotokos there, the church doors again opened at his prayer; after praying in the church, the servant of God came out, and the doors closed by themselves. The deacon, watching this, could only say to himself in fear:

“Lord, have mercy!” Thus they went on to the Blachernae church. Afterward the deacon realized that the procession through the churches he had witnessed had been accomplished so swiftly that it was like the flight of birds. When they came to the doors of the Blachernae church[12], and that man, with tears, offered his prayer, at once, as in the other churches, the doors opened by themselves; placing the deacon in the doorway and bidding him watch attentively within, he himself entered the church, knelt, and began to pray fervently. The deacon, standing in the doorway, saw inside the church a light illuminating everything around, and a certain luminous deacon coming out of the sanctuary and censing throughout the whole church. After a little while he saw a host of priests, clad in white vestments, coming out of the sanctuary into the middle of the church; he saw also another host of priests clad in red vestments; all together they gathered in the midst of the church and sang beautiful and somehow special church hymns, of which the deacon could remember none except “Alleluia.”

That man, rising after his prayer, said to the deacon:

"Brother, enter the church without fear and look at the left host of standing priests: do you not recognize the priest with whom you had enmity?"

The deacon, entering with trembling and approaching the man of God, looked at the left host and did not find the priest he sought. The angelic man bade the deacon examine also the right host of priests. The deacon, looking, saw the priest with whom he had had enmity, and pointed him out to the man of God. He said to the deacon:

"Go, tell the priest whom you recognized: Nikita the chartularius stands outside the church and calls you, that you may come to him!"

The deacon went as he was bidden, took the priest by the right hand, and led him to the man of God, who by then had already come out of the church. Gently he looked upon the priest and said in a quiet voice:

12. Blachernae was a district in Constantinople at the western corner of the city; in the times of the Byzantine Empire it was famous throughout the East for its sanctuaries. Especially renowned were the Blachernae for its church of the Mother of God, built by the emperor Leo the Great, in whose reign in this church, in 474, the honorable robes of the Most Holy Theotokos, brought from Palestine, were laid.

"Father presbyter, speak with your brother; end the enmity that you have between you."

At once the priest and the deacon knelt facing each other, and after long greetings they ended their enmity. After forgiveness the priest entered the church and took his place, while Nikita, the man of God, made a bow on the church threshold, and at once the church doors closed. Then, together with the deacon, he went on the return way. Having gone some distance, the blessed Nikita said to the deacon:

"Brother Sozon, save your soul for yourself and for my benefit; and tell the father who sent you that the purity of his holy prayers and his hope in God can raise even the dead!"

Having said this, the blessed one vanished from the deacon's eyes. The deacon, bowing in the place where the feet of that wondrous man had stood, went to the elder, his spiritual father, with fear and joy, glorifying and thanking God that He had granted him by a wondrous and miraculous manner to be reconciled with the deceased priest, through the prayers of the hidden servant of God, Nikita the chartularius, who so pleased God amid the people and worldly turmoil.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus

Воспоминание святого Третьего Вселенского собора в Ефесе

In the twenty-first year of the reign of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger, son of Arcadius, the holy Third Ecumenical Council[13] was convened at Ephesus for the following reason. Nestorius, who unworthily occupied the throne of Patriarch of Constantinople[14], began to preach a false teaching akin to the teachings of the former heretic Paul

13. Theodosius II the Younger was an eastern Roman (Byzantine) emperor, grandson of Theodosius the Great; he reigned from 408 to 450. The Third Ecumenical Council was convened in 431. Ephesus was an Ionian city on the western shore of Asia Minor, originally the center of the Greek colonies of Asia Minor, and under Roman rule the chief city of proconsular Asia; it was renowned for its extensive commerce, its learning and arts, and its magnificent temple in honor of the pagan goddess Diana. Afterwards Ephesus quickly declined. At the present time nothing remains of this once famous and brilliant city but ruins.

14. Nestorius was Patriarch of Constantinople from 428 to 431.

of Samosata, and also of Diodore of Tarsus[15]. He did not fear to assert that the Only-begotten Son of God, Christ, who for us and for our salvation was incarnate and became man, who is eternally born of God the Father without a mother, and on earth was born as man without a father, does not have one Person or one Hypostasis, but two different persons: one Divine and the other human. And concerning the Most Pure Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ he impiously taught that She should not be called Theotokos, but Christotokos, unwilling to acknowledge that She truly bore God the Word in the flesh. St. Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria[16], wrote to him often, exhorting him to desist from such error, but seeing that he not only did not heed his exhortations but was still more strengthened in his heresy, he wrote to Celestine, Pope of Rome[17], and to the other patriarchs, asking them to persuade Nestorius to abandon his false teaching. When they too could not turn the impious Nestorius from his false teaching, then the Orthodox bishops appealed to the Emperor Theodosius that he convene an Ecumenical Council. Theodosius commanded that such a Council be convened in Ephesus. At this council there were present two hundred holy fathers, of whom the most distinguished were: St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Juvenal, Memnon of Ephesus, and many others (St. Celestine, Pope of Rome, could not come to the Council because of illness). Nestorius also arrived at Ephesus. Although the fathers of the Council of Ephesus sent him an invitation three times to appear before the council, he each time stubbornly refused. Then the holy fathers resolved to begin the conciliar sessions without him. Having condemned Nestorius and his impious teaching, they solemnly confirmed the Orthodox teaching that

15. Paul of Samosata (Samosata was an ancient city in Syria) was Bishop of Antioch (260). He taught about Jesus Christ as a man who had attained Divinity, and about the Holy Spirit as the power of God; he was condemned at the Council of Antioch in 269. Diodore, Bishop of Tarsus (Tarsus was the chief city of Cilicia, a southeastern Roman province in Asia Minor), was one of the well-known Christian theologians of the fourth century, distinguished for piety and learning. But he acknowledged in Jesus Christ the union of the two natures, divine and human, only morally, and not in essence—unmingled and undivided; for which reason many not without foundation see in him a direct forerunner of Nestorianism.

16. Cyril of Alexandria was the most outstanding and most learned theologian of the Christian Church in the fifth century, a champion of Orthodoxy and a refuter of various heresies, especially of Nestorianism; he left numerous writings; he died in 444.

17. St. Celestine I was Pope of Rome from 422 to 432.

one Person and two natures must be confessed in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that His Most Pure Mother must be praised as the one Ever-Virgin and true Theotokos. To expose the impiety of Nestorius still further, the holy fathers of this council approved and handed down to the Holy Church, as a guide, the work of St. Cyril of Alexandria called "The Twelve Anathematisms against Nestorius."

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Joseph of Volokolamsk

Память преподобного Иосифа Волоколамского

St. Joseph was a native of the environs of the town of Volok Lamsky[18]. His great-grandfather was of Lithuanian origin, and his parents were named John and Marina[19]. At the age of seven he was given over to learning[20], and very quickly he mastered the Divine Scripture. He loved to go often to the house of God, and, withdrawing from his peers, he directed all his thoughts to pleasing God. Despising the vanity of the world, he withdrew to Borovsk[21], to the monastery of the Venerable Paphnutius, who tonsured him into the monastic order[22]. He always remained in fasting and prayer, and was a skilled ascetic, obeying his spiritual teacher in all things. After some time, he took his own father into the same monastery, who had likewise accepted the monastic life, and served him and cared for him until his death. For eighteen years he remained in obedience to St. Paphnutius. After the death of his teacher and guide he was made abbot of his monastery, which he governed for about two years. Then he withdrew with some of the brethren into the forest surrounding the town of Volok Lamsky,

18. "Volok Lamsky," otherwise called simply "Volok," the present district town of Volokolamsk in Moscow Province, was originally founded by Novgorodian colonists on the river Gorodenka, a tributary of the Lama, and already existed in 1135. In antiquity Volok Lamsky was very extensive, populous and rich.

19. Venerable Joseph, in the world Ivan Sanin, was born in 1439 or 1440.

20. Venerable Joseph was taught letters in the Monastery of the Exaltation.

21. Borovsk—now a district town of Kaluga Province—is situated on the right bank of a steep bend of the river Protva, 80 versts from Moscow and at about the same distance from Kaluga. The town has existed since the thirteenth century and received its name from the large pine forests (bory) surrounding it, which still remain.

22. This was about 1459.

and there he built a monastery, in which he erected a stone church in honor of the Dormition of the Mother of God[23]. He gathered many brethren and established a most strict common life. He himself dressed like a beggar, so that no one could distinguish the superior in him. He zealously struggled against the heresy of the "Judaizers"[5691] and wrote a book refuting it. Besides this, he also wrote a rule for his monastery. During a famine his monastery provided sustenance for many poor. The Venerable One reposed on September 9, in the year from the creation of the world 7094[24], in the reign of Grand Prince Basil Ioannovich, having lived only seventy-five years. His holy body was laid near the sanctuary of the cathedral church of his monastery[25].

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Theophanes, Faster and Confessor

Память преподобного Феофана, постника и исповедника

The parents of Theophanes were pagans, but he turned to Christ already in childhood. While still an infant, he saw a child dying of cold; he took pity on him, took off his own clothing and put it on him. When, after that, he came home, his parents asked him: "Child, where is your clothing?"

He answered:

"I have clothed Christ with it."

His father asked him:

"Who is this Christ? We venerate Mercury and Apollo."

After this the youth left his parents. An Angel of the Lord took him and brought him up to the mountain Diavis, where he entrusted him to a certain faster who had lived the monastic life for seventy-five years. The elder received the youth and began to teach him the monastic life and the sacred books. The Angel nourished both of them. Five years after this the elder reposed. After his death, the youth lived in a cave,

23. This was about 1479.
24. From the Nativity of Christ, in 1515.
25. The relics of Venerable Joseph of Volokolamsk at the present time remain hidden in his monastery.

practicing the ascetic fast for fifty-eight years. Then, receiving a command from the Angel of God, he came out of the cave and, seated on a lion, traveled sixty stadia, preaching the Christian faith. The emperors Carus, Carinus and Numerian[26] ordered him to be seized and beaten: the Venerable One was given a hundred blows on the neck, after which he endured still many other torments. When the tormentors saw how many miracles he performed, and what a great number of people came to him and received holy baptism, they were ashamed of their impotence and peacefully released him. He returned to his cave and, having lived in it seventeen more years in strict fasting, he reposed in the Lord[27].

* * *

NOTES

5691. The heresy of the "Judaizers" arose in the second half of the fifteenth century in Novgorod, where its propagator was the visiting Jew Skhariya, and from there it passed into Moscow, gained wide extent and threatened the Orthodox Church with great disturbances. The most outstanding and energetic champion against the heresy was Venerable Joseph of Volokolamsk, who wrote against them the so-called "Enlightener," a work in sixteen books, thoroughly exposing their false teachings. The heresy of the "Judaizers" borrowed much from Judaism, from which it also received its name; the "Judaizers" denied the Incarnation of God and the Divinity of Jesus Christ; they denied monasticism and the spiritual hierarchy, the mysteries, the veneration of saints and icons, they denied the life after death, etc. The Council of 1504 anathematized the heretics, condemned some of the heretics to burning, and put an end to the further spread of the heresy.

26. Carus, Numerian and Carinus, who reigned as Roman emperors in succession: Carus from 282 to 283, and Numerian and Carinus, the sons of Carus, together from 283 to 284.
27. The repose of Venerable Theophanes took place about 300 A.D.

THE TENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 10

10 сентября

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

Life and Passion of the Holy Martyrs Minodora, Mitrodora and Nymphodora

Житие и страдание святых мучениц Минодоры, Митродоры и Нимфодоры

Three virgins—Minodora, Mitrodora and Nymphodora—offered themselves as a gift to the Most Holy Trinity. Others bring gifts to God from their possessions, just as the three Eastern kings once brought Him gold, frankincense and myrrh[1] (see Mt. 2:11); but the holy virgins brought God gifts from their inner treasures. In place of gold they offered their souls, redeemed not with corruptible gold but with the precious blood of the spotless Lamb[2] (see 1 Pet. 1:19); in place of frankincense they offered a pure conscience, saying with the Apostle: "For we are the fragrance of Christ"[3] (2 Cor. 2:15); in place of myrrh they gave the Lord their very bodies, offering them up to wounds for Christ while still in undefiled virginity. The holy virgins were firmly convinced that the Lord requires not our temporal wealth but ourselves, as David once said: "Thou art my Lord; my goods are nothing unto Thee" (Ps. 15:2). Therefore they offered up themselves to God, as is clearly seen from their holy life and courageous sufferings.

1. The Magi were natives of Persia and belonged to the honored class of wise and learned men. According to tradition they were leaders of their people, and therefore are here called kings.
2. The Apostle compares the condition of people before their conversion to Christ to a state of slavery. One could be freed from slavery by ransom; and from the slavery of sin and vain living we were redeemed by the blood of the immaculate Christ, called in Holy Scripture the Lamb.
3. The knowledge of Jesus Christ, spread throughout the world by the preaching about Him, the Apostle Paul As in the Old Testament the holy vessels and the ministers of the tabernacle, anointed with myrrh, spread fragrance around them, so in the New Testament the apostles, being as it were vessels of the most fragrant myrrh, the knowledge of Christ, were filled with fragrance, and by preaching about Christ they spread this fragrance everywhere.

The holy virgins were born in Bithynia[4]. Sisters according to the flesh, they remained sisters in spirit as well, for they were of one mind in preferring to serve God rather than to be slaves of the world and of all its vanity. Desiring to keep both soul and body undefiled and to be united in perfect purity to their pure Bridegroom, Christ the Lord, the holy virgins heeded His call: "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:17). Loving virginal purity above all else, and knowing how hard it is to preserve that purity among a people inclined to fornication and unceasing sin, the holy virgins left human society, withdrew themselves from the whole world, and settled in a solitary place. Just as river waters that flow into the sea lose their sweetness the moment they mingle with the sea water and become salt, so purity of soul, dwelling amid the world, cannot help but be infected by its love of pleasure. Thus Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, kept her virginal purity until she gave herself up to the pagan city of Shechem; but as soon as she became acquainted with the daughters who lived in that city and entered into fellowship with them, she at once lost her virginity[5]. This world, with its three daughters—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life[6] (see 1 Jn. 2:16)—is that same Shechem, and it cares for nothing but to harm those who love it; as pitch blackens whoever touches it, so the world makes its admirers foul and unclean. Blessed, therefore, is he who flees the world so as not to stain himself with its uncleanness; blessed also were these three virgins, who fled from the world and from its wicked daughters. The defilements of the world did not sully the holy virgins, and they remained pure, like white doves, flying on the wings of virtue and of the vision of God over mountains and deserts, seeking a refuge, as in a nest, in di-

4. Bithynia was at that time the northwestern province of Asia Minor; it lies along the shores of the Black Sea, the Bosphorus and the Strait of Constantinople.

5. Dinah is mentioned in the Book of Genesis (Gen. 30:21, 34:1, 48:15). During Jacob's sojourn in the land of Shechem, Dinah, out of curiosity, went to see the local maidens. At that time the son of the prince of Shechem, captivated by her beauty, seized her by force, carried her off to his house and dishonored her.

6. The Apostle exhorted Christians not to love the world and not to cling to it. Three passions operate in the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the lust of the mind or worldly pride.

vine love. So it is with hermits who live apart from the vain world: they have only one unceasing striving toward God.

For their dwelling place the holy virgins chose a high and desolate hill, which lay two stadia[7] from the warm springs at Pythia[8]. Settling here, they found a quiet refuge and a secure rest, and they spent their lives in fasting and unceasing prayer. The holy virgins hid their virginal purity from human eyes in the wilderness and lifted that purity up onto the high hill, so that the Angels might see it; they climbed to the very summit of the mountain so that, shaking off the dust of the earth, they might more easily draw near to heaven. How virtuous their life was may be judged from the very place of their dwelling. For what does a desert signify, if not the renunciation of all things and solitude? What does a high hill testify to, if not contemplation of God? What do the warm waters beside which the holy virgins dwelt signify, if not the warmth of their hearts toward God? As the Israelites, delivered from Egyptian bondage, had to traverse the desert[9], so the holy virgins, having gone out from the world, loved the life of the desert. As Moses, ascending the mountain, beheld God (see Ex. 34:4, 6), so they too, dwelling on the high hill and raising their eyes to the Lord, clearly contemplated Him with their mental gaze. As in the desert waters flowed from a rock struck with a staff (Num. 20:2–11), so from the humbling blows upon their breasts streams of tears flowed from the eyes of the holy virgins. And these warm tears had a power that the warm springs did not have: the waters could wash away only bodily uncleanness, but the tears cleansed the vices of the soul and made the soul whiter than snow. Yet what was there for tears to cleanse in those who, having purified themselves from every defilement, both bodily and spiritual (1 Cor. 7:1), lived upon the earth as Angels do? If tears can arise in anyone's heart from remembrance of a multitude of sins, in these pure virgins the weeping came only from love of God. For where the love of God burns with a flaming fire, streams of tears cannot but flow. So

7. Two stages, about 3 km.
8. This was the name of a locality near the city of Nicomedia. Later, Emperor Justinian (527–565) built here a palace, a hospital and a church in the name of the Archangel Michael.
9. The history of the Hebrews' wanderings through the Arabian desert is set forth in the Book of Numbers (Num. 11:21).

great is the power of this fire that when it kindles in a heart, as in a furnace, the dew grows as the flame grows, for the greater the love, the greater the tenderness. Tears are born of love; thus, when Christ wept over the dead Lazarus, they said: "Behold how he loved him" (Jn. 11:36). The holy virgins wept as they offered their prayers and meditated on God, for they loved their Lord and longed to be satisfied with beholding Him; with tears they awaited the time when they would see their beloved Heavenly Bridegroom. Each of them 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)[10]. "Day and night we weep," the holy virgins said, "because so long a time has not yet come when we shall appear before the face of our most sweet Bridegroom Jesus Christ, to be satisfied with the vision of Him, for which we long as earnestly as the hart thirsts for the water brooks" (Ps. 41:1).

But "a city set on a hill cannot be hid" (Mt. 5:14)[11]; so the holy virgins, although by their singular manner of life they had wholly withdrawn from the world, were made manifest to men by God Himself. The wondrous healings of the sick, accomplished through the prayers of the holy virgins, like loud trumpets carried the news of them throughout the land. At that time the wicked Maximian reigned, and the prince Fronto governed the province of Bithynia. Hearing of the holy virgins, the prince commanded that they be seized and brought before him. The lambs of Christ, whom even the wild beasts of the desert had not harmed, were taken by men of beastlike appearance and beastlike morals and brought to the tyrant. Like three Angels, the three maidens stood before the judgment of the impious. They ought to have stood before the God glorified in the Trinity, and not before sinful men, who were not worthy even to look upon the faces of the holy virgins, shining with angelic beauty and the grace of the Holy Spirit. The tyrant himself marveled how such beauty, the like of which he had never seen even in royal palaces, could be preserved in the desert. For although the bodies of the holy virgins had been wholly worn down by fasting and

10. That is, my tears became for me as it were my constant food. See Ps. 41:3–4.

11. The words of the Savior spoken to the Apostles (Mt. 5:14). This means that a soul adorned with virtues and drawn near to God cannot be hidden from attentive eyes.

many ascetic labors, their faces had not only not lost their virginal beauty but shone with it all the more. Where the heart is full of spiritual joy and gladness, the beauty of the face cannot wither: "a merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance," says Holy Scripture (Prov. 15:13). There is in abstinence something which, instead of wasting away, lends beauty to human faces; so once Daniel and the three youths with him, although they lived in fasting and abstinence, excelled in beauty all the youths of the king's court (Dan. 1:5–16). It was the same with the holy virgins, and the beauty of these flowers of the desert, daughters of God, surpassing all the beauty of the daughters of the world, was beyond the grasp of the human mind.

The prince first asked the holy virgins what their names were and where they came from.

They answered that, by the name of Christ, they were called Christians, and that at holy baptism they had been given the names Minodora, Mitrodora and Nymphodora; that they were sisters by birth and had been born in this same land of Bithynia.

The prince continued his speech, hoping by flattery to draw the holy virgins into his impiety, and said to them:

"Beautiful maidens! Our great gods have loved you and honored you with such beauty; they are ready to honor you further with great riches, only render them honor and, together with us, bow down to them and offer them sacrifice; and I will commend you before the emperor. When the emperor sees you, he will love you and honor you with many gifts, and will give you in marriage to great dignitaries, and you will enjoy more honor, glory and wealth than other women."

Then the elder sister, Minodora, said:

"God created us after His own image and likeness; to Him we bow down, and of other gods we do not wish even to hear. Your gifts and honors are as useless to us as refuse trampled underfoot is to anyone. You promise us noble husbands from your emperor, but who could be better than our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom in faith we have betrothed ourselves? With Him we have entered into pure marriage, to Him we have cleaved in soul, with Him we are united in love. He is our honor,

our glory, our riches, and no one—not you, not your emperor, not the whole world—is able to separate us from Him."

Mitrodora, the second sister, said:

– "For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" (Mt. 16:26). What is this whole world for us, set against our beloved Bridegroom and our Lord? It is as mire against gold, darkness against the sun, gall against honey. Shall we then, for the sake of the vain world, betray the Lord in our love and destroy our souls? Never!

– You talk a great deal, – said the tormentor, – because you have not seen torments or received wounds; otherwise you would speak differently once you had learned them.

– Do you really think, – answered the younger sister, Nymphodora, boldly, – to frighten us with torments and cruel wounds? Gather here from the whole world the instruments of torment, swords, stakes, iron claws; summon from all the earth every tormentor; join together all possible tortures and deliver to them our frail body; you will see that those instruments will be broken sooner, that the arms of all the tormentors will tire, and that all your forms of torment will be exhausted, before we fall away from our Christ. Bitter pains for Him will be for us a sweet paradise, and temporal death will be eternal life.

But the prince went on trying to persuade them.

– I counsel you, – he said, – as a father: listen to me, children, and offer sacrifice to our gods. You are own sisters: surely you will not wish to see one another in shame, dishonor and torment, nor wish to see your beauty fade. Am I not speaking the truth? Are not my words for your good? Truly I give you a fatherly counsel, for I do not wish to see you stripped, beaten, tormented and cut to pieces. Fulfil then my will, that you may win favor not only with me but also with the Emperor, and, receiving every blessing, may live out your whole life in prosperity. But if you do not heed me now, you will at once be given over to bitter torments and grievous sicknesses, and your beauty will perish.

– Judge! – said Minodora, – your flatteries are unpleasant to us, and your threats do not frighten us. We know that to enjoy with you wealth, glory and all temporal pleasures is the same as preparing for

ourselves eternal sorrow in hell, while to endure temporal torments for Christ means to earn eternal joy in heaven. The prosperity you promise us is unstable; the torments with which you threaten us are temporal; but the torments prepared by our Lord for those who hate Him are eternal, and the abundance of mercy which He keeps for those who love Him is boundless. We do not desire your fleeting goods, and we do not fear your temporal torments; we dread the torments of hell and strive for the blessings of heaven, because these are eternal. But above all: since we love Christ, our Bridegroom, we are of one mind in desiring to die for Him, and to die together, so that it may be seen that we are sisters even more in spirit than in body. As one womb brought us into the world, so let one death lead us out of this world; let one chamber of the Savior receive us, and there let us abide forever.

After these words she raised her eyes to heaven and said:

– Jesus Christ, our God! We do not renounce Thee before men; do not Thou renounce us before Thy Heavenly Father.

And turning again to the tormentor, she went on:

– Torment us then, judge! Wound with wounds that body which seems fair to you; for our body there can be no better adornment, neither gold, nor pearls, nor costly garments, than the wounds for our Christ, which we have long desired to receive.

– You are the eldest by age and by understanding, – the prince said to her, – and you ought to teach the others to obey the commands of the Emperor and of ourselves; but you yourself do not listen, and you corrupt them. I beg you: listen to me, do what I command you, bow down to the gods, so that your sisters, following your example, may do the same.

– You labor in vain, prince, – the saint answered, – you strive in vain to cut us off from Christ and to bend us to the worship of idols, which you call gods. Neither I nor my sisters will do this, for we have one soul, one thought, one heart, which loves Christ. Therefore I advise you not to waste more words, but to test us in deed: beat us, cut us, burn us, cut us to pieces; then you will see whether we will obey your godless command. We are Christ's, and we are ready to die for Christ.

Hearing such words, Prince Fronto fell into a rage and poured out all his wrath upon Minodora. Removing the two younger sisters, he ordered Minodora to be stripped naked and beaten. Four executioners began to beat the saint, while a herald meanwhile cried out: "Honor the gods and praise the Emperor, and do not insult our laws."

For two hours they beat the saint Minodora. At last the tormentor said to her:

– Now offer sacrifice to the gods.

– I am doing nothing else, – the martyr answered, – than offering sacrifice. Do you not see that I have offered my whole self as a sacrifice to my God?

Then the tormentor commanded the servants to beat the saint Minodora even harder. And they beat her pitilessly over her whole body, breaking her joints, shattering her bones and crushing her body. But the holy virgin, burning with fervent love and longing for her immortal Bridegroom, endured the tortures valiantly, as if feeling no pain.

At last she cried out from the depths of her heart:

– Lord Jesus Christ, my joy and the love of my heart, to Thee I flee; my hope, I beseech Thee: receive my soul in peace.

With this prayer the saint breathed out her spirit and passed to her beloved Bridegroom, covered all over with wounds instead of costly adornments.

Four days later the tormentor summoned Mitrodora and Nymphodora to judgment, and ordered the dead body of their elder sister to be brought and laid at their feet. The honorable body of the saint Minodora lay naked, without any covering; from head to foot it was covered with wounds, and all its joints were broken. Such a sight aroused deep compassion in all. The tormentor seemed to wish to say to the young virgins: "See what has become of your sister; the same will befall you"; he hoped that at the sight of his sister's body, so cruelly tortured, the virgins would be frightened and would do his will. All who stood by, looking upon the mangled dead body, could not restrain their natural pity and did not hide their tears; only the tormentor was hard as stone, and only grew the more embittered. Although nature itself and love for their sister moved the holy virgins, Mitrodora

and Nymphodora, to tears, a still greater love for Christ restrained them from weeping. They had a firm hope that their sister was already enjoying joy in the chamber of her Bridegroom, and was waiting for them too, adorned with the same wounds, to hasten to stand before the face of the all-desired Lord. Therefore, gazing upon the holy body lying before them, they said:

– Blessed art thou, sister and mother of ours: thou hast been worthy of the martyr's crown and hast entered the chamber of thy Bridegroom. Pray now to the most merciful Lord, whom thou now seest, that He may command us too to come to Him by thy way, and deem us worthy to bow down to Him, the great God, to enjoy His love and eternal joy with Him. And you, tormentors, why do you delay and not kill us? Why do you deprive us of the lot of our beloved sister? Why do you not at once bring us the cup of death, for which we thirst as the sweetest drink? Behold, our bones are ready to be broken, our ribs ready to be burned, our body ready to be torn, our head ready to be cut off, our heart ready to endure bravely. Begin then your work, expect nothing more from us: we will not bend our knees before false gods. You see how eagerly we desire death. What more do you want? To die together with our sister for Christ the Lord, our most beloved Bridegroom: this is our only desire.

The judge saw how fearless they were, and believed that their desire for death for Christ was unyielding; yet he still tried, with flatteries, to bring them to agreement with himself, and with cunning went on persuading them.

But the sisters answered:

– When will you cease, wretched tormentor, to oppose our firm resolve? You know that we are branches of one root, that we are own sisters; be assured then that we also have one thought. You could understand this from our sister whom you tormented. If she, having before her eyes no example of courage in suffering, showed such invincible endurance, what then must we do, seeing before us our sister, who has given us an example? Do you not see how she, though she lies with closed lips, instructs us by her open wounds and exhorts us to the ascetic feat of suffering? No, we will not be parted from her, nor will we

break our kinship bond, but we will die for Christ just as she died. We renounce the riches you have promised; we renounce glory and all that is of the earth and will return again to the earth; we renounce mortal bridegrooms, since we have the Incorruptible: Him alone we love, and to Him, instead of a dowry, we offer our death, that we may be made worthy of immortality in His eternal, pure and holy chamber.

Then, having lost all hope, the tormentor fell into a terrible rage, and, removing the younger sister, ordered Mitrodora to be hanged and her body to be scorched with candles. Thus Mitrodora was tormented for two hours. Enduring the torment, the saint raised her eyes to her one beloved Bridegroom, for whom she suffered, asking help from Him. She was taken down from the tree, scorched like a coal, but the tormentor ordered her to be beaten hard with iron rods, breaking all her limbs. In such torments the saint Mitrodora, calling upon the Lord, committed her pure soul into His hands.

When she had died, the third Lamb of Christ, Nymphodora, was brought forward, so that she might see the lifeless bodies of her two sisters and, terrified by their cruel death, renounce Christ.

The prince began to speak to her with guile:

"Fair maiden! I marvel at your beauty more than at the beauty of others, and I grieve over your youth. I swear by the gods that I have come to love you as a daughter of my own blood. Only bow down to the gods, and you will at once win the great favor of the emperor: he will reward you with estates and shower you with honors. But if you do not do this, you will perish just as your sisters did, whose bodies lie before you."

These words passed by the holy maiden's ears like the wind: she not only gave them no heed, but spoke with scorn of the idols and of the idolaters, and, like David, said: "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. Let those who make them be like them, and all who trust in them" (Ps. 113:12, 16)[12].

The lawless man, seeing that he would achieve nothing by words, ordered her hung up naked and her body flayed with iron claws. Yet in

12. Idols are the work of human hands, and the idolaters themselves become like their idols: devoid of reason, insensible, as their idols are.

such torments she showed not the least impatience, uttered no cry and no groan, but only, raising her eyes to heaven, moved her lips in silence, which was a sign of her fervent prayer. And when the herald cried out, "Offer sacrifice to the gods and you will be freed from torment," the saint said:

"I have offered myself in sacrifice to my God; suffering for Him is sweet to me, and death is gain."

At last the tormentor ordered her beaten to death with iron rods, and Saint Nymphodora was slain for confessing Jesus Christ.

Thus the three maidens glorified the Most Holy Trinity by their martyr's end.

The tormentor, however, was not satisfied with the sufferings of the maidens, but poured out his unbridled rage even upon the dead. He commanded that a great pyre be kindled and the bodies of the holy martyrs cast into it. As soon as this was done, suddenly fire fell from heaven with a great thunderclap and instantly consumed Prince Fronto and all his servants who had tormented the holy maidens. And upon the kindled pyre there poured a great rain, which quenched the fire. The faithful took up the bodies of the saints, which the flame had not harmed, and with honor committed them to burial, laying them near the warm waters in a single coffin. Thus one coffin received those whom one womb had borne, so that those who were inseparable in life would be together also in death. Sisters on earth, they remained sisters in heaven, sisters in the coffin, and sisters in the bridal chamber of their Bridegroom. Over their bodies a church was built in their name[13], and healings flowed from their relics like rivers, to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity and in memory of the three holy maidens, by whose prayers we too may be counted worthy to behold the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God. To Him be glory forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Ye who suffered patiently for the Trinity, ye conquered the many-plotting foe, having been clothed in the Spirit in brotherly fashion:

13. In honor of the holy martyrs there is a service; the canon was composed by Venerable Joseph the Hymnographer (d. 883).

therefore ye dwell with the five maidens[14] *in the heavenly chamber of passion-bearers, and stand before the All-King with the Angels, ever in joy.*

* * *

Life of the Holy Empress Pulcheria

Житие святой царицы Пульхерии

The Greek emperor Arcadius[15], dying, left behind an eight-year-old son, Theodosius, and three daughters: Pulcheria, Arcadia and Marina. Pulcheria, who was older in years than her brother, was distinguished by wisdom and modesty. She was a great gift of Divine Providence to the Greek kingdom, to help the young Theodosius and to defend Orthodoxy against the attacks of heretics[16]. Wise beyond her years, she was received by her brother as co-ruler and granted the title of Augusta[17]. She was 16 years old when, having attained power, she began to govern the Greek empire not with the understanding of a woman, but with the wisdom of a man, to the astonishment of the whole world of that time: so was it given her from God for the purity of her life. For out of love for God, and also out of care for the peace and tranquility of her subjects, she declined marriage, lest there be any discord between her husband and her brother; and, having dedicated herself to God, she remained a virgin until her death. As a sign of her entrusting her virginity to God, she had a Holy Table made of gold and precious stones, of wondrous workmanship and great value, for the cathedral[18] church. Her sisters she also persuaded to preserve their virginity, and they vowed to God to preserve their maidenly purity until their death, and lived together with her in fasting and prayer, obeying her not only as their elder sister but as their mother and empress.

14. Here are evidently meant those five wise virgins of whom the parable of the Savior speaks (Mt. 25:1–13).
15. He reigned from 395 to 408.
16. Nestorians and Eutychians; see below concerning them.
17. This title passed to the Christian Greek emperors from the pagan Roman ones, who were all called, in addition to their own names, Augusti, in honor of the first Roman emperor who bore this name; hence our word "Most August."
18. That is, in the Patriarchal (residence).

Pulcheria was in place of a mother to her brother, the Emperor Theodosius, and took every care of him, teaching him the fear of God. Knowing the Greek and Latin languages well, she was herself his teacher, and taught him not only books but good conduct; she gave him instruction in how he ought to be in conversation, how he ought to comport himself in general, how to punish and how to show mercy to the guilty; in a word, she taught him all that is necessary for a good ruler. And the good seed did not fall upon barren ground, for he obeyed her in everything; and the good upbringing he received led him, when he reached maturity, to be kinder, gentler, more patient, more guileless, wiser, more discerning and more merciful than other emperors; but besides upbringing, the prayers of the holy Pulcheria also helped him in life. She built a splendid church in honor of the Most Pure Mother of God at Blachernae[19] and many other churches and monasteries, and she distributed abundant alms to the poor. Through her care the Greek kingdom, apart from internal heretical disturbances, remained in peace and quiet.

When Theodosius had reached his twentieth year and the time came for him to enter into marriage, the blessed Pulcheria was concerned to find him a worthy wife. At that time there arrived at Constantinople from Athens[20] a maiden named Athenais, of pagan faith, beautiful in appearance, modest and intelligent, the daughter of the renowned Athenian philosopher[21] Leontius, who had been taught by her father astronomy, geometry and all Hellenic[22] wisdom, and who surpassed many sages in understanding. She came to Constantinople for the following reason. Her father, dying, divided all his property between his two sons, Valerius and Aetius, and left her nothing but a few gold coins; when relatives and neighbors asked him what he was leaving to his daughter, Leontius answered: "Her beauty and her wisdom are enough for her."

After the father's death the two brothers divided between themselves all the paternal estate and gave their sister nothing; with a com-

19. A locality in Constantinople.
20. A city in Greece, now its capital.
21. A philosopher means a sage.

plaint against her brothers she came to Constantinople. Seeing her, the holy Pulcheria noticed her beauty, good conduct and intelligence, and resolved to marry her to her brother. But first she brought her to the Christian faith and drew her near to herself as a daughter of her own, and only then gave her in marriage to Theodosius as one worthy of union with the emperor. At holy baptism she was given the name Eudocia. From her marriage with Theodosius was born a daughter, Eudocia, who was afterward married to the Roman emperor Valentinian III[23].

In the reign of the emperors Theodosius and Valentinian[24], through the efforts of the blessed Pulcheria, the Third Ecumenical Council was convened at Ephesus against the impious Nestorius[25]. Pulcheria had great zeal for piety, and by her exhortations she turned her brother, who had begun to be carried away by heresy and to depart from the true teaching, and established him in Orthodoxy; for this she was honored with many praises from the holy fathers. But some years passed, and the enemy of the human race, no longer willing to endure the blows which holy Pulcheria dealt to heresy, armed himself against her and planned to remove her from the imperial throne and from power; and this succeeded for a time, for God sometimes permits His holy friends to be subjected to temptations. The temptation of holy Pulcheria began in the following manner. The Emperor Theodosius had a eunuch[26] named Chrysaphius, the favorite and counselor of the emperor, a man crafty, malicious and avaricious. He was hostile toward Patriarch Flavian[27], the successor of St. Proclus. Flavian was fully worthy of the patriarchate for his piety and blameless life, but Chrysaphius was a heretic[28] and therefore did not sympathize with Flavian's elevation to the patriarchate. Wishing to bring some accusation against

22. Hellenic means Greek; sometimes this word means pagan; at the time of the Nativity of Christ the Greeks were the most educated people of antiquity.
23. He reigned from 423 to 455.
24. Here is meant Valentinian III, a contemporary of Theodosius II.
25. Theodosius had indeed made Nestorius Archbishop of Constantinople.
26. Eunuch in Greek means "keeper of the bed"; in Byzantium this was the name of special court officials who managed the imperial bedchamber; at the same time these were usually the persons most intimate with the emperor.
27. St. Flavian was Patriarch from 447 to 449.
28. Chrysaphius was an Eutychian.

Flavian, Chrysaphius demanded that he present the emperor with some gift "as a blessing," as a newly ordained hierarch. Flavian, having ordered several loaves made of pure flour, sent them to the palace; but Chrysaphius did not accept them, saying that the patriarch ought to send, "as a blessing," not loaves but gold. The patriarch answered through his messengers: "Chrysaphius knows well that church gold and silver belong to God, and can be given to no one except, perhaps, the poor."

By this he only armed Chrysaphius still more against himself, and Chrysaphius began to seek a way to destroy the patriarch; but seeing that the blessed Pulcheria, by her piety, firmly took the patriarch's side, so that it would be difficult to do him any harm, he began to devise new schemes against her as well: he began to sow discord between her and the Empress Eudocia, seeking by every means to break their mutual love.

Meanwhile the following event took place. Emperor Theodosius had a habit of signing papers without reading what was written in them. Pulcheria, out of her constant care for him, wished to correct him also of this failing. Having prepared a paper in the emperor's name, stating that the emperor, at Pulcheria's request, gave his wife into her servitude and declared that from that time he no longer had any authority over Eudocia, she presented this paper to Theodosius for his signature. He, according to his custom, did not read the paper and, not knowing what was written in it, affixed his hand to it. Pulcheria, taking the paper, invited the Empress Eudocia to her palace, and by pleasant conversation and respectful attention kept her there for a long time; and when the emperor sent for his wife, she did not let her go. To the second messenger Pulcheria replied with a smile:

"Let the emperor know that he no longer has authority over his wife, for he has given her into my servitude and confirmed this by his imperial decree."

After that she herself went to her brother and said to him:

"See how badly you act when you sign documents without reading them," and she showed him that decree.

By this resourcefulness she caused the emperor from that time on to be more circumspect, to examine and read the papers he was required to sign.

Learning of this, the crafty Chrysaphius came to Empress Eudocia and said to her:

"See what Pulcheria is doing to you, how she humbles you: she wishes to have you as her slave. How long will you endure this from her? Are you not as much an empress as she? Are you not closest of all to the emperor, being one body with him?"

By such and similar speeches he roused anger in Eudocia against Pulcheria, and she began to incite her husband, so that he, taking authority from his sister, might reign alone. Instructed by his wife and by Chrysaphius, the emperor, though he was inclined to do as they wished, was ashamed to bring dishonor upon his sister, who was his teacher and older than he in years. Therefore Eudocia and Chrysaphius asked the patriarch to persuade Pulcheria, when she appeared in the church, to accept the title of deaconess, in view of her pure and holy life. At that time it was the custom to compel maidens and widows known for purity of life, even against their will, to serve as deaconesses; by this means the enemies of St. Pulcheria hoped to remove her from power[29]. The patriarch secretly informed her of their intrigues. But Pulcheria, perceiving her brother's design and seeing the enmity toward her on the part of Eudocia and Chrysaphius, herself gave up imperial power, left the palace with the maidens who served her, and in a secluded place lived there a pious life in silence.

Meanwhile the heretic Chrysaphius, waiting for a favorable time to carry out his malicious designs, turned the emperor against the patri-

29. Deaconess, in Greek, means a female servant. The institution of deaconesses goes back to apostolic times (see Rom. 16:1). Elected to the office of deaconess were elderly virgins or widows (not younger than 40). Their duty was to watch over decorum and order among women during worship, to instruct women who were converting to Christianity in how they should conduct themselves at baptism, to assist the bishop at the baptism of women, and, in his place, to perform the anointing of parts of the body other than the forehead, and so on. Concerning deaconesses there are several canonical decrees, namely: IV Ecumenical 15, VI Ecumenical 14, and Basil the Great 44. A deaconess who entered marriage was subject to anathema together with her husband; thus, for St. Pulcheria, should she become a deaconess, the path to the imperial throne would be entirely closed.

arch. And so for the Church of God a time of troubles set in, for in the absence of Pulcheria, the defender of piety, the heretics began to act without any fear, until God opened the spiritual eyes of the emperor, so that at last he recognized his error, became convinced of the injustice of his wife's anger against St. Pulcheria, and understood the malice of Chrysaphius.

Once an apple was brought to Emperor Theodosius, extraordinarily beautiful and unusually large. Marveling at its beauty and size, he sent it to his wife, and she, after holding it, did not eat it herself but sent it to the senator Paulinus, the emperor's favorite, who was then ill. Paulinus, knowing nothing, sent the apple to the emperor. Receiving the apple, the emperor recognized it, went to the empress, and asked her:

“Where is the apple that I sent you?” She, not knowing that the apple had again come into her husband’s hands, replied:

"I ate it."

Then the emperor, showing her the apple, asked:

"And what is this?"

He was terribly angry with his wife and reviled her in every way, thinking that she was committing adultery with Paulinus. The latter the emperor sent into exile in Cappadocia, and forbade his wife to show herself before him. But at the same time he became greatly angry with Chrysaphius as well, since he learned that he had been the cause of many evils. At first the emperor took away Chrysaphius's estate, and then condemned him to exile. God Himself punished Chrysaphius for the undeserved insult to St. Pulcheria. While sailing into exile by ship, Chrysaphius drowned in the sea; and Paulinus, innocent of anything, while in exile was beheaded by the sword at the emperor's command. Afterwards Eudocia herself, dying, bore witness with an oath to the innocence of Paulinus and of herself. Yet God permitted this misfortune to befall them: for Paulinus, for the salvation of his soul, and for the empress, as a punishment. The empress, hearing of Paulinus's death, was greatly grieved that because of her there had perished innocently so prudent and chaste a man, and she asked her husband's permission to venerate the holy places. Receiving permission, she went to Jerusalem, where she distributed rich alms, built many churches, and foun-

ded monasteries. She remained in Jerusalem for a long time, until by insistent entreaties she softened her husband's anger and was reconciled with St. Pulcheria, to whom, as a sign of peace and unbroken love, she sent an image of the Most Pure Mother of God, painted, according to tradition, by the holy evangelist Luke.

After the Empress Eudocia went to Jerusalem, Theodosius asked St. Pulcheria to return once more to the throne; but she did not wish this, preferring solitary service to the One God over dominion over many lands. Then the emperor asked her a second time to return to the palace and share with him the governance of the kingdom, and did not cease his entreaties until he obtained what he sought: St. Pulcheria returned to her imperial palace with great honors. And again the storm raised by heresy subsided, and the disturbances ceased: peace reigned in the Church, and the Greek empire enjoyed peace. After a fairly long time the Empress Eudocia also returned from Jerusalem, bringing with her the hand of the holy Protomartyr Stephen. When Eudocia, on her way, brought it into Chalcedon[30], St. Stephen appeared to Pulcheria by night and said:

"Behold, you have received what you desired, for I have already come to Chalcedon."

Rising in the morning, Pulcheria together with Theodosius went out to meet the hand of the holy Protomartyr; there they also lovingly received the Empress Eudocia.

In the forty-second year of his life, Emperor Theodosius fell ill, and feeling the approach of death, he told St. Pulcheria about a revelation that had come to him at Ephesus in the church of St. John the Theologian. As he stood there in prayer, it was revealed to him that after his death his successor would be the warrior Marcian. Therefore Theodosius asked Pulcheria to help Marcian attain the throne.

Marcian was a native of Thrace[31], the son of a soldier and himself a brave soldier, a man of mature years, prudent and of good disposition. Chosen from on high for kingship from his youth, he was miraculously

30. A city in Asia Minor on the shore of the Strait of Constantinople (on the other side opposite it lies Constantinople).

31. A region in the Byzantine Empire in the northeastern part of the Balkan Peninsula.

preserved from death. Once, on his way to Philippopolis[32], he came upon the body of a man recently slain on the road, and stopped over it, moved with pity for the murdered man. Wishing to perform a work of mercy—to bury the dead man—he began to dig a grave for him; and then passers-by on the same road saw Marcian burying the dead man. Thinking that he had committed the murder, they seized him and, bringing him into the city, delivered him to judgment. Since there was no one to testify to his innocence, and his own defense was not believed, he was condemned to death as a murderer. When preparations for his execution were already under way, at that very moment the true murderer was revealed by divine revelation. The latter received what his deeds deserved, and Marcian was honorably released. Afterwards he served in the Greek army under the command of Aspar. During the war with the Vandals[33], when the latter defeated the Greeks and took many captive, Marcian too was taken with the others and brought before the Vandal leader Gaiseric. Once Gaiseric, wishing to look at the prisoners, climbed at noon, in the great heat, to an elevated place, and saw from afar Marcian sleeping on the ground, with an eagle above him that had descended and spread its wings like a tent, shielding him from the sun's rays. Seeing this, Gaiseric understood the future of his prisoner, and calling him to himself and asking his name and origin, said:

"If you wish to be alive, unharmed and free, swear to me that when you ascend the imperial throne you will never make war on the Vandals, but will live with us in peace."

Marcian swore to what Gaiseric desired, and was honorably released to his homeland.

Having returned from captivity, Marcian once again took a prominent place in the Greek army. One day, during the Greeks' campaign against the Persians, Marcian fell ill on the way and remained in a Lycian city, Sidine; there he was received into the home of two good men, the brothers Tatian and Julian, who, having grown very fond of him, took great care of his health. Soon after his recovery, the two brothers

32. A city in the western part of Thrace.

33. The Vandals were a people who lived first in southern Spain and afterward in northern Africa; they belonged to the Germanic tribe and in the time of St. Pulcheria professed Arianism.

went out with him to hunt birds. When noon came and the heat of the sun grew strong, they lay down to rest and fell asleep. Tatian woke first and, just as Gaiseric had once done, saw a great eagle hovering over the sleeping Marcian, shading him with its outspread wings and screening him from the sun's heat. Seeing this, Tatian woke his younger brother Julian, and both marvelled at the wondrous sight. When Marcian then rose, the eagle flew away, and the brothers foretold to Marcian that he would become emperor, and asked what gratitude and favour he would show them when he came to reign. He said to them:

"If your prediction comes true, you will be to me in place of a father."

After this, Marcian began to acquire ever greater glory, for God Himself glorified the man whom He had chosen according to His own heart. Meanwhile the pious Emperor Theodosius the Younger died, and his consort Eudocia again withdrew to Jerusalem, and there, having lived piously for some years, she too died and was buried in the church of the holy Protomartyr Stephen, which she had built. After the death of Theodosius, St. Pulcheria, in agreement with the courtiers and military commanders, chose Marcian to be emperor, as a man worthy and pleasing to God. Once he had come to the throne, Marcian summoned to court the two brothers mentioned above, Tatian and Julian, and, honouring them with high ranks, appointed them governors, one of Thrace and the other of Lycia.[34] He also fulfilled his oath to Gisericus, keeping peace with him unbroken until the end of his reign. After Marcian's accession, St. Pulcheria wished to return once more to her seclusion, but the newly chosen emperor and the whole Synclite asked her not to abandon them, but to help govern the realm, since she was wise and experienced in affairs of state; yet this could be possible for her only by becoming the Emperor's wife. She pointed out to them the virginity she had promised to God, which she must keep until death. But Marcian also declared that he too had vowed to God to keep chastity. Then, for the needs of the holy Church, which was troubled by the multiplying heretics, St. Pulcheria consented to enter into marriage with Marcian,

34. A region of the Byzantine Empire in the southwest of Asia Minor.

on the condition, however, that she should remain a virgin to the end of her life, for this was required both by the promise she had given to God, and by the natural chastity of both spouses, and by their years, which were by then far from young: she was then 51 years old, and the Emperor too was no longer young. Thus Pulcheria was called his wife, but in truth was not a wife but a sister, co-reigning with him and ruling to the great benefit of the whole Church of God and of the whole realm; likewise Marcian was called her husband, but in truth was to her not a husband but a brother, co-reigning with her as the daughter of the Emperor who had inherited her father's throne. Thus at that time one could see on the Greek throne, as it were, a reigning virginal purity, for there reigned an emperor pure in soul and body, and an Empress, a virgin keeping herself undefiled.

O virginal marriage, seldom seen or heard of! Let the world full of impure lusts marvel at this! Let people who serve fleshly passions and pleasures be ashamed, hearing of such a marriage of this pious imperial pair, which was made like unto Angelic purity!

Through the cares of the holy Empress, in addition to the aforementioned council at Ephesus, a council of the holy Fathers was convened at Chalcedon against the impious Dioscorus and the archimandrite Eutyches.[35] She defended Orthodoxy with all her strength, so that some writers credit her in particular with the defence of the faith at both of these councils.

Such zeal of Pulcheria for piety and her great wisdom came from the fact that the Holy Spirit dwelt in her soul and pure heart, as in His holy temple, and filled her with His great gifts.

Having lived 54 years and given all her property to churches, monasteries and the poor, St. Pulcheria reposed in the Lord, whom she had served with her whole heart.[36]

35. Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria, and Eutyches taught that in Jesus Christ there is one divine nature, for the humanity in Him was swallowed up by the Divinity. Their followers were called Eutychians or Monophysites (from Greek words meaning "one" and "nature"). The IV Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon was in 451.

36. The repose of St. Empress Pulcheria followed in 453. Her memory was soon after her repose celebrated by Emperor Leo (457–474).

By her prayers, O Lord, deprive us not of Thy heavenly Kingdom. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Three Women, found on a mountain in the wilderness[37]

Память святых Трех жен, обретенных в пустынной горе

Paul, Bishop of Monemvasia,[38] related the following account.

When I was a layman, I was sent to the East to collect the imperial tribute. On the way I saw a monastery in the wilderness and wished to enter it. The abbot came out of the monastery to meet me with the brethren, and after mutual greetings we sat down in the monastery courtyard, where a fruit garden had been planted. And then we saw that birds were flying to the trees, breaking off branches with fruit, and quickly flying away.

I asked the abbot:

"Why do the birds not eat the fruit here on the spot, but carry it off along with the branches?"

The abbot answered:

"For eleven years now these birds have been doing this."

Then, as though by revelation from God, I said that somewhere in the nearby mountains there must be ascetics, men or women of God, and that it was for them, by the command of the Lord, that the birds carried these fruits. While I was saying this, a raven flew up and broke off a branch with fruit. Then I proposed to the abbot that we go after the bird, and we followed the raven, which flew before us with the fruit; but the raven alighted on a hill and set down the branch on the ground. When we began to climb the hill, the raven took up the branch again and flew into a deep ravine, like an abyss, from which it soon emerged, but now without the branch. Then we too came to that ravine and threw a stone into it. Suddenly a voice reached us from below:

37. They ascetically labored in the 10th century.

38. Monemvasia is a city on the island of Minoa, on the Gulf of Argos, which was a strong fortress and the chief center of Byzantium's trade relations with the East. Today it is an insignificant town with the ruins of its fortifications.

"If you are Christians, do not kill us."

We asked:

"Who are you?"

They answered:

"If you wish to see us, throw down to us three garments, for we are women and naked; and then go along the mountain and you will find there a narrow path which will lead you to us."

Then three monks from the brethren who were with us took off their garments, wrapped stones in them, and threw the garments down to them. We ourselves, descending from the hill, found, as we had been told, a narrow passage along which one could barely pass, and by this way we reached the ravine where the three holy women were. On meeting us, the women bowed down to the ground; and we, having offered a prayer, sat down; one of the women also sat, while the other two remained standing. Then the abbot addressed the seated woman with a question:

"Where are you from, and how did you come to such a place?"

She who was questioned answered:

"I am from Constantinople, where I was married to a courtier; but my husband died in his youth, and I was left a widow at a little over twenty years of age, mourning both my widowhood and my childlessness. After some days, a nobleman, hearing of me, sent his slaves, wishing to take me to himself by force, and the messengers demanded that I go at once to their master. Then I, raising a prayer to my Lord Jesus Christ that He would deliver me from that man, who wished by violence to defile my soul and body, said to the slaves: 'Can you doubt that I would gladly go to your most distinguished master? But at present I am afflicted with a woman's illness and am unclean from a continual flow of blood. Wait a little, until I recover from the illness and am cleansed, and then I will gladly go to your master.' Having heard me, the messengers went away, saying: 'Good, our master will wait for you up to 40 days.' After they had gone, I set free my male and female slaves, giving them gold, and kept with me only the two whom you see here, distributing all my possessions to the poor. Then I invited my kinsman, a God-fearing man, and under a dreadful oath bound him to

sell my estates and houses and to give the proceeds to the poor. Afterwards, at night, I took with me these two maidservants, who are now my sisters, and embarked with them on a ship, by which, through God's guidance, I came to this place; and now it is the eleventh year that we have seen no human face except yours today. Our garments, after a year, wore out and fell from us."

The abbot asked her:

"How do you get your sustenance?"

The holy woman answered:

"Our good and merciful God, who fed His people in the desert for forty years, sends food to us too, unworthy handmaidens of His. Every day, by His divine providence, the birds bring us food in far greater quantity than we need. The same most gracious Lord covers us in our nakedness and warms us with His grace, so that we fear neither the cold of winter nor the heat of summer, but live as in Paradise, constantly glorifying the Holy Trinity."

Marvelling at what he heard, the abbot said:

"If you permit, my lady, I will send one of the brethren to the monastery for food, and we shall refresh ourselves together."

But the holy woman answered:

"Rather, command that a priest come and, having celebrated the holy Liturgy here, make us worthy to partake of the most pure Mysteries of Christ, for since we left the city we have been deprived of Communion."

The abbot immediately sent a monk to the monastery for a priest and food. The priest who came celebrated the Divine Liturgy, and first the mistress herself partook of the Most Pure Mysteries, and then her handmaidens. After that, having tasted food with us, Bishop Paul concludes his account: the holy woman asked the abbot to remain with them for three days, to which the abbot agreed. Then the blessed woman, rising, offered a fervent prayer and yielded up her spirit to God. We, weeping, sang the funeral chants and then buried her. On the next day the second woman, after praying, likewise departed peacefully, and on the third day the third woman. Having buried them, we returned to the monastery, glorifying Christ our God, who works glorious signs

and wonders in His saints. To Him be honor and worship forever. Amen.

* * *

Memory of Holy Martyr Varipsavas

Память святого мученика Варипсава

This saint received from a certain hermit the blood that flowed from the most pure side of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by it he performed many healings. The pagans killed St. Varipsavas[39] by night, but the great treasure, the blood of Christ, was preserved by his disciples.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Apostles Apelles, Luke and Clement

Память святых Апостолов Апеллия, Луки и Климента

The Holy Apostle Apelles was bishop in Smyrna;[40] he is mentioned by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 16:10).

St. Luke (Lucius), of whom the Apostle Paul also bears witness in his Epistle to the Romans (15:21), was bishop in Laodicea of Syria.[41] St. Clement, whom the Apostle Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Philippians (Phil. 4:3), was bishop in Sardica.[42]

39. The martyric death of St. Varipsavas and his struggle belong to the 2nd century.

40. Smyrna was the famous trading city of Ionia, on the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea (or Archipelago), some 56 versts from Ephesus, at the mouth of the river Meles, one of the most ancient cities of Asia Minor; the Church was planted in Smyrna by the Holy Apostle John the Theologian. Smyrna now belongs to the Turks, but to this day the Orthodox Christian faith is preserved and flourishes there. The city remains even now one of the most prosperous and densely populated cities of the empire.

41. Laodicea of Syria was the chief city once of Phrygia, in its southwest, in Asia Minor, on the river Lycus; it was famed for its wide trade. At present only ruins on a low hill near the devastated village of Eski-Hissar serve as a monument to this ancient city.

42. Sardica was the ancient Sardis, or Sardes, a wealthy city of Lydia in the northwestern part of Asia Minor, formerly the capital and residence of King Croesus, known for his wealth; in apostolic times it was still a considerable city, and a Christian church arose there early. In the 10th century Sardica was razed to the ground by the Asian conqueror Tamerlane. Now there is only an insignificant village here, and only ruins bear witness to the former greatness of this city.

* * *



THE ELEVENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 11

11 сентября

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

Life and Ascetic Labors of Our Venerable Mother Theodora, Who Lived in the Guise of a Man

Житие и подвиги преподобной матери нашей Феодоры, подвизавшейся в мужском образе

"The eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times brighter than the sun, beholding all the ways of men, and penetrating into hidden places. All things were known to Him before they were created" (Sir. 23:27–29).

Theodora, a noblewoman living in Alexandria,[1] did not know this truth. She believed the enemy, the devil, who secretly suggested and persuaded her that a sin committed in darkness, a sin the sun does not see, would not be known to God. But when she came to understand by her own experience that nothing can be hidden from God, what a great repentance she then displayed!

Living honestly in marriage with her husband, Theodora fell into such a temptation. A certain wealthy man, young and frivolous, stirred by the devil, conceived desire for her and did everything he could to incline her to adultery: he sent her costly gifts, promised still more precious ones, and beguiled her with words. But being unable to accomplish anything himself, he hired a certain seductress, a sorceress, to entice the chaste Theodora and draw her into the wicked deed he had planned. And this seductress, having Satan as her accomplice, found a convenient time and began to speak to Theodora about that young man.

Theodora said:

1. Alexandria: the famous city founded by Alexander the Great about 333 B.C. on a promontory projecting into the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea (somewhat south of the present city of the same name); it was once the center of learning and the first trading city on earth; at the beginning of the fourth century it became the center of Christianity and the seat of the patriarch.

"Oh, if only I could be rid of this man who has long been troubling me! If I obey him, then the very sun shining upon us will be a witness before God of my sin!"

"In that case," advised the temptress, "when the sun sets and dark night comes, you may fulfill the young man's desire in some secluded place, and no one will know your deed, and there will be no witness before God, for the night is deep and darkness will cover everything."

Theodora said:

"Oh, how good it would be if God did not know of a sin committed at night!"

"So it shall be," answered the temptress, "for God sees only those sins which the sun illumines, and what is done in darkness, how can He see it?"

Theodora, being young, simple-hearted and inexperienced, yielded to the temptress's allurements; the devilish temptation also helped greatly, for its power is great, while our nature is inclined to passions and our strength is feeble. Thus Theodora obeyed the wicked counsel and committed the lawless deed in the darkness of night. But with the dawning of the morning light, the light of God's mercy immediately shone forth in her heart: for, recognizing her sin, she began to grieve, to strike her face, to tear her hair, to feel shame before herself, and to loathe herself. So the mercy of God, which does not desire the death of the sinner, because of her former chastity, moved her toward swift repentance and amendment; for God sometimes permits a man to fall, so that, rising again, he may show still greater zeal, amendment, and fervor toward God, who forgives sins.

Grieving and weeping over the sin she had committed, Theodora tried to comfort herself a little, thinking:

"God does not know of my sin; yet even if He does not know it, still I am ashamed and sorrowful."

Seeking to calm her sorrow, Theodora went to a women's monastery, to the abbess whom she knew. Seeing her grieved face, the abbess asked:

"What sorrow is upon you, my daughter? Has your husband wronged you?"

Theodora answered:

"No, my lady; but I myself do not know why my heart is grieved."

The abbess, wishing to console her, by the inspiration of the Spirit of God began a spiritually profitable conversation with her and began to read the Divine books. And when she read one passage (an exhortation), she came to this saying of the Gospel: "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops" (Lk. 12:2–3; Mt. 10:26).

Hearing these words of the Gospel, Theodora struck herself on the breast, crying out:

"Woe is me, wretched one! Now I am lost, deceived, thinking that God would not know of my sin."

And she began to beat herself, weeping and sobbing.

Then the abbess understood that Theodora had fallen into sin, and began to question her as to exactly what had happened to her.

Theodora, scarcely able to speak through her tears, told the abbess everything in detail, and falling at her feet, cried out:

"Have mercy on me, my lady, who am perishing, and teach me what I am to do! Can I still be saved, or am I already lost forever? Am I to hope in the mercy of God, or to despair?"

The abbess began to say to her:

"You did not do well, my daughter, in listening to the enemy; you thought wrongly in supposing you could hide from God, who tests hearts and reins, who knows from afar the thoughts of men, and sees with His eye what has not yet been done: neither night nor any secret and dark place can hide the sinner from His all-seeing eye. You have done wrong, my daughter: you have angered God, you have not kept faithfulness to your husband, you have defiled your body and harmed your soul. Why did you not tell me of this before, when you were being enticed, so that I might have helped you and taught you how to guard against the snares of the enemy? But since this has already happened to you, at least now amend your ways and cast yourself upon the mercy of God, praying with contrition that He may forgive your sin. Do not

despair, my daughter: although you have committed a great sin, the mercy of God is still greater, and there is no sin that overcomes the love of God for mankind; only take courage, and you will be saved."

Speaking these and similar words, the abbess admonished and instructed her and set her on the path of repentance, and at the same time she comforted her, telling her of the mercy of God and of His ineffable goodness, with which He is ready to receive those who repent and to forgive those who sin. She also reminded her of the sinful woman of the Gospel, who washed the feet of Christ with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head, and received forgiveness of her sins from God.

Theodora, having heard all the words of the good instructress and laid them up in her heart, said:

"I believe in my God, my lady, and from now on I will not commit such a sin; and as for what I have already done, I will take care of it as far as I am able."

Having received, though not quickly, consolation for her heart, she returned to her house. But since her conscience accused her, she was ashamed to look her husband straight in the face, and she pondered how she might appease God: she wished to enter a women's monastery, but she knew her husband would not permit it. And so, in order to hide from her husband and from all her acquaintances, she devised the following.

When her husband went away from home on some business, she, late in the evening, cut off her hair, dressed herself in men's clothing, and, committing herself to the will of God, secretly left the house and went off quickly, like a bird that has flown out of a snare. Arriving at a certain desert monastery called "Octodecat,"[2] which lay eighteen versts from the city, she knocked at the gate, and seeing the gatekeeper, said:

"Show me love, Father: go and tell the hegumen to receive me into the monastery, a sinful man, for I wish to repent of my evil deeds, and

2. Octodeka is Greek for "eighteen." The monastery received its name from this. It should be noted that in the first centuries Egypt was renowned for monastic asceticism, which first arose there, and abounded in monastic communities, as is clear from the further narrative of this Life; for this reason some monasteries received their names from their distance from the nearest more or less large center.

therefore I have come here, that I may wash your holy feet and serve you day and night in all that you command me."

The gatekeeper went and reported to the hegumen. The hegumen said:

"We must test him: whether it is God who has directed him to come to us. So give him no answer until morning, and do not admit him into the monastery; if he does not go away, but remains patiently at the monastery doors, awaiting mercy, then we shall know that he has come truly and with zeal to serve God."

The gatekeeper did so, and paid no attention to Theodora, despising her as an unworthy slave. She sat near the gates and wept. Night came, and wild beasts began to pass by (for that desert was full of beasts); but Theodora, by the grace of God, remained unharmed, armoring herself, as with a shield, with the sign of the Cross and with prayer.

In the morning the gatekeeper, looking through the little window, saw that Theodora was sitting near the gates, and said:

"Why are you waiting here? We will not take you in, for you are not fit for us."

She answered:

"Even if I were to die here at the gates, I will not leave until you take pity on me and receive me into the monastery."

Then the gatekeeper, seeing her patience and humility, opened the gates and led her in to the hegumen. The hegumen asked her where she was from, what her name was, and why she had come. She answered:

"From Alexandria, Father; my name is Theodore. I am full of sins and lawlessness; but having come to myself and recognized my transgressions, I wish to offer repentance: and so I have come to your holy place, that you may receive me into your order and save a perishing sinner. Therefore receive me, Father, as the Lord received the thief, the publican, and the prodigal son."

Then the hegumen began to point out to her the labors and ascetic exploits of the monastery, and said:

"You will not be able to bear this, child, for I see that you are young and brought up in worldly pleasures; our monastery has no delights, our order requires a difficult manner of life, and remaining with us re-

quires great abstinence and fasting. Our brethren, in obedience, bear great labors, not neglecting the church rule, such as the midnight office and Matins, the Hours and Vespers, and many cell prayers and prostrations, as well as frequent all-night vigils, standing in prayer. You, however, are accustomed to the comfort of the flesh, and you cannot bear with us the burden of the monastic struggle. Although I see that you have come with zeal, I fear that you may change your purpose, for many often begin a good work with zeal, but soon, failing to endure, abandon the good undertaking and become the most slothful. So I advise you to return to the world, and may God arrange your salvation as He pleases."

Then Theodora, falling at the feet of the abbot, said with tears:

"Do not cast me out, Father, from your holy monastery, nor deprive me of the angelic life in common with you. Do not drive me back into the world from which I have fled, as the Jews fled from Egypt, never to return. Do not be troubled by my youth, for by your holy prayers I shall grow accustomed to every kind of abstinence, and with God's help I shall bear all labors and do with zeal and diligence whatever you command me. Only receive me, who desire to repent of my sins."

Yielding to such entreaties, the abbot received her and ordered her to perform all the monastery obediences. Thus the woman lived among men, in the form and under the name of a man, and no one knew this secret except God alone. And who can tell of her laborious life? The brethren saw her labor in obedience, her patience in abstinence, her humility in submission. But her hidden and secret ascetic deeds, her all-night prayers, her heartfelt sighs, tears, prostrations and uplifted hands, these only God saw. Both day and night she had recourse to His mercy, as once the harlot who washed the feet of the Lord with her tears. Her repentance was greater than the sin she had committed, for by humility she mortified all her passions and lusts, humbled herself before all, conquered her own will by self-denial, and became as it were an Angel in the flesh. Her body, once defiled, now purified by the labors of repentance and abundant tears, became a holy temple of God, a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

After eight years had passed, the monastery ran short of oil, and Theodora was sent with camels to the city of Alexandria to buy oil. Meanwhile her husband, not knowing where his wife had withdrawn or what had befallen her, searched for her a long time. Not finding her, he lamented day and night and fervently prayed to God that He would reveal to him where his wife was. And one night he saw an Angel, who announced to him:

"Do not grieve for your wife, for she is working for God in the midst of His servants. If you wish to see her, go early in the morning and stand by the church of St. Peter; there you will see her. For whoever passes by the church and greets you, that one is your wife."

The husband of Theodora rejoiced at this Angelic vision, which informed him concerning his wife and how he would see her. Early in the morning he hastened to the church of St. Peter and, standing there, began to look to the right and to the left, expecting to see what he desired. At that time the blessed Theodora passed by with the camels, clothed in the monastic garment of a man. Her husband did not recognize her, nor could he have recognized her: on the one hand because of her male clothing, on the other because of the change in her face. Once she had been beautiful of countenance, but from fasting and monastic labors her beauty had withered. Theodora, however, recognized him from afar, and secretly wept, and said within herself:

"Woe is me, a sinner! Through sin against my husband I have lost the mercy of God!"

As she passed by him, she bowed to him and said:

"Good day, sir!"

He likewise bowed to her, saying:

"Be well, Father!"

And so they parted. Having stood there almost the whole day, Theodora's husband returned home grieving that he had not obtained what he desired, and considering the Angelic vision a deception. At home he began to pray again with tears:

"Lord! You see my sorrow. Hear my prayer and reveal to me whether my wife is alive or not, and whether she is on the good path or the evil one."

And on another night he again saw in a vision an Angel speaking to him:

"Why do you weep? Did you not see your wife yesterday, as I told you?"

He said:

"I did not see her, my lord."

The Angel said:

"Did I not tell you that the one who passes by, bows to you and greets you, that one is your wife?"

Then the husband, understanding that he had seen his wife but had not recognized her, thanked God that his wife was alive and serving God; he hoped to be saved himself through her prayers. And the blessed Theodora thanked God that she had seen her husband and that her husband had not recognized her. Returning to the monastery, she devoted herself to her own salvation, fasting at first one day, then two, then three and four days; sometimes she remained a whole week without food, fervently praying for the forgiveness of her sin.

Near that monastery there was a lake where lived a beast, a crocodile[3], which often came out of the lake and devoured people and cattle passing by. The eparch[4] Gregory, appointed by the emperor Zeno[5] to govern the city of Alexandria, placed guards on the road passing by the lake, so that no one would pass that way. Wishing to learn of the grace of God dwelling in Theodora, the abbot summoned her and said:

"Brother Theodore, we need water. Take the water-carrier, go and draw water from the lake and bring it to me."

3. A huge reptile resembling a lizard, with bony leathery plates on its back, an enormous jaw, and large sharp teeth. Crocodiles devour not only large fish and carrion, but even animals and people. The Nile, the greatest river in the world, which waters all of Egypt, abounded in them, and they caused very considerable harm. Despite this, the ancient Egyptians deified them and often kept them in ponds, where they were fed the flesh of animals and of people. It is therefore not surprising that such a river reptile appeared in the lake, nor that the authorities, perhaps out of fear of the pagans, who were still numerous in Alexandria, did not dare to catch and destroy this dangerous animal. By the lake one may understand Lake Mareotis, or Mariut, which lay not far from both Alexandria and the Nile, whither the crocodile could itself have crawled quite easily.

4. A governor of a province in the Graeco-Roman Empire.

5. A Byzantine emperor who reigned from 474 to 491.

Theodora, as a good novice, took the water-carrier and went. The guard who met her said:

"Do not go here for water, Father, for the beast will tear you to pieces."

But she replied:

"My father the abbot sent me, and I must fulfill what was commanded."

When she came to the shore of the lake, the crocodile came out and carried her on its back to the middle of the lake. When she had drawn the water, the beast again brought her to the shore. She adjured the beast that from that time on it should do harm to no one, and at once the beast was dead. The guard, seeing such a miracle, reported it to the abbot and the eparch, and all glorified God. The brethren marveled that the beast had done no harm to the blessed one, and they praised the power of obedience.

But some of the brethren, prompted by the devil (for no one is free from the temptations of the enemy), did not believe what had happened, and began to hate Theodora, saying:

"Here we have lived in the monastery for so many years and work no miracles, yet he came only yesterday and already performs miracles. Does he wish to be greater than we? Did he not kill the beast by some sorcery?"

A few versts from this monastery, in a deep desert, stood another monastery. The malicious brethren, writing a letter secretly from their own abbot addressed to that monastery, came late in the evening to the cell of the blessed Theodora and said to her:

"Brother Theodore, the abbot orders you to carry this letter quickly to that monastery."

Theodora rose, took the letter, and went at night to the monastery. The malicious brethren did this so that she would be torn to pieces by beasts on the road, for there was an innumerable multitude of beasts[6] there, and therefore no one could pass that way at night. The malicious brethren reasoned among themselves:

6. The Egyptian deserts, like African deserts in general, are especially abundant in fierce lions. The beast of which the narrative speaks further is to be understood as a lion.

"Let us see whether this pious hypocrite, whom the beasts obey, returns unharmed."

When Theodora was walking that way, a huge beast met her and, bowing to her, turned back and went before her, escorting her to the monastery gate. The beast pushed against the gate; the doorkeeper opened it, and St. Theodora went with the letter to the abbot. But since the doorkeeper had not closed the gate, the beast entered the monastery and, seizing the doorkeeper, began to tear him apart.

The doorkeeper cried out:

"Woe, woe, help me!"

Everyone awoke at that cry. Learning what had happened, the saint returned from the abbot's cell and approached the brother being torn by the beast. Seizing the beast by the throat, she freed the doorkeeper and said to the beast:

"How did you dare to attack the image of God and wish to kill it? Die yourself."

And at once the beast fell at the feet of Theodora and expired. The brother who had been torn by the beast she anointed with oil, invoking the name of Christ, made the sign of the Cross over his wounds, and made him whole and unharmed. Seeing the miracle that had taken place, all bowed to the blessed one and glorified God, who had subjected wild beasts to His servant Theodora. Being dismissed from that monastery, Theodora returned very early to her own monastery, and upon arriving told no one where she had been or what she had done.

On the following day the monks came to that monastery with some offering, and having related what had happened to the abbot and all the brethren, they bowed to the abbot, giving thanks that his disciple Theodore had delivered the doorkeeper from the beast's teeth, healed him of his wounds, and killed the beast itself. Hearing this, the abbot and all the monks greatly marveled. Having dismissed the visiting brethren, the abbot gathered all the monks and asked them:

"Who sent Brother Theodore to that monastery?"

All denied it, saying:

"We do not know."

The abbot also asked Theodora, saying:

"Brother, who sent you to that monastery at night?"

Not wishing to reveal her malicious brethren who had sent her, Theodora said to the abbot:

"Forgive me, Father! I dozed off in my cell and do not remember who came and commanded me in your name to carry the letter quickly to that abbot. I went, fulfilling the obedience."

Then the malicious brethren, recognizing the grace of God in the blessed Theodora, began to repent of their malice, and falling before her, asked forgiveness. She, being without malice, was in no way angry with them for it, and did not even tell anyone about them; on the contrary, she humbled herself as a sinner unworthy of the love of the brethren.

Once, while Theodora was performing her obedience, a demon appeared to her, saying with wrath:

"You, filthy adulteress, who abandoned your husband, have you come here to arm yourself against me? I will use all my power to compel you to renounce not only the monastic life but also faith in the Crucified, and to flee from this place! And do not think that I am not here, for I will not leave you in peace until I entangle your feet in a snare and cast you into a pit you do not expect."

But Theodora, making the sign of the Cross over herself, said:

"May God crush your power, devil!"

And the demon became invisible.

Some time later the blessed Theodora was again sent with camels to the city of Alexandria to buy wheat for the needs of the monastery.

Dismissing her on her way, the abbot said:

"If, child, you are delayed on the road, turn aside to the monastery of Enat and spend the night there with the camels." (For there was a monastery on the way, near the city, called "Enat"[7].)

Setting out, Theodora was indeed delayed on the road, and in accordance with the abbot's command she came to the monastery of Enat. Bowing to the abbot of that house, she asked his blessing to let the camels rest until the day should come. The abbot gave her a place in

7. Probably right near the city itself; indeed, as the Greek name of the monastery shows, at a distance of one verst.

the guest-house where there was a pen for the camels. At that time there was staying in the guest-house a daughter of that abbot, a woman no longer young, who had come to bow before her father and visit him. Seeing the young monk (that is, the blessed Theodora), the girl, at the instigation of the devil, conceived a desire for him. She came by night to Theodora, who was sleeping beside the camels, and, not knowing that this was a woman, began shamelessly to importune her and to entice her into sin. But Theodora said:

"Depart from me, sister, for I am not accustomed to such a thing; moreover, I have an evil spirit within me, and I fear lest it kill you."

Withdrawing in shame, the girl found another guest, with whom she committed lawlessness and conceived in her womb. Meanwhile Theodora, when day came, went into the city, and having fulfilled her obedience returned to her monastery and continued her labors for her salvation. After six months it became evident that the girl was with child, and her family began to beat her and to question her: who had made her thus? She, at the instigation of the devil, accused the blessed Theodora, saying:

"The monk Theodore of the Octodecatum, going into the city with the camels, lodged in the guest-house; in the night he came to me, and I conceived by him."

Hearing this, her father, the abbot of Enat, sent his monks to the monastery of Octodecatum with a complaint to its abbot that his monk had dishonored the girl.

The abbot, summoning Theodora, asked her:

"Do you hear what these people say about you, telling that you dishonored the girl and that she is now with child?"

Theodora answered:

"Forgive me, father, but God is my witness that I am innocent of this."

The abbot, knowing the pure, angel-like life of Brother Theodore, did not believe what the monks of Enat related about him. But when that girl gave birth to a son, the monks of Enat came to the monastery of Octodecatum and left the child in the midst of the monastery, reproaching the brethren who lived there and saying:

"Raise your infant!"

Then the abbot, seeing the infant, believed that it had indeed been as they related, and was greatly angered against Theodora, who was innocent in soul and body. Gathering the brotherhood and summoning Theodora, he asked her:

"Tell us, wretch, was this your doing? You have brought dishonor upon our monastery and shame upon our monastic order! You have not feared God. We counted you as it were an angel, and you have proved to be an accomplice of demons. Confess, then, your lawlessness."

The blessed Theodora, marveling at the misfortune that had befallen her, said with humility:

"Forgive me, holy fathers, I am a sinner!"

After conferring among themselves, the monks expelled her from the monastery with dishonor and blows, giving her the infant. So great was the wondrous patience of the blessed one! With a single word she could have proved her innocence, but, not wishing to reveal the secret that she was a woman, she took upon herself another's sin, as a recompense for her former transgression. Taking the infant, she sat down at the monastery gates, weeping like Adam cast out of Paradise. Opposite the monastery she built for the infant a small hut, and, begging milk from the shepherds, she nourished the child with it for seven whole years; she herself endured hunger and thirst, nakedness, cold and heat, drinking sea water and feeding on wild herbs.

Unable to bear such patience, the devil devised to beguile Theodora in another way. He took the form of her husband, and entering the hut where she sat with the infant, said:

"Are you here, my lady? For so many years I have labored, seeking you with tears, and you do not think of me at all, my lady? Do you not know that for your sake I left father and mother, and you have cast me off? Who persuaded you to come to this place? Where is the color of your face? Why have you so wasted yourself? Come, then, my beloved, let us go to our house. For if you wish, you may keep chastity at home too: I will not hinder you. Remember my love, my lady, and come with me to our house."

The blessed one did not recognize that it was a demon, but thought that it was indeed her husband, and said to him:

"I cannot return to you in the world, from which I fled because of my sin; I fear that I may fall into greater sins."

When she raised her hand in prayer with the sign of the cross, the demon at once became invisible. Then the blessed one knew that it had been the devil, and said:

"You nearly beguiled me, devil."

She repented that she had entered into converse with the devil, and from that time she guarded herself more carefully against the snares of demons. But the devil did not cease to arm himself against Theodora. He gathered a multitude of demons, who, taking the forms of various beasts, attacked her, crying with human voices:

"Let us tear this adulteress to pieces!"

But Theodora, crossing herself, said: "They surrounded me, they encircled me, but in the name of the Lord I overcame them" (Ps. 117:11), and the demons immediately vanished. Then the devil, wishing to beguile her by love of money, showed her a multitude of gold and men gathering it; but this too vanished at the sign of the cross.

Then the devil took the form of a prince; and a multitude of horsemen, going before him, passed by Theodora's hut and cried:

"The prince is coming, the prince is coming!"

Then they said to Theodora:

"Bow down to the prince."

She answered:

"I bow down to the one God."

Then they, dragging her out of the hut, forcibly led her to the prince of darkness (God permitted them to lay hands on the saint, that she might be tested "as gold in the furnace" (Ps. 3:6)), and compelled her to bow down to him. But she would not, saying:

"I worship my Lord God and serve Him alone."

Then the demons began to beat her without mercy, and leaving her barely alive, they departed. The shepherds, coming to Theodora, found her lying as one dead, and thinking that she had died, carried her into

the hut and laid her there. They reported this also in the monastery, saying:

"Your monk Theodore is dead; take his body and bury it."

The abbot with the brotherhood came to Theodora's hut, and noticing that her soul was still in her, said:

"Leave him, for he will live."

And they returned to the monastery. Theodora, coming to herself at midnight, began to weep and beat her breast, crying out:

"Woe is me, sinner, woe is me, helpless! Oh, how God chastises me for my sins!"

And, raising her hands to heaven, she cried out with a loud voice:

"O merciful God, deliver me from the hand of the devil and forgive my transgressions!"

The shepherds who had spent the night near that place, hearing that the blessed Theodora, whom they had thought dead, was praying, marveled that she was still alive, and glorified God.

After this the abbot ordered that the infant be taken from her into the monastery, at which Theodora greatly rejoiced, for she was freed from the labor and care of raising the child. She herself continued to wander in the desert. Her body was blackened by cold and heat, her eyes dimmed from bitter tears, and she lived among wild beasts, which, like sheep, obeyed her and were gentle.

Once again the devil made an attempt upon her. Seeing her sorely hungry, he appeared to her in the form of a soldier bringing good food, and said:

"The prince who beat you now repents of it and has sent you this food, asking you to forgive him and to accept it from him."

Theodora, recognizing the demonic deceit, crossed herself and said:

"May God destroy and bring to nothing your cunning, enemy! God is my helper, and you will not beguile me."

From that time the devil ceased to tempt her.

After seven years of such laborious life, Theodora was pitied by the monks, who came to the abbot, saying:

"Have mercy, father, on Brother Theodore, for he has already accomplished repentance for his sin; forgive him and receive him into the monastery."

The abbot answered:

"Brother Theodore, God has forgiven you the sin you committed. Live with us in the monastery and labor; go out of the monastery no more, lest the devil again cast you into temptation; bring up your son as well, that he may be a zealous follower of your deeds."

And the abbot gave her a cell, freeing her from all monastic labors, that she might pray to God in peace and rest after such great toils. And Theodora lived in that cell for two years with her supposed son Theodore, teaching him letters and the fear of God, and also humility, obedience and the other monastic virtues.

In one summer there was a great drought, so that the wells in the monastery dried up and the lakes were exhausted. Then the abbot said to some of the brethren:

"No one else can entreat God to give us water but Father Theodore, for he is filled with the great grace of God."

Summoning the blessed one, the abbot said:

"Father Theodore, take a vessel and draw us water from the well."

The well was dry and did not have a single drop of water.

"Bless, father!" said Theodora, and went to the well.

Lowering the vessel into the well, she filled it with pure water and brought it to the abbot and the brotherhood; seeing this, all marveled. They at once went to the well, in which the water had long since dried up, and looking in, saw that it was full of water, and they glorified God. And there was enough of that water for every monastic need, until rain fell and filled with water all the reservoirs that had dried up.

The blessed Theodora, being humble in spirit, said to the brethren:

"It was not for my sake that this came to pass, but for the sake of our abbot who sent me, who has a firm, unshaken faith in God; and I only did what I was commanded, relying on the prayers of our father."

Theodora continued to live in her cell, praying to God and bringing up the son who was not her own.

One evening, taking the boy with her in full view of everyone, Theodora shut herself in her cell with him and began to instruct him. The abbot, moved by God, sent some of the brethren to listen unobserved at the cell, to hear what she was speaking about with her boy. Theodora, pressing the boy to her breast and embracing him, kissed him, saying:

"My beloved son! My time has come, my end has arrived, and I am departing from you. Do not weep for me, and do not say to yourself, 'I am an orphan,' for you have a Father in God, who covers you with His grace, and to Him I too (if I obtain boldness before Him) shall pray for you. Hear my last words and fix them in your heart: love God above every creature and above yourself, cleave to Him with all your heart, and never cease to glorify Him and to pray to Him with lips and heart, with tongue and mind. Never abandon the common rule, but go to church with the other brethren at the hours: the first, third, sixth and ninth, at Vespers, the Midnight Office and Matins. Let all your prayers be joined with contrition of heart, with tears and sighing. Weep before God every day, that you may be made worthy of eternal consolation. Obey the abbot and the brethren, renounce your own will, and keep guilelessness from now until the end of your life. Set a guard over your mouth with silence; take care not to condemn anyone, nor to make sport of another's sin, but when you see someone sinning, pray for him to the One sinless God, that He may correct him, and deliver you from falls and the temptations of the enemy. Say nothing idle, nothing foul, nothing blasphemous, lest such a word come from your mouth for which you would have to give an answer on the day of judgment. Be meek and humble of heart, regard everyone as your fathers and benefactors, and count yourself lower than all. If you hear that any of the brethren is ill, do not hesitate to visit him and serve him with zeal, and perform every obedience laid upon you without murmuring. Love poverty and non-possession as a most precious treasure. Remember my life, how I wandered with you: what did I gain in my hut outside the monastery wall? Food or clothing? Utensils or some treasure? Nothing but God. For what is more important to a man than God and His divine love? He is our treasure, He is our riches, He is our food and drink, He

is our clothing and covering, He is our health and strength, He is our joy and gladness, He is our hope and expectation. Strive to acquire Him, my son. If you acquire Him, you have enough, and you will rejoice in Him more than if you had gained the whole world. Strive to keep your purity: as you are now pure in body and soul, so remain until the end of your life. Guard yourself, my child, that you not offend the Spirit of God and drive Him from you through love of pleasure and self-indulgence. Mortify your members, and give no rest or indulgence to your body: like a stubborn donkey, subdue it with hunger, thirst, labor and wounds, until you present your soul to Christ as a pure bride. Guard yourself carefully from the snares of the demons, be sober and watchful, for the devil does not sleep, seeking to devour everyone who serves God. From this enemy may the help of God defend you! Also, my child, make remembrance of me as well, that I may find mercy before the righteous Judge, who will judge not only open sins but also secret ones, and to whom I now depart."

The boy, being wise, said:

"Can it be, my father, that you are leaving me and leaving me an orphan? What shall I do without you? Woe is me, poor boy! Woe is me, an orphan, that I am losing you, my good father!"

Theodora, comforting him, said:

"Did I not tell you not to call yourself an orphan, since you have God as your keeper, who cares for you? He will be your father and mother, teacher and instructor, protector and guide to salvation."

After this Theodora rose and, with tears, began to pray, saying:

"O God, who knowest my sins and my repentance! Thou knowest the sorrow of my heart, Thou knowest how I unceasingly grieved that I had angered Thee, O Lord! Thou knowest the labors by which I subdued my sinful body, because I dared to commit iniquity and to grieve Thy goodness. Thou knowest the sorrow of my soul, knowest that my soul, from the time I recognized my sin, has never ceased to lament and to grieve bitterly that I angered Thee. Therefore, hear now my groaning, attend to my prayer, see my heart melting like wax, try it, look upon my tears, and have mercy on my wretched soul! Forgive my iniquities, pardon my sins, remember not my evil deeds: 'According to

Thy mercy remember Thou me, for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord' (Ps. 24:7). Accept my repentance, accept my prayer and weeping, and accept my soul also!"

She prayed thus for a long time, and not everything she said could be heard: only her weeping and the beating of her breast were audible. The boy wept with her, sobbing over his orphanhood. She comforted him again and prayed once more. At last she said with joy:

"I thank Thee, my most merciful Creator, that Thou hast heard and pitied me, and delivered my soul from death and my eyes from tears."

Having spoken other words of thanksgiving and rejoicing in spirit, Theodora fell silent. One might have thought she had given up her holy soul into the hands of her Lord, for her words were no longer heard, only the boy's weeping. At that hour the bell was rung for Matins. The monks, who had heard everything Theodora said, went to the abbot and told him all. The abbot, having heard their account, began to speak with tears:

"My children, this night I saw a vision: two radiant men appeared and led me up to the heights of heaven, and from there a voice came to me, saying: 'Come and see what blessings I have prepared for My bride Theodora.' And I saw a radiant paradise, whose beauty and splendor cannot be described. The men who appeared, leading me within paradise, showed me its mansions, and in it a golden couch prepared, and an Angel stood beside it guarding it. I asked those who led me: 'For whom are this mansion and this couch prepared?' And they said to me: 'Wait a little, and you will see the glory of God.' Soon I saw the orders of Angels, of martyrs and of venerable ones, coming with sweet singing, whose sweetness cannot be told; in their midst I saw a beautiful woman in great glory. Having been brought into the mansion, she was seated on the couch, while sweetest songs were sung; and I bowed down in reverence before that honorable woman. And the Angel said to me: 'Do you know who this is?' I answered: 'I do not know, my lord.' He said to me: 'This is your monk, Theodore; by nature he was a woman, and only in appearance a man. Having lived for a little time in marriage, Theodora left the world for God's sake and labored in your monastery; and, being slandered for the maiden who bore a child, she did not reveal

that she was a woman, but as though she were the real father she received the infant and raised him. Then, being cast out of your monastery, she suffered much, feeding on grass and sea water, enduring cold, heat and poverty, and bearing many afflictions from the demons. For all this the merciful God has so glorified her, for He loved her as His bride and made her an heir of His Kingdom with all the saints.' Hearing this, I began to weep, because I did not know this mystery, and, believing a lie, I wronged the saint by casting her out of the monastery in disgrace; in the midst of my weeping I awoke. So now, my children, my heart is filled with joy and sorrow. I rejoice that I was made worthy to see this most glorious vision, which the human eye has not seen, and to hear the sweetest sounds of holy songs, which the ear has not heard; but I grieve and weep that we did not know the servant of God and His beloved bride living among us, and, not knowing, wronged her for a long time."

After this the abbot, gathering the brethren, went to the cell of the blessed Theodora, and knocking at the door said:

"Father Theodore, bless!"

But there was no answer, for Theodora had already departed to the Lord. The boy, weeping over her, had fallen asleep, and they could barely wake him. Entering the cell, the brethren saw the blessed Theodora lying on the ground; her hands were folded on her breast and her eyes closed, and her face shone with beauty like the face of an Angel. When they began to prepare her honorable body for burial, the abbot opened her breast, wasted from long fasting, and everyone learned that it had been a woman. The abbot commanded the brethren to reveal this mystery to no one until those who had slandered the venerable one for the dishonor of the maiden were summoned; and he sent the brethren to the abbot of Enat, saying:

"We beg your love, Father: come to us with your brethren, for today we have a great feast, and we wish you to celebrate with us."

The abbot of Enat came with his monks, and they led him to the holy body of the blessed Theodora, saying:

"Father, your daughter's husband has died."

Having shown him the body of the venerable one, they asked:

"Is this not Theodore?"

And the abbot of Enat said:

"Indeed, it is he."

They asked also the monks who had come with him, saying:

"Do you know him?"

They said:

"We know him well: this is the deceitful brother Theodore, who defiled the maiden. May God repay him according to his deeds!"

Then the abbot of Octodecatum opened her breast and, showing her female breasts, said:

Is this a man's body? Yes. Fathers, we were mistaken: we thought it was a man, but in truth it was a woman; having changed her outward appearance and taken a man's name, she lived like an angel among us sinners, who knew nothing of this mystery, and endured many afflictions from us. Now her death has shown what she was and what she is, for she is righteous and venerable and well-pleasing to Christ our God, for I have seen her rejoicing in the heavenly chamber, in glory and great light, with the choirs of the Angels and with all the saints.

Then all who were present were struck with fear and marveled at this great mystery; and those who had slandered her with a sin of which she was innocent were deeply ashamed, and all wept much, crying out:

"Woe to us, that we so long dishonored the servant of God!"

And, falling down before her holy relics, they said with tears:

"Forgive us, servant of God, that in our ignorance we sinned against you!"

After this an Angel of God appeared to the abbot of Octodecatum, saying:

"Take a horse and set out for the city, and whomever you meet first, take and bring him here."

The abbot set out at once, and seeing a man coming toward him on the road, he asked him:

"Where are you going?"

He answered:

"I have heard that my wife has died in some monastery, and I am going to see her."

The abbot took the man with him, set him on his horse, returned to the monastery, and brought him to the holy body of the venerable woman. When he saw Theodora, her husband began to weep bitterly and inconsolably before her relics. The countless host of monks living around the Octodecatos monastery, having heard of everything that had happened, gathered with candles and censers, and having prepared the holy body of the venerable Theodora, buried her with honor in the monastery where she had labored well. And they celebrated brightly for many days, glorifying Christ God and extolling His beloved bride, the venerable Theodora. Her husband, after her burial, asked for the cell in which his wife, or rather, the bride of Christ, had lived, and having been tonsured a monk, he labored in it in fasting, prayer and tears, remembering the ascetic deeds of the venerable Theodora, and after a short time he departed to the Lord. And the youth Theodore, whom the venerable woman had as a son in place of her own, inherited the disposition, the ascetic labors and the entire virtuous life of his supposed father, or rather, of his mother, the venerable Theodora. He attained such perfection that after the death of the abbot he was chosen by all the monks to take his place; he was a good father, guiding his children on the path of salvation, and he himself walked the same path in the footsteps of the venerable Theodora and was settled with her in the heavenly dwellings.

By the prayers of Thy saints, O Lord, deprive us not of Thy heavenly Kingdom. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having wearied thy body with fasting, with vigilant prayers to the Creator thou didst entreat for thy sin, that thou mightest receive full forgiveness; and thou didst receive remission, having shown the path of repentance.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Euphrosynus

Память преподобного Евфросина

The Venerable Euphrosynus[8] was born of humble parents, but by his virtues he surpassed even those of noble birth. Many, though of illustrious lineage, possess no virtues, and therefore fall into the depths of hell. On the contrary, people of lowly origin, by their beneficent humility, are often raised up into the paradise of God. So also this Venerable Euphrosynus was seen in a vision standing in paradise, which he inherited by his holy life.

In the monastery Euphrosynus served the brethren in the kitchen, and he served not as to men but as to God, in great humility and obedience. Laboring day and night in his obedience, he never abandoned prayer and fasting. His patience was wondrous, for he endured great vexations, reproaches, insults and frequent affronts. Kindling material fire in the kitchen, he was himself inflamed with the spiritual fire of love for God, and his heart burned toward Him. Preparing food for the brethren, by his virtuous life he prepared for himself a table in the Kingdom of God, that he might be satisfied there with heavenly bliss together with those of whom it is said: "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God" (Lk. 14:15). He served the Lord in secret, that it might be repaid to him openly, as indeed it was fulfilled.

Thus did the Lord show what His servant Euphrosynus had merited.

A certain priest who lived in the same monastery with Euphrosynus always prayed God to show him in a sensible form those future blessings prepared for those who love Him. And one night he had such a vision: it seemed to him that he stood in paradise, beholding with fear and joy its unspeakable beauty; there he saw Euphrosynus, the cook of his monastery.

Approaching him, the priest asked:

"Brother Euphrosynus, what is this? Is it indeed paradise?"

Euphrosynus answered:

8. He lived and labored in the ninth century in the lands of the Amorites, in Palestine, near the Jordan.

"Yes, Father, this is paradise."

The priest asked him again:

"And how are you here?"

Euphrosynus answered:

"By the great mercy of God I have been settled here to dwell, for this is the abode of God's chosen ones."

The priest asked:

"Have you any authority over these beauties?"

Euphrosynus answered:

"As far as I can, I give of what you see."

The priest said:

"Can you not give me also something of these blessings?"

Euphrosynus answered:

"By the grace of my God, take whatever you wish."

Then the priest, pointing with his hand to the apples, asked for them. Euphrosynus, plucking three apples, put them in the priest's handkerchief, saying:

"Take what you asked for, and enjoy it."

At this time they began to strike the church signal for Matins. The priest, awakening and coming to himself, took what he had seen for a dream, but stretching out his hand to his handkerchief, he found in it those apples which he had received from Euphrosynus in the vision, and he perceived from them an unspeakable fragrance, and was therefore amazed. Rising from his bed and laying the apples upon it, he went to the church and saw Euphrosynus standing at the morning service. Approaching him, the priest earnestly besought him with an oath to reveal to him where he had been that night.

Euphrosynus answered:

"Forgive me, Father, that tonight I was where you saw me."

The priest said:

"That is why I adjured you to declare the works of God, that you might not conceal the truth."

Then the humble Euphrosynus said:

"You, Father, asked the Lord to show you in a sensible form the rewards of His chosen ones, and the Lord was pleased to show your rev-

erence this through me, a worthless and unworthy one, and so you have seen me in the paradise of my God."

The priest asked:

"And what did you give me, Father, in paradise, when I asked you?"

Euphrosynus answered:

"I gave you three apples, the very ones you laid on your bed in your cell; but forgive me, Father, for I am a worm and not a man."

At the conclusion of Matins the priest gathered the brethren and, showing them the three apples of paradise, related in detail what he had seen. Then all perceived from those apples an unspeakable fragrance and spiritual joy, and in tenderness they marveled at what the priest had told. They went to the kitchen to Euphrosynus, that they might bow down to the servant of God, but they no longer found him, for he had left the church and hidden himself, fleeing human glory, and they could in no way find him. As to where precisely he had hidden, there is no need to inquire much: for if paradise had been opened to him, where else could he have gone? The brethren divided those apples among themselves and gave them to many for a blessing, and especially for healing, for the sick who partook of them were cured of their illnesses. And all received much benefit from this gift of St. Euphrosynus, and, preserving the wondrous vision described not only on paper but in their hearts, they strove toward great labors and were well-pleasing to God.

By the prayers of the Venerable Euphrosynus may the Lord grant us also to be counted worthy of the paradisal abodes! Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Ia

Память святой мученицы Ии

The holy martyr Ia was from the city of Vizad;[9] together with 9,000 Christians she was taken captive by the Persian king Shapur.[10] For confessing Christ she was brought to trial before the chief of the magi, who sought to compel her to renounce Christ. But

9. Vizad was a city in the main province of the Persian kingdom.

she did not yield to his persuasions and remained steadfast in the true faith. For this she was cast into prison and starved for a whole year. Then she was led out of confinement and beaten severely with knotted staves, after which she was taken back to prison, where she remained fifteen years. After this time had passed, she was brought out again and her knees, thighs and arms were bound so tightly with cords that her bones were broken. Then they began to beat her on the loins and on the belly with straps of rawhide, and at last they struck off her head.[11]

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Diodorus and Didymus

Память святых мучеников Диодора и Дидима

These holy martyrs were from Laodicea in Syria. Confessing the faith of Christ, they taught the pagans about Christ and converted and baptized many of them. For this they were brought to trial before the governor of Laodicea, and here they boldly confessed Christ. They were subjected to terrible torments, but they did not renounce Christ; they fearlessly rebuked the deceit of idolatry and reproached the governor for abandoning the true God and worshipping false gods. With prayer on their lips they surrendered their souls to the Lord amid the torments.

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10. Shapur II, known as "the Great," was a Persian king who reigned from 310 to 381 A.D. He is known for his successful wars against the Romans, and he was a cruel persecutor of Christianity.

11. The martyric death of St. Ia belongs to the years 362–384.

THE TWELFTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 12

12 сентября

New Calendar September 12 · Old Calendar September 25 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Autonomus

Житие и страдание святого священномученика Автонома

Saint Autonomus was a bishop in Italy in the reign of Diocletian. When a cruel persecution of Christians arose, Autonomus remembered the words of the Lord spoken in the Holy Gospel: "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another" (Mt. 10:23). Leaving Italy, he removed to Bithynia, where by the will of God he settled in a village called Soreos.[1] Here Saint Autonomus was received by a certain hospitable man, Cornelius. He lived with him for a fairly long time, and preaching Christ, he converted many pagans to the Christian faith. He won a great many souls to God here, for a multitude of people gathered in the house of Cornelius to hear the teaching of Saint Autonomus. He, like the Apostles, preached the Word of God with boldness, for in him acted the same Holy Spirit who once descended upon the holy Apostles in tongues of fire. Through the preaching of Autonomus the Holy Spirit kindled human hearts with love of God and piety, so that those who heard his teaching were moved and gladly received his preaching, asking him for holy baptism. And in that region he brought so many people to the holy faith that the house of Cornelius could no longer hold the whole assembly of believers. Then Saint Autonomus built a church for the Christians in the name of the commander of the heavenly hosts, the holy Archangel Michael, placing under his protection all whom he had newly enlightened; and he himself, having ordained Cornelius a deacon and entrusted to him the rational

1. Bithynia was a region in Asia Minor. The Soreos, or Soreae, lay on the right hand of ships entering the Gulf of Nicomedia or Astacus.

flock of Christ, went into Lycaonia and Isauria,[2] desiring to be a preacher of piety there also.

Having labored in these lands in the preaching of the Word of God for a fairly long time, Saint Autonomus again returned to Cornelius, for he wished to visit the flock of Christ that he had acquired. He appointed Cornelius a presbyter, and together with him began to serve the salvation of the human race.

When the impious emperor Diocletian arrived at Nicomedia with the aim of destroying all the followers of Christ who were there, the idolaters began to search also for Saint Autonomus, as the best known of the Christians. But the hierarch, desiring to lead still more people from the darkness of demons to the light of the knowledge of the true God, did not deliver himself into the hands of the tormentors. Preserving himself for the good of the Church, Saint Autonomus sailed to Claudiopolis, which stood on the shore of the Euxine Sea,[3] where he sowed the seeds of the Word of God, which, falling upon the good soil of human hearts, soon by the grace of God brought forth many spiritual fruits. Having there duly set in order all that pertained to piety and instructed the believers on the way of salvation, Saint Autonomus again returned to Soreos.

Seeing that the number of believers there had increased still more, the saint appointed Cornelius a bishop, and himself set out for the land of Asia,[4] where he began to root out the thorns of godlessness and to spread the holy faith in the One God. And here, by the grace of God, he delivered many from error and eternal perdition, overthrowing by his preaching the altars of the idols and building in human hearts spiritual temples for the Holy Spirit.

Soon Saint Autonomus again visited Cornelius and the flock entrusted to him. Seeing that all were here being instructed in the law of God

2. Lycaonia was a region of Asia Minor, adjoining Isauria, also an Asia Minor region, with a city of the same name. Isauria at various times belonged to Phrygia, to Pisidia, and to Lycaonia.

3. The Euxine Sea, or Pontus, is the ancient name of the Black Sea, which according to tradition was earlier called "Axinian," that is, inhospitable, on account of its storms; but when its shores, beginning in the seventh century, came to be covered with Greek colonies, it began to be called "Euxine," that is, hospitable.

and making progress in virtues, Autonomus was consoled by this and gave thanks to God that his labors had not been in vain, and that his spiritual children, whom he had begotten by the Gospel, had multiplied.

Near the city of Soreos there was a village named Limna; its inhabitants were still darkened by the gloom of idol-worship. And so, going to them, Saint Autonomus began to preach Christ to them, and having converted many of them to Christianity, he taught them the mysteries of the holy faith, enlightened them with baptism, and thereby joined them to the chosen flock of Christ.

Once the local inhabitants who had remained in unbelief were celebrating a festival of one of their vile idols, and offering sacrifice to demons, they rejoiced in their idol-temple. Then the Christians, who by that time were already numerous, gathered and came to the feasting pagans, overthrew their altars and smashed all the idols, and they utterly destroyed their temple. By this they showed the unbelievers that their gods were worthless, for they could not resist when they were broken, and did not cry out when they were smashed.

The pagans, enraged at the Christians for such a grievous humiliation, resolved to avenge the destruction of their idols and began to wait for a suitable time for this.

Once they learned the day on which the servant of the Lord, Autonomus, was to offer the bloodless sacrifice to God in the church of the archangel Michael that he had built in the city of Soreos, they gathered from Limna together with pagans from the other neighboring villages in countless numbers, and secretly prepared to fall suddenly upon the house of God and kill the shepherd of the Christians, Saint Autonomus, which they succeeded in doing.

During the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the pagans fell upon the church in great numbers: some held weapons in their hands, others clubs or stones; they drove out of the church all the Christians who were there, and inhumanly slew Saint Autonomus: they tortured him in the sanctuary, so that it was entirely stained with his holy blood. Thus,

4. Asia was a Roman province comprising the western part of Asia Minor, otherwise called "Proconsular Asia."

while offering the bloodless sacrifice, the hierarch himself was offered as a bloody sacrifice upon the altar of the heavens above.[5]

Having slain Saint Autonomus, the pagans heaped upon him a multitude of stones, with which they had killed him. Having celebrated a triumph in honor of having avenged themselves upon the Christians for the insult to their gods, they all dispersed. And the hierarch lay slain, and there was then great confusion in the church and inconsolable weeping of the believers because of the murder of their father and good shepherd. But a certain deaconess named Mary, taking the holy body of the hieromartyr, with reverence committed it to burial.

Many years after the burial of Saint Autonomus, at the time when Constantine the Great ascended the throne, a certain nobleman named Severian was sent by the emperor to Alexandria. Fearing the rough sea, he traveled not by sea but overland along the shore. By the providence of God it happened that their way lay past the place where the body of the hieromartyr Autonomus was lying; and suddenly the horses all stopped at once and could by no means proceed further. However they were beaten with whips, not one of them could be moved from its place; they were relieved of the burdens they were drawing, but even then they could not continue the journey, as though some invisible hand held them back; and Severian was greatly perplexed.

With Severian rode a certain pious man, who had been endowed with the gift of discerning the mysteries of God. He said to Severian:

"You should build a church in this place to the martyr whose body is buried here; and if you vow to do this, you will see that your horses will quickly go on."

Severian gladly promised to do this, and his horses did indeed immediately start forward and ran swiftly. Severian, before his return from Alexandria, built a small house of prayer on that place in honor of the holy martyr; and on his return he erected over the tomb a beautiful church.

Many years later, a certain priest, not knowing that beneath the earth of this church lay the holy relics of Saint Autonomus, dismantled

5. The repose of the Hieromartyr Autonomus took place about 312, shortly after the persecution of Diocletian.

it because of its dilapidation, and built a new one in another place, near the sea.[6] The place where the saint's relics had lain hidden under the earth remained empty for sixty years, until the death of the Byzantine emperor Zeno,[7] and no one knew of that precious treasure which was concealed in the depths of the earth. At that time one of the imperial bodyguards, named John, who was in the aforementioned regions, in the cities of Soreos and Limna, carrying out a certain imperial command, once went hunting; and it happened that on that very place where a church had once stood over the relics of the saint, he saw a hare, and drawing his bow and loosing an arrow, he killed it; having killed many other animals as well, he returned home. But at night, when he was already asleep on his bed, the hieromartyr Autonomus appeared to him in a dream and commanded him to build a church on the very place where he had killed the hare the day before. John, awaking, resolved to apply all his effort to fulfill what had been commanded him, and in a short time he built a wondrous church in the name of the hieromartyr Autonomus; and he found the saint's relics in the earth whole and wholly incorrupt, and from them many miracles began to take place, and many sick people received healing here.

Concerning the very uncovering of the relics of Saint Autonomus, the blessed Symeon Metaphrastes[8] speaks thus:

"Seeing the glorious ascetic who overcame the properties of human nature, I stood up to glorify God; and behold, once when I looked with my eyes into the tomb of the holy martyr Autonomus, I saw that his holy relics remain unconquered by the power of death. Death, which boasts that it destroys within three days the whole composition of a living being, could not, over so many years, destroy a single hair of this glorious man. His head and hair were unharmed, his face whole, his

6. This was about 430; the uncovering of the incorrupt relics of St. Autonomus took place some 60 years later.

7. The Byzantine Emperor Zeno reigned from 474 to 491.

8. Symeon Metaphrastes was a well-known church writer of the tenth century (d. 940), compiler and collector of the Lives of the Saints; his labours in this field later served as the main source for the Menaion of St. Demetrius of Rostov. Metaphrastes here repeats the testimony of another person, who lived 200 years after the death of St. Autonomus and who calls himself a contemporary of the Emperor Justin (518–527).

skin firm; not one of the hairs of his eyelashes had decayed; only his eyes were closed. And as I gazed upon him, it seemed to me that death had only caused him to keep silence, and preserved all his body and all his members whole: nothing had fallen from his head, nothing had been separated from the other parts of his body. Thus the Lord glorifies those who glorify Him in their holy bodies. To Him belong all glory, honor and worship, now, always, and unto ages of ages. Amen."

* * *

Commemoration of the Hieromartyr Cornutus, Bishop of Nicomedia

Память священномученика Корнута, епископа Никомидийского

Saint Cornutus the Hieromartyr lived in the vicinity of Nicomedia, in the village of Sataly (Sarsala, Sursana). He was a zealous confessor of the name of Christ. During the persecution of the Christians, the Governor of Iconium[9], Perennius, was sent into that country. When many Christians fled from his persecutions into hidden places, St. Cornutus, already advanced in venerable old age, presented himself to him in person. To the Governor's question as to who he was, the aged hierarch boldly answered: "I am a Christian," and began openly to confess that Christ is the true God, the Creator of all, and to rebuke the deceit of idols. His feet were bound with thin cords and he was dragged through the city streets, while blood flowed in streams from the feet that had been cut by the cords. Amid his tortures the Hieromartyr gave thanks to God. Afterwards, following further torments, he was beheaded with the sword[10].

* * *

Memory of St. Julian the Martyr

Память святого мученика Иулиана

9. Iconium was a city on a high, fertile plain in the interior of Asia Minor, at the foot of the Taurus mountains; it was formerly the principal city of Lycaonia, and is now Konya, the chief city of the Turkish Asia Minor region of Karaman.

10. The martyric death of St. Cornutus took place in the reign of the Roman Emperor Decius (249–251).

In the reign of Diocletian and Maximian, Antoninus was appointed governor of the province of Galatia[11]. He was informed that in a certain cave in a mountain Julian was hiding with 40 other Christians, and that they were performing Christian worship there. When, by the governor's command, he was seized and urged to surrender the other Christians who were with him, he refused. Before presenting himself for judgment, St. Julian cried out in a loud voice, turning towards his companions who remained in the cave:

"Behold, they have already taken me to judgment, and I go to the martyr's struggle for Christ, without having betrayed you! But do you be zealous to follow me in my struggle!"

When St. Julian stood before the governor Antoninus, the latter said to him:

"Draw near to the gods and offer sacrifice to them."

The holy martyr answered him with boldness:

"Your counsel is not pleasing to me; for us Christians there is no better lot than to die for that holy faith in which we have been brought up."

Then the governor commanded that an iron bed be heated, and, stripping the martyr, had him laid upon it. The holy sufferer, brought to that place, signed himself with the sign of the Cross and mounted the heated bed. Then an Angel of the Lord appeared, cooled the flame, and preserved the holy martyr unharmed.

"Who are you?" asked Antoninus of the martyr, "and how is it that you so easily extinguished the fire?"

"I am the servant of God; my name is Julian," answered the holy sufferer. The governor asked him again:

"Who are your parents?"

The martyr answered:

"My mother is an aged woman, and my father has departed to the Lord."

11. Galatia was a small, mountainous but fertile province of Asia Minor, lying between Phrygia, Bithynia, Pontus and Cappadocia. The sufferings and martyric death of St. Julian took place in the very ancient city of Ancyra, now Ankara.

Antoninus commanded that his mother be brought, and, looking at her angrily, said to her:

"Persuade your wicked son to offer incense to the goddess; but if you do not do so, I will hand your body over to outrage."

The valiant mother of the holy martyr answered the governor:

"If against my will they defile my body, this will not only not be counted to me as a fault, but will be for me a pledge of eternal glory and blessed recompense."

The governor, shamed by these words of the aged woman, commanded that she be released, and condemned St. Julian to beheading by the sword. Having reached the place of execution together with the soldiers, the holy martyr asked them for time to pray.

"I give thanks to Thee, O Lord," he prayed, "that Thou hast strengthened me and helped me to remain steadfast even unto the shedding of blood. Grant, O Lord, to those who will take earth from the place of my burial forgiveness of sins and deliverance from passions. And let no corrupting insect come upon their fields: neither locust, nor caterpillars, nor anything else; and likewise let them be delivered from the attack of birds of prey! And receive my spirit in peace!"

And a voice was heard from heaven:

"Christ, the Author of your struggle, has opened to you the gates of His Kingdom. Enter into them, for you have lawfully contended for His Name!"

This voice was heard also by the 40 Christians who had been hidden in the cave. They went to the place of the martyr's suffering, but found him already dead. Before all the soldiers they openly confessed Christ, the true God. Then the soldiers, binding them, led them to the governor, and he commanded that their heads be cut off[12].

* * *

12. The death of St. Julian and with him 40 other martyrs of Christ took place in the first years of the fourth century.

THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 13

13 сентября

New Calendar September 13 · Old Calendar September 26 (civil dates)

A Sermon on the Dedication of the Church of the Resurrection of Christ in Jerusalem[1]

Слово на обновление иерусалимского храма Воскресения Христова

On this day we celebrate the Dedication of the glorious and very great church in Jerusalem—not the one that King Solomon built on Mount Moriah, but the one that the pious Emperor Constantine, together with his most laudable mother Helena, wondrously established on Golgotha, cleansing and renewing the holy place that had been defiled by pagan impiety.

After the voluntary sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, that holy place where our salvation was accomplished was mocked and defiled by the enemies of Christ. The impious Roman emperor Hadrian especially defiled all the holy places with demonic idols and sacrifices. Having built a city on the site of Jerusalem, which had been laid waste by Titus,[2] he commanded that the Lord's Tomb be covered with earth and a multitude of stones, and on the hill where the Lord had been crucified he erected a temple to Venus, the pagan goddess of lewdness, and set up her idol; and over the Lord's Tomb he placed an idol of the god Dii (Jupiter). Thus, where the Lamb of God offered Himself in sacrifice to God the Father for our sins, there impure offerings were made to demons and every kind of abomin-

1. This feast is called the So-called Resurrection, that is, the so-called Resurrection. The name indicates that this is not the Bright Resurrection nor a Sunday, but a special feast which, although it occurs on a day that is not Sunday, is called, or in popular usage is named, "Resurrection," because it belongs to the Church of the Resurrection of Christ.

2. Titus was Roman emperor from 79 to 81 A.D. Jerusalem was conquered by Titus in 70 A.D., during the reign of his father Vespasian.

ation was committed. Likewise, in Bethlehem, where the Most Pure One was born from the womb of the Most Pure Virgin, the impious emperor set up an idol of Adonis,[3] so that this holy place too was defiled by shameful deeds; and where the Temple of Solomon had stood, he built an idolatrous shrine. He named the city itself Aelia after himself, for he bore the name Aelius Hadrianus, and he commanded that no one dare call it Jerusalem. He did all this with the intention of wiping out from the earth the very memory of the name of Jesus Christ. He renamed the city in which Jesus Christ had performed many miracles, and established demonic dwellings on the places of His Nativity, Crucifixion and Burial, with the purpose that the human race of the following generations would utterly forget Christ and never again call to mind the places where the Lord had lived and taught. Yet Hadrian himself perished, and the King of glory again glorified the holy place.

The Lord, having enlightened with the light of holy faith the Emperor Constantine and his mother Helena, put into their hearts the desire to renew the Holy City of Jerusalem—to create, on the very place where the destroyed temple of Christ's body was raised in three days (see Jn. 2:19, 21; Mt. 26:16, 27:40; Mk. 14:58, 15:29), a beautiful house of God, and to cleanse and sanctify all the holy places from demonic defilements. To this end the pious emperor sent his mother with a great quantity of gold to Jerusalem, and wrote to the most holy Patriarch Macarius,[4] that he should apply all his zeal to the building of the church. Saint Helena, upon arriving in Jerusalem, destroyed all the shrines in it, overthrew the idols, and cleansed and sanctified the whole city from pagan defilements. She discovered the Honorable Cross of the Lord and the Tomb, clearing away the earth and stones with which it had been covered, and erected in that place a church so large that a single building enclosed both the site of the Crucifixion and the site of the Burial of Christ, for they were not far from one another, as the evangelist John remarks: "In the place where He was crucified there

3. Adonis was an ancient Greek deity who served as a personification of the sun, dying in winter and rising again in spring. Worship of him was very widespread and was accompanied by sumptuous festivities, with immoral rites and games.

4. Macarius I was Patriarch of Jerusalem from 313 to 333 A.D.

was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid. There they laid Jesus because of the Jewish Day of Preparation, for the tomb was nearby" (Jn. 19:41–42). Thus with one church she enclosed both Golgotha and the Lord's Tomb. This church was called "Martyrion," that is, a witness—a witness precisely to the Resurrection of Christ, since on that place Christ died and rose again.[5] Saint Helena also built other churches: in Bethlehem, on the Mount of Olives,[6] in Gethsemane[7], and at many holy places, and adorned them variously and richly. Yet the church over the Lord's Tomb was more beautiful and greater than all. But the Empress Helena herself did not see the completion of its construction: returning to her son, she fell asleep in the Lord while the church was not yet ready,[8] for it was impossible to build so large and wondrous an edifice in a short time, and it was barely finished within ten years.

When the church was fully completed, the pious emperor commanded that bishops from all lands gather in Jerusalem for the consecration of the temple. A great multitude of hierarchs came here: from Bithynia, Thrace, Cilicia, Cappadocia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Arabia, Palestine, Egypt and the other countries of Africa, and one bishop from Persia; there also gathered an innumerable multitude of people from the whole world, so that not all could fit within the bounds of Jerusalem. The Church of the Resurrection was consecrated on

5. St. Cyril of Jerusalem foresaw also the place of the Resurrection, called Martyrion. For what reason is this place of Golgotha and the Resurrection not called a church, as other churches are, but Martyrion? Probably on the basis of the words of the prophet: "in the day of My resurrection, as a testimony (martyrion)."

6. The Eleonian or Olive Mount is one of the Judean mountains to the east of Jerusalem, from which it is separated by the Kidron valley; it received its name from the multitude of olive trees growing upon it. It is higher than other neighboring mountains, for example Zion and Moriah; from its summit magnificent views open in every direction. From the summit of the Mount of Olives, Jesus Christ ascended into heaven on the fortieth day after His resurrection. The magnificent church built here by Empress Helena was later converted by the Turks into a mosque.

7. Gethsemane is a village or place beyond the Kidron brook, at the foot of the Mount of Olives, where Christ was betrayed by Judas (Mt. 26:36; Jn. 18:1–3). Gethsemane in Russian means "place of olives," or an oil press for extracting juice from olives. The Garden of Gethsemane is still shown at the foot of the Mount of Olives, on its southern side; in the garden they also point out the place of the Lord's prayer before the sufferings of Golgotha, as well as the burial grotto of the Mother of God, where her tomb is now located.

8. The death of Empress Helena followed in 327.

September 13, 335, in the 30th year of the reign of Constantine, when the whole of Jerusalem was also renewed. The holy fathers gathered at this festival, following the example of the Old Testament ordinance, determined that the day of the Dedication of the church should be celebrated forever. For as in the Old Testament Judas Maccabeus, having cleansed the greatest sanctuary—the Holy of Holies—from defilement by Syrian idolatry, ordained that its dedication be celebrated for all time (1 Macc. 4:36–59), of which the Gospel also makes mention: "And it was the Feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem" (Jn. 10:22); so also in the New Testament the equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine, having built as it were a second Holy of Holies, established with the holy fathers that throughout the whole world the Dedication of the great Church of Jerusalem, which is the mother of all churches, should be celebrated.

Therefore now let us celebrate its Dedication, giving thanks to Christ God, who by His sufferings and resurrection renewed the whole creation and cleansed His holy Church from idolatrous defilements. Let us too be renewed, as temples of the Living God, putting off the old man and putting on the new; let us cleanse ourselves from the evils grown old within us, and begin to do good works, walking in a new, pious life. Then—just as men celebrate the Dedication of a temple made with hands—the Angels will celebrate the renewal of our spiritual temple; for over every sinner who is renewed by repentance there is joy in heaven among the Angels, and with them rejoices over him the very Creator of the Angels, who does not desire the death of sinners, Christ our Lord, to Whom be glory forever, Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

As the beauty of the heights of heaven, and the beauty below of the holy dwelling-place of Thy glory, hast Thou shown, O Lord; establish this forever, and receive through the Theotokos the prayers offered unceasingly in it to Thee, O Life and Resurrection of all.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

The Church appeared as a heaven most radiant, illumining all the faithful; in it, standing, we cry: Establish this house, O Lord.

* * *

Life of Hieromartyr Cornelius the Centurion

Житие священномученика Корнилия Сотника

Soon after the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, and after His Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, there settled in Caesarea of Palestine a centurion named Cornelius, a native of Italy in Thrace.[9] Although he dwelt in the darkness of unbelief, he already performed works of light, and, remaining a Gentile, he was like a Christian. He did not know Christ, but unconsciously honored Him by works of mercy. Living in the midst of a corrupt world, he was virtuous, as Saint Luke testifies of him in the Acts: "Now there was a certain man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of the cohort called the Italian cohort"[10] (Acts 10:1). God did not despise such virtues of his, and was pleased to enlighten him with the light of faith and lead him to the knowledge of the truth, so that his good deeds should not be covered by the darkness of unbelief.

Once, while praying to God in his house, this God-fearing man saw an Angel of God, who told him that his prayers and alms had been accepted by God. The Angel commanded him to send to Joppa[11] for Simon, called Peter, and to do whatever he should tell him. He at once sent men with a request to summon Peter. While the messengers of Cornelius were on their way to Joppa, Peter went up onto the roof of the house at the sixth hour[12] to pray. He felt hunger at that time, and there appeared before him a vision urging him not to disdain going to

9. A region of the Roman Empire, to the northeast of Macedonia. At present Thrace is under the name of Romania.

10. Caesarea was a large city in Palestine, on the Mediterranean Sea, where the Roman procurators resided. The Italian cohort was a regiment composed of native Romans.

11. Joppa (in Hebrew meaning "beautiful, elevated place") is the most ancient Phoenician city, which, after the conquest of the Promised Land, fell to the tribe of Dan; it lies on the Mediterranean Sea on a high hill, to the south of the flourishing Plain of Sharon, twelve hours' journey from Jerusalem. This city was at all times a very important port and trading city; today it is Jaffa.

an uncircumcised man of another nation—for the Jews did not enter into fellowship with the Gentiles and held them in disdain. The vision that appeared to Peter was this: from heaven three times there came down a vessel, as it were a large sheet, bound at its four corners, and a voice commanded Peter to slaughter and eat the animals, beasts, reptiles and birds contained in the vessel. When Peter refused, saying that he had never eaten anything unclean, the voice spoke again to him from heaven:

"What God has cleansed, do not call unclean."

This vision was a sign of the conversion of Cornelius and the other pagans. Peter's hunger signified the hunger described by the Prophet Amos: "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but a thirst for hearing the words of the Lord"[13] (Amos 8:11). Such hunger was in the house of Cornelius and among all the pagans: just as Peter desired bread necessary for the body, so they desired bread for the soul. The vessel, bound at its four corners, signified the Church of Christ, established in the faith by the four Evangelists. The various unclean animals, beasts, reptiles, and birds within the vessel represented the pagans, who in their low earthly desires resembled four-footed animals, looking with the eye of their understanding only toward the earth, knowing nothing of heavenly things and unable to seek what is above the earthly; in their ferocity they were beasts, and in their impiety, harmful to souls, they were poisonous reptiles; in their proud arrogance they resembled birds soaring on high. They were commanded to be slain and eaten—that is, with the keen sword of the word of God to put to death the ancient animal lusts and brutish ways of the pagans, and to make of their souls and bodies, cleansed through baptism, "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Rom. 12:1). The vessel's descent three times signified the threefold immersion of baptism. And when the voice from heaven declared that they had been cleansed by God, this signified

12. The Jews would ordinarily withdraw for prayer into the upper chamber, arranged on the roof of the house (a kind of our mezzanine). Peter, however, remained on the roof itself, under the open sky. The sixth hour corresponds to our twelve o'clock noon.
13. That is, the striving to hear the true teaching about God and salvation.

that Christ had shed His blood to wash away the filth of sin, not only for the Israelites, but also for the pagans.

While Peter pondered this vision and was perplexed, the men sent by Cornelius came to his house and asked for him. The Spirit of God commanded him to go with them without hesitation, so that the first pagan might be joined to the Church of Christ; after him, other pagans were also to come to Christ. When Peter entered the house, Cornelius, surrounded by all his relatives and friends, received him with honor and, falling at Peter's feet, bowed down before him. Then Peter raised him up and said:

"You know that it is not proper for a Jew to go among foreigners or to associate with them; nevertheless, God has revealed to me that I should call no one profane or unclean. Therefore I have come to you without hesitation, and now I ask why you summoned me."

Cornelius related to him in every detail how he had seen an Angel and what he had heard from him, and asked Peter to teach him how to attain salvation. Peter, opening his mouth, began to preach to him about Jesus Christ: that He was God in the flesh, lived on earth among men, taught and guided them on the path leading to the Kingdom of Heaven, and wrought many signs and wonders, healing every disease and raising the dead by His word. Peter then told how Christ willingly suffered and died, and afterward rose again in order to free man from suffering and raise him from death, granting him eternal life; that He would judge the living and the dead; that all the Prophets bear witness concerning Him; and that everyone who believes in His name will receive forgiveness of sins. While Peter spoke these things, the Holy Spirit, planting his words in the hearts of those who listened, brought them to faith, and Cornelius was baptized with all his household. He was the first of the pagans to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and, after receiving baptism, left everything and followed Peter, who appointed him bishop. As he traveled through various lands with Peter and the other preachers, he labored zealously, preaching Christ. When Peter, Timothy, and Cornelius were in the city of Ephesus, they learned that idolatry was especially strong in the city of Scepsis[14], and

considered which of them should go there to preach. They cast lots, and the lot fell to Cornelius; calling upon God for help, he hastened to that city. There lived a prince named Demetrius, a philosopher learned in Hellenic wisdom, who greatly hated the Christian faith and honored the pagan gods, above all Apollo and Zeus. When the prince learned that Cornelius had arrived in the city, he immediately summoned him and asked where he had come from and why.

Cornelius replied:

"I am a servant of the Living God, and I have come here as one sent to call you out of the deepest darkness of ignorance, to lead you to the light of truth, and to cast a pure ray of knowledge into your soul."

But the other, understanding nothing of Cornelius's words, grew angry and said furiously:

"I ask you one thing, and you tell me another. I swear by the gods that if you do not answer each of my questions, I will not spare your old age, nor have I any shame for your gray hairs. So tell me: whom do you serve, and why have you come here?"

Cornelius said:

"If you wish to know of my service, know that I am a centurion. When I heard of you—that you, your wife, and all the inhabitants of your province had fallen into great delusion—I came to deliver you from demonic deception, to guide you onto the true path, and to reconcile you with the One Living God, Who created heaven and earth and all that is in them."

To this Demetrius said:

"I see that you are weighed down by age, and I spare you in view of your advanced years. Cease speaking falsely; approach our gods and bow down before them. If you will not do this, know that I shall subject you to grievous torments, and no god but my gods will deliver you from my hands."

"My God," Cornelius answered, "can not only keep me safe and unharmed from every evil and deliver me from the hands of men, but also destroy your gods and shatter their idols to dust, and bring you, who

14. A city in the western Asia Minor province of Mysia.

hope in them in vain, to the knowledge of Him! But I will never bow down to demons and their soulless images. For it is written: 'The gods that have not made heaven and earth shall perish' (Jer. 10:11). And again: 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve' (Mt. 4:10). I have come here to turn you to repentance and that 'they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will' (2 Tim. 2:26)."

Then the prince said:

"I have sworn by my gods that I will not spare you, but will subject you to grievous torments if you do not offer sacrifice to the gods."

"To which gods do you command me to offer sacrifice?" asked Cornelius.

And the prince said:

"Offer sacrifice to Apollo and Zeus."

Cornelius then said:

"Show me these gods of yours."

The prince rejoiced, thinking that Cornelius wished to worship them, and led him to the temple of Zeus.

The people followed them, wishing to see how Cornelius would bow down to the idols. When they came to the temple, they all entered: the prince with Cornelius and the others, among whom were the prince's wife, named Euanthia, and his son, named Demetrian after his father. Entering the idol temple, Cornelius turned to the east[15] and, kneeling upon the ground, prayed thus:

"O God, Who shakest the earth and turnest mountains into the abysses of the sea! By the hand of Daniel Thou didst shatter Bel, slay the dragon, and, having shut the mouths of the lions, preserve Thy servant unharmed (Dan. 14). Now also cast down these idols and grant the people to know Thy mighty arm!"

Having prayed thus, the saint came out of the temple. Prince Demetrius and all the people gathered there came out with him. But Evanthia and Demetrian remained inside the temple. And suddenly there was an earthquake; the temple fell with its idols, and the gods in whom

15. The ancient Christians prayed, turning toward the east, whence the sun rises, which was a symbol of the Sun of Righteousness, Christ.

the pagans had trusted were shattered to dust, while the fallen walls blocked the prince's wife and son from leaving. All the people were terrified as they watched the temple collapse, but the prince did not know that his wife and son had been buried beneath the walls.

Rejoicing in the power of the Living God, Cornelius said to the prince:

"Where now, prince, are your great gods?"

But the other, filled with fury, said:

"Tell us, sorcerer, by what magic have you brought about the fall of our temple and our gods?"

And he began to consult with his attendants about what torments to use to destroy Cornelius.

The day was already drawing toward evening, and the sun was beginning to set, so there was no time left to torture Cornelius. The prince ordered his hands and feet to be bound and him to be hung in this condition in the dungeon, so that he might suffer there hanging all night until morning; in the morning the prince intended to torture him cruelly and put him to death. When the saint had been taken to the dungeon and, by order of the tormentor, hung there with his hands and feet bound, one of the prince's servants, named Talefon, ran to him and said:

"My lord! My mistress and your only son have perished in the temple, which collapsed in the earthquake."

Hearing this, Prince Demetrius tore his garments[16] and wept bitterly. The elders of the city wept with him, while others tried to comfort him. But who could comfort him in such grief, when his heart had just received word of the sudden death of his wife and son?

Then the prince said to his attendants:

"Go, clear away the stones of the fallen temple, find the bones of my beloved wife and my dear son, and bring them to me."

Having said this, he again wept bitterly. Just then, the chief of the priests, Varvat, came hastily to him and said:

"I heard the voices of your wife and son, who cried out from among the fallen walls: 'Great is the God of the Christians: through His ser-

vant Cornelius He has preserved us alive from a terrible death. Ask this holy man to bring us out of here, lest we perish here. For we see the wondrous miracles of his God and hear the voices of Angels singing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"' (Lk. 2:14)."

Hearing this from Varvat, the prince quickly ran with all his attendants to the servant of God in the dungeon and found him walking freely there, for the Angel of the Lord had loosed his bonds. And the prince fell at the feet of Cornelius, saying:

"Great is your God, Cornelius, Who keeps my wife and my son in the fallen temple. Therefore I beg you, servant of the Most High God, come and bring them out of there: I, together with all my attendants, believe in Christ Crucified, whom you preach."

St. Cornelius went with them to the fallen idol temple, and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, said:

"O Lord God of hosts, Who 'looketh on the earth, and it trembleth' (Ps. 103:32), before Whose face the mountains melt and the depths are dried up! Hear, O Lord, the prayers of the imprisoned; bring Euanthia out of the ruins, and turn not Thy face from her son, but hearken unto them for Thy name's sake."

As he prayed thus, there suddenly opened a place between the fallen walls where Euanthia and her son had been enclosed, and both came out from there unharmed, glorifying God. All who were there and saw this most glorious miracle cried out:

"Great is the Christian God!"

Demetrius was baptized together with his wife, his son, and his whole household; with him were also baptized two hundred and seventy-seven other citizens. St. Cornelius lived in that city for a fairly long time, uprooting the thorns of unbelief from human hearts and sowing the seeds of piety. Before long he converted the whole city to Christ, and he appointed there as presbyter a respected man named Eunomius. Having reached deep old age and drawing near to death, of which he had learned beforehand, he prayed diligently, preparing him-

16. The ancients tore their garments as a sign of sorrow.

self for the journey to the Lord. Gathering around him all whom he had converted from paganism to Christianity, he taught them to abide in faith and love and to exercise themselves in every virtue, prospering in the fulfillment of the commandments of the Lord. Having taught them much, he heard a voice from heaven:

"Cornelius! Come to Me, for there is prepared for thee 'the crown of righteousness' (2 Tim. 4:8)."

Hearing this, Cornelius at once began to pray, and, kneeling, said:

"O Lord our God! Thou hast vouchsafed me to keep the faith, to accomplish the ascetic labor, and to overcome the adversaries. I thank Thee for all! But I beseech Thee, O Lord, look down from Thy holy height upon Thy servants and be merciful to them; establish them in the faith, strengthen them in their labors, send them help in fulfilling Thy holy commandments, that they may unceasingly glorify Thy most holy name now and unto ages of ages."

And when all said, "Amen," he gladly gave up his spirit into the hands of the Lord, who was calling him to heaven.

Prince Demetrius with his wife Euanthia, his son Demetrian[17], the presbyter Eunomius, and all the faithful wept for a long time over their father and teacher; lighting candles and chanting the funeral hymns, they buried his body with honor near the fallen temple of Zeus. And each day the faithful, coming to his grave, burned incense and prayed, and from his tomb many healings were given to the sick.

Many years passed, and all the contemporaries of the events described departed to the Lord. The place where the relics of St. Cornelius had been buried remained unknown to later generations, for thorns and dense undergrowth had grown up around his tomb, and no one knew of the precious treasure kept there. Once it happened that the bishop of the city of Troas[18], Silvanus, was in that place; St. Cornelius appeared to him at night in a dream and said:

"For a long time I have lived here, and no one has visited me."

17. All three suffered for Christ and are numbered among the saints; their memory is celebrated on September 11.

18. Troas was the region of the ancient city of Troy, in the western Asia Minor province of Mysia. Bishop Silvanus of Troas died in 425 A.D.

The bishop, awaking from sleep, marveled at what he had seen and wondered who had appeared to him. On the following night the saint appeared to him again and said:

"I am the centurion Cornelius, and my relics lie in the thornbush growing near the place where once stood the temple of Zeus. Build me a church near the place that belonged to Demetrius; that place is called Pandochium[19], and many bodies of the faithful and holy brethren are buried there."

In the morning the bishop told his clergy of the vision, and set out with all of them to the thornbush which the saint had shown him in the vision. Having prayed, they began to dig the earth, and soon found a coffin containing the relics of St. Cornelius, whole and incorrupt, from which came an extraordinary fragrance; and all were greatly gladdened at the discovery of such a great treasure. The bishop, however, remained perplexed concerning the church which the saint had commanded him to build, for he did not have as much money as was required for the building of a church. Yet in this matter too St. Cornelius did not delay to help the bishop. On the following night he appeared to a certain pious and very wealthy man named Eugenius, and commanded him to give Bishop Silvanus as much money as would be needed for building the church. Eugenius then reported his vision to the bishop and gave him all that was needed, after which the holy church was built and adorned with all manner of beauty. When the time came to transfer the honorable relics from the thornbush to the newly built church, a great multitude of the faithful gathered with Bishop Silvanus and Eugenius, holding lighted candles in their hands. As soon as the bishop with the clergy began to sing the "Thrice-Holy," the coffin suddenly rose of its own accord and was borne by unseen hands toward the church; and no one of the people dared to touch it. Seeing that the coffin moved of its own accord, all marveled and were struck with awe, and with one voice cried out:

"Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Sabaoth, who shows us His power and His wonders through His servant Cornelius!"

19. The Greek name for a hospice (house of hospitality).

There happened to be present at that time many unbelievers who, seeing this wonder, believed in our Lord Jesus Christ. When all had reached the church and entered it, they stood on both sides, wishing to see where the coffin with the relics would go and where it would stop. It moved straight and stopped near the sanctuary, on the right side. The bishop wished to place it inside the sanctuary, but no one could move the coffin from the place where it had stopped of itself. And many miracles were performed at that time and afterward by the holy and wonderworking relics of God's servant. After the death of Bishop Silvanus, his place was taken by Philostorgius, who persuaded an icon painter named Encratius to paint the whole church with sacred images, and above all to take care of writing the icon of St. Cornelius himself. The icon painter, beginning to paint the icon of St. Cornelius, could by no means depict his face, and several times he washed off all that he had painted on the icon, feeling that he could not write the saint's countenance altogether comely. Encratius lost his temper, uttered blasphemous words against the saint, left his icon, and, intending to paint something else on the church wall, climbed the ladder, but slipped and fell down, and so struck himself that he lay as one dead. Those in the church took him, carried him home, and laid him on a bed barely alive and unable to utter even a single word. Around his mouth worms could be seen, some crawling in, others crawling out of his lips. This was his punishment for having dared to utter blasphemous words against the saint with his mouth. Yet, as the Lord Himself and His holy servants are not angry to the end nor forever indignant, on the next morning he who had brought the wife and son of Demetrius out alive from the collapsed walls appeared also to Encratius, took him by the hand, and raised him from the bed as if from sleep, and then became invisible. Encratius, feeling himself healthy, hastened to the saint's church, and, falling down before the honorable coffin in which the healing relics of Cornelius rested, with tears asked forgiveness for his transgression and thanked the saint for having had mercy on him and healed him from his sickness, when he was already close to death. That icon painter received a double benefit from the saint's appearance: he was healed of his sickness and learned what the saint's countenance was like. After

this he depicted St. Cornelius on the icon as he had seen him in the appearance, and glorified Christ God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages. Amen.

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Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Gordian, Macrobius, Elias, Zotichus, Lucian, and Valerian

Память святых мучеников Гордиана, Макровия, Илии, Зотика, Лукиана и Валериана

These martyrs suffered under Licinius. Gordian was from Cappadocia, Macrobius from Paphlagonia; both were youths, and for their firm faith in Christ they suffered earlier in the city of Tomis. By the command of Prince Maximus, after many torments, they were beheaded with the sword. St. Valerian wept bitterly at the tomb of the martyrs and, weeping, died.[20]

* * *

Commemoration of the Venerable Peter in Atroa

Память преподобного Петра в Атрое

This venerable man was sanctified by God from his mother's womb. He spent his whole life in fasting and unceasing prayer; he performed many miracles; among others, he crossed the river Galis as if on dry land. He so afflicted his body with iron chains that he seemed rather a shadow than a man. Having been pleasing to God, after a considerable time he died in peace.[21]

* * *

20. They suffered at the beginning of the fourth century. Cappadocia and Paphlagonia are regions of Asia Minor. By Scythia are probably meant its colonies on the Black Sea coast. Tomi, now Constanţa, is a seaport of Romania.

21. The Halys is a river of northwestern Asia Minor, flowing through Cappadocia and Galatia and emptying into the Black Sea. By Atroea must be understood an unknown city in Asia Minor. Venerable Peter labored under Patriarch Tarasius of Constantinople (784–806 88.) and under the Byzantine emperor Nicephorus (802–811 A.D.).[1*]

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Seleucus, Stratonicus, Cronides, Leontius, and Serapion

Память святых мучеников Селевка, Стратоника, Кронида, Леонтия и Серапиона

St. Seleucus was from Galatia, Stratonicus from Nicomedia in Bithynia; Cronides, Leontius, and Serapion were from Egypt.

After many torments, the tormentors bound the holy Cronides, Leontius, and Serapion by the hands and feet and cast them into the sea. The waves of the sea cast their holy relics ashore. Angels commanded the Christians to give them burial. St. Seleucus suffered in Galatia. He was tormented with various torments for a long time, and finally was given over to be devoured by beasts. St. Stratonicus suffered thus: the ruler of Bithynia commanded him, after many torments, to be bound to two bent branches of a tree; then he released these branches, and the holy martyr was torn in two and so gave up his spirit to God.[22]

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22. Their martyrdom belongs to the third century. Cronides, Leontius and Serapion, after many torments, were drowned in the sea in Egypt, about 237 A.D., at Alexandria under Maximinus I; Stratonicus suffered at Nicomedia in Bithynia (his memory is also celebrated on September 9).

THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 14

14 сентября

New Calendar September 14 · Old Calendar September 27 (civil dates)

Tale of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of the Lord

Сказание о воздвижении честного и Животворящего Креста Господня

When Maxentius reigned in Rome, he inflicted much evil upon the people, persecuting and torturing not only Christians but also killing pagans; he plundered their property and lived viciously, insulting noble families. He was burdensome and abhorrent to all Rome because of his cruelties and his depraved life. Therefore the Romans secretly sent a petition to Emperor Constantine, who was then in Britain with his mother, begging him to come and deliver them from this tormentor. Constantine first wrote to Maxentius, admonishing him in a friendly way to cease his acts of violence. But Maxentius not only did not heed him and did not reform, but became even worse, and took up arms against Constantine himself, not wishing that he should be an emperor equal to himself. While the whole army chose Constantine for the imperial throne, Maxentius seized the throne by his own authority. The people did not love him, and only some nobles, to whom he promised great gifts and many honors, expressed their desire for his election; Constantine, however, was proclaimed emperor by universal consent.

Hearing that Maxentius was not reforming but was increasing in his malice, Constantine gathered an army and marched against him in war. Seeing that the strength of his army was small, and taking into account also the evil schemes of Maxentius, he began to doubt his success. He knew that Maxentius had shed much human blood for the performance of sorceries, and had sacrificed to demons many youths, maidens and women with child in their wombs, in order to appease with these offer-

ings his false gods, in whom he trusted. Knowing that demonic power also aided Maxentius, Constantine began to pray to the One God who reigns over heaven and earth, whom the whole Christian race worships, and implored Him to grant him a sign of victory over the tormentor. And while he prayed thus fervently, at noon there appeared to him in the sky the image of the Cross of the Lord, shining more brightly than the light of the sun, in the form of a star; on it was the inscription: "By this conquer." All the soldiers saw this wondrous apparition, among them the commander Artemius (who was afterward tortured for Christ under Julian)[1], and they were filled with wonder. Most of them, however, were struck with fear: among the pagans the image of the cross was a sign of misfortune and death, since criminals condemned to capital punishment, robbers and malefactors, died upon the cross; therefore the soldiers feared that their war would be unfortunate. Emperor Constantine himself was in great perplexity. But during the night the Lord Christ Himself appeared to him in a dream, and again showed the sign of the Precious Cross that had appeared by day, saying to him:

"Make a likeness of this sign, and command that it be carried before your regiments; and then you will conquer not only Maxentius but all your enemies."

The emperor related his vision to his attendants, and, summoning skilled goldsmiths, commanded them to make the precious Cross of the Lord, after the likeness of the sign that had appeared, of gold, pearls and precious stones. At the same time he commanded all his soldiers to depict the sign of the cross on all their weapons, on their helmets and shields.

The impious Maxentius, hearing of Constantine's campaign into Italy against Rome, boldly advanced with the Roman forces against the great Constantine. Constantine commanded that the precious Cross be carried before his regiments. When they met Maxentius and joined battle, Maxentius was defeated by the power of the Precious Cross, and a multitude of his soldiers were slain, while he himself took to flight. Pursued by Emperor Constantine, he crossed the river Tiber by a

1. The memory of Artemius is 20 October; his martyric death took place in 363.

bridge which he himself had built; but at that moment the bridge was destroyed by the power of God, and the wretched tormentor drowned in the river with his troops, like the ancient Pharaoh, and the river was filled with horsemen, horses and weapons.[2] Constantine the Great entered Rome in triumph, and the whole people met him joyfully with great honors. The emperor offered the greatest thanksgiving to God, who had granted him victory over the tormentor by the power of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, and in memory of that glorious victory he set up in the midst of Rome, on a high stone column, a cross, on which he inscribed: "By this saving sign the city has been delivered from the yoke of the tormentor."

On another occasion Constantine went to war against the Byzantines, whose small city Byzantium had been founded by a certain Greek named Byzas in the days of Manasseh, king of Judah, and named after himself.[3] Twice defeated by them, Constantine was in great sorrow. As evening came on, lifting up his eyes to heaven, he saw a composed writing, on which was written: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Ps. 49:15). Terrified, he again lifted his eyes to heaven, and saw as before the cross in the heavens, depicted by stars, and around it the inscription: "In this sign thou shalt conquer." After this, when the cross was carried before him in battle, Constantine fought with the Scythians[4] on the river Danube, and again that saving weapon appeared in the heavens, and again, as before, Constantine gained the victory.

Perceiving from this the power of Christ crucified on the cross, and believing that He is the one true God, Constantine was baptized in His name together with his most praiseworthy mother Helen, whom, because of her great piety, he sent to Jerusalem with great wealth to dis-

2. This event took place 28 October 312.

3. Byzantium, afterward the famous Constantinople, or Tsargrad, first elevated by Constantine the Great, was founded about 658 B.C. and named after its chief founder (it was founded by emigrants from the Greek Asia Minor city of Miletus, which was then subject to the Persian kingdom).

4. The Scythians were a wild nomadic people who came from Asia and at first roamed the southern steppes of present-day Russia, whence they afterward moved farther west to the Danube, disturbing the regions along the Danube of the Roman Empire with devastating raids.

cover the Precious Cross of the Lord. Empress Helen, having journeyed to Jerusalem, visited the holy places, cleansed them from idolatrous defilement, and brought to light many relics of the saints. The patriarch in Jerusalem at that time was Macarius, who met the empress with due honors. The blessed Empress Helen, desiring to find the life-giving Cross of the Lord that had been hidden by the Jews, summoned all the Jews and asked them to show her the place where the Precious Cross of the Lord was concealed. When they began to deny that they knew, Empress Helen threatened them with torture and death. Then they pointed out to her a certain elder named Judas, saying that he could show the empress what she sought, because he was the son of a respected prophet.

Despite prolonged torments, Judas refused to tell the place where the Cross of the Lord was hidden. Then Empress Helen commanded that he be thrown into a deep pit. Having remained in it for some time, Judas at last promised to tell what he knew about the Cross of Christ buried in the earth. Then they brought him up out of the pit and, following his direction, came to the place where there was a large mound of earth and stones, on which the Roman emperor Hadrian had already built a temple in honor of the pagan goddess Venus[5] and placed an idol in it. Judas showed that the Cross of Christ was hidden precisely here.

Empress Helen commanded that the idol's temple be torn down and the earth and stones be scattered and dug up. When Patriarch Macarius had offered prayers at that place, a fragrance spread through the air, and immediately, toward the east, the Tomb of Christ and the Place of the Skull were discovered; near them were found three crosses buried, and afterward the nails with which the Lord had been nailed to the Cross. When they could not determine which of the found crosses was the Cross of Christ, it happened that at that time a dead man was being carried out for burial. Then Patriarch Macarius commanded the bearers to stop, and the crosses were laid in turn upon the dead man. When the

5. A Greco-Roman goddess of love, beauty, sensuality, and impure lusts. The cave of the Lord's Tomb had, two centuries before this, been filled in by order of the Roman emperor Hadrian, with the aim of making the very place of the Crucifixion and Burial of Christ completely unrecognizable. This was in 119 A.D.

Cross of Christ was laid upon him, the dead man immediately rose up and, by the power of the Divine Cross of the Lord, stood up alive.[5788] The empress, receiving the Precious Cross with joy, bowed down before it and kissed it, and so also did all the military and civil commanders and nobles who were with her. Some at that time, because of the crowding, were unable to see and kiss the holy Cross, and asked that at least they be shown it from afar. Then Macarius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, standing in an elevated place and raising the Cross, showed it to the people.

And the people cried out:

"Lord, have mercy!"

From this the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross of the Lord received its beginning.[6]

The empress kept for herself a part of the precious wood of the Cross of the Lord, as also the nails; and the Cross, having been placed in a silver reliquary, she gave to Patriarch Macarius to keep for future generations. Judas, together with a multitude of Jews, believed in Christ and was baptized, and in holy baptism was named Cyriacus; afterward he was Patriarch of Jerusalem, and he died, having suffered for Christ under Julian the Apostate.[7] And the holy Empress Helen commanded that churches be built at the holy places in Jerusalem, and first of all she commanded that the Church of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ be built, where the Tomb of Christ and the Precious Cross had been found. Then she commanded that a temple be erected in Gethsemane, where the tomb of the Most Holy Theotokos was, in honor of her venerable Dormition. After this the pious empress founded eighteen more churches, and having adorned them with various precious objects and endowed them with all that was needful, she returned to Byzantium, taking with her a part of the life-giving wood of the Cross of the Lord and the nails with which the body of Christ had once been nailed.

6. According to the investigations of hagiologists, this took place approximately at the end of May 326. From 335, when the consecration of the Church of the Resurrection of Christ was performed on 13 September, it was established to celebrate the Exaltation of the Cross of the Lord on the following day, 14 September.

7. The memory of Cyriacus is celebrated 28 October.

The blessed Emperor Constantine placed the Life-Giving Wood in a golden reliquary; of the Lord's nails, one was cast by St. Helen into the Adriatic Sea[8] when she was returning to Constantinople, to calm a violent storm and the surging of the sea; another the emperor had fashioned into his helmet; a third he fastened to the bit of the bridle of his horse, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah: "In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord" (Zech. 14:20); and the fourth nail the Empress Helen gave for safekeeping to the closest counselors of the emperor.

After St. Helena's return from Jerusalem to Byzantium, the Christ-loving Emperor Constantine erected three large crosses in accordance with the three wars in which the Cross had appeared to him: one in Rome, when he drowned Maxentius; another in Byzantium, when he took it; and a third when he defeated the Scythians on the river Danube. In accordance with these three victories, he made three honorable crosses of precious materials, and wrote upon them in golden letters the words: IS XS NIKA, that is, Jesus Christ conquers. Bearing witness before all to his zeal for piety, and showing that he had conquered his enemies by the power of the Cross, the emperor set one cross upon an elevated place in the eastern marketplace, another cross on the top of the purple Roman column[9] in the main city square, and the third on a beautiful marble platform in the bread market, where for the sake of the Holy Cross of Christ many wonders and signs were wrought. Many bear witness that at night the Angel of the Lord descended from heaven to that place in a radiant light, and, going around, censed the honorable Cross, sweetly chanting the Trisagion hymn, after which he again ascended to heaven. This took place three times a year: in the month of September, on the night of the Exaltation of the Honorable Cross of Christ; a second time, on 7 May, on the night of the commemoration of the appearance of the Cross of the Lord in the heav-

8. The Adriatic Sea is the bay-shaped part of the Mediterranean that washes the Apennine peninsula and the west of the Balkan. St. Empress Helena from Jerusalem probably first went to Rome, and from there to the new capital of the empire, Constantinople.

9. The remnant of this "purple column," which Constantine the Great once transported from Rome, still survives in Constantinople to this day. It is known as the "Burnt Column," which is indeed what it is.

ens; and a third time, in the Great Lent of the holy Forty Days, on the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross. And many of the devout, who live righteously and holily, have seen this descent of the Angel and heard his singing, and afterward told of it to others.

We must now recall also how the honorable and Life-giving Tree of the Cross of the Lord was once carried off by the Persians, and afterward returned again to Jerusalem to the joy of the faithful[10].

In the reign of the Byzantine emperor Phocas, Chosroes, king of the Persians, having conquered Egypt, Africa, and Palestine, took Jerusalem, and in the process slew many Christians[11]. Plundering at that time various church treasures and vessels, he took among the others this most precious treasure, the Tree of the Life-giving Cross of the Lord, and carried it off to Persia. After some time, upon the death of the emperor Phocas, Heraclius[12] ascended the throne; he tried to overcome Chosroes, but was himself defeated by him many times and therefore asked for peace, yet did not receive it from the haughty enemy. Then, in great sorrow, the emperor sought help from God: he commanded all the faithful to offer prayers, vigils, and fasts, that the Lord might deliver them from the enemy, who in his pride boasted of destroying all Christians and reviled the name of the Lord, and so that the enemies might not say: "Our hand (that is, our strength) is strong, and our gods are mighty"; but that the pagans might know that there is one true God, against whose strength and might no one can stand. The emperor himself prayed with tears and fasted diligently. Then, gathering all the warriors and arming them with the power of the Cross, in hope of God's help, Heraclius went to war against the Persians, and in battle defeated Chosroes and put him to flight; after this, for seven years he laid waste the Persian kingdom, conquering cities and villages and

10. The following narrative is translated from the Chet'i-Minei of St. Demetrius of Rostov, on the authority of Theophanes the Confessor, composer of canons (d. in the first half of the 9th century), and George Kedrenos, a Byzantine church historian of the late 11th and early 12th century.

11. The Byzantine Emperor Phocas reigned from 602 to 610. Khosrow II, King of Persia, declared war on the Greeks under the pretext of avenging the death of the Emperor Maurice, his ally, and of Maurice's children, who were inhumanly put to death by the usurper-emperor Phocas.

12. Heraclius reigned from 610 to 641.

gaining victories over the numerous armies of Chosroes. Finally Chosroes, no longer able to resist the Greek forces, fled from his land, and when crossing the river Tigris[13], he made his younger son Medarsus his co-ruler. Stirred by this, his elder son Siroes plotted to kill both his father and his brother, which he soon accomplished. After this Siroes, remaining the heir and ruler of the Persian kingdom, sent an embassy to the Greek emperor Heraclius with petitions and numerous gifts, declaring his submission to him and asking him to end his devastating war. Then the emperor Heraclius, having concluded peace with the Persian king, took with him also the Life-giving Tree of the Cross of the Lord, which Chosroes had carried off from Jerusalem and which had been in Persian captivity for fourteen years. And the Greek emperor returned with many gains, rejoicing and glorifying God for His great help.

Having reached Jerusalem, the emperor laid the honorable Tree upon his shoulders in order to carry it to its former place; he bore it clothed in imperial purple adorned with gold and precious stones, with the royal crown upon his head. Then a great miracle took place: the emperor suddenly stopped in the gates through which one entered Golgotha, and, to the astonishment of all, could not take a single step with the honorable Tree of the Cross of Christ. Zachariah, Patriarch of Constantinople, together with all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, went out to meet the emperor with branches and dates as far as the Mount of Olives, and walked together with the emperor. And behold, he sees a radiant Angel of God standing in those gates and forbidding entrance.

And the Angel said to him:

"Our Creator did not carry the Cross here in the manner in which you carry it."

Seeing and hearing this, the patriarch trembled, and turning to the emperor said:

"Know, O emperor, that it is impossible for one clothed in rich garments and adorned with royal ornaments to carry this holy Tree, which

13. The Tigris is a river flowing through Mesopotamia in Persia; at the end of its course it joins the Euphrates and empties into the Persian Gulf.

Christ, who for our sake became poor, carried in a state of humiliation; if you wish to bring it in, imitate His poverty."

Then the pious emperor Heraclius took off his purple robe and clothed himself in plain and poor garments, and carried the honorable Tree of the Holy Cross without any hindrance, walking barefoot—he brought it into the church to the very place from which Chosroes, king of the Persians, had taken it, and set the Cross-Tree there again[14].

And there was great joy and gladness among the faithful because of the return of the Cross of the Lord, and they rejoiced (just as the Israelites once rejoiced at the return of the Ark of the Covenant from the Philistines) (1 Kgdms. 7), giving praise to Christ crucified on the cross, the King of glory, and worshipping at the footstool of His Holy Cross. To Him be honor, glory, and worship from us also, now and forever and unto ages of ages, amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance, granting victories to our faithful Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich over his adversaries, and by Thy Cross preserving Thy dwelling.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

O Christ God, who by Thy will wast lifted up on the Cross, grant Thy mercies to Thy new dwelling that bears Thy Name[15]; by Thy power gladden our faithful Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich, granting him victories over his adversaries, Thou who hast Thy weapon of peace as an invincible victory to aid him.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Papias

Память святого мученика Папия

St. Papias suffered in the reign of Maximian, under the governor Magnus, in the land of Lycaonia. He was tortured much and in

14. This was in the year 629 A.D. The Patriarch of Jerusalem at that time was St. Zacharias, from 609 to 633 (he was in Persian captivity from 614 to 628).
15. That is, Christians.

various ways: his jaws and cheeks were crushed, he was hung up and scraped with claws; then they put iron boots with nails upon his feet and made him walk in them. In such torments he gave up his spirit to the Lord[16].

* * *

NOTES

5788. St. Demetrius of Rostov, in his Sermon on the Exaltation of the Cross of the Lord (in a note), accompanies this with the following details: "Concerning that miracle through which the true Cross of Christ was recognized, many speak in disagreement. Some say that a dead girl was being carried to burial and was raised by the power of the Cross. Others speak of a dead widow who came to life through the Life-giving Tree. Some relate that a certain widow lay ill at home and was near death, but the patriarch (Macarius) came to her with the empress (Helena), and bringing crosses laid them upon the sick woman, and when the Cross of the Lord was laid upon her, she immediately rose up healthy. Others report that (at that time) a corpse was being carried to the cemetery, but through contact with the Cross of the Lord he was raised. Nicephorus Callistus (Book VIII, ch. 29) says that both miracles were then performed by the Cross of the Lord: both the widow who lay ill at home and was already dying was restored from the gates of death to life and health, and the dead man who was being carried for burial was raised."

16. St. Papias suffered at the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century. He was a native of Lycaonia (a region of Asia Minor bordering Galatia to the north, Phrygia and Isauria to the west, Cappadocia to the east, and Lycia to the south), from the city of Laranda, where he began his sufferings, which he continued afterward in Diocaesarea, and finished in Seleucia in Isauria.

THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 15

15 сентября

New Calendar September 15 · Old Calendar September 28 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Nikita

Страдание святого мученика Никиты

When the honorable and life-giving Cross of the Lord, that sign of victory, was lifted up on high above the world, then Saint Nikita, who bore the name of victory, came under its shelter. On the day before this, we celebrated the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, that invincible victory for the world, and now we honor Saint Nikita, whose name means *victor*.[1] This good soldier of Jesus Christ took his stand beneath the Cross, as beneath a banner, to wage war against the enemies of the Holy Cross, in honor of the One Crucified upon it. One fights for an earthly king, another for his own life and vain glory, another for temporal riches; but Saint Nikita fought for his one Lord, Jesus Christ, who is the King of all creation, our glory, and a treasure that never fails. Where and in what manner this soldier struggled for Christ, the following account tells.

When, in the reign of the holy and equal-to-the-apostles Emperor Constantine the Great, the holy Faith began to spread throughout the whole world, then also in the land of the Goths,[2] beyond the river Istr[3] (the Danube), holy piety shone forth like a light in darkness. In that land was born, baptized, and brought up Saint Nikita. Theophilus, the Gothic bishop,[4] who took part in the First Council of Nicaea, confessed the dogmas of the Orthodox Faith and signed the decrees of the Coun-

1. Nicetas – from the Greek, "victor."
2. The land of the Goths extended from the lower Vistula to the Black Sea; the Goths lived chiefly in what is now Romania, along the Danube.
3. Istr – the ancient name of the Danube.
4. Died about 340.

cil, enlightened Nikita with the light of faith and baptized him in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

After some time, the ancient adversary, the devil, unable to endure that the holy Faith of Christ was spreading and that the number of Christians was increasing more and more, stirred up in this barbarian land, darkened by idol-worship, a struggle and a fierce persecution against those who confessed the name of Christ and believed in the Lord. A spirit of malice moved the prince of that country, named Fanarikh, to slay Christians and to root out even the memory of them from his land. At that time the Goths were divided and fell into civil strife. They split into two parties: one part had as its leader a certain Fritigern, and the other was led by the cruel persecutor Athanaric. When these kinsmen met in battle and a great slaughter took place, Athanaric, who had greater strength and courage, overcame and defeated his opponent and put his army to flight. The defeated Fritigern fled to Greece, where he sought help from the Christ-hating emperor Valens;[5] the emperor ordered the whole army stationed in Thrace to go to Fritigern's aid. After this, Fritigern, with all his remaining warriors and with the Greek army gathered in Thrace, marched out against his rival. Crossing the river Istr (Danube), he commanded that an image of the holy Cross be made and carried before his regiments. Thus he attacked Athanaric. A terrible battle ensued, but the Christians, with the help of the Cross, overcame Athanaric and defeated his entire army: some were slain, others taken captive, so that he himself barely escaped with a small band. From that time the Christian Orthodox Faith spread more and more among the Goths, for many, seeing the irresistible power of the Cross manifested in battle, believed in the Lord crucified upon it.

When Bishop Theophilus died, Ulfilas[6] ascended his throne, a man prudent and pious. He devised letters for the Goths and translated many books from Greek into Gothic, so that the Christian Faith spread among the Goths more and more with each passing day. Saint Nikita, one of the most noble and renowned persons of that land, also contrib-

5. The emperor Valens reigned from 364 to 378.

6. Ulfilas or Wulfila – the first Gothic bishop and zealous preacher of Christianity among the Goths; lived from 311 to 383.

uted to the establishment of faith in Christ by his zeal. By his piety and God-inspired words he led many to Christ.

After some time the impious Athanaric returned again to his homeland. Having attained power and strength, he, instigated by the devil, raised a terrible persecution against the Christians in his domain, seeking to avenge his humiliation, since he had been defeated and put to shame by the Christians in battle.

Then Saint Nikita, burning with zeal for God, went out to struggle against both enemies, the invisible and the visible. Against the invisible enemy he fought by converting unbelievers to the true faith and preparing believers for the martyr's exploit; against the visible enemy he fought by rebuking the persecutor Athanaric and reproaching him for his godlessness and inhumanity, for delivering multitudes of believers to various torments. Thus Saint Nikita conquered both: he trampled the devil and overcame the severity of the persecutor. The various tortures by which the good sufferer of Christ was to be compelled to renounce Christ proved powerless, and the persecutor himself was perplexed that, for all his power, he could not bend to his impiety a single servant of Christ, who stood firm in his confession like a strong and unshakable pillar.

What then did the lawless one devise? He resolved to destroy by fire the one whom he could not kill with many wounds, by torment of the flesh and dismemberment of the limbs. But what did the impious one achieve? He burned himself more with his fury than the martyr with the flame: Saint Nikita, though he was in the fire, his body was not consumed by the fire, and his soul was reborn to a new, eternal and immortal life. Meanwhile the persecutor, even without fire, burned up from his own godlessness: he died spiritually in his soul and prepared his body for hell. Thus Saint Nikita waged war for Christ under the sign of the Cross and showed himself a victor; not only by name, but in very deed was he such.

The body of the saint, unharmed by the fire, remained without burial and lay cast out in dishonor. At that time there lived there a pious Christian named Marianus. This man was a native of the land of Cilicia, from the city of Mopsuestia.[7] On some business of his he had come to the Gothic land and had remained there for a fairly long time. Marianus became acquainted with Saint Nikita and won his friendship and love; he came to love him especially when he saw that the holy ascetic stood for the holy Faith of Christ even to the point of readiness to shed his blood for it. And so, when the saint's body lay unburied, Marianus conceived the thought of how he might take the body of his beloved friend and Christ's martyr and carry it to his native land. But he feared to carry out his intention, for fear of the prince, who had commanded that no one should dare to bury the martyr's body. Then Marianus resolved to take it secretly by night.

When night fell, Marianus was ready to go out to the task he had planned; but the night was dark and rainy, so that it was hard for him to walk. Marianus was greatly grieved by this, for he did not see where to go or where to find the martyr's body he sought. As he sorrowed deeply over this, the God of all consolation, who once showed the Magi the way to Bethlehem by a star (Mt. 2:2), comforted Marianus in his sorrow and showed him a favorable way to find the body of the saint: He sent a certain heavenly power in the form of a star, which, shining before Marianus, led him where it was needful. This star went before Marianus and dispelled the darkness of the night; and he followed it with joy. When he reached the place where the body of the saint lay, the star stopped above it. Then Marianus, wrapping the body of the martyr in a clean winding-sheet, carried it to the house where he lived.

Thus Marianus obtained the treasure he sought. Having hidden it for a time in his dwelling with great care, he soon after returned to his fatherland and brought with him the body of the holy martyr.[8] Arriving at the city of Mopsuestia, Marianus buried it with honor in his house.

God bestowed a blessing upon the house of Marianus for the sake of His passion-bearer, St. Nicetas, as once He blessed the house of Po-

7. The city of Mopsuestia was situated on a plain, on the banks of the river Pyramus.
8. The repose of St. Nicetas took place on September 15, 372.

tiphar with many riches for the sake of Joseph (Gen. 39:5), and the house of Obed-edom for the sake of the Ark of the Covenant (2 Kgdms. 6:11). The house of Marianus came to abound in great wealth, both material and spiritual, for from the saint's tomb many gifts were given to all in need, and many healings were granted to the sick. The whole city and the surrounding inhabitants gathered at the saint's tomb, so that the house of Marianus could not hold all the believers who came together there; therefore all resolved to build a church in the name of St. Nicetas and to lay the martyr's relics there. Taking up this work with zeal, the faithful soon erected a church. When the building was finished and the church adorned with fitting splendor, the tomb of the holy martyr was opened, and taking the reliquary, they carried it into the newly built church and buried it there in the earth. Only Marianus succeeded in taking, as a blessing for his house from the saint's relics, one finger, which he kept with reverence; no one else could take any particle of the relics of St. Nicetas.

Once the blessed Auxentius, Bishop of Mopsuestia, having built a church in honor of the holy martyrs Tarachus, Probus and Andronicus, where the relics of these three saints rested, wrote in his epistle asking the citizens of Anazarbus to give him some part of the relics of the holy martyrs for the newly built church. The citizens of Anazarbus then asked Auxentius that, in exchange, he give them some part of the relics of St. Nicetas as a blessing for their city. Wishing to fulfill their request, the bishop commanded that the tomb of the holy martyr Nicetas be opened. And behold, without any visible cause, the marble stone that lay upon the saint's tomb broke into two halves. One of those present boldly touched the holy relics with his hand, but immediately his hand dried up, and terror fell upon him. At the same time a loud peal of thunder sounded from heaven and a bright flash of lightning appeared; all were seized with fear. Then the bishop understood that God did not bless the dividing of the saint's relics, and he repented of his intention. Taking by the withered hand the man who had boldly touched the saint's relics, he again laid it upon the relics and began to pray:

"O holy martyr of Christ, Nicetas! It becomes you more to heal than to harm, for you are good and imitate the All-good Lord; and if you

have swiftly punished this man, will you not all the more quickly show him mercy?"

No sooner had the bishop uttered these words than the withered hand of that man was instantly healed, and all marveled at the wonders of the holy martyr Nicetas and glorified God. No longer daring to touch the relics of the servant of God, the bishop,[9] having sung a reverent chant over them, again honorably closed his tomb, glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one God in Trinity, to Whom belong all glory, honor and worship forever. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Philotheus, Priest and Wonderworker

Память святого Филофея, пресвитера и чудотворца

The Venerable Philotheus was a native of a village called Muravyev (Mravino)[10]. Having reached mature age, he entered into marriage and had children. Then he was counted worthy to receive the holy priesthood. From that time the saint unceasingly fasted and prayed. For his holy life he was counted worthy of the gift of working wonders, and in the name of Christ he performed many miracles: thus he turned water into wine, moved a rock from its place with a single word, and wrought many other wonders. At the same time he performed works of Christian love: he fed the hungry and helped those in need. When a year had passed after his repose[11], and the faithful wished to transfer his relics to another place, the saint, as if alive, stretched forth his hands, and taking hold of the shoulders of two priests who were carrying his body, he rose and took three steps. He was again laid in the same place, where his holy relics began to pour forth abundant myrrh.

* * *

9. Bishop Auxentius II lived in the middle of the fifth century; he took part in the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon in 451.

10. From the Greek, where it stands "Myrmex," meaning ant; hence Muravyevo, or Mravino. This village was located in Asia Minor, in the region of Bithynia.

11. The repose of St. Philotheus is placed around the tenth century.

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Porphyrius

Память святого мученика Порфирия

Once the birthday of the emperor Julian the Apostate was being celebrated. Porphyrius, as a mime, was to mock and insult the Christians in the theater. At the very moment when, for this purpose, he plunged into the water and cried out, "Porphyrius is baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit," he suddenly believed in the true God, and, coming out of the water, began openly to confess Christ. For this he was delivered to sufferings and beheaded with the sword[12].

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Maximus, Asclias and Theodotus

Память святых мучеников Максима, Асклиады и Феодота

The holy martyrs Maximus and Asclias lived in the reign of the impious Maximian in Moesia, in the city of Marcianopolis. They were known for their piety, taught many the true faith and brought them to holy baptism. Learning of this, Tiris, the governor of Thrace, who had arrived at that time in Marcianopolis, commanded that they be brought to judgment. After a lengthy conversation with Maximus about the faith, the tormentor ordered four men to beat him over his whole body; then, after Asclias confessed her faith in Christ, he commanded that she too be beaten with shoe soles. Then the pious Theodotus stepped forward and denounced the inhumanity of the tormentor; for this he was hanged upon a tree and his body was scraped. 13 days later Tiris, arriving at Hadrianopolis, subjected all three martyrs, who had been brought to that same city, to new wounds, burning them with heated copper plates so that their bodies melted; but a voice from heaven comforted and encouraged them. After several days of imprisonment, they were delivered to the beasts in the circus before a great gathering of people. But the she-bear let loose upon Maximus and

12. St. Porphyrius the martyr suffered in the reign of Julian the Apostate in 361, in Asia Minor, in the city of Ephesus.

Theodotus fawned upon them, and the bull to which Asclias was tied stopped as if bound and did not move from its place. The enraged governor set out with the holy martyrs for Philippopolis, and before reaching that city, in the village of Saltis, after further attempts to persuade them to renounce Christ, he commanded that their heads be cut off. Not long after this, the tormentor, while sitting in judgment, was struck by lightning[13].

* * *

13. The holy martyrs Theodotus, Maximus and Asclias (also Asclepiodotus) suffered at the beginning of the fourth century, when Galerius Maximian reigned in the East of the Roman Empire. By Moesia is meant here not the northwestern region, but the Roman province along the Danube, divided into the western, or upper, and the eastern, or lower. Marcianopolis was a city in lower Moesia on the road from Constantinople to the Danube, later Preslav, now the village of Pravody in Bulgaria. Hadrianopolis (in Turkish Edirne) is a famous city founded in the first half of the second century by the Roman emperor Hadrian. Philippopolis was an ancient fortified city in Thrace, now in Eastern Rumelia, on the river Maritsa; to this day it remains very significant for its industry and population.

THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 16

16 сентября

New Calendar September 16 · Old Calendar September 29 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy and All-Praised Great Martyr Euphemia

Страдание святой всехвальной великомученицы Евфимии

During the reign of the impious Diocletian[1], Chalcedon[2] was governed by his appointed proconsul Priscus[3]. Intending to hold a festival in honor of the pagan god Ares,[4] to whom a temple in Chalcedon was dedicated, with his image set up within it, Priscus sent out a decree to all the surrounding cities and villages, commanding in the emperor's name that everyone assemble in Chalcedon for the festival and that each person bring sacrifices to Ares according to his means. In his decree Priscus threatened great torments for those who would not obey his command and appear at the festival, for which he had appointed the ninth day after the decree was issued. And so, when the day appointed for the demonic festival arrived, a great multitude of people gathered in Chalcedon, together with the animals brought for sacrifice. All began their festive revelry, offering sheep and oxen in sacrifice and worshipping the lifeless idol—or, rather, the demon dwelling within it. Then the Christians of those regions, abhorring this God-detested festival and fearing the proconsul's fierce wrath, began to hide themselves and, gathering in secret places, performed their service to the true God, our Lord Jesus Christ. Meanwhile, the persecutor

1. At the beginning of the third century.
2. The chief city of the Roman province of Bithynia, on the southern shore of the Propontis (Sea of Marmara) opposite Byzantium.
3. Proconsuls were the emperor's governors in the provinces or regions.
4. Ares or Mars was a pagan god; he was considered the god of war and at the same time the guardian of people and fields against everything harmful.

ordered a strict inquiry to be made as to whether anyone was resisting his command, and whether there were any who did not worship the idol of Ares. It was discovered that Christians were resisting the persecutor, for they did not heed the proconsul's command and did not render to the demon the honor due to the one true God alone. The persecutor, angered that the Christians would not obey him, ordered them to be sought out and handed over to torments.

At that time, forty-nine Christians were concealed in a certain secret place, offering prayers. Among them was a beautiful maiden named Euphemia, of noble birth, the daughter of the senator Philophron and his wife Theodorosia, devout people. The persecutor was informed of these Christians who were hiding, and he ordered them all to be seized and brought before him for judgment. At once his savage servants rushed, weapons in hand, upon the gathered rational flock of Christ like beasts upon their prey. They surrounded on every side the house where the faithful secretly served God, so that no one could escape. Breaking down the doors, they mercilessly dragged the Christians out one by one, and, having seized them all, led them with dishonor and mockery to the proconsul. Led like sheep to the slaughter, the holy and humble servants of Christ stood before the proud persecutor, ready to suffer for their Lord even unto the shedding of their blood.

Seeing them, the proud ruler said:

"Are you the ones who resist the command of the emperor and of us, despising the sacrifice offered in honor of the great god Ares?"

The Christians answered:

"The command of the emperor, or of you, proconsul—if it is not contrary to the God of Heaven—must indeed be obeyed. But if it is contrary to God, then we must not only refuse to obey, but even resist. Had you commanded us in something wherein we are bound to obey the authorities, we would have rendered unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's (Mt. 22:20). But since your command is opposed to God and hateful to Him—for you command us to honor the creature instead of the Creator, and compel us to worship and sacrifice to a demon, and not to the Most High God—we shall never carry out this command of

yours, for we are true worshippers of the true God who dwells in Heaven."

Then the persecutor opened his deceitful mouth and, sharpening his flattering tongue like a razor, addressed them with cunning speech, striving by promises of gifts and honors to turn from the straight path to ruinous idol-worship those whom the Lord "purchased with His precious blood."[5] At the same time the proconsul threatened them with terrible torments if they would not do as he advised and commanded.

But the saints answered:

"Your gifts and honors, proconsul, which you promise us, we have long since cast away, loathed, and counted as 'loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus'[6] (Phil. 3:8), for we possess heavenly blessings, greater and better than earthly ones. Earthly blessings are temporary and fleeting, but heavenly ones are eternal and unchanging (2 Cor. 4:18). We not only do not fear the terrible torments with which you threaten us, but greatly desire to endure them, that the power and strength of our God may be made manifest in us, so that you might marvel and, recognizing the weakness of your defiled gods, be put to shame. But why continue this verbal dispute? Begin what you have resolved to do, and you will see that we have far greater steadfastness in endurance than you have zeal for tormenting us."

Then the persecutor began to torment them with various tortures, and for nineteen whole days the saints endured diverse torments, receiving new wounds each day and suffering hunger and thirst. The holy maiden Euphemia was among them, young and beautiful. To encourage her, they said:

"Strive, maiden, for the sake of the Heavenly Bridegroom; strive to please Him through suffering; strive to meet Him with the wise virgins, that He may love you as His bride and bring you into His bridal chamber."[7]

5. Canon for the Meeting of the Lord, Ode 3, Irmos.
6. That is, we count, in comparison with the blessings obtained through Christ, as mere refuse swept out of a room.
7. Here is meant the Savior's parable of the wise virgins (see Mt. 25:1–13).

Then, on the twentieth day, they were brought to trial, where the proconsul asked them:

"Perhaps, taught by your sufferings, you will now consent to obey our decree?"

Then the holy martyrs, together with St. Euphemia, answered:

"Do not hope, proconsul, to turn us from the straight path. You could sooner overturn the mountains on earth and move the stars in Heaven than tear our hearts away from the true God."

Enraged by these words, the persecutor ordered them to be struck long upon the face. Then, seeing that this had no effect, he decided to send them to the emperor, but meanwhile ordered them confined in prison. As they were being led there, the proconsul saw St. Euphemia, a young and beautiful maiden, shining among the host of holy martyrs like the moon among the stars, and like a wolf he snatched this sheep from Christ's flock. But she lifted her eyes and hands to Heaven and cried out:

"Forsake me not, my most beloved Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, for I hope in Thee. Deliver not unto beasts the soul that loveth Thee and confesseth Thy holy name. Let not mine enemy rejoice over me. Strengthen me, Thy weak handmaid, lest iniquity prevail against me."

Wishing to turn her to his godlessness, the persecutor contrived every means to beguile her, ensnaring her maidenly heart with gentle words, gifts, and various promises.

But she said firmly:

"Do not think, persecutor, that you can easily bend my weakness to your impiety and iniquity with cunning persuasion. For though I am a woman by nature, weak in the flesh and young in years, my heart is nevertheless firmer than yours, and the strength of my faith is far greater than your courage. Moreover, by the mercy of my Christ, I possess greater understanding than all your pagan orators, with whom you consider yourselves wise, though in truth you are more foolish than all the ignorant, since you refuse to know the true God and honor a demon as a god. Therefore, you will not beguile me with cunning words as the serpent once beguiled our foremother; you will not make this bitter world sweet to me with its pleasures, which I count as bitterness for

the sake of my sweetest Jesus; and you will not overcome 'the power that is made perfect in weakness,'[8] (2 Cor. 12:9), however strong your assaults may be. For I hope in my Christ that He will not forsake me nor withdraw from me His mighty helping hand, until the proud head of the demon is trampled beneath a woman's feet."

Then the persecutor, put to shame by St. Euphemia's answer, grew exceedingly angry. Changing into rage the vile affection he had hitherto shown her, he ordered a wheel to be prepared for torture, fitted with many sharp knives. As the servants bound the holy maiden to the wheel, she armed herself with the sign of the Cross. They began to turn the wheel, and the martyr's body was cut to pieces, while her joints were crushed.

But she prayed earnestly to God.

"O Lord Jesus Christ," cried the holy maiden, "enlightenment of my soul, fountain of life, Who grantest salvation to those who hope in Thee! Come now to my aid, that all may know that Thou art the one God and the sure hope of those who trust in Thee: 'There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.'"[9] (Ps. 90:9–10)

When she had prayed, the wheel suddenly stopped, and the servants fell powerless, for an Angel of God appeared, broke the mechanism, took the holy maiden down from the wheel, healed her wounds, and restored her to health. She came down from the wheel whole and well, and joyfully sang, giving thanks to God and glorifying His almighty power.

Seeing this, the persecutor and all who were there were bewildered and greatly astonished at the miracle. Yet where malice had blinded the eyes of the soul, so great a miracle could bring no benefit: they were unable to recognize the mighty hand of the true God. "The heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed" (Is. 6:10); and they considered this wondrous sign to be the work of sorcery.

8. That is, the power of God, which strengthens weak people.
9. That is, no calamity will overtake, and no wound will weigh upon the body of, those who have made God their refuge (Ps. 90:9–10).

After this, the persecutor ordered a great fire to be kindled in a special furnace and the saint to be cast into it. While the furnace was being heated and the flames within it were already blazing fiercely, the holy martyr again gave herself to prayer, which once served as armor to protect the three youths in the fiery furnace. The holy maiden opposed the material fire with the fire of fervent love for God, and, lifting her eyes to Heaven, said:

O God, who dwellest on high and beholdest the lowly (Is. 33:5; Ps. 137:6)! In Babylon Thou didst keep the three youths, who for Thy law were given over to the fire, whole and unhurt by the fire through Thy holy Angel, and didst send them dew from heaven. Be Thou then a helper to me also, Thy handmaid, since I am striving, my Christ, for Thy glory!

Thus she spoke, and, having armed herself with the sign of the Cross as with a weapon, she stood calmly awaiting that they should cast her into the fire.

Then the two soldiers, Victor and Sosthenes, who were to cast the martyr into the furnace, saw a wondrous sight appear in the fire: before them appeared Angels of God, who scattered the fire in the furnace and forbade them to touch the bride of Christ. Seeing this miracle, they said to the tormentor:

"We shall not dare, proconsul, to touch this holy maiden with our defiled hands and cast her into the fire, even if you command us to be beheaded, for we behold a marvelous wonder which your eyes do not see. It is better for us to endure your wrath than the anger of those radiant men who threaten us from the fiery flame."

Hearing this, the tormentor grew angry with them; supposing that they were Christians and therefore unwilling to cast the maiden into the furnace, he ordered them to be bound in chains, and he entrusted the execution of his command concerning Euphemia to two other soldiers, one of whom was called Caesar and the other Varius. These, seizing the virgin, cast her into the furnace, but at once a mighty flame burst out of the furnace, rushed upon the soldiers who had cast the maiden in, and burned them to ashes on that very spot, and it made the other attendants flee. But the saint, rejoicing in the midst of the fur-

nace as though in a bright chamber and cool dew, sang the song of the three youths: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, praised and highly exalted forever" (Dan. 3:52). And a wondrous miracle came to pass: the fire did not touch her, did not even harm her garments, for her Bridegroom, the incorruptible Christ the Lord, Himself secretly descended into the furnace to His holy bride and bedewed her with heavenly coolness. When the furnace went out, the saint came forth whole and healthy, to the astonishment of all. Not knowing what to do, the tormentor ordered her cast into prison, saying to himself: "In the night I will devise what to do with this sorceress." Then, summoning Victor and Sosthenes, he fell upon them with all his fury and promised to destroy them if they did not worship the idols.

They answered:

"Until now we have gone astray, not knowing the truth; now we have come to know the One God who created heaven and earth: Him we believe in and worship, but your gods, to which we too once bowed, not knowing that the demons were deceiving us, we will no longer honor from now on. Do with us what you will: our bodies are in your hands, but our souls are under God's protection."

And the tormentor sentenced them to be torn apart by beasts. When the saints went to the place where they were to be torn by the beasts, they prayed fervently to God that He would have mercy upon them and, forgiving them the sins committed while they were in error and unbelief, would bring their souls to where those who believe in Him abide. And at once a Divine voice sounded from heaven, calling them to rest; hearing it, they gladly commended their souls into the hands of God. The beasts did not touch their bodies, which were afterwards secretly buried by the faithful.

When the night had passed and morning came, the tormentor sat down on the judgment seat, and Saint Euphemia was brought out of the prison; going to judgment, she sang with joy:

"'O God, I will sing a new song to Thee' (Ps. 143:9). I will glorify Thee, O Lord, my strength! I will sing of Thee among the nations and glorify Thy name, for Thou alone art the true God, and there is no other God besides Thee."

Singing thus, she came to the judgment. Here she was long interrogated, tortured, and compelled to offer sacrifice. When she still refused to obey, the tormentor, convinced of her steadfastness, ordered her body to be hung up and scraped with sharp knives. Yet even after this torment she was unharmed by the power of God. Then, digging a deep ditch and filling it with water, they placed in it countless numbers of snakes, vipers, poisonous sea creatures, and all manner of reptiles, both land-dwelling and water-dwelling; when the ditch was filled with them, the tormentor commanded that Saint Euphemia be thrown into it.

She, signing herself with the sign of the Cross, said:

"My light, Jesus Christ! Thou didst keep Jonah unharmed in the belly of the sea-monster, Thou didst deliver Daniel from the mouths of the lions; keep me too with Thy mighty hand, that Thy holy name may be glorified in me."

With these words she threw herself into the ditch, and the serpents and reptiles, approaching her, did her no harm, but seemed to care for her, for they bore her upon themselves, not letting her sink into the depth of the ditch filled with water; the holy virgin came out of it, by the mercy of God, without any harm to herself. The tormentor was now in complete perplexity, not knowing what else to do with her. Still wishing to destroy her, and thinking that the sorcery which, in his opinion, the saint possessed overcame only open dangers and not secret plots, he ordered another ditch dug and filled with sharp spears, swords, and knives, fixing all this weaponry at the bottom of the ditch with the points upward, and covering it outside slightly with brushwood and earth. Then he commanded the martyr to cross that ditch, reckoning that she, knowing nothing, would fall upon the sharp weapons fixed there and die of her wounds. But the saint crossed easily, like a bird flying over nets; some of the pagans, not knowing of that ditch, fell into it and perished. Seeing this, the tormentor was struck with shame, and the words of Scripture were fulfilled here: "He digged a pit and hollowed it out, and fell into the hole which he had made" (Ps. 7:16).

The saint, glorifying God, sang:

"'Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord, or show forth all His praise?' (Ps. 105:2), for Thou hast kept Thy tormented servant unharmed from wounds, saved her from fire, protected her from beasts, water, and the wheel, and brought her out of the ditch. And now, O Lord, deliver my soul from the hand of him who from the beginning has been the enemy of all who obey Thee; 'remember not the sins of my youth nor my transgressions' (Ps. 24:7), but by the drops of Thy blood shed for me, cleanse the defilement of my flesh and spirit, for Thou art the purification, sanctification, and enlightenment of Thy servants (Heb. 1:3; Lk. 2:32)."

The proconsul tried once more to beguile her with gentle words.

"Do not dishonor," he said, "your family, do not destroy the flower of your youth, and do not doom yourself to death. Honor the great Ares, and you will be honored, praised by all of us, and rewarded with great glory and wealth."

He spoke much else to beguile her, but she laughed at him and called him mad.

Then he began to torment her again, and, having beaten her cruelly with rods, he ordered her to be sawn in two with a sharp saw; but the saw could do no harm to her holy body. Then he ordered her to be roasted on a red-hot griddle, but the griddle grew cool, for Angels stood with the bride of Christ, preserving her in all her torments. At last the proconsul sentenced Euphemia to be devoured by beasts.

When the saint was led into the circus where she was to be torn by beasts, she prayed that the Lord would send an end to her torment, would receive her soul into His hands, and would bid her pass from her much-suffering body into the longed-for land.

"O Lord of hosts!" she said, "Thou hast shown in me Thy invincible power and Thy unconquered right hand, Thou hast shown the weakness of the demons and the madness of the tormentor, and hast set me above all torments. As Thou didst permit the slaying and shedding of blood of the martyrs who were before me, so now accept also my sacrifice, offered to Thee from a contrite soul and a humble spirit, and grant rest to my soul in the habitations of the saints and in the choir of martyrs, 'for Thou art blessed forever.'"

When Saint Euphemia finished her prayer, beasts were let loose upon her—lions and bears—but they, approaching her, licked her feet. Only one she-bear inflicted a small wound upon her, from which blood flowed; at that moment a voice was heard from heaven calling her to the heavenly mansions, and at once she gave up her spirit to the Lord, for whose sake she had suffered with all devotion. And the earth quaked and the city was shaken, walls collapsed, temples fell, and great terror seized everyone. When all fled from the circus in fear, the holy body of the martyr remained stretched out upon the ground.

The parents of Euphemia took their holy daughter and with honor buried her near the city, at a distance of one stadion[10]. They gave thanks to God, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to be the parents of such a daughter, who through the shedding of her blood had become the bride of the heavenly Bridegroom, Christ, King of all, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

In thy sufferings thou didst struggle nobly, and after thy death thou dost sanctify us with the streams of thy miracles, O all-praised one. Wherefore we sing thy holy dormition, hastening by faith to thy divine church, that we may be delivered from the infirmities of the soul and receive the grace of miracles.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Sebastiana

Память святой мученицы Севастианы

Saint Sebastiana lived in the reign of Domitian[11] and was a disciple of the Apostle Paul. The governor George ordered her seized in

10. A church in honor of the Great Martyr Euphemia was later built here. In this church the fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon) was held in the year 451 A.D. In the fifth century churches were built in honor of the Great Martyr in Rome and Mediolanum. Her relics under Theodosius the Great were brought to Alexandria, and afterward returned to Chalcedon. After Chalcedon was taken by the Persians (617), the relics of St. Euphemia were transferred to Constantinople, where they are preserved to this day.

the city of Marcianopolis[12]. She was beaten and cast into a red-hot furnace, but remained there unharmed. Then she was led to Heraclea[13], where she was hanged on a tree, after which she was thrown to the beasts. But again she remained unhurt. At last her head was cut off with a sword; instead of blood, milk flowed from her[14].

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Melitina

Память святой мученицы Мелитины

Saint Melitina was from the city of Marcianopolis in Thrace. She lived in the reign of Antoninus,[15] under the hegemon Antiochus.

She worked many miracles: by her prayer she cast down idols, shattered the images of Apollo and Hercules, and brought many to the true faith. She then converted the hegemon's wife to Christ. For this she was beheaded. Her honorable body first lay unburied. A Macedonian named Acacius, passing through that place on his way to his homeland, asked permission to take her holy relics. He placed them in a small coffer and wished to carry them to his homeland. In the course of the voyage across the sea he fell ill and died. When the ship reached the cape of the island of Lemnos,[16] the body of the holy martyr was laid there. Near her tomb the body of Acacius was also buried.

* * *

11. Domitian was a Roman emperor who reigned from 81 to 96 A.D., a cruel persecutor of Christians.

12. Marcianopolis was a city in Lower Moesia on the road from Constantinople to the Danube; later it was Preslav, now the village of Pravodi in Bulgaria.

13. Heraclia or Heraclea is a frequently occurring city name. Here one should understand the city in Thrace of this name on the Propontis (Sea of Marmara), with an excellent harbor. It is an ancient colony of the Samians, now Eregli. In Heraclea the tormentor of Sebastiana was the governor Pompian.

14. According to the Greek Prologues her body was cast into the sea, but three Angels carried it to Rhizistus (Redestos in Thrace on the Sea of Marmara, now Rodosto).

15. The Roman emperor Antoninus Pius reigned from 138 to 161 A.D.

16. Lemnos is one of the largest islands of the Aegean Sea. It was reckoned to belong to the Thracian territory, and lies 87 miles from Athos.

Memory of the Holy Martyr Ludmila

Память святой мученицы Людмилы

The Blessed Ludmila was a native of Serbia, the daughter of a Serbian prince. She was given in marriage to the Czech prince Boriwoj. At that time the Czech people had not yet been baptized; Prince Boriwoj himself and his young wife were pagans. After their marriage they came to believe in Christ and were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; they built churches and appointed priests at them. They had three sons and one daughter. Boriwoj died at the age of thirty-six. The Blessed Ludmila bore her sorrow with complete submission to the will of God, and distributed all her property to the poor. Her son Wratislaw succeeded his father on the throne and ruled his people for thirty-three years, after which he also died. Power was taken into his hands by Wenceslaus, Ludmila's grandson. Then Wenceslaus's mother hated her mother-in-law Ludmila and sought in every way to destroy her. Learning of this, Ludmila withdrew to the city of Tetin. Her daughter-in-law incited two boyars and sent them to Tetin to kill the Blessed Ludmila. These two villains, coming there, gathered around them many other evil men like themselves. When evening came, they surrounded the courtyard and the palace itself where the Blessed Ludmila was, broke open the doors and entered the palace. Seizing the holy princess, they threw a cord around her neck and strangled her. Thus the Blessed Ludmila, pleasing to God, suffered martyrdom; this happened on a Saturday, at the first hour of the night; she was then sixty-one years old. God glorified the place of her burial with many miracles (she was buried not in a church but beneath the city wall): every night burning candles appeared over that place; a blind man received his sight when he touched the earth from the grave of St. Ludmila. Hearing of these wondrous signs, her grandson Wenceslaus carried out the translation of her relics to the city of Prague and laid them in the church of St. George, where to this day they send forth many signs and miracles. The wicked mother of Wenceslaus perished by an evil death.[5829]

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Memory of Hierarch Cyprian, Metropolitan of Kiev

Память святителя Киприана, митрополита Киевского

Saint Cyprian, Metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia, Wonderworker, was a native of Serbia, from the city of Tarnovo, and was distinguished by his holy life,[17] great wisdom and wide reading in the sacred books.[18] He edified everyone by his God-inspired teaching and his soul-saving admonitions. He zealously labored in the work of unceasing instruction;[19] he exhorted his flock to abide in the fear of God and to refrain in every way from frivolous laughter and idle talk, and especially to be diligent in prayer and in true repentance. He loved a quiet, silent life, and therefore often withdrew to his metropolitan village of Golenishchevo.[20] This particularly tranquil place lay between two rivers, the Setun and the Ramenisa, and was surrounded by abundant forest. Here he built a church in the name of three hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom.

Living in this place, Hierarch Cyprian ordained bishops and priests and diligently engaged in copying and translating many sacred books from Greek into Slavonic.[5834] He also wrote the Life of the great wonderworker, Hierarch Peter, Metropolitan of all Russia.[21] Saint Cyprian also exercised himself much in prayer and in the reading of the Divine

17. Hierarch Cyprian first practiced the monastic labors on Athos, where, as the epistle of Patriarch Euthymius of Tarnovo to the monk Cyprian on Athos attests, he won renown by his labors.

18. By his learning, his zeal for knowledge and his familiarity with the Holy Scriptures he was known even on Athos, whence he addressed the aforementioned Patriarch Euthymius with a request to write to him about certain "church matters," namely questions about bowing on the days of Pentecost and during the twelve days between the Nativity of Christ and the Theophany, and about communing the Holy Mysteries in the absence of a priest in the wilderness. His learning, as well as his holy life, drew the special attention of Patriarch Philotheus of Constantinople, who drew him near and made him a trusted confidant, and afterwards ordained him Metropolitan, first of Kiev and Lithuania. After the death of Hierarch Alexis, Cyprian became Metropolitan of all Russia, taking up the administration of the Russian Church in 1390, after two years of ecclesiastical-hierarchical turmoil.

19. Among the monuments of his teaching remain, among other things, his various epistles, imbued with the spirit of true Christian wisdom and of zealous pastoral care for the spiritual needs of the flock entrusted to him. Among such epistles the following deserve particular attention: the epistles to Abbot Athanasius and to the clergy of Pskov.

20. Golenishchevo is a village near Moscow, situated on a picturesque high place beyond the Sparrow Hills, in the Moscow district; it exists to this day. At other times the hierarch withdrew to the so-called "Holy Lake" in the Vladimir volost, where he also built a church in the name of the Transfiguration of the Lord.

Scriptures.[22] He always kept in his thoughts the remembrance of death, the Last Judgment of Christ, the torment of sinners and the blessedness of the righteous. Advancing in such God-pleasing labors, Metropolitan Cyprian reached a great old age and fell ill in that same village of Golenishchevo. Four days before his death he wrote a farewell letter in which he forgave and blessed all the faithful, and asked their forgiveness himself, showing in this true Christian wisdom and humility. He did so because he knew the power of humility: it remits sins and directs all things toward good. Before his death the hierarch commanded the bishops and attendants around him to read this letter over his grave at his burial.[23] And in such humility, with a prayer of thanksgiving on his lips, he fell asleep in the Lord in the year 6914 from the creation of the world, on the sixteenth day of September.[24]

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Dorotheus the Hermit

Память преподобного Дорофея пустынника

The Venerable Dorotheus was from Thebaid and dwelt in the desert near Alexandria, in a place called "The Cells of the Hermits."[25] Palladi-

21. The Life of Metropolitan Peter, composed by St. Cyprian, breathes living piety and is the fruit of gratitude for deliverance from misfortunes and a grievous illness, of which Cyprian himself bears witness. Several historical works by Cyprian, which have come down to our time, are also ascribed to him, some of which entered the so-called "Book of Degrees"; there is a record that St. Cyprian wrote many lives of Russian saints.

22. According to the accounts of the chronicle, he was filled with "all wisdom and understanding," and was "very learned and exceedingly spiritual; he wrote books with his own hand, was often occupied in prayer, and in honoring the Divine Scriptures."

23. The farewell, or spiritual, testament of St. Cyprian was read, in accordance with his will, at his burial, and likewise afterwards at the burials of his successors. It is full of Christian wisdom, imbued with the spirit of deep piety, and speaks with moving eloquence of the transience, vanity and nothingness of all earthly things, and of the remembrance of death.

24. In 1406 A.D. His relics were discovered in 1472 and rest in the Moscow Dormition Cathedral beneath the floor (the memory of the discovery and translation of his relics is celebrated on May 27). During the administration of St. Cyprian of the Russian Church, the miraculous deliverance of Moscow and all Russia, through the protection of the Mother of God, from the terrible invasion of the Asiatic conqueror Tamerlane deserves particular attention; it coincided with the translation from Vladimir to Moscow of the wonderworking Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God, carried out by the command and at the wish of Hierarch Cyprian.

us, Bishop of Helenopolis,[26] who in his youth was an eyewitness of his ascetic labors, relates the following about him.

For sixty years the elder dwelt in one cave, leading a very austere life; every day during the midday heat, wandering along the sea, he gathered stones and built cells from them, giving them to those who could not build them themselves. I, says Palladius, once said to him:

"Why, Father, at such an age do you torment your body in the fierce heat?"

And he answered me:

"So that it may not torment me, but I may torment it."

He ate each day in moderation, only dry bread and a little desert greenery, once a day, and he likewise took water in moderation.

God is witness that no one ever saw him lying on a mat or sleeping; throughout the night he sat weaving baskets from palm branches, and selling them he bought food for himself. And I thought, does he live so austerely only when I am present? Wishing to learn about his whole life, I asked many of his disciples whether his life had always been so strict. They told me that from childhood he had lived this way, and by his custom he never slept, except that, while doing something or taking food, he would sometimes close his eyes, so that many times bread fell from his lips during the meal. Once when we urged him to sleep a little on a mat, he said to us, as if out of pity for us:

"If you ever persuade an Angel to sleep, then persuade me too."

On one day, says Palladius, he sent me about the ninth hour to his well to bring a small vessel of water for his meal. And it happened that when I approached the well and bent over, I saw in it an asp,[27] and

25. The Thebaid is the region of the city of Thebes, famous in antiquity; by the same name the whole of Upper (southern) Egypt was called in general, after its principal city, Thebes. The Cells of the Hermits was the name given to one of the Egyptian deserts, on the western side of the river Nile.

26. Palladius of Helenopolis (368–430), disciple of St. Dorotheus, a native of Galatia, came to Alexandria in 388, whence he afterwards withdrew into a nearby desert, where St. Dorotheus also labored, and afterwards settled in Bethlehem. In 399 he was elected bishop of Helenopolis in Bithynia in Asia Minor. After that, Emperor Arcadius exiled him, as a partisan of St. John Chrysostom, to Upper Egypt, whence in 408 he was transferred to Antinoe, and in 412 he compiled a collection of lives of the saints and accounts of them, which in his honor was called the "Lausiac History."

from fear I drew no water at all, but ran back to him, reported what I had seen and said:

"We are lost, Father, for I saw an asp in the well."

The venerable one, smiling a little and shaking his head, said to me:

"If the devil wished to cast vipers, asps and other poisonous reptiles into all the wells and all the springs of water, you would never drink water and would die of thirst."

Having said this, he rose and went himself to the well, drew water, signed it with the sign of the Cross, and drank of it, saying:

"Where the Cross is, the power of demons does no harm at all."[28]

* * *

NOTES

5829. The Blessed Ludmila, wife of the Christian prince of Bohemia, Boriwoj, lived at the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century. She was the grandmother of St. Prince Wenceslaus (926–935, son of Duke Wratislaw and of the pagan Drahomira; he was of holy life, beloved of the people, and after his death came to be venerated as the patron of the land). She received holy baptism together with her spouse from St. Methodius, Equal-to-the-Apostles, in Moravia, which neighbors Bohemia. After her husband's death, living in the Bohemian capital of Prague, she carefully brought up her grandson, Prince Wenceslaus, in the truths of the faith. St. Ludmila received a martyr's end in 927, through the machinations of her daughter-in-law Drahomira, who had returned to paganism. Signs and wonders were wrought at her tomb; the report of them moved Prince Wenceslaus to solemnly transfer her incorrupt body to Prague, to the church of St. George the Great Martyr, which his father had built. She is regarded as the patroness of Bohemia.

5834. Thus St. Cyprian translated from the Greek the Euchologion and the Service Book, which in certain separate parts were partly adapted to the needs of Russian church practice; also canons and prayers, and the Kormchaya (Nomocanon), which in the 16th century was still kept in the Moscow Dormition Cathedral. Some minor pieces of a liturgical character, partly translated and partly original, are also attributed to St. Cyprian. The hierarch also collected the canonical writings of Russian hierarchs and princes, circulated copies of the liturgy and of other services, offered explanations of the services, denounced abuses in their performance, and so on. In general, in the history of the Russian Church Metropolitan Cyprian occupies an important place, especially as a

27. The asp or basilisk is one of the most venomous snakes, whose poison is deadly; it is common in the sandy deserts of Arabia, Egypt and the Sahara.

28. Lausiac History, ch. 2. St. Dorotheus reposed at the end of the 4th century, in the reign of Theodosius the Great (379–395).

worker in the field of correcting the liturgical books and church rites. An ancient notice about St. Cyprian says that he "translated many holy books from the Greek language into Russian and left a good number of writings for our benefit."



THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 17

17 сентября

New Calendar September 17 · Old Calendar September 30 (civil dates)

Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs Faith, Hope and Love, and of their Mother Sophia

Страдание святых мучениц Веры, Надежды и Любви, и матери их Софии

In the reign of the emperor Hadrian there lived at Rome a widow, an Italian by birth, named Sophia, which in translation means Wisdom. She was a Christian, and in keeping with her name she conducted her life prudently, according to that wisdom which the Apostle James extols, saying: "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits"[1] (Jas. 3:17). This wise Sophia, living in honourable wedlock, bore three daughters, to whom she gave names corresponding to the three Christian virtues: the first daughter she named Faith, the second Hope, and the third Love. And indeed, what else could proceed from Christian wisdom but virtues pleasing to God? Shortly after the birth of her third daughter, Sophia lost her husband. Remaining a widow, she continued to live piously, pleasing God by prayer, fasting and almsgiving; and her daughters she brought up as a wise mother can do: she strove to accustom them to manifest in their lives those Christian virtues whose names they bore.

As the children grew, their virtues grew with them. They already knew well the books of the prophets and apostles, were accustomed to

1. The Apostle contrasts earthly, worldly wisdom with the wisdom that is from above, that is, descending from God, and points out the qualities of the latter: it is free from all sinfulness and passion; it loves peace and loves to make peace in every strife; in order not to disturb peace, it meekly endures every injustice; it is free from a passion for disputes and quarrels, and even seeks to subdue this passion in others through submission (it is compliant); it is full of mercy and good works.

heed the instructions of their teachers, applied themselves diligently to reading, and were zealous in prayer and in household labours. Obeying their holy and God-wise mother, they prospered in all things and advanced from strength to strength. And since they were exceedingly beautiful and prudent, soon everyone began to take notice of them.

The report of their wisdom and beauty spread throughout all Rome. The governor of the district, Antiochus, heard of them and wished to see them. As soon as he saw them, he at once became convinced that they were Christians; for they did not wish to conceal their faith in Christ, did not doubt their hope in Him, and did not weaken in their love for Him, but openly before all glorified Christ the Lord, abhorring the God-abominable pagan idols.

Antiochus informed Emperor Hadrian of all this, and he did not delay to send his servants at once, that they might bring the maidens to him. Fulfilling the imperial command, the servants went to the house of Sophia, and when they came to her they found her engaged in instructing her daughters. The servants announced to her that the emperor was calling her together with her daughters. Understanding for what purpose the emperor was calling them, they all turned to God with this prayer:

"Almighty God, do with us according to Thy holy will; do not forsake us, but send us Thy holy help, so that our heart may not be dismayed before the proud tormentor, that we may not fear his dreadful torments, and not be terrified at death; let nothing tear us away from Thee, our God."

Having offered this prayer and bowed to the Lord God, all four—mother and daughters—taking each other by the hand like a woven garland, went to the emperor, and, often gazing toward heaven, with sighs from the heart and secret prayer, committed themselves to the help of Him who commanded them not to fear "them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul" (Mt. 10:28). When they came to the imperial palace, they signed themselves with the sign of the Cross, saying:

"Help us, O God, our Saviour, for the glory of Thy holy Name."

They were led into the palace, and they stood before the emperor, who sat proudly upon his throne. Seeing the emperor, they paid him the honour due to him, but they stood before him without any fear, without any change of countenance, with courage in their hearts, and looked upon everyone with a cheerful gaze, as though they had been summoned to a feast; with such joy they came before the emperor to be tortured for their Lord.

Seeing their noble, bright and fearless faces, the emperor began to ask what family they were of, what their names were, and what their faith was. Being wise, the mother answered so prudently that all those present, listening to her replies, marvelled at her understanding. Having briefly mentioned her origin and name, Sophia began to speak of Christ, whose origin no one can explain[2], but whose Name every race must worship[3]. She openly confessed her faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and, calling herself His servant, glorified His Name.

"I am a Christian," she said, "this is the precious name in which I can take pride."

At the same time she said that she had also betrothed her daughters to Christ, so that they might keep their incorruptible purity for the incorruptible Bridegroom, the Son of God.

Then the emperor, seeing before him so wise a woman, but not wishing to enter into a lengthy conversation with her or to pass judgment, deferred the matter to another time. He sent Sophia together with her daughters to a noble woman named Palladia, charging her to keep watch over them, and to present them to him for judgment after three days.

Living in the house of Palladia and having at her disposal a good deal of time for instructing her daughters, Sophia strengthened them in the faith day and night, teaching them with words inspired by God.

2. "Who shall declare His generation?" – so it is said in the book of the Prophet Isaiah (Is. 53:8); that is, no one is able to depict worthily the origin or birth of Jesus Christ, both His pre-eternal birth from God the Father and His temporal birth from the Most Holy Virgin Mary. This great mystery is not fully revealed even to the Angels (see 1 Pet. 1:12).

3. See Phil. 2:10. Here is meant the name of the Son of God, by reason of which all orders of beings, heavenly and earthly, and even the inhabitants of the underworld, the evil spirits, must worship Christ.

"My beloved daughters," she said, "now is the time of your struggle, now has come the day of your espousal to the immortal Bridegroom. Now, in keeping with your names, you must show a steadfast faith, an unfailing hope, an unfeigned and eternal love. The hour of your triumph has come, when you will receive the martyr's crown and be wedded to your most beloved Bridegroom, and with great joy you will enter His radiant chamber. My daughters, for the sake of this honour of Christ, do not spare your young flesh; do not spare your beauty and youth, for the sake of the Most Beautiful, who is fairer than the sons of men, and for the sake of eternal life do not grieve that you will lose this temporal life. For your heavenly Beloved, Jesus Christ, is eternal health, unspeakable beauty and unending life. And when your bodies for His sake are tormented unto death, He will clothe them in incorruption and will make your wounds bright as the stars in heaven. When your beauty is taken from you through torments for Him, He will adorn you with a heavenly beauty which the eye of man has never seen. And when you lose temporal life, laying down your souls for your Lord, He will reward you with endless life, in which He will glorify you for ever before His heavenly Father and before His holy Angels, and all the heavenly powers will call you brides and confessors of Christ. All the venerable ones will praise you, the wise virgins will rejoice over you and will receive you into their fellowship. My dear daughters! Do not allow yourselves to be seduced by the allurements of the enemy; for, as I think, the emperor will lavish caresses upon you and promise great gifts, offering you glory, wealth and honour, all the beauty and sweetness of this corruptible and vain world; but do not desire any such thing, for all this vanishes like smoke, is scattered like dust by the wind, and as flower and grass wither and return to the earth. Do not be afraid when you see fierce torments, for, having suffered a little, you will conquer the enemy and triumph for ever. I believe in my God, Jesus Christ; I believe that He will not forsake you suffering in His Name, for He Himself has said: 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee' (Is. 49:15). Unceasingly He will remain with you in all your torments, looking upon your struggles,

strengthening your weakness and preparing for you the incorruptible crown as your reward. O my beautiful daughters! Remember my sufferings at your birth, remember the labours with which I nourished you, remember the words with which I taught you the fear of God, and comfort your mother in her old age by your good and courageous confession of faith in Christ. It will be a triumph and joy and honour and glory for me among all the faithful, if I am counted worthy to be called the mother of martyrs, if I see your valiant endurance for Christ, your steadfast confession of His Holy Name and your death for Him. Then my soul will rejoice, and my spirit will exult, and my old age will be strengthened. Then you will indeed be my daughters, if, having heeded your mother's instruction, you stand for your Lord unto blood and die for Him with zeal."

Having listened with tenderness to such instruction from their mother, the maidens felt sweetness in their hearts and rejoiced in spirit, awaiting the time of torment as the hour of the marriage feast. For, being holy branches from a holy root, they desired with all their soul that to which their wise mother Sophia exhorted them. They took all her words to heart and prepared themselves for the struggle of martyrdom, as though they were going to a radiant chamber, fortifying themselves with faith, strengthening themselves with hope, and kindling in themselves the fire of love for the Lord. Encouraging and confirming one another, they promised their mother to fulfil in very deed, with the help of Christ, all her soul-profitable counsels.

When the third day came, they were brought before the lawless emperor for judgment. Supposing that they would easily yield to his seductive words, the emperor began to speak to them thus:

"Children! Seeing your beauty and sparing your youth, I counsel you as a father: bow down to the gods, the rulers of the universe; and if you listen to me and do what you are commanded, I will call you my children. I will summon the chiefs and governors and all my counsellors, and in their presence I will declare you my daughters, and you will be praised and honoured by all. But if you do not listen and do not carry out my command, you will bring great evil upon yourselves, and you will grieve the old age of your mother, and you yourselves will perish at

the very time when you could most of all rejoice, living carefree and merrily. For I will hand you over to a cruel death and, breaking your limbs, I will cast them to be devoured by dogs, and you will be trampled underfoot by all. Therefore, for your own good, listen to me: for I love you, and not only do I not wish to destroy your beauty and deprive you of this life, but I would wish to become a father to you."

But the holy maidens answered him with one voice and with one mind:

"Our Father is God, who dwells in the heavens. He cares for us and for our life, and He has mercy on our souls; we wish to be loved by Him and we desire to be called His true children. Worshipping Him and keeping His commandments and precepts, we spit upon your gods, and we do not fear your threat, for we desire only this: to suffer and to endure bitter torments for the sake of the sweetest Jesus Christ, our God."

Hearing such an answer from them, the emperor asked Mother Sophia what her daughters were called and how old they were.

Saint Sophia answered:

"The name of my first daughter is Faith, and she is twelve years old; the second, Hope, is ten years old, and the third, Love, is only nine years old."

The emperor was greatly astonished that at so young an age they possessed such courage and wisdom and could answer him thus. He began again to compel each of them to his impiety, and first he addressed the eldest sister, Faith, saying:

"Offer sacrifice to the great goddess Artemis."

But Faith refused. Then the emperor commanded that she be stripped naked and beaten. The tormentors, striking her without any mercy, said:

"Offer sacrifice to the great goddess Artemis."

But she endured the sufferings in silence, as though they were beating not her body but someone else's. Having achieved no success, the torturer ordered her maiden breasts to be cut off. But instead of blood, milk flowed from the wounds. All who beheld Faith's torment marvelled at this miracle and at the martyr's endurance; and shaking their heads,

they secretly reproached the emperor for his madness and cruelty, saying:

"What sin has this beautiful maiden committed, and for what is she suffering so? Woe to the madness of the emperor and his savage cruelty, which inhumanly destroys not only old men but even small children."

After this an iron grate was brought and set over a strong fire. When it had grown hot like glowing coals, and sparks flew from it, they laid the holy maiden Faith upon it. For two hours she lay on this grate, calling upon her Lord, and she was not in the least scorched, which astonished everyone. Then she was placed in a cauldron standing on the fire and filled with boiling pitch and oil, and even there she remained unharmed, and sitting in it as though in cool water, she sang praises to God. The torturer, not knowing what else to do with her, or by what means he might turn her from the faith of Christ, condemned her to be beheaded with the sword.

Hearing this sentence, Saint Faith was filled with joy and said to her mother:

"Pray for me, my mother, that I may complete my journey, reach the desired end, see my beloved Lord and Savior, and be delighted by beholding His Divinity."

And to her sisters she said:

"Remember, my dear sisters, to Whom we have made our vow, to Whom we have been betrothed; you know that we have been sealed with the holy cross of our Lord, and must serve Him for ever; therefore let us endure to the end. One and the same mother bore us, one raised and taught us, and therefore we must also accept one and the same death; as sisters of one womb, we must have one will. Let me be an example for you, that you too may both follow me to our Bridegroom, who calls us."

After this she kissed her mother, then, embracing her sisters, she kissed them as well, and went forth under the sword. Her mother did not grieve at all over her daughter, for her love of God had conquered in her the sorrow of the heart and the mother's pity for her children. She

was concerned only with this: that one of her daughters might be afraid of the torments and turn away from her Lord.

And she said to Faith:

"I bore you, my daughter, and for your sake I endured the pangs of childbirth. But you repay me with good, by dying for the name of Christ and shedding for Him that very blood which you received in my womb. Go to Him, my beloved, and, stained with your own blood as though clothed in purple, stand before the eyes of your Bridegroom in beauty; remember before Him your poor mother, and pray to Him for your sisters, that He may strengthen them in the same endurance that you show."

After this Saint Faith was beheaded and departed to her Head, Christ God. Her mother, embracing and kissing her much-suffering body, rejoiced and glorified Christ God, who had received her daughter Faith into His heavenly mansion.

Then the impious emperor set before himself the second sister, Hope, and said to her:

"Dear child! Take my counsel: I speak this out of love for you, as a father would — bow down to the great Artemis, so that you too may not perish as your eldest sister perished. You have seen her terrible torments, you have seen her grievous death; do you truly wish to suffer in the same way? Believe me, my child, that I pity your youth; if you obeyed my command, I would declare you my daughter."

Saint Hope answered:

"O emperor! Am I not the sister of her whom you have put to death? Was I not born of the same mother? Was I not nourished with the same milk, and did I not receive the same baptism as my holy sister? I grew up together with her, and from the same books and from the same instruction of our mother I learned to know God and our Lord Jesus Christ, to believe in Him and to worship Him alone. Do not think, O emperor, that I act or think otherwise, or desire anything different from what my sister Faith desires; no, I wish to walk in her footsteps. Do not delay, and do not seek to dissuade me with many words, but rather proceed to the deed itself, and you will see my unity of mind with my sister."

Hearing such an answer, the emperor delivered her to torment.

Stripping her naked, as Faith had been, the imperial servants beat her for a long time without any pity, until they grew weary. But she remained silent, as though not feeling any pain at all, and only looked at her blessed mother Sophia, who stood there, bravely beholding the sufferings of her daughter and praying to God that He would grant her steadfast endurance.

By the command of the lawless emperor, Saint Hope was cast into the fire, and, remaining unharmed like the three youths, she glorified God. After this she was hung up and was scraped with iron claws: her body fell away in pieces and blood flowed in streams, yet from her wounds there issued a wondrous fragrance, and on her face, bright and shining with the grace of the Holy Spirit, there was a smile. Saint Hope still reproached the torturer for being unable to overcome the endurance of so young a maiden.

"Christ is my help," she said, "and I not only do not fear torment, but I desire it as the sweetness of paradise: so pleasing to me are sufferings for Christ. But you, O torturer, await torment in the fiery Gehenna together with the demons whom you honour as gods."

Such speech still more inflamed the torturer, and he ordered a cauldron to be filled with pitch and oil, set on fire, and the saint to be cast into it. But when they were about to throw the saint into the boiling cauldron, it immediately melted like wax, while the pitch and oil spilled out and scorched everyone standing around. Thus the miraculous power of God did not forsake Saint Hope.

The proud torturer, seeing all this, would not come to know the true God, for his heart had been darkened by demonic delusion and pernicious error. But, mocked by a little maiden, he suffered great shame. Unwilling to bear such disgrace any longer, he at last condemned the saint to beheading by the sword. The maiden, hearing of the approach of her end, went with joy to her mother and said:

"My mother! May peace be with you; be well, and remember your daughter."

Her mother, embracing and kissing her, said:

"My daughter Hope! Blessed are you by the Lord God Most High, because you hope in Him and, for His sake, do not spare your blood; go to your sister Faith, and together with her stand before your Beloved."

Hope also kissed her sister Love, who was watching her sufferings, and said to her:

"Do not remain here either, sister; let us stand together before the Holy Trinity."

Having said this, she approached the lifeless body of her sister Faith and, embracing it with love, out of the pity natural to human beings she wished to weep, but for love of Christ she turned her tears into joy. Then, bowing her head, Saint Hope was beheaded by the sword.

Taking her body, the mother glorified God, rejoicing in the courage of her daughters, and with her sweet words and wise exhortations she urged her youngest daughter to the same endurance.

But the torturer summoned the third maiden, Love, and, as with the first two sisters, sought by flatteries to persuade her to turn away from the Crucified and to worship Artemis. But the seducer's efforts were in vain. For who could endure so steadfastly for her beloved Lord as Love? As Scripture says: "Love is strong as death... Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it" (Song 8:6–7).

The many waters of worldly temptations did not quench in this maiden the fire of love for God, nor did the rivers of affliction and suffering overwhelm her; her great love was especially clearly shown by her readiness to lay down her life for her Beloved, the Lord Jesus Christ, for there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends (Jn. 15:13).

Seeing that nothing could be accomplished by kindness, the torturer resolved to subject Love to suffering, thinking by various torments to turn her from her love for Christ; but she answered, according to the Apostle:

"Who shall separate us from the love of God: shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom. 8:35).

The torturer ordered her to be stretched upon a wheel and beaten with a rod. She was stretched so that the members of her body were

torn from their joints; and as she was beaten with the rod, she was covered with blood as with a purple robe, and the earth too was drenched with it, as though by rain.

Then a furnace was heated. Pointing to it, the torturer said to the saint:

"Maiden! Say at least that the goddess Artemis is great, and I will release you; but if you do not say this, you shall at once be burned in this heated furnace."

But the saint answered:

"Great is my God Jesus Christ, but Artemis and you with her shall perish!"

Enraged by these words, the torturer commanded those standing by to cast her into the furnace at once.

But the saint, without waiting for anyone to throw her into the furnace, hastened to enter it herself; and, unharmed, she walked in its midst as though in a cool place, singing and blessing God, and rejoicing.

At the same time, a flame flew out of the furnace upon the unbelievers surrounding it, burning some to ashes and scorching others; reaching the emperor, it burned him also, so that he fled far away.

Other radiant faces were seen in that furnace, rejoicing together with the Martyr. The name of Christ was exalted, and the impious were put to shame.

When the furnace had gone out, the Martyr, the fair Bride of Christ, came forth from it unharmed and joyful, as from a bridal chamber.

Then, by order of the emperor, the torturers bored through her limbs with iron drills; but God strengthened the saint with His help in these torments also, so that she did not die from them.

Who could endure such torments and not die at once?!

Yet her beloved Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, strengthened the saint, that He might put the impious to shame all the more, grant her a greater reward, and glorify His mighty power in a frail human vessel.

The torturer, grown ill from his burns, at last ordered the saint to be beheaded with a sword.

When she heard this, she rejoiced and said:

"O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast loved Thy handmaid Love, I sing and bless Thy much-sung name, because Thou dost number me among my sisters, having vouchsafed me also to endure for Thy name what they endured."

Her mother, St. Sophia, prayed without ceasing to God for her youngest daughter, that He might grant her endurance to the end, and said to her:

"My third branch, my beloved child, strive even unto the end. You are walking the good path, and a crown has already been woven for you, and the bridal chamber prepared for you has been opened. The Bridegroom already awaits you, looking down from on high upon your struggle, that when you bow your head beneath the sword, He may take your pure and undefiled soul into His arms and give you rest with your sisters. Remember me also, your mother, in the kingdom of your Bridegroom, that He may show mercy to me also and not deprive me of sharing and dwelling with you in His holy glory."

And at once St. Love was beheaded with a sword.

Her mother received her body, laid it in a precious coffin together with the bodies of the holy Faith and Hope, and, having adorned their bodies as was fitting, placed the coffin upon a funeral wagon. She carried them some distance out of the city and buried her daughters with honor upon a high hill, weeping for joy. Having remained at their tomb for three days, she prayed fervently to God and herself reposed in the Lord. The faithful buried her there also with her daughters. Thus she too was not deprived of sharing with them in the Kingdom of Heaven and of the martyr's crown, for though not in body, yet in her heart she suffered for Christ.

Thus wise Sophia also ended her life wisely, offering to the Holy Trinity as a gift her three virtuous daughters, Faith, Hope, and Love.

O holy and righteous Sophia! What woman has been saved through childbearing[4] as you have, having borne such children, who were betrothed to the Savior and, having suffered for Him, now reign and are glorified with Him? Truly, you are a mother worthy of wonder and of

blessed remembrance; for when you beheld the dreadful and grievous torments and death of your beloved children, you not only did not grieve, as is natural for a mother, but, comforted by the grace of God, rejoiced all the more, and yourself taught and entreated your daughters not to spare this temporal life, but to pour out their blood without reserve for Christ the Lord.

You who now enjoy the sight of His most radiant countenance together with your holy daughters, send us wisdom also, that, having preserved the virtues of faith, hope, and love, we may be vouchsafed to stand before the Most Holy, Uncreated, and Life-giving Trinity, and glorify Her unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 1:

Faith, Hope, and Love, the honored and most holy branches of Sophia, appeared and by grace overcame the wisdom of the Greeks[5]; having suffered and shown themselves victorious, they were crowned with an incorruptible crown by the Master of all.

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Memory of the Holy Martyr Agathoclia

Память святой мученицы Агафоклии

St. Agathoclia was the slave of a certain Christian, Nicholas. His wife Paulina, who adhered to the heresy of Arius[6], tormented Agathoclia greatly over the course of eight years, compelling her to forsake the Orthodox faith and accept heretical teaching: at times she struck her neck with stones, at times she made her walk barefoot over sharp stones; once she crushed her ribs with an iron hammer, and

4. The bearing of children in sorrow was a punishment laid upon women for the fall of Eve, but in this same thing lies also the condition of their salvation. Therefore the Apostle Paul says: "she shall be saved through childbearing" (1 Tim. 2:15), provided, however, that "they continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control." Such was St. Sophia.

5. That is, they turned the wisdom of the pagans into foolishness. Cf. Is. 33 and 1 Cor. 1:20, 3:16.

6. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, denied the pre-eternal existence of the Son of God, His equality with and consubstantiality with God the Father, asserting that the Son of God was not begotten of God the Father before the ages but was created. This heresy was condemned at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325.

at last cut out her tongue. The holy Martyr would not yield to her mistress's entreaties, and therefore she was imprisoned and tormented with hunger. But by God's providence, birds brought her small fruits from trees. At last her mistress killed her with an iron crowbar.[7]

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Theodotia

Память святой мученицы Феодотии

While Alexander Severus[8] reigned in Rome, the hegemon Symblicius was sent to Cappadocia. He was informed of a certain Christian woman, Theodotia, who was from the land of Pontus[9] and was very wealthy. The hegemon long exhorted her to renounce the Christian faith, but without success. Then she was hung up and her body was scraped with instruments. She endured this torment, glorifying God and seeming not to feel her sufferings. After this they put her in fetters and led her to prison. When eight days had passed, the prison opened of itself. Seeing this, the guards were frightened and ran to tell Symblicius; but he did not believe them and ordered the saint to be brought before him. When he saw that she was entirely unharmed by her wounds, though some traces of her former sufferings remained, he asked her:

"Who are you?"

The saint answered him:

"Your mind is darkened; had you been sober, you would surely have known that I am Theodotia."

Then Symblicius ordered the saint to be thrown into a heated furnace. Suddenly fire came forth from the furnace and burned seventy men; the others who were near the furnace closed its opening and fled. The hegemon sent two pagan priests and some others to scatter the ashes from the body of the holy Martyr. When they opened the furnace, a flame came out and burned the priests, while the other men sent there

7. According to the Greek Minaia, Paulina had apostatized from Christianity and worshipped idols. – The time of the sufferings and repose of the holy martyr is not known precisely.
8. Alexander Severus was a Roman emperor who reigned from 222 to 235.
9. The Pontic land, or Pontus, is the north-eastern province of Asia Minor on the Black Sea.

saw the saint sitting in the midst of the furnace between two youths in white garments, singing; this sight so terrified them that they fell as though dead. The saint came out of the furnace, rejoicing and praising God. She was again put in prison, for Symblicius intended to go to Byzantium and wished to take the holy Martyr with him in chains. On his return, while he was in Ancyra, the hegemon again summoned the saint to stand trial and said to her:

"If you will not obey me and sacrifice to the gods, I shall order you to be laid upon red-hot iron."

She answered him:

"If Livisius[10] Dorotheus will mount the griddle with me and the fire does not touch him, then I will sacrifice to the gods."

Symblicius agreed to this, and Dorotheus mounted the red-hot iron sheet, but was burned at once, while the holy Martyr remained unharmed. The hegemon was at a loss as to what to do, and then ordered the holy Martyr to be bound and taken to Nicaea.[11] There he brought her into an idol temple, intending to compel her to sacrifice to the idols. She prayed, and suddenly all the idols fell to the ground and were shattered. All who saw this were terrified. Greatly angered by this mockery of the idols, the hegemon ordered four soldiers to stretch the saint out and saw her in two. But the saw grew dull and the servants grew exhausted, while the saint once again remained unharmed and glorified God. Symblicius then ordered her head to be cut off with a sword, and by this execution St. Theodotia was granted the martyr's crown.[12]

* * *

10. Livisius was the domestic secretary of the governor (*hegemon*).
11. Nicaea (now Iznik) was in antiquity a rich and flourishing city of Bithynia in Asia Minor; now it is very poor and sparsely populated.
12. Around the year 230.

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 18

18 сентября

New Calendar September 18 · Old Calendar October 1 (civil dates)

Our Venerable Father Eumenius, Bishop of Gortyna

Преподобный отец наш Евмений, епископ Гортинский

From his youth, St. Eumenius was well-pleasing to God through his virtuous life. He walked the narrow way that leads to the Kingdom of Heaven, heeding the words of the Lord: "Strive to enter in through the narrow gate" (Lk. 13:24). Whoever would enter through this gate must lay aside two heavy burdens: care for possessions and concern for the body. Eumenius renounced his possessions and distributed them to the poor, mindful of how difficult it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. For who, burdened by attachment to riches, can enter through the narrow gates of heaven? The Lord gave good counsel to the young man who asked Him what he must do to inherit eternal life: "If thou wilt be perfect," the Lord said to him, "go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven" (Mt. 19:21). He who serves mammon[1] cannot serve God, and one weighed down by the burden of riches will not pass through the narrow doors of heaven, just as a camel cannot pass through the eye of a needle. Just as one who would pass through a narrow place must take off not only his load but even his clothing, so one who desires to be in heaven gives to the poor not only the surplus of his possessions, as an unbearable burden, but even what is necessary, including the clothing that covers his body, thus imitating the Lord. Such was St. Eumenius:

1. The word "mammon," of Chaldean or Syrian origin, means possessions, wealth, earthly goods, since a person places his hope in them; thus it signifies not only riches, but also love and attachment to them. In the New Testament mammon is represented as though it were a deity that presides over wealth (see Mt. 6:24).

he counted all things as refuse, renounced everything and left everything, in order to follow Christ, and to find and gain Him alone. Having renounced his possessions and removed them from himself as though they were clothing, he clothed the poor, the naked, and the needy with them. Stripping himself of every earthly attachment, he entered upon the narrow way of poverty, passing through the narrow gate that leads to heavenly riches. The Venerable Eumenius also renounced another burden—the cares of the body; by his ascetic labors, toil, self-restraint, fasting, and vigil, he put to death the lusts of the flesh and made his body lean, withdrawing from all indulgence of the flesh and love of pleasure; for "they which strive for the mastery," as the Apostle says, "are temperate in all things" (1 Cor. 9:25). He abstained from everything that fattens the body, weighs down the mind, and gives rise to passions. He gave no sleep to his eyes until he had cleansed soul and body of the passions and become a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Thus, laying aside the heavy burdens of possessions and every carnal passion, he made himself able to pass along the narrow way and through the narrow gate that lead to eternal life.

Since the virtuous life of St. Eumenius shone like a lamp and was of great benefit to all, he was chosen and elevated to the episcopal throne of the Church of Gortyna[2]; and, like a candle set upon a candlestick, he enlightened his flock, illuminating the Church of Christ like the sun by his deeds and teachings. For one who is the light of the world ought to precede his word with deeds, just as the radiance precedes the lamp itself in the sight of the beholder. Thus St. Eumenius, abiding upon his episcopal throne, taught his spiritual children first by deed, showing himself to be a model for his flock through his pure and God-pleasing life, and then instructing them also by word. Having first become light himself, he then enlightened others; he himself meditated day and night upon the law of the Lord, and then taught others to do likewise; having himself acquired a pure conscience, he purified the consciences of others as well. He was very merciful, in keeping with the meaning of his name,[3] and his life was full of deeds of mercy. He was a father to

2. Gortyna, or Gortyn, was in antiquity a notable city on the island of Crete, by the river Lethe. (Today it is Hieropotamo.) The ruins of the ancient city survive to this day.

orphans, the wealth of the poor, a giver to those who asked, a comforter of the sorrowful, a physician to the suffering, and a wondrous wonderworker. Once, by his holy prayer, he slew a great serpent that rushed upon him; yet he wrought a still greater miracle by trampling upon the infernal serpent, the devil, conquering him through prayer and driving him away from the flock of Christ entrusted to him. And not only in Gortyna, but also in Rome,[4] St. Eumenius took up arms against the demons. Arriving in Rome, he brought many to amazement by his signs and wonders: he cast demons out of people, healed the sick, and brought peace to those who were at enmity and anger. Afterward he was also in Thebaid,[5] where, during a drought, he brought rain down from heaven by his prayer; and in that land he later reposed in peace, passing from temporal life into eternal and unending life.[6] His holy body was translated to Gortyna, the place of his service, and buried there with honor.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having been illumined by the Divine Light, O most blessed one, thou dost also enlighten us, who sing with love of thy honorable, glorious, and holy repose, O Father, O Hierarch Eumenius, praying unceasingly for us all.

* * *

3. Eumenius, translated from the Greek, means "well-disposed," "benevolent," or "merciful."
4. Here, by the name Rome, one should understand Constantinople, which was called the New or Second Rome; this interpretation best accords with the meaning of the entire Life and the course of the events described in it.
5. According to the words of the Church hymns, St. Eumenius went to Thebaid not of his own will, but was exiled there by enemies of the Orthodox Faith (Canon, Ode 7, Troparion 2). He was exiled because he "made the dark heresies small" (sessional hymn) of the Monothelites, who acknowledged in Christ only one will—the Divine.
6. The activity and repose of St. Eumenius belong to the 7th century.

Holy Martyr Ariadne

Память святой мученицы Ариадны

The Holy Martyr Ariadne suffered for Christ during the reign of the impious Emperor Hadrian.[7] She was a slave of a certain Tertullus, ruler of the city of Prymnessus in Phrygia.[8]

When this Tertullus, on the occasion of the birth of his son, held a celebration in an idol temple, offering sacrifices there, worshipping demons, and rejoicing with all his household, friends, and neighbors, the holy Ariadne remained at home and would not enter the idol shrine to celebrate with her master. Then her master, angered with her, beat her without mercy and at last, having hung her up, ordered her to be scraped with iron. After this he imprisoned Ariadne and for a long time made her suffer hunger, compelling her to renounce Christ and worship soulless idols; but afterward he released her from prison, and she left the city. Then Tertullus regretted having let her go and pursued her with his servants. Ariadne looked back, saw them in pursuit, and ran; when she came to a certain rock, she prayed to God to deliver her from the hands of her enemies. And immediately, by Divine command, the rock split open, the saint entered into it, and the two halves of the cleft rock came together again. This miracle was wrought by the Angel of the Lord, who appeared there. Then those pursuing her were troubled with fear: they began to fight among themselves and, wounding one another with their spears, perished. Thus the Lord delivered His handmaid from the hand of the impious, as a bird from the snare of the fowlers. By her prayers may He deliver us also from our enemies, and grant us, together with St. Ariadne, to celebrate in the joy of heaven unto the ages. Amen.

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7. The holy Martyr's repose occurred at the end of Hadrian's reign.

8. Phrygia was a large region of Asia Minor. At first it embraced the whole central part of the western half of the peninsula, as well as the southern shore of the Propontis (the Sea of Marmara) as far as the Hellespont (the Dardanelles), which was later assigned to Mysia. Its borders were Mysia, Lydia, and Caria to the west; Lycia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia to the south; Cappadocia to the east; and Galatia and Bithynia to the north.

THE NINETEENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 19

19 сентября

New Calendar September 19 · Old Calendar October 2 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Trophimus, Sabbatius and Dorymedon

Страдание святых мучеников Трофима, Савватия и Доримедонта

In the reign of the Roman Emperor Probus[1], and while Attikos, also called Iliodorus, governed Antioch, the people of Antioch once kept a festival in honor of Apollo of Daphne, and, according to custom, spent the whole day in sacrifices to idols, in drunkenness, revelry and all manner of unseemly deeds. At that time two unknown men came to Antioch from another land: Trophimus and Sabbatius, pious men, worshippers of the true God. Seeing the blindness and perdition of so many souls, they only sighed, and, turning to God, prayed with tears, saying:

"O God, who didst create the whole world out of nothing by Thy one word, and didst make man in Thine own image! Look down from heaven and snatch these people out of the hands of the adversary."

While they were saying this, the idolaters noticed that they did not worship the pagan gods, and, seizing them, led them to their ruler and judge Attikos-Iliodorus. He ordered them separated from one another and first brought before him the Holy Trophimus, whom he began to question about his name, life and faith.

The Saint answered:

"My name is Trophimus. I was born of free and noble parents, but, falling under the power of sin, I lived at first in impiety, until through holy Baptism I received true freedom and nobility."

Then the judge asked:

"What is your faith?"

1. The Roman emperor Probus reigned from 276 to 282 A.D.

Trophimus answered:

"I have already told you, but listen, I will say it still more clearly: I am a Christian, a slave of Christ, and I desire to be a sacrifice to Christ."

The judge asked:

"Have you read the imperial decrees concerning the Christians?"

"I have read them," answered the Saint, "but what are they to us? Between piety and demonic deception there is as great a difference as between day and night."

These words roused the tormentor to anger; he ordered the Saint Trophimus stripped and, stretching him by the hands and feet, to be beaten without any mercy. The martyr was beaten so long that the ground was reddened with blood. Then the judge ordered them to stop beating him and said:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, Trophimus, or else I will send you to Phrygia[2], to the tormentor Dionysius."

This Dionysius was known everywhere for his cruelty and inhumanity.

Saint Trophimus answered:

"It makes no difference to me whether I am killed by you or by another, whether you torment me or Dionysius: death will be one and the same, for you both have one intention, to kill those who serve the true God."

The judge grew still more angry and ordered the Saint hanged on a tree and his body torn. Then executioners at once surrounded him with sharp instruments, with which they tore the martyr, scraping his body down to the bones and even to the very entrails. He, enduring everything, said quietly and meekly:

"Lord, help Thy servant!"

Then the judge asked:

"Where now is your Christ?"

The martyr answered:

"My Christ is with all who call upon Him. He does not depart from me either, and the clear sign of Christ's presence with me lies in this:

that I bear the torments lightly, which human nature could never bear unless God Himself helped the sufferers."

After these tortures the Saint Trophimus was cast into prison.

Then the Blessed Sabbatius was brought to judgment, and the judge said to him:

"I do not ask you whether you are a Christian, but first tell me: what is your rank?"

The very word "Christian" was so hateful to the pagans that the tormentor did not even want to hear it; as a man sick in his eyes cannot look at the light that is pleasant to all the healthy, so he, with his darkened spiritual eyes, could not gaze upon the light of the name of Christ, and therefore said: "I do not ask whether you are a Christian."

Saint Sabbatius answered:

"My rank, dignity and fatherland, my glory and wealth is Christ, the Son of God, who exists eternally: by His providence the universe is established and governed."

The judge, taking the martyr's bold answer as an insult to himself, flew into a rage and, striking him on the cheek, said:

"Answer what you are asked, and before I destroy you by torments, go to the gods and offer them sacrifices."

But the Saint reviled the gods, laughed at the madness of the impious and exposed their godlessness.

Then, by the tormentor's command, Sabbatius was hanged and scraped with iron claws until his bones were laid bare. Since whole pieces of flesh had already fallen from the bones and all his entrails were torn, the torturers had nothing more to tear. Therefore the martyr was untied from the tree, and Saint Sabbatius at once gave up his soul into the hands of his Lord.

When Saint Sabbatius had reposed in the Lord, only the Blessed Trophimus remained in the hands of the tormentors. Atticus, despairing of converting him to idolatry, decided to send him to the tormentor Dionysius in Phrygia. He wrote to Dionysius a letter informing him of Trophimus, and that, however much he had suffered torments, he had

2. Phrygia is a region of Asia Minor.

nevertheless proved stronger than his tormentors; that he honored Christ alone, mocked the gods and set them at nothing. Then he ordered the Saint brought out of prison, shod in iron boots, inside which many nails had been driven with their points upward, and led in those boots to Phrygia. The soldiers, taking the Saint, led him and made him walk beside them: they rode on horses while the Saint walked on foot in the iron boots studded with nails, with his feet pierced, outstripping both foot soldiers and horsemen and reddening the whole road with his blood. This was indeed a sorrowful road leading to blessed life: as many steps as he took, so many new wounds he received in his feet, and as there were new wounds, so he endured new sufferings and torments. But the Lord Himself accompanied him: He strengthened His servant on this road and prepared a reward for every step.

After a three-day journey, the soldiers with the holy martyr reached the Phrygian city called Synnada[3], and there they delivered to Dionysius the letter of Heliodorus. Having read the letter, Dionysius at once ordered the Saint Trophimus brought before him and asked:

"Are you Trophimus?"

The martyr answered:

"I am Trophimus, and a servant of the true God, those who believe in Whom shall never be put to shame."

Dionysius said:

"You remain obstinate and still call upon the vain and futile Christ, who was the cause of the death of many; but if before you did not want to renounce Him, then now abandon the hope you had in Him: offer sacrifice to the gods, so that you may be delivered from cruel torments and death and live your life in peace."

The valiant Trophimus answered:

"Even if I wished to be delivered from death, that is impossible: for if you do not kill me, my very nature is in any case mortal. Yet by death must be acquired eternal life, which is immeasurably better and more lasting than this present life, full of evils and brief; and the good things

3. Synnas, or Synnada, was a city in the north of Phrygia near a mountain range, where the famous Synnadic marble quarries were located. Today it is ruins near Eskikara.

of the future life our perishable eye cannot see, the ear cannot hear, and they do not come into the mind of man. I am seized with a great desire for that life, and I rejoice, hearing from you of the death with which you threaten me."

Then Dionysius, breathing fury, commanded that Saint Trophimus be beaten with thick sinews; and while they beat him, the tormentor said:

"You have only to promise to offer sacrifice to the gods, and you will at once be freed from torment."

But he, paying no attention to the wounds or to the tormentor's words, kept silent.

The servants, by the tormentor's command, took vinegar, mixed it with mustard and poured it into Trophimus's nostrils. After this, hanging him on a tree, they cut his sides, making deep oblong wounds, and streams of blood flowed from his ribs.

The Saint bore these torments in silence, saying to himself: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but out of them all the Lord delivers him" (Ps. 33:20).

Dionysius, hearing this, said:

"Vain is your hope, Trophimus, and futile your thoughts: for who will come to you from heaven and deliver you from your present sufferings? Therefore I advise you to offer sacrifice to the gods, and then you will help yourself."

The Saint, laughing at the madness of the tormentor, answered:

"I will never renounce my God, the true and living God."

Then Dionysius said to the servants in fury:

"Torment him still more."

And they began to torment him with still greater cruelty.

The Saint prayed and spoke thus: "O my God! Deliver me out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the lawless and oppressor, for Thou art my hope, O Lord God" (Ps. 70:4–5).

The tormentor ordered vinegar with salt poured on the wounds of the holy martyr, to increase his sufferings.

Then the Blessed one said to the tormentor:

"You are now only strengthening my body, so that it may not decay from the wounds you inflict."

Then they began to burn his ribs with lit candles, but not even with this could they overcome the invincible soldier of Christ; after this the Saint Trophimus was cast into prison.

In Synnada there was a senator and first counselor named Dorimedont; he was a pious Christian, but concealed it, fearing the tormentor. He often came secretly to the Saint Trophimus in prison, washed away his blood and wiped his scabs with clean cloths, bound up his wounds and in every way cared for him. But he was not to remain hidden from the tormentor for long. Soon there came an ungodly feast called the "Dioscuria," that is, the Day of Castor and Pollux[4]: this festival was celebrated publicly in the city of Synnada. Dionysius, together with all his courtiers and counselors, worshipped the idols, and, seeing that Dorimedont was not with them, sent to him to say that he should appear at the festival.

The Blessed Dorymedon answered the messengers:

"I am a Christian, and therefore I ought not to attend demonic feasts."

Dionysius, hearing of this, ordered him brought to him by force, and, having questioned him, became convinced that he was indeed a Christian; yet, not wishing to judge him on that same day, he ordered him taken into custody.

Afterwards he sent his friends to him to persuade him to repent and turn to their gods. But Dorimedont, looking sternly upon them, said: "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity" (Ps. 6:9).

Then he fell silent and was "as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth is no answer" (Ps. 37:15).

4. Castor and Pollux, according to the beliefs of the Greeks and Romans, were the sons of the ruler of heaven and highest of the gods, Zeus (otherwise Dios), for which reason they were called Dioscuri; after death, according to these beliefs, they live and die again every other day, enjoying the "loponnesian" divinities of light. At the same time they were revered as protectors of the state. In their honor special festivals were celebrated, called "Dioscuria" (after their name), and also "Anakia" (festivals of the lords and rulers, as Castor and Pollux were called in some localities).[1*]

On the next day the tormentor went to the court and commanded that Dorimedont be brought.

"Deluded man!" he said to the holy martyr. "What happened to you yesterday, that you have turned away from the gods and refused to carry out the royal commands? Did it not please you that everyone should honor you, and that you should hold no lowly place among us?"

To this the saint answered:

"He who loves the true God counts for nothing worldly honor and glory. What profit is there in boasting before others, in clothing oneself in precious garments and in worshipping idols? All this is temporary and vain; all this separates a man from God and casts him into the fiery Gehenna."

For a long time the tormentor, with flatteries and threats, sought to turn the holy Dorimedont away from Christ; but, achieving nothing, he commanded that he be stripped, hung up, and his ribs burned with red-hot iron stakes, saying:

"Let us see whether Christ will come to help you."

But the saint, in these torments, called upon the name of the Lord his God, mocked the pagan gods, and with his words pierced the heart of the tormentor more than the spears pierced the body of the saint.

Then Dionysius turned his anger upon the servants who were tormenting the saint, and reproached them that they could not silence one man who blasphemed their gods. The servants, enraged, tore the saint's face with iron claws and knocked out his teeth; yet even so they could not silence the God-speaking lips that confessed Christ and reviled the lifeless idols. Then they kindled a fire beneath the holy martyr and set him upon the glowing coals; but he walked upon them as though upon fair flowers, rejoiced in these sufferings, and was ready to endure for Christ greater and more grievous torments. After this the tormentor commanded that he be led back to the prison, and that the holy Trophimus be brought out for torment. He was hung up, and they began to tear his body with iron claws, reopening his former wounds; and then they put out his eyes with red-hot rods. But the saint, in such sufferings, gave thanks to Christ; after which he was again led back to prison.

Dionysius began to consult with his councillors as to what death to put Trophimus and Dorimedont to, since they disdained every kind of torment; and he decided to give the martyrs to be devoured by wild beasts. For this purpose the tormentor commanded that hungry beasts be prepared and a public spectacle arranged. When the day came on which the saints were to be given to the beasts, Dionysius appeared at the spectacle with all his councillors and servants, and a great multitude of people gathered. The holy martyrs Trophimus and Dorimedont were brought out of the prison naked and covered with wounds, so that their whole bodies were as one continuous sore. When the saints were placed in the arena prepared for the baiting of beasts, a she-bear was released upon them, which rushed at them in fury; but, drawing near to them, it at once became gentle. The holy Dorimedont, desiring to "depart and be with Christ" (Phil. 1:23) the sooner, took the she-bear by the ear and provoked her, that she might quickly tear him to pieces; but the she-bear, as if ashamed, bowed and turned her head away from him. Then the tormentor, more enraged than the beast, and seeing that the saints remained unharmed by the she-bear, released a leopard upon them; but it, like a dog, licked their feet. Then they released a lion; yet this beast too, like the first, became meek as a lamb. The tormentor was angered at the keeper of the beasts and threatened him with death if he could not provoke the beasts so that they would devour these two Christians; but when he began to provoke the lion, the lion rushed upon him and tore him to pieces. All who were present, seeing such a miracle, were struck with fear and came to know the power of the true God and our Savior. Only the lawless tormentor would not acknowledge it, but was yet more covered with the darkness of his madness, blaspheming Christ and calling the servants of Him sorcerers. Then he commanded that the heads of the saints be cut off with the sword. Thus the saints Trophimus and Dorimedont ended their sufferings: they died by the sword after many grievous torments, and, joining the holy Sabbatius in immortal life, now rejoice with the Angels, glorifying the Holy Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God, glorified by all forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

O God, praised in the Trinity, Thou didst glorify the Trinity of martyrs: Trophimus, Sabbatius and Dorimedont; for, believing in Thee, they overthrew the foe. By their prayers, O Christ our God, have mercy on us.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As the foundation of the suffering ones and the establishment of piety, the Church honors and glorifies thy radiant passion, O blessed sufferer ever sung of, glorious and wise Trophimus: with those who suffered with thee, entreat cleansing for those who sing to thee, as one invincible.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Zosimas the Hermit

Страдание святого мученика Зосимы пустынника

Once Domitian, governor of Cilicia, set out with his servants to hunt, and traversed many deserts, hills and mountains, pursuing and catching wild beasts. And in one place he saw a multitude of beasts, among which an old man walked and conversed with them as with people. The hunters rushed upon them, and when the beasts fled, they seized the old man and brought him to the prince, thinking that he was a sorcerer who performed enchantments in the desert.

They asked him who he was and what his name was.

The saint answered:

"I am a Christian; my name is Zosimas."

Then they bound him and brought him to the city for judgment. Here the prince began to question him about sorcery and witchcraft: in what manner had he so bewitched the beasts that he lived among them unharmed and conversed with them as with people?

Zosimas answered:

"I do not live in the desert for sorcery; but, being a Christian myself, I cannot live in a city with unbelievers—therefore I went into the desert, desiring rather to be with beasts than with wicked men, the en-

emies of my Lord Jesus Christ. Having as a model of such a life the lives of other Christians, the holy fathers who withdrew from the world and dwelt in the desert, I too strove to imitate them as far as I could. God, who knows those who serve Him and cares for them, has also, in His goodness, ordered my life, and for my consolation has subjected to me the wild beasts—and so I live with them, rejoicing in the Lord and casting all my hope upon Him."

The prince said to him in reply:

"So you are a wicked old man, who reveres the Nazarene? Very well. I will go to Nazareth, and there I will torment you cruelly, so that you will either renounce the Nazarene or lose your life in grievous sufferings; and, incidentally, let the Nazarenes too, seeing your torments, be afraid."

And he first sent St. Zosimas in chains to Nazareth, and then himself set out there. Choosing a time for the trial, Domitian commanded that Zosimas be brought and asked him:

"Tell about your sorcery—how did you enchant the beasts?"

In answer to this Zosimas confessed that he was a Christian.

Then the prince commanded that the saint be hung head downward, a large stone be tied to his neck, and that he be scraped with iron claws.

After this he asked again:

"Will you now tell about your sorcery?"

Zosimas said in reply:

"Christ, my God—it is He who sent the beasts to console me in the desert."

The prince said to him:

"If the beasts obey your God, then bid one beast come here; then we will all accept your faith."

Zosimas, raising his honorable hands to heaven, began to pray.

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God!" he said, "hear me, Thy servant; send here a lion to serve me."

And suddenly a terrible lion ran into the city, and everyone, seeing it, fled. The lion, coming up to Zosimas, began to support the stone that was tied to his neck.

Then the prince began to beg the saint:

"Zosimas! Tame the beast, and we will untie you."

Zosimas commanded the beast to be gentle, and the prince ordered the saint to be untied and wished to send him to the emperor. But Zosimas gave up his spirit to God[5]. The Christians buried the saint's body with honor, glorifying the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, glorified forever. Amen.

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Commemoration of the Holy Right-believing Prince Theodore, Wonderworker of Smolensk and Yaroslavl, and of his children David and Constantine

Память святого благоверного князя Феодора, смоленского и ярославского чудотворца, и чад его Давида и Константина

The holy and blessed Prince Theodore, surnamed the Black, was the son of the Prince of Smolensk Rostislav Mstislavich, and descended in the ninth degree from the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince Vladimir[6]. Theodore had two brothers, Gleb and Michael, who, after their father's death, wronged him, giving him as his appanage only the one city of Mozhaisk[7]. Notwithstanding this, he did not become

5. The sufferings of St. Zosimas belong to the beginning of the fourth century, to the time of the reign of the Roman emperor Diocletian. The memory of St. Zosimas the hermit is still celebrated on January 4, together with St. Athanasius the commentariensis (overseer of prisoners, who kept records of them), who, seeing Zosimas unharmed after dreadful tortures, believed in Christ, and after ascetic prayer gave up his spirit to the Lord in the desert. St. Zosimas, according to the Menaion accounts, briefly related also by St. Demetrius of Rostov, did not die from the tortures he endured at the hands of Domitian, but peacefully gave up his spirit to the Lord there in the desert, together with St. Athanasius, in a cleft of a rock.

6. The year of birth of St. Theodore, the right-believing prince, cannot be determined exactly, but it was undoubtedly between 1240 and 1245. According to the testimony of his biographer (Hieromonk Antony, second half of the fifteenth century), he was brought up in piety from his early years and taught the divine dogmas, with which his heart was filled with love, like a lip moistened by pure water; as a boy he already turned away from childish games and customs, applying himself most of all to reading the sacred books and keeping purity of soul and body.

7. Mozhaisk (now a small district town of Moscow province) was then still a very young, poor, and sparsely populated little town with a small district and neighboring villages. But Theodore accepted his appanage, in the words of his hagiographer, without murmuring, thinking above all of acquiring the treasure that is not stolen, incorruptible, and eternal. In a short time the wise and good prince managed to make his appanage both populous and not poor, and he earned the reverent love of the people.

angry with them, and patiently held that appanage. For this his meekness God afterwards entrusted to him the administration of the glorious city of Yaroslavl. This came about as follows: in Yaroslavl there lived Princess Xenia, wife of Prince Basil of Rostov, who had a single daughter. The right-believing Prince Theodore married this daughter of the Prince of Rostov, by whom he afterwards had a son, Michael, and a daughter, and he received Yaroslavl as his possession[8]. And after the death of his brother Michael he also inherited the principality of Smolensk[9].

Piously and pleasingly to God did Prince Theodore live in Yaroslavl, for from his youth he loved Christ and His Most Pure Mother. He especially honored priests and monks, and bestowed alms on the poor. As a valiant warrior of Christ, he obeyed his Lord in all things and turned away from every unrighteousness.

In those times, when the Tatar yoke lay heavy upon the Russian land, it was the custom for the Russian princes to journey to the Horde to the Khan, in order to be confirmed in their princely dignity. When on one occasion certain princes set out for the Horde, there went with them the Blessed Prince Theodore of Yaroslavl, bearing many gifts for the Khan and for his consort[10]. In the Horde he was received with great favor, and served at the Khan's court as a favorite, held in high esteem. His manly beauty and his wisdom so captivated the Khan's wife that she desired to give her daughter in marriage to him. But he told her that he had a wife in Yaroslavl, and he would not yield to her entreaties.

8. Yaroslavl stands at the confluence of the river Kotorosl with the Volga, 244 versts from Moscow; it is one of the most ancient Russian cities; it was at first dependent on Rostov, but later began to be governed by its own princes. St. Theodore entered into marriage with the Rostov princess Maria Vasilievna about 1267, and at that same time took up the administration of the Principality of Yaroslavl.

9. This was in 1279. However, the blessed Prince Theodore himself did not live in Smolensk and only bore the title of Prince of Smolensk, although for some time he wrote documents there, decided various judicial matters, and cared for the welfare of the Smolensk people as their prince; soon he yielded Smolensk to his nephew Alexander Glebovich.

10. The journey of Prince Theodore to the Horde was undertaken partly also for other reasons: the Khan of the Golden Horde, Mengu-Temir, together with other Russian princes, summoned Theodore as well to subdue the Yasses and the Kama Bulgars, who did not wish to pay tribute to the Tatars. In the Horde at the Khan's court the holy prince spent about three years.

Having obtained from the Khan confirmation of his reign in Yaroslavl, and having received such confirmation, the Blessed Theodore departed from the Horde for home. When he arrived near Yaroslavl, he heard that his wife had died. He wished to enter the city, where at that time his son Michael and his mother-in-law were living; but the boyars and his mother-in-law did not admit him, and began to speak of him in foolish words: "It is not our custom," they said, "to accept as prince one who comes from another land; it is enough for us to have as our prince the heir of Theodore, Michael." St. Theodore went again to the Horde and asked the Khan to give him back the Principality of Yaroslavl. The Khan sent the people of Yaroslavl a strict command to receive their prince, but they did not obey such a command and obstinately refused to receive Theodore. While St. Theodore was staying in the Horde as the Khan's guest, the Khan's wife again began to urge her husband to give their daughter in marriage to Theodore. But the Khan long did not agree, saying that it was not fitting to give a Khan's daughter in marriage to a tributary, and moreover one of another faith. Then the Khan's wife disclosed to her husband her desire that their daughter should accept the Christian faith and be baptized, and then be married to Theodore. The Khan agreed[11]. The Khan's daughter was baptized and then entered into marriage with the Prince of Yaroslavl. In holy Baptism she was named Anna. After this marriage the Khan loved St. Theodore even more. He often seated him at his table, placed the Khan's crown upon his head each day, clothed him in his own purple, built him a splendid palace, and surrounded him with glory and wealth[12]. But amid all this splendor the heart of the blessed prince was not puffed up, and the glory of this world did not divert him from the love of Christ; and he advanced more and more in the fulfillment of the commandments of the Lord. While he was still living in the Horde, a

11. The Khan himself undertook to intercede before the Patriarch of Constantinople for permission for this marriage, and for this sent an embassy headed by Bishop Theognostus of Sarai; the Patriarch gave permission on the condition that the Khan's daughter accept the Christian faith.

12. The Khan at the same time gave his son-in-law and daughter several cities for their support: Chernigov, Bolgary, Kumany, Korsun, Arsk, Kazan, and others, in all up to 36 cities. Prince Theodore obtained from the Khan permission to build several churches in the Horde, spread Christianity by every means, and protected the clergy.

son was born to him, who was named in holy Baptism David. Then a second son was born to him, named in holy Baptism Constantine.

Soon after this, messengers came to him from Russia with the news that his son Michael had died in Yaroslavl. Then Prince Theodore began to ask the Khan to release him to the Russian land together with his princess and their children. The Khan released him with great honor, placed a crown upon him, and honored him with the great principality of Yaroslavl. The holy prince arrived in Yaroslavl with great dignity; with him also came many Tatar nobles from the Khan's court, whom, after some time, he sent back to the Horde with honor.

St. Prince Theodore ruled in his city of Yaroslavl piously and pleasingly to God until deep old age[13]. Falling ill, and feeling that this sickness was mortal, he called to himself his princess, his wife, and his children, and bequeathed to them to remain in love and peace[14]. Then he ordered that he be carried to a monastery, and there with great joy he received the monastic habit from the abbot, and throughout that whole day he rejoiced and gave thanks to God that He had granted him this gift, which his soul had long desired. Just before his death he wished to receive the schema, after which, having granted forgiveness to all and himself asked forgiveness of all, he signed himself with the sign of the Cross and committed his soul into the hands of God[5877]. He was solemnly buried in the Church of the Transfiguration of the Lord. His holy relics even now pour forth many miracles to the glory of Christ Jesus, our Lord, to Whom be glory now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Troparion, Tone 4:

From your youth, O holy ones, clinging to the love of Christ, you diligently kept His law and ordinances; and now, enriched with

13. St. Theodore governed his principality meekly, wisely and impartially, defending the wronged, widows and orphans, and showing mercy to the poor and the needy. The chronicles distinguish in particular his sincere and humble piety, his strict fasts and prayers, his laborious ascetic exploits, and his care for the building of churches and the adornment of the Church, as well as his reverence for the episcopal and priestly dignity. His pious sons David and Constantine imitated him in these things. Of them, the younger died later as a celibate, and the elder governed the Principality of Yaroslavl peacefully for 23 years.

wondrous gifts, you pour forth healings, O Theodore, David, and Constantine. Entreat Christ God, for those who honor you in faith, that our souls may be saved.

Troparion at the Translation of the Holy Relics, Tone 8:

Shining from your youth like many-radiant stars, you illumined the hearts of the faithful by the translation of your honorable relics; in the flesh you appeared on earth as Angels, planted by fasting like trees by the waters of abstinence, watered by the streams of your tears, and you cleansed defilement. Therefore you have been shown to be dwelling-places of the Spirit of God, O Theodore, David, and Constantine. Entreat Christ God that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

You have appeared, O most luminous lamps, in the flesh as Angels; and, nurtured like the trees of Paradise of life by fasting, vigil, and faith, you have flourished, receiving by your prayers the grace of heaven. Having shown yourselves to be steadfast physicians, you heal the infirm souls of those who with faith take refuge at your holy relics, O glorious wonderworkers, Theodore, David, and Constantine. Entreat Christ God to grant the forgiveness of sins to those who honor your memory with faith and love.

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NOTES

5877. This took place on 19 September 1299. The son and successor of St. Prince Theodore, Prince David, died in 1321, and the year of the death of Prince Constantine is not given in the chronicles. Their bodies, according to the wish expressed during their lives, were laid beside the body of their father, in a vault beneath the arches of the church, not in the earth but above it, in tombs. The uncovering of the incorrupt relics of

14. The last testament of St. right-believing Prince Theodore is most touching and instructive. It is set down in full on an ancient icon in the Monastery of the Savior, the beloved monastery of him and his family, built by his pious consort Anna. On the icon St. Theodore is depicted full-length in monastic garb, in the midst of his sons, with a scroll in his left hand.

the holy right-believing Princes of Yaroslavl, Theodore, David and Constantine, which was occasioned by and accompanied by numerous wondrous healings, took place nearly 200 years later, in 1467. In 1658 the translation of their relics took place, which gave occasion for the establishment of a local feast on 13 June. In 1704 St. Demetrius, Metropolitan of Rostov, had a cypress reliquary made for the holy relics of the Wonderworkers of Yaroslavl, and on 22 June the hierarch transferred the relics into it, establishing that this day be kept forever as a feast. Afterwards the cypress reliquary with the holy relics of the saints was placed in a new silver reliquary, and at the same time the holy relics were translated into the newly built church in the name of the Holy Wonderworkers of Yaroslavl, Princes Theodore, David and Constantine, in which they rest even now, near the left choir.



THE TWENTIETH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 20

20 сентября

New Calendar September 20 · Old Calendar October 3 (civil dates)

Life and Sufferings of the Holy Great Martyr Eustace Placidas, His Wife, and Sons

Житие и страдание святого великомученика Евстафия Плакиды, его супруги и чад

In the reign of the Emperor Trajan[1] there lived at Rome a voivode named Placidas[2]. He was of a noble family and possessed great wealth. His courage in war was so well known that the very name of Placidas struck terror into the enemy. Even at the time when the Emperor Titus was waging war in the land of Judea[3], Placidas was an outstanding Roman commander and was distinguished in every battle by his fearless courage.

In his faith Placidas was an idolater, yet in his life he did much good, Christian-like works: he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, helped those in need, and freed many from bonds and prison. He rejoiced sincerely when he had occasion to render help to anyone in distress and sorrow, and he rejoiced even more than in his glorious victories over the enemies. Like Cornelius, of whom the Book of the Acts of the Apostles tells (Acts 10:1–48), Placidas attained perfection in all

1. Trajan was one of the best Roman emperors: he took great care for the welfare of his people, thoroughly reformed the government of the state, extended the borders of the empire by fortunate wars, and founded new cities. Yet he too persecuted the Christians.

2. The pagan name of St. Eustathius, more precisely in Roman pronunciation "Placidus," from the Latin word *placidus*, meaning "quiet," "even," "calm," "gentle," "meek." It is a name that aptly characterizes the high moral qualities of St. Eustathius even before his conversion to Christianity.

3. Titus was a Roman emperor, son and successor of Emperor Vespasian, who reigned from 79 to 81. During his father's reign he was sent with a large army to Judea to punish the Jews who had rebelled against Roman authority. It is this war that is meant here. The war ended in 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple of Solomon.

good works, but he did not yet have the holy faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the faith without which all good works are dead (Jas. 2:17). Placidas had a wife, as virtuous as he himself, and two sons. Placidas was very kind and merciful to all; only the knowledge of the one true God was lacking to him, and, though he did not yet know Him, he already honored Him by his good deeds. But the merciful Lover of mankind, the Lord, desires the salvation of all and looks upon those who do good: "In every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him" (Acts 10:35). He did not despise this virtuous man, did not permit him to perish in the darkness of idolatrous error, and Himself deigned to open to him the way to salvation.

Once Placidas, as was his custom, went out hunting with his soldiers and servants. Meeting a herd of deer, he posted the horsemen and began the chase after the deer. Soon he noticed that one, the largest of them, had separated from the herd. Leaving his soldiers, Placidas with a small company pursued the deer into the wilderness. The companions of Placidas soon exhausted their strength and remained far behind him. Placidas, however, having a stronger and swifter horse, continued the pursuit alone until the deer ran up a high rock. Placidas stopped at the foot of the rock and, looking at the deer, began to consider how he might catch it. At that moment the All-good God, who by manifold means leads people to salvation and by destinies known to Him alone guides them onto the path of truth, caught the hunter himself, appearing to Placidas as once He appeared to the Apostle Paul (Acts 9:3–6). Continuing to look at the deer, Placidas saw between its antlers a shining cross, and on the cross the likeness of the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ crucified for us. Amazed at this wondrous vision, the voivode suddenly heard a voice saying:

"Why dost thou pursue Me, Placidas?"

And together with this divine voice, fear at once fell upon Placidas: falling from his horse, Placidas lay on the ground as one dead. Scarcely recovering from his fear, he asked:

"Who art Thou, Lord, who speakest with me?"

And the Lord said to him:

"I am Jesus Christ, God, who became incarnate for the salvation of men and endured voluntary sufferings and death on the Cross, whom thou honorest without knowing Me. Thy good deeds and abundant alms have come before Me, and I desired to save thee. And so I have appeared here to catch thee into the knowledge of Me and to join thee to My faithful servants. For I do not wish a man who does righteous deeds to perish in the snares of the enemy."

Rising from the ground and seeing no one before him any longer, Placidas said:

"Now I believe, Lord, that Thou art the God of heaven and earth, the Creator of all creatures. Henceforth I worship Thee alone, and I know no other God besides Thee. I beseech Thee, Lord, teach me what I am to do?"

And again he heard a voice:

"Go to a Christian priest, receive baptism from him, and he will instruct thee unto salvation."

Filled with joy and tenderness, Placidas fell in tears to the ground and worshipped the Lord, who had deemed him worthy of His manifestation. He grieved that until then he had not known the truth and had not known the true God, and at the same time he rejoiced in spirit that he had been granted such grace, which opened to him the knowledge of the truth and set him on the right path. Mounting his horse again, he returned to his companions, but, keeping his great joy in secret, he told no one what had happened to him. When he returned home from the hunt, he called his wife aside and told her in private all that he had seen and heard. His wife in turn told him:

"Last night I heard someone say to me such words: thou, thy husband, and thy sons will come to Me tomorrow and will know Me, Jesus Christ, the true God who sends salvation to those who love Me. Let us not then delay; let us at once do what we have been commanded."

Night came. Placidas sent to find where a Christian priest lived. Learning where his house was, Placidas took with him his wife, his children, and some faithful servants of his, and went to the priest, whose name was John. Coming to him, they told the priest in detail about the appearance of the Lord and asked him to baptize them. Hav-

ing heard them, the priest glorified God, who chooses even from among the pagans those who are pleasing to Him, and, instructing them in the holy faith, opened to them all the commandments of God. Then he offered a prayer and baptized them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And at holy baptism they were given the names: to Placidas, Eustace; to his wife, Theopista; and to their sons, Agapius and Theopistus. After the baptism the priest communed them with the Divine Mysteries and dismissed them in peace, saying:

"May God, who has enlightened you with the light of His knowledge and called you to the inheritance of eternal life, be always with you! And when you are granted to behold God in the life to come, remember me, your spiritual father."

Thus, reborn in holy baptism, they returned to their house, filled with unspeakable joy. The divine grace illumined their souls with a quiet light and filled their hearts with such bliss that it seemed to them they were in heaven and not on earth.

On the following day Eustace, mounting his horse and taking with him some servants, went out as if to hunt to the very place where the Lord had appeared to him, in order to give thanks to Him for His unsearchable gifts. Arriving at that place, he sent the servants to look for game. He himself, dismounting, fell face down on the ground and with tears prayed and thanked the Lord for His unspeakable mercy, that He had deigned to enlighten him with the light of faith. In his prayer he committed himself to his Lord, surrendering himself in all things to His good and perfect will, and beseeching Him that in His goodness He would arrange everything for his benefit as He Himself knows and is pleased. And here he received a revelation about the trials and sorrows that were coming upon him.

"Eustace," said the Lord to him, "it behooves thee to show thy faith in deed, thy firm hope, and thy zealous love for Me. All this is tested not amid temporal wealth and vain prosperity, but in poverty and afflictions. Thou, like Job, must endure many sorrows and experience many calamities, so that, tried like gold in the furnace, thou mayest appear worthy of Me and receive the crown from My hands."

"Let Thy will be done, O Lord," answered Eustace, "I am ready to receive everything from Thy hands with thanksgiving. I know that Thou art good and merciful and, as a Father, in mercy chastisest; shall I not then receive from Thy merciful hands a fatherly chastisement? Truly I am ready, as a servant, to bear with patience all that may be laid upon me, if only Thy almighty help be with me."

And again he heard a voice:

"Dost thou desire to endure sorrows now, or in the last days of thy life?"

"Lord," said Eustace, "if it is impossible to avoid temptations altogether, then grant that I endure these calamities now; only send me Thy help, that evil may not overcome me and tear me away from Thy love."

The Lord said to him:

"Be strong, Eustace, for My grace will be with thee and will guard thee. Deep humiliation awaits thee, but I shall exalt thee, and not only in heaven shall I glorify thee before My Angels, but among men I shall restore thy honor: after many sorrows I shall again send thee consolation and return to thee thy former rank. Thou must, however, rejoice not in a temporal honor, but in the fact that thy name is written in the book of eternal life."

Thus did Saint Eustace converse with the unseen Lord, and, being filled with divine grace, he received revelations from Him. Rejoicing in spirit and burning with love for God, he returned to his house. All that had been revealed to him by God Eustace told to his honorable wife. He did not hide from her that many calamities and sorrows awaited them, and he urged her to endure them bravely for the Lord's sake, Who would turn these sorrows into eternal joy and gladness.

Listening to her husband, this prudent woman said:

"The will of the Lord be over us; we shall with all diligence pray to Him only that He send us patience."

And they began to live piously and honorably, laboring in fasting and prayer, giving alms to the poor even more abundantly than before, and advancing in all the virtues more zealously than ever.

Some time later, by the permission of God, sickness and death came upon the household of Eustace. All his household fell ill, and within a short time not only nearly all his servants but also all his livestock died. Since those who remained alive lay sick, there was no one left to guard Eustace's treasure, and thieves plundered his property by night. Soon the glorious and wealthy voivode was almost a beggar. Eustace, however, was not in the least dismayed by this, nor did he fall into inconsolable grief: amid all these trials he did nothing to offend God, and, thanking Him, he said, like Job:

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

Eustace comforted his wife, that she should not grieve over what was befalling them, and she in turn comforted her husband; and so both of them bore their sorrows with thanksgiving to God, entrusting themselves entirely to His will and strengthening themselves with hope in His mercy. Seeing that he had lost his property, Eustace resolved to hide from all his acquaintances somewhere in a distant land, and there, not revealing his noble origin and high rank, to live among the common people in humility and poverty. He hoped that by living such a life, far from worldly report and unhindered, he would serve Christ the Lord, who for our salvation humbled Himself and became poor. Eustace took counsel about this with his wife, and they then decided to leave the house by night. And so, secretly from their household, of whom only a few remained, and those sick, they took their children, exchanged their precious garments for rags, and left their home. Coming from a noble family, having been a great dignitary, beloved of the emperor and respected by all, Eustace could easily have regained his glory, honor and wealth, which he had lost; but, counting them as nothing, he gave up everything for God's sake and desired to have Him alone as his protector. Hiding so as not to be recognized, Eustace wandered through unknown places, stopping among the simplest and most ignorant people. Thus, leaving his rich chambers, this imitator of Christ wandered without a shelter anywhere. Soon the emperor and all the nobles learned that their beloved voivode Placidas had disappeared no one knew where. All were perplexed and did not know what to think:

whether someone had destroyed Placidas, or he himself had perished somehow by chance. They grieved greatly over him and sought him, but they could not comprehend the mystery of God that was unfolding in the life of Eustace: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. 11:34).

While Eustace with his family was staying in a certain unknown place, his wife said to him:

"How long, my lord, shall we live here? Let us rather leave here for distant lands, so that no one may recognize us, and that we may not become an object of mockery among our acquaintances."

And so, together with the children, they set off along the road leading to Egypt.[4] After traveling several days, they came to the sea, and seeing in the harbor a ship ready to sail for Egypt, they boarded it and set sail. The master of the ship was a foreigner[5] and a very savage man. Enticed by the beauty of Eustace's wife, he was inflamed with passion for her and conceived in his heart the wicked intention of taking her from this poor man and making her his own. When they reached the shore where Eustace had to disembark, the master, instead of payment for the sea passage, took Eustace's wife for himself. Eustace resisted, but could do nothing, for the savage and inhuman foreigner, drawing a sword, threatened to kill Eustace and throw him into the sea. There was no one to defend Eustace. In tears he fell at the feet of the wicked man, begging him not to separate him from his beloved companion. But all his entreaties were unsuccessful, and he heard a decisive answer:

"If you wish to remain alive, be silent and go away from here; or else die here at once by the sword, and let this sea be your grave."

Weeping, Eustace took his children and went ashore; the master of the ship, pushing off from the shore, raised the sails and set out on the

4. That is, in the direction of the Mediterranean Sea, which had to be crossed by ship in order to reach Egypt. Egypt is a country in the northeastern part of Africa. At the time described, Egypt was under Roman rule, to which it finally fell in the year 30 B.C.

voyage. How grievous was this parting for this God-pleasing man from his chaste and faithful wife! With eyes full of tears, and with hearts breaking with sorrow, they took leave of one another. Eustace wept as he remained on the shore; his wife wept on the ship, forcibly torn from her husband and carried off to an unknown land. Can their sorrow, weeping and lamentation be expressed? Eustace stood on the shore for a long time, following the ship as long as he could see it. Then he set out on his way, leading his young children with him; the husband wept for his wife, and the children wept for their mother. The only consolation for the righteous soul of Eustace was that he accepted these trials from the hand of the Lord, without whose will nothing can happen to him. Eustace was also encouraged by the thought that he had been called to the faith of Christ precisely so that he might patiently pass the way to the heavenly fatherland.

But Eustace's sorrows were not yet at an end; on the contrary, he was soon to suffer new griefs, greater than the former. He had scarcely forgotten his first sorrow when a new grief drew near. He had only just endured the bitter separation from his wife, and already the loss of his children was close at hand. Continuing his journey, Eustace came to a broad and very swift river. There was no ferry or bridge across this river, and it had to be crossed. It proved impossible to carry both sons across to the other bank at once. Then Eustace took one of them and carried him on his shoulders to the opposite side. Setting him down there, he went back to carry the second son also. But as he had already come to the middle of the river, suddenly a cry was heard. Eustace turned around and saw with horror how a lion had seized his son and run off with him into the desert. With a bitter and piteous cry Eustace watched the beast retreating, until it vanished from sight with its prey. Eustace hastened back to his other son. But before he could reach the bank, a wolf suddenly rushed out and dragged the lad off into the

5. In the Life he is called a "barbarian." Thus the Greeks, and after them the Romans, called all foreigners in general. It was a contemptuous epithet, denoting the rudeness and ignorance of other peoples. At the same time, the term was also taken in Scripture to mean, in general, an inhuman and savage person. Probably this was one of those sea brigands who in those days still often terrorized the shores of the Mediterranean, carried off and sold beautiful women and girls into slavery, and brutally killed those who hindered them.

forest. Surrounded on all sides by heavy sorrows, Eustace stood in the middle of the river, as it were drowning in a sea of his tears. Can anyone tell how great his heartfelt grief and lamentation were? He had lost his wife, chaste, of the same faith and pious; he had lost his children, on whom he had looked as the sole consolation amid the trials that had befallen him. Truly it was a marvel that this man did not faint under the weight of such great sorrows and remained alive. Undoubtedly it was only the all-powerful right hand of the Most High that strengthened Eustace to bear these sorrows: for only He who permitted him to fall into such temptations could also send him such patience.

Coming out onto the shore, Eustace wept long and bitterly, and then, with a heavy heart, continued on his way. For him there was only one Comforter, God, in whom he firmly believed and for whose sake he bore all this. Eustace did not murmur against God in the least, did not say: "Have You, Lord, called me to know You in order that I should lose my wife and children? Is this the benefit of faith in You, that I should become the most unhappy of all men? Do You so love those who believe in You that they should perish in separation from one another?" Nothing of the kind did this righteous and patient man even think. On the contrary, in deep humility he gave thanks to the Lord that it pleases Him to see His servants not in worldly well-being and vain pleasures, but in sorrows and calamities, so that He may comfort them in the future life with eternal joy and gladness.

But Almighty God turns everything to good, and if He permits the righteous to fall into calamities, it is not in order to punish him, but to test his faith and courage, taking pleasure not in tears but in steadfast patience, and heeding his thanksgiving. Just as the Lord once preserved Jonah unharmed in the belly of the whale (Jonah ch. 2), so He preserved unharmed the children of Eustace, carried off by wild beasts. When the lion was carrying the lad off into the desert, shepherds saw it and, with shouts, pursued it. Abandoning the boy, the lion sought safety in flight. Likewise, the husbandmen saw the wolf that had seized the other boy and, with shouts, gave chase. The wolf too dropped the boy. The shepherds and the husbandmen were from one village. They took the children and raised them.

But Eustace knew nothing of this. As he continued on his way, now he gave thanks to God in patience, now, overcome by human nature, he wept, crying out:

Woe is me! Once I was rich, and now I am poor and stripped of everything. Woe is me! Once I was in glory, and now I am in dishonor. Woe is me! Once I had a household and great estates, and now I am a wanderer. I was once like a leafy and fruitful tree, but now I am like a withered branch. I was surrounded at home by friends, in the streets by servants, in battles by soldiers, and now I am left alone in the wilderness. But do not forsake me, O Lord! Do not despise me, Thou All-seeing! Do not forget me, Thou All-good! O Lord, do not forsake me to the end! I remember, O Lord, Thy words spoken to me in the place of Thy appearing: "Thou shalt bear afflictions, as Job did." But with me there has already been fulfilled more than with Job; for he, although he lost his property and glory, lay upon his dunghill, whereas I am in a foreign land and do not know where to go. He had friends who comforted him; but my comfort, my beloved children, the wild beasts snatched away in the wilderness and devoured. He, although he lost his children, could have from his wife some consolation and some service; but my good wife has fallen into the hands of a lawless foreigner, and I, like a reed in the wilderness, am shaken by the storm of my bitter sorrows. Be not angered with me, O Lord, that I speak thus from the grief of my heart; for I speak as a man. But I rest upon Thee, my Provider and the Ordainer of my way, I hope in Thee, and with Thy love, as with cool dew and a breath of wind, I cool the fire of my sorrow, and with the longing for Thee, as with a certain sweetness, I sweeten the bitterness of my misfortunes.

Speaking thus with sighs and tears, Eustace came to a certain village called Vadisis. Settling there, he began to work, hiring himself out to the inhabitants there, so as to earn his sustenance by the labor of his hands. He worked and toiled at a task to which he was not accustomed and which he had not known before. Afterwards Eustace besought the inhabitants of that village to entrust him with guarding their grain, for which they paid him a small wage. So he lived in that village for fifteen years in great poverty and humility and in much labor, so that in the

sweat of his face he ate his bread. And who can depict his virtues and his ascetic labors? Anyone may appraise them if he imagines that, amid such poverty and wandering, he practised nothing so much as prayer, fasting, tears, vigils and sighs from the heart, lifting his eyes and heart to God and awaiting mercy from His unspeakable compassion. Eustace's children were brought up not far from there, in another village, but he did not know of them, and they themselves did not know of one another, although they lived in one village. And his wife, like Sarah of old[6], was kept by God from the lust of that foreigner, who, at the very hour when he took her from her righteous husband, was struck down with illness, and, arriving in his own country, died, leaving his captive unsullied, without having touched her. Thus God preserved His faithful servant, so that, though she was in a net, she was not caught; but like a bird she escaped the snare of the fowlers: the net was broken, and she was delivered by the help of the Most High. After the death of that foreigner, the virtuous woman became free and lived in peace, without calamities, earning her food by the labor of her hands.

At that time the barbarian tribes were waging war against Rome and inflicting much harm, having seized some cities and regions[7]. Therefore Emperor Trajan was in great sorrow, and, recalling his brave voivode Placidas, he said:

"If our Placidas were with us, our enemies could not mock us; for he was terrible to the foe, and the enemies feared his name, because he was brave and fortunate in battle."

The emperor and all his nobles marveled at the strange circumstance that Placidas had disappeared with his wife and children no one knew where. Resolving to send searchers for him throughout his whole realm, Trajan said to those around him:

6. This is, of course, a well-known parallel from the life of the Old Testament patriarch Abraham and his wife Sarah, shortly after they had settled in the land of Canaan. When Abraham came to Egypt during a famine, Pharaoh, struck by Sarah's beauty, wished to take her as his wife; but the Lord did not permit it, and for Sarah's sake He afflicted both the king and his household with grievous plagues (Gen. 12:11–20).

7. This was shortly before the death of Trajan, as is clear from the narrative itself. History shows that at this time various Asian peoples subject to Rome had risen against Roman rule, and the emperor was preparing a campaign against Mesopotamia.

"Whoever finds my Placidas for me, I will honor with great honor and reward with many gifts."

And there were two good soldiers, Antiochus and Acacius, who had once been faithful friends of Placidas and had lived at his house, and they said:

"O autocratic emperor, command us to search for this man, who is very much needed by the whole Roman empire. Should we have to seek him even in the most distant lands, we will still apply all our zeal."

The emperor rejoiced at their readiness and at once sent them to seek Placidas. They set out and traversed many regions, seeking their beloved voivode in towns and villages, asking every person they met whether anyone had seen such a man anywhere. At last they approached the village where Eustace lived. Eustace at that time was guarding grain in the field. Seeing the soldiers approaching him, he began to look at them closely, and, recognizing them from afar, he rejoiced and wept for joy. Sighing deeply to God in the secret of his heart, Eustace stood in the road by which the soldiers had to pass; and they, coming up to Eustace and greeting him, asked him what village this was and who owned it. Then they began to ask whether there was here some wanderer of such an age and such an appearance, whose name was Placidas.

Eustace asked them:

"Why do you seek him?"

They answered him:

"He is our friend, and for a long time we have not seen him, and we do not know where he is together with his wife and children. If anyone were to tell us of him, we would give that man much gold."

Eustace said to them:

"I do not know him, and I have never heard of any Placidas. However, my lords, I beg you, enter the village and rest in my hut, for I see that you and your horses are tired from the road. So rest at my house, and afterwards you may learn about the man you seek from someone who knows him."

The soldiers, heeding Eustace, went with him into the village; but they did not recognize him, whereas he recognized them well, so that

he nearly wept, but restrained himself. In that village lived a good man, in whose house Eustace had lodging. He led the soldiers to this man, asking him to show them hospitality and feed them.

"And I," he added, "will repay you with my labor for all that you spend on the entertainment, for these men are my acquaintances."

The man, out of his goodness, and also heeding Eustace's request, zealously entertained his guests. And Eustace served them, bringing and setting dishes before them. In the course of this there came to his mind his former life, when those whom he was now serving had themselves served him in just this way; and he, overcome by the natural weakness of human nature, barely restrained his tears, but hid himself from the soldiers so as not to be recognized; several times he went out of the hut, and, having wept a little and wiped away his tears, he at once came in again, serving them like a slave and a simple peasant. The soldiers, often gazing at his face, began little by little to recognize him, and they began to say quietly to one another: "This man is like Placidas... can it really be he?..." And they added: "We remember that Placidas had a deep wound on his neck, which he received in war. If this man has such a wound, then he truly is Placidas himself." Seeing that wound on his neck, the soldiers at once leapt up from the table, fell at his feet, began to embrace him, and wept much for joy, saying to him:

"You are Placidas, whom we are seeking! You are the emperor's favorite, over whom he has grieved so long! You are the Roman voivode, over whom all the soldiers mourn!"

Then Eustace understood that the time had come, of which the Lord had foretold to him, when he was to receive again his first rank and his former glory and honor; and he said to the soldiers:

"I am, brethren, the one you are seeking! I am Placidas, with whom you fought against the enemies for a long time. I am the man who was once the glory of Rome, terrible to foreigners, dear to you, but now poor, wretched and known to no one!"

Great was their mutual joy, and joyful were their tears. They clothed Eustace in costly garments, as their voivode, handed him the emperor's letter, and earnestly asked him to go at once to the emperor, saying:

"Our enemies have begun to prevail over us, and there is no one so brave as you, who could conquer and disperse them!"

The master of that house and all his household, hearing this, marveled and were perplexed. And through the whole village spread the news that a great man had been found in it. All the inhabitants of the village began to flock together, as to a great miracle, and gazed in wonder at Eustace, dressed as a voivode and receiving honors from the soldiers. Antiochus and Acacius told the people of the exploits of Placidas, of his bravery, glory and nobility. The people, hearing that Eustace was such a brave Roman voivode, marveled, saying: "Oh, what a great man has lived among us, serving us as a hired laborer!" And they bowed down to him to the ground, saying:

"Why did you not reveal to us, lord, your noble birth and rank?"

The former master of Placidas, in whose house he had lived, fell at his feet, begging him not to be angry with him for the disrespect he had shown. And all the inhabitants of that village were ashamed at the thought that they had kept a great man as a hired servant, as a slave. The soldiers set Eustathius on a horse and rode with him on the road back to Rome, while all the villagers escorted him a long way with great honor. During the journey Eustathius conversed with the soldiers, and they asked him about his wife and children. He related to them everything in order, all that had befallen him, and they wept as they listened to such misfortunes of his. In turn they told him how deeply the emperor had grieved over him, and not only he, but his whole court and the soldiers as well. Conversing in this way, after some days they reached Rome, and the soldiers announced to the emperor that they had found Placidas, and how this had come about. The emperor met Placidas with honor, surrounded by all his nobles, and embraced him with joy and asked about everything that had happened to him. Eustathius told the emperor all that had befallen him, and his wife and children, and all who listened were moved to tenderness. After this the emperor restored Eustathius to his former rank and endowed him with greater wealth than he had possessed at first. All Rome rejoiced at Eustathius's return. The emperor asked him to set out on a campaign against the foreign tribes and by his valor to defend Rome from their

invasion, and also to take revenge on them for their seizure of some cities. Gathering all the soldiers, Eustathius saw that they were not enough for such a war; therefore he proposed that the emperor send decrees to all the regions of his realm and gather from the towns and villages young men fit for military service, and then send them to Rome; and this was carried out. The emperor sent out the decrees, and a multitude of young and sturdy men fit for war were gathered in Rome. Among them were brought to Rome also the two sons of Eustathius, Agapius and Theopistus, who by then had come of age and were handsome of face, stately of body and strong of strength. When they were brought to Rome and the commander saw them, he greatly loved them, for paternal nature itself drew him to the children, and he felt a strong affection for them. Although he did not know that they were his sons, he loved them as his own children, and they were always with him and sat with him at one table, for they were dear to his heart. Afterward Eustathius set out to war against the foreign tribes and conquered them by the power of Christ. He not only took back from them the cities and regions they had seized, but also conquered the whole enemy land and utterly defeated their army. Strengthened by the power of his Lord, he showed even greater valor than before and gained such a brilliant victory as he had never won before.

When the war was over, and Eustathius was returning home in peace, it happened that he came to a village situated in a picturesque place by a river. Since this place was convenient for a halt, Eustathius stopped with his soldiers for three days, for it was pleasing to God that His faithful servant should meet with his wife and children, and that those who had been scattered should be gathered together again into one. His wife lived in that very village, having a garden from which she obtained her sustenance with great difficulty. By God's providence, Agapius and Theopistus, knowing nothing of their mother, pitched a tent near her garden; brought up in the same village, they had one common tent and loved one another as brothers of one womb. They did not know that they were full brothers, yet, not knowing their close kinship, they kept brotherly love between them. Both of them lay down to rest near their mother's garden, not far from the place where the command-

er's camp was. One day their mother, about noon, was working in her garden and heard the conversation of Agapius and Theopistus, who at that time were resting in their tent. Their talk was this: they asked one another of what origin each was, and the elder said:

"I remember a little that my father was a commander in Rome, and I do not know why he departed from that city with my mother, taking with him me and my younger brother (for he had two of us). I remember also that we reached the sea and boarded a ship. Then, during the voyage at sea, when we put in to shore, our father went out of the ship, and with him we two brothers, but our mother, I do not know for what reason, remained on the ship. I remember too that our father wept bitterly for her, we wept with him too, and he went on his way in tears. When we came to a river, my father set me down on the bank and, taking my younger brother on his shoulder, carried him to the opposite bank. When he, having carried him across, was walking back after me, a lion came running, seized me and carried me off into the wilderness; but shepherds took me away from it, and I was brought up in the village that you know."

Then the younger brother, rising quickly, threw himself on his neck with tears of joy, saying:

"Truly you are my brother, for I too remember all that you are telling, and I myself saw when a lion carried you off, while at that time a wolf carried me off, but farmers took me away from it."

Learning of their kinship, the brothers rejoiced greatly and began to embrace and kiss one another, shedding tears of joy. And their mother, hearing such a conversation, marveled and raised her eyes to heaven with sighs and tears, for she was convinced that they were truly her children, and her heart felt sweetness and comfort after all its bitter sorrows. Yet, being a sensible woman, she did not dare to appear before them and reveal herself without more certain word, for she was a beggar and dressed in poor clothes, while they were handsome and famous soldiers. She resolved to go to the commander to ask his permission to return to Rome together with his army: she hoped that there it would be easier for her to reveal herself to her sons, and also to learn of her

husband, whether he was alive or not. She went to the commander, stood before him, bowed to him and said:

"I beg you, lord, command that I may follow your regiment to Rome; for I am a Roman woman and was taken captive by foreign tribes into this land, now for the sixteenth year; and now, being free, I wander in a foreign country and endure extreme poverty."

Eustathius, from the goodness of his heart, at once inclined to her request and allowed her to return fearlessly to her homeland. Then that woman, looking at the commander, was fully convinced that he was her husband, and stood in amazement as if in a trance. But Eustathius did not recognize his wife. She, having unexpectedly received one joy after another, just as before one sorrow after another, inwardly prayed to God with sighs and feared to reveal herself to her husband and say that she was his wife; for he was in great glory and was now surrounded by a multitude of attendants, while she was like the lowest beggar. And she withdrew from his tent, praying to her Lord and God that He Himself would arrange matters so that her husband and children might recognize her. Then, choosing a more suitable time, she again entered Eustathius's tent and stood before him. And he, looking at her, asked:

"What else do you ask of me, old woman?"

She bowed to him to the ground and said:

"I entreat you, my lord, do not be angry with your servant for wishing to ask you about one matter. Be patient and hear me."

He said to her:

"Good, speak."

Then she began her speech thus:

"Are you not Placidas, named Eustathius at holy baptism? Are you not the one who saw Christ on the cross between the antlers of a stag? Are you not the one who for the sake of the Lord God left Rome with his wife and two children, Agapius and Theopistus? Did not a stranger take your wife from you on the ship? The faithful witness in heaven is Christ the Lord Himself, for whose sake I have endured many afflictions, that I am your wife, and that by the grace of Christ I was preserved from outrage, for that stranger, at the very hour he took me

from you, perished, punished by the wrath of God, while I remained pure, and now I suffer hardship and wander."

Hearing all this, Eustathius seemed to awake from sleep and at once recognized his wife, stood up and embraced her, and both of them wept much from great joy. And Eustathius said:

"Let us praise and give thanks to Christ our Savior, who did not forsake us in His mercy, but as He promised to comfort us after sorrows, so He has done!"

And they, with many joyful tears, gave thanks to God. After this, when Eustathius had ceased weeping, his wife asked him:

"Where are our children?"

He, heaving a deep sigh, answered:

"Wild beasts have devoured them."

Then his wife said to him:

"Do not grieve, my lord! God has helped us to find each other unexpectedly; so He will help us to find our children too."

He remarked to her:

"Did I not tell you that beasts devoured them?"

She then began to tell him all that she had heard the day before in her garden while working, all the words that the two soldiers had spoken together in the tent, from which she had learned that they were her sons.

Eustathius at once called those soldiers to him and asked them:

"Of what origin are you? Where were you born? Where were you brought up?"

Then the elder of them answered him thus:

“My lord, we were left very young after our parents, and therefore remember little of our childhood. Yet we remember that our father was a Roman commander, like you; but we do not know what happened to him, nor why he went out of Rome by night with our mother and the two of us. Nor do we know why, when we had crossed the sea in a ship, our mother remained behind on that ship. Our father, weeping for her, came with us to a river. While he was carrying us across the river one by one, and was in the midst of it, wild beasts seized us: a lion seized

me, and a wolf my brother. But we were both saved from the beasts, for shepherds saved and raised me, and farmers my brother."

Hearing this, Eustathius and his wife recognized their children and, throwing their arms around their necks, wept for a long time. And there was great joy in Eustathius's camp, as once there had been in Egypt when Joseph was recognized by his brothers (Gen. 45:1–15). News that their commander's wife and children had been found spread throughout all the regiments, and all the soldiers gladly gathered together, and there was great rejoicing throughout the whole army. They had not rejoiced so much over their victories as over this joyful event. Thus did God comfort His faithful servants, for "the Lord killeth, and maketh alive ... the Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich" (1 Kgdms. 2:6–7); He brings down into affliction and raises up to joy and gladness. Then Eustathius could say with David: "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare [to you] what He hath done for my soul. I will remember to show mercy unto me. The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly!" (Ps. 65:16; 10:16; 117:16).

As Eustathius was returning from the war, rejoicing doubly, both in his victory and in finding his wife and children, but before he had yet arrived in Rome, Emperor Trajan died, and Hadrian succeeded him. Hadrian was exceedingly cruel, hated good men, and persecuted the pious. After Eustathius had entered Rome with great triumph, according to the custom of Roman commanders, bringing many captives with him and surrounded by rich spoils of war, the Emperor and all the Romans received him with honor[8], and his courage was praised more than before, and all held him in still greater esteem. But God, Who does not will that His servants be honored and praised in this changeable and unstable world with vain and temporary honor, for He has prepared for them in heaven eternal and unfading honor and glory, showed Eustathius the path of martyrdom; for soon He again sent him dishonor and affliction, which he joyfully endured for Christ. The impious Hadrian desired to offer sacrifice to demons in thanksgiving for his victory over his

8. That is, Placidas was honored with what was called, according to Roman custom, a triumph, that is, a solemn and splendid reception accorded to a commander crowned with glory as a victor.

enemies. When he entered the temple of idols with his nobles, Eustathius did not enter with them, but remained outside. The Emperor asked him:

"Why do you refuse to enter the temple with us and worship the gods? Before all others, you ought to give them thanks, for they not only preserved you safe and unharmed in the war and granted you victory, but also helped you find your wife and children."

Eustathius answered:

"I am a Christian, and I know my one God, Jesus Christ; Him I honor and thank, and Him I worship. For He has granted me everything: health, victory, my wife, and my children. But I will not worship deaf, dumb, powerless idols."

And Eustathius went to his home. The Emperor was angered and began to consider how he might punish Eustathius for dishonoring his gods. First he stripped him of his rank as commander and summoned him to judgment as a common man, together with his wife and children, and exhorted them to offer sacrifice to the idols. But, being unable to persuade them to do so, he condemned them to be devoured by wild beasts. And so St. Eustathius, that renowned and valiant warrior, went to the circus, condemned to death together with his wife and sons. But he was not ashamed of this dishonor, nor did he fear death for Christ, Whom he had served zealously, confessing His holy name before all. He strengthened his holy wife and his children also, that they might not fear death for the Lord, the Life-Giver of all; and they went to their death as to a feast, encouraging one another with hope of the reward to come. Wild beasts were let loose upon them, but they did not touch them, for whenever any beast approached them, it immediately turned back, bowing its head before them. The beasts' fury was subdued, but the Emperor grew yet more furious and ordered them to be taken to prison. On the next day he ordered a brazen bull to be heated red-hot and St. Eustathius, his wife, and his children to be cast into it[5886]. But for the holy martyrs this heated bull was as the Chaldean furnace, cooled by the dew, had been for the holy youths (Dan. 3:21). Being within the bull, the holy martyrs prayed, gave their souls to God, and passed into the Kingdom of Heaven. Three days later Hadrian ap-

proached the bull, wishing to see the ashes of the martyrs who had been burned. When the doors were opened, the torturers found their bodies whole and unharmed, and not a hair on their heads had been burned; their faces were like the faces of those who sleep, and shone with wondrous beauty. All the people who were there cried out:

"Great is the God of the Christians!"

The Emperor returned to his palace in shame, and all the people reproached him for his wickedness, saying that he had put to death in vain a commander so necessary to Rome. The Christians took the precious bodies of the holy martyrs and buried them[9], glorifying God, wondrous in His saints, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to Whom from us all be honor, glory, and worship, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having plainly imitated the sufferings of Christ, and having fervently drunk His cup, thou, Eustathius, wast made a partaker and heir of glory, receiving from God Himself, the God of all, divine forgiveness from on high.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Michael, Prince of Chernigov, and His Boyar Theodore, Who Suffered at the Hands of the Impious Batu

Страдание святых мучеников Михаила, князя Черниговского и боярина его Феодора, от нечестивого Батыя пострадавших

When you see tumults and wars, or other calamities, do not think that all this is merely an ordinary occurrence in this transitory world, or that it has come about by chance; but know that calamities are permitted by the will of almighty God on account of our sins, so that those who sin may come to their senses and amend their ways. At first the Lord admonishes us sinners with small chastisements; but if we do not amend, then He sends greater chastisements

9. The relics of St. Eustathius and his family are in Rome, in the church bearing his name.

upon us, as He once did upon the Israelites. For what did the Lord permit to befall those who would not amend through the cords of Christ's scourge? (Jn. 2:15) "Thou shalt smite them," He said, "with a rod of iron" (Ps. 2:9). The small chastisements which the Lord permits at first are these: rebellion, famine, sudden death, civil wars, and the like. But if sinners are not brought to their senses by such chastisements, then the Lord sends upon them a cruel and grievous invasion of foreigners, so that at least amid this great calamity people may come to their senses and turn from their wicked ways, according to the word of the Prophet: "When He slew them, then they sought Him" (Ps. 77:34). So it was with us, with all our Russian land. When by our wicked conduct we provoked the goodness of the all-merciful God and greatly offended His mercy, yet would not repent, turn away from evil, and do good, then the Lord was angered against us with His righteous anger and willed to punish us for our iniquities with the most terrible chastisement. And so He permitted the godless and cruel barbarians called Tatars, with their most impious and lawless emperor Batu[10], to come upon us. Attacking the Russian land[11] in countless numbers, they defeated the right-believing Russian princes and crushed their army; they laid all the cities waste and devastated the Russian land with sword and fire, for none could resist those godless hordes, to whom God had delivered us on account of our sins, as He once spoke through the Prophet: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword" (Is. 1:19–20). The Christians who escaped the sword and captivity hid themselves in the mountains and trackless wildernesses; and all the Russian land then presented a sorrowful sight: the places formerly inhabited by people—cities and villages—lay deserted, while people dwelt

10. Batu was the grandson of the great Genghis Khan and Tatar khan. Batu established his residence on the banks of the river Volki, naming his capital "Sarai." Here his Horde roamed, known under the name of the Golden or Kipchak Horde (an *orda* was a Tatar encampment). But Batu himself was not an absolute sovereign: in his turn he depended on the Great Khan, the heir of Genghis, who roamed with a great Horde in the deserts of Central Asia, whither many Russian princes went to show their submission to the Great Khan.

11. This invasion of the Tatars into the Russian land took place in 1238.

where wild beasts had formerly lived, hiding themselves from the barbarians.

At that time there lived the pious and ever-memorable Michael, son of Vsevolod the Red[12], Prince of Chernigov. From his youth he was distinguished by a virtuous life; having loved Christ, he served Him with all his heart, and all could see the prince's guileless soul: his meekness, humility, affability toward all, and mercy toward the poor. Always pleasing God with prayer and fasting, and adorning his soul with every good work, Prince Michael made it a fair dwelling for God, his Creator.

This pious prince had a beloved boyar, as virtuous as himself, named Theodore; together with him, Prince Michael also suffered at the hands of the impious Batu, laying down his life for Christ.

When the right-believing and Christ-loving Michael held the principality of Kiev, the impious Batu sent his Tatars to inspect the city of Kiev. The men he sent were amazed when they saw the greatness and beauty of the city of Kiev, and, returning to Batu, told him of this renowned city. Then Batu again sent envoys to Michael, so that by flattery they might persuade the prince to submit to him of his own free will. The right-believing Prince Michael understood that the Tatars intended by treachery to seize the city and lay it waste: the prince had already heard that those cruel barbarians mercilessly killed even those who submitted to them willingly, and so he ordered Batu's envoys to be put to death. After this, Michael learned that an immense Tatar army was drawing near, which, like locusts in their great multitude (for the warriors numbered 600 thousand men), had come upon the Russian land and taken possession of its fortified cities. Knowing that Kiev could not escape the approaching enemies, Prince Michael, together with the boyar Theodore, fled to Hungary[13] to seek aid for his homeland. Not receiving this aid, Michael wandered for a time in a foreign

12. Vsevolod, called Chermny, Prince of Chernigov, son of the Grand Prince of Kiev Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich. From 1210 to 1214 Vsevolod held Kiev; he died in 1215.

13. Hungary (Slavonic *Ugriya*) was a kingdom, the principal land of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The son of Michael of Chernigov, Rostislav, was married to a daughter of the Hungarian king Bela. Hoping to find in his kinsman a faithful ally, Prince Michael urged the king to rise with combined forces against the common enemy, but he persuaded neither him nor the others to whom he appealed for help.

land; “Hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast”[14] (Is. 26:20).

After Prince Michael’s departure from Kiev, other Russian princes held the principality of Kiev; yet they, too, could not defend Kiev against the impious Batu. Coming with all his army, Batu took possession of Kiev, Chernigov, and other fortified cities and principalities; all were grievously laid waste by fire and sword. This was in the year 6748 from the creation of the world, and in the year 1240 from the Nativity of Christ. At that time the renowned and glorious city of Kiev was utterly laid waste by the hands of Christ-hating enemies; its notable citizens perished by the sword of the impious—some were slain, and others led away captive. The splendid churches of God were defiled and burned, so that the words of David were fulfilled: “O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance; they have defiled Thy holy temple; they have made Jerusalem a desolation. The dead bodies of Thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of Thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them” (Ps. 78:1–3).

Prince Michael, who was then wandering abroad, heard of all that was happening in the Russian land and inconsolably mourned his brethren of the same faith and the desolation of his land. Soon Michael learned that the impious king had commanded the townspeople who had survived the sword and captivity, few though they were, to live unafraid in their own places, on condition that they paid him tribute. And many Russian princes who had fled to distant foreign lands, hearing this, began to return to their native land. Having done obeisance to the impious king, they took up their principalities and, paying tribute to Batu, settled again in their ruined cities. The pious Prince Michael also returned from his wanderings with his boyar Theodore and all his people, choosing rather to pay tribute to the impious king and live, even in his emptied homeland, than to remain a wanderer in a foreign land.

14. At this point the Prophet Isaiah calls for patient endurance of grievous calamities, since these calamities are the consequence of God's wrath for the people's impiety. "Hide yourselves," says the prophet, "for a short time, until the wrath of the Lord has passed by you."

First he came to Kiev, where he wept bitterly, seeing the holy places deserted and the Pechersk Church,[15] like heaven, laid waste to its very foundations. Then Michael went to Chernigov. And scarcely had Prince Michael rested there from his journey when the Tatars, hearing of his return, came from Batu and began to summon him (as they did the other Russian princes) to their king, saying:

"You cannot live in Batu's land without doing obeisance to him. Therefore, go—pay him homage and become his tributaries—and then remain in your dwellings."

That impious emperor had the following custom: if any Russian prince came to pay him homage, the Tatar sorcerers and priests compelled him to pass through fire,[16] and if any prince brought the emperor gifts, the sorcerers took a little of each gift and cast it into the fire as an offering. Having led them through the fire, they compelled them to worship the sun, a bush, and the idols; only after this did they admit them to the emperor. Many Russian princes, out of fear of the emperor and in order to retain their principalities, did all these things: they passed through the fire and worshipped the idols—and for this the emperor granted them what they asked.

Hearing that many Russian princes, seduced by the glory of this world, had worshipped idols, the pious Prince Michael grieved deeply; and, zealous for the Lord God, he resolved to go to the unrighteous emperor, the most treacherous of all men, and fearlessly confess Christ before him and shed his blood for the Lord. Having formed this resolve and being aflame in soul, Michael summoned his faithful counsellor, the

15. The Kiev Caves Church of the Mother of God was founded by the Venerable Fathers Antony and Theodosius of the Caves in 1073, under Bishop Michael, in the days of the right-believing Prince Svyatoslav Yaroslavich. The building of the church, begun amid various wonders and signs, continued under the abbacy of Venerable Stephen and Venerable Nikon, and was completed under Abbot John. The beauty and splendor of this church astonished contemporaries. Its interior gleamed with gold and mosaic and drew the eye by its icon painting. The floor was laid in mosaic of multicolored stones arranged in beautiful patterns. The tops of the church were gilded; the cross set upon the main dome was wrought of pure gold. It is not surprising, therefore, that contemporaries called the Caves church "like unto heaven" and said that it was the glory and adornment of the whole Russian land.

16. The Tatar priests led all who came to the khan through fires: by their conviction, this destroyed every evil intention in those who went to their sovereign. Fire, according to their belief, was a "purgatory for all evil designs," and even took away the power of concealed poison.

boyar Theodore, and told him of his intention. Theodore, being pious and steadfast in the faith, approved his lord's decision and promised not to forsake him until the very end, but to lay down his own soul with him for Christ. After conferring in this way, they firmly resolved to go and die for the confession of Jesus Christ, never in any way turning from their purpose. At once they went to their spiritual father, named John, to tell him of this. When they had come to him, the prince said:

"Father, I wish to go to the emperor, as all the Russian princes do."

The spiritual father heard these words with sorrow, and, sighing deeply, said:

"Many princes have gone there and destroyed their souls, fulfilling Batu's will and worshipping the fire and the sun and the other idols. And you, Michael, if you wish, go in peace; but I beseech you, do not imitate them or do what they did to preserve their earthly power: do not pass through the fire of the impious, and do not worship their abominable gods, for our God is one, Jesus Christ. Do not partake, either, of any of the defiled food offered to idols, lest you destroy your soul."

The prince and the boyar answered:

"We wish to shed our blood for Christ and lay down our souls for Him, that we may be an acceptable sacrifice to Him."

Hearing this, John rejoiced in his soul and, looking upon them with a joyful countenance, said:

"If you do this, you shall be blessed, and in this last generation you shall be called newly revealed martyrs."

Then, having given them instruction from the Gospel and the other divinely inspired books, he gave the prince and the boyar Communion of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, blessed them, and said:

"May the Lord God strengthen you and send you the gift of the Holy Spirit, that you may be steadfast in the faith, bold in confessing the name of Christ, and courageous in suffering; and may the King of Heaven number you among the company of the first holy martyrs."

After this, Michael and Theodore went home; having made all the necessary preparations there for their journey and taken leave of their families, they hastened on their way, praying to God, aflame with

heartfelt love for Him and longing for the martyr's crown: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God!" (Ps. 41:2).

When they reached the place where the godless emperor Batu was, his arrival was immediately reported to him. Batu summoned his sorcerers and priests and ordered them to lead the Prince of Chernigov, according to their custom, through the fire and make him worship the idols, and only then to bring him before him. The sorcerers came to the prince and said:

"The great emperor summons you."

They took him and led him away. His boyar Theodore followed after him, as after his lord. Soon they came to the place where fire had been kindled on either side, with a path between, along which many had already passed; the sorcerers intended to lead Prince Michael along this path as well. Then the prince said:

"It is not fitting for Christians to pass through that fire which the impious honor as a god, but I am a Christian; therefore I will not pass through the fire, nor worship the creature, for I worship the Creator—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the one God in Trinity, the Maker of heaven and earth."

Hearing these words of the prince, the sorcerers and priests were enraged. Leaving Michael, they went to report his words to the emperor. At that time certain Russian princes who had come with him to pay homage to Batu approached Prince Michael—among them was Boris, Prince of Rostov.[17] They pitied Michael and grieved deeply for him, yet at the same time feared that they too might incur the emperor's wrath, and so advised Michael to do Batu's will.

"You can," they said, "pretend to obey the command and worship the fire and the sun, merely to escape the emperor's wrath and a cruel

17. Boris Vasilkovich (Vasilyevich), Prince of Rostov, grandson of Michael of Chernigov, the elder of the two sons of Vasilko Konstantinovich by his marriage to Maria Mikhailovna, a princess of Chernigov. After the death of his father, who was killed by the Tatars near Rostov in the Sherensky forest in 1238, Boris received Rostov as his appanage. This prince is known in history as an intercessor for the Russian land before the khan of the Golden Horde. He visited the Horde more than eight times; by order of Batu he even traveled to Great Tatary, to Khan Sartak (1245). Boris died in the Horde in 1277 and was buried in the Dormition Cathedral of Rostov.

death. When you return home in peace, you can then act as you wish: the Lord will not punish you for this, nor be angered with you, for He knows that you did it under compulsion. If your spiritual father counts your deed as a sin, we will all take your guilt upon ourselves—only listen to us, pass through the fire, and worship the Tatar gods. By this you will free both yourself and us from the emperor's wrath and an evil death, and you will obtain many benefits for your land."

They said all this to Michael with bitter tears. The pious boyar Theodore, hearing their words, was greatly troubled, fearing that the prince might follow the counsel of those around him and fall away from the faith. Approaching the prince, he began to remind him of his promise and of the words of his spiritual father:

"Remember, pious prince," he said, "how you vowed to lay down your soul for Christ. Call to mind the words of the Gospel with which our spiritual father taught us: 'For whoever would save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?' (Mk. 8:35–36). 'Everyone therefore who confesses Me before men, I also will confess before My Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father who is in heaven' (Mt. 10:32–33)."

Prince Michael listened with delight to the words of his boyar, and, burning with zeal for God, he awaited the torment with joy, ready to die for Christ the Giver of Life. Prince Boris, of whom mention was made above, continued to urge Michael earnestly to fulfil the tsar's will.

"I do not wish to be a Christian in name only," Michael answered them, "and to act like the pagans."

Then, taking off his sword, he threw it down before them and said:

"Take the glory of this world; I have no need of it."

Shortly afterward, a distinguished courtier named Eldega came from Batu and delivered to Prince Michael the following words from his king:

"The great king says to you: choose one or the other. If you carry out my command, passing through fire and bowing to my gods, you will not only remain alive but will receive great favors from me and be the

complete master of your principality. But if you do not obey me and do not bow to my gods, you will die an evil death."

Having heard the royal words from Eldega, Prince Michael was not in the least dismayed, but boldly answered:

"Tell the tsar: thus says to you Prince Michael, servant of Christ. If, O tsar, the kingdom and the glory of this world have been entrusted to you by God, and the Right Hand of the Most High has subjected us to you for our sins, then we ought to bow down to you as to a tsar and render the honor befitting your royal dignity. But to renounce Christ and bow down to your gods, that will not be; for they are not gods but creation. Our prophetic Scriptures say thus: 'The gods who did not make heaven and earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens' (Jer. 10:11). What could be more senseless than to forsake the Creator and worship the creature?"

Eldega said to him:

"Michael, you are mistaken in calling the sun a creature. For tell me: who entered that immeasurable height of heaven and created so great a luminary, which gives light to the whole universe?"

"If you wish to hear me," the saint answered him, "I will tell you Who created the sun and all things visible and invisible. God, who is without beginning and invisible, and His Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, likewise uncreated and having neither beginning nor end, and the Holy Spirit likewise—God in three Persons, but one in Essence—He created heaven and earth and the sun, which you worship, and the moon and the stars, and also the sea and the dry land. He also created the first man, Adam, and gave him all created things to serve him. And the Lord gave men the law that they should not worship anything created, neither on earth nor in heaven, but should worship the One God who created all things; to Him I bow down. And if the tsar promises me a principality and the glory of this world, I do not seek it, since the tsar himself is not eternal, nor is the power he gives me eternal, and I have no need of it. I hope that my God, in whom I believe, will give me an eternal kingdom that has no end."

Then Eldega said:

"If you, Michael, persist and do not fulfil the tsar's will, you will be put to death at once."

The saint answered:

"I do not fear that death through which I may be counted worthy to dwell eternally with God. Why should we say much more? I am a Christian; I confess the Creator of heaven and earth, I firmly believe in Him, and I will die for Him with joy."

Then Eldega, seeing that neither by flattery nor by threats could he persuade Michael to fulfil the tsar's will, went to Batu to report to him all that he had heard from Michael.

Having heard Eldega, Batu flew into a rage and ordered his attendants to put Prince Michael to death at once. And the tormentor's servants rushed upon him like dogs to the chase, or like wolves pursuing a sheep. The holy martyr of Christ, together with Theodore, was at that time unafraid of death; they sang psalms and prayed fervently to God. Seeing the murderers approaching, they began to sing: "Thy martyrs, O Lord, endured many torments, and by Thy love the holy ones united their souls." Reaching the place where Prince Michael stood, the murderers seized him by the hands and feet like beasts and, throwing him down upon the ground, beat his whole body long and pitilessly, so that the earth was stained with his blood. Michael endured all this bravely, repeating only one thing: "I am a Christian!"

Among the tsar's servants there was one who had formerly been a Christian but had become an apostate and had taken up the impious Tatar faith. This apostate, seeing how bravely the saint endured his torments, grew enraged against him, and since he was an enemy of Christians, drew a knife, seized Michael by the head, cut it off and threw it down, while the lips of the holy confessor still went on repeating: "I am a Christian."

O wondrous miracle! The head, already severed from the body, still confessed Christ.

After this the impious tormentors approached the pious Theodore and said to him:

"Carry out the tsar's command and bow down to our gods; for this you will not only remain alive, but will receive great honor from the tsar and inherit the principality of your lord."

But the holy Theodore answered:

"I do not seek the principality of my lord, nor do I need honor from your tsar. I desire only to go to Christ by the same path on which my lord went, the holy martyr Prince Michael; for I believe, as he did, in the One Christ, the Creator of heaven and earth, and I wish, as he did, to suffer for Him, and I do not fear torments or death itself."

Seeing Theodore's steadfastness, the murderers seized him and began to torment him as cruelly as they had St. Michael. At last they cut off his honorable head, saying as they did so:

"He who would not bow down to the radiant sun is not worthy even to look upon the sun."

Thus, having suffered honorably, the holy martyrs Michael and Theodore commended their souls into the hands of the Lord, in the year 6753 from the creation of the world, from the Nativity of Christ in 1245, on the 20th day of September. Their holy bodies were cast out to be devoured by dogs, but for many days they remained whole and untouched by anyone. Thus the grace of Christ preserved them unharmed. Moreover, over the bodies of the martyrs there appeared a fiery pillar shining with a bright radiance, and every night burning candles were seen. Seeing all this, the Christians who were at that time in the Horde secretly took the bodies of the martyrs and buried them with honor.[5896]

After the holy martyrs were slain, the impious Batu again set out to make war with all his hosts, first on Poland, then on Hungary; but he was killed by the Hungarian king Vladislav, and thus received an evil end to his evil life. So the tormentor Batu received hell as his portion, while the holy martyrs inherited the Kingdom of Heaven and eternally glorify the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Having completed your lives in martyrdom and adorned with the crowns of confession, you ascended to the heavens, O wise Michael, together with the valiant Theodore. Pray to Christ God to preserve

your fatherland, the emperor and the people, through His great mercy.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Counting the earthly kingdom as nothing, you left behind the glory that passes away; willingly[18] *entering the contest, you preached the Trinity before the impious tormentor, O Passion-bearer Michael, together with the valiant Theodore. Standing before the King of hosts, pray that your fatherland, the emperor and the people may be preserved unharmed, that we may ever honor you.*

* * *

NOTES

5886. The *Great Chet'i-Minei* of Metropolitan Macarius adds here the following details, which are not found in St. Demetrius of Rostov. When the holy martyrs drew near the place of their terrible execution, they raised their hands to heaven and offered a fervent prayer to the Lord, as though beholding some heavenly manifestation, as is evident from the first words of their prayer. The prayer was as follows: "O Lord God of hosts, invisible to all, yet visible through us! Hearken to us who pray to Thee and receive our last prayer. Behold, we are gathered together, and Thou hast granted us the lot of Thy saints; as the three youths cast into the fire in Babylon were not rejected by Thee, so now grant that we too may end our lives in this fire, that Thou mayest graciously receive us as an acceptable sacrifice. Grant, O Lord God, to everyone who remembers our memory a portion in the Kingdom of Heaven; and turn the fury of this fire into cold, and grant us to die in it. We pray further, O Lord: grant that our bodies may not be parted, but that they may lie together." In answer to this prayer a Divine voice sounded from heaven: "Let it be to you as you ask! And more shall be yours, for you have endured many afflictions and have not been overcome. Go in peace, receive the crowns of victory for your sufferings, and rest forever and ever."

5896. The holy relics of the right-believing Prince Michael and of his boyar Theodore were transferred from the Horde by God-fearing Christians first to Vladimir, and then to the prince's native city, Chernigov. Then, on February 14, 1572, by the will of Tsar John Vasilyevich the Terrible, the holy relics were transferred to Moscow, for fear that they might be subjected to outrage by the Catholics, when Chernigov passed under Polish rule. They were placed beneath the floor in the cathedral church of the Chernigov Wonderworkers, which stood in the Kremlin near the Tainitsky Gates. When that cathedral was abolished, the holy relics, by order of Empress Catherine II, were solemnly transferred on August 25, 1770, to the Sretensky Cathedral, which was in the

18. That is, without compulsion, voluntarily.

palace on the Seny; from there, on November 21, 1774, they were moved to the Archangel Cathedral, where they first rested in a magnificent silver reliquary made in commemoration of the peace with Turkey; and after 1812 (when this reliquary was carried off by the enemy), they rest to this day in a copper reliquary overlaid with silver.



THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 21

21 сентября

New Calendar September 21 · Old Calendar October 4 (civil dates)

St. Apostle Quadratus

Святой Апостол Кодрат

St. Apostle Quadratus, one of the seventy, preached the word of God in Athens and in Magnesia[1], where he was also bishop; through his preaching he brought many to the light of divine knowledge. According to the words of Sirach, he was "as the morning star among the clouds" (Sir. 50:6). By the dark clouds we understand pagan godlessness, alien to the light of piety; the people held by it sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. But St. Apostle Quadratus, preaching the word of God, shone before them like a great light; he dispelled the darkness surrounding them, put an end to the sacrifices to idols, overthrew the idols and by his prayer laid waste the demonic temples. As once a star guided the eastern kings, so he showed the way to Christ; and as the morning star leads on the sun, so he proclaimed to the world the great Luminary and dispersed the gloom surrounding human souls. But darkness is the constant enemy of light; therefore the godless pagans, seeing that Quadratus was destroying their idols, driving out demons and uprooting impiety, raised a persecution against the holy Apostle and rushed upon him with stones, as once the Jews upon Stephen (Acts 7:59). Although they stoned St. Quadratus, he, kept by the grace of Christ, remained alive. Then they cast him into prison and long tormented him with hunger; the impious idolaters deprived of natural food him who nourished their souls not with perishable bread but with food that leads to eternal life. They tormented the saint with hunger, but they themselves perished from that hunger of which Holy

1. Magnesia – the eastern peninsula and region of Thessaly.

Scripture speaks: "Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11). They could not destroy by hunger a man ever strengthened from on high, but they themselves condemned themselves to eternal death. After long sufferings St. Quadratus died, but his soul lives in the Kingdom of Heaven and enjoys paradisal blessedness. He completed the course of his suffering under the emperor Hadrian, and began to live forever before the King of Glory, Jesus Christ: with Him he suffered, and with Him he is glorified in His kingdom. His holy body, laid in Magnesia, poured forth many healings upon the sick. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As an honorable hierarch and a most steadfast sufferer, the whole world offers to Thee, O Lord, Quadratus the Apostle, and with hymns honors his venerable memory, ever beseeching that forgiveness of transgressions be granted to those who sing of His compassion.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyrs Hypatius and Andrew

Память святых священномучеников Ипатия и Андрея

These saints were born in the land of Lydia[2]. In childhood they both studied together in one monastery, and adorning themselves with every virtue, grew stronger and stronger in the faith. Having reached mature age, Hypatius took monastic vows; he strove to remain constantly in silence and to labor before God. Andrew, however, devoted himself to the service of people: he became a cleric, a zealous preacher of the word of God, and zealously instructed the Christians in church. Both were distinguished by great abstinence, humility and unfeigned love for all. The archbishop of Ephesus, learning of the virtuous life of these pious men, summoned them to himself; he derived no small benefit from conversing with them, therefore he came to love them

2. Lydia – a region on the western coast of Asia Minor.

greatly, and made Hypatius, against his will, bishop of the Church of Asia, saying:

"It is not fitting for such a lamp to be in the wilderness, under a bushel; he must stand upon the episcopal throne, to enlighten the Church with the teaching of Christ."

Andrew, however, he ordained as a priest. Thus did these two saints shine forth, enlightening people by wise teaching and by the purity of their lives. Meanwhile the Greek emperor Leo the Isaurian[3] raised a persecution against the holy icons; he commanded throughout the empire that they be cast out of the churches of God, and issued a most severe order that no one should dare to venerate them. Then the holy Hypatius and Andrew took up arms against the iconoclasts: they urged their flock not to heed the impious royal decree. The emperor, hearing of this, ordered them brought before him, and long sought to persuade them to renounce the veneration of the holy icons; he even commanded his wise men to enter into dispute with the valiant warriors of Christ, but the persecutor of the true faith could by no means shake these firm pillars of the Church. Then, having cast them into prison, he kept them there a long time, hoping thereby to force them to abandon their conviction. Deceived, he commanded that they be beaten without mercy, that the skin with the hair be torn from their heads, and, smearing their beards with pitch, set them afire, and then deliver to the flames the precious holy icons upon their heads. All this they bravely endured, and by the power of God remained alive. Then Leo commanded that they be dragged through the city, and the saints were dragged for the mockery of all. At last they were slain like lambs, and gave up their souls into the hands of God, having suffered for the holy icons. Their honorable bodies were cast to be eaten by dogs, but the faithful secretly took them and buried them with honor befitting these martyrs.

* * *

3. Emperor Leo III the Isaurian, 717–741.

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Eusebius and Priscus

Память святых мучеников Евсевия и Приска

St. Eusebius lived in Phoenicia[4] and at first was a secret follower of Christ. At that time the pagans raised a terrible persecution against the Christians; they subjected believers to various tortures wherever they could find them; then many of the faithful, fleeing from the hands of the impious, hid in secret places. St. Eusebius, reflecting on the words of Christ, "Whoever confesses Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father in heaven" (Mt. 10:32), was filled with divine zeal, went to the governor of the city, and standing before him said:

"Why do you rage, enemy of God, persecuting the flock of Christ?"

The ruler, looking at him, asked:

"Who are you?"

He answered:

"I am a servant of Christ, against whom you rise up."

Greatly angered by such words, the prince said:

"How have you dared, bold one, to come here and insult me, a prince?"

To this Eusebius answered:

"My zeal for my Lord Jesus Christ moved me to expose your blindness: for you have lost your reason, and worship a demon, not God."

Then the prince commanded that he be stripped, hung up, and his body scraped; the saint was scraped with sharp iron until his bones were laid bare; then they began to pour vinegar with salt upon him and to rub his wounds. All this the confessor of Christ endured bravely, as though it were not his body enduring such torments, and he rejoiced in these sufferings that he suffered for the faith of Christ. When he had endured these torments, the prince said to him:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods and you will live; if you do not do this, we will destroy you."

4. Phoenicia – an ancient country north of Palestine; it formed a narrow coastal strip between the sea and the Lebanon mountains; the most notable cities of this region are Tyre and Sidon.

He answered:

"You can destroy my body, but Christ will receive my soul; for Him I am willing to endure everything, for "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Mt. 24:13)."

Seeing his steadfastness, the wicked men struck off his head with a sword. Thus he entered into heaven and received the crown of glory from the hand of the Lord.

St. Priscus confessed the name of Christ in Phrygia and brought many pagans to Christ. Then the impious seized him, hanged him up, and began to scrape deeply along his ribs with iron claws, so that the whole body of St. Priscus was furrowed like tilled earth. Some of the impious standing there, seeing such fierce torments and the blood flowing from the martyr, fell into strong fury: drawing their swords, they rushed upon the saint and struck off his head.

Thus for the witness to Jesus Christ suffered this good confessor, and now Christ confesses him before His Father in heaven.

Glory to God forever and ever. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Bishops Isaac and Meletius

Память святых епископов Исакия и Мелетия

Our Venerable and pious fathers, Isaac and Meletius, were bishops of the Church of Christ. Both fulfilled one and the same episcopal ministry and were distinguished by the fear of God and by Christian virtues. Their continual task was to teach the people the divine, spiritual words and to walk in the commandments of God. Both were distinguished by beneficence; they distributed their estates to the poor and showed mercy toward them, nourishing them with material bread together with spiritual bread—teaching and soul-profitable instruction. By their lives they earned the gift of working miracles, and they died in peace in old age, in different years, but on one day[5].

5. St. Isaac was bishop of Cyprus and died on Cyprus (a large island in the north-eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea); Meletius died later, in a city not known.

* * *

Life of St. Demetrius, Metropolitan of Rostov, Wonderworker

Житие святителя Димитрия, митрополита Ростовского, чудотворца

St. Demetrius, in the world Daniel, was born in December 1651 in the town of Makarov[6], situated forty versts from the city of Kiev.

His father, Savva Grigorievich Tuptalo, rose from the rank of common Cossack to that of centurion, and spent the remainder of his days in the service of the Church, taking upon himself the duties of ktitor of the Kirillov monastery[7]. Both he and his wife Maria Mikhailovna were pious people and led a good Christian life. But the father was constantly drawn away from home by military duties, and the boy was reared chiefly under the guidance of his mother. The saint himself spoke of her with tender love and praise when she died: "On the very Great Friday of the saving Passion, my mother reposed at the ninth hour of the day, exactly at the hour when our Savior, suffering on the cross for our salvation, delivered up His spirit into the hands of God the Father. She had lived more than seventy years from her birth... may the Lord remember her in His heavenly kingdom! She died in good disposition, memory and speech. O that the Lord would vouchsafe me, through her prayers, such a blessed end! Truly her end was Christian: for with all the Christian rites and the customary mysteries, she was fearless, unashamed, and peaceful. And may the Lord grant her a good answer at His terrible Judgment, as I do not doubt of God's mercy and of her salvation, knowing her constant virtuous and devout life. And I count this as a good sign of her salvation, that on that same day and at that same hour when Christ the Lord opened Paradise to the thief during His voluntary Passion, He commanded her soul to be separated from her body."[8] Under the influence of such a virtuous mother the boy

6. Makarov – now a small town in the Kiev province and district – at that time belonged to the domains of the Lithuanian hetman.

7. The Kirillov Monastery in Kiev was founded in the 12th century by Vsevolod Olgovich, prince of Chernigov; it was laid waste by Batu; it was restored in the 17th century and abolished in 1786.

Daniel grew in the fear of God and in piety, advancing from strength to strength and being strengthened in the virtues.

Daniel received his elementary education at home. His parents taught him to read, and when Daniel had completed his eleventh year they sent him to the Kiev Brotherhood School[9]. Owing to his excellent abilities and ardent diligence in his studies, Daniel soon began to excel in the sciences and surpassed all his peers. In the rhetoric classes he attracted particular attention by his skill in versification and oratory. Under the guidance of the famous preacher and polemical theologian Galiatovsky[10], Daniel perfected himself in those turns and figures of speech which later involuntarily astonished the hearers of his sermons, and acquired that energy and invincible power of persuasion which were afterwards displayed in his struggle with the schismatics. But while succeeding in his studies, Daniel at the same time was distinguished by remarkable good conduct, and early showed an inclination to the contemplative and ascetic life. He took no part in children's games and avoided all pleasures and amusements. The time free from school tasks he spent in reading Holy Scripture, the writings and lives of the saints, and in prayer. With especial zeal he visited the house of God, where he reverently offered up his fervent prayers to the Lord. The more often and diligently he read Divine Scripture and the lives of the holy fathers, the more his desire to imitate the holy righteous grew within his soul.

At the age of fifteen Daniel had to leave the school. In that calamitous time for Kiev the city was continually passing now under Polish, now under Russian rule. This told also upon the state of the school,

8. Diary (the daily notes of the hierarch) under March 29, 1689.

9. The Kiev Brotherhood School (now the Kiev Theological Academy) was opened in 1615 at the same time as, and at, the Theophany Brotherhood Monastery; it was reorganized by Metropolitan Peter Mogila (1633–1647), and from that time it long remained the center of spiritual and secular learning in Russia. Many enlightened pastors and zealous defenders of Orthodoxy came out of the Kiev school.

10. Ioannikii Galyatovsky († 1688), first a teacher and then rector of the Kiev school (1657–1665), who did much for its flourishing, was one of the most renowned theologians, polemicists and preachers of his time. The numerous writings of Ioannikii, directed against the Latins and the Uniates, bear witness to his zeal in defending the Orthodox truth.

which in 1665, when the Poles seized Kiev, suffered complete ruin and for a long time remained in neglect.

Therefore Daniel could not complete the course and had to discontinue his studies, having spent only three years in the school.

Having from his youth felt an inclination to the monastic life, Daniel, soon after leaving the school, forsook this world with all its goods. Having obtained the blessing of his parents, in the eighteenth year of his life he settled in the Kirillov monastery. The abbot of the monastery, Meletius Dzik, had known Daniel for a long time, since he had previously been rector of the Kiev school. On 9 July 1668 he performed Daniel's tonsure into the monastic state and named him Demetrius. The newly tonsured monk wholly committed himself to the will and providence of God. He began to observe strictly and unswervingly all the monastic rules, and zealously, in humility and obedience, accomplished the monastic labours. He strove with all his might to imitate in virtues the Venerable Anthony and Theodosius and the other ascetics of the Caves. He by no means concerned himself with acquiring estates and wealth, but with his whole soul strove only to please God, to serve Him alone faithfully and without hypocrisy, and thereby to gain for himself the imperishable treasure.

Less than a year after Demetrius's tonsure, at the request of the superior, he was ordained to the rank of hierodeacon. This ordination was performed on the feast of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos in 1669 by Joseph Tukalsky[11], nominated to the Kiev metropolitan see, who was then living in the city of Kaniv. In the rank of hierodeacon Demetrius remained in the Kirillov monastery for a rather long time. He submitted in everything to the superior, humbly and diligently served the brethren, unquestioningly performed every obedience, came first to church and left it last; in the church he stood in fear, reverently attending to the words of Holy Scripture; in his cell he often prayed, wrote and composed what the abbot assigned him, and diligently continued his studies.

Thus Demetrius laboured until 1675. At this time in the Gustyn monastery was the Archbishop of Chernigov, Lazarus Baranovich[12].

Here St. Demetrius was presented to him for ordination to the rank of hieromonk, which was performed on 23 May, on the day of the Descent of the Holy Spirit. At this time St. Demetrius was only twenty-four years old, but he was already skilled in the work of preaching the word of God. Having become better acquainted with him and having learned of his high spiritual qualities, the archbishop invited St. Demetrius to be preacher[13] at the Chernigov cathedral church. For more than two years St. Demetrius preached in the cathedral and other churches of the Chernigov eparchy. Instructing the people in the law of Christ, he brought great spiritual benefit to all his hearers and gave them great delight: his living and captivating speech was seasoned with the salt of wisdom, so that all strove to listen to him.

The fame of St. Demetrius as a great preacher quickly spread throughout Little Russia and Lithuania, and monastery after monastery began to invite him, to profit from his eloquent instruction. The immediate occasion of such invitations was the following event. In June 1677, moved by pious zeal, Demetrius set out from Chernigov for the Novodvorsk monastery[14] to venerate the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, painted by St. Peter, Metropolitan of Moscow, and was to remain in Lithuania. At the time St. Demetrius arrived, the monastery was preparing for the solemn translation of this icon from the old church into the new. For this there had come the Belarusian bishop Theodosius and the abbot of the Vilna Holy Spirit monastery, Clement. When the feast was over, Clement took Demetrius with him to his monastery. Demetrius spent more than two months in Vilna and delivered two sermons there. Soon, however, at the request of Bishop Theodosius, St. Demetrius set out for Sluzk and, settling in the Broth-

11. Joseph (Neliubovich-Tukalsky), from 1661 archbishop of Mogilev, then metropolitan of Kiev; he was held captive by the Poles and died in Chigirin in 1676.

13. Until the end of the 16th century, sermons were rarely delivered orally in Russia: for the most part translated homilies of the holy fathers or lives of saints were read. With the rise of schools in south-western Russia, however, examples of original preaching began to appear, and at the same time a special office of preacher was formed, which was exercised at cathedrals, monasteries and brotherhoods by educated clergy.

14. The Novodvorsky Monastery, founded in 1618 to combat the Union, was located within Lithuanian territory (in the present Pinsk district) and was subordinate to the Holy Spirit Monastery in Vilna.

erly Transfiguration monastery[15], for fourteen months tirelessly laboured in the preaching of the word of God. Demetrius was greatly loved and benefited by John Skochkevich, the ktitor of the monastery, at whose expense the Transfiguration monastery had been built. St. Demetrius also deeply respected and loved his benefactor, lived in Sluzk until his death, and honoured his memory by delivering a sermon at his burial.

Meanwhile St. Demetrius had been repeatedly invited to return to Little Russia. He was summoned both by Hetman Samoylovich[16] and by his former superior Meletius, who now governed the Kiev Michael monastery. In February 1679 St. Demetrius arrived at Baturyn[17] and was received by the hetman[18] very kindly and graciously. Having settled in the Nicholas Krupitsky monastery[19], situated not far from Baturyn, Demetrius continued to labour zealously in fasting, prayer, and incessant reading of edifying books; but with especial zeal he preached the word of God. The fame of his virtuous life spread through all the monasteries. Many of them invited St. Demetrius to them to govern. Thus the brethren of the Kirillov monastery addressed him with an earnest request to accept leadership over them. But St. Demetrius, probably out of humility, and also held back by the hetman, declined this request and sent a letter of thanks to the Kirillov monastery. Soon after this, in 1681, the abbot of the Maksakov Transfiguration monastery[20] died. The brethren also turned to St. Demetrius, asking him to be their abbot. Because of its secluded location the Maksakov

15. The town of Sluck – in the Minsk province. The Transfiguration Monastery, founded around 1600, belonged to the Sluck Brotherhood, which, like the other brotherhoods, protected Orthodoxy from the oppression of Catholics and Uniates.

16. Ivan Samoylovich, son of a priest, was elected Hetman in 1672; in 1687 he was deposed from the hetmancy, and he died in Tobolsk in 1690.

17. Baturin, today a small town on the river Seym, 27 verst from the district town of Konotop, was founded in 1575 by Stephen Báthory, King of Poland, who named it after himself (Baturin). After the incorporation of Little Russia, Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich designated Baturin as the residence of the Hetman.

18. The Hetman (leader of the Cossacks) was the chief and independent authority in Little Russia.

19. Founded in the fifteenth century, laid waste by the Crimean Tatars, and restored in the sixteenth century. The monastery was named Krupitsky after the *krupitsy* (crumbs) that fell near the monastery during a famine. The tradition concerning this was recorded by St. Demetrius with his own hand in the Gospel on the Holy Table.

monastery corresponded as well as possible to Demetrius's strict monastic life. Therefore, with the hetman's consent, he accepted the proposal of the Maksakov monks and set out with a hetman's letter to Chernigov, to Archbishop Lazarus Baranovich, for a decree.

The Archbishop received Demetrius very graciously. As though foreseeing the future, Lazarus, as soon as he had broken the seal of the hetman's letter, said to Demetrius: "Without reading the letter, I say: may the Lord God bless you not only with the abbacy, but, by the name of Demetrius, I wish you a mitre: may Demetrius receive a mitre."

On the same day, after his installation as abbot[21], Lazarus greeted him thus: "Today is the memory of the Prophet Moses, the Beholder of God; on this day the Lord God has granted you the abbacy in the monastery where the church of the Transfiguration of the Lord stands, as Moses was on Tabor. And as He declared His ways unto Moses, so may He declare to you on this Tabor His ways unto the eternal Tabor."

"These words," the holy Demetrius himself testifies, "I, a sinner, received as a good omen and a prophecy, and I took note of them for myself. May God grant that the prophecy of his archpastorship come to pass."

Taking leave of Demetrius the next day, Lazarus gave him a good staff.

"And he sent me off so well," says St. Demetrius, "as a father sends off his own son. May the Lord grant him all good things according to his heart."

Upon entering upon the administration of the monastery, St. Demetrius did not in the least change his former strict monastic life. Laboring as before in vigils, prayer and good works, he set an example of Christian humility to all. Always remembering the words of the Lord: "whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant" (Mt. 20:26), he lived so himself, taught others so to live, and served for all as a model of faith and piety. Undoubtedly such abbots are the glory and adornment of the monasteries they govern. This is why St. Demet-

20. Today a women's Edinoverie (Single-Faith) monastery, located in the Sosnitsa district near the town of Borzna, on the bank of the river Desna.
21. 1 September 1681 (*Diary*, under the year 1681).

rius did not remain long in any one monastery, and was, as we shall see, transferred from one monastery to another.

The monks of Maksakov were not long edified by the word and holy life of Demetrius. On 1 March 1682 he was appointed abbot of the Nicholas Monastery at Baturyn. But he himself soon renounced this monastery. He longed for a quiet and silent life, so that he might unhindered devote himself to contemplation of God, to prayer and to other God-pleasing pursuits. Therefore, in the very next year of his abbacy at Baturyn, on the day of his Angel, 26 October 1683, he laid down the administration of the monastery and remained in it as a simple monk. Soon, however, by the Providence of God, St. Demetrius was called to the great work of compiling the Lives of the Saints (Chetyi-Minei), by which he brought the greatest benefit to the whole Russian people.

In 1684 Barlaam Yasinsky was appointed archimandrite of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra. From his predecessors, Peter Mogila and Innocent Gizel[22], he inherited, together with the rank of archimandrite, the idea of the great labor of compiling the lives of the saints. This labor was all the more necessary since, as a result of Tatar raids and Lithuanian and Polish devastations, the Church had lost many precious spiritual books and biographies of the saints. Seeking a man capable of this important and great labor, Barlaam fixed his attention on St. Demetrius, who had already become renowned for his zeal in works of soul-saving. His choice was approved by the unanimous consent of the other fathers and brethren of the Lavra. Then Barlaam addressed Demetrius with a request to move to the Kievan Lavra and to undertake the labor of correcting and compiling the lives of the saints.

Dismayed by the weight of the labor laid upon him, the humble ascetic sought to decline it. But, fearing the sin of disobedience and well aware himself of the needs of the Church, he chose to submit to the urgent requests of Barlaam. Placing his hope in the help of God and in the prayers of the Most Pure Mother of God and of all the saints, Demetrius in June 1684 entered upon his new labor and with great diligence began to perform the obedience laid upon him. His soul, filled

22. On Yasinsky, Mogila and Gizel, see the preface to this book.

with the images of the saints whose lives he was occupied with, was granted spiritual visions in sleep, which strengthened him on the way to higher spiritual perfection and encouraged him in his great labors.

"On the tenth of August 1685," the holy Demetrius himself relates, "on Monday, I heard the bell for Matins, but, out of my habitual laziness, having overslept, I did not manage to arrive at the beginning and slept even until the reading of the Psalter. At that time I saw the following vision: it seemed that I had been entrusted with the care of a certain cave in which holy relics were resting. Examining with a candle the coffins of the saints, I saw there, as though resting, the holy Great Martyr Barbara. Approaching her coffin, I saw her lying on her side, and her coffin showed some decay. Wishing to cleanse it, I took her relics out of the shrine and laid them in another place. Having cleansed the shrine, I approached her relics and took them in my hands to place them back in the shrine; but suddenly I saw St. Barbara alive.

"Holy Virgin Barbara, my benefactress! Intercede with God for my sins," I cried out.

The saint answered, as though having some doubt:

"I know not whether I shall intercede, for you pray in the Roman manner."

I think this was said to me because I am very lazy in prayer, and in this I resembled the Romans, whose prayers are very brief, as mine are brief and rare. Hearing these words from the saint, I began to grieve, and as it were to despair. But the saint, after a short time, looked upon me with a cheerful and smiling face and said: "Fear not," and spoke some other comforting words, which I do not recall. Then, having laid her back in the shrine, I kissed her hands and feet; her body seemed living and very white, but the shrine was poor and dilapidated. Grieving that with impure and defiled hands and lips I dared to touch the holy relics, and that I saw no fine shrine, I pondered how to adorn this coffin, and began to seek a new and richer shrine into which to transfer the holy relics; but at that very moment I awoke. Regretting my awakening, my heart nevertheless felt joy."

Concluding this account, St. Demetrius humbly remarks: "God knows what this dream signifies and what its outcome will be! O, would

that through the prayers of St. Barbara, my protectress[23], God might grant me the correction of my evil and wretched life!"

Another dream, which occurred three or four months after the first, was the following: "In 1685, during the Philip's Fast," writes St. Demetrius, "one night, having finished in writing the sufferings of the holy martyr Orestes, whose memory is kept on 10 November, an hour or less before Matins, I lay down to rest without undressing, and in a dream vision I saw the holy martyr Orestes, who, with a cheerful face, spoke to me these words:

"'I endured greater torments for Christ than you have written.'

Having said this, he opened his breast to me and showed on his left side a great wound passing through to the inside, saying:

"'This was burned into me with iron.'

Then, opening his right arm to the elbow, he showed a wound in the very place opposite the elbow, and said:

"'This was cut through.'

The severed sinews were visible at this point. Also, opening his left arm, he showed a wound of the same kind in the same place, and said:

"'That too was cut through for me.'

Then, bending down, he uncovered a leg and showed a wound at the bend of the knee; and uncovering the other leg down to the knee, he showed the same kind of wound in the same place, and said:

"'And this was cut open for me with a scythe.'

Standing upright and looking me in the face, he said:

"'Do you see? I endured more for Christ than you have written.'

I, not daring to say anything against this, was silent and thought to myself: who is this Orestes, is he not one of the Five Martyrs (13 December)? To this thought of mine the holy martyr answered:

"I am not that Orestes who is among the Five Martyrs, but the one whose life you are now writing.

23. St. Demetrius held in special veneration the Great Martyr Barbara. As early as 1678, when he was in Slutsk, Abbot Meletius sent him as a gift a portion of the relics of St. Barbara. And some years after the vision described, namely on 13 January 1691, St. Demetrius solemnly translated a portion of the relics of the same Great Martyr, which after the death of Tukalsky had been kept in the Baturin treasury "as if under a bushel," to the Nicholas Monastery, and he established that a moleben be sung to St. Barbara every Tuesday.

I saw another, some important man, standing behind him, who also seemed to me to be some martyr, but he said nothing. At that very moment the bell rung for Matins awakened me, and I grieved that this very pleasant vision had ended so soon."

"And as for this vision," adds St. Demetrius, having recorded it more than three years later[24], "I, unworthy and sinful, truly saw it as I have written, and not otherwise; this I confess under my priestly oath: for I remembered all of it fully then, and I remember it now."

More than two years had passed since St. Demetrius laid down the abbacy and was accomplishing his great labor in a solitary cell. It happened that he was in Baturyn together with Archimandrite Barlaam. The hetman and the new metropolitan Gideon[25] received him with joy and began to persuade him to take up again the administration of the Nicholas Monastery. For a long time Demetrius refused this, but at last he had to yield to the zealous entreaties, and on 9 February 1686 he moved to Baturyn. But, having left the Kievan Lavra, St. Demetrius did not abandon his work. With the same diligence as in the Lavra, he continued to compose the lives of the saints, and here he completed the first quarter of the Chetyi-Minei, containing three months: September, October and November.

St. Demetrius presented his work to Archimandrite Barlaam. Having read and examined the manuscript together with the elders of the cathedral and other prudent men, Barlaam resolved to proceed to the printing of the lives of the saints. St. Demetrius came from Baturyn to the Lavra, and under his personal supervision in 1689 the first book of the Chetyi-Minei was printed.

Shortly after this, St. Demetrius had occasion to be in Moscow. Prince Golitsyn sent Hetman Mazepa[26] to Moscow with a report on the

24. *Diary*, under the year 1689.

25. Gedeon Chetvertinsky (†1690) was elected in Kiev in July 1685 and consecrated in Moscow on 8 November of the same year. Returning from Moscow, Metropolitan Gedeon also stopped at Baturin.

26. Ivan Stepanovich Mazepa (Koledinsky, †1709) was brought up at the court of the Polish King John Casimir and completed his education abroad. After the overthrow of Samoylovich he was elected Hetman in 1687 and took part in the second Crimean campaign of Golitsyn. In 1708 he betrayed Tsar Peter and Russia, for which he was anathematized.

conclusion of the campaign against the Crimea[27]. Together with the hetman, St. Demetrius and Innocent, abbot of the Kirillov Monastery, were sent to confer with the patriarch on certain ecclesiastical matters. This was on 21 July 1689. On arriving in Moscow they were presented to Tsar John Alekseyevich and to Tsarevna Sophia. On that same day St. Demetrius was presented to Patriarch Joachim[28]. A month after his arrival, St. Demetrius and the hetman were at the Holy Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra. Tsar Peter Alekseyevich was then living there, hiding from Tsarevna Sophia's attempts against him. He received Demetrius graciously. At the Lavra Demetrius also had occasion to see the patriarch. "We visited him often," the saint himself says, "and he blessed me, a sinner, to continue writing the lives of the saints, and gave me an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos in a metal setting as a blessing."

On returning to his monastery, St. Demetrius set about the composition of the lives of the saints with great zeal. To pursue his God-pleasing labor more conveniently, he left his abbot's quarters and built for himself, in a secluded spot near the church of St. Nicholas of Krupitsa, a special cell, which in his notes he calls a "skete."

While St. Demetrius was laboring over the second book of the Menaion, the new Moscow patriarch, Adrian[29], sent him a letter of commendation. The letter was brought by Barlaam, who had been elevated and consecrated in Moscow (31 August 1690) to the rank of Metropolitan of Kiev.

"God Himself," wrote the patriarch, "will reward you, brother, with every blessing of goodness, inscribing you in the book of eternal life, for your God-pleasing labors in writing, correcting, and printing the soul-profiting books of the lives of the saints for the first three months, September, October, and November: may He likewise bless, strengthen,

27. Prince Vasily Vasilievich Golitsyn (1643–1714) was the foremost statesman during the seven-year regency of Tsarevna Sophia (1682–1689). Here is meant his campaign to the Crimea in 1689, as unsuccessful as the first in 1687, but which nonetheless brought Golitsyn rewards as the victor.

28. Joachim (1674–1690), ninth Patriarch of All Russia, at first regarded St. Demetrius with mistrust, as he did all the learned men of south-western Rus'.

29. Adrian (1690–1700), the last Patriarch of All Russia.

and speed you to labor for a full year further, and to correct and fully prepare for printing the other such books of the lives of the saints."

At the same time the patriarch asked the new metropolitan and the future archimandrite of the Lavra to assist St. Demetrius in every way, as "a skillful, prudent, and zealous worker."

Encouraged by the patriarch's attention, St. Demetrius replied to the Moscow hierarch with a feeling of humble gratitude: "Blessed and glorified be God among the saints and glorified by the saints, who has now given to His holy Church such a good and skillful shepherd as your archpastorship, who from the beginning of your pastorate have first of all taken care and concern for the increase of God's glory and of the glory of His saints, desiring that those lives be printed for the world, for the benefit of the whole Christian Orthodox Russian people. This glory belongs to all the venerable. Now I too, unworthy as I am, with the Lord's assistance, will stretch forth my frail and sinful hand more zealously to the task before me, having your holiness aiding me in this work, and your blessing strengthening and guiding me, which greatly stirs me up to shake off the sleep of sloth and to carry out diligently what is commanded me. Although I am not skilled, and do not have such knowledge and ability as to bring to completion the work begun, nevertheless, in Jesus who strengthens me, I must bear the yoke of holy obedience, He supplying the insufficiency of my weak understanding, from whose fullness we all have received and still receive; only may the God-acceptable prayer of your archpastorship, on which I greatly rely, continue to help me with its blessing."

Now St. Demetrius resolved to devote himself exclusively to the Menaia. "On 14 February (1692)," he himself relates, "in the first week of the fast, before the Divine Liturgy, I left and handed over my abbacy in the Baturyn monastery, so as to remain in greater peace and to write the lives of the saints." Living in his secluded cell, he composed the second book, containing the following three months, December, January, and February, and on 9 May 1693 he himself brought it to the Kiev-Pechersk printing house.

But however much the diligent monk longed for a quiet and secluded life, people who valued his lofty spiritual qualities gave him no rest.

Thus, while St. Demetrius was overseeing the printing of his work, the new Archbishop of Chernigov, St. Theodosius of Uglich, persuaded him to take charge of the Sts. Peter and Paul monastery, 27 versts from the city of Glukhov[30]. During his stay in this monastery, in January 1695, the printing of the second quarter of the Menaion was completed. For this book too Patriarch Adrian honored Demetrius with the same praises as for the first, sending him another letter of approval. This prompted Demetrius to continue his work with zeal, and he began to prepare the third book, containing the months of March, April, and May.

In early 1697 St. Demetrius was appointed abbot of the Kiev Kirillov Monastery, and five months later, on 20 June, he was elevated to the rank of archimandrite of the Chernigov Yelets Dormition Monastery[31]. Thus was at last fulfilled the wish of Lazarus Baranovich: Demetrius received the mitre. But, raised to the rank of archimandrite, St. Demetrius, remembering the words of Scripture, "to whom much is given, of him much will be required" (Lk. 12:48), devoted himself to his labors and ascetic exploits with even greater fervor and zeal. Without neglecting his work on the lives of the saints, he did not forget the good order of the monastery, and everywhere helped with counsel and judgment, word and deed.

Two more years passed, and St. Demetrius was transferred to the Savior Monastery of Novgorod-Seversk[32]. This was the last monastery he governed. Here he completed the third quarter of the Menaion, which was printed in January 1700. After this, the archimandrite of the Lavra, Joasaph Krokovsky[33], with the brethren, as a sign of especial respect for the compiler of the lives of the saints, sent him as a gift

30. The Glukhov Peter and Paul Monastery, Chernigov Province, was founded by no one knows whom and at no known time. It already existed in the middle of the seventeenth century. St. Demetrius built a stone cathedral in the monastery.

31. The Yelets Dormition Monastery on the Boldin Hills, beyond Chernigov, was founded on the advice of Venerable Anthony of the Kiev Caves by Prince Svyatoslav Yaroslavich in 1069, on the site of an appearance of an icon of the Mother of God; it was laid waste by the Tatars, restored in 1500; from 1635 to 1649 it was in the power of the Uniates; restored in 1671.

32. This monastery, which stood in Novgorod-Seversky itself, was built by Archbishop Lazarus Baranovich in the middle of the seventeenth century.

33. Joasaph Krokovsky was archimandrite of the Kiev Caves Lavra from 1697 to 1708.

an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, which Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich had bestowed on the Kiev Metropolitan Peter Mogila during his coronation.

In the same year, 1700, Emperor Peter the Great, concerned for the distant regions of his vast dominions, entrusted the Kiev Metropolitan Barlaam to "seek out, from among archimandrites or abbots or other monks, one good and learned and of blameless life, who might be metropolitan at Tobolsk, and who by God's mercy might preach in China and in Siberia, and bring to the knowledge and service and worship of the true living God people who are hardened in the blindness of idol-worship and other ignorances." No one was as well known to Barlaam for this purpose as the archimandrite of Novgorod-Seversk, and St. Demetrius was summoned to Moscow in early 1701. Here he delivered a word of greeting to the emperor, in which he portrayed the dignity of an earthly tsar, who represents on earth the image of Christ, the Heavenly King. Soon afterward, on 23 March, St. Demetrius was ordained Metropolitan of Siberia and Tobolsk. High honor adorned the humble Demetrius, but it was not to his liking. Siberia is a harsh and cold land, and St. Demetrius's health was weak, undermined by unceasing labors. Siberia is a distant land, while St. Demetrius had a work close to his heart, which he had begun in Kiev and could continue only there, or near those places where learning was then concentrated, and not in remote and desolate Siberia. All this so troubled him that he took to his bed. The sovereign himself visited the sick man and, learning the cause of his illness, calmed him and allowed him to remain for a time in Moscow, awaiting the next available eparchy. A vacancy in such an eparchy soon occurred: Metropolitan Joasaph of Rostov died, and on 4 January 1702 St. Demetrius was appointed his successor.

St. Demetrius arrived in Rostov on 1 March, in the second week of the Great Fast. On entering the city he first visited the Savior–St. James Monastery. Entering the Cathedral of the Conception of the Mother of God, where the relics of St. James of Rostov rest, the new archpastor performed the customary prayer, and at the same time, having learned by a special revelation from above that it was destined for him to end his laborious and most useful life in Rostov, he chose a

grave for himself in the right corner of the cathedral and said to those around him: "This is my rest: here will I dwell for ever and ever"[34]. After celebrating the Divine Liturgy in the Dormition cathedral, the hierarch addressed his new flock with an eloquent and moving sermon, in which he set forth the mutual obligations of pastor and flock.

"Let not your heart be troubled," said the hierarch, "concerning my coming to you: for I entered by the door, and not some other way; I sought you not, but was sought; and I knew you not, neither do you know me; the judgments of the Lord are a great abyss. They sent me to you, and I have come, not that you should serve me, but that I should serve you, according to the word of the Lord: whoever wishes to be first among you, let him be servant of all."

Having entered upon the governance of the Rostov Metropolitanate, St. Demetrius found in it great disorders. With the zeal of Elijah he gave himself up to unsleeping care for the good ordering of the Church and the salvation of human souls. As a true shepherd, following the words of the Gospel: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mt. 5:16), the hierarch himself in all things showed himself a model of piety. At the same time he strove to root out in people of every rank evil morals, envy, injustice and other vices. The clergy especially grieved the hierarch by their ignorance and their neglect of the preaching of the Word of God.

"Woe to our wretched time," said St. Demetrius in one of his instructions, "for the sowing is utterly neglected; the Word of God has been greatly forgotten, and I know not whom it is first needful to bewail: the sowers or the soil, the priests or the hearts of men, or both together? Together they have become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. The sower does not sow, and the soil does not receive; the priests are careless, and the people go astray; the priests do not teach, and the people are ignorant; the priests do not preach the

34. The Saviour-Jacob Monastery of Rostov was founded at the end of the fourteenth century by Bishop James of Rostov (†1392); at the beginning of the seventeenth century, during the Lithuanian invasion, it was devastated. The cathedral church in the name of the Conception of St. Anne, in which the relics of St. Demetrius rest, has existed since 1691.

Word of God, and the people do not listen, nor are they willing to listen."

In many of the spiritual persons the hierarch did not even find good moral upbringing. On the contrary, he had to observe with sorrow that the heads of families were inattentive to their household's fulfilment of the chief Christian duties.

"And what is still more astonishing," St. Demetrius continues, "that the wives and many children of priests never receive Communion, which we have learned from this: the sons of priests come to be ordained in their fathers' places, and when we ask them how long since they communicated, many truly say that they do not remember when they communicated. O wretched priests, who are careless of your own house! How can they be zealous for the Holy Church who do not bring their own household to Holy Communion? How can they bring their parishioners who take no thought for the salvation of souls in their own house?"

The priests knew their duties poorly. Among them were some who at feasts, with reproof and rebuke, related the sins of their spiritual children that had been disclosed in confession. Others were lazy about going to the sick to hear confession and to administer the Holy Mysteries, especially to the poor.

Still more the hierarch was filled with pious zeal, and still more deeply did he grieve when he learned that some priests, forgetting the fear of God, did not render due reverence to the Most Pure and Life-giving Mysteries of Christ. In one of his epistles the hierarch relates such an event.

"It happened to us, in January 1702, to travel to the city of Yaroslavl. On the way I entered one village church. Having performed the customary prayer, I wished to render the worthy honor and worship to the Most Pure Mysteries of Christ, and I asked the priest there:

"Where are the Life-giving Mysteries of Christ?"

The priest, as though not understanding my words, stood in perplexity and was silent. Then I asked him again:

"Where is the Body of Christ?"

The priest did not understand this question either. But one of the experienced priests who was accompanying me asked him:

"Where is the reserve?"

Then the priest took out from a corner a "very vile vessel" and showed the great holiness kept in it with such negligence, upon which even the Angels look with fear.

"And my heart was grievously troubled over this," says the hierarch, "that the Body of Christ is kept in such dishonor, and that they know no honorable name fitting for the Most Pure Mysteries. Let heaven be astonished at this, and let the ends of the earth be horror-struck!"

The hierarch set about the immediate eradication of such crying defects. Wishing that the priests should abandon their negligence and perform their service with all diligence and the fear of God, St. Demetrius wrote two circular epistles for the pastors. These epistles were sent out in many copies to the priests, so that they might copy them for themselves, read them more often, and amend their conduct of their duties in accordance with them.

In the first epistle the hierarch paternally exhorted the pastors to abandon their evil morals, forbade them to relate the transgressions of their spiritual children, and to take pride in their rank and position as spiritual fathers. In the name of the Lord he entreated them not to despise the poor and the needy, but to care equally and unceasingly for the souls of all whom they shepherd.

In the second epistle St. Demetrius, by his archpastoral authority, commanded that the priests, under pain of the dread Judgment of God, should not only themselves render due worship to the Holy and Life-giving Mysteries, but also teach others to do so; he exhorted them to keep Them in places and vessels befitting their holiness, and not to call them "reserve"; he urged the priests to prepare themselves worthily for their sacred service, and entreated that they should teach the people as often as possible and themselves carefully fulfil their duties.

Striving completely to root out the defects among the clergy, St. Demetrius recognized that the most effective means to this end was good instruction and upbringing. Therefore he opened a school at his episcopal house.[35] Gathering in this school more than two hundred persons, children of clergy, he divided them into three classes and appointed a separate teacher for each class. The school was the object of the hierarch's special care. He often visited the classes, himself heard the pupils and tested their knowledge. In case of a teacher's absence he himself took upon himself his duties. In the time free from his customary occupations the hierarch gathered capable pupils and expounded to them some books of the Old Testament; in summer, when he resided in the episcopal village of Demyan, he explained the New Testament to the pupils. No less did the hierarch care for the moral upbringing of the pupils. On Sundays and feast days they were to come to the cathedral church for the All-night Vigil and the Liturgy. At the end of the first kathisma, during the reading of some homily or life, the pupils were to approach the hierarch for his blessing, thus making known their presence. The archpastor commanded the pupils strictly to observe not only the Great Lent but also the other fasts; he himself heard their confession and gave them Holy Communion. To those who had finished their studies the hierarch gave places at churches, according to their merit. To readers and sextons, to instill in them respect for their office, he gave the sticharion, which had not previously existed in Rostov.

However much the hierarch was burdened with numerous cares and affairs, he did not in his new service abandon his labor on the lives of the saints. Almost three years had passed since St. Demetrius had come to Rostov, and in the chronicle of the Rostov hierarchs, kept at the Rostov cathedral, the following record was entered concerning the completion of this great labor by the hierarch Demetrius: "In the year from the Incarnation of the Word of God 1705, in the month of February, on the 9th day, on the memory of the holy martyr Nicephorus, called the victorious one, at the leave-taking of the feast of the Meeting of the Lord, when holy Simeon the God-receiver had uttered his prayer,

35. Classes in the school began on 1 September 1702. However, the school opened by St. Demetrius existed for only a short time; in 1705 it ceased to exist.

'Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Master,' on the Friday of the Passion of the Lord, on which Christ said on the Cross, 'It is finished,' before the Saturday of the commemoration of the departed and before the Sunday of the Last Judgment, by the help of God and the Most Holy Mother of God, and by the prayers of all the saints, the month of August was written. Amen."

In September of that same year this last book, containing the months of June, July and August, was printed at the Kiev Caves Lavra. Thus was completed the great work of compiling the Menaia-Chetii, which had required of the hierarch more than twenty years of intense labor.

But another important ascetic labor awaited St. Demetrius in the Rostov flock. There was at that time a multitude of schismatics, whose chief teachers, hiding in the Bryn forests,[36] scattered their pernicious teaching everywhere through secret preachers. By false interpretations and secret exhortations they ensnared the sheep of Christ in their ruinous nets. Many, having believed their flattering teaching, wavered in the true faith.

"Woe to the wretched, to our last times!" exclaims the hierarch. "For now the Holy Church is greatly oppressed and diminished, now by external persecutors, now by internal schismatics, who, according to the Apostle, 'went out from us, but they were not of us' (1 Jn. 2:19). And already the true catholic Apostolic Church has been so diminished by schism that one can scarcely find anywhere a true son of the Church: for in nearly every city some separate faith is invented, and already simple peasants and women, who do not know the true way at all, dogmatize and teach about faith, saying that the sign of the three fingers is not the right and new cross; and in their obstinacy these wretched people stand, despising and rejecting the true teachers of the Church."

Such phenomena were extremely grievous to an enlightened defender of the faith of Christ. The hierarch resolved to make several circuits of his eparchy, and he resided for long periods in Yaroslavl, so as by his

36. The dense Bryn forests stretched along the river Bryn, which flows into the Zhizdra, a tributary of the Oka, in Kaluga Province. Schismatics hid in these forests. From this the name of the schism, "the Bryn faith," derives.

word to rebuke the obstinate ignorance of the apostates from the Orthodox Church. On one of his visits to Yaroslavl, St. Demetrius, having served the Liturgy in the cathedral on a Sunday, was returning to his house. At this time two men unknown to him approached him and addressed him with a question:

"Holy Master, what do you command? They order us to shave our beards,[37] but we are ready to lay down our heads for our beards."

The hierarch was surprised at such an unexpected question, and in his turn asked:

"What do you think, would your head grow back if it were taken off?"

"No," they answered.

"And would the beard grow back?" asked the hierarch.

"The beard will grow back," they answered.

– So let them cut off your beard, and you will live to see another.

When the Hierarch and the notable citizens who had accompanied him entered his cell, they conversed for a long while about the shaving of beards. St. Demetrius learned that among his flock there were many who doubted their salvation because, by the decree of the Tsar, their beards had been shaved. They thought that together with the beard they had lost the image and likeness of God. For a long time the Hierarch exhorted them to set aside these doubts, proving that the image of God and His likeness are found not in the beard and not in the face, but in the soul of man. After this the Hierarch wrote a treatise, *On the Image of God and the Likeness in Man*, and sent it throughout his eparchy. By command of the sovereign, this treatise was printed three times.

Soon after, St. Demetrius wrote an extensive work, *An Inquiry into the Faith of the Bryn* [5935], which laid bare the very spirit of the schism.

In this work the Hierarch clearly and convincingly demonstrated that the faith of the schismatics is not right, that their teaching is harmful to the soul, and that their deeds are not pleasing to God.

Tirelessly laboring for the benefit of the Church and the state, St. Demetrius undertook other works as well. Thus he intended to compose

a *Chronicle, relating the deeds from the beginning of the creation of the world to the Nativity of Christ*. The Hierarch wished to compose this book both for his own reading in his cell and for other special reasons. He well knew that not only in Little Russia but also in Great Russia few people possessed a Slavonic Bible. Only the wealthy could acquire it, while the poor were entirely deprived of the spiritual benefit that the reading of this God-inspired book affords. Many persons, even among the clergy, did not know the order of the biblical narrative. For this reason the Hierarch desired to compose a brief biblical history, so that everyone might acquire it at a modest price and become acquainted with the content of the Bible [38]. St. Demetrius at once set to work and began to select information from the Holy Scripture and various chronographs [39].

"I write," said the Hierarch, "with God's help, moral instructions, and in places also an interpretation of the Holy Scripture, as far as my weak powers allow; and the biblical histories I give only briefly, as an introduction, and from them, as from springs, I draw streams of moral teaching" [40].

However greatly the Hierarch desired to finish the *Chronicle*, he could not fulfill his intention. A great obstacle to this was his utterly broken health. He succeeded in describing events only up to 4600 years. Meanwhile, after this work, the Hierarch intended, with God's help, to undertake the composition of a brief interpretation of the Psalter [5939].

St. Demetrius was a famous preacher of his time and often addressed his flock with edifying and eloquent words. No labors or duties ever distracted him from preaching the Word of God. The truths of Christianity which he proclaimed, pouring forth directly from the soul of the preacher, were always living and effective, and they captivated

37. At that time Peter the Great issued decrees by which shaving of beards was ordered.
38. Of this intention of the Hierarch we know from his *Epistolar*, that is, the collection of his letters.
39. The word "chronograph" is Greek (*chronos*, time; *graphō*, I write) and means a chronicle arranged by years. In Byzantium various compilations of historical content were so called, which also set forth biblical history. From Byzantium they passed also to us.
40. A letter appended to the *Diary* for 1708.

the hearers by the simplicity of a conversation of a father with his children, of a teacher with his pupils. If it were possible to find and gather together all the homilies of this Russian Chrysostom, they would surely prove to be a great multitude. But, unfortunately, very many of the homilies of St. Demetrius have been lost [41].

Wisely did the Hierarch Demetrius govern his flock, and he never resorted to harsh measures. Distinguished by meekness, he treated all, both the noble and the simple, with equal love and without any partiality. All the faithful sons of the Church loved and honored him as a father. The sovereign himself and the whole royal family deeply respected the Metropolitan of Rostov for his truly virtuous life. The Christian virtues of St. Demetrius shone equally in the monastic cell and in his episcopal ministry. Especially brightly shone in his life prayer, fasting, humility, freedom from covetousness, and love for the poor and orphans.

Despite the multitude of affairs in governing his eparchy, St. Demetrius went daily to church for prayer; on all Sundays and feast days he celebrated the Liturgy and preached; he always took part himself in processions, however long and distant they might be. If he felt unwell, which happened not infrequently, he would send to the seminary, so that the students, in memory of the five wounds of Christ [42], might read the Lord's Prayer ("Our Father") five times for him. Visiting the seminary, he exhorted the students constantly to call for help upon the Teacher of wisdom and the Giver of understanding, the Almighty Lord. He instructed his servants and all who lived with him to make the sign of the cross and quietly read the prayer "Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos" whenever the clock struck. He treated his servants very humanely. When any of them had a name-day, he blessed him with an icon or gave him money. He taught them diligently to fast and to avoid gluttony and drunkenness. St. Demetrius himself set an example of this in his own life. Taking food only to sustain his bodily strength, the Hierarch ate only once during the first week of Great Lent; he likewise ate only once during Holy Week, on Great Thursday.

41. Of the Hierarch's preaching activity in Little Russia five sermons are known. In all, about 100 sermons of St. Demetrius have been printed.

42. Here are meant the wounds of Christ's crucifixion on His most pure hands, feet and side.

Constantly remembering the words of the Savior: "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Lk. 18:14), St. Demetrius throughout his whole life was distinguished by great humility.

"I am not such," the saint said of himself, "as your love deems me to be. I am not well-mannered, but ill-mannered, full of bad habits, and in understanding I stand far from the wise; I am foolish and ignorant; and my light is nothing but darkness and dust... I beg your brotherly love to pray to the Lord, my Light, that He may enlighten my darkness, and that the honorable may come forth from the unworthy" [43].

Having attained the high rank of the episcopate, St. Demetrius kept the same humility: to his superiors he was respectful, to his equals kind, to his subordinates merciful, and to the unfortunate compassionate.

It goes without saying that with such high moral qualities the Hierarch must also have been distinguished by complete disinterestedness. Indeed, in his heart there was no place for stinginess, love of gain, or love of money. All alms and revenues he throughout his whole life used either for church needs or for the benefaction of the needy. He cared for orphans, widows, beggars, and the poor as a father for his children. All that he received he distributed to them, summoning to his cross-chamber the blind, deaf, lame, and infirm, offering them a meal, giving them clothing, and showing them other kindnesses. The Hierarch himself attested to his disinterestedness and freedom from covetousness in his spiritual testament, which he drew up two and a half years before his death.

"I have deemed it right," he says, "by this my spiritual testament to make known to everyone who may wish after my death to seek my cell possessions, so that he may not labor in vain, nor trouble those who have served me for God's sake, what my treasure and wealth are (I say this not out of vainglory, but so that I may make known to those who seek my possessions after me). For from the time I received the holy monastic habit and was tonsured in the Kiev St. Cyril Monastery in the

43. Thus St. Demetrius wrote to his friend, the monk Theologus, corrector at the Printing Office in Moscow.

eighteenth year of my age, and promised God to keep voluntary poverty, from that time until my approach to the grave I acquired no property or covetous gain [44], except holy books [45]; I gathered no gold or silver; I did not choose to have superfluous garments or any things beyond the bare necessities, but strove as far as possible to keep monastic poverty and destitution in spirit and in deed, not caring for myself, but trusting in the Providence of God, who has never forsaken me. The alms that came into my hands from my benefactors, and the cell revenues from my offices, I spent on my own needs and on the needs of the monastery, when I was an abbot and archimandrite, and likewise when I was a bishop: I did not accumulate the cell revenues, which were not large, but spent them partly on my own needs and partly on the needs of the needy, as God directed. Let no one therefore labor after my death, searching or seeking for any cell possessions of mine: for I leave nothing even for my burial, nor for commemoration, so that monastic poverty may be made manifest most of all at my end before God. For I believe it will be more pleasing to Him if not even a single *tsata* [46] remains after me than if much had been gathered and were being distributed."

This testament, in which the Hierarch again expressed his wish to be buried in the Savior–St. James Monastery, he made known to his friend, Metropolitan Stephen Yavorsky [47]. At that time they also made a covenant between themselves: if Bishop Stephen should die first, Metropolitan Demetrius should be present at his burial; but if Demetrius should first depart to the Lord, Stephen should bury him.

The Hierarch Demetrius reposed at the age of fifty-eight, on 28 October 1709, a day after his name-day. A few days before his death, he was informed of the imminent arrival in Rostov of Tsaritsa Paraskeva

44. *Mshelo-imstvo* means covetousness.

45. The remaining large library of the learned Archpastor of Rostov, consisting of Greek, Latin, Polish and Slavonic books, manuscript and printed, passed to the Moscow Patriarchal (now Synodal) Library. Several books that belonged to St. Demetrius are in the Library of the Moscow Synodal Printing House.

46. A small coin.

47. Stephen Yavorsky (1658–1722), Metropolitan of Ryazan and Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal throne, was one of the most prominent figures of the Petrine era, known as a preacher. He became acquainted with St. Demetrius in 1684.

Feodorovna [48] to venerate the wonderworking Tolga Icon of the Mother of God, which, on account of the autumn storms that had hindered the Tsaritsa's journey to Yaroslavl [49], had been resolved on this occasion to be brought from there to Rostov. Hearing this, the Hierarch summoned his treasurer, Hieromonk Philaret, and prophetically announced to him the nearness of his death: "Behold, two queens are coming to Rostov: the Queen of Heaven and an earthly queen; only I shall not be found worthy to see them, and it behooves you, the treasurer, to be ready to receive them."

Three days before the repose of St. Demetrius, the illness that had long lain hidden in his chest manifested itself with particular force in a cough. Despite this, the hierarch tried to appear vigorous. On his name-day, October 26, he himself served the Liturgy in the cathedral, but he was no longer able to speak his sermon, and he had one of his singers read it for him from a notebook. At the dinner table he sat with his guests, although with the greatest difficulty. On the following day, Archimandrite Barlaam of the Danilov Monastery in Pereslavl came to visit the hierarch. During their conversation, the nun Barsanuphia, who was then living in Rostov and who had formerly been the nurse of Tsarevich Alexis Petrovich and had been tonsured into monasticism by St. Demetrius himself, sent word to the hierarch. She regarded the Archpastor of Rostov with profound reverence and often asked him for spiritually profitable instruction. So on this occasion too, Barsanuphia earnestly begged the hierarch to visit her that same day. St. Demetrius went to her together with Archimandrite Barlaam. On the way back he could barely reach his cell, leaning on the servants.

Immediately he ordered the singers to be called to him to sing the spiritual songs he himself had composed, namely: "Jesus, my most beloved," "In God I place my hope," and "Thou art my God, Jesus, thou art my joy." This singing gladdened his soul with words that had

48. The widowed consort of Tsar John Alexeevich, who died in 1696.

49. The feast in honor of the "Tolga" Icon of the Mother of God is celebrated on 8 August. The Tolga Monastery is located 9 verst from Yaroslavl on the Volga; it was founded in 1314 by Prokhor, Bishop of Rostov (in schema Trifon), on the site of an appearance of the icon to him.

flowed out of it, and he listened to the singers while warming himself beside the stove.

When the singing was over, having dismissed the singers, the hierarch kept back one of them, Savva Yakovlev, whom he loved and who was a diligent copyist of his writings. St. Demetrius began to tell him about his life, how he had spent it in his youth and in mature years, how he had prayed to God and to His Most Pure Mother and to all the saints, and he said: "And you, children, pray in the same way."

Then he blessed the singer, and, escorting him out of the cell, bowed to him almost to the ground and thanked him for his diligence in copying.

Seeing that the archpastor escorted him so humbly and unusually and bowed so low to him, the singer shuddered and said with reverence:

“Is it to me, holy vladyka, the least of your servants, that you bow so?”

To this the hierarch replied with the same meekness:

"I thank you, child!"

The singer wept bitterly and withdrew. After this, St. Demetrius ordered the servants to go to their places, and he himself shut himself in a private room, as though wishing to rest, and gave himself over alone to fervent prayer to God. In the morning the servants entered the room and found the hierarch dead, kneeling in the posture of one at prayer. Thus the prayer that had sweetened the hierarch's life accompanied him even to his death.

The honorable body of the departed hierarch was clothed in the episcopal vestments that he himself had prepared,[50] and on the same day it was carried to the domestic church. Under his head and beneath the whole body, in accordance with the testament of St. Demetrius, his rough drafts were laid in the coffin. Word of the hierarch's repose spread at once throughout all Rostov. Crowds of people gathered at his coffin, sincerely weeping over the irreplaceable loss of their beloved shepherd and teacher. On the same day Tsaritsa Paraskeva Feodorovna

50. St. Demetrius was often visited by Tsaritsa Paraskeva Feodorovna and the daughters of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich, who gave him cassocks. From these gifts the Hierarch prepared for himself episcopal vestments, and he bequeathed that he be buried in these garments.

arrived in Rostov with her daughters, the Tsarevnas Ekaterina, Paraskeva and Anna (the future Tsaritsa) Ioannovna. Finding the hierarch no longer alive, as he himself had foretold, she wept much that she had not been granted to receive his blessing, and she ordered a joint panikhida to be served.

On October 30, at the tsaritsa's command, the body of the hierarch was carried to the cathedral with due honor. The tsaritsa heard the panikhida a second time, bade a final farewell to the man of God, and set out for Moscow.

Soon Metropolitan Stephen arrived for the burial of the hierarch. Entering the cathedral directly, he bowed before the body of his departed friend and wept much over him. After this he ordered the treasurer Philaret to prepare everything necessary for the burial in the Yakovlev Monastery. Then the abbots of the Rostov monasteries, the cathedral priests, and many of the townsfolk approached Stephen with a petition that Demetrius be buried in the cathedral, where the former bishops had customarily been laid. But Stephen did not agree, saying: "The most reverend Demetrius, upon entering the Rostov cathedra, first of all visited the Yakovlev Monastery and himself chose a place here for his burial. How, then, can I violate his will?"

On the appointed day of the burial, November 25, Metropolitan Stephen, faithful to the covenant of friendship, served the Liturgy and the funeral rite, at which he delivered an address, often exclaiming: "Holy Demetrius, holy!" After this, accompanied by the weeping people, the body of St. Demetrius was carried to the Yakovlev Monastery, and here in the Conception Cathedral it was committed to the earth. The most reverend Stephen wrote funeral verses, in which, among other things, he said:

All you people of the city of Rostov, weep,
Mourning with tears your departed shepherd,
Demetrius, the hierarch, most reverend,
Metropolitan, meek and humble.

For about forty-three years the body of St. Demetrius rested beneath the vault. In September 1752, when the decayed floor of the Conception Cathedral was being taken apart, a rotted wooden frame

was found, over which, in place of a roof, thick beams had been laid lengthwise, which later fell in upon the frame. The rotted frame was dismantled, the earth that had poured in was removed, and the coffin of the hierarch was seen. It had been damaged: the lid was broken by the collapsing beams, and through the openings could be seen the covering, the mitre, and all the hierarch's vestments, undamaged by decay. When the holy relics were examined, it was found that the hands of the hierarch, folded crosswise upon his breast, were wholly incorrupt; only four fingers of the right hand had been broken by a board that fell into the coffin, and the left hand was separated at the elbow; all the other parts of the body were intact.

Hearing of the discovery of the holy relics, the people hastened in crowds to the newly revealed man of God, and at his tomb there opened an abundant spring of healings,[51] which are bestowed upon believers to this day, to the glory of the wondrous Triune God in His saints, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

O zealot of Orthodoxy and eradicator of schism, healer of Russia, and new intercessor before God, by thy writings thou hast made the foolish wise, O spiritual pipe, blessed Demetrius; pray to Christ God that our Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich, and all his house and realm, be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

The star of Russia, shining forth from Kiev and reaching Rostov by way of Novgorod-Seversky, illuminating all this land by teaching and miracles, let us extol the golden-worded teacher Demetrius; for he wrote all things that serve for instruction, that he might gain all for Christ, as Paul did, and save our souls through right faith.

* * *

51. On 22 April 1757 St. Demetrius was numbered among the saints. By commission of the Holy Synod, Arsenius, Metropolitan of Rostov, wrote the biography of the saint at that time, and the service to him was composed by Ambrose, Bishop of Pereyaslavl, afterward Archbishop of Moscow.

NOTES

5935. *The Investigation concerning the Schismatic Bryn Faith* was first printed in Moscow in 1745. This work is divided into three parts. In the first, the Hierarch resolves two questions: "Is the faith of the schismatics right?" and "Is their faith old?" Answering the first question, St. Demetrius proves that the schismatics have no true faith, for their faith is confined to old books and icons, the eight-pointed cross, their own manner of forming the fingers for the sign of the cross, and the number of seven prosphora at the Liturgy—which does not constitute a faith. Resolving the second question, the Hierarch says that the faith of the schismatics is new, or a renewal of old heresies and errors. In the second part of the *Investigation* the author says that the teaching of the schismatics, which derives from impostor teachers, is 1) false, 2) heretical, and 3) blasphemous. In the third part, concerning the works of the schismatics, it is proved that their works, apparently good, are corrupted by self-confidence, vanity, and hypocrisy; and then they enumerate the evil, openly lawless deeds of the schismatics.

5939. Of the numerous works of St. Demetrius, some have a dogmatic content, others a spiritual-moral one, and still others a historical one. – I. To the dogmatic belong: 1) *Brief Questions and Answers on the Faith*; 2) *Mirror of the Orthodox Confession* (both works present a catechetical exposition of the teaching and moral doctrine of the Orthodox Church); 3) *Twelve Articles on the Transubstantiation of Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ*; 4) *The Investigation concerning the Bryn Faith*. – II. To the spiritual-moral belong: 1) *Spiritual Remedy for Disturbance of Thoughts* (extracted from the Ladder, the Paterikon, the lives of the saints, and so forth); 2) *Apology for the Consolation of a Man in Sorrow Who Is in Affliction* (a dialogue between the sorrowing and the comforter); 3) *The Inner Man, in the Chamber of His Heart, Instructing Himself and Praying in Secret* (the purpose of this work is to accustom the Christian to prayer); 4) *Adoration of the Holy Trinity*; 5) *Adoration of the Most Holy Theotokos*; 6) *Prayer of Confession to God for Each Day*; 7) *General Confession of Sins*; 8) *On the Communion of the Holy Mysteries* (reflections on how to approach the Holy Mysteries worthily, and prayers before and after Communion); 9) Prayerful meditations on the Passion of the Lord (with various titles); 10) Two pastoral epistles (on the worthy celebration of the sacraments of penance and Communion); 11) *Spiritual Alphabet* (brief spiritual and moral rules arranged according to the Slavonic alphabet, after the example of the Ladder of John Climacus); 12) *Spiritual Psalms or Hymns*, and so forth. – III. To the historical belong: 1) *Diary* (daily notes from 1681 to 1703, and letters relating to the Hierarch's scholarly labors); 2) *The Watered Fleece* (a narrative of twenty-four wonders from the icon of the Mother of God in the Ilyinsky Chernigov Monastery); 3) *Chronicle, Showing the Deeds from the Beginning of the World to the Nativity of Christ*; 4) *Catalogue of the Metropolitans of Kiev*; and 5) *The Menaia-Chetyi*.

THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 22

22 сентября

New Calendar September 22 · Old Calendar October 5 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Phocas, Bishop of Sinope

Страдание святого священномученика Фоки, епископа Синопского

In the city of Sinope[1] lived a certain man named Pamphilus, with his wife Maria; they were the parents of blessed Phocas. From his youth, the saint was granted such grace of the Holy Spirit that he drove demons out of people and healed infirmities. When Phocas came of age, he was chosen bishop in his native city for his virtuous life, and zealously began to shepherd his rational sheep. Instructing them by word, he edified them by his example; though he had already led a virtuous life, after receiving the rank of bishop he strove yet more earnestly, so that all, seeing his good works, glorified the Heavenly Father. He restrained many people from error, turned many pagans away from idol-worship, and led them to worship the One God. The Lord was pleased to grant His faithful servant the martyr's crown and revealed this to him in a vision, as follows: from on high a dove flew down, holding in its beak a wreath of flowers; it placed this wreath upon the head of the blessed one and spoke in a human voice:

"Your cup is already full; it is meet for you to drink it."

From this vision St. Phocas understood that he was to suffer for Christ. From it we also learn that he was a great servant of God, for while still in the body he was granted a crown from heaven. Thus does the most good God exalt His servants, deem them worthy of glory and honor, and place crowns upon their heads. By the purity of his soul and body, St. Phocas was a true heavenly bridegroom: Heaven desired to be

1. The city of Sinope lies on the southern shore of the Black Sea.

joined to him and to place a crown upon him; yet this crown was a foretoken of a better crown, in the Savior's bridal chamber, with which he was to be crowned eternally and in which he was to appear at the heavenly wedding. After this glorious sign, in the reign of Trajan, Phocas was delivered to the ruler Africanus for torture. This ruler long compelled him to offer sacrifice to the idols, but the saint chose rather to offer himself as a sacrifice to God. He did not obey the prince's command, for he would not give to the work of human hands the honor due to the One God, Who sitteth upon the Cherubim. Then the prince commanded that the saint be bound to a tree and tortured. His whole body was covered with wounds; just as hungry, ravenous birds fall upon a corpse and, devouring it, tear it to pieces, so the torturers mangled the pure body of Christ's sufferer. But St. Phocas endured all this courageously; from on high he heard a voice strengthening him, and calling upon Jesus Christ, he bore his torments, despising all suffering. He spared not his flesh for the sake of Him Who spared not Himself, but suffered for us upon the Cross. For St. Phocas, these sufferings were as a cooling breeze from Paradise; so courageously did he bear his torments, confessing the name of the Lord Who suffered for us. Nothing was unbearable to the faithful servant who suffered for his Master. Even if torturers from all the world had gathered against him and every torment had been devised, even then he would have been ready to endure all things for his beloved Lord, crying out with the Prophet David: "My heart is ready, O God" (Ps. 107:2). The torturers laid him upon a sheet of iron heated red-hot, but the iron cooled at once, for the hierarch's heart burned with love for God, and this spiritual fire overcame the power of sensible fire. And in every torment they could devise for him, St. Phocas proved victorious, for around him appeared a host of Angels and an ineffable Divine light. In the prisons the light of heaven illumined him; in his bonds he rejoiced in the hope of heavenly freedom; in his afflictions he was comforted by Angels; in his wounds he was strengthened by Jesus Christ. After many and varied torments, they cast him into a heated bath, where he prayed and surrendered his spirit into the hands of God[2], and was granted the victor's crown in the

Church Triumphant. His holy body was buried with honor by the faithful, and many miracles were wrought at his tomb[3].

Kontakion, Tone 6:

As a hierarch offering sacrifices, O father, at the last thou didst offer thyself as a living sacrifice, bearing lawful witness to Christ God; strengthened by Angels, thou didst willingly embrace death, while those who cry unto thee say: Come, Phocas, with us, and none against us.

* * *

Life and Passion of the Holy Martyr Phocas, Called the Gardener[4]

Житие и страдание святого мученика Фоки, именуемого вертоградарем

In that same city of Sinope, but at another time, there lived another Phocas. He made himself a garden near the sea, and, having planted in it various greens, sold them, thus providing sustenance for himself and for the poor. He placed some of the greens from his garden beside the road, so that all passers-by might take them, for he was distinguished by great love for his neighbors and hospitality toward strangers, and cultivated the garden of his soul more carefully than his earthly one. Flourishing in piety and nourishing pure thoughts in his heart, he brought forth the fruits of virtue, so that his holy soul could be called a garden of the Holy Spirit, as it is said in Scripture: "A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride" (Song 4:12); and again: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:23).

Blessed Phocas was so hedged about with virtues that the ancient thief—the devil, who stole blessedness from our foremother in the garden of Paradise—could not steal virtue from St. Phocas. The saint zealously sought his salvation, heedful with fear of the Apostle's words:

2. The repose of the Hieromartyr Phocas took place in 117.
3. On 22 July is celebrated the translation of his honorable relics from Pontus to Constantinople.
4. A gardener is the keeper of a garden or kitchen-garden.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). Thus the saint struggled, and the report of his pious life spread among the people. Virtue, like a burning candle, cannot be hidden, but shines from afar even in the darkness of night; so St. Phocas shone forth among unbelieving and corrupt people, as it were amid darkness, by his piety, leading many to know the light. The report of the saint reached even the impious prince of that land. The prince was told that Phocas not only believed in the Crucified One himself, but also led others to Him. Then the prince sent his servants to kill Christ's servant; they set out at once and began to seek Phocas, in order to put him to death.

Phocas himself met them and asked:

"Whom are you seeking?"

They answered:

"We are looking for Phocas."

Then Phocas said:

"Come to my house, my lords, and I will tell you about him."

With these words he brought them to his house and entertained them, for this is how one ought to treat one's enemies, according to the words of Scripture: "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink" (Prov. 25:22).

When the servants had tasted wine, Phocas asked them:

"Why are you looking for this man?"

Then they revealed their secret to him:

"We are seeking him to deliver him to torture, for the prince sent us to kill him because he does not worship our gods, but honors the Crucified One."

Phocas began to entreat them:

"I beg you, my lords, wait until morning in my house; eat and drink, and tomorrow I will deliver him to you, for no one knows him better than I do. He lives not far from here; now he has gone somewhere, but he will soon return. Then I will give him into your hands."

The men sent by the prince agreed and began to feast in the house of St. Phocas. Meanwhile, he prepared a tomb in his garden, made ready everything necessary for burial, distributed his possessions to the

poor, and spent the whole night in prayer, preparing for death. When morning came, the servants sent by the prince rose and asked him:

"Is Phocas here, the one you wanted to deliver into our hands?"

The saint answered them joyfully:

"He is here, my lords—do with him as you wish."

Then the servants asked:

"Where is he, then?"

The blessed one answered:

"I am Phocas, whom you seek; I am a servant of Jesus Christ... I renounce your abominable gods; put me to death."

Hearing this, the men sent by the prince were astonished. They felt ashamed and did not wish to stain their hands with this man's blood, since he had received and entertained them so hospitably. They wished to leave and said to him:

"We will tell the prince that we searched everywhere for Phocas, but found him nowhere."

But he began to entreat them, seized them by the feet, and begged them to carry out what they had been commanded, saying:

"You could repay my hospitality in no better way than by granting what I ask of you; for by this you will release me from the bonds of the flesh, and I shall be able to be united with Christ, Whom I desire."

Thus St. Phocas longed to be freed from the bonds of the body and to live with Christ. So ardently did he desire to shed his blood for Christ; so great was his love for God that he said:

"Thy mercy is better than life" (Ps. 62:4).

So he entreated the servants, and received the crown of martyrdom; having been beheaded with the sword, he passed from earth to heaven[5]. His holy relics were buried in the tomb that he had himself prepared. Afterward, when piety shone yet more brightly in those lands, a church was built in his name over the martyr's tomb. And many of the faithful drew grace from the holy relics of Christ's sufferer: some received healing from their infirmities, others consolation in their sorrows, and still others help in their misfortunes through the prayers of the holy martyr

5. This took place about the year 320.

Phocas. Not only in the city of Sinope, but throughout the whole world, on land and on sea, the saint proved a great benefactor in need and a swift helper to all who called upon his name in faith and committed themselves to his prayers. Seafarers had the custom of invoking St. Phocas for help, for he appeared to them many times: at night, when a storm arose, he would wake the sleeping helmsman; they saw him raising the sails himself; at times he was seen at the prow of the ship; at times he appeared walking upon the sea. The name of St. Phocas was glorified on many ships sailing the Black and Adriatic Seas and the ocean; instead of their customary songs, the sailors began to sing hymns of praise in honor of St. Phocas, so that his name was on the lips of mariners every hour. They remembered St. Phocas not only in dangers but also amid their pleasures. They had this custom: when they sat at table or at some feast, they set aside a portion of food or drink in honor of St. Phocas. One of those present at the meal would buy this portion, and the money received from the sale was gathered into a special collection box. Thus each day a portion of their meal was given to the saint, and one after another bought this portion: today one, tomorrow another, then a third; from the first to the last, all in turn bought that portion and collected money for it. When they came ashore, the money gathered from the sale of these portions was distributed to the poor, the sick, orphans and strangers.

This custom was kept for many years, until the enemies of the holy Cross, by God's permission for our sins, seized all those lands[6]; they began most severely to oppress the holy faith and diminished the number of Christians. Yet even now St. Phocas, the common intercessor of all, does not cease to help those sailing on the sea of this world; he leads us to the heavenly haven, earnestly praying to the Lord for us. May we, by the prayers of this Martyr of Christ, be delivered from every drowning, tossing and tempest, now, always, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

6. Here are meant the Mohammedans, the Turks. In 1214 Sinope fell under the power of the Seljuk Turks, and two and a half centuries later it was again conquered (in 1461) by the Mohammedans (the Ottoman Turks), namely by Mehmed II, who conquered Constantinople and founded, on the ruins of the Byzantine Empire, the Turkish (Mohammedan) one.

* * *

Life of the Holy Prophet Jonah

Житие святого пророка Ионы

The holy prophet Jonah was the son of Amittai and came from the city of Gath-hepher[7]. His mother was, according to tradition, that same widow of Zarephath[8] who during the famine gave food to the prophet Elijah and was herself fed through him, for the meal in her jar did not fail nor the oil in her jug diminish until the day the Lord sent rain upon the earth. Meanwhile Jonah, then still a small lad, fell ill and died; then the widow said to Elijah:

"What have I done to you, O man of God? You came to me to call my sins to remembrance and to punish me with the death of my son."

He said to her:

"Give me your son."

Taking the child from her, Elijah carried him to the upper room where he lived and laid him on his own bed; then he called upon the Lord and said:

"O Lord my God! Wilt Thou bring evil even upon the widow with whom I dwell, by slaying her son?"

And, breathing upon the child three times, he prayed:

"O Lord my God! Let the soul of this child return into his body."

The Lord heard the prayer of His holy prophet and did as he asked: the soul of the child returned into his body, and he rose again.

Having reached maturity, Jonah lived a virtuous life and steadfastly fulfilled all the commandments of the Lord. He so pleased God that, according to tradition, he was soon granted the gift of prophecy and foretold, among other predictions, the sufferings of the Lord, the desolation of Jerusalem, and the end of the world.

"When," he said, "you hear a stone crying out with a thin and plaintive voice, when from a tree an utterance rises up to God, then sal-

7. Jon. 1:1; 4 Kgdms. 14:25. Gath-hepher, according to the testimony of the Book of Joshua, at the division of the promised land among the children of Israel by lot fell to the tribe of Zebulun and lay in the northern part of Galilee (northern part of Palestine), on the way to Tiberias, above Nazareth.

vation will draw near and all peoples will go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord; but Jerusalem, filled with beasts, will be in the abomination of desolation: then the end will come to all that lives."

Having received from God on high the gift of prophecy, Jonah came forward in public prophetic service after the prophet Elisha, continuing his work, as Elisha himself had continued the work of Elijah, being of one spirit with him. The ancient Jewish tradition calls the holy prophet Jonah a disciple of Elisha[9], belonging to that school of the sons of the prophets which was headed first by the prophet Elijah and then by Elisha; Jonah was one of the sons of the prophets whom Elisha sent to anoint Jehu as king over Israel[10]. After the death of Elisha, Jonah took his place. To encourage Jeroboam, king of Israel, in the war he was about to wage against the mighty Syrian kingdom, the prophet Jonah, having received a command from God, foretold him great success in that war, and Jeroboam, by his word, restored the borders of the kingdom of Israel from Hamath to the Dead Sea, thus recovering the ancient territories of his kingdom that had been taken by the Syrians[11].

In the reign of the same Jeroboam, Jonah was called to a new service. He received from God a command to go and preach repentance to the wicked foreign peoples who were hostile to Israel.

"Arise," the Lord commanded him, "go to Nineveh, that great city[12], and preach in it, for its wickedness has come up before Me."

But the prophet did not fulfill the command of God. He thought that God, being good and merciful, long-suffering and abounding in mercy,

8. 3 Kgdms. 17:14–23. Sarepta of Sidon was a Phoenician city, situated not far from Sidon.
9. Elisha was the famous Israelite prophet, disciple and successor of the prophet Elijah.
10. 4 Kgdms. 9:9–22. Among the Israelites, the disciples of the prophets, who formed societies brought up under their direct influence, were called "sons of the prophets." Although these were not, in the proper sense, schools, nevertheless young men called thereto were prepared in them for the prophetic ministry, and from these centers religious education also spread among the people.
11. 4 Kgdms. 14:25. From this is also determined the time of Jonah's prophetic ministry, which belongs to the reign of Jeroboam and his predecessor Joash. Consequently Jonah was one of the most ancient prophets of Israel and lived in the ninth century B.C.

would have compassion on the Ninevites if they repented of their sins. Therefore he feared that his prophecy of Nineveh's destruction would not come to pass, and he would be counted a deceiver, and the very name of the God of Israel would be subjected to reproach and reviling. In his soul he did not wish mercy for that wicked city, whose inhabitants were so hostile and dangerous to the Israelites. At the same time, feeling the full weight of disobedience to God, Jonah, in fear and sorrow, fled from the face of the Lord. But no one can hide from God, for "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Ps. 23:2): who can flee from Him "who is everywhere and fills all things"?

During his flight Jonah arrived at Joppa and found here a ship sailing to distant Tarshish[13]; having paid the fare, he went aboard and set out on the long journey. But the Lord, desiring to admonish His servant, raised a strong wind, and a great tempest arose on the sea. The mighty waves tossed the ship from side to side, so that it was ready to break apart. Terror seized the sailors, and they began to cry out each to his own god, whichever he honored and regarded as his protector. At the same time, desiring to lighten the ship of its excessive weight and thereby lessen the threatening danger, they began to cast the cargo into the sea. Jonah alone remained idle; he went down into the inside of the ship, lay down there, and fell fast asleep.

Meanwhile the helmsman came to Jonah and, finding him asleep in such danger, woke him and said to him in dread:

"Why are you sleeping? Arise, call upon your God: perhaps God will remember us, and we shall not perish."

But the storm did not abate and the danger from it did not lessen. Then the sailors said to one another:

12. The city of Nineveh was the chief city of the Assyrians, with whom the Jews at that time were in hostile relations. The city lay on the eastern bank of the Tigris in Mesopotamia. It was the most populous and wealthiest city in the ancient world and had a circumference of about 84 versts, which fully corresponds to the biblical description of it in the book of the Prophet Jonah as a three days' journey (Jon. 3:3), for the distance of one day's journey among Eastern peoples corresponds to our 25–30 versts.

13. Tarshish, or Tartessus, was an ancient Phoenician colony in the southwestern corner of ancient Iberia (Spain), on the river Baetis (Guadalquivir).

"Come, let us cast lots, that we may learn for whose sake this misfortune has come upon us."

They cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then they questioned him:

"Tell us, for whose sake has this misfortune come upon us? What is your occupation, whence do you come, where is your country, and of what people are you?"

Jonah said:

"I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."

Then he told them of his disobedience to the will of God, and how, having sinned before God, he had grown afraid and now was fleeing from the face of God. Hearing this, the sailors were greatly alarmed and horrified at his transgression of the divine will, crying out:

"Why have you done this?"

Despite the lot that had fallen upon Jonah, condemning him to death and to the ruin threatening them, they would not carry out the sentence against him, both out of their humanity and out of fear before the Almighty God of Israel, who had raised the storm upon them for Jonah's disobedience. Seeing in him the messenger of this God, they began to question him:

"What shall we do with you, that the sea may calm for us?"

The storm did not cease, and the tumult grew ever stronger. Then Jonah said to them:

"Take me and cast me into the sea, and it will become calm for you, for I know that this great storm has come upon you because of me."

But the sailors still hesitated, seeing in Jonah an extraordinary man and fearing to offend in his person the Almighty God of Israel. Instead, they began to row vigorously to reach the land, while the sea continued to rage against them. Then they resolved at last to carry out the sentence upon Jonah. But before doing so, they called upon the Lord:

"We beseech Thee, O Lord, let us not perish for the soul of this man, and do not lay upon us innocent blood; for Thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased Thee."

And they took Jonah and cast him into the sea, and immediately the sea grew calm. Then all who were in the ship became yet more convinced that the storm had been sent by God as punishment for Jonah's transgression, and they feared His almightiness; filled with reverence for Him, they offered sacrifices of thanksgiving and made vows to honor Him.

Meanwhile, at God's command, a whale swallowed the Prophet Jonah, and Jonah remained in the belly of this whale three days and three nights[5964]. Cast into the sea and swallowed by the whale, Jonah could not but feel mortal anguish; yet he did not lose his presence of mind, especially when he saw that he was unharmed. Hope arose within him that the Lord would once more grant him to see God's light and would save him from the depths of the sea. Filled with this hope, he began to pray to the Lord God, repenting before the Lord of his sin. Pouring out his sorrowful and repentant feelings, and at the same time his gratitude to God, Jonah cried out thus from the whale's belly:

"I cried unto the Lord in my distress, and He heard me; from the belly of Hades I cried out, and Thou heardest my voice. Thou didst cast me into the depths, into the heart of the sea, and the streams compassed me about; all Thy waters and Thy waves passed over me. And I said, 'I am cast out from before Thine eyes'; and the streams compassed me about; all Thy waters and Thy waves passed over me. The waters compassed me about, even to my soul; the deep closed round about me; seaweed was wrapped about my head. I went down to the foundations of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever; yet Thou, O Lord my God, wilt bring my life up from Hades. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came unto Thee, into Thy holy temple. They that observe vain and false gods have forsaken their own Merciful Benefactor. But I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of praise; what I have vowed I will perform: salvation is of the Lord."[14]

Jonah's prayer was heard: the merciful Lord chastened His servant for disobedience to the Divine will, but, desiring not his death, commanded the whale to cast Jonah upon dry land. Seeing the light of day,

the sky, the earth, and the sea, Jonah fervently gave thanks to God, Who had delivered him from death.

After this the word of the Lord came unto Jonah a second time.

"Arise, go to the great city of Nineveh, and preach in it what I have already commanded thee."

Then Jonah arose and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a great city, a three days' journey in circumference. And Jonah began to walk through the city as far as one could go in a day, and he preached:

"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

Brief and fearsome were the words of the Prophet Jonah, who seemed to be decisively foretelling the swift destruction of Nineveh. But the inhabitants of the city understood that God, in decreeing their destruction, did not without cause defer the execution of His decree for a time, and that the forty days were undoubtedly granted them for repentance; and they believed the word proclaimed to them from God through the Prophet Jonah. They declared a fast and clothed themselves in sackcloth, all of them, from the greatest among them to the least. Jonah's preaching reached the king of mighty Nineveh himself; he rose from his throne, put off his royal robe, clothed himself in sackcloth, and sat in ashes.[15] Then he commanded that a proclamation be made throughout all Nineveh in his name, the name of the king, and in the name of his nobles, that neither men nor cattle, oxen nor sheep, should eat anything, or go out to pasture, or drink water; that both people and cattle should be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God, and that everyone should turn from his evil way and from the violence of his hands.

14. The prayer of Jonah in the belly of the whale is set as the basis of the sixth ode of the canons. The Holy Church sees in the voyage of Jonah not only a prefiguring of the sufferings and sojourn of the Savior in the tomb, but also a likeness of our life. To Jonah's ship, overtaken by a storm and submerged by the waves, she likens our soul, tossed by the waves of the sea of worldly life, drowned by sins, and ensnared by the spiritual beast, the devil. To the saving shore onto which Jonah was cast she likens the quiet haven which our soul finds in God. With this thought she daily, at Matins, in the sixth ode of the canon, recalls to us his penitential song, and, placing it on our lips, moves us to pray as fervently as Jonah prayed in the belly of the whale, that God may raise the life of our spirit from spiritual corruption.

15. These were the expressions of grief and contrition customary among Eastern peoples.

"Who knows," said the Ninevites, "perhaps God will yet have mercy and turn away from us His burning wrath, and we shall not perish."

The hope of the repentant Ninevites did not deceive them: God, seeing their contrition and their labor of repentance, revoked His decree, had mercy on them, and did not bring upon them the calamity of which He had foretold by the mouth of His Prophet.

But while it was pleasing to God to behold the repentance of the Ninevites and to have mercy on them, Jonah, still holding to his former thoughts concerning the irrevocability of prophecy and, in human weakness, failing to comprehend the boundless mercy of God, was greatly grieved by the swift declaration of mercy toward the repentant sinners. When the forty days of preaching had passed, he went out of the city and, having climbed a hill on the eastern side of the city, made himself a booth there and sat beneath it in the shade, to see what would become of the city. But when he saw that nothing had happened to the city, in deep sorrow he cried out to God in his prayer:

"O Lord! Was not this what I said when I was yet in my own country? Therefore I fled to Tarshish; for I knew that Thou art a good and merciful God, long-suffering and of great mercy. And now, O Lord, take my soul from me; for it is better for me to die than to live."

And the Lord God caused a vine to grow up by night[16] over Jonah's head, to deliver him from the heat of the sun and also from his grief, for the Prophet found comfort for his troubled spirit in it. Jonah might have seen in this a sign of God's will that he remain in that place and wait to see what would become of the city; this might also have nourished within him the hope that God would somehow, by a miracle, vindicate His sentence concerning Nineveh. At the same time, in the plainly miraculous appearance of the shady plant, Jonah understood that God was taking special care of him. His heart rejoiced, and the sorrow that had arisen from the thought that God had forsaken him

16. In the Hebrew text the word here is *kikayon*, which denotes a special shady plant of the nature of ivy, or, as some translate it, the castor-oil plant, which in a few days grows to the height of a shade tree; but which can also dry up just as quickly, since it is often eaten away at the root by worms.

was turned into gladness; and Jonah remained beneath the plant that had grown up throughout that day, sheltering from the heat of the sun.

But Jonah's joy over the shady plant was short-lived. On the following day, at the rising of the dawn, a worm, by God's command, gnawed at the plant, and it withered.

And when the sun had risen, God sent a scorching east wind, and the sun beat upon Jonah's head, so that he fainted and asked to die.

"It is better for me to die," he said, "than to live."

And God said unto Jonah:

"Art thou so greatly grieved because the plant has withered?"

Jonah answered:

"I am greatly grieved, even unto death."

Then, instructing the Prophet with fatherly care, God said:

"Thou hast pity on the plant, for which thou didst not labor, nor make it grow, which came up in one night and perished in one night. And should I not have pity on Nineveh, that great city, wherein were more than a hundred thousand people who cannot discern between their right hand and their left,[17] and also much cattle?"

After this, when forty days had passed and the destruction of Nineveh had not come to pass, but the sun had instead shone forth, the Ninevites saw in this a sign of God's mercy and forgiveness. They went out of the city to the Prophet Jonah and gave him gifts for the Temple in Jerusalem, in gratitude for their deliverance. Accompanied by the gratitude of the Ninevites, whom he had timely admonished by proclaiming God's wrath, Jonah departed from Nineveh in peace and returned to his native land. Having lived here for a considerable time in a manner pleasing to God, the holy Prophet Jonah died in peace and was buried in his native city;[18] now, standing before Christ God in the heavens, he is satiated with the sight of His countenance and glorifies Him with the Prophets and Apostles and all the saints unto the ages.[5970] Amen.

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17. By this name it is more probable that children of the first age are meant, and in that case the number of inhabitants of Nineveh is usually put at 645,000 persons.

Memory of Venerable Jonah the Presbyter

Память преподобного Ионы пресвитера

Venerable Jonah the Presbyter lived in Palestine and was the father of Venerable Theodore and Theophanes "the Branded," who suffered greatly for the veneration of the holy icons at the hands of the iconoclast emperors.[19] Jonah was distinguished by his fear of God and virtuous life, and was especially zealous in hospitality and in other works of Christian mercy. He lovingly cared for the upbringing of his sons; while still at home, he himself taught them the wisdom of books, instructing them yet more in the rules of piety. In mature age, as he approached old age, Jonah, by God's will, lost his wife and resolved to devote the remainder of his days to the whole and perfect service of God. He withdrew to the secluded Lavra of St. Sabbas the Sanctified, renowned for the ascetic struggles of its venerable monks, where his holy sons had labored before him. Here he received the monastic tonsure and, emulating the holy ascetic life of the monks of that monastery, acquired an even greater fear of God and worked out his salvation with fear.

Jonah continually abode in strict fasting and fervent prayers of contemplation. As he prayed for himself, he did not forget the world he had left; grieving for it in soul and burning with love for his neighbors, he fervently prayed to God for the good ordering of Christendom, for peace in the Holy Church, and for the piety of the emperors, for the Byzantine emperors had then turned aside to the iconoclast church and

18. He died about 800 B.C. Of the life of the Prophet Jonah after his preaching only traditions are known, the most ancient of which relate that he died in his native city, where his tomb is still pointed out and where the Mohammedans built a magnificent mosque in his honor. According to another tradition, the prophet remained in Nineveh, among whose ruins near Mosul his tomb is also pointed out, an object of universal veneration among Christians, Jews and Mohammedans. The first opinion is confirmed by the testimony of the Third Book of Maccabees, where it is said that God "showed Jonah, when he was hopelessly languishing in the belly of the whale dwelling in the depths of the sea, unharmed to all his kinsmen" (3 Macc. 6:6).

19. The memory of the Venerable Theodore the Branded is celebrated by the Church on 27 December. They are called "Branded" because, among the tortures to which they were subjected by the Byzantine iconoclast emperors for venerating icons, shameful verses about their madness were branded upon them, by the painful branding of which with heated needles their faces were burned down to the very eyelids. The Venerable Theophanes is also known as a writer and composer of canons.

were disturbing the peace of God's Church.[20] In such a virtuous life Jonah attained advanced old age, and for his God-pleasing life he acquired from God the gracious gift of healing. Having peacefully reached the end of his days, he joyfully surrendered his holy and blessed soul to the Lord,[21] toward Whom he had ever burned with pure and ardent love.

* * *

Life of St. Peter, Formerly a Tax-Collector[22]

Житие святого Петра, прежде бывшего мытарем

In Africa there lived a hard-hearted and merciless publican named Peter. He never had pity on the needy, never gave thought in his mind to death, did not go to the churches of God, and his heart was ever deaf to those who asked alms. But the good and man-loving God does not desire the death of sinners, but cares for the salvation of all and, by His inscrutable Providence, saves each one. To this Peter also He showed His mercy and saved him in the following manner.

Once the beggars and the poor who sat along the street began to praise those who showed mercy to them, prayed to God for them, and reproached the merciless. In the course of their conversation they also spoke of Peter, telling how cruelly he treated them, and they asked one another whether anyone had ever received any alms from the house of Peter. When no one could be found who had, one of the poor men rose and said:

"What will you give me if I go now and ask him for alms?"

They agreed, and collected a pledge; the beggar went and stood at the gate of Peter. Soon Peter came out of the house. He was leading a donkey laden with loaves of bread for the prince's dinner. The beggar bowed to him and began to beg loudly for alms. Peter seized a loaf,

20. Such were the Byzantine emperors contemporary with the Venerable Jonah: Leo V the Armenian (813–820), Michael II the Stammerer (820–829) and Theophilus (829–842). The iconoclastic heresy arose in Byzantium in the first half of the eighth century and continued until the middle of the ninth (842).

21. The Venerable Jonah the presbyter died in the first half of the ninth century.

22. A publican is a collector of taxes.

threw it in the beggar's face, and went away. The beggar picked up the bread and came to his fellows and said:

"I received this loaf from the hands of Peter himself."

With these words he began to glorify the Lord and to give thanks to Him that Peter was so merciful. Two days later the publican fell ill so grievously that he was near death, and in a vision it appeared to him that he stood at judgment, and his deeds were laid upon the scales. On one side of the scales stood foul and wicked spirits; on the other side stood bright and comely men. The evil spirits brought all the wicked deeds that Peter the publican had committed throughout his whole life from his youngest years, and laid them on the scales; but the bright men found not a single good deed of Peter's that could be placed on the other side of the scales. Therefore they were sorrowful, and said to one another in perplexity:

"We have nothing to lay on the scales."

Then one of them said:

"Indeed, we have nothing to lay, except one loaf of bread which he gave for Christ's sake two days ago, and that only under compulsion."

They laid that loaf on the other side of the scales, and it tipped the balance to its side. Then the bright men said to the publican:

"Go, poor Peter, and add still more to this loaf, lest the demons seize you and lead you to eternal torment."

Coming to himself, Peter pondered this and understood that what he had seen was not a phantasm but the truth; at the same time he recalled all his sins, even those he had already forgotten: all his transgressions stood clearly before him, and it was precisely these that the wicked demons had gathered and laid on the scales. Then Peter, marveling, thought:

"If one loaf, thrown by me in the face of a poor man, helped me so much that the demons could not take me, how much more does a generous alms, given with faith and zeal, help those who lavishly distribute their wealth to the poor."

From that time he became exceedingly merciful, so that he did not even spare himself. Once he was walking to his toll-house[23]. On the way

he met a shipowner: the man was naked, for through the loss of his ship he had become utterly impoverished. And this man, falling at Peter's feet, asked him to give him clothing so that he might cover his nakedness. Peter took off his own fine and costly outer garment and gave it to him; but the man, ashamed to walk about in such clothing, gave it for sale to a merchant. Peter, returning from his toll-house, chanced to see that the garment was hung out for sale in the market-place; this so grieved him that on coming home he did not even want to take food, but shut himself up, wept and sobbed, saying:

"God has not accepted my alms; I am not worthy that a poor man should have any remembrance of me."

Grieving and sorrowing in this way, he fell asleep for a little while, and there appeared to him a certain comely man, shining more brightly than the sun; on his head was a cross, and he was clothed in the very garment that Peter had given to the impoverished shipowner. This man said to Peter:

"About what, brother Peter, do you grieve and weep?"

The publican answered:

"How should I not weep, my Lord, when I give to the poor from what You have given me, and they sell again in the marketplaces what has been given them."

Then He who appeared said to him:

"Do you recognize the garment that I am wearing?"

Peter answered:

"Yes, Master, I recognize it; it is mine; with it I clothed the naked."

He who appeared said:

"Cease, then, to grieve, for I have received the garment you gave to the beggar, and I am wearing it, as you see; I praise you for your good deed, for you clothed Me, who was perishing from cold."

Waking, the publican marveled, and was zealous for the life of the needy, saying:

"If the poor are the same as Christ, then, I swear by the Lord, I shall not die until I become one of them."

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23. A tax-house is the place where duties or tribute were collected.

Immediately he distributed all his property to the beggars and freed his slaves, keeping only one of them; to this slave he said:

"I want to tell you a secret; keep it and obey me; but if you do not keep the secret and do not obey me, know that I shall sell you to the pagans."

The slave answered him:

"Whatever you command me, master, I must do."

Then Peter said to him:

"Let us go to the holy city, let us venerate the life-giving Tomb of the Lord, and there you shall sell me to some Christian, and give the money received from the sale to the poor; then you yourself will be a free man."

The slave was amazed at such a strange intention of his master; he did not want to obey him and said:

"I must go with you to the holy city, since I am your slave; but to sell you, my master, I cannot, and I shall never do it."

Then Peter said to him:

"If you do not sell me, I shall sell you to the pagans, as I have already told you."

And they set off for Jerusalem. Having venerated the holy places, Peter again said to the slave:

"Sell me; and if you do not sell me, I shall sell you to the barbarians into hard slavery."

Seeing such an unyielding intention in his master, the slave had to obey him even against his will. Meeting a certain God-fearing man known to him, a silversmith by trade named Zoilus, the slave said to him:

"Listen to me, Zoilus: buy from me a good slave."

The silversmith answered:

"Brother, believe me, I have become poor, so that I have nothing with which to pay for him."

Then the slave proposed to him:

"Borrow from someone and buy him, for he is very good, and God will bless you for him."

Believing his words, Zoilus took thirty gold coins from one of his friends and with this money bought Peter from his slave, not knowing that Peter was himself the master of that slave. The latter, taking the money for his master, departed for Constantinople, and, telling no one what he had done, distributed that money to the poor. From that time Peter began to serve Zoilus; he had to do things to which he had not been accustomed before: now he worked in the kitchen, now carted dung from Zoilus's house, now dug the earth in the vineyard; by these and other heavy labors he wore down his flesh in his boundless humility. Zoilus saw that Peter was bringing a blessing upon his house, as once the house of Potiphar received a blessing on account of Joseph; he saw that his wealth had increased; therefore he came to love Peter, and at the same time, seeing his extraordinary humility, he felt respect for him. Once he said to him:

"Peter, I want to set you free; be my brother."

But Peter did not want freedom; he preferred to serve in the guise of a slave. Often one could see other slaves reviling him, sometimes even beating him and insulting him in every way, and he endured all this patiently, without uttering a word. Once Peter saw in a dream the radiant Man who had once appeared to him in Africa in his own garment; this Man, now holding thirty gold coins in His hand, said to him:

"Do not grieve, brother Peter, for I Myself received the money for you; endure until the time when you are recognized."

Some time later, some silver merchants came from Africa to venerate the holy places; Zoilus, Peter's master, invited them to his house for dinner. During the meal the guests began to recognize Peter and said to one another:

"How this man resembles Peter the publican."

Hearing their conversation, Peter began to hide his face from them, so that they would not fully recognize him. However, they recognized him and began to say to the master of that house:

"We want to tell you something important, Zoilus: do you know that in your house serves a great man, Peter? In Africa he was a very prominent person; he freed all his slaves; the prince is greatly grieved and regrets that Peter has left us; therefore we shall take him with us."

Standing behind the doors, Peter heard all their words; setting down on the ground the dish he was carrying, he hastened to the gate in order to run away. The doorkeeper had been mute and deaf from his birth, so that he opened and closed the gate only by certain signs.

Saint Peter, hurrying to get out, said to the mute man:

"I tell you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: open the doors for me at once."

Then the mute man's lips were loosed, and he said:

"Very well, master, I shall open them at once."

With these words he immediately opened the gate, and Peter hastily went out. Then the former mute came to his master and began to speak in the presence of everyone; all those in the house marveled when they heard that he was speaking; at once they all began to search for Peter, but did not find him. The mute man said:

"See, perhaps he has run away; know that he is a great servant of God; when he approached the gate, he said to me: 'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I tell you, open the gate.' And I immediately noticed a flame issuing from his lips, which touched me, and I began to speak."

Everyone at once set out following Peter's tracks, but did not overtake him; they searched diligently everywhere, but did not find him. Then all in Zoilus's house wept aloud and said: "How did we not know that he was such a great servant of God?" And they glorified God, who has many hidden servants. Peter, fleeing from human glory, concealed himself in secret places until his repose[24].

Glory to the Lord for ever. Amen.

* * *

NOTES

5964. The three days' sojourn of the Prophet Jonah in the belly of the whale prefigured the three days' sojourn of Christ the Savior in the earth. Jesus Christ Himself thus testifies to the prefiguring significance of the Prophet Jonah: "As Jonah was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights" (Mt. 12:39–40). The Savior compares Himself with Jonah: "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and shall con-

24. The saint died in the sixth century at Constantinople.

demn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here" (Mt. 12:41). Thus Jonah in his ministry and life prefigured the death, resurrection and preaching of Jesus Christ. The Fathers of the Church speak of this thus: "The fleeing prophet went up into the ship; Christ went up onto the tree. A mighty storm arose on the sea; this agitation of the sea is the unbelief of the Jews. The lot fell upon the prophet to be cast into the sea; this lot signifies the will of the Father, by which Christ descends into the abyss of sorrows and death. Jonah voluntarily consents to be cast into the sea; Jesus Christ voluntarily ascends the cross. Jonah goes down into the sea from the ship; Christ descends from the cross into the tomb and into the underworld of the earth. Jonah sacrifices himself to save those who were suffering the storm; Christ dies for the salvation of the human race, tossed by the sinful waves. The prophet, taken by a beast but not devoured by it, prays in its belly; Jesus Christ, struck down by death but not held by it, prays for all people. Jonah remains unharmed in the belly of the whale; the body of Jesus Christ remained undamaged in the tomb. Jonah remained in the belly of the whale three days and three nights; Jesus was in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. Jonah on the third day came forth unharmed from the belly of the whale; Jesus Christ, by the power of His Divinity, rose incorrupt from the tomb on the third day. After his miraculous deliverance from death Jonah goes to preach repentance to the Ninevites; after the resurrection of Christ His teaching is preached to the pagans. Until the time of Jonah's disastrous voyage Nineveh had not heard the preaching of repentance and had drawn upon itself the wrath of God; but afterward the prophet, by his preaching, delivered the Ninevites from the wrath of the Lord; so only by the death and resurrection of Christ the human race, plunged into the abyss of sin, is delivered from sin, curse and death and reconciled with God."

5970. The name of the Prophet Jonah is inscribed on the fifth of the books of the Minor Prophets, whose subject is Jonah's embassy to Nineveh with the preaching of repentance. The occasion of Jonah's embassy was not only the salvation of Nineveh, but also the instruction of the Jews themselves, among whom an intolerance toward foreigners had then developed. The Lord admonishes the prophet that salvation is the possession of the pagans too, and warns the Jews to amend, for they too may perish if they do not repent, and their place will be taken by the pagans. Hence the new prefiguring significance of Jonah's preaching, which foreshadowed the New Testament apostolic preaching calling all nations into the Church of Christ. An indication of this significance of the book of the Prophet Jonah and of himself may be found in the words of the Savior Himself, who, reproaching the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, for their impenitence, unbelief and inattentiveness to the preaching of John the Baptist about repentance, says: "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here" (Mt. 12:41). The book of the Prophet Jonah is read in full at the Vespers service on Great Saturday, together with the other prophecies of the Old Testament about the resurrection of the Savior.



THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 23

23 сентября

New Calendar September 23 · Old Calendar October 6 (civil dates)

A Word on the Conception of the Honorable and Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord John

Слово на зачатие честного и славного пророка, предтечи и крестителя Господня Иоанна

While the conception of our Savior was drawing near, there came about in a glorious and wondrous manner the conception of St. John the Forerunner. Many mothers conceive children, but few are those whose conception is glorified and celebrated by the Holy Church. Only three mothers are known in whose wombs conceptions took place that became a subject of wonder for the whole world. These are the Righteous Anna, St. Elisabeth, and the Most Pure Virgin Mary. Righteous Anna conceived the Mother of God, Elisabeth conceived the Forerunner, and the Virgin Mary conceived Christ our Savior. All these conceptions were announced by an Angel and came about by the grace of God, yet not otherwise than through conversation between the messenger and those who were to conceive, for God Himself required the consent of those who would conceive. Therefore the messenger, the holy Archangel Gabriel, entering the sanctuary to the priest Zacharias, who was then serving before God, said:

"Fear not, Zacharias: thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And many shall rejoice at his birth."

Zacharias answered:

"What thou announcest to me, joyful messenger, is both unexpected and strange, for to bear children in old age is unnatural; I am old, and my wife is advanced in years: how can we conceive and bear a son?"

The Angel answered:

"From your very first words, Zacharias, I see that you are of little faith; you do not believe that my words will come to pass. True, what I announce is not in keeping with your nature, but there is the will of God, for Whom nothing is impossible: 'God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham' (Mt. 3:9). Do you not know that God could create Adam from the earth, form Eve from the bone of Adam, and grant a son, Isaac, to the aged Sarah? Therefore the Almighty God will grant your wife the birth of a son in her old age, for your prayer has been heard."

"I," said Zacharias, "now offer up my prayers to God for the coming of the desired Messiah, whom He promised through the lips of His holy prophets; I pray that God send Him soon to earth to save the seed of Abraham from the bondage of foreign peoples; I pray to Him also that He forgive my sins and the sins of the whole people; but as for having a son, I do not now pray for it, for I myself have already reached an advanced age, and my wife has grown old."

The Angel said to him:

"I am Gabriel, who stands before God; by divine revelation I know that you now pray not for the granting of a son but for what you have spoken of to me. Yet earlier, when you and your spouse were not yet old, you fervently besought the Lord that He send you a son. The all-merciful Lord, from Whom not even the slightest movement of the human heart can be hidden, hearkens to those who pray to Him and fulfills the desires of those who fear Him. Having heard your former prayers, He will grant you a son who shares the name of grace[1], for the Lord knows by His good pleasure when to fulfill the petitions of His saints; and behold, a son shall be born to you who will be great before the Lord."

To this Zacharias answered:

1. "John" means grace.

"Now I see, messenger, that you are an Angel of God, for your discourse bears witness to this, your appearance clearly shows it, and the power of your words confirms it. At first, however, when you suddenly appeared before me and began to speak, I was terrified, just as the prophet Daniel was once afraid when he saw an Angel: 'I looked upon this great vision,' he said, 'but there remained no strength in me' (Dan. 10:8); and the mother of Samson also said: 'A man of God came to me, whose countenance was like the countenance of an Angel of God, very reverend [terrible]' (Judg. 13:6). Therefore I was afraid and do not dare to contradict your Angelic words; yet I will ask, why will the son who is to be born to me be great? Will he be higher and holier than the prophet Jeremiah, to whom the word of the Lord came: 'Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations' (Jer. 1:5)?"

The Angel said:

"Your son will be great before the Lord, and in his spiritual greatness he will not only be equal to the prophet Jeremiah but will surpass him. If the latter received sanctification before his birth, this one will be filled with the Holy Spirit even while still in his mother's womb. Jeremiah was appointed only to prophesy concerning the Messiah, but this one will be granted to lay his hand upon Him and to baptize Him. And he will surpass not only Jeremiah but also the other great saints in the greatness of the grace of God, for even among our Angelic orders, which always behold the face of the Lord of Sabaoth, God does not reveal the mysteries of His good will equally to all, but reveals them through the higher orders to the lower. Many stars appear before the rising of the sun, but only the morning star precedes the sun itself. Many prophets preached of the coming of the Messiah, but the child born of you will not only proclaim Him with his word but will also point out with his finger to the people the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Therefore your son will be great and greater among all those born of women. As the fulfillment of joyful news is more pleasing than the news itself, so the prophet who is born of you will have more honor in comparison with the other prophets. All the proph-

ets and the Law itself prophesied before him; he, however, will be the completion of all the prophets, the end of the Old Testament, the forerunner of the new grace."

Zacharias said to this:

"Good and joyful is your message, Angel of the Lord! If every wise son gladdens his father, how much more would a son wiser than all the prophets gladden me, an old man! But how can I rejoice when I doubt your words? There is no gladness or joy in things doubtful, only in things certain. Therefore I beseech you, Angel of God, tell me, how can I be assured of what you announce to me?"

Then Gabriel answered:

"You still continue to doubt and do not believe my words, Zacharias; shall I, a messenger of God, speak falsely? 'The Lord is faithful in all His words and holy in all His works' (Ps. 144:13), so that 'with God no word shall be void of power' (Lk. 1:37). You are a priest and teacher of Israel; do you not know that the time has come which I reckoned by weeks, when I was sent to Babylon to the prophet Daniel? Have you not read his prophecies? Consider and understand that He who saves Israel has already drawn near, and before His face an Angel in the flesh will go before Him—your son, who will prepare the way of the Messiah, walking before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah. But because you did not believe my words, you will be mute and will not speak a word until the day when this comes to pass."

And immediately the mouth of Zacharias was bound by muteness, and the bonds of Elisabeth's barrenness were loosed. The Angel withdrew to the throne of the Almighty. Glory to the Lord forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Rejoice, thou who wast first barren and childless, for behold, thou hast conceived the lamp of the Sun, who shall illumine openly all the universe that suffers from blindness. Exult, O Zacharias, crying out with boldness: the Prophet of the Most High is he who is about to be born.

Kontakion, Tone 1:

Great Zacharias rejoices brightly, with the all-glorious Elisabeth his spouse, worthily conceiving John the Forerunner, whom the Archangel joyfully announced; and let us men honor him as he deserves, as the mystagogue of grace.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Andrew, John, Peter and Antoninus

Память святых мучеников Андрея, Иоанна, Петра и Антонина

These holy martyrs suffered at the time when the cruel prince Ibrahim ruled over Africa. At the capture and destruction of the Sicilian city of Syracuse[2], Ibrahim led from there to Africa John and his two children, Peter and Antoninus. These two young lads he ordered to be taught the Saracen language and sciences. When they grew up, Prince Ibrahim so loved them for their wisdom and virtuous life that he called Antoninus his kinsman, and gave Peter the rank of sacellarius[3]. They secretly confessed the Christian faith, but could not conceal it from the prince. Learning that they believed in Christ, he was greatly angered, ordered them bound in iron stocks, and had them beaten with knotted staves. For a long time the tormentors dealt blows to the holy Antoninus; then they set him on an ass, bound him fast with strong thongs, and led him about the city, subjecting him to blows and heaping upon him every kind of insult. The holy Antoninus endured all this, giving thanks to God. The holy Peter was stripped and beaten for a long time with staves on the bones and the belly. After this the martyrs were cast into prison. After some time the prince ordered them brought out and heavy wooden boards placed upon them, so that their arms were dislocated from their bodies and their thighs and knees were entirely crushed; the bodies of the holy martyrs were stained with their own blood, and all their bones were broken. Then they brought their father John; the prince seized him by the neck with his left hand and with his right thrust a knife into his throat; thus the holy martyr

2. The capture of Syracuse was in the year 868.
3. The chief steward.

breathed his last over the bodies of his children. Then Ibrahim ordered a large fire kindled and the bodies of the holy sufferers burned upon it. And with the holy Andrew, who was already advanced in years, the cruel tormentor dealt thus. First he kept him for a fairly long time in hunger and thirst, depriving him of clothing, and then, mounting a horse and taking a spear, he rode against the holy martyr and struck him in the chest with the spear. The holy Andrew loudly began to offer praise to God. The cruel prince rode at the saint a second time and pierced him between the shoulders. Bleeding, the blessed one fell to the ground, after which his head was cut off with a sword.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Iraida

Память святой мученицы Ираиды

Saint Iraida, the Virgin, lived in Alexandria. Once, going out to a spring to draw water, she saw a ship that had put in at the shore; on that ship were a multitude of maidens, men, priests, deacons and monks, all of them bound in chains, for they were being taken to torment for confessing the name of Jesus Christ. Suddenly Iraida was kindled with a great love for the Lord; casting aside her water-jar, she of her own will joined herself to the prisoners of Christ and was bound in chains together with them. When the ship arrived at the Egyptian city of Antinoe, Saint Iraida was the first of all to suffer cruel torments and was beheaded with the sword[4]; after her, all the rest also sealed their confession of faith in Jesus Christ with their blood.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Polyxenia

Житие преподобной Поликсении

Saint Polyxenia was by birth from Spain. She lived in the first century after the Nativity of Christ, in the time of the holy Apostles, and was their disciple. From birth and in her youth Polyxenia was

4. Saint Iraida died about the year 308. Her memory is also celebrated a second time, together with the name Raisa, on September 5.

a pagan. Together with her elder sister Xanthippe[5], the wife of Probus, the ruler of that land, the Virgin Polyxenia heard the Divine teaching of Christ the Savior from the holy Apostle Paul, when he preached in Spain. Xanthippe and Probus accepted Christianity at that time, but Polyxenia remained still a pagan.

After this, misfortunes befell Polyxenia. She was exceedingly beautiful; enticed by her beauty, a dishonorable man forcibly abducted Polyxenia and carried her off to Greece. But the merciful and all-powerful Protector of the defenseless and innocent, the Lord, preserved the young maiden unharmed and did not permit the criminal designs of the impious abductor to be fulfilled. The Lord turned the evil intent of the wicked man even to the benefit of Polyxenia. Sailing to Greece, on one of the ships Polyxenia heard the preaching of yet another great disciple of Christ, the holy Apostle Peter. Well disposed toward the lofty Divine teaching of Christ the Savior, upon her arrival in Greece she turned with living trust to the patronage and protection of the Christians. The holy Apostle of Christ Philip, who was preaching there at that time, entrusted a pious family with concealing Polyxenia from her criminal abductor. With great difficulty and obstacles these virtuous Christians succeeded in hiding Polyxenia in the Greek city of Patras, or Patrae, in the region of Achaia, where the majority of the inhabitants had by then been converted to Christianity through the preaching of the holy Apostle Andrew, the first-called disciple of Christ the Savior.

In Patras, Polyxenia, already prepared by the evangelical preaching of the holy Apostles of Christ Paul, Peter and Philip, and having now herself experienced the active charity of the Christians, accepted Christianity with a living faith in the Divinity of the teaching of Christ the Savior, and was baptized by the holy Apostle Andrew the First-called himself. There too Polyxenia was an eyewitness of the glorious miracles performed by the holy Apostle Andrew. She saw how meekly this elder, by then already aged, endured grievous tortures and torments, how he suffered the death of the cross for his refusal to renounce the

5. The memory of the Venerable Xanthippe is celebrated on the same day.

Lord Jesus Christ and for his bold intercession on behalf of the Christians.

"Believe in Christ yourself," the holy Apostle said to the wrathful pagan ruler of the city and region, when the latter, threatening death, demanded that Saint Andrew renounce Christ, bow down to the pagan gods and offer sacrifice in their honor. "I grieve more for your perdition than for the sufferings awaiting me," the holy Apostle continued. "My sufferings will last a day or two, but your torments will last forever."

But, paying no heed to the meek exhortation of Saint Andrew, the malicious ruler first condemned him to cruel tortures, and afterwards doomed him to the death of the cross; and in order to prolong his sufferings as long as possible, he ordered that he be not nailed but tied to the cross.

When the Apostle of God was being led to the place of crucifixion, the people, among whom was the young Polyxenia, thronged about him in great numbers, crying out loudly:

"What has this righteous man, this friend of God, sinned, that he is being led to the most shameful execution among us, to which only the most vile criminals are condemned?"

But Saint Andrew calmed and admonished the people, and went with joy to the place of torment for the confession of Christ.

His devoted disciples did not leave Saint Andrew, among whom was also Polyxenia, even when he was crucified and hung upon the cross. A multitude of people pressed close to the innocently crucified Saint Andrew, indignant at the ruler's decision and crying out with growing discontent:

"In vain does this holy man suffer!"

The Apostle, however, sought to calm those who were agitated, and continued to teach the word of God:

"People standing here," he said, "wives and children, old men and young, slaves and free! Hear my words and think no more about the vanity of temporal life, but look at me, hanging on the cross for Christ and already ready to leave this body. Those who undergo death for the truth in this world should not fear it: they attain blessed repose. Cleanse yourselves, do not forget my teaching; believe with all your

heart in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Keep the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ and thereby show yourselves worthy of the eternal blessedness which the Lord has prepared for those who love Him!"

Days and nights passed in this way. The holy elder, despite grievous torments, did not cease to instruct the people. And this meek, yet life-filled and truly loving preaching from the cross had a particularly strong effect upon the young Polyxenia. In a few days she lived through an entire life, and Christianity was unshakably established in her.

Meanwhile the prolonged suffering of Saint Andrew so increased the murmuring and indignation of the people that the crowd, with shouts, surrounded the dwelling of the ruler Aegeates, demanding the release of Saint Andrew, who was already in his third day of hanging on the cross without food.

"In vain does this meek, holy and peaceful man suffer," said the people. "For more than two days now he has hung on the cross and has not ceased to teach us goodness and truth; he must be taken down!"

Aegeates, alarmed by the tumult, agreed to the people's wish and went himself to the place of execution, in order to have Saint Andrew taken down from the cross in his presence. The first-called Apostle, seeing him, said:

"Why have you come, Aegeates? If it is to confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will without doubt receive forgiveness; but if you have come to untie me from this tree, you are striving in vain to do this now—I already rejoice in beholding the King of Heaven, already I worship Him, already I stand before Him! But while there is still time, take care for your soul and do not prepare for yourself eternal torments."

At the ruler's command, the soldiers were about to untie Saint Andrew from the cross, but the Apostle, lifting his eyes to heaven, cried out:

"Do not permit, O Lord, that I be taken down from the cross; grant me to suffer for Thee in the same manner in which Thou wast pleased to suffer. Do not let those who have come to know and love Thee through my preaching be shaken; preserve them and establish them in

Thy holy faith, that they too may glorify Thee, the true God; and receive me also in peace!"

And indeed, the executioners in vain sought to approach the crucified man to untie him from the cross—an invisible force restrained them. A bright light, brighter than the sun, completely surrounded Saint Andrew and for nearly half an hour concealed him from those standing by. When this light vanished, it was seen that the holy Apostle Andrew had already yielded up his spirit to God, and only his face shone with heavenly light.

As the Resurrection of Jesus Christ powerfully moved the holy Apostles to preach His Divine teaching, so the repose of the holy Apostle Andrew fruitfully affected Saint Polyxenia. Having received Christianity from such a pillar of the Church of Christ as the holy Apostle Andrew, and having been exercised and strengthened in the Divine faith of the Savior under his own guidance, Saint Polyxenia herself desired to preach the Divine teaching of Christ the Savior. And when she learned that the holy Onesimus, who had visited the city of Patras shortly after the death of the Apostle Andrew, was setting out to preach in Spain, Saint Polyxenia gladly accompanied him to her homeland for the labors of evangelization. She wished to convert to Christ her fellow countrymen, who were still unenlightened by the light of the Gospel.

Returning to Spain with Saint Onesimus and with her companion Rebecca, who had been baptized together with her, Saint Polyxenia zealously devoted herself to the active spreading of Christianity among her fellow countrymen. Her sister Xanthippe also joined in her evangelical labors. There has been preserved a tradition that they preached especially often in the populous city of Toledo.

Thus for the whole remainder of her life, almost forty years, Saint Polyxenia devoted herself to this great labor, giving to those who believed in Christ an example of a pious life. The fruit of this pious apostolic service of hers was that very many pagans in Spain were converted and established in Christianity by her.

About the year 109 after the Nativity of Christ, Saint Polyxenia peacefully reposed, having preserved her virginity to the end of her earthly life.

* * *



THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 24

24 сентября

New Calendar September 24 · Old Calendar October 7 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of the Holy First Martyr and Equal-to-the-Apostles Thecla

Житие и страдание святой первомученицы, равноапостольной Феклы

The holy Apostles Paul and Barnabas, preaching the Gospel to the world, came to Iconium[1] and lodged at the home of Onesiphorus, whom St. Paul mentions in his Epistle to Timothy, saying: "May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains" (2 Tim. 1:16). While living at the home of Onesiphorus, they often visited the synagogue, fearlessly preached the Word of God, led people to the way of salvation, and converted them to faith in Jesus Christ. At that time many, heeding their teaching and seeing the signs and wonders they performed, believed in our Lord Jesus Christ. This is related in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles: "In Iconium they (that is, Paul and Barnabas) went together into the synagogue of the Jews, and spoke in such a way that a great multitude of both Jews and pagans believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up and embittered the hearts of the pagans against the brethren. Nevertheless, they remained there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, Who bore witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands" (Acts 14:1–3).

At that time there lived in Iconium an eighteen-year-old maiden, beautiful in appearance, named Thecla, daughter of Theocleia, of a

noble and illustrious family. She was betrothed to a certain Thamyris, one of the most distinguished young men in the city, renowned for his wealth and beauty. Seeing the wonders performed by the Apostles, Thecla, together with others, listened at the window to their discourse in the home of Onesiphorus, diligently heeding all that they preached. The seed of the Word of God fell upon good ground, and through the action of the Holy Spirit took deep root in Thecla's heart and sprang up: she believed in the Son of God, loved Him, and cleaved to Him with all her soul. Paul, prompted from on high, began to speak of virginity and chastity; among other things he said that a maiden who keeps her virginity for love of Christ is like the Angels; she is the bride of Christ, and Christ is her Bridegroom, Who brings her into His heavenly bridal chamber. St. Paul spoke much on this subject and moved Thecla to preserve her virginity, so that the holy maiden then and there resolved firmly to leave her bridegroom, to scorn all the delights of this world, and to serve Christ in purity until her very end. Thus the wise maiden became the bride of the heavenly Bridegroom and followed Him with ardent love; yearning for her incorruptible Bridegroom, she melted like wax, so that in her was fulfilled what David had said: "My heart is become like wax; it is melted in the midst of my inward parts" (Ps. 21:15). Thecla was so enraptured by Paul's discourse that for three days and three nights she quite forgot food and drink and bodily rest. As once Mary, "who sat at the feet of Jesus" (Lk. 10:39), pondered upon God alone, so Thecla was nourished only by His word, for it is written in Holy Scripture: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4). When Theocleia learned that her daughter had believed in Christ and was diligently listening to the word of God, she came and angrily dragged her away by force from this soul-profiting occupation, and rebuked the holy preachers, the Apostles, reviling them; then she tore her daughter,

1. This took place in A.D. 45–46, during the first journey of St. Apostle Paul. The city of Iconium was in Lycaonia, a region of Asia Minor to the south-west of Cappadocia. The first journey of St. Apostle Paul is narrated in the Acts of the Apostles, chapters 13 and 14. The holy Apostle came to Iconium from Antioch of Pisidia.

already a lamb of Christ, away from Christ's flock. Afterward, calling her bridegroom Thamyris, she said to him:

"Do you not care about your bride, that she is in some kind of frenzy? Look: she has been deceived by these strangers, these impostors, who lead foolish people astray with their lofty speeches; for three days now she has not left them, having forgotten her own home."

Then Thamyris began to speak gently and tenderly with Thecla; but she would speak with him about nothing, and would not even look at him, for in her heart she bore another Bridegroom, "fairer in beauty than the sons of men." Gazing upon Him with the eyes of her spirit, she conversed with Him in her mind, while this corruptible and temporal bridegroom inspired her only with aversion. Thamyris, seeing that Thecla rejected him and did not love him, was greatly grieved, while Theocleia, in her anger, began to beat her daughter, dragged her by the hair, and trampled her underfoot; then she shut her up alone and starved her. Yet she herself, overcome by natural motherly love, wept for her daughter; embracing her, she began to kiss her and tearfully begged Thecla not to reject her bridegroom, who was handsome, rich, noble, and honored by all, and seated her at table beside Thamyris. But Thecla, turning away from him, sat silently, looking down and tasting nothing, constantly remembering in the depths of her heart her heavenly Bridegroom. When Thamyris, caressing her, tried to embrace and kiss her by force, she spat in his eyes and tore herself from his hands like a bird from a snare. Then her mother again flew into a rage and began beating her once more, while Thamyris, deeply grieved, went to the prince to complain against the Apostle Paul.

"A stranger," Thamyris said, "has appeared in our city. By his sorcery he deceives the people, turning them away from the worship of the gods and converting them to Christ Jesus, Who was crucified by the Jews. He has also deceived the maiden Thecla, my betrothed; at first she loved me greatly, but now she not only refuses to look at me, she even loathes me as a leper and flees from me as from some wild beast. Thus has that sorcerer quenched her love for me; and I cannot understand what he has done to her."

The prince summoned Paul and asked him where he came from and what he had done in their city. Then Paul opened his apostolic lips and, as was his custom, began to teach him the word of God, preaching Jesus Christ. The prince, however, did not proceed to examine the matter at once, but postponed Paul's trial until another time; he ordered Paul to be bound, put in prison, and kept there until an opportunity arose to question him more fully. When Thecla heard that Paul had been imprisoned because of her, she arose by night, secretly left the house, and came to the prison. Finding the guard who watched the prison doors, she took off her necklace and other gold ornaments and gave them to him, asking him to open the doors and let her in to see Paul.

St. Chrysostom mentions this, saying:

"Hear of St. Thecla: that she might see Paul, she gave her gold to the prison guard; but you will not give even a single farthing[2] to behold Christ.[3]"

The prison guard granted her request—he rejoiced at the precious necklace and gold ornaments—and led her in to St. Paul. Thecla fell before him with joyful tears and kissed the chains of Christ's prisoner. At first Paul was astonished when he saw her, but afterward, when he learned all that she had suffered at the hands of her mother and bridegroom for the sake of her chastity, he rejoiced with great joy at the courage of the young maiden, kissed her on the head, blessed her, praised her faith and maidenly chastity, and called her the bride of Christ and his first daughter, whom he had begotten anew through the preaching of the Gospel. Thecla sat in the prison with Paul as a daughter with her father, listening to his paternal instruction and treasuring his words in her heart as a priceless treasure. He taught her much concerning faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, instructed her in the love of God, exhorted her to preserve her chaste virginity, and firmly established her in the teaching of Christ, as St. Gregory of Nyssa[4] writes, saying:

2. *Tsata*: a coin equal to 10 kopecks.
3. This testimony concerning Thecla is found in the 25th homily of St. John Chrysostom on the Acts of the Apostles.
4. In the 4th homily on the Song of Songs.

– Such myrrh once (that is, the teaching), together with the white lily[5] of chastity, Paul poured into the ears of the holy maiden; by these drops, flowing from the lily of the heart, Thecla put to death the outward man, all vain thoughts, and quenched the passions.

St. Epiphanius[6] also writes:

"Thecla, who had a handsome bridegroom, the foremost in the city, very rich, greatly honored, and noble, found Paul, who turned her away from betrothal to this bridegroom; thus the holy maiden renounced all earthly blessings, that she might be deemed worthy of heavenly ones."

Meanwhile, they began searching for Thecla in Theocleia's house, but could not find her. Then there arose cries, weeping, and lamentation: her mother mourned for her daughter, Thamyris for his bride, and the servants for their mistress. The attendants scattered in every direction, searching and asking in the streets and in the houses, but nowhere could they find her. Only after a long while did they learn that she was in the prison; at once they hurried after her. When the messengers arrived, they saw her sitting beside Paul and, as though bound to him, listening to his instruction with the greatest attention. Then they seized her and led her out of the prison, and reported all that had happened to the prince. Taking his seat upon the judgment bench, he ordered Paul to be brought before him. As soon as the people saw him brought in, they shouted to the prince:

"Prince, this man is a sorcerer; put him to death!"

Thamyris in particular insisted that Paul be put to death; in his complaint he charged Paul with having turned his bride away from him. When Thecla was summoned, the prince asked her:

"Why do you loathe your bridegroom, who is so handsome and noble? Why will you not marry him?"

But she looked at Paul and made no answer. Then Theocleia, forgetting her natural love for her daughter and betraying her maternal affection, began to cry out furiously to the prince like a savage lioness or an enraged bear:

5. Krin – the lily.

6. St. Epiphanius was a contemporary of St. John Chrysostom; he was Bishop on the island of Cyprus for 36 years.

"Burn this wicked slave; she deserves such a death! This is not my daughter, for she does not obey me, her mother. Burn her as an example to the others, so that all the maidens of the city, seeing this, may fear and not dare to disobey their mothers and oppose them, as this utterly wicked and disobedient girl has done. No, she is not my child, not the fruit of my womb, but a cursed offspring and a dead branch—burn her!"

Thus insistently did the mother demand that her daughter be burned, and Thamyris that Paul be executed. The prince questioned the holy Apostle at length, but found no fault in him except that he preached Christ; therefore he did not condemn him to death, but ordered him to be beaten and driven out of the city, so that he might not persuade other maidens to preserve their virginity. Barnabas and Onesiphorus, with his sons, were likewise banished together with Paul. Paul himself, moreover, was eager to leave the city, not only because the prince, Thamyris, and Theocleia were persecuting him, but also because the people were attacking him and seeking to kill him for preaching the word of God and bearing witness to Jesus Christ. St. Luke mentions this in the Acts of the Apostles, saying: "But the unbelieving Jews stirred up and incensed the hearts of the Gentiles against the brethren. Meanwhile the people of the city were divided: some were on the side of the Jews, and others on the side of the Apostles. And when the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, made an assault upon them, to insult and stone them, they, learning of it, withdrew to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe"[7] (Acts 14:2, 4–6), and from there to Antioch. At first they remained for several days not far from the city of Iconium, in a cave on the road to Daphne[8], wishing to learn what would become of Thecla. There they remained fasting and prayed fervently for her, that the Lord would strengthen her and show His mercy upon her; and this was indeed fulfilled.

The prince strove for a long time to make Thecla treat her betrothed with her former love, but his efforts did not succeed; then, at

7. The cities of Lystra and Derbe were located in the Lycaonian region of Asia Minor, not far from Iconium.
8. A suburb of Antioch.

Theocleia's request, he condemned the holy maiden to be burned. For this purpose a great quantity of dry wood, hay, and brushwood was brought and heaped into a great pyre. Then the servants took the saint to lead her there; but she would not let them lead her, and hastened of her own accord to the pyre prepared for her. Making the sign of the Cross, she mounted it and stood at its summit, ready to burn; for the material fire held no terror for her, since she herself was burning with the immaterial fire of divine love. As she stood upon the pyre, she looked ahead and saw the Lord in the likeness of Paul, standing and commanding her to be steadfast. Therefore St. Cyprian speaks thus in his prayer: "Stand before us as Thou didst before Paul in his bonds, and before Thecla in the fire."[9]

Meanwhile they kindled the fire beneath and set the pyre alight on every side; but, to the astonishment of all, the flames rose high and encircled Thecla. All were yet more amazed when a sudden heavy rain with hail poured down and quenched the fire; in terror, the prince and all the people fled to their houses from the pouring rain and the violent hail. Thecla, however, came down unharmed; the fire had not touched the pure maiden in the least. After this she neither went to her mother's house nor tarried in Iconium, but set out from the city to seek her spiritual father, Paul. On the road she met one of Paul's disciples from the household of Onesiphorus, who was going into the city to buy bread. The holy maiden recognized him and asked:

"Where is Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ?"

Then he led Thecla to the cave where Paul was with the others, fasting and fervently praying to God for her. When they saw Thecla alive and well, they rejoiced with great joy, and, lifting their eyes and stretching out their hands to heaven, gave thanks to God, Who had preserved His handmaiden unharmed. Then they offered her bread, and themselves also strengthened themselves with food. From there Paul and Barnabas passed through Lystra and Derbe, preaching the Gospel and healing the sick; Thecla followed after them as far as Antioch. As they were entering that city, they chanced to meet a certain Alexander,

9. These words are found in the homily of St. Cyprian on the martyrs.

a leading man of the city. He was young, lived a life of sensual pleasure, and gave himself to impious deeds, as was the custom among the pagans. When he saw the holy maiden Thecla and was struck by her beauty, he was inflamed with impure desire for her. Thinking that Thecla was Paul's wife, Alexander first offered Paul much gold and tried to persuade him not to hinder his evil designs. But when he learned that Thecla was not Paul's wife, but an unmarried maiden, his passion for her burned all the more, and he desired to take her for his wife. He began to persuade the holy Thecla to love him, but she fled from him as from a roaring lion seeking to devour the goodness of her soul. Alexander, however, strove by every means to ensnare her. Thus, one day, when he met Thecla on the road amid a great crowd, he could not restrain the lustful fire burning in his heart: forgetting all shame, he seized her by force and threw his arms about her neck. The holy maiden, weeping, began to implore Alexander to leave her.

"Do not compel me, a stranger; do not compel me, a servant of God. I have renounced my betrothed; how can I consent to your desire?"

As she spoke, Thecla tore herself from his grasp, tore his clothing in the sight of all, and thereby put him to great shame. Alexander was exceedingly angry, and, learning that she was also a Christian, brought her before the prince for judgment. When asked why she shunned marriage, Thecla answered:

"My Bridegroom is Christ, the Son of God; to Him I am joined in spiritual marriage."

The prince began to compel her to renounce Christ and marry. When she resolutely refused, the prince condemned her to be devoured by wild beasts for two offenses: piety and chastity—for believing in Christ and for refusing marriage, though young and beautiful. This punishment was postponed until the morning; meanwhile, a woman named Tryphena took her into her house to keep her safe that night. Tryphena was of royal lineage and held in great honor; later she too believed in Christ. It is of her that St. Paul speaks in his Epistle to the Romans: "Greet," he says, "Tryphena and Tryphosa"[10] (Rom. 16:12).

Taking Thecla into her house, Tryphena spent the whole night with her in spiritual conversation. In the morning a great multitude gathered to see this spectacle; the prince and all the city's rulers came as well. The holy Thecla was led forth like a lamb to the slaughter, and stood in the place where the beasts were to devour her. When the beasts were released upon her, they all began to walk around her, but not one touched her, for God shut the mouths of the beasts, as once He had done in Daniel's den. All the spectators marveled at this wondrous sight: the bloodthirsty beasts had put aside their ferocity and become gentle as sheep. Some among the people glorified the God whom Thecla confessed, while others blasphemed, saying:

"She has charms in her clothing, and that is why the beasts do not touch her."

The prince himself and the city's rulers also said that she was a sorceress and had bewitched the beasts, so that they could not harm her. Therefore they resolved to deliver Thecla the next day to beasts more numerous and hungrier than the others, and in the meantime sent her back to Tryphena. Tryphena was exceedingly glad to see that the holy maiden had returned unharmed from the place of execution. While Thecla remained in Tryphena's house until morning, the prince ordered that no food be given to the beasts, so that, being hungry, they might more swiftly rush upon their victim. And so, on the following morning, the saint was again led to the place of execution; Tryphena followed her, weeping that such a holy maiden was being put to death without any fault. Thecla was placed in a conspicuous spot, and the shameless prince ordered that the saint be stripped:

"There are charms," he said, "in her clothing; that is why the beasts do not touch her. Strip this sorceress, and let us see whether she will remain unharmed."

Then they stripped the holy maiden and set her where the people could see her. Shame alone was her covering, and she repeated the

10. Both of these women are mentioned in the Roman Martyrologies under 10 November, namely: "The memory of the holy women Tryphena and Tryphosa, who lived in Iconium in Lycaonia; instructed by the preaching of St. Paul and edified by the example of St. Thecla, they made great progress in Christian teaching."

words of the Prophet David: "Shame covers my face..." (Ps. 43:16). Hungry, enraged beasts—lions and bears—were released upon her. Coming out of their enclosures and seeing the maiden standing unclothed, they bowed their heads to the ground, lowered their eyes, and, as though ashamed of the maiden's nakedness, drew back from her. A wondrous sight! The beasts felt shame: they turned their eyes away from the maiden's nakedness, while people gazed upon her shamelessly. Thus, in this spectacle, the irrational animals became accusers and judges of mankind: though bloodthirsty by nature, the beasts took upon themselves the character of chaste men, while men, though rational, became like wild beasts. But what did they gain by it? By stripping the chaste maiden before all, they sought to dishonor her, but only increased her honor. St. Chrysostom speaks well, recalling the stripping of two women—the wife of Potiphar in the bedchamber, and Thecla in the presence of all the people: "What benefit did the lustful Egyptian woman gain by undressing in the bedchamber? What harm did the first martyr Thecla suffer when they stripped her before a multitude? Thecla, though stripped, did not sin as the Egyptian woman sinned, nor was she filled with dishonor, but was exalted as a saint. The nakedness of the one, in the presence of many, was crowned, while that of the other was put to shame even in a closed bedchamber."[11]

While the holy Thecla stood naked in that place, one of the lionesses approached, lay down before her, and licked her feet, as though paying honor to her virginal chastity. St. Ambrose mentions this[12], saying: "One could see a beast stretched upon the ground, licking the saint's feet; by this it bore silent witness that it could do no harm to a virgin's body. The beast bowed down before her whom it had been given to tear apart and, forgetting its natural disposition, took upon itself the character which men had lost."

Meanwhile the people, seeing that the beasts did not dare to touch the holy virgin, began to cry out with a loud voice:

11. These words of Chrysostom are contained in the homily on the man born blind.

12. St. Ambrose, the holy Bishop of Milan, is known for his victorious struggle against the Arians and for his care for the welfare of his flock. He reposed in 397. His memory is celebrated on 7 December. St. Thecla is mentioned in the second book On Virginity.

– Great is the God whom Thecla confesses!

The tormentor, however, not knowing the power of God, wished to destroy Thecla by another means: he commanded that a deep pit be dug, filled with various reptiles, serpents and vipers, and that the saint be cast into it. But He who once shut the mouths of the lions, now also blunted the stings of the serpents, restrained their fury and destroyed their poison: the saint came out of the pit unharmed, so that all marveled at such a miracle. For a long time the wicked tormentor did not know what else to undertake; at last he commanded that two strong bulls be brought, that Thecla be bound between them by the feet, and that the bulls be goaded with burning sticks, so that, running off in different directions, they would tear her to pieces. But even after this the saint remained unhurt, for when she was bound with strong cords to the bulls and they began to goad the bulls with red-hot iron, the cords tore like cobwebs, the bulls ran away, and the saint remained in the same place, suffering no harm whatever. Then the prince himself, marveling at what had happened, recognized in the maiden the power of God, and calling Thecla, asked her:

– Who are you? And what power do you have, that nothing can harm you?

She answered:

– I am the servant of the Living God!

And she said nothing more. The prince, fearing God, who keeps Thecla from every harm, commanded that she be honorably clothed in a garment and released, pronouncing this sentence: "Thecla, the servant of God, I release into freedom."

The saint went to the house of Tryphena, and there was great joy in the whole house of Tryphena at Thecla's deliverance. Remaining there for some time, Thecla preached the word of God and taught many to believe in Christ. She greatly desired to see Paul, her father and teacher, and, having found him, wished to follow him; but he did not permit her, saying:

– No one goes out to the contest with the bride.

Then she, receiving the blessing of the Apostle, went to Seleucia[13], and settled in the wilderness on a mountain near Seleucia; laboring there in fasting, prayer and contemplation of God, she worked many miracles and healed every kind of sickness. The inhabitants of the surrounding places, learning of this, came to her and brought their sick, whom St. Thecla taught to believe in the Lord our Jesus Christ, and healed. Once a pagan priest, riding on horseback from Seleucia, passed by the place where the saint lived. Seeing Thecla, who was at that time gathering herbs for her food, he was captivated by her beauty and was inflamed with an impure desire: striking his horse, he rushed upon her to accomplish his evil intent. But the saint, strengthened by the power of God, seized him, threw him down, and struck him against the earth so hard that he lay for three days mute and motionless. Those who passed by, seeing that the priest lay as if dead, wondered what had befallen him. On the third day this became known in the city as well; then a multitude of people came from there to look at what had happened to him and to take him home. The priest, as soon as he came to himself, at once rose to his feet and said:

– I saw a certain goddess, and from her I suffered this.

Only with great difficulty, suffering much pain, could he reach his home. Summoning a painter, he commanded him to depict on a board a maiden of eighteen years. When the painter began to work, then by the providence of God he succeeded in portraying very well the likeness of St. Thecla: the image was extremely lifelike; having finished his work, the man brought the icon to the priest; the latter, seeing so true a likeness, said:

– Just such a maiden did I see!

Taking the icon, he kissed it, and at once was completely healed; and this image of St. Thecla he afterward kept honorably in his house; then, through the preaching of the holy virgin, he believed in Christ together with his whole household. The Equal-to-the-Apostles Thecla lived for a long time in that region, instructing many on the path of salvation, helping many in their misfortunes, and healing many infirmities.

13. Seleucia lies south of Lycaonia and north of Antioch.

The physicians and sorcerers in Seleucia saw that everyone who fell ill with any sickness went not to them but straight to Thecla, so that their crafty devices came to an end. Losing their profits, they grew poor; therefore they were greatly grieved and began to rage against the good healer Thecla, who healed without reward all who came to her. Moved by envy and anger, they plotted to incite certain depraved youths to dishonor her by force; the haters spoke among themselves thus:

– Thecla the maiden is pure, and therefore pleasing to the great goddess Artemis; the goddess hears her petitions and gives her power to heal the sick. But if she is defiled, Artemis will turn away from her; her healing power will be taken from her, and then again the art of our medicine will be exalted.

Reasoning thus, they sought to find shameless youths for such a vile deed, and, plying them with wine, persuaded them to go and dishonor Thecla. At the same time they gave them much money and promised to give more if they fulfilled their request. Mad and unbelieving, they did not know that Thecla heals every sickness and every disease not by the power of Artemis, but by the grace of Christ!

The debauched youths, having drunk their fill of wine, obeyed the physicians and sorcerers; they hastened toward Thecla, inflamed with lust and full of foul thoughts and evil intent.

Seeing them, Thecla asked:

– Children! What do you want?

They began to speak shameful words in reply. Hearing this, and understanding their evil intent, St. Thecla fled from them; she who had never feared wild beasts took flight from shameless men. They pursued Thecla and chased her as wolves chase a sheep; when they were already overtaking her, she prayed to God that He would deliver her from the hands of the lawless. Immediately the stone mountain that was in that place, by God's command, opened, received the saint into its bosom, and protected her virginity. That mountain became the tomb of her honorable body: there she committed her soul into the hands of God. The years of her life were ninety. Now she, in endless life, glorifies Christ God, the Giver of Life, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Having been instructed in the words of Paul, O God-espoused Thecla, and having been established in faith by Peter, thou didst appear as the God-called first martyr and first-suffering among women. Thou didst go up into the flame as into a place of flowering, the beasts and the bulls were affrighted at thee, for thou wast armed with the Cross: wherefore, O all-praised one, entreat Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Thou didst shine forth with the goodness of virginity, and wast adorned with the crown of martyrdom; O maiden, thou wast entrusted to apostleship as most glorious; and the flame of fire thou didst turn into dew; and the fury of the bulls thou didst restrain by thy prayer, O first-suffering one.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Coprius

Память преподобного Коприя

St. Coprius was born on a dunghill[14] near the walls of the monastery of the Venerable Theodosius the Great, the founder of the common life. His mother fled from the pursuit of the Agarenes together with many others, seeking protection at the walls of the Venerable's monastery. When the Agarenes withdrew, the monks came out of the monastery and found a newborn infant on the dunghill. By the command of their abbot, the great Theodosius, they took the infant and named him Coprius. The child was nourished with goat's milk. To this end the monks deliberately chose a particular goat from the flock. Every time the infant asked for food, that goat would separate itself from the flock of sheep among which it grazed, come down from the mountain, and after feeding the infant would return again to the flock. She did this until the infant began to take solid food. When the young Coprius came of age, the Venerable Theodosius the Great especially

14. The name Coprius is Greek, from *kopra* – a dunghill, a heap of manure.

loved him. By his pious life he soon became a dwelling of the Holy Spirit; even wild beasts obeyed him. Once he saw in the monastery garden a bear devouring the vegetables; the saint took the beast and led it out of the garden, forbidding it ever to enter there again. Another time he was climbing a mountain together with a donkey, to bring firewood to the monastery. As he began to gather the wood, the bear bit the donkey in the thigh. Then St. Coprius laid the firewood on the bear and said to it:

– You must now work until the donkey recovers.

The bear obeyed him and carried wood and water until the donkey recovered; only then did the Venerable forgive the beast.

For some time St. Coprius served in the monastery kitchen; once the food in the cauldron began to boil and run over. Finding no spoon nearby, the Venerable began to skim off the foam with his bare hand, then stirred the food in the cauldron with the same hand and so stopped the boiling, and he himself remained completely unharmed. The Venerable attained the age of ninety and shone among the monks like the sun. He was deemed worthy of holy orders and was adorned with every virtue; often withdrawing to a solitary place, he prayed fervently to God. The Venerable Theodosius the Great, who had by then already died, sometimes appeared to him, and standing beside him sang prayers together with him. Appearing to him for the last time, he said to him:

– Behold, Coprius, the time has come for you to leave temporal life; come to us, to the place of rest prepared for you.

Soon after this vision the wondrous ascetic, having been ill for a short time and bidding farewell to the ascetics, reposed in the Lord[15].

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Nicander of Pskov

Житие преподобного отца нашего Никандра Псковского

In the days of the Grand Prince of Moscow Basil Ioannovich,[16] in the Pskov region, amid a wild and marshy countryside, in the village of Videlebye, there lived a pious man named Philip. Both he and his

15. St. Coprius reposed around the year 530.
16. Prince Basil Ioannovich, 1505–1533.

wife Anastasia led a God-pleasing life; they often frequented the house of God, hearing the word of the Lord and being instructed in the commandments of Christ. Their eldest son Arsenius, constantly seeing before him the pious example of his parents, left the worldly vanity and received the monastic tonsure. But even more renowned for his ascetic labors and miracles was his brother Nikon, who afterwards became our Venerable Father Nicander.

Nikon was born in 1507, and the grace of God rested upon him from his earliest years; even in his youth he asked his parents to give him over to instruction in the Divine Scripture. Often visiting the church dedicated to the great saint of God Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, and hearing of the miracles of this glorious ascetic, the youth Nikon, from his early years, was kindled with the desire to follow Christ. The quiet monastic life of his brother Arsenius, devoted to labor and prayer, also greatly appealed to him. The example of the recently departed Venerable Sabbas and Euphrosynus of Pskov, who had shone forth by their ascetic labors and miracles, strengthened the youth in his purpose. Nikon wished to venerate the incorrupt relics of these saints of God and to visit the places near Pskov where they had labored. The holy youth often and fervently prayed to the Creator that He would deliver him from the destructive worldly vanity and make him worthy of His eternal kingdom. Nikon loved neither the games proper to his youthful age nor fine garments; he took no part in idle conversations, always wore plain clothing, and loved spiritual poverty and purity of heart. He constantly waged war with the enemy of the human race, thus preparing himself for future, still greater spiritual labors. Meanwhile, by the will of God, his father died. The seventeen-year-old youth, burning with a strong desire to serve the Lord, with tears and humility persuaded his mother to distribute part of the property to the needy, and to give part to the churches of God, and to leave this vain world. Coming to a women's monastery, Anastasia received the tonsure there and soon passed into eternal life, where the virtuous and pious have been predestined from eternity to receive the unfading crown. Then Nikon set out for the city of Pskov, visited all the churches and monasteries there, also went round the neighboring monasteries, and at

last reached those places which had been made famous by the ascetic labors of Sts. Euphrosynus and Sabbas. The pious youth rejoiced greatly that the Lord had led him to venerate the relics of these saints of His, which he had long desired, and he became still more strengthened in spirit for the labor that lay before him. Only one thing grieved Nikon deeply: that he had not been fully well taught in the Divine Scripture. Therefore the young ascetic fervently besought the Lord, the Teacher of all, to enlighten the eyes of his mind. And so, guided by the Holy Spirit, he again set out for Pskov; there a pious man named Philip met Nikon and took him into his house to work. Seeing Nikon's great desire to understand the Holy Scripture, Philip gave him over to be taught by a certain deacon who was renowned for his learning and wisdom. The saint prayed often and diligently, saying:

"Guide me, O Lord, in Thy truth, and teach me to understand Thy words."

And the Lover of mankind, God, heard the fervent prayer of His humble servant: He opened to Nikon the knowledge of the Divine Scripture, poured out His grace upon him, and bestowed on him the spirit of understanding, so that all marvelled how quickly and how well Nikon learned the Scripture. As fire purifies gold, so misfortunes purify and still more exalt a man. The ancient envier of the human race, the devil, unable to endure the pious life of the venerable one, stirred up against him certain evil men; but the holy Nikon, according to the commandment of Christ, bore all the assaults with prayer and thanksgiving, and by his humility overcame those who rose against him.

Once, while praying in the church, the venerable one heard the words of the Gospel: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Mt. 11:28–30). These words struck Nikon, and he resolved to carry out his cherished desire without delay. For a long time he had heard of a certain desert place, remote from villages and hamlets, between Pskov and Porkhov,[17]

17. Now a district town of the Pskov province.

amid wild forests and impassable marshes; but Nikon knew of no man who could point out the place to him precisely. Desiring to fulfil in deed the words spoken by the Holy Spirit through the righteous prophet and king David: "Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness; I would hasten to escape from the windy storm and tempest" (Ps. 54:8–9), the humble ascetic fervently besought the Lord, saying:

"O Lord and Master of my life, Jesus Christ, Son of God, hear my prayer, vouchsafe me to see the desert, send me a man who may guide me on the path of salvation and show me that secluded place."

The saint's prayer was heard, and, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, he set out from Pskov for his native village of Videlebye. Here Nikon learned that a man named Theodore knew of that place. Coming to Theodore, the venerable one began to beg him:

"From my youth I have heard of a desert place, but there was no man who could point it out to me. You know that place; for the sake of the great Name of God, show it to me; for this you yourself will receive a reward from the Lord, and you will be a guide to my sinful soul."

Seeing Nikon's so strong desire, the pious man Theodore secretly from others led him into the desert. Having built a small hut, the two of them settled here and began to labor in toil and prayer. After some time the venerable one returned to Pskov in order, as was his custom, to hear the Divine Liturgy in the church of the holy and glorious Epiphany; in this church a voice spoke to Nikon from the sanctuary:

"Nikon, Nikon, My servant, go into the desert shown to you by the pious man Theodore, and there you shall find rest for yourself. Through you that desert shall flourish, and many shall be saved there; those who come there shall receive grace and shall glorify My Name."

The venerable one at once went out of the church in spiritual joy and set off for the place shown him by the Lord Himself. On the way Nikon met the blessed Nicholas of Pskov;[18] he foretold that various temptations from demons and assaults from evil men awaited the ascetic in the desert; but nothing could restrain Nikon. Rejoicing, like a warrior going into battle, the venerable one returned to his desert and

18. Blessed Nicholas of Pskov reposed on 28 February 1576.

labored there for fifteen years in toil, prayer, fasting, reading of the Divine Scripture, constant vigilance, and endured much from demons and evil men.

Meanwhile the report of his ascetic deeds began to spread, and the surrounding inhabitants began to flock to him. This was burdensome to the humble ascetic: he looked for his reward not from men but from God, and earthly glory was a weight to him. And so, with tears and great sorrow, not wishing to leave this place yet wishing to flee from men's praise, the saint went again to Pskov. Here he was taken into the house of that Philip with whom the venerable one had lived during his studies; learning that Nikon was firmly resolved to dedicate himself to God, Philip led the blessed one to the monastery of St. John the Theologian, where the relics of the founder of this monastery, the Venerable Sabbas of Krypetsy, rested. Beholding the icon of this ascetic of God and falling before the reliquary of his relics, Nikon began to pray thus:

"Venerable saint of God, Sabbas, pray to the Lord Christ that He may vouchsafe me, a sinful and unworthy servant of His, to walk the path along which thou didst walk, and that He may help me in this course and be my intercessor."

After this Nikon, with humility and tears, began to implore the abbot of this monastery to accept him among the brethren. But the abbot held him back, saying:

"Our monastery is poor, and you yourself are not strong in health; do not lay upon yourself so heavy a burden. You may live with us, but do not hasten to accept the monastic tonsure."

But Nikon begged for only one thing: that his request be granted. Then the abbot, seeing such zeal in the saint, such an irresistible desire to take up the monastic life, was at last obliged to yield to the great entreaties of the saint: he commanded one of the hieromonks to tonsure Nikon, and he was given the name Nicander.

Then the Venerable Nicander, with renewed strength, set himself to his labours, and advanced more and more in the virtues, bearing fruit a hundredfold to the Lord. Burning with love for Christ, he entirely renounced his own will, surrendered himself wholly to God, and became a fit temple of the All-Holy Spirit. He constantly strengthened himself

with such pious reflections: the monastic life is like a field of wheat, which requires frequent rain of tears and great diligence. If thou wishest to bring forth abundant fruit, and not thorns, then be sober in mind and labour. Strive to be good soil and not stony ground, so that the seed sown from on high in thy heart may bring forth fruit, and not wither in the heat of dejection and negligence. Nourishing his soul with such salutary reflections, and granting it spiritual delight through prayer, the Venerable Nicander strove to weaken his flesh; remembering always the words of David, "Look upon mine affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins" (Ps. 24:18), the Venerable never ceased from bodily labour. The brethren and the abbot marvelled at the life and exploits of the Saint, and glorified God, who sends such ascetics. The two aforementioned men, Philip and Theodore, followed the example of the Saint and received the tonsure in the same monastery; the first was named Philaret, and the second Theodosius; after some time both of them peacefully departed to eternal life.

Meanwhile the Venerable Nicander, observing that his ascetic life was arousing the wonder of the brethren, began to be burdened by life among the monks: the glory of men was heavy to him. Fleeing the praises of the brethren, and longing for his former eremitic life, he went off to his desert, and there lived yet another full fifteen years; he often fed on herbs alone, called "ush",[19] he ceaselessly prayed and laboured, and in every way cared for the salvation of his soul. His very life was often exposed to danger. Thus once evil men, at the instigation of the devil, attacked the poor hut of the Saint, carried off the hermit's meagre belongings, took from him his last consolation, the holy icons and books, and grievously wounded him in the ribs with a spear, leaving him barely alive. By God's help, the Saint rose and began to pray thus:

"O Lord my God, Jesus Christ, strength and might of those who trust in Thee! Undeservedly Thou, the Sinless One, didst accept voluntary suffering at the hands of the Jews; but I, Thy unworthy servant, have endured all this most justly, for my countless sins. I thank Thee for all, and with tears and a tender heart I pray to Thee for these men:

19. *Uzh* or *uzhevnik* – wild mustard; another name for this plant is *brylena*.

forgive them, for they know not what they do; they are not to blame, but the enemy, the sower of all evil, has moved them to this deed. Suffer them not, O Lord, to perish because of me, a sinner: in ignorance have they done this."

The Lord, swift to help, miraculously granted healing to His humble servant, and the robbers were also punished. At a distance of a verst and a half from the Saint's cell lay Lake Demyanovo, into which the river Demyanka flows; by God's permission, the robbers lost their way on the shores of this lake; for three days they wandered, vainly seeking the road and suffering greatly from hunger. Two of them repented of their transgression and began to say to their companions:

"It is for this that we cannot find the road: that we acted unjustly, stealing the Saint's belongings and inflicting grievous wounds upon him."

But the other two fell into complete despair and began to say:

"He could not even defend himself."

But the All-Seeing God heard these words and punished those who reviled the holy man: crossing the river Demyanka, they slipped from the footbridge and drowned. Seeing this, the remaining two were struck with fear and began to pray to the Lord that He would forgive their sin. Their prayer was heard, and they soon found the way to Nicander's hut. Returning to the Venerable all that they had taken, they, with bitter weeping and sobbing, threw themselves prostrate before the Saint, begging him to forgive them and to pray to the Lord for them. The Venerable Nicander received the penitents with fatherly love, forgave them, fed them, and urged them to abandon their evil purpose, pointing out that the enemy of mankind had prompted them to walk this perilous path; and he dismissed them in peace. Returning safely home, they told everyone of what had befallen them, glorifying at the same time the merciful God and His servant, the Venerable Nicander. From that time the fame of the Saint grew still greater; many began to come to the Venerable, bringing him food and asking for his blessing.

Nicander spent many years in the desert and endured much labour there, but earthly glory, which frightened him more than anything, remained heavy and unbearable to him. He feared the praise of men more

than he feared the robbers. Therefore the Venerable again left the desert and went to the Krypetsky Monastery, where he received the monastic tonsure. Having arrived at the monastery, the Saint continued his ascetic life; he fed only on dry bread, quenched his thirst with plain water, did not partake of wine or fish, and only on Saturdays and Sundays allowed himself a little cooked food, and even that was often lacking; this humble ascetic surpassed all in the monastery by his virtuous and strict life. He was always ready to render service and help to all, carried water and firewood from afar, spent his nights in constant vigil, and often at night went out into the forest and, stripping his body, let the gnats and horseflies sting it, so that it was covered with streams of blood; meanwhile he himself sat motionless, spinning wool and chanting the Psalms of David. When morning came, the Venerable returned to the monastery, first hastened to the church, where he stood through the whole service without leaving his place, and was the last to leave the church. The brethren, marvelling at his exploits, appointed him sexton. The difficult and burdensome obedience of baking the prosphora was laid upon the Saint, but the Venerable Nicander performed this labour with joy, saying:

"If our Lord Jesus Christ called bread, prepared for the mystical supper, His Body, then I ought to rejoice that God has deigned to make me the preparer of such loaves, upon which a great and awesome mystery is accomplished: in a wondrous and incomprehensible manner they are changed into the holy Body of Christ."

And the servant of God continued to labour unceasingly. The brethren, seeing his growing zeal and loving him for his humility and meekness, asked the abbot to make Nicander the cellarer.[20] The abbot granted the brethren's request and appointed the Venerable to the office of cellarer; the holy man, in this elevation, did not change his former life, but performed his new duty with humility of mind and zeal, as though it were a task entrusted to him by the Lord Himself. He was not puffed up by the authority given to him, but always remembered the words of Scripture: "Whoever would be great among you, let him be

20. The *cellarer* (from the Greek *kellarios*) was obliged to keep the monastery's provisions.

your servant" (Mt. 20:26). But Saint Nicander was not long cellarer: he feared to cause offence to anyone in his new office; moreover, he longed for his former eremitic life, and therefore resolved to leave the monastery again. Going out of the monastery, he settled on an island four versts from the monastery; here the Saint again devoted himself to his usual labours, and spent three and a half years in them. The fame of the hermit's ascetic life began to draw many people to him, which again burdened Nicander. Meanwhile the enemy and envier of men, the devil, the father of lies and untruth, put into the mind of the abbot of the Krypetsky Monastery the thought that Nicander was diminishing the monastery's revenues. Therefore he asked the Venerable to move to some other place. With the greatest humility the Saint fulfilled the wish of the abbot, who had unjustly accused him: he again set out for the desert that the Holy Spirit had previously shown him.

During his journey the Venerable Nicander arrived at a village, Lokoty; the day was already drawing towards evening, and the Saint stopped to spend the night at the house of a peasant, and at that time a feast was taking place in the peasant's house. This happened to fall on the Monday of Cheesefare week, when the Saint, according to his custom, was keeping the fast. The peasant offered Nicander food, but the blessed one refused to accept it. The enemy of human salvation, however, planned to mock the Saint: shortly before the holy man's arrival in the village, he had put into the minds of certain evil men the thought of plundering the house of one of the peasants of that village; so they did: they attacked his house, plundered it, and set it on fire. Therefore the peasant who had received the Saint, offended by the Venerable's refusal, began to say:

"Probably you too are one of those men who burned my neighbour's house; and I suppose you have planned something similar against me, since you will not touch my food."

He told his neighbours of this; they, gathering together, began mercilessly to beat the Saint with cudgels all over his body and about his head. But Christ our Saviour did not permit the Saint to suffer long, nor to perish by the demonic plot; but soon, through the prayers of our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, He delivered

him from his torment: the groans of Saint Nicander and the cries of those who were beating him were heard by people passing by; coming up, they began to say:

"This old man has done you no harm; what are you doing, madmen, do you wish to put an innocent man to death?"

Those men were ashamed and besought the Saint to forgive them; they also offered him whatever food he wished; but the Saint refused to partake, and thus prayed for those who had tormented him:

"O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, do not reckon this to them as sin: they know not what they do."

It was only the next morning that Nikandr ate a little bread, and then, humbly forgiving from his whole heart the villagers who in ignorance had beaten him, he set out on his way. Once, during his further journey, the saint, growing weary, lay down and began to drift into slumber; suddenly he saw that two huge and powerful wolves were ready to fall upon him. Rising, the saint made the sign of the Cross over himself and, striking the ground with his staff, said:

"Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity" (Ps. 6:9).

And the beasts immediately vanished. Arriving at his desert, the saint again devoted himself to ascetic labors, and for a full fifteen years he lived there. He endured many afflictions from demons and from evil men, but by his unceasing prayers and tearful lamentations over his sins he overcame and defeated their guile, adorning his soul as with bright pearls through his labors, and he always edified himself with soul-profitable reflections.

Great are the benefactions of God our Creator. He not only glorified His servant in heaven after his repose, but even during his life bestowed upon him the gift of clairvoyance, as is seen from the following. A certain man named Peter, surnamed Yesyukov, who lived twelve versts from the saint's hut, grieved deeply that he had no children. And one day an elk ran right up to Peter's courtyard. This happened not by chance, but by the providence of God, for the Gospel says: "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house" (Mt. 5:14). Thus the merciful Lord pointed out the Ven-

erable Nicander by means of the elk. Mounting his horse, Peter together with his men pursued the beast; his companions gradually fell behind, so that at last he was left alone. For a long time Peter pursued the animal, which tried to hide in the forest; riding into a remote, impassable thicket, Peter lost sight of the elk. At that very moment he noticed a small hut; thinking that someone lived there, Peter knocked at the door with the words:

"Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us."

But there was no answer; only after the third time (such was the saint's custom) did the door open, and Nicander met Peter, who had never seen the Venerable before, with the words:

"My son Peter, go to the oak, where a shelter has been arranged for those who come; I will come there presently."

Arriving at the indicated place, Peter soon saw a comely elder approaching him; he bowed to him and asked his blessing.

"May the blessing of the Lord be upon you and upon your wife," answered the elder.

Peter thought to himself:

"Truly the grace of God dwells in this man; truly he is filled with the Holy Spirit, for although he has never once seen me, he knows both my name and that I am married."

Bowing to the elder to the ground, Peter asked what his name was and how long he had lived in the desert.

"My name is Nicander, a sinner, but as to the years of my dwelling here, do not ask me; only God knows that," humbly replied the elder.

Then Peter, falling on his knees before the saint, began to complain bitterly of his misfortune:

"Already I am old, and yet I have no son."

To this the Venerable Nicander answered:

"Rise, child, and return to your house; through the prayers of the Most Holy Theotokos a son will be born to you."

And indeed the saint's prediction was fulfilled. From then on Peter often came to the Venerable and was nourished by his soul-profitable instructions.

Once the servant of God said to him:

"After my departure into eternal life, this desert place will be exalted and glorified; over the grave where my sinful body will be laid, a church will be erected in honor of the glorious Annunciation of our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos."

On another occasion there came to Nicander a certain man named Simeon, desiring to receive the saint's blessing and instruction. The Venerable, perceiving by his insight that Simeon's death was near at hand, said:

"Child Simeon, the time of your life is growing short," and, giving him scissors, he continued:

"Go to whatever monastery the Lord shows you and take the monastic habit, for the end of your life is approaching."

Hearing this, Simeon went to one of the monasteries, received the tonsure there, and soon, having partaken of the Holy Mysteries of Christ, departed in peace into eternal life.

Meanwhile, people, having heard of the ascetic life of the Venerable Nicander, began more and more often to come to him. When they approached his cell quietly, they could hear the saint praying and see that he often made prostrations to the ground. As soon as the saint noticed their approach, he pretended to be asleep. When the visitor knocked at his door with the words, "Bless, father," Nicander remained silent; he did not answer the second time either. Only after the third time, as though rising from sleep, did the saint answer:

"May our Lord Jesus Christ bless you, child."

In such labors the saint spent all his days and nights. The blessed one never lay down to sleep; but if sleep overcame him, he would drowse sitting up, and only for a short while, after which he again began to pray. His disregard for the flesh went so far that Nicander washed only his hands and face with water; he fed mostly on plants. When pious people brought him bread, the Venerable accepted the offering with thanksgiving; then he let the bread dry and in that state ate it at sunset; he quenched his thirst with water. Although he led so severe a life, his face could never be seen gloomy, but always shone with joy and tranquility. Throughout the whole of the Great Lent the saint ate only once a week; and on Great Friday he went to the Demy-

ansk Monastery, where, having partaken of the awesome and life-giving Mysteries of Christ, he returned again to his desert, considering himself unworthy to be counted among the brethren of that monastery. Only God knows the toils and struggles which Saint Nicander endured in the desert. Often evil spirits appeared to disturb the Venerable and even inflicted wounds upon him, as was the case also with Saint Anthony of Egypt[21]. To strengthen His ascetic, the Lord sent him in a vision the Venerable Alexander of Svir; this servant of God encouraged Nicander for the battle with invisible enemies. The Gospel says that this kind is cast out by nothing but prayer and fasting; with this weapon also the Venerable Nicander gained the victory over the prince of darkness. But he had to struggle a long time with the spirits of malice: every time Nicander wished to rest from his labors, such a clamor arose around his cell that it seemed as if a multitude of chariots were passing, or the playing of timbrels and pipes could be heard[22]. Then the Venerable would begin to read the Psalms of David, and the noise would cease; so for a long time, by day and by night, the evil spirits did not allow the saint to rest, until by the grace of God he finally overcame them completely. Once a large bear came to the saint's cell and began to rub against it with such force that the cell shook and was ready to collapse. Making the sign of the Cross over the little window of his cell and making the sign of the Cross over himself, the saint looked out and saw a large beast standing by the cell. Then the Venerable, once more signing himself with the Cross, went out of the cell and made the sign of the cross over the beast. As though struck by some invisible power, the bear fell before the saint, began to lick gently his honorable feet, and then withdrew into the forest. And again on another occasion the Venerable Alexander of Svir appeared to him in the vestibule of the cell; encouraging him to his labors, he said:

"Fear not, my brother Nicander: from this time the Lord will deliver you from all the snares of the enemy."

21. The memory of the Venerable Anthony the Great, who valiantly waged battle against the spirits of wickedness, is celebrated on 17 January.

22. The *tympanum* is a musical instrument covered with leather and consisting of two metal plates, with rattles attached at the sides. The *svirel* is a wind instrument.

From that time the saint acquired such power over the demons that they did not even dare to approach his cell.

A certain man named Nazarius, who lived not far from the Venerable's cell, fell into a grievous illness: worms covered his whole body, and especially a large sore opened on his chest, so that the internal organs could be seen; the sick man could not move without terrible pain. Nazarius suffered from this grievous illness for a year and six months. His household, seeing that Nazarius had fallen into such an incurable disease, wept, not knowing how to relieve the sufferer's torments. Nazarius, however, having heard of the miracles and the ascetic life of Saint Nicander, ordered his household to carry him to the Venerable; they did as Nazarius asked, and, bringing him, laid the sufferer before the hermit's cell. When Nicander came out of his dwelling, Nazarius, gathering all his strength, began to embrace and bathe with tears the saint's feet, and to beg the blessed one to pray to the Lord for him. The Venerable answered:

"Nazarius, do not touch my feet; in vain you kiss them, in vain you ask me for healing, for your healing is impossible for man but possible for God; it is He whom one must ask in faith for healing." Hearing this, the sick man marveled that the Venerable knew his name, although he had never seen him before; therefore he begged him all the more earnestly.

"And if you, Father," added Nazarius, "leave me, I will not depart from this place, and I will die before your cell."

Then the Venerable, seeing Nazarius's fervent faith, ordered that he be carried into the shelter for travelers and told him to try to fall asleep there. But the sick man answered:

"Holy Father, throughout my whole illness I have not once been able to close my eyes; how then do you advise me now to sleep?"

To this Nikandr said:

I had already heated that room before your arrival, for I knew that you would come to me. Now, while I go to pray, try to fall asleep; afterwards you will show me your wounds.

Nazarius wished to uncover his sore at once, but could not, for his shirt had stuck to his body so firmly that it could not be pulled off. See-

ing this, the saint made the sign of the Cross over the wound and sent Nazarius to the appointed place, where he soon fell into a deep sleep. The Venerable Father himself, shut up in his cell, prayed fervently the whole night that the Lord, the One Healer of all who suffer, would grant health to the sick man and at the same time enlighten the eyes of his soul and strengthen him in the faith. The Lord, swift to help all who call upon His holy name in faith, heard the prayer of His servant. In the morning Nazarius awoke and felt himself completely healed; at once he rose to his feet; the scab came away together with the shirt, like bark from a tree. Then he began to give fervent thanks to God, who had granted him healing, and to glorify His saint, Nicander. The Venerable Father, however, not desiring glory from men, forbade him to tell of what had happened, "lest something worse befall you," he added.

On another occasion a peasant named Simeon Vasilyev, a man of Prince Kostrov, came to Nicander and bitterly complained to the Venerable Father that his horse had been stolen. The saint, hearing this, sighed deeply. Simeon went on complaining and said that five days had already passed since that time. Then Nicander, with great humility and meekness, began to speak:

"It is not for the horse, my son, that one should grieve because it was stolen; no, one must grieve not for what was stolen but for the one who stole it, for the man did this at the prompting of the devil."

Simeon, astonished, remarked to him:

"So, Father, you grieve for the man who committed the theft?"

Then Nicander answered:

"Child Simeon, go to your house; what was taken from you will be returned."

The saint's words came true: that very night the horse came running home by itself. Simeon came to the Venerable Father a second time, gave thanks to him, and told what had happened.

"And the man who stole my horse," he added, "has drowned in the river."

Hearing this, Nicander grew sorrowful and instructed Simeon thus:

"My son, one must grieve for Christians whom death overtook before they had time to repent of their sins; and for this man one must pray, for the Lord has said: 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish' (Lk. 13:3)."

The Venerable Father spoke for a long time, and by his instructions, filled with love, he enlightened the eyes of Simeon's soul. The latter began to glorify the Lord even more fervently, who had sent such a saint of His to earth.

Meanwhile the Venerable Nicander, seeing that the end of his earthly life was drawing near, began to prepare himself to enter the Kingdom of Heaven adorned with all the virtues. Day and night he prayed and asked the All-merciful Lord to forgive him his transgressions. Not content with the usual severity of his life, he resolved to become like the Angels and to take upon himself the Great Schema. For this purpose the Venerable Father went to the Demyansk Monastery, and there he received the Great Tonsure from the hand of the abbot. This was eight years before his death; after this the saint again settled in his solitude.

At that time a deacon from the town of Porkhov, named Peter, often came to the Venerable Father. The saint conversed with him at length about Holy Scripture, the faith of Christ, and the Christian virtues. Once Nicander told Peter of a miracle that had happened to him:

"I formerly suffered much and severely in my legs, but now, by the mercy of God, I have been freed from the sickness."

Looking at the saint's legs, Peter saw that all his shins were bared of their bodily covering, and he was greatly struck by it. On another occasion Nicander said to Peter:

"Soon the Lord will call my sinful soul to Himself. When you learn of my death, come and bury my mortal body."

"Will what you speak of happen soon?" asked Peter. "And how will you let me know of what has occurred?"

"I do not know how I shall inform you, for at that time there will be war: then Polish and Lithuanian troops will come here and besiege Pskov and Porkhov. But when you hear of my departure to God, bury my body fearlessly in the place where you find it, and over my grave a

church shall be erected in honor of the great and glorious Annunciation."

Thus Nicander was peacefully preparing to leave this temporal world. Forty-seven years and two months after the Venerable Father had last settled in his solitude, he fell into a bodily illness. Soon the saint felt the approach of death, and with tears he began to beseech the Lord to grant him forgiveness of all his transgressions, invoked in prayer all the saints, and committed his desert dwelling-place to the care of the Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos. Then the Venerable Nicander lay down on his bed, folded his hands crosswise, and, saying, "Blessed is God, who so willed; glory to Thee," he yielded up his spirit to the Lord.

Thus in peace fell asleep in the Lord this wondrous Father of ours, the Venerable Nicander, on 24 September 1582.

By God's permission, Stephen Báthory, King of Poland,[23] led his armies against the land of Rus'. The enemy besieged the cities of Pskov and Porkhov; throughout that whole region there were many Polish and Lithuanian people, so that the townsfolk could not go out beyond the city walls. At that time a certain peasant of the village of Borovichi, named John, nicknamed "the Long," came to the desert where the Venerable Father lived, in order to receive the saint's blessing. He knocked once, twice, a third time at the door of Nicander's cell, yet John still received no answering call from the ascetic. Then, entering the cell, he saw that the holy Nicander had departed to the Lord, and the whole hut was filled with an extraordinary fragrance. John, reverently taking up the honorable body of the saint, covered it with earth with heartfelt tenderness. Then, unnoticed by the Polish troops, through the prayers of the saint, he came to the town of Porkhov and told all the inhabitants of the Venerable Father's repose. At this news the townsfolk of Porkhov wept and grieved that they had lost so glorious an intercessor and advocate before God; they earnestly desired to go to the saint's burial, but feared the enemy. Then the deacon Peter, seeing the hesitation of his fellow citizens, addressed them with these words:

23. Stephen Báthory was King of Poland from 1576 to 1586.

"Brethren, listen to what I shall say to you concerning the newly-reposed Father Nicander, for I myself with my own eyes have seen the laborious and ascetic life of this elder. Human lips and tongue cannot describe all the virtues of this father. The Venerable Father himself foretold to me his departure to God; he foretold that his death would come during the invasion of the Lithuanian people. But you, do not be afraid or fearful; boldly go and give over to burial the honorable body of this ascetic, for the Venerable Father himself told me that the Lord God will not deliver you into the hands of the enemy, and evil shall not touch you."

By his speech Peter persuaded his fellow citizens to go fearlessly into the desert, where the servant of God had so zealously labored throughout his earthly life. Unhindered by anyone, all the citizens, laymen and clergy, men and women, elders and youths, came into the desert to the place where the body of the Venerable Father had been covered with earth, and they buried him with honor.

The Venerable Nicander lived seventy-five years and eight months. All the days of his life he faithfully and unhypocritically served the Lord, leaving us an example of a good and God-pleasing life. Let us also follow in his footsteps and constantly imitate this saint in patience and humility, that he may send down and give help and protection to all who call upon him in faith: "Venerable Father Nicander, pray to God for us."

In 1585 a certain monk, Isaiah, desiring to follow the example of the Venerable Nicander, came to the place where this servant of God had lived and labored. For a long time Isaiah suffered from an illness of the legs, and at last, through the prayers of the Venerable Father, he received healing from his infirmity. This Isaiah, on the site of the Venerable Nicander's labors, founded a monastery[24] and gathered in it a large brotherhood. At the earnest request of the brethren Isaiah accepted the abbacy, and he was raised to the priestly rank by Alexander, Bishop of Novgorod. The bishop took careful thought for the new monastery, provided it with funds, and ordered a church to be built over the

24. The Annunciation Nikandrov Hermitage, now outside the regular establishment, 20 versts from Porkhov.

grave of the Venerable Nicander in honor of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Hearing the divine voice in the Gospel, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," O Venerable Father Nicander, thou didst take up the cross and follow Christ: thou didst leave the world and dwell in the desert, and by fasting and vigil thou didst receive the heavenly gift. Thou healest the souls of the sick who come to thee in faith. Wherefore, O Venerable One, thy spirit rejoiceth with the Angels.

Kontakion, Tone 1:

Christ hath shown thee as a sunbeam, O Venerable One, for thou shinest with the grace of wonders in the Russian land, and thou drivest away the darkness of passions and sorrows from those who come to thee in faith. Wherefore we honor thy memory, our Father Nicander, and cry to thee: Rejoice, O beauty of the desert-dwellers, and praise and stay of our land.

* * *

THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 25

25 сентября

New Calendar September 25 · Old Calendar October 8 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Mother Euphrosyne

Житие преподобной матери нашей Евфросинии

I

n the city of Alexandria there once lived a man named Paphnutius. He was rich, renowned, and held in honor; he feared God, kept the commandments of the Lord, and lived a God-pleasing life. His wife was also a good, pious, and God-fearing woman. There was only one thing that weighed upon them: they had no children. They grieved greatly over this, for there was no one to whom they could leave their property, one who might manage it well after their death. Sorrowing over their childlessness, they ceaselessly besought the Lord to grant them a child; they gave generous alms to the poor, bestowed many gifts upon churches and monasteries, and moreover persisted in fasting and prayer, visited the houses of God, and asked God to fulfill their desire. Once Paphnutius set out for a certain monastery whose abbot, as he had heard, was distinguished by his holy life; to this monastery too he made a large donation. Conversing with the abbot, Paphnutius received consolation from him. Perceiving that this monk was pleasing to God, he confided to the abbot his sorrow, namely that he had no children. With a bow to the ground he asked the abbot to pray to God, together with his brethren, on his behalf, that the Lord might grant him a child. The most gracious God, who mercifully receives the prayers of all who fervently pray to Him and call upon Him, heeded the prayers of the abbot and blessed Paphnutius. After this the barrenness of his wife was lifted, and God gave them a daughter, very beautiful in appearance. The parents, filled with the greatest joy, offered thanks to God with their whole heart. At her baptism the infant was named Euphrosyne[1]. From that time Paphnutius began to visit that monastery often, distributed alms to all the monks, and cherished great love for that abbot for his beneficial conversation and also for the fact that, through his prayers, he had received from God what he desired. Twelve years after Euphrosyne's birth, her mother reposed into eternal life; Paphnutius, as before, continued to instruct his daughter in Divine Scripture. Having become skilled in it, the maiden devoted herself to diligent reading of the sacred books. Meanwhile the report of her prudence and beauty spread throughout all Alexandria. Therefore many of the noble and distin-

1. The Venerable Euphrosyne labored in the first half of the 5th century.

guished citizens wished to have her as wife for their sons, and vied with one another in hastening to declare their desire to her father. Paphnutius said:

"Let it be as it pleases the Lord!"

Among the suitors for Euphrosyne's hand there was one man who surpassed all others in nobility, rank, wealth, and renown. He entreated Paphnutius to give his daughter in marriage to his son, and Paphnutius agreed. Having come to terms, they set the time of the wedding.

Even before the marriage, Paphnutius went with his daughter to the monastery where the aforementioned abbot lived, whom he revered as a father, and said to him:

"I have brought to you, holy father, my daughter, the very one whom God granted me through your prayers; I ask you, pray for her, for I wish to give her in marriage."

The abbot blessed Euphrosyne and then began to converse with Paphnutius about the salvation of the soul, and he instructed his daughter in chastity, humility, the fear of God, and love for the Creator, and also exhorted her to give alms. All these words sank deeply into the heart of the wise and prudent maiden, who was then eighteen years old. Paphnutius spent three days with his daughter in the monastery guesthouse. During this time Euphrosyne listened daily to the reading and singing of the Church; she marveled as she beheld the ascetic labors of the monks, and said to herself:

"Blessed are these people, for they live here on earth as Angels, and in the life to come they will dwell together with the Angels."

She became greatly zealous to imitate their holy life. After three days had passed, Paphnutius said to the abbot:

"We wish to go to the city; release us in peace, honored father."

Euphrosyne, however, falling at the abbot's feet, said:

"I beg you, father, pray for me, that the Lord may save my soul."

The abbot blessed her and prayed for her to the Lord thus:

"O God, who knowest the destiny of every man even before his birth, grant Thy servant an equal reward and recompense with all who from of old have been well-pleasing to Thee."

After this, bowing to the abbot, Paphnutius and his daughter departed for the city. This righteous man so deeply honored the monastic order that whenever he met a monk anywhere on the road or in the city, he invited him to his home, hospitably entertained him, and asked him to pray to God for himself and for his daughter.

Soon there came the day of commemoration of the founder of that monastery, and the abbot sent one of the brethren to invite Paphnutius, the benefactor of the monastery, to that day. It so happened that the monk who was sent did not find Paphnutius at home; Euphrosyne, learning that a black-robed monk had come to their house, called him to her and began to question him about how many brethren there were in their monastery. He answered her:

"Three hundred and fifty-two persons."

Then she asked him:

"If someone should come to your monastery and wish to live with you, would your abbot receive him?"

To this the monk answered:

"Certainly, he would receive him gladly, remembering the words of the Lord: 'him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out' (Jn. 6:37)."

The maiden further put to him a question:

"Do you all sing together, and do you all fast alike?"

"Yes, we all sing together," the monk replied, "and each of us fasts as much as he wishes and is able."

Having learned from the monk everything about monastic life, the maiden said to him:

"I too would like to begin such a life, but I am afraid to disobey my father, for he wishes to give me in marriage, being carried away by the riches of this vain world."

The monk said to her:

"Do not desire a temporary and fleeting union with a mortal, but dedicate yourself to Christ: instead of all the passing and vain goods, He will grant you the Kingdom of Heaven and dwelling with the Angels. Leave your home secretly and go to the monastery, abandoning worldly garments, and clothe yourself in the monastic habit, so that you may not be recognized."

Saint Euphrosyne rejoiced on hearing these words of the monk, and asked him:

"Who will tonsure me?"

He answered her:

"Your father will go to our monastery and remain there three or four days, and in that time you should summon some monk: he will gladly fulfill your desire and tonsure you."

While they were thus conversing with each other, Paphnutius came in and, seeing the monk, asked him:

"What has moved you to come to us, father?"

The monk answered:

"The commemoration of the founder of our monastery is approaching, and the abbot asks you to come to us and take part in our feast; for this you will receive a blessing from God."

Paphnutius gladly agreed to go with the monk to the monastery, and took with him many gifts for the monastery church and brethren. In his absence his daughter, Saint Euphrosyne, called one of her faithful servants and said to him:

"Go to the monastery of the Venerable Theodosius, enter the church there, and summon to me the first monk you meet."

That servant, by a special providence of God, met a monk carrying his handiwork from the monastery for sale; he asked the monk to go with him to the house of his master, and the monk agreed. Euphrosyne, seeing the venerable monk, went out to meet him and bowed to him, asking him to pray for her. The monk prayed, blessed her, and they sat down. The holy maiden began to speak to him thus:

"Sir, my father is a Christian and a faithful servant of God; my mother is no longer living. My father, who has great wealth, wishes to marry me off so that his treasures will not be lost; I, however, would not wish to defile myself with worldly vanity, yet I fear to disobey my father, and therefore I do not know what to do. All the previous night I spent without sleep, beseeching God that He would send down His mercy upon me. And when morning came, I wished to summon to me one of the ascetic fathers, that I might hear from him a word of edifica-

tion and direction as to how I ought to act. I beg you, father, teach me the way of the Lord, for I know that you have been sent to me by God."

Then the elder began to instruct her thus:

"The Lord says in the holy Gospel: 'If any man cometh to Me, and hateth not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple' (Lk. 14:26). I do not know what more to tell you than this. If you can endure the struggle with the flesh, then leave everything and flee from this world, as Israel fled from the labors of Pharaoh. And the heirs of your father's wealth are very many: churches, monasteries, hospitals, hospices, orphans, widows, wanderers, those imprisoned in dungeons and taken captive. Your father may give his property to whomever he wishes; but as for you, take care of your own soul."

To this the maiden said to him:

"I place my hope in God and in your prayers, father, for I think, with help from on high, to dedicate myself to God."

"Do not delay in this purpose, my daughter," the elder answered her, "for whoever postpones the accomplishment of a God-pleasing ascetic labor usually later repents of such delay; now too is the time to repent."

Saint Euphrosyne said to the elder:

"For this very reason I asked you, father, to come to me; I wanted you to fulfill the desire of my heart, and, having prayed for me, to bless and tonsure me."

Then the elder rose, prayed, and, by the will of God, tonsured Euphrosyne into the monastic life, placing the schema upon her. At this he said to her:

"May God, who granted salvation to all His saints, keep you from all evil."

After this he departed for his monastery, rejoicing and glorifying God. Meanwhile Euphrosyne began to reflect in her heart:

"If I go to a convent for women, my father will find me there and force me to leave the monastery and enter into marriage. It is better for me to go to a men's monastery, where no one will recognize me."

Resolved to carry out her intention, she dressed in men's clothing late in the evening and left the house secretly, unknown to anyone, taking with her only fifty gold coins. She hid herself that night in a certain place. In the morning her father came into the city, and by the particular providence of God he went straight to the church. Euphrosyne, meanwhile, went to that monastery where her father was known. Approaching the gate of the monastery, she knocked and said to the doorkeeper:

"Go and tell the abbot that a eunuch[2] has come from the imperial palace, and is standing at the gate, wishing to speak with him."

When the abbot came out, Euphrosyne fell to the ground and bowed before him. He raised her up and offered the customary prayer, after which they both sat down. Then he began to question her:

"Why have you come to us, child?"

Euphrosyne answered him:

"Father, I served as a eunuch in the imperial palace, and I came to love the monastic life very much, but I did not find in the city what my soul was seeking. Having heard of the ascetic life of the monks of your monastery, I came to this holy abode, desiring to labor together with you."

To this the abbot replied:

"You have done well, child, in coming to us. If you wish to live in our monastery, then remain here."

Then he asked her name. Euphrosyne answered that her name was Smaragdus.

"Child Smaragdus," the superior said to her, "you are young, and therefore you cannot live alone in a cell; you need a spiritual guide, who will direct you in the monastic life and teach you the rule of the monastery and all its customs."

To this the maiden answered:

"Arrange my life, Father, as you think best."

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

At the same time she took out the fifty gold coins, gave them to the abbot, and said:

"Take these, Father, and afterward I will give to the monastery all my remaining property in the city."

The abbot called one of the monks, by name Agapitus, a man of holy life, and entrusted Smaragdus to him with these words:

"From now on let this youth be your spiritual son and disciple; instruct him in the virtues, so that he may surpass his teacher."

After fervent prayer with prostrations, the elder Agapitus took Smaragdus into his cell and instructed him in the monastic life. The new monk had a very beautiful face. When he came to the church for the services, the devil troubled many of the brethren with impure thoughts, wounding their hearts through the beauty of the new monk. Therefore the brethren complained against the abbot, saying:

"Why have you brought into the monastery such a handsome brother, to be a temptation to the weakest of the monks?"

Hearing this, the abbot called Smaragdus to him and said:

"Because the weakest of the brethren are tempted by your beauty, it is better for you to remain alone in your cell, laboring in silence and prayer, and not to come to the church. Your spiritual guide will bring food to your cell, so that you will have no need to go out anywhere."

Euphrosyne answered:

"As you command, Father, so I will do."

The abbot ordered Agapitus to prepare a secluded cell for Smaragdus. Agapitus carried out the abbot's will and led Smaragdus into that cell, where he spent his time in prayer, fasting and vigil, day and night serving God with a pure heart. The blessed Agapitus marveled at his struggles and labors, and related them to all the brethren for their edification. The brethren, for their part, were instructed by these ascetic labors and glorified God, who had granted such strength to the young ascetic.

Meanwhile Paphnutius, the father of Euphrosyne, on returning home, hastily entered his daughter's room and, not finding her there, began to grieve and sorrow greatly. With anger he questioned his male

and female slaves about what had happened to Euphrosyne and where she had gone. The servants answered him:

"Last evening we still saw her, but today she has not appeared to us, so we thought perhaps her betrothed's father had invited her to his house."

Paphnutius sent slaves to the house of his daughter's betrothed, but they did not find her there either. The bridegroom and his father, hearing of Euphrosyne's disappearance, were greatly saddened, and when they came to Paphnutius they found him lying on the ground in deep sorrow and weeping.

"Has someone seduced her, or has she run away with someone?" they asked him.

At once horsemen were sent throughout all Alexandria to search for Euphrosyne. They searched the houses of the neighbors, the roads, the shore of the sea and the ships; they went round many convents, the fields, deserts, mountains and caves, everywhere seeking the daughter of the grieving father. Finding her nowhere, the messengers returned in sorrow. And all wept for her as for one dead. The bridegroom wept for his bride, the father-in-law grieved for his daughter-in-law, and the father shed bitter tears for his daughter, as Jacob once did for Joseph, and he spoke such sorrowful words:

"Woe is me, my sweet child! Woe is me, light of my eyes! Woe is me, comfort of my soul! Who has stolen my treasure? Who has withered my branch? Who has extinguished my lamp? Who has taken away my hope? Who has dishonored my daughter? What wolf has torn my lamb? What place has hidden from me her bright face? She would have restored my family, been the staff of my old age, the consolation of my sorrows. Let not the earth conceal the body of mine until I learn what has become of my daughter Euphrosyne!"

All the friends and neighbors gathered at Paphnutius' house also lamented and wept aloud with him over the unexpected loss of his daughter. Finding no relief anywhere in his sorrow, Paphnutius went to the monastery where his daughter had been living in seclusion, and, falling at the feet of the abbot, said:

"Father, do not cease to pray to God that He may hear my prayers, for I do not know what has befallen my daughter — whether someone has taken her, or whether she has perished in some other way."

Hearing these words, the honorable elder was greatly troubled, and gathering all the brethren together, he said:

"Brethren, show love and pray to the Lord, that He may be pleased to reveal to us the fate of the daughter of our friend and benefactor Paphnutius."

For a whole week the monks fasted and prayed, but no revelation was granted to them, as had happened with their other petitions; for day and night Euphrosyne prayed to God that He would reveal nothing about her to anyone in this earthly life, and her prayers were stronger than the prayers of all the brethren.

Receiving no revelation about Euphrosyne, the abbot began to console Paphnutius with these words:

"Child, 'do not despise the chastening of the Lord... for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth' (Heb. 12:5, 6). If not one bird falls to the ground without the will of the Lord, how much less could anything have happened to your daughter without it. I think she has chosen the good part, and therefore God has not revealed her to us. If she had fallen into sin (God forbid!), God would not have disregarded the great prayerful labor of all the brethren of our monastery, but would have revealed her to us. I have hope that the Lord will reveal her to you even in this earthly life."

Paphnutius was somewhat comforted by these words and returned to his house, giving thanks to God. Every day he prayed diligently to the Lord and gave abundant alms to the poor. After some days he visited the monastery again and asked the brethren for their prayers. One day, meeting the abbot, he bowed to him and said:

"Pray for me, Father, for my sorrow over my daughter does not pass; my soul has found no consolation at all, the wound of my heart only grows, and with each day my grief becomes stronger."

The abbot, seeing his great sorrow, comforted him in every way; in one of his conversations with him he remembered Smaragdus and said:

"We have a monk who leads a very strict life; he came to us from the palace of the emperor Theodosius[3], and we all marvel at his holy life. Would you not like to speak with him? Perhaps you will receive some comfort from this conversation, for he is filled with the Holy Spirit."

"Yes, I would," answered Pafnutius.

Then the abbot, not knowing that Smaragdus was the daughter of Paphnutius, called Agapitus and said to him:

"Take Paphnutius to Smaragdus, so that he may speak with him."

Agapitus and Paphnutius entered the cell of Smaragdus. When Euphrosyne saw her father, she recognized him and burst into tears; and Paphnutius thought she was weeping from prayerful emotion. He could not recognize her, for from strict abstinence and all-night prayers the color of her face had faded, and Euphrosyne herself had deliberately covered her face with her hood so that she might not be recognized. After praying, both sat down, and Smaragdus began his conversation with Paphnutius, speaking to him of the Kingdom of Heaven and of the eternal glory which man may attain through humility, purity, holiness, almsgiving and love; he spoke to him also of renouncing the world, and that one should not love children more than God, the Creator of all; he pointed to the words of the Apostle that "tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience" (Rom. 5:3–4). Seeing the great sorrow of her father, Smaragdus sympathized with him and comforted him, saying:

Believe me: God will not forsake you. For if your daughter had been on a path of destruction, the Lord would have revealed it to you, through the prayers of the holy fathers, who prayed so fervently concerning this. No, I am firmly convinced that your daughter heeded the good Teacher, Who says in the Gospel: “He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be My disciple” (Mt. 10:37; Lk. 14:33). God may yet show her to you in this life. Therefore cease to grieve. Why do you torment yourself with sorrow? Rather, give thanks to God for everything, and do not lose hope; for I too, when my teacher Agapitus told me of your coming to the monastery and of your sorrow, prayed earnestly to

3. Theodosius II (408–450) is meant here.

God to grant you patience and courage, to order all things for the good of you and your daughter, and to comfort you. I trust that the God of all consolation will not leave you to remain in sorrow until the end: if not soon, yet He will reveal to you the fate of your daughter, for whom you grieve so deeply.

Then Euphrosyne, fearing that her father might recognize her, since she had spoken with him for so long, said to Paphnutius:

"My lord, go home now in peace."

Hearing these words, Paphnutius wept and rejoiced, for his heart burned with natural love for Smaragdus, and he had received much benefit from speaking with him. Then he went to the abbot and said:

"God alone knows, father, what benefit I have received from this monk; by the grace of God, his words have filled my heart with such joy as though I had found my beloved child."

After this, Paphnutius asked all the monks to pray for him and returned home. Smaragdus lived in that monastery for thirty-eight years, leading a God-pleasing life. At the end of that time he fell grievously ill, and thereafter gave his soul to the Lord. Before his repose, Paphnutius again came to the monastery to venerate and visit the brotherhood. After his customary conversation with the abbot, he said to him:

"Father, if it is possible, allow me to see Brother Smaragdus, for I love him very much."

The abbot summoned Agapitus and charged him to take Paphnutius to Smaragdus. When Paphnutius entered his cell and saw Smaragdus lying on his bed in grievous illness, he fell down beside his bed and began to speak with bitter tears:

"Woe is me! Where are your sweet words, where your promises that I should see my lost daughter? Behold, I not only do not see her, but am losing you too, my comforter. Woe is me! Who will comfort my old age now? To whom shall I go, and who will be my solace in sorrow? I weep and grieve in my soul at being parted from you. For thirty-eight years now I have not seen my daughter, nor have I received news of her from anywhere; and now my dear Smaragdus is leaving me—Smaragdus, at whose finding I rejoiced so greatly, as though I had found my lost daughter. What can I hope for now? Where shall I find consola-

tion? One thing remains to me: to go down into the grave with my sorrow!"

Seeing how inconsolably Paphnutius wept, Smaragdus said to him:

"Why are you troubled and so overcome by great sorrow? Is the hand of the Lord not mighty? Or is anything impossible for God? Therefore cease to grieve. Remember how the Lord once showed Joseph alive to Jacob, who had wept for him as for one dead; that same God will comfort you too. Now I ask only one thing of you: remain here for three days and do not leave me."

Paphnutius remained in the monastery, and meanwhile pondered thus within himself:

"Will the Lord perhaps reveal something to Smaragdus concerning my daughter?"

At last the third day came, and Euphrosyne, having received a revelation concerning the time of her departure to the Lord, summoned her father Paphnutius and said to him:

"Almighty God has ordered my fate according to His will and fulfilled my desire. Now I have reached the end of my struggles, having walked the monastic path not by my own strength, but by the help of Him Who preserved me amid the snares of the enemy. I do not wish you to grieve any longer for your daughter. I am Euphrosyne, your daughter, and you are my father. I am she whom you seek. For love of God I left you, my father, all my inheritance, and my earthly bridegroom, and came here, concealing that I was a woman. Now I ask you: allow no one but you to wash my body. I also beseech you to fulfill the promise I made to the superior of this monastery. When I asked him to receive me here, I said that I had great possessions which I intended to give to this monastery. Therefore fulfill my promise, bring the remaining possessions to this monastery, and pray for me."

After these words, Euphrosyne gave up her spirit to the Lord. Hearing all this and seeing that his daughter had died, Paphnutius was overcome by fear and great sorrow, and collapsed upon the ground as if dead. When Agapitus came and saw that Smaragdus had reposed and Paphnutius was barely alive, he poured water over Paphnutius's face, raised him from the ground, and asked him:

"What is the matter with you, Paphnutius?"

He answered him:

"Let me die here, for I have seen a wondrous miracle."

Then Paphnutius rose from the ground and fell upon the face of the departed, weeping bitterly and saying:

"Woe is me, my beloved child! Why did you not reveal yourself to me before this hour? Oh, how I would have wished to die with you! Woe is me, that you concealed yourself from me, my dear daughter! How well you escaped the snares of the enemy, hid yourself from the vanity of this world, and entered into eternal life!"

Hearing Paphnutius's words, Agapitus understood this wondrous mystery. He was filled with awe and went at once to tell the abbot. The latter hastened thither immediately, fell upon the holy body of Euphrosyne, and began to speak with sobs:

"Euphrosyne, bride of Christ and holy maiden, forget not your fellow strugglers and this monastery, but pray to the Lord Jesus Christ for us, that He may deem us worthy, after good struggles, to attain salvation and dwell with His saints."

Then the abbot ordered the whole brotherhood to assemble, so that her holy body might be buried with fitting honor. When all the monks had gathered and beheld this wondrous miracle, they glorified God, Who had shown His mighty power in a frail body. One of the brethren was blind in one eye. He came to the relics of the Venerable one and, weeping, began to kiss her precious body; at once his eye was opened, and he received his sight. Seeing this healing, the whole brotherhood magnified the mercy of God, glorified His holy servant Euphrosyne, and were edified by her holy life. After this they buried her in the resting place of the holy ascetic fathers, and held a memorial for her with spiritual joy. Her father Paphnutius returned home, distributed his estate among churches and monasteries, the poor, and travelers, and brought the considerable portion that remained to that monastery for its needs; he himself was tonsured there. He asked to be given his daughter's cell, and lived there in a God-pleasing manner for ten years. At the end of that time he reposed on the very same mat on which his daughter, the Venerable Euphrosyne, had died. He was buried with honor beside his

daughter, and it was decreed that their memory be celebrated each year, to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, God wondrous in His saints. Glory be to Him forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having desired to obtain the life on high, thou carefully left behind the sweetness of earth[4]*, and thou didst mingle thyself among men, most fair; for the sake of Christ thou didst disregard the bridegroom of thy betrothal, a temporal betrothed.*

* * *

Life and Miracles of our Venerable and God-bearing Father Sergius, Wonderworker of Radonezh[5]

Житие и чудеса преподобного и богоносного отца нашего Сергия, Радонежского чудотворца

Our Venerable and God-bearing Father Sergius was born in the region of Rostov to pious parents, Cyril and Mary[6]. Even from his mother's womb, God chose him for His service. Shortly before his birth, his mother, as was her custom, came to church on a Sunday for the Divine Liturgy. Before the reading of the Holy Gospel began, the infant in her womb cried out so loudly that all who stood in the church heard his voice. During the Cherubic Hymn the infant cried out a second time; and when the priest said, "The Holy Things are for the holy," a voice from the mother's womb was heard for the third time. From this all understood that a great luminary for the world and a servant of the Most Holy Trinity would come into the world. Just as St. John the Forerunner leaped for joy in the womb before the Mother of God (Lk. 1:41), so this infant too leaped before the Lord in His holy temple. At this miracle the Venerable one's mother was overcome with

4. That is, desiring to obtain the heavenly life, thou hast hastened to leave earthly delights.
5. Compiled on the basis of the Life of St. Sergius written in the fifteenth century by the Venerable's disciple Epiphanius, and other sources.
6. The year of the birth of the Venerable Sergius is not known exactly; it probably took place in 1314.

fear and trembling; all who heard the voice were greatly astonished as well. When the day of birth came, God granted Mary a son, who was given the name Bartholomew. From the first days of his life the infant showed himself to be a strict faster. His parents and those around him began to notice that he would not take his mother's milk on Wednesdays and Fridays; nor would he touch his mother's breasts on other days when she happened to eat meat. Seeing this, his mother gave up meat altogether.

When Bartholomew reached the age of seven, his parents sent him to learn to read and write. His two brothers studied with him, the elder Stephen and the younger Peter. They learned well and made great progress, while Bartholomew lagged far behind them: learning came hard to him, and although his teacher worked with him very diligently, he nevertheless made little progress.

This came about by God's providence, so that the child might receive understanding in letters not from men, but from God. Bartholomew grieved deeply over this and prayed fervently and with tears that God would grant him understanding of letters. And the Lord hearkened to the prayer that issued from the depths of the pious youth's heart.

One day the father sent Bartholomew to fetch the horses. Long accustomed to obeying his parents without question, the youth set off at once; the errand was all the more welcome to him because he had always loved solitude and stillness. His way led through a forest, and there he met a certain monk, or rather an Angel of God sent in the form of a monk. He was standing in the midst of the forest, praying. Bartholomew drew near to the elder, bowed to him, and waited until he had finished his prayer. When the prayer was ended, the elder blessed the youth, kissed him, and asked what he needed.

Bartholomew answered:

"I have been given over, Father, to book learning, but I understand little of what my teacher says to me. I grieve greatly over this and do not know what to do."

Having said this, the youth asked the elder to pray to the Lord on his behalf. The monk fulfilled Bartholomew's request. When he had finished his prayer, he blessed the youth and said:

"From now on, my child, God will grant you to understand what is needful, so that you may also teach others."

With these words the elder took out a small vessel and gave Bartholomew, as it were, a particle of a prosphora. He bade him eat it, saying:

"Take it, child, and eat it. This is given to you as a sign of the grace of God and for the understanding of the Holy Scripture. Do not regard the fact that this particle is so small: great will be your joy if you partake of it."

After this the elder was about to continue on his way, but the joyful youth earnestly begged the monk to visit the house of his parents.

"Do not pass by our house," Bartholomew implored, "do not deprive my parents of your holy blessing."

Bartholomew's parents, who held monks in honor, welcomed the desired guest with reverence. They offered him food, but he answered that one must first partake of spiritual food. When everyone began to pray, the elder bade Bartholomew read the Psalms.

"I cannot, Father," the youth answered.

But the monk spoke prophetically:

"From now on the Lord will grant you the knowledge of letters."

And indeed the youth at once began to read the Psalms fluently. His parents marveled greatly at the change that had come over their son.

At parting, the elder said to the parents of the saint:

"Great will your son be before God and men. He will one day become a chosen dwelling of the Holy Spirit and a minister of the Holy Trinity."

As the earth, abundantly watered by rain, becomes fruitful, so from that time the holy youth read books without any difficulty and understood all that was written in them; letters came easily to him, for "He opened his understanding, that he might understand the Scriptures" (Lk. 24:45). The youth grew in years, and together with them he grew in wisdom and virtue. Early he felt a love for prayer; from his earliest years he knew the sweetness of converse with God. Therefore he began to attend the house of God so zealously that he did not miss a single service. He did not love childish games and carefully avoided them; the merriment and laughter of his peers did not appeal to him, for he knew

that “evil companionships corrupt good morals” (1 Cor. 15:33). He firmly remembered that “the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord” (Ps. 110:10), and therefore he always strove to learn this wisdom. With particular diligence and zeal he devoted himself to reading the Divine and sacred books. Knowing that the passions are best overcome by abstinence, the young youth imposed upon himself a strict fast: on Wednesdays and Fridays he ate nothing, and on other days he sustained himself only with bread and water. Thus he came to hate his flesh in order to save his soul. If he met anyone in need, Bartholomew gladly shared his clothing with him and did everything he could to serve him. Though not yet in a monastery, he lived the life of a monk, so that everyone marveled, seeing such abstinence and piety in a youth. At first his mother, anxious for her son's health, urged him to give up so harsh a way of life. But the prudent youth humbly answered his mother:

"Do not turn me away from abstinence, for it is so sweet and profitable for my soul."

Astonished at the wise answer, his mother no longer wished to hinder her son's good intention. Thus, by subduing his flesh through abstinence, Bartholomew did not go outside his parents' will.

Meanwhile Cyril and Mary moved from the aforementioned city of Rostov to a locality called "Radonezh" [7]. This happened not because the place was known or famous for anything, but because God so willed: it was pleasing to Him to glorify His zealous servant in this very place.

Bartholomew, who was then about fifteen years old, also followed his parents to Radonezh. His brothers had by then already married. When the youth reached the age of twenty, he began to beg his parents to bless him to take the monastic tonsure: he had long desired to dedicate himself to the Lord. Although his parents held the monastic life above all else, they asked their son to wait a while.

“Child,” they said to him, “you know that we are old; the end of our life is not far off, and there is no one but you to serve us in our old age.

7. On the site of ancient Radonezh there now stands the village of Gorodishche or Gorodok; it lies between Moscow and the Holy Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra, twelve versts from the latter.

Be patient a little longer, see us to our burial, and then no one will hinder you from fulfilling your cherished desire."

Bartholomew, as an obedient and loving son, submitted to the will of his parents and zealously strove to ease their old age, so as to earn their prayers and blessings. Shortly before their deaths, Cyril and Mary received the monastic habit in the Monastery of the Protection of the Theotokos at Khotkovo, about three versts from Radonezh [8]. There also came Bartholomew's elder brother Stephen, who had been widowed about that time, and he entered the ranks of the monks. Some time later the parents of the holy youth, one shortly after the other, peacefully reposed in the Lord and were buried in this monastery. After the death of their parents, the brothers spent forty days here, offering fervent prayers to the Lord for the repose of the newly departed servants of God. Cyril and Mary left all their property to Bartholomew. Seeing the repose of his parents, the Venerable One reflected thus: "I am mortal, and I too shall die, as my parents did." Pondering in this way the brevity of this life, the prudent youth distributed all of his parents' property, keeping nothing for himself; he did not even retain anything for his sustenance, for he trusted in God, who "giveth food to the hungry" (Ps. 145:7).

Seeking the solitary life, Bartholomew together with his brother Stephen set out to find a place suitable for the desert life. For a long time the brothers wandered through the surrounding forests, until they came to the place where the monastery of the Holy Trinity now stands, so glorified by the name of the Venerable Sergius. At that time this place was covered by a dense, impenetrable forest that no human hand had touched; no road ran through this forest, no dwelling stood in it, and only beasts and birds lived there. With fervent prayer the brothers turned to God, calling down God's blessing upon the place of their future dwelling, and they committed their fate to His holy will. Having built a hut, they began to labor zealously and to pray to God. They also raised a small church, and by common agreement they decided to consecrate it in the name of the Holy Trinity. For this they went to Mo-

8. At that time this monastery had two divisions: one for monks and another for nuns.

scow and asked Metropolitan Theognostus [9] to give his blessing for the consecration of the church. The hierarch received them kindly and sent clergy with them to consecrate the church. Thus was the foundation of the Holy Trinity Monastery modestly laid.

With diligence and tireless zeal Bartholomew now devoted himself to spiritual struggles: the young ascetic was filled with great joy when he saw that his cherished desire had been fulfilled.

But his elder brother Stephen, weary of life in so desolate a place, left Bartholomew, moved to Moscow to the Monastery of the Theophany, and there became closely associated with Alexis, who later became Metropolitan of Moscow.

Remaining in complete solitude, Bartholomew prepared himself even more for the monastic life. Only when he had grown strong in labors and struggles and had accustomed himself to the strict observance of monastic rules did he resolve to receive the monastic tonsure.

At that time there came to him an abbot named Mitrophan; he tonsured the blessed Bartholomew into the monastic order in the twenty-third year of his life. The rite of tonsure was performed on the day of the commemoration of the holy martyrs Sergius and Bacchus, and Bartholomew was given the name Sergius. After the tonsure, Mitrophan celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the church of the Holy Trinity and granted the new monk Communion of the Holy Mysteries of Christ; at that very time the church was filled with an extraordinary fragrance, which spread even beyond the walls of the temple. For seven days the newly tonsured monk remained continually in the church. Each day Mitrophan celebrated the Divine Liturgy and gave him Communion of the Holy Body and Blood of the Lord. During all this time Sergius's food was the prosphora that Mitrophan gave him each day. Sergius spent the entire time in prayer and contemplation of God; he constantly called upon God from the depths of his pure heart, glorified the great name of the Lord, and sang the Psalms of David and spiritual songs: he was wholly filled with joy, and his soul burned with divine

9. Metropolitan Theognostus held the see from 1328 to 1353.

fire and pious zeal. After Mitrophan had spent several days with Sergius, he said to him:

"Child, I am leaving this place and commit you into the hands of God; may the Lord be your defender and keeper."

And foreseeing the future, he prophesied:

"In this place God will raise up a great and glorious monastery, where the great and terrible name of the Lord will be glorified and virtue will shine forth."

Having offered a prayer and given some instruction on the monastic life, Mitrophan withdrew. St. Sergius, remaining alone in that place, labored zealously, mortifying his flesh with fasting, vigil and manifold toils; and during the fierce winter, when the frost split the earth, he endured the cold in a single garment. He suffered many sorrows and temptations from the demons, especially at the beginning of his solitude in the wilderness. The invisible foes rose up against the monk with fury; unable to bear his ascetic feats, they sought to terrify the saint so that he would abandon that place. They appeared now as beasts, now as serpents. Sergius, however, drove them away by prayer: calling upon the Name of the Lord, he dispersed the demonic delusions like a fine cobweb. Once at night the demons, as though an entire host, drew menacingly near him and cried out with terrible fury:

"Depart from this place, depart, or you will perish a cruel death!"

As the demons uttered these words, flame burst from their mouths. But the Venerable One, armed with prayer, drove back the power of the enemy, and, glorifying God, remained there without any fear.

Once, when the hermit was reading his rule at night, suddenly a noise arose from the forest; the demons, in great numbers, again surrounded the cell and cried out threateningly to the Venerable Sergius:

"Depart from here! Why have you come into this wild forest? What are you seeking? Do not hope to live here any longer; you see yourself that this place is empty and impassable! Are you not afraid of dying of hunger or of perishing at the hands of robbers?"

With such words the demons sought to terrify the Venerable One, but all their efforts were in vain: the saint prayed to the Lord, and at once the demonic host vanished.

After these visions, the sight of wild beasts no longer terrified the ascetic so greatly; packs of hungry wolves ran past his solitary cell, ready to tear the monk apart, and bears also came there. But the power of prayer saved the hermit here as well. Once the Venerable Sergius noticed a bear in front of his cell; seeing that the bear was very hungry, he took pity on the beast, brought out a piece of bread and laid it on a stump. From that time the bear often came to the cell, awaited its customary alms and looked upon the saint with meekness; the Venerable Sergius shared his food with it, often even giving it his last morsel. And the wild beast became so gentle that it obeyed even the saint's call.

Thus the Lord did not forsake His servant in the wilderness: He was with him in all sorrows and temptations, helped him, encouraged and strengthened His zealous and faithful servant.

Meanwhile the fame of the Venerable One began to spread everywhere. Some spoke of his strict abstinence, his diligence and his other ascetic labors; others marveled at his simplicity and guilelessness; still others related his power over the evil spirits—and all were amazed at his humility and purity of soul. Therefore many from the surrounding towns and villages began to gather around the Venerable One. Some came to him for counsel, others wished to enjoy his soul-profiting conversation. Each found in him good counsel, each returned from him comforted and reassured, and each felt lighter at heart: so did the gentle and grace-filled words with which Sergius received all who came to him for advice or pious instruction work. The Venerable One received everyone with love; some even asked him for permission to live together with him, but the saint dissuaded them, pointing to the difficulties of the monastic life.

"These places," said the Venerable One, "are desolate and wild; many hardships await us here."

Filled with a deep feeling of reverence for the saint, these newcomers asked for only one thing: that Sergius allow them to settle here. Seeing the firmness of their intention and their strong resolve to dedicate themselves to God, the Venerable One had to yield to their request. Soon twelve men had gathered under the Venerable One's guidance, and this number long remained unchanged: if one of the brethren was

taken by death, another came to take his place. Many saw in this number a coincidence: the number of the Venerable One's disciples was the same as the number of the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ; others compared it with the number of the twelve tribes of Israel. Those who came built twelve cells. Sergius, together with the brethren, enclosed the cells with a wooden palisade. Thus arose the monastery, which by the grace of God exists to this day.

The ascetic life of the hermits passed quietly and peacefully; each day they gathered in their small church and there offered fervent prayers to the Lord; seven times a day the church received the monks beneath its roof: here they celebrated the midnight office, Matins, the Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours, Vespers and Compline; and for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy they invited a priest from the nearby villages.

A year after the brethren had come to Sergius, the aforementioned hieromonk Mitrophan, who had performed the rite of tonsure over the Venerable Sergius, also settled in the newly founded monastery; he was welcomed with joy by the brethren, and was unanimously elected by all as hegumen. The monks rejoiced that it had now become possible to celebrate the Liturgy far more often than before. But Mitrophan soon gave up his soul to the Lord. Then the brethren began to beg the Venerable One to accept the priesthood and be their hegumen. Sergius refused this: he wished to imitate the Lord and be the servant of all; he himself built several cells, dug a well, carried water and set it at the cell of each brother, chopped wood, baked bread, sewed clothing, prepared food, and humbly performed other labors. The time free from toil Sergius devoted to prayer and fasting; he fed himself on bread and water only, and that in small quantity; each night he spent in prayer and vigil, and only for a brief time did he yield to sleep. To the great amazement of all, such a severe life not only did not weaken the ascetic's health, but seemed even to strengthen his body and give him strength for new and still greater labors. By his abstinence, humility and pious life the Venerable Sergius set an example to all the brethren. The hermits looked with wonder upon this "Angel in the flesh" and strove with all their strength to imitate him; like him they persevered in fasting, pray-

er and constant labor: now sewing garments, now copying books, now tilling their small gardens and performing other such works. Perfect equality reigned in the monastery, but above all stood the Venerable One: he was the first ascetic in this monastery or, rather, the first and the last, for many labored here in his time and after him, but none can be compared with him: he shone like the moon among the stars. The fame of his ascetic life continued to grow, to strengthen and to spread: his brother Stephen brought to him his twelve-year-old son John; the youth, hearing of the holy life of Sergius, burned with desire to follow him; he received the tonsure and was named Theodore; in this monastery Theodore lived some twenty-two years and occupied himself with icon-painting.

More than ten years had passed since the first companions had come to Sergius, and with each day the need for a hegumen and a priest was felt more strongly. It was not always possible to invite priests, and a leader vested with the authority of hegumen was also needed. There was no other person more worthy to occupy such a place than the founder of this monastery, but the Venerable Sergius shrank from the hegumen's office: he wished to be in the monastery founded by his labors not its superior, but its last monk. At last the hermits, gathering together, came to the Venerable One and said:

"Father, we cannot live without a hegumen; we desire that you be our teacher and guide; we wish to come to you in repentance and, opening before you all our thoughts, to receive from you each day the absolution of our sins. Celebrate the Holy Liturgy among us, that we may partake of the Divine Mysteries from your honorable hands."

Sergius refused strongly and for a long time:

"My brethren," he said, "I never had even a thought of the hegumen's office; one thing alone my soul desires: to end my days as a simple monk. Do not compel me, then. Let us rather entrust all this to God; let Him Himself reveal to us His will, and then we shall see what we are to do."

But the monks continued to beg the Venerable One insistently to fulfill their wish, and said:

"If you do not wish to care for our souls and be our shepherd, then we shall all be forced to leave this place and break the vow we have given; then we shall be left to wander like sheep without a shepherd."

For a long time the monks went on persuading, begging and even insisting. At last the saint, moved and overcome by their entreaties, set out with two elders to Pereslavl-Zalessky[10] to Athanasius, Bishop of Volhynia, for the latter, since Metropolitan Alexis had departed for Constantinople, was then administering the affairs of the metropolis. The hierarch received the ascetic kindly, of whom he had long since heard reports. Embracing him, he conversed with him at length about the salvation of the soul. At the close of the conversation the Venerable Sergius humbly bowed before Athanasius and asked him for a hegumen for his monastery. To this request the hierarch replied:

"From now on be father and hegumen for the brethren gathered by you in the new monastery of the Life-Originating Trinity!"

So he ordained the Venerable Sergius first as hierodeacon and then ordained him as hieromonk. With the greatest reverence, filled entirely with fear and tenderness, Sergius celebrated his first Divine Liturgy, after which he was appointed abbot. Athanasius conversed for a long time with the newly appointed abbot and said to him:

"Child, you have now received the great rank of the priesthood. Know, then, that it befits you, according to the commandment of the great Apostle: 'We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves' (Rom. 15:1). Remember his word: 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ' (Gal. 6:2)."

After this, the Hierarch Athanasius embraced and blessed the Venerable Sergius and dismissed him in peace to the monastery of the Most Holy Trinity. The hermits met their first abbot with rejoicing; they came out to meet their guide and father and bowed to him with filial love. The abbot too rejoiced, seeing his spiritual children. Coming into the church, he turned to the Lord with fervent prayer and asked that God would bless him and send him almighty help in the new and diffi-

10. Pereyaslavl-Zalessky is now a district town of the Vladimir Governorate.

cult service. Having prayed, the Venerable Sergius addressed the brethren with a word of instruction, exhorted the monks not to slacken in their labors, asked for their support, and for the first time gave them his abbatial blessing. Simple and few were his words of instruction, yet by their clarity and persuasiveness they took root in people's hearts for all time. Indeed, the Venerable Sergius acted not so much by word as by his very life, showing all a good example. Having become abbot, he not only did not relax his former strictness, but began with even greater zeal to keep all the monastic rules; he constantly bore in his heart the words of the Savior: "Whoever wishes to be first among you, let him be the servant of all" (Mk. 10:44). Every day he celebrated the Divine Liturgy; he always prepared the prosphora himself, grinding the wheat for them with his own hands and performing all other tasks. His especially beloved labor was baking the prosphora, and to this work he admitted no one else, although many of the brethren would have wished to take it upon themselves. He was the first to come to church, where he stood upright, never permitting himself to lean against a wall or to sit; he was the last to leave the house of God. Unceasingly and with love he taught the brethren and urged them to follow in the footsteps of the great ascetics of God, often recounting to his spiritual children the lives of these ascetics. Thus zealously did he shepherd his rational flock, guiding it on the path of salvation and driving away from it the noetic wolves by prayer.

After some time, the demons, unable to endure the virtuous life of the saint, again rose up against him. Turning into serpents, they crept into his cell in such numbers that they covered the whole floor. Then the blessed one turned in prayer to the Lord and with tears asked to be delivered from the diabolical delusion, and immediately the demons vanished like smoke. From that time God granted His servant such power over the unclean spirits that they did not dare even to approach the Venerable Father.

For a long time the monastery had twelve brethren. But then there came from Smolensk an archimandrite named Simeon. Renouncing his prominent position, Simeon, with a feeling of profound humility, asked the Venerable Father to accept him as a simple monk. Sergius was

greatly moved by such a request and received the newcomer with love. Archimandrite Simeon brought with him much property and handed it over to the Venerable Father so that the saint might build a larger church. With Simeon's gift, the Venerable Father, with God's help, soon built a new church, enlarged the monastery, and together with his brethren glorified God day and night.

From that time many began to gather to the Venerable Sergius, to save their souls under the guidance of this glorious ascetic. The holy abbot received all who came with love, but, knowing from experience the difficulty of the monastic life, he did not tonsure them quickly. Usually he commanded that the newcomer be clothed in a long garment of black cloth and ordered him to perform, together with the other monks, some obedience. He acted thus so that the newcomer might learn the whole monastic rule; only after a long testing did the Venerable Sergius tonsure the newcomer and give him the mantle and klobuk.

Having received monks after such careful testing, the saint then also took care of their life. Thus the Venerable Father strictly forbade the monks, after compline, to leave their cells or to engage in conversation with one another; at that time each had to remain in his cell, occupied with handiwork or prayer. Late in the evening, especially on dark and long nights, the tireless and zealous abbot, after private prayer, made the rounds of the cells and through the little window looked to see what each was doing. If he found a monk either at prayer, or at handiwork, or reading edifying books, he joyfully raised prayers to God on his behalf and asked that the Lord strengthen him. But if he heard forbidden conversation, or found someone at some vain occupation, he knocked on the door or window and went on further. On the following day he would summon such a monk and enter into conversation with him. The obedient monk would confess, ask forgiveness, and Sergius with fatherly love forgave him; but on the disobedient one he imposed a penance. Thus the Venerable Sergius cared for the flock entrusted to him, and thus he knew how to unite meekness with strictness. He was a true shepherd to the monks of his monastery.

The monastery of the Venerable Sergius, rich in examples of truly Christian life, was in the first period of its existence poor in the most

necessary things; often the ascetics suffered extreme want of what was most needed. Remote from habitations, cut off from the whole world by a dark, dense forest abounding in all kinds of wild beasts, this monastery could not count on human help. Often the brethren had no wine for celebrating the Divine Liturgy, and they were compelled, with deep regret, to deprive themselves even of this spiritual consolation; often there was not enough wheat for the prosphora, or incense for censing, wax for candles, oil for lamps; then the monks lit wood splinters and under such light they performed the services in the church. In the poorly and meagerly lit church they themselves burned and blazed with love for God more brightly than the brightest candles. Simple and unadorned was the external life of the monks, and equally simple was everything that surrounded them and that they used, but this simplicity was majestic: the vessels used for the mystery of Communion were made of wood, the vestments were of plain dyed cloth, and the liturgical books were written on birch bark. Sometimes the monks of this monastery, where there was not yet a common life, suffered want of food; even the abbot himself often experienced need. Thus once the Venerable Sergius had not a single piece of bread left, and throughout the monastery there was scarcity of food; but he strictly forbade the monks to leave the monastery in order to beg sustenance from laymen. He required that they place their hope in God, who sustains every living creature, and ask Him in faith for all that is needful; and what he commanded the brethren, he himself fulfilled without fail. Therefore the saint endured three days. But at dawn on the fourth day, tormented by hunger, he took an axe and came to an elder living in this monastery, named Daniel, and said to him:

"I have heard, elder, that you wish to build a porch onto your cell. I want my hands not to remain idle, and so I have come to you. Allow me to build the porch."

To this Daniel replied:

"Yes, I have long wished to make the porch; I have even prepared everything needed. I am only waiting for a carpenter from the village. But I do not venture to entrust such work to you, for you would have to be well rewarded."

But Sergius said that he needed only a few pieces of old, moldy bread. Then the elder brought out a sieve with pieces of bread, but the Venerable Father said:

"Without doing the work, I do not take payment."

Then he set zealously to the work; he spent the whole day at this task and, with God's help, finished it. Only in the evening, at sunset, did he accept the bread; having prayed, the saint began to eat it, and some of the monks noticed that dust flew from the lips of the Venerable Father from the bread covered with mold. Seeing this, the hermits marveled at his humility and patience.

Once again there came a shortage of food; the monks endured this deprivation for two days; at last one of them, suffering greatly from hunger, began to murmur against the saint, saying:

"How long will you forbid us to leave the monastery and to ask for what is necessary for us? We will endure one more night, and in the morning we will leave here, so that we do not die of hunger."

The saint comforted the brethren, reminded them of the ascetic deeds of the holy fathers, and showed how for Christ's sake they endured hunger and thirst and underwent many privations; he quoted to them the words of Christ: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them" (Mt. 6:26).

"If He feeds the birds," said the saint, "can He not give food to us? Now is the time for patience, and we murmur. If we bear a brief trial with thanksgiving, this very temptation will serve us for great benefit; for even gold is not made pure without fire."

With this he spoke prophetically:

"Now we have a shortage for a short time, but in the morning there will be abundance."

And the saint's prediction came true: the next morning, a large quantity of freshly baked bread, fish, and other newly prepared foods was sent to the monastery by an unknown person. Those who brought all this said:

"This is what the Christ-lover has sent to Father[11] Sergius and the brethren who live with him."

Then the monks asked those who had brought the food to partake of a meal with them, but they refused, saying that they had been ordered to return at once; and they hastily departed from the monastery. The hermits, seeing the abundance of food brought to them, understood that the Lord had visited them with His mercy, and, giving fervent thanks to God, they set out a meal. At this the monks were greatly struck by the unusual softness and the extraordinary flavor of the bread. For a long time this food was sufficient for the brethren. The Venerable Abbot, taking advantage of this occasion to instruct the monks, said, teaching them:

"Brethren, behold and marvel at the reward God sends for patience: 'Arise, O Lord my God, lift up Thy hand, forget not the afflicted' [He will not forget His poor to the end] (Ps. 9:33). He will never abandon this holy place or His servants who dwell in it and serve Him day and night."

The Venerable's fatherly care for his brethren, and his greatest humility, were often manifested in other instances as well, as may be seen from what follows.

On arriving in the wilderness, the Venerable Sergius settled in a waterless place. The saint had not stopped here without intention: by carrying water from afar, he wished to make his labor still greater, for he strove to wear down his flesh ever more strongly. But when, by God's good pleasure, the brotherhood increased and a monastery was formed, a great shortage of water began to be felt; it had to be carried from afar and with great difficulty. For this reason some began to murmur against the saint, saying:

"Why did you settle in this place without discernment? Why did you establish a monastery where there is no water nearby?"

The Venerable humbly answered these reproaches:

"Brethren, I desired to dwell in silence alone in this place, but it was God's will that a monastery should arise here. He can grant us water

11. *Abba* means father.

too; only do not lose heart, and pray with faith: for if in the wilderness He brought water out of the rock for the disobedient Hebrew people, He will all the more not forsake you, who serve Him with zeal."

After this, he once took with him one of the brethren and secretly went down with him into a thicket below the monastery, where there had never been running water. Finding a little rainwater in a ditch, the saint knelt down and began to pray thus:

"O God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who didst create heaven and earth and all things visible and invisible, who didst form man and dost not desire the death of the sinner, we, Thy sinful and unworthy servants, beseech Thee: hear us at this hour and manifest Thy glory. As in the wilderness Thy mighty right hand worked wonders through Moses, bringing water out of the rock, so now show forth Thy power, O Creator of heaven and earth: grant us water in this place, that all may know that Thou hearest those who pray to Thee and offer glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen."

Then suddenly an abundant spring burst forth. The brethren were greatly struck; the murmurs of the discontented gave way to a feeling of reverence before the holy Abbot; the monks even began to call this spring "Sergius's." But the humble ascetic found the praise of men burdensome, and therefore he said:

"Brethren, it was not I who gave you this water, but the Lord Himself sent it to us, unworthy as we are. Therefore do not call it by my name."

Heeding these words of their teacher, the brethren ceased to call that spring "Sergius's."

From that time on the monks no longer experienced any lack of water, but drew water from this spring for all the monastery's needs; and often those who drew this water with faith received healing from it.

Many years had already passed since the Venerable Sergius laid the foundation of the monastery. The holy life of this great ascetic could not remain unnoticed, and so many people began to settle in those places, entirely covered with dense forest; many began to turn to the Venerable, asking for his prayers and blessing; many of the villagers

began to come often to the monastery and to bring what was necessary for sustenance. The fame of the saint grew and increased more and more. The Venerable performed many and various miracles even during his lifetime. The Lord bestowed on His servant an extraordinary miraculous power: thus once the Venerable raised a dead man. This happened as follows: in the vicinity of the monastery there lived a man who had great faith in Sergius; his only son was afflicted with an incurable illness. Firmly hoping that the saint would heal his son, this villager set out for the Venerable. But at the very time he came into the saint's cell and began to ask him to help the sick boy, the youth, worn out by severe illness, died. Having lost all hope, the father of the boy began to weep bitterly:

"Woe is me," he said to the saint, "I came to you, O man of God, with firm confidence that you would help me; it would have been better if my son had died at home, then I would not have been diminished in the faith which until now I have had in you."

Grieving and sobbing thus, he went out to bring everything needed for the burial of his son.

Seeing the weeping of this man, the Venerable took pity on him, and, offering a prayer, raised the youth. Soon the villager returned with a coffin for his son.

But the saint said to him:

"It is in vain that you give yourself up thoughtlessly to sorrow: the youth has not died, but is alive."

Since this man had seen his son die, he did not want to believe the saint's words; but drawing near, he noticed with amazement that the youth was indeed alive; then the overjoyed father began to thank the Venerable for the raising of his son.

"You are deceiving yourself," said Sergius, "and you do not know yourself what you are saying. When you were carrying the youth here, he was exhausted from the severe cold, and you thought he had died; now in the warm cell he has grown warm again, and it seems to you that he has risen."

But the villager continued to insist that his son had risen by the saint's prayers. Then Sergius forbade him to speak of this, adding:

"If you go about telling of it, you will lose your son altogether."

In great joy this man returned home, glorifying God and His servant Sergius. One of the Venerable's disciples learned of this miracle, and it was he who made it known.

The Venerable performed many other miracles as well. Thus one of the local inhabitants fell into a grievous illness; for some time he could neither sleep nor take food. His brothers, hearing of the miracles of the Venerable Sergius, brought the sick man to the ascetic and asked him to heal the sufferer. The saint prayed, sprinkled the sick man with holy water, after which he fell asleep; and waking, he rose completely healthy and strong, as though he had never been ill; glorifying and thanking the great ascetic, this villager returned home.

People came to the Venerable not only from the neighboring villages but even from distant regions. Thus once a nobleman was brought to Sergius from the banks of the Volga, possessed by an unclean spirit. He suffered greatly: now he bit, now he thrashed about, now he fled from everyone; ten men could scarcely restrain him. His relatives, hearing of Sergius, resolved to bring this demoniac to the Venerable. It required great labor and much effort. When the sick man was brought into the vicinity of the monastery, he tore his iron fetters with extraordinary force and began to cry out so loudly that his voice could be heard even in the monastery. Learning of this, Sergius performed a moleben for the sufferer; at this time the sufferer began to grow somewhat calm; he was even brought into the monastery itself. At the conclusion of the prayer service, the Venerable approached the demoniac with the cross and began to make the sign of the cross over him; at that very moment the man rushed with a great cry into the water that had gathered not far off after the rain. But when the Venerable made the sign of the holy cross over him, he felt himself completely healthy, and his reason returned to him. Asked why he had thrown himself into the water, the one who had been healed answered:

"When I was brought to the Venerable, and he began to make the sign of the honorable cross over me, I saw a great flame issuing from the cross, and thinking that that fire would burn me, I rushed into the water."

After this he remained in the monastery for several days, glorifying the mercy of God and thanking the holy ascetic for his healing.

Often other demoniacs were brought to the saint, and all of them received deliverance.

The merciful Lord bestowed such power on His zealous and faithful servant that demons came out of the people possessed by them, even before the sufferers were brought to the saint. Many other wonders also took place through the ascetic's prayers. "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed" (Mt. 11:5); in a word, all who came to the saint with faith, whatever ailments they suffered, received bodily health and moral instruction, so that they obtained double benefit.

The report of these wonders of Venerable Sergius spread ever farther and farther, and the fame of his life of the highest ascetic labor grew ever wider and wider; the number of those visiting the monastery increased more and more. All glorified Venerable Sergius, all reverently honored him; many came here from various towns and places, desiring to see the holy ascetic; many sought to receive instruction from him and to delight in his soul-profiting conversation; many monks, leaving their own monasteries, came under the protection of the monastery founded by the Venerable, desiring to labor under his guidance and to live together with him; simple folk and nobles alike longed to receive his blessing, and princes and boyars came to this blessed father. All respected him and regarded him as one of the ancient holy fathers, or as a prophet.

Esteemed and glorified by all, Venerable Sergius remained the same humble monk: human glory did not allure him; he continued to labor and to serve everyone as an example. He shared with the poor everything that he possessed; he did not love soft and fine garments, but constantly wore a garment of coarse cloth, sewn by his own hands. Once there was no good cloth in the monastery; only one piece remained, and it was so poor and rotten that the brethren refused to take it. Then Sergius took it for himself, sewed a garment from it, and wore it until it fell apart.

Indeed, the saint always wore old and plain clothing, so that many did not recognize him and took him for an ordinary monk. A peasant from a distant village, hearing much about St. Sergius, desired to see him. Therefore he came to the Venerable's monastery and began to ask where the saint was. It happened that the Venerable was then digging the earth in the vegetable garden. The brethren told the arriving peasant of this; at once he went into the garden and there saw the saint digging the earth, in poor, torn clothing, covered with patches. He thought that those who had pointed out this elder to him had made sport of him, for he had expected to see the saint in great glory and honor.

Therefore, returning to the monastery, he asked a second time:

"Where is St. Sergius? Show him to me, for I have come from afar to look upon him and to venerate him."

The monks answered:

"The elder you have seen is our Venerable Father."

After this, when the saint came out of the garden, the peasant turned away from him and did not want to look at the blessed one; indignant, he reasoned thus:

"How much labor I have expended in vain! I came to behold a great servant of God, and expected to see him in great honor and glory, and now I see some simple, poor old man."

Perceiving his thoughts, the saint warmly gave thanks to the Lord in his soul; for always, the more the vainglorious man exalts himself in the praise and honor that he receives, the more the humble-minded man rejoices in dishonor and abasement. Calling that peasant to himself, the Venerable set a table before him and began to entertain him cordially; among other things, the saint said to him:

"Do not grieve, friend; you will soon see the one you wished to see."

No sooner had the blessed one spoken these words than a messenger came, announcing the arrival of a prince at the monastery. Sergius rose and went out to meet the noble guest, who had come to the monastery accompanied by a multitude of servants. Seeing the abbot, the prince bowed low to the Venerable from afar, humbly asking his blessing. The saint, blessing the prince, led him into the monastery with due honor, where the elder and the prince sat side by side and conversed,

while all the others stood in attendance. The peasant, pushed far away by the prince's servants, could not, despite all his efforts, recognize from a distance that elder whom he had earlier scorned. Then he quietly asked one of those standing near:

"Sir, who is that elder sitting with the prince?"

The other answered him:

"Are you a stranger here, that you do not know this elder? This is Venerable Sergius."

Then the peasant began to reproach and blame himself:

"Truly I was blind," he said, "when I did not believe those who showed me the holy father."

When the prince left the monastery, the peasant quickly approached the Venerable, and, ashamed to look at him directly, bowed down at the elder's feet, asking forgiveness for having sinned through lack of understanding. The saint encouraged him, saying:

"Child, do not grieve, for you alone thought rightly of me, saying that I am a simple man; all the others are mistaken in supposing that I am great!"

From this it is clearly seen with what great humility Venerable Sergius was distinguished: the farmer who had disdained him he loved more than the prince who had shown him honor. With these gentle words the saint comforted the simple peasant; having lived for some time in the world, this man soon came back to the monastery again and received tonsure here, so deeply had the humility of the great ascetic touched him.

Once, late in the evening, the blessed one, as was his custom, was performing his rule and earnestly praying to God for his disciples, when suddenly he heard a voice calling him:

"Sergius!"

The Venerable was greatly astonished at such an unusual manifestation at night; opening the window, he wished to see who was calling him. And behold, he saw a great radiance from heaven, which so dispelled the darkness of the night that it became brighter than day. The voice was heard a second time:

"Sergius! You are praying for your children, and your prayer has been heard. Look: see the number of monks gathering under your guidance in the name of the Most Holy Trinity."

Looking around, the saint saw a great multitude of beautiful birds, sitting in the monastery and around it and singing unspeakably sweetly. And again the voice was heard:

"Thus shall the number of your disciples increase, like these birds; and after you it shall not diminish or lessen, and all who desire to follow in your footsteps shall be wondrously and variously adorned for their virtues."

The saint was astonished at such a marvelous vision; wishing that someone else also might rejoice with him, he called loudly to Simeon, who lived nearest of all. Surprised at the abbot's unusual summons, Simeon hastened to him, but he was not vouchsafed to see the whole vision, and beheld only some part of that heavenly light. The Venerable told Simeon in detail all that he had seen and heard, and the two of them spent the whole night without sleep, rejoicing and glorifying God.

Soon after this, envoys from the most holy Patriarch of Constantinople, Philotheus[12], came to the Venerable and handed the saint, together with a blessing, gifts from the Patriarch: a cross, a paramand[13], and a schema.

"Perhaps you have been sent to someone else," said the humble abbot to them, "for who am I, a sinner, that I should receive gifts from the most holy Patriarch?"

To this the messengers answered:

"No, father, we have not made a mistake; we have not been sent to anyone else, but to you, Sergius."

They brought from the Patriarch the following epistle:

"By the grace of God, Archbishop of the City of Constantine, the ecumenical patriarch, Lord Philotheus, to our son and fellow-minister in humility, Sergius, in the Holy Spirit, grace and peace and our blessing! We have heard of your virtuous life according to the commandments of God, and have glorified God and praised His name. But there

12. Philotheus was Patriarch from 1354 to 1355, and a second time from 1362 to 1376.
13. *Paramand*: a small square cloth bearing an image of the Passion of the Lord.

is still one thing lacking in you, and that the most important: you have no common life. You know that the forefather of God, the Prophet David, who embraced everything with his understanding, said: 'How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together!' (Ps. 132:1). Therefore we also give you good counsel: establish a common life; and may the mercy of God and our blessing be with you."

Having received this patriarchal epistle, the Venerable went to the blessed Metropolitan Alexis, and, showing him this letter, asked him:

"Holy master, how do you command?"

To the elder's question the Metropolitan answered:

"God Himself glorifies those who serve Him faithfully! He has vouchsafed you such grace that the report of your name and of your life has reached to distant lands; and as the great ecumenical patriarch advises, so we also advise and approve the same."

From that time Venerable Sergius established a common life in his monastery and strictly commanded that the rules of the common life be observed: to acquire nothing for oneself, not to call anything one's own, but according to the commandments of the holy fathers to have everything in common.

Meanwhile the Venerable Sergius grew weary of men's glory. Having established the common life, he desired to dwell in solitude and, amid stillness and silence, to labor before God. Therefore he left his monastery secretly and set out into the wilderness. Having gone about sixty versts, he found a place that greatly pleased him, near a river called Kirzhach[14]. The brethren, seeing themselves abandoned by their father, were in great grief and confusion; left like sheep without a shepherd, the monks sought him everywhere. After some time they learned where their shepherd had settled, and, coming to him, they entreated the saint with tears that he would return to the monastery. But the Venerable Sergius, loving silence and solitude, preferred to remain in the new place. Therefore many of his disciples, leaving the Lavra, settled with him in that wilderness, raised a monastery, and built a church in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos. But the monks of the

14. Of the Pokrov district of the Vladimir Governorate.

great Lavra, unwilling to live without their father, and at the same time unable to persuade him to return to them, went to the most reverend Metropolitan Alexis and asked him to persuade the Venerable Sergius to return to the monastery of the Holy Trinity. Then the blessed Alexis sent two archimandrites to the Venerable Sergius with a request that he heed the entreaty of the brethren and, returning, comfort them. He urged Sergius to do this so that the monks of the monastery he had founded should not scatter, lacking a shepherd, and the holy place not fall into ruin. The Venerable Sergius, without objection, fulfilled the petition of the blessed hierarch: he returned to the Lavra to the place of his first dwelling, whereat the brethren were greatly consoled and gladdened.

Saint Stephen, Bishop of Perm[15], who bore great love for the Venerable Sergius, once was traveling from his eparchy to the city of Moscow. The road along which the hierarch was passing lay some eight versts from the monastery of Sergius; since Stephen was in great haste to reach the city, he drove past the monastery, intending to visit it on his return. But when he was opposite the monastery, he stood up from his carriage, chanted "It is truly meet," and, having offered the customary prayer, bowed to the Venerable Sergius, saying:

"Peace be to you, spiritual brother."

It happened that the blessed Sergius was then sitting at table with the brethren. Perceiving in spirit the bishop's salutation, he immediately rose; having stood a little, he offered a prayer, and in turn bowed to the bishop, who by then had already gone a long distance from the monastery, and said:

"Rejoice, you too, shepherd of Christ's flock, and may the blessing of the Lord be with you."

The brethren were astonished at such an unusual act of the saint; some, however, understood that the Venerable One had been granted a vision. At the end of the meal the monks began to question him about what had happened, and he said to them:

15. The memory of St. Stephen, Enlightener of Perm, is celebrated on 27 April; his relics rest in the Moscow Cathedral of the Savior on Bor.

"At that hour, opposite our monastery, Bishop Stephen halted on his way to Moscow, bowed to the Holy Trinity, and blessed us sinners."

Afterwards some of the Venerable One's disciples learned that this had indeed been so, and they marveled at the clairvoyance bestowed by God upon their father Sergius[16].

Many pious men shone with glory in the monastery of the Venerable One; many of them, for their great virtues, were appointed as abbots of other monasteries, and some were raised to episcopal sees. All of them advanced in virtue, instructed and guided by their great teacher Sergius.

Among the disciples of the Venerable One was one named Isaac; he desired to dedicate himself to the ascetic labor of silence, and therefore often asked the saint for a blessing for so great an undertaking. Once the wise shepherd, in answer to his petition, said:

"If you, child, desire to keep silence, then on the following day I shall give you my blessing for it."

On the next day, after the Divine Liturgy was ended, the Venerable Sergius signed him with the honorable Cross and said:

"May the Lord fulfill your desire."

At that very moment Isaac saw that a wondrous flame issued from the hand of the Venerable One and enveloped him, Isaac; from that time he remained in silence, and only once did a miraculous appearance loosen his lips.

The Venerable Sergius, while still in life, in the flesh, was granted to have fellowship with the incorporeal. This happened in the following manner. Once the holy hegumen was celebrating the Divine Liturgy together with his brother Stephen and his nephew Theodore. In the church at that time, among others, was also Isaac the silent one. With fear and reverence, as always, the saint performed the great mystery. Suddenly Isaac sees in the sanctuary a fourth man, in wondrously shining vestments and radiating an extraordinary light; at the Little En-

16. In memory of this, there is still preserved in the Holy Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra the following custom: before the last dish, at the sound of a small bell, all the monastics rise, and the presiding hieromonk says: "By the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us," after which all sit down again to finish the meal.

trance with the Gospel the heavenly co-celebrant followed the Venerable One, his face shining like snow, so that it was impossible to gaze upon him. The marvelous appearance struck Isaac; he opened his mouth and asked the elder Macarius standing beside him:

"What is this wondrous sight, Father? Who is this extraordinary man?"

Macarius, no less adorned with virtues, had also been granted this vision; astonished and struck by it, he answered:

"I do not know, brother; I myself am terrified, beholding such a marvelous sight. Has not some priest come with Prince Vladimir?"

Prince Vladimir Andreyevich[17] was at that time in the church together with his boyars; the elders asked one of them whether a priest had come with the prince; the one asked answered that no priest had been with the prince. Then the monks understood that an Angel of God was co-serving with the Venerable Sergius. At the end of the liturgy the said disciples of the saint approached him and asked him about this. At first the abbot did not wish to reveal the mystery to them:

"What extraordinary sight have you seen, children? Stephen, Theodore, and I, the sinner, served the liturgy; there was no one else."

The disciples, however, continued to entreat him; then the Venerable One said to them:

"Children, if the Lord God Himself has revealed it to you, how could I conceal it? He whom you saw was an Angel of the Lord; not only now, but always, when it falls to me, unworthy, to celebrate the liturgy, he, by God's will, serves together with me. But you must keep this strictly secret while I am alive."

Among the disciples of the Venerable One was one named Andronicus, who came from the same city of Rostov whence the Venerable One himself was born. Still in his youth he came to the blessed father Sergius at the monastery and was received by him among the monks. Here he labored for many years, adorned himself with many virtues, and endured many toils; therefore the saint loved his zealous disciple greatly and prayed fervently to the Lord for him. At that time the Met-

17. Prince Vladimir Andreyevich of Serpukhov, within whose domain the Trinity Lavra lay, was a companion-in-arms of Demetrius Ioannovich Donskoy at the Battle of Kulikovo.

ropolitan of Moscow was still the holy Alexis; a close friendship and the bonds of brotherly love united this hierarch with the blessed Sergius; they often held soul-profitable conversations, and the holy metropolitan frequently sought the counsel of the venerable abbot. Once, visiting the monastery, Alexis said to Sergius:

"Beloved, I wish to ask one favor of you, and I think that out of love for me you will not refuse my request."

The elder answered the archpastor:

"Holy vladyka, we are all under your authority; nothing is forbidden to you in this monastery."

Then the metropolitan said:

"With God's help, I wish to build a monastery. For when we were sailing from Constantinople, a violent storm arose, so that the ship was in danger of sinking, and destruction threatened us. All began to pray to God; I too began to beseech Him to deliver us from impending death. In so doing I vowed to build a church in the name of that saint whose memory is celebrated on the day when the Lord grants us to disembark on the shore. From that hour the storm ceased, calm came, and we reached the shore on the 16th of August[18]. Now I wish to fulfill my vow: to build a church in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in honor of His Image not made by hands; beside it I wish to establish a monastery and introduce in it the common life. Therefore I ask you: give me your beloved disciple Andronicus."

The saint readily fulfilled the metropolitan's request. Having given an offering for the needs of the monastery, Alexis departed for Moscow, and there, on the banks of the Yauza, founded a monastery[19], where he entrusted the leadership to the aforementioned Andronicus. Some time later the Venerable Sergius himself arrived at the new monastery; blessing his disciple, he said:

"O Lord, look down from heaven upon this place and visit it with Thy mercy."

The same hierarch Alexis, giving thanks to the Lord for the healing, through his humble prayers, of the Tatar queen Taidula, founded an-

18. On 16 August is celebrated the translation from Edessa to Constantinople of the image of our Lord Jesus Christ not made by hands, which took place in 944.

other monastery in Moscow in memory of the Miracle of the Archangel Michael; and for this Chudov monastery the metropolitan asked Sergius for several elders.

The name of the Venerable is also connected with the founding of another monastery in Moscow, namely the Simonov Monastery.[20] The aforementioned Theodore, nephew of Sergius, dwelt for a long time in the monastery of the great ascetic, flourishing in virtues and wearing out his flesh with abstinence. He never concealed anything from his spiritual father, the abbot, but confessed to him every thought. When he was already a hieromonk, he desired to found a monastery somewhere, and he told this to the Venerable Sergius. After some time St. Sergius, seeing in this the will of God, blessed Theodore and released him, together with some of the brethren. Having found a place near the river Moscow, Simonovo, Theodore resolved to found a monastery here. When the Venerable heard of this, he came, blessed Theodore, and praised his intention. Theodore built a church in the name of Our Most Pure Lady the Theotokos, in honor of Her glorious Nativity; having established the monastery here, Theodore also introduced in it the common life. The fame of Theodore's virtuous life spread widely, and the number of monks of his monastery continually grew. The Venerable Sergius himself often visited this monastery and, according to tradition, took part in the labors of the brethren. After some time the Venerable Theodore was raised to the rank of Archbishop of Rostov, and there he shone by his virtues like a bright lamp until his death, which took place on 28 November 1394.

Not only in Moscow but in many other places there arose monasteries, these lights of the true faith, founded by the disciples of the Venerable Sergius or established by the great ascetic himself. Thus Grand Prince Demetrius Ivanovich, desiring to raise a monastery in Kolomna on the site called Golutvino, earnestly asked St. Sergius to bless that place and to erect a church there. Moved by such faith of the Grand Prince, and impelled by love for him, the Venerable went to Kolomna on foot—he always had this custom—blessed that place, and erected there

19. The Monastery of the Savior and St. Andronicus was founded in 1361.
20. The beginning of the Simonov Monastery dates to about 1370.

a church in the name of the holy Theophany. At the request of the Grand Prince he gave for the new monastery one of his disciples, Hieromonk Gregory, a man reverent and pious; soon this monastery too, where the common life was likewise established, flourished by the grace of God to the glory of the One God, glorified in the Trinity.[21]

At the request of another prince, Vladimir Andreevich, the Venerable blessed a place in Serpukhov for a monastery in honor of the Conception of the Most Holy Theotokos. To this monastery, called Vysotsky, the saint sent as its builder one of his most beloved disciples, Athanasius, mighty in the Divine Scriptures, distinguished by extraordinary obedience and other virtues, and who labored much in copying books.[22] Thus the Venerable Sergius, blessing many monasteries and sending his disciples there, labored for the benefit of the Church and to the glory of the holy and great name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The life of the Venerable, equal to the angels, his extraordinary humility, and his labors for the benefit of the Church inspired the holy Metropolitan Alexis with the desire to have the blessed Sergius as his successor and deputy.

This worthy shepherd of Christ's flock, noticing that his death was already approaching, summoned the Venerable Sergius, and taking his episcopal cross adorned with gold and precious stones, handed it to the Venerable. But the great ascetic, bowing humbly, said:

"Forgive me, holy vladyka; from my youth I have not been a wearer of gold, and in old age I desire all the more to remain in poverty."

St. Alexis said to him:

"Beloved, I know that such has always been your life; but now show obedience and receive the blessing that we give you."

With these words he himself placed the cross upon the saint, and then began to speak:

"Do you know, Venerable, why I have summoned you and what I wish to propose to you? Behold, I have held the Russian Metropolis en-

21. The Kolomna Golutvin Monastery, founded about 1385, was at first situated four versts from the town of Kolomna, where the Moskva River flows into the Oka; but in the eighteenth century the monastery was moved into the town itself, whence it came to be called "New Golutvin."
22. The Vysotsky Monastery, so named because it stands on the high bank of the Nara River, was founded in 1374.

trusted to me by God, as long as it pleased the Lord; but now my end is near, only I do not know the day of my death. I desire, while I am still alive, to find a man who after me could shepherd the flock of Christ, and I find no one but you. I know well that the prince, the boyars, and the clergy—in a word, every single person—love you; all will beg you to ascend the archpastoral throne, since you alone are fully worthy of it. Therefore accept now the episcopal rank, so that after my death you may be my deputy."

Hearing these words, the Venerable, who considered himself unworthy of such a rank, was greatly troubled in spirit.

"Forgive me, vladyka," he answered the hierarch, "you wish to lay upon me a burden beyond my strength. This is impossible: I am a sinner and the most lowly of all men; how shall I dare to accept so high a rank?"

For a long time the blessed hierarch Alexis persuaded the Venerable. But Sergius, who loved humility, remained unyielding.

"Holy vladyka," he said, "if you do not wish to banish me from these parts, then do not speak of this any more, and do not allow anyone else to trouble me with such words: no one will find in me agreement to this."

Seeing that the saint remained unyielding, the archpastor ceased speaking to him about it: he feared that the Venerable might withdraw to more distant places and deserts, and Moscow would be deprived of such a lamp. Having comforted him with spiritual conversation, the hierarch dismissed him peacefully to his monastery.

After some time the holy Metropolitan Alexis died; then all earnestly pleaded with Sergius to accept the Russian Metropolis. But the Venerable remained firm as adamant. Meanwhile Archimandrite Michael ascended the archpastoral throne; he dared to clothe himself in the hierarchal vestments and to put on the white klobuk before his consecration. Supposing that Sergius would hinder his bold intention and would himself wish to occupy the metropolis, he began to plot against the Venerable and his monastery. The blessed one, learning of this, said to his disciples:

"Michael, who exalts himself above this monastery and above our meagreness, will not obtain what he desires, and will not even see Constantinople, for he is overcome by pride."

The prophecy of the saint was fulfilled: when Michael was sailing on a ship to Constantinople for consecration,[23] he fell ill and died, and Cyprian was raised to the throne.[24]

For more than a hundred and fifty years the Russian land had endured a grievous calamity: more than a hundred and fifty years had passed since the Tatars had seized it. Heavy and humiliating was the yoke of these terrible conquerors; frequent raids upon whole regions, the devastation of the population, the slaughter of inhabitants, the destruction of God's churches, and heavy tribute—all this lay upon the Russian land as an unbearable oppression; the princes often had to journey to bow before the Horde and there were subjected to various humiliations. Not infrequently, too, disagreements and quarrels arose among the princes themselves, which hindered them from uniting and casting off the yoke of the alien tribes.

At this time, by God's permission for the sins of men, one of the Tatar khans, the impious Mamai, rose against Rus with all his countless hordes. The proud khan even wished to destroy the Orthodox faith; in his haughtiness he said to his nobles:

"I will take the Russian land, I will lay waste the Christian churches, and I will slay all the Russian princes."

In vain the pious Prince Demetrius Ivanovich tried by gifts and submission to appease the fury of the Tatars; the khan was implacable; already the hordes of the enemy, like a thundercloud, were drawing near the borders of the Russian land. The Grand Prince also began to prepare for the campaign, but before setting out on the way, he went to the Monastery of the Life-Giving Trinity, to bow before the Lord and to ask a blessing for the forthcoming campaign from the hegumen of that monastery; having prayed fervently before the icon of the Most Holy Trinity, Demetrius said to the Venerable Sergius:

"You know, Father, what great grief crushes me and all the Orthodox: the impious khan Mamai has moved all his hordes, and behold,

they are advancing upon my patrimony, to lay waste the holy churches and to destroy the Russian people. Pray, then, Father, that God may deliver us from this great calamity."

Hearing this, the Venerable began to encourage the prince and said to him:

"It behooves you to care for the flock entrusted by God, and to go forth against the impious."

After this the holy elder invited the prince to hear the Divine Liturgy; when it was finished, Sergius asked Demetrius Ivanovich to partake of food in his monastery; although the Grand Prince was hastening to go to his army, he obeyed the holy hegumen. Then the elder said to him:

"This meal, Grand Prince, will be to your benefit. The Lord God is your helper; the time has not yet come for you yourself to bear the crowns of victory, but for many—for countless many of your fellow combatants—crowns of suffering are prepared."

After the meal the Venerable, sprinkling the Grand Prince and those who were with him with holy water, said to him:

"The enemy awaits final destruction, but for you there await mercy, help, and glory from God. Trust, then, in the Lord and in the Most Pure Theotokos."

Then, making the sign of the honorable cross over the prince, the Venerable prophetically declared:

"Go forth, lord, fearlessly: the Lord will help you against the impious; you will conquer your enemies."

His last words were said to the Prince alone. The defender of the Russian land rejoiced, and the Saint's prophecy moved him to tears of tenderness. At that very time there lived in the monastery of Sergius two monks, Alexander Peresvet and Andrew Oslyabya, who had been warriors in the world and were experienced in martial affairs. The Grand Prince asked Venerable Sergius for these warrior-monks, and the Elder at once granted Demetrius Ivanovich's request. He ordered

23. At that time the Russian Church was still subject to the Patriarch of Constantinople.
24. He was Metropolitan from 1354 to 1391.

that the schema bearing the image of the Cross of Christ be placed upon these monks:

"Behold, children, an invincible weapon. Let it be for you in place of helmets and shields of war!"

Then the Grand Prince exclaimed in tenderness:

"If the Lord helps me, and I gain the victory over the godless, I will found a monastery in the name of the Most Pure Mother of God."

After this the Venerable Father once more blessed the Prince and those around him. According to tradition, he gave him an icon of the Lord Almighty, and escorted him as far as the gates of the monastery. Thus the Holy Abbot sought to encourage the Prince in that grievous time, when the impious enemies threatened to wipe the Russian name from the face of the earth and to destroy the Orthodox Faith.

Meanwhile the Russian princes united, and the gathered army set out on campaign. On September 7 the host reached the Don, crossed it, and encamped on the famous Kulikovo Field[25], ready to meet the terrible foe. On the morning of September 8, on the feast of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, the army made ready for battle. Just before the battle, the monk Nektary came from Venerable Sergius with two other brethren. The Holy Abbot wished to strengthen the Prince's courage: he conveyed to him the blessing of the Most Holy Trinity and sent, with the monks, a Theotokos prosphora and a letter in which he comforted him with hope in God's help and foretold that the Lord would grant him victory. News of Sergius's messengers spread quickly through the ranks and inspired the warriors with courage. Trusting in the prayers of Venerable Sergius, they went fearlessly into battle, ready to die for the Orthodox Faith and their native land.

The countless Tatar host advanced like a cloud, and from its midst came forward the champion Chelubey, of enormous stature and extraordinary strength. Arrogant, like the ancient Goliath, he challenged someone from the Russians to single combat. Terrible was the fearsome appearance of this champion. But against him came forth the humble monk Peresvet. Having mentally taken leave of his spiritual father, of

25. The Field of Kulikovo lies in the Epifan district of the Tula Governorate.

his brother Oslyabya, and of the Grand Prince, this valiant warrior of Christ, with a lance in his hands, rushed swiftly upon his adversary. With terrible force they met, and both fell dead. Then a dreadful battle began, such as had never been seen in Rus': they fought with knives and strangled one another with their hands; pressing against one another, they died beneath the hooves of horses; from the dust and the multitude of arrows the sun could not be seen, and blood flowed in streams over a space of ten versts. Many valiant Russian warriors fell that day, but twice as many Tatars were slain; the battle ended in the complete rout of the enemy. The impious and haughty foes fled, leaving behind them the field of battle strewn with the corpses of the fallen; Mamai himself barely escaped with a small retinue.

During the whole time that the dreadful battle was taking place, Venerable Sergius, having gathered the brethren, stood with them in prayer and fervently besought the Lord to grant victory to the Orthodox host. Possessing the gift of foresight, the Saint saw clearly, as if before his eyes, all that was distant from him by a great distance; foreseeing all this, he told the brethren of the victory of the Russians, named the fallen by name, and himself offered prayers for them. Thus the Lord revealed everything to His servant.

The Grand Prince returned to Moscow with the greatest joy, having received the surname Donskoi for so glorious a victory over the Tatars, and at once set out for Venerable Sergius. Arriving at the monastery, he gave thanks to the Lord from his whole heart, "the Mighty in battle," thanked the Holy Abbot and the brethren for their prayers, related the battle to the Venerable Father in detail, ordered requiem liturgies and panikhidas to be served for all the warriors slain on the Kulikovo Field[26], and made a generous donation to the monastery. Remembering the vow he had made before the battle to build a monastery, the Grand Prince, with the help of Venerable Sergius, who chose the site and consecrated the church of the new monastery, built a monastery in honor of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos on the river Dubenka[27], where a cenobitic community was also established.

26. Then the Dimitrievsky Saturday (in October) was established as a day for commemorating the warriors who fell in that battle and all the departed in general.

Soon after this, by the delusion of the devil, the Tatars under the new khan Tokhtamysh treacherously attacked the Russian land[28]. Tokhtamysh suddenly seized Moscow and laid waste to it and several other cities. Venerable Sergius withdrew to Tver. The dreadful enemies were already not far from the monastery, but the mighty right hand of God preserved the monastery from the bold hand of the fearsome conquerors: Tokhtamysh quickly withdrew when he learned that the Grand Prince was approaching with his host.

The Tatars were terrible enough in themselves, but they were even more terrible and dangerous to the Russian land at the time when disputes and quarrels arose among the princes over the Grand Princely throne and other possessions. Some of the princes even entered into alliances with the enemies of the Russian land, the Tatars and the Lithuanians. Our enemies often took advantage of such internecine strife, so that inevitable ruin threatened the Russian land. Yet for its salvation and for the repulse of the terrible enemies, it was necessary for all to unite closely and to defend their homeland firmly against the unbelievers, forgetting all mutual discord. For this it was necessary that supreme power be in the hands of one Grand Prince, so that the other princes would submit to him and carry out his will. Venerable Sergius strove to further this, both before the Battle of Kulikovo and after it, and thereby brought great benefit to his native land. Several times he went now to one prince and now to another, and, with God's help, by his inspired word he often put an end to quarrels. Thus in 1365 he visited Nizhny Novgorod and induced Prince Boris Konstantinovich, who had seized that city from his brother Demetrius, to submit to Grand Prince Demetrius Ivanovich, who demanded that Nizhny Novgorod be returned to Prince Demetrius.

Venerable Sergius also reconciled with the Grand Prince of Moscow the Prince of Ryazan, Oleg. The latter had more than once broken treaties, entering into dealings with the enemies of the Russian land. Demetrius Ivanovich, following the commandment of Christ, several

27. The Dubensky Monastery, built forty versts from the Lavra on the river Dubenka, which flows into the Dubna, no longer exists.
28. The invasion of Tokhtamysh took place in 1382.

times offered Oleg peace, but he rejected all the Grand Prince's proposals. Then the Prince turned to Venerable Sergius with a request to induce Oleg to make peace. In 1385 the humble Abbot, as was his custom, went on foot to Ryazan and long conversed with Oleg. The Ryazan Prince was moved in soul; he was ashamed before the holy man and concluded an everlasting peace with the Grand Prince.

Demetrius Ivanovich himself cherished a particular love and reverence for the Venerable Father: he often turned to the Holy Abbot for counsel and often came to him for a blessing. He invited Sergius to be the sponsor of his children. Even the Prince's testament was confirmed by the signature of the Venerable Father; in this testament an order was established once and for all for the succession to the Grand Princely throne: the supreme authority was to be inherited by the eldest son.

The aforementioned Prince Vladimir Andreevich cherished filial love and great faith toward the Blessed One: he often came to him and often sent him as a gift something needful for daily life. Once, as was his custom, he sent a servant with various foods to the monastery of the Venerable Father. On the way the servant, through the delusion of the devil, was tempted and ate a little of the food sent. Arriving at the monastery, he told the Saint that these foods had been sent by the Prince. But the Elder, who saw clearly, did not wish to accept them, saying:

"Why, child, did you obey the enemy? Why did you let yourself be enticed, having tasted of the foods which you were not to touch without a blessing?"

The servant, rebuked, fell at the feet of the holy Elder and with tears began to beg his forgiveness, repenting of his transgression. Only then did the Venerable Father accept what had been sent. He forgave the servant, forbidding him to do anything of the kind again, and dismissed him in peace, and he bade him convey to the pious Prince thanks and a blessing from the monastery of the Holy Trinity.

Many turned to the Venerable Father, asking his help and intercession, and Sergius always helped those in distress and defended the oppressed and the poor. Near the monastery lived a certain miserly and hard-hearted man; he wronged his neighbor, an orphan: he took from

him a pig, without paying money for it, and ordered it to be slaughtered. The wronged man went to complain to the Venerable Father and begged his help. Then the Venerable Father summoned that man and said to him:

"Child, do you believe that there is a God? He is the Judge of the righteous and the sinful, the Father of orphans and widows; He is ready to take vengeance, but it is fearful to fall into His hands. How, then, do we not fear to take what belongs to another, to wrong our neighbor, and to do every evil? Are we not yet content with what He gives us by His grace, that we are enticed by another's goods? How can we despise His long-suffering? Do we not see that those who do unrighteousness become destitute, their houses are emptied, and their memory vanishes forever; and in the age to come an endless torment awaits them?"

And the Saint instructed this man at length, and bade him pay the orphan the due price, adding:

"Never oppress orphans."

That man repented, promised to amend his ways and to return the money to his neighbor; but after some time he changed his intention and did not give the orphan the money. And so, going into the storeroom where the meat of a slaughtered pig was kept, he suddenly saw that all of it was eaten through with worms, although it was then freezing weather. Seized with fear, he at once paid the orphan what was due and threw the meat to the dogs.

Once there came to Moscow from Constantinople a certain bishop; he had heard much of the holy servant of God, but did not believe it.

"Can such a great lamp," he thought, "appear in these lands?"

Reasoning thus, he resolved to go to the monastery and see the elder for himself. As he drew near the monastery, fear came upon him; but no sooner had he entered the monastery and looked upon the saint than he was at once struck blind. Then the Venerable Father took him by the hand and led him into his cell. With tears the bishop began to implore Sergius, told him of his unbelief, begged for the restoration of his sight, and repented of his sin. The humble abbot touched his eyes, and the bishop at once regained his sight. Then the Venerable Father spoke

with him meekly and gently, and said that one must not become proud; and the bishop, who had earlier doubted, now assured everyone that the saint was truly a man of God, and that the Lord had vouchsafed him to behold an earthly angel and a heavenly man. The Venerable Father escorted the bishop from his monastery with due honor, and he returned home glorifying God and His servant Sergius.

Once at night the blessed Sergius stood before the icon of the Most Pure Mother of God, performing his customary rule, and, gazing upon her holy face, prayed thus:

"O Most Pure Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, intercessor and strong helper of the human race, be for us unworthy an Intercessor; pray always to Thy Son and our God, that He may look upon this holy place. We Thy servants call upon Thee, Mother of sweetest Christ, for help, for Thou art the refuge and hope of all."

Thus the Venerable Father prayed and sang the thanksgiving canon to the Most Pure One. Having finished his prayer, he sat down for a short time to rest. Suddenly he said to his disciple Micheas:

"Child, watch and be sober! At this hour an unexpected and wondrous visitation will come to us."

No sooner had he spoken these words than a voice was suddenly heard, saying:

"Behold, the Most Pure One comes."

Hearing this, the saint hurried out of the cell into the vestibule; here a great light, brighter than the radiance of the sun, shone upon him, and he was vouchsafed to behold the Most Pure One, accompanied by two Apostles, Peter and John: an extraordinary brilliance surrounded the Mother of God. Unable to bear such a wondrous radiance, the saint fell prostrate. The Most Pure One touched the saint with Her hands and said:

"Do not be afraid, My chosen one! I have come to visit you, for your prayers on behalf of the disciples have been heard. Grieve no more over this monastery: henceforth it will have abundance in everything, not only during your life but also after your departure to God. I shall never abandon this place."

Having said this, the Most Pure Mother of God became invisible. The saint was struck with great fear and trembling. Coming to himself after some time, he saw that his disciple was lying as if dead. The saint raised him; then Micheas began to bow at the feet of the elder, saying:

"Father, for the Lord's sake, tell me what this wondrous appearance was; my soul almost parted from my body, so marvelous was this vision."

The saint was filled with great joy; even his face shone with inexpressible exultation; he could say nothing else but:

"Child, wait a little, for my soul too trembles from the wondrous vision!"

For some time the Venerable Father stood in silence; after this he said to his disciple:

"Call Isaac and Simon to me!"

When they came, the saint told them everything in order, how he had seen the Most Pure Mother of God with the Apostles and what She had said to him. Hearing this, they were filled with great joy, and all together they served a moleben to the Mother of God; and the saint spent that whole night without sleep, reflecting on the merciful visitation of the Most Pure Sovereign Lady.

Once the Venerable Father was celebrating the Divine Liturgy. His aforementioned disciple Simon, a man of proven virtue, was then the ecclesiarch. Suddenly he saw fire moving over the Holy Table, illuminating the sanctuary and encircling the officiating Sergius, so that the saint was enveloped in flame from head to foot. And when the Venerable Father approached to receive the Mysteries of Christ, the fire rose up and, coiling like some wondrous veil, sank into the holy chalice, from which this worthy servant of Christ, St. Sergius, partook.

Seeing this, Simon was struck with terror and stood in silence. After communing, Sergius withdrew from the Holy Table and, realizing that Simon had been vouchsafed a vision, called him and asked:

"Child, why has your soul been so terrified?"

"Father, I have beheld a wondrous vision: I saw the grace of the Holy Spirit working together with you."

Then the Venerable Father forbade him to tell this to anyone, saying:

"Do not speak of this to anyone while the Lord has not called me to Himself."

And both of them began to give fervent thanks to the Creator, who had shown them such mercy.

Having lived many years in great abstinence amid unceasing labors, having performed many glorious miracles, the Venerable Father attained to deep old age. He had already reached seventy-eight years. Six months before his death, foreseeing his departure to God, he called the brethren together and entrusted their guidance to his disciple Nikon: though young in years, this man was wise in spiritual experience. Throughout his whole life this disciple had imitated his teacher and mentor, the Venerable Sergius. It was this Nikon whom the saint appointed abbot, while he himself gave himself wholly to perfect stillness and began to prepare for departure from this temporal life. In the month of September he fell into a grievous illness and, feeling his end approaching, called the brethren to him. When they had gathered, the Venerable Father addressed them once more with teaching and instruction; he exhorted the monks to remain in the faith and in unanimity, implored them to preserve purity of soul and body, bequeathed to them unfeigned love toward all, counseled them to turn away from evil lusts and passions, to observe moderation in food and drink, urged them not to forget hospitality and to be humble, and to flee earthly glory. At last he said to them:

"I am departing to God, who calls me, and I entrust you to the Almighty Lord and to His Most Pure Mother; may She be your refuge and a wall against the arrows of the wicked one."

In the very last moments the Venerable Father desired to be vouchsafed the holy Mysteries of Christ. He could no longer rise from his bed by himself: his disciples reverently supported their teacher under the arms when for the last time he partook of the Body and Blood of Christ; then, raising his hands, he committed his pure soul to the Lord in prayer.[29] No sooner had the saint departed than an inexpressible fra-

grance spread throughout his cell. The face of the righteous one shone with heavenly blessedness; it seemed he had fallen asleep in a deep slumber.

Bereft of their teacher and mentor, the brethren shed bitter tears and grieved greatly, like sheep that have lost their shepherd; with funeral hymns and psalmody they buried the honorable body of the saint and laid it in the monastery where he had so zealously labored throughout his life.

More than thirty years had passed since the repose of the Venerable Sergius. The Lord willed to glorify His servant still more. At that time there lived near the monastery a pious man; having great faith in the saint, he often came to the tomb of Sergius and fervently prayed to the servant of God. Once at night, after fervent prayer, he fell into a light sleep; suddenly St. Sergius appeared to him and said:

"Tell the abbot of this monastery: why do they leave me so long beneath the cover of the earth in the tomb, where water surrounds my body?"

Awakening, that man was filled with fear and at the same time felt in his heart an extraordinary joy; he immediately told of this vision to Nikon, the disciple of the Venerable Sergius, who was then abbot. Nikon told the brethren of it, and great was the rejoicing of all the monks. The report of such a vision spread far, and therefore many people flocked to the monastery; there came also Prince Yuri Dmitrievich,[30] who revered the Venerable Father as a father and took much care for the holy monastery. As soon as those gathered opened the tomb of the Venerable Father, at once a great fragrance spread round about. Then they saw a wondrous miracle: not only had the honorable body of the Venerable Sergius been preserved whole and unharmed, but corruption had not touched even his garments; on both sides of the tomb stood water, yet it did not touch either the relics of the Venerable Father or his clothing. Seeing this, all rejoiced and praised God, who had so wondrously glorified His servant. With jubilation the holy relics of the Venerable Father were placed in a new

29. The repose of the Venerable Sergius took place on 25 September 1392.
30. Prince of Zvenigorod.

reliquary. This uncovering of the relics of the Venerable Sergius took place on 5 July 1428, and in memory of it a feast was established.

The merciful Lord has wondrously glorified His great servant: numerous and manifold miracles are granted to all who call upon his holy name in faith and who fall before the reliquary of his wonderworking and many-healing relics. The humble ascetic fled from worldly glory, but the mighty right hand of God exalted him on high, and the more he humbled himself, the more God glorified him. While still on earth, the Venerable Sergius wrought many miracles and was granted wondrous visions; but, filled with the spirit of humility and meekness, he forbade his disciples to speak of these things. After his repose, he received such power from the Lord that the various miracles accomplished through his prayers are like a many-watered river that does not diminish its streams. True and unfailing is the word of Scripture: "Terrible art Thou, O God, in Thy sanctuary" [God is wonderful in His saints] (Ps. 67:36). Wondrous are the miracles granted to all through this servant of God: the blind receive their sight, the lame healing, the mute the gift of speech, the demoniacs deliverance from evil spirits, the sick health, those in distress help and intercession, those oppressed by enemies protection, the sorrowing relief and consolation; in a word, help is granted to all who turn to the Venerable Sergius. The sun shines brightly and warms the earth with its rays, but this wonderworker shines still more brightly, enlightening human souls with his miracles and prayers. The sun sets, but the glory of this wonderworker shall never fade; it will shine eternally, for the Holy Scripture says: "But the righteous live for evermore" (Wis. 5:15).

It is impossible to pass over in silence the miracles of this servant of God, yet it is not easy to describe them; so great is their number, so varied are they. Let us mention only the most important of the wonders by which God was pleased to glorify His great ascetic[31].

31. The account of the posthumous miracles of the Venerable Sergius was compiled from the Menaia of Metropolitan Macarius of All Russia, from the Lives of Sergius composed by Metropolitans Platon and Philaret, and on the basis of the narrative of the posthumous miracles of Simon Azaryin; the account of the miracles during the Polish siege of the Lavra is taken from the *Tale of the Siege of the Trinity Monastery* by the cellarer Avraamy Palitsyn; the early printed Lives of the Venerable Sergius and other historical sources have also been taken into account.

Though he had left the brethren in visible form, the Venerable Sergius did not cease his invisible communion with them; this great wonderworker cared for his monastery even after his repose, appearing several times to members of the brotherhood. Thus once a monk of this monastery, named Ignatius, was granted such a vision: St. Sergius stood at the All-night Vigil in his accustomed place and took part with the other brethren in the church chanting. Ignatius, astonished, at once related this to the brotherhood, and all with great joy gave thanks to the Lord, who had granted them so great an intercessor and helper.

In the autumn of 1408, when the aforementioned disciple of the Venerable Sergius, Nikon, was abbot, the Tatars under the fierce leader Edigei began to approach the borders of Moscow. The Venerable Nikon long besought the Lord that He would preserve this place and protect it from the invasion of the dread enemies; in doing so he invoked the name of the great founder of this monastery, the Venerable Sergius. One night, after prayer, he sat down to rest and fell into a doze. Suddenly he sees the hierarchs Peter and Alexis, and with them the Venerable Sergius, who said:

"It was the good pleasure of the Lord that foreign peoples should touch this place also; but you, child, do not grieve and do not be troubled: the monastery will not be laid waste, but will flourish even more."

Then, having given his blessing, the saints became invisible. Coming to himself, the Venerable Nikon hastened to the doors, but they were locked; opening them, he saw the saints walking from his cell toward the church. Then he understood that this was not a dream but a true vision. The prediction of the Venerable Sergius was soon fulfilled: the Tatars laid waste the monastery and burned it. But Nikon, forewarned in this wondrous manner, with the brethren withdrew from the monastery for a time; and when the Tatars retreated from the borders of Moscow, Nikon, with the help of God and through the prayers of the Venerable Sergius, rebuilt the monastery and erected a stone church in honor of the Holy Trinity, where the relics of the Venerable Sergius rest to this day[32]. Many worthy men saw St. Alexis together with the

Venerable Sergius coming to consecrate the new buildings of the monastery.

During the abbacy of the same Venerable Nikon, a monk was felling trees to build cells; he badly cut his face with an axe. From the great pain he could not continue his work and returned to his cell; evening was already coming, and at that time the abbot happened not to be in the monastery. Suddenly the monk hears someone knock at the door of the cell and name himself the abbot; weakened by pain and loss of blood, he could not rise to open the door; then it opened of itself, a wondrous light suddenly filled the whole cell, and in the midst of this radiance the monk saw two men, one of whom was in episcopal vestments. The sufferer mentally began to ask a blessing of those who had come. The luminous elder pointed out to the hierarch the foundations of the cell, and the latter blessed them. Then the sick man, to his greatest astonishment, noticed that the blood had stopped flowing from his wound, and he felt completely healed. From this he understood that he had been granted to see St. Alexis and the Venerable Sergius. Thus these holy men, bound together by close ties of brotherly love during their lives, after death too often appeared together to many.

One of the inhabitants of Moscow, named Symeon, born according to the saint's prediction, fell so gravely ill that he could neither move, nor sleep, nor take food, but lay as one dead on his bed. Suffering in this way, one night he began to call upon St. Sergius for help:

"Help me, Venerable Sergius, deliver me from this sickness; even during your life you were so merciful to my parents and foretold my birth; do not forget me, who suffer in so grievous an illness."

Suddenly two elders appeared before him; one of them was Nikon; the sick man at once recognized him, for he had personally known this saint even during his life; then he understood that the second of those who appeared was the Venerable Sergius himself. The wondrous elder marked the sick man with the sign of the cross, and after this bade Nikon take the icon that stood by the bed, which had once been given to Symeon by Nikon himself. Then to the sick man it seemed that all his

32. The consecration of this church took place on 25 September 1412.

skin had peeled off from his body; after this the saints became invisible. In that very moment Symeon felt that he was completely recovered: he rose from his bed, and no one supported him any longer; then he understood that it was not his skin that had come off, but that the sickness had left him. Great was his joy; rising, he began fervently to thank St. Sergius and the Venerable Nikon for his unexpected and so wondrous healing.

Once, as usual, a great multitude of people gathered at the monastery of the Venerable Sergius, for a great feast in honor of the Holy Trinity was approaching. Among those who came was a poor blind man who had lost his sight at the age of seven; he stood outside the church, where at that time the solemn divine service was being reverently celebrated; his guide had left him for a while; listening to the church chanting, the blind man grieved that he could not enter and bow before the relics of the Venerable Sergius, who, as he had often heard, granted so many healings. Abandoned by his guide, he began to weep bitterly; suddenly there appeared to him the swift helper of all who are in distress, St. Sergius; taking him by the hand, the Venerable Sergius led this man into the church, brought him to the reliquary, and the blind man bowed before it, and at once his blindness vanished. Many people were witnesses of this glorious miracle; all gave thanks to God and glorified His servant; and the man who had received healing, in gratitude, remained forever in the monastery of the Venerable Sergius and helped the brethren in their labors in return for his healing.

In 1551 Tsar John Vasilyevich the Terrible[33] founded the town of Sviyazhsk[34] for protection against the Tatars; in this town a monastery was built in honor of the Holy Trinity, where an image of the Venerable Sergius was kept; many miracles were granted through this icon, not only to the faithful but also among unbelieving pagans. Once the elders of the mountain Cheremis[35] came to Sviyazhsk in submission; they related the following: "About five years before the founding of this

33. Ivan Vasilyevich the Terrible reigned from 1533 to 1584.
34. Sviyazhsk is now a district town of the Kazan Governorate.
35. The Cheremis are a Finnic people, scattered chiefly in the Vyatka, Kazan, Orenburg, Perm, Kostroma and Nizhny Novgorod governorates.

town, when this place was empty, we often heard here the sound of Russian church bells; we sent swift young men here to see what was happening; they heard voices singing beautifully, as if in a church, but saw no one; only one monk walked about with a cross, blessing on all sides, and as it were measuring out the place where the town now stands, and that whole place was filled with fragrance. When arrows were shot at him, they did not wound him, but flew upward and broke, falling to the ground. We told our princes of this, and they told the tsaritsa and the nobles."

But especially many miracles were wrought by the Venerable Sergius during the grievous siege of the Holy Trinity Monastery by the Poles. By his appearances the saint wished to hearten the courage of the defenders of this renowned monastery and strengthen all Orthodox people. The enemies, under the command of Lisovsky and Sapieha, began to besiege the monastery on 23 September 1608; their number was enormous, reaching 30 thousand, while the defenders numbered little more than two thousand. Therefore all who had gathered in the monastery were greatly disheartened. Amid universal weeping and lamentation, an All-night Vigil was celebrated on the eve of 25 September—the day on which the memory of St. Sergius is kept. But the Venerable hastened to encourage those who were in sorrow and distress: that very night a monk named Pimen had a vision. This monk was praying to the All-Merciful Savior and the Most Pure Mother of God; suddenly his cell became as light as day. Thinking that the enemies had set the monastery on fire, Pimen came out of his cell, and a wondrous sight appeared to him: he saw above the church of the Life-giving Trinity a pillar of fire rising up to the heavens. In amazement Pimen called other monks and some laymen, and all marveled at this extraordinary vision. After some time the pillar began to descend and, gathering itself into a fiery cloud, entered the Trinity church through the window above the entrance.

Meanwhile the besiegers showered the monastery with cannonballs; but the almighty right hand of God protected the monastery of the Most Holy Trinity: the cannonballs fell in empty places or into ponds and did little harm to the besieged. A multitude of people had gathered

under the protection of the monastery walls, so that within the monastery there was extraordinary overcrowding; many had no shelter, despite the late season. Meanwhile the enemies began to dig a mine under the monastery and wore down the strength of the besieged with frequent raids. To encourage those within the monastery, the Venerable appeared one Sunday to the sacristan Irinarch and foretold an enemy attack. Then that same elder saw how St. Sergius walked along the enclosure and sprinkled it with holy water. The following night the enemies indeed made a fierce assault upon the monastery, but the defenders, forewarned in this miraculous manner, repelled them and inflicted no small defeat upon them.

Although the besieged knew that a mine was being dug, they did not know its direction; every moment they were threatened with cruel destruction, and each man saw death before his eyes at every hour. In this sorrowful time all hastened with zeal to the church of the Life-giving Trinity; all cried out to God for help with heartfelt compunction, and all repented of their sins. There was no one who did not turn in faith to the relics of the great intercessors Sergius and Nikon; having been vouchsafed the precious Body and Blood of the Lord, all prepared for death. In those grievous days the Venerable Sergius appeared to Archimandrite Joasaph[36]. Once, after fervent prayer before the icon of the Most Holy Trinity, Joasaph fell into a light doze; suddenly he saw the saint, his hands raised, praying tearfully to the Most Holy Trinity. When he had finished his prayer, he turned to the archimandrite and said to him:

"Rise, brother; it is now fitting to pray: 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation' (Mt. 26:41). The almighty and all-merciful Lord has had mercy on you, that you may continue to labor in prayer and repentance in the time to come."

The archimandrite told the brethren of this appearance, and greatly comforted the people who were seized with fear and overwhelmed by sorrow.

36. Ioasaf was archimandrite from 1608 to 1610.

Soon afterward the same Archimandrite Joasaph was vouchsafed yet another vision. Once he was performing his rule in his cell, when suddenly the Venerable Sergius entered and said:

"Rise and do not grieve, but offer your prayers with gladness, for the Most Pure Mother of God, the Ever-Virgin Mary, with the ranks of Angels and all the saints, prays to God for you all."

The Venerable Sergius appeared not only to those who were in the holy monastery, but also to the Cossacks besieging the Lavra. One Cossack from the enemy camp came to the monastery and told of the Venerable's appearances: many commanders had seen two radiant elders walking along the monastery walls, resembling the wonderworkers Sergius and Nikon; one censed the monastery, while the other sprinkled it with holy water. Then they turned toward the Cossack regiments, reproaching them for wishing, together with the non-Orthodox, to lay waste the house of the Most Holy Trinity. Some of the Poles began shooting at the elders, but the arrows and bullets rebounded upon the very men who shot them and wounded many of them. That same night the Venerable appeared in a dream to many Poles and foretold their destruction.[37] Some of the Cossacks, terrified by this appearance, left the enemy camp and went home, promising never again to take up arms against the Orthodox. By God's mercy the besieged succeeded in discovering the direction of the mine. They destroyed it, and several defenders gave their lives in so doing, fulfilling Christ's commandment: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn. 15:13). Meanwhile the onset of winter forced the enemies to cease their frequent attacks, but the besieged began to suffer greatly from a terrible enemy within: overcrowding and poor food in the monastery brought on a dreadful illness—scurvy.[38] The small force of defenders dwindled with each day; the hieromonks could not keep up with giving the last rites to the dying; only about 200 men remained able to bear arms. The besieged awaited the resumption of hostilities in

37. Indeed, both chief leaders of the Poles, Sapieha and Lisowski, soon perished: Sapieha died in Moscow in 1611, and Lisowski, on 25 September 1616, on the day of the memory of the Venerable Sergius, was suddenly struck dead, having fallen from his horse.

38. Scurvy: a disease in which the gums swell and ulcers appear on the legs.

despondency. But God wondrously preserved the monastery founded by His great servant. With their scanty forces, the defenders long repelled the assaults of the enemy; yet the more time passed, the more the besieged lost heart. The weak and irresolute even advised surrendering voluntarily to the enemy; they said that it was no longer possible to send anyone to Moscow to ask for help, so tightly had the enemies hemmed in the monastery. Amid this grumbling and despondency, the Venerable Sergius wished to sustain their courage and encourage the fainthearted. He again appeared to the sacristan Irinarch and said:

"Tell the brethren and all the men-at-arms: Why grieve that it is impossible to send word to Moscow? Today, at the third hour of the night, I sent from here to Moscow, to the house of the Most Pure Mother of God and to all the wonderworkers of Moscow, three of my disciples—Mikhei, Bartholomew, and Naum—to serve a moleben there. The enemies saw those who were sent; ask why they did not seize them."

Irinarch told of this appearance; everyone began asking the guards and the enemies whether anyone had seen those sent from the monastery. Then it became clear that the enemies had indeed seen three elders. They pursued them, hoping to overtake them quickly, since the horses beneath the elders were very poor. But the pursuers were deceived in their expectation: the horses beneath the elders sped as though winged, and the enemies could in no way catch up with them.

At that time there was an ailing elder in the monastery. Hearing of this, he began to wonder what sort of horses the elders sent by Sergius had ridden, and whether all this had really happened. Then the Venerable suddenly appeared to him; telling him that he had sent the elders on those blind horses which, for lack of fodder, had been let out beyond the monastery enclosure, he healed the elder of his illness and, at the same time, of his unbelief.

On that very day an elder was seen in Moscow, followed by twelve carts laden with baked bread. Moscow, too, was then besieged by enemies. The elder was making his way to the Monastery of the Epiphany, where the Lavra then had a metochion. Those who saw the eld-

er marveled and wondered how he could have passed unseen amid the enemy regiments.

"Who are you, and how did you pass through such a multitude of troops?" the people of Moscow asked the elder.

He answered them:

"We are all from the house of the Most Holy and Life-giving Trinity."

When he was asked what was happening in the monastery of the Venerable Sergius, the elder answered:

"The Lord will not deliver His name to be put to shame by unbelievers; only do not be troubled, brethren, and do not give yourselves over to despair."

Meanwhile a report began to spread through Moscow about those who had arrived from the monastery of the Venerable Sergius; Tsar Vasily[39] himself asked why they had not been brought to him. Many people began gathering at the Monastery of the Epiphany, but no one there saw those who had arrived. When a great abundance of bread suddenly appeared in that monastery, people understood that it had been a vision.

Moscow, too, endured the hardships of the siege; the enemies cut off all access to the city, so that bread became very expensive. Tsar Vasily and Patriarch Hermogenes[40] persuaded Avramy Palitsyn, cellarer of the Holy Trinity Monastery,[41] to sell part of the bread stored in the Monastery of the Epiphany at a low price. Avramy carried out this order; but after some time the price of bread again became very high. The Tsar and the patriarch once more asked that bread be released from the Lavra's metochion. Avramy feared that the stores of bread would soon be exhausted, but, trusting in God's mercy and invoking the name of His great servant, the Venerable Sergius, he granted the Tsar's request. At that time a man named Spiridon served in the granary of the Monastery of the Epiphany. As he was raking out the grain, he noticed

39. Vasily Ioannovich Shuisky reigned from 1606 to 1610.
40. Hermogenes, known for his martyr's death, was Patriarch from 1606 to 1612.
41. The cellarer (*kelar*, from the Greek *kellarios*) was obliged to keep the monastery's provisions. Avraamy Palitsyn, who left the account of the Polish siege of the Trinity Lavra, died in 1625.

rye pouring from a crack in the wall; he began to rake it away, but it flowed all the more abundantly. Seeing this miracle, he told the other servants and the cellarer himself. It is worthy of wonder that throughout the whole siege the monastery's stores of bread did not diminish, so that this bread fed both all who lived there and many who came. At last, having been defeated several times, the enemies withdrew in fear from the walls of the Trinity monastery on 12 January 1610.[42]

At that time the whole Russian land was passing through a grievous season: the enemies had scattered over it; some of the towns were besieged, while others did not know what to do, whom to follow, or whom to heed. Much blood did the enemies shed, and the Russian land was perishing. In this sorrowful time the Trinity Lavra brought great benefit to the Fatherland. Its Archimandrite Dionysius[43] and its cellarer Avramy Palitsyn, gathering about them swift and wise scribes, composed letters of exhortation and sent them to the towns. In these letters the Archimandrite and the cellarer called upon all Russian people to unite together and to stand firmly against the enemies of the Russian land and of the Orthodox faith. One of these letters came to Nizhny Novgorod. At that time there lived there a pious man, Kozma Minin; he loved to withdraw often into a private chamber and there, alone, to offer up his fervent prayers to God. Once, in that chamber, St. Sergius appeared to him in a dream vision; the great Wonderworker bade Kozma gather money for the fighting men and go with them to cleanse the Muscovite state of its enemies. Awaking, Kozma pondered this vision in fear; but, judging that the gathering of an army was not his affair, he did not know how to resolve. After a short time the Venerable One appeared to him a second time, yet even after this Kozma remained irresolute. Then St. Sergius appeared to him a third time and said:

"Did I not tell you to gather fighting men? The merciful Lord has been pleased to have mercy upon the Orthodox Christians, to deliver them from turmoil and to bestow upon them peace and quiet. Therefore I told you to go forth for the liberation of the Russian land from its en-

42. In memory of this, on the Sunday nearest the 12th, a cross procession is held in the Lavra.
43. Dionysius was archimandrite of the Trinity Monastery from 1610 and died.

emies. Do not fear that the elders will heed you little: the younger will gladly follow you; this good work will have a good end."

This last vision threw Kozma into trembling; he even fell ill, and then, believing that the sickness had been sent him as punishment for his doubt, he began earnestly to implore the Venerable Sergius for forgiveness, and after this he zealously set himself to the task. He began to persuade his fellow citizens to assemble a host and go forth against the enemies; the young especially helped him. Soon Kozma was elected a communal elder, and the citizens resolved to obey him in everything. Then this pious man gave all his property for the fighting men, and all the people of Nizhny followed his example. Thus he gathered an army, went with it against the godless enemies, and greatly contributed to the liberation of the native land from the Poles and the Lithuanians. Still for some years, by God's permission, they tormented the Russian land and shed the blood of the Orthodox; but the Almighty Lord, who desires not the death of a sinner, looked with His merciful eye upon the Russian state, saved and preserved it through the prayers of His glorious servant, the Venerable Sergius.

Many other miracles did this servant of God perform, and to this day his tomb is an unfailing source of wonderworking; all who come to it in faith receive various and rich mercies. Let us too fall down before the shrine of the all-healing relics of St. Sergius, and in heartfelt tenderness cry out: "Venerable Father Sergius, pray to God for us."

Troparion, Tone 4:

Ascetic of virtues, as a true warrior of Christ our God, thou didst greatly struggle against the passions in this temporal life; by psalmody, vigils and fasting thou didst become a model for thy disciples. Wherefore the All-holy Spirit dwelt in thee, and thou wast brightly adorned by His action. And since thou hast boldness toward the Holy Trinity, remember the flock which thou hast wisely gathered; and forget not, as thou didst promise, to visit thy children, O Venerable Sergius, our father.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Wounded by the love of Christ, O Venerable One, and having followed after Him with unreturning desire, thou didst hate every carnal delight, and as a sun thou didst shine forth upon thy fatherland; wherefore Christ also enriched thee with the gift of miracles. Remember us who honor thy most bright memory, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, Sergius, God-wise.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Euphrosyne of Suzdal

Житие преподобной Евфросинии Суздальской

The Venerable Euphrosyne was the daughter of Prince Michael of Chernigov, a confessor of the Christian faith. For a long time the wife of this prince was childless; with warm faith Prince Michael and the princess turned to the Most Holy Theotokos and to the Venerable Fathers Anthony and Theodosius, and with tears they prayed that they be blessed with fruit of the womb. One night the Most Holy Theotokos appeared to them and said:

"Take courage, pray; your petition shall be fulfilled, and as a sign of this you shall receive a fragrance."

This vision filled them with dread. Awaking from sleep, they found at their bedside a bundle of aromatics; they at once put them into a censer, and the whole house was filled with a wondrous fragrance. Both the nobles and the household of the prince marveled at this ineffable fragrance. Prince Michael and his wife prayed to God yet more fervently. After this the Most Pure Theotokos appeared to them again and placed in their hands a dove, and the house was filled with fragrance. And a third time the Most Holy Theotokos appeared to them with the Venerable Anthony and Theodosius and said:

"Your prayers have been heard: a daughter will be born to you, whom you shall name Theodulia; she will be a servant of the Church of Blachernae."

At last the time of the birth of this daughter came,[44] and the parents named her Theodulia, according to the word of the Mother of God. If

44. The Saint was born in 1212.

her wet-nurse had eaten meat, the saint, though still in swaddling clothes, did not take milk from the nurse's breast that whole day. Seeing this, her mother pondered what would become of her daughter. And then, once, she had such a vision: she herself was flying up to heaven on wings and offering her young daughter to God. Awaking from sleep, she gave thanks to the Most Holy Theotokos for all her wondrous signs. The newborn maiden was enlightened with holy baptism in the Pechersk monastery, in the church of the Most Pure Theotokos. When she grew older, the Right-believing Prince Michael himself taught her Divine Scripture. For the rest, the young princess's tutor was the boyar Theodore, who was distinguished by his wisdom and his learning in the sciences. The pious maiden surpassed all her peers in her progress in learning and in the beauty of her face. Many, hearing of her wisdom and beauty, sought her hand insistently, but were refused. At that time there lived in Suzdal a very pious prince, Mina. He asked the parents of the holy maiden to give Theodulia to him in marriage. They consented, but the maiden herself was greatly grieved by this and earnestly besought the Most Holy Theotokos to preserve her in virginity. The Most Holy Lady appeared to her, bidding her to obey her parents, and said:

"Defilement shall not touch your body."

The holy virgin obeyed the will of her parents and set out for Suzdal; while she was still on the way there, her betrothed died. Arriving in that town, she took the tonsure in the local monastery in honor of the Deposition of the Robe of the Most Holy Theotokos at Blachernae, and at her tonsuring she received the name Euphrosyne. She rendered great obedience to the nuns of that monastery; she greatly wore down her flesh, ceaselessly cared for her soul, and shone brightly with all the virtues. For her holy life Euphrosyne received from God the gift of prophecy; often she instructed all with the Gospel word and healed many sick. During the invasion of the impious Batu the saint preserved the monastery from ruin by her prayers. She passed to eternal life on September 25, the very day on which she had received the tonsure.[45]

* * *

45. St. Euphrosyne reposed in 1250; her honored relics rest in the Ryzopolozhensky Monastery at Suzdal.

Commemoration of the Venerable Martyr Paphnutius

Память преподобномученика Пафнутия

The holy Venerable Martyr Paphnutius lived in the time of the emperor Diocletian and was an Egyptian by birth. Arrian, the governor of Egypt, who persecuted Christians, arriving at the city of Gentyria (Tentyra), commanded 200 soldiers to find and bring to him the ascetic Paphnutius. But, forewarned by an Angel, he presented himself, and after confessing Christ he was cast into prison. Then he was brought again before the governor, and the fetters fell from his hands and feet of their own accord. Then he was subjected to such grievous torments that his entrails fell out, but an Angel healed him. Two soldiers, Dionysius and Callimachus, who had tormented the saint, seeing this, believed and were at once beheaded. Paphnutius, imprisoned, converted 40 officials cast there by the governor. All of them were given to the fire for confessing Christ. After this the saint, miraculously freed from custody and received with joy in the house of a wealthy man named Nestorius, stirred to the struggle of martyrdom both him, his wife and his daughter Stephana, who were beheaded by Arrian; then St. Paphnutius converted 16 disciple youths, children of noble parents; these were pierced with darts, and one of them gave up his spirit on the pyre; 80 fishermen, stirred to martyrdom, were put to death with the axe. Paphnutius himself converted yet another 400 soldiers with their commander Eusebius, who were burned in pits. After this the saint was thrown into the river with a stone, but he floated on that stone to the shore; finally, sent to Diocletian himself, St. Paphnutius was nailed by him to a palm tree and gave up his spirit to God.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 26

26 сентября

New Calendar September 26 · Old Calendar October 9 (civil dates)

Life of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian

Житие святого Апостола и Евангелиста Иоанна Богослова

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian was the son of Zebedee and Salome, daughter of Joseph the Betrothed.[1] He was called to preach the Gospel from his fishing nets. When our Lord Jesus Christ, walking by the Sea of Galilee, was choosing Apostles from among the fishermen, and had already called two brothers, Peter and Andrew, He then saw the other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John, mending their nets in a boat with their father Zebedee, and called them.[2] Immediately, leaving the boat and their father, they followed Jesus Christ.

At the very moment of his calling, John was named by the Lord "Son of Thunder," because his theology, like thunder, was to be heard throughout the whole world and fill the whole earth.[3] John followed his good Teacher, learning the wisdom that issued from His lips; and he was greatly beloved by his Lord Christ for his perfect guilelessness and virginal purity. The Lord honored him as the most excellent of the

1. The homeland of John the Theologian was Bethsaida. His parents were pious people, who lived in expectation of the Messiah. Already in his childhood they taught John the law of Moses. From childhood St. John was also a helper to his father in his labors of fishing and trade. The companions and like-minded friends of John were the inhabitants of the same Bethsaida, the holy brothers Peter and Andrew, who later also became holy Apostles. When St. John the Baptist went out to preach, all these pious youths willingly became his disciples, though they still did not leave their homes or their occupations. They left all this only when the Lord made them His disciples.

2. According to the testimony of the Blessed Jerome, John was still quite a youth when the Lord called him into the number of His disciples. His pious parents did not hinder John, as well as his brother James, from becoming disciples of the Divine Teacher.

twelve Apostles: he was one of the three closest disciples of Christ, to whom the Lord many times revealed His Divine mysteries. Thus, when He wished to raise the daughter of Jairus, He allowed no one to follow Him except Peter, James and John. When on Tabor He wished to show the glory of His Divinity, He took Peter, James, and also John. When He prayed in the garden, John was not absent there either, for He said to the disciples: "Sit here while I go and pray there," and "taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee" (Mt. 26:36–37), that is, James and John. Everywhere John, as the beloved disciple, was never separated from Christ. And how Christ loved him is seen from the fact that John reclined on His breast. For when at the Last Supper the Lord foretold His betrayer, and the disciples began to look at one another in bewilderment as to whom He meant, then John was reclining on the breast of his beloved Teacher; as he himself relates in his Gospel: "One of His disciples, whom Jesus loved, was leaning against Jesus' breast; Simon Peter motioned to him to ask whom He meant; he, leaning back against Jesus' breast, said to Him: Lord, who is it?" (Jn. 13:23–25). So beloved was John by the Lord that he alone could lie without hindrance upon the breast of the Lord and boldly ask Him about this mystery. But John also showed to his loving Teacher a mutual love greater than the other Apostles': for during the voluntary sufferings of Christ they all, leaving their Shepherd, fled, while he alone remained unceasingly watching all the tortures of Christ, sympathizing with Him in his heart, weeping and mourning together with the Most Pure Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Lord; and he did not depart with her from the Son of God who suffered for us, even to the cross and the death of the Savior. For this he was adopted by the Lord at the cross to the Most Pure Virgin Mary: hanging on the cross, the Lord, "seeing His mother and the disciple standing there whom He loved, said to His mother: Woman, behold your son! Then He said to the disciple: Behold your

3. The name "Boanerges" (son of thunder), besides this, pointed also to certain peculiarities of the character of the holy Apostle. Being pure, good, guileless and trusting, he was at the same time full of strong zeal for the glory of God. He loved the Lord with all the power of his innocent heart. Therefore the Lord loved John more than all His other disciples. Already a year after his calling, John was chosen by the Lord from the multitude of His disciples into the number of the twelve Apostles.

mother! And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home" (Jn. 19:26–27). And he treated her as his own mother with all reverence and served her until her honorable and glorious Dormition. On the day of her Dormition, when the honorable and holy body of the Mother of God was carried to burial, Saint John walked before her bier with the royal scepter shining like light, which the Archangel Gabriel had brought to the Most Pure Virgin, announcing to her the translation from earth to heaven.

After the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, Saint John went to Asia Minor together with his disciple Prochorus, where the lot fell to him to preach the Word of God.[4] On the way there, Saint John grieved, for he foresaw dangers at sea, of which he also forewarned his disciple Prochorus. It happened that when they boarded a ship at Joppa and began the voyage, at the eleventh hour of the day a great storm arose, and at night the ship was wrecked, and all who were on it were swimming in the sea waves, each holding onto whatever he had seized. At the sixth hour of the day the sea cast all of them with Prochorus onto the shore five stadia from Seleucia;[5] only John remained in the sea. Prochorus wept much and long and went on alone to Asia. On the fourteenth day of his journey he came to a village lying by the sea, and stopped here to rest. And so, at the time when he once looked at the sea and grieved for John, a foaming sea wave with great noise rushed onto the shore and cast up John alive. Prochorus went up to see whom the sea had thrown up, and, meeting John, lifted him from the ground, and, embracing, they wept and thanked God for everything. Thus Saint John spent fourteen days and nights in the sea, and by the grace of God remained alive. Entering the village, they asked for water and bread, and having been refreshed, they set out for Ephesus.[6]

When they entered the city together, they were met by a woman named Romana (Romeka), who had become famous even to Rome for the malice of her deeds, and who kept public baths in that city. And so

4. In the year 50 A.D., that is, two years after the Dormition of the Mother of God, St. John still remained in Jerusalem, since it is known that he was present at the apostolic council held in Jerusalem in that year. Only after the year 58 A.D. did St. John choose the lands of Asia Minor as the place for preaching the Gospel, where before him St. Apostle Paul had preached.
5. A seaport city in Syria.

she, hiring John and Prochorus, set them to work in the bath and tormented them. By her cunning she drew both of them into her service: she set John to tend the fire and Prochorus to pour water, the one and the other for the whole of their lives, and they remained for a long time in great distress. Now in that bath there was a demon who each year put to death one of those who bathed in it, a youth or a maiden. When this bath was being built and its foundation laid, by a demonic delusion a youth and a maiden were buried alive there; from that time such a murder had continued to occur. It happened at that time that a certain lad named Domnus, son of the city elder Dioscorus, entered the bath. As Domnus was bathing, a demon attacked him and strangled him, and there was great weeping over him. This became known throughout the whole city of Ephesus; learning of it, Dioscorus himself was so grieved that he too died of sorrow. Romana prayed much to Artemis that she would raise Domnus, and while praying she tormented her own body, but nothing helped. While John was asking Prochorus about what had happened, Romana, seeing them conversing, seized John and began to beat him, reproaching him and laying the blame for Domnus' death upon John. At last she said: "If you do not raise Domnus, I will kill you."

After praying, John raised the lad. Romana was struck with terror. She called John God or Son of God, but John preached the power of Christ and taught faith in Christ. Then he also raised Dioscorus, and Dioscorus and Domnus believed in Christ, and they were all baptized. Fear fell upon all the people, and they marveled at what had happened. Some said of John and Prochorus that they were sorcerers, while others justly objected that sorcerers do not raise the dead. John cast the demon out of the bath, and he and Prochorus remained in the house of Dioscorus, confirming the newly enlightened in the faith and teaching them a virtuous life.

6. The first beginnings of the Christian faith were laid in it by the disciples of John the Baptist; already the Apostle Peter found Christians here, but the Gospel was mainly preached here by the Apostle Paul; afterward his disciple Timothy was bishop here; finally, Ephesus was the place of residence of the Apostle John, who also died here. The fruit of the unceasing care of the Apostle John was that in Ephesus the pure Evangelical teaching was preserved, so that the Church of Ephesus, in the words of St. Irenaeus, was a true witness of the apostolic tradition.

At one time a feast of Artemis took place in Ephesus, and the whole people, in white garments, celebrated, rejoicing and exulting at the temple of Artemis; and opposite the temple stood an idol of that goddess. And so John, going up to a high place, stood near the idol and loudly denounced the blindness of the pagans, that they did not know whom they worshipped, and instead of God they honored a demon. The people were filled with fury at this and threw stones at John, but not one of the stones struck him: the stones instead struck down the very ones who threw them. John, raising his hands to heaven, began to pray, and immediately a heat and great scorching came upon the earth, and as many as 200 of the multitude of people fell, and all of them died, while the rest barely came to themselves from fear and entreated John for mercy, for terror and trembling had fallen upon them. When John had prayed to God, all the dead rose again, and they all fell down before John and, believing in Christ, were baptized. There too, in a certain place called Tichi, John healed a paralytic who had lain for 12 years. The one who was healed glorified God.

After John had performed many other signs, and the report of his miracles had spread everywhere, the demon dwelling in the shrine of Artemis, fearing that he too would be overthrown by John, took on the form of a warrior, sat down in a prominent place and wept bitterly. Passers-by asked him whence he was and why he wept so greatly.

He said: "I am from Caesarea in Palestine, the chief over the prisons. I was ordered to guard two sorcerers who had come from Jerusalem, John and Prochorus, whom, on account of the multitude of their wicked deeds, they condemned to death. In the morning they were to perish a cruel death, but by their sorcery they escaped from prison during the night, and because of them I have fallen into trouble, for the prince wishes to destroy me in their place. I begged the prince to let me go in pursuit of them, and now I hear that those sorcerers are here, but I have no one to help me catch them."

Saying this, the demon also showed a document attesting to it, and showed a large bundle of gold, promising to give it to those who would destroy these sorcerers.

When the soldiers heard this, some of them took pity on him and stirred up the people against John and Prochorus. They went to the house of Dioscorus and said: "Either hand over the sorcerers to us, or we will set fire to your house." Dioscorus would rather have had his house burned than give up to them the apostle and his disciple Prochorus. But John, seeing in the spirit that the popular uproar would turn out for good, gave himself and Prochorus over to the gathered crowd. Led by the people, they came to the temple of Artemis. John prayed to God, and suddenly the idol temple fell, without harming a single person. And the apostle said to the demon that sat there:

"I speak to you, impious demon: tell me how many years you have lived here, and was it you who stirred up this people against us?"

The demon answered:

"For 109 years I have dwelt here, and it was I who stirred up this people against you."

John said to him:

"In the name of Jesus of Nazareth I command you to leave this place." And at once the demon came out.

Terror seized all the people, and they believed in Christ. John performed even greater signs, and a great multitude of the people turned to the Lord.

At that time Domitian, Roman emperor, raised a great persecution against the Christians, and John was slandered before him. The eparch of Asia seized the saint and sent him bound to Rome to the Caesar, where for his confession of Christ John first endured blows, and then was made to drink a cup filled with deadly poison. But when, according to the word of Christ, "if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them" (Mk. 16:18), he suffered no harm from it, he was then cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, but he came out of it unharmed as well. And the people cried out: "Great is the God of the Christians!" The Caesar, no longer daring to torment John, considered him immortal and condemned him to exile on the island of Patmos, as the Lord had said to John in a dream: "It behooves you to suffer much, and you shall be exiled to a certain island, which has great need of you."

Taking John with Prochorus, the soldiers led them to a ship and set sail. One day during their voyage, the royal courtiers sat down to dine, and, having abundance of food and drink, they grew merry. One of them, a youth, playing, fell from the ship into the sea and drowned. Then their merriment and joy turned to weeping and lamentation, for they could not help the one who had fallen into the depths of the sea. The father of that youth, who was also there on the ship, wept especially bitterly; he wanted to throw himself into the sea but was held back by others. Knowing John's power to work miracles, they all began earnestly to beg his help. He asked each of them which god each one honored; one said Apollo, another Zeus, a third Hercules, some Aesculapius, others Artemis of Ephesus [7].

And John said to them:

"You have so many gods, and yet they cannot save one drowned man!"

And he left them in sorrow until morning. In the morning John took pity on the youth's death and fervently prayed to God with tears. At once there arose a swell on the sea, and one wave, rising up to the ship, cast the youth alive at John's feet. Seeing this, all were amazed and rejoiced over the youth saved from drowning. They began to honor John greatly and took off his iron fetters.

One night, at five o'clock, a great storm arose on the sea, and all began to cry out, despairing of their lives, since the ship was already beginning to break apart. Then all cried out to John, asking him to help them and to pray to his God for their deliverance from perdition. Bidding them be silent, the saint began to pray, and the storm immediately ceased and a great calm came.

One soldier was afflicted with a stomach illness and was already dying; the apostle made him well.

The water on the ship ran short, and many, exhausted from thirst, were close to death. John said to Prochorus:

"Fill the vessels with sea water."

And when the vessels were filled, he said:

7. Aesculapius, son of Apollo, a legendary physician who, after his death, became, in the opinion of the pagans, the god of medicine, was depicted with a staff entwined by a serpent.

"In the name of Jesus Christ, draw and drink!"

Having drawn it, they found the water sweet, and after drinking they were refreshed. Seeing such wonders, John's companions received baptism and wished to set John free. But he himself persuaded them to take him to the place appointed for him. Arriving at the island of Patmos, they handed the letter to the governor. Miron, the governor's father-in-law, took John and Prochorus into his house. Miron had an elder son, named Apollonides, who had within him a prophesying demon that foretold the future; and everyone regarded Apollonides as a prophet. At the time John entered the house of Miron, Apollonides at once disappeared without a trace; he fled to another city, fearing that the prophesying demon would be cast out of him by John. When a cry arose in Miron's house about Apollonides, a message came from him informing them that John had driven him from the house by his sorcery, and that he could not return until John was destroyed.

Having read the letter, Miron went to his son-in-law the governor to report what had happened; the governor, seizing John, wished to give him to the beasts to be devoured. But John begged the governor to endure a little and to allow him to send his disciple to Apollonides, promising to bring him back to the house. The governor did not hinder the sending of the disciple, but bound John himself with two chains and put him in prison. And Prochorus went to Apollonides with John's letter, in which was written thus: "I, John, apostle of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, command the prophesying spirit dwelling in Apollonides, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit: come out of the creation of God and never enter it again, but be alone outside this island, in waterless places, and not among men."

When Prochorus came to Apollonides with this message, the demon at once came out of him. Apollonides regained his reason, and, as if waking from sleep, he went back with Prochorus to his city. But he did not at once enter the house; first he hastened to the prison to John, and falling at his feet, gave him thanks for freeing him from the unclean spirit. Learning of Apollonides' return, his parents, brothers and sisters all gathered and rejoiced, and John was released from his bonds. Apollonides related about himself the following: "Many years have passed

since I lay on my bed in a deep sleep. Some man, standing on the left side of the bed, shook me and woke me, and I saw that he was blacker than a burnt and rotten stump; his eyes burned like candles, and I trembled with fear. He said to me: 'Open your mouth'; I opened it, and he entered into my mouth and filled my belly; from that hour the good and the evil became known to me, and also everything that happens in the house. But when the apostle of Christ entered our house, then the one sitting within me said to me: 'Flee from here, Apollonides, lest you die in torment, for this man is a sorcerer and wants to kill you.' And I at once fled to another city. When I wished to return, he would not allow me, saying: 'If John does not die, you cannot live in your house.' But when Prochorus came to the city where I was, and I saw him, the unclean spirit at once came out of me by the same way by which he had first entered my belly, and I felt relief from a great burden, my mind came to a sound state, and I was well."

Hearing this, all fell at John's feet. He, opening his mouth, taught them faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And Miron believed with his wife and children, and they were all baptized, and there was great joy in Miron's house. And afterwards the governor's wife, Chrysippida, Miron's daughter, received holy baptism with her son and all her slaves; her husband Lawrence, governor of that island, was baptized after her, laying down his authority in order to serve God more freely. John and Prochorus remained in Miron's house for three years, preaching the word of God. Here, by the power of Jesus Christ, he worked many signs and wonders: he healed the sick and cast out demons, destroyed the temple of Apollo with all its idols by a single word, and, turning many to faith in Christ, baptized them.

In that land there was a certain sorcerer named Cynops, who lived in the wilderness and for many years had dealings with unclean spirits. Because of the apparitions he produced, all the inhabitants of the island regarded him as a god. The priests of Apollo, angered at John for the destruction of the shrine of Apollo and for making all the people followers of Jesus Christ, came to Cynops and complained to him about the apostle of Christ, begging him to avenge the dishonor to their gods. Cynops, however, did not want to go to the city himself, since he had lived

in that place without going out for many years. But the citizens came to him even more often with the same request. Then he promised to send an evil spirit into Miron's house, to take John's soul and deliver it to eternal judgment. In the morning he sent to John one of the princes over the evil spirits, commanding him to bring John's soul to him. Coming into Miron's house, the demon stood in the place where John was. John, seeing the demon, said to him:

"In the name of Christ I command you not to move from this place until you tell me for what purpose you have come here to me."

Bound by John's word, the demon became motionless and said to John:

"The priests of Apollo came to Kinops and begged him to go to the city and bring death upon you, but he would not, saying: 'For many years I have lived in this place, not going out; shall I now trouble myself because of a wicked and insignificant man? Go your way; in the morning I will send my spirit, and he will take his soul and bring it to me, and I will deliver it to eternal judgment.'"

And John said to the demon:

"Has he ever sent you to take a human soul and bring it to him?"

The demon answered:

All the power of Satan is in him, and he has an agreement with our princes; and we are with him, and Kinops listens to us, and we to him.

Then John said:

"I, an apostle of Jesus Christ, command you, evil spirit, not to enter human dwellings nor to return to Kinops, but to depart from this island and be tormented."

And at once the demon departed from the island. Kinops, seeing that the spirit had not returned, sent another; but this one also suffered. And he sent two more of the dark princes: he bade one enter to John, and the other stand outside, to bring him word. The demon who entered to John suffered just as the one who had come before; the other demon, standing outside, seeing the misfortune of his companion, fled to Kinops and told him what had happened. Kinops was filled with fury, and taking the whole multitude of demons, he came into the city. The whole city rejoiced at the sight of Kinops, and all came and bowed

down to him. Finding John teaching the people, Kinops was filled with great fury and said to the people:

"Blind men, who have strayed from the true path, listen to me! If John is righteous and all that he says is true, let him converse with me and perform the same wonders that I perform, and you will see who is greater, John or I. If he proves stronger than I, then I too will believe his words and deeds."

And Kinops said to a certain youth:

"Youth! Is your father alive?"

He answered:

"He is dead."

And Kinops said:

"By what death?"

The same one answered:

"He was a sailor, and when the ship was wrecked, he drowned in the sea."

And Kinops said to John:

"Now show, John, your power, that we may believe your words: present the father to his son alive."

John answered:

"Christ did not send me to draw the dead out of the sea, but to instruct deluded men."

And Kinops said to all the people:

"Now at least believe me that John is a deceiver and is deceiving you; take him and hold him until I bring the youth's father to him alive."

They seized John, and Kinops spread out his hands and struck them upon the water. When a splashing was heard on the sea, all were frightened, and Kinops became invisible. And all cried out:

"Great are you, Kinops!"

And suddenly Kinops came out of the sea, holding, as he had said, the youth's father. All were astonished. And Kinops said:

"Is this your father?"

"Yes, master," answered the youth.

Then the people fell at Kinops' feet and wished to kill John. But Kinops forbade them, saying:

"When you see more than this, then let him be tormented."

Then, calling another man, he said:

"Did you have a son?"

And he answered:

"Yes, master, I had one, but someone killed him out of envy."

And at once Kinops called out with a loud voice, summoning by name the murderer and the murdered, and both appeared. And Kinops said to John:

"Are you amazed, John?"

Saint John answered:

"No, I am not amazed at this."

Kinops said:

"You will see more, and then you will be amazed, and you will not die until I terrify you with signs."

And John answered Kinops:

"Your signs will soon be destroyed."

Hearing such words, the people rushed upon John and beat him until they considered him dead. And Kinops said to the people:

"Leave him unburied; let the birds tear him apart."

And they departed from that place, rejoicing with Kinops. Soon, however, they heard that John was teaching in the place where criminals were stoned. Kinops summoned the demon by whose help he practiced sorcery, and coming to that place, he said to John:

"I intend to inflict upon you an even greater humiliation and shame, and for this reason I left you alive; come to the sandy seashore, and there you will see my glory and be ashamed."

Three demons accompanied him, whom the people took for men raised from the dead by Kinops. Striking his hands together with great force, Kinops plunged into the sea and became invisible to all.

"Great are you, Kinops!" cried the people, "and there is none other greater than you!"

But John commanded the demons, who stood in human form, not to leave him. And he prayed to the Lord that Kinops should not be alive,

and so it came to pass; for the sea was suddenly stirred and boiled with waves, and Kinops did not come out of the sea again, but remained in the depths of the sea, like the ancient accursed Pharaoh. And to those demons whom the people took for men raised from the dead, John said:

"In the name of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen on the third day, depart from this island." And they at once vanished.

The people, however, sat on the sand, waiting three days and three nights for Kinops; from hunger, thirst and the heat of the sun many of them grew faint and lay speechless, and three of their children died. Taking pity on the people, John prayed for their salvation, and after conversing with them at length about the faith, he raised their children and healed the sick, and all of them with one accord turned to the Lord, were baptized, and went home glorifying Christ. And John returned to the house of Miron, and, often coming to the people, he taught them the faith in Jesus Christ. Once he found a sick man lying by the road, grievously suffering from fever, and healed him with the sign of the cross. A Jew named Philo, who had disputed with the apostle from the Scriptures, seeing this, invited John to his house. His wife had leprosy; she fell down before the apostle and was at once healed of the leprosy and believed in Christ. Then Philo himself believed, and with his whole household received holy baptism. Saint John then went out into the marketplace, and the people gathered to hear from his lips the saving teaching. Idol priests also came, and one of them, tempting the saint, said:

"Teacher! I have a son who is lame in both legs; I beg you, heal him; if you heal him, I too will believe in the God whom you preach."

But the saint said to him:

"Why do you so tempt God, who will openly reveal the deceit of your heart?"

Having said this, John sent to his son with these words:

"In the name of Christ, my God, arise and come to me."

And he, rising at once, came to the saint healthy; but the father, for this temptation, at that very hour became lame in both legs, and from severe pain fell to the ground with a cry, imploring the saint:

"Have mercy on me, O hierarch of God, and heal me in the name of Christ, your God, for I believe that there is no other God but Him."

Moved by his entreaties, the saint healed the priest and, having taught him the faith, baptized him in the name of Jesus Christ.

In the morning John came to the place where a man lay suffering from dropsy and had not risen from his bed for 17 years. The apostle healed him with a word and enlightened him with holy baptism. On the same day a man who had become governor after Miron's son-in-law, Lawrence, sent for John, earnestly begging the saint to come to his house; for the governor's wife, who was pregnant, had come to the hour of giving birth, and she suffered greatly, being unable to be delivered of her burden. The apostle came quickly, and scarcely had he set foot on the threshold of the house, when the wife at once gave birth, and her affliction was relieved. Seeing this, the governor believed in Christ with his whole household.

After living there three years, John went to another city, whose inhabitants were darkened by the gloom of idolatry. When he entered it, he saw the people celebrating a feast to the demons, and several bound youths. John asked one of those standing there:

"Why are these youths bound?"

That man answered:

"We worship a great god, a wolf, to whom we are now keeping a feast; to him these youths will be sacrificed."

John asked to be shown their god, to which the man said:

"If you wish to see him, wait until the fourth hour of the day; then you will see the priests going with the people to the place where the god appears; go with them, and you will see our god."

But John said:

"I see that you are a good man, and I have come; I beg you, lead me to that place yourself at once, for I greatly desire to see your god; and if you show him to me, I will give you a precious pearl."

The man led John, and showing him a swamp filled with water, said:

"From here our god comes out and appears to the people."

And John waited for the coming out of that god; and about the fourth hour of the day a demon appeared, coming out of the water in the form of a huge wolf. Halting it in the name of Christ, Saint John asked:

"How many years have you lived here?"

"70 years," answered the devil.

But the apostle of Christ said:

"In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit I command you: depart from this island and never come here again."

And the devil at once vanished. And that man, seeing what had happened, was terrified and fell at the apostle's feet. John taught him the holy faith and said to him:

"Behold, you have from me that pearl which I promised to give you."

Meanwhile the priests reached that place with the bound youths, holding knives in their hands, and with them a great crowd of people. For a long time they waited for the wolf to come out, so that they might slaughter the youths to be devoured by him.

At last John approached them and began to beg that they release the innocent youths:

"Your god, the wolf, is no more," he said; "it was a demon, and the power of Christ has overcome him and driven him out."

Hearing that the wolf had perished, they were frightened, and, not finding it despite long searching, they released the youths and let them go unharmed. Saint John began to preach to them about Christ and to rebuke their delusion, and many of them, believing, were baptized.

In that city there was a bathhouse. Once the son of a priest of Zeus was bathing in it, and was slain by a demon dwelling in the bath. Hearing of this, his father came to John with great weeping, asking him to raise his son and promising to believe in Christ. The saint went with him and, in the name of Christ, raised the dead man. And he asked the youth what had been the cause of his death.

He answered:

"When I was bathing in the bath, someone black came out of the water, seized me and strangled me."

Perceiving that a demon lived in that bath, the saint exorcised him and asked:

"Who are you, and why do you live here?"

The demon answered:

"I am the one whom you cast out of the bath house in Ephesus, and I have lived here for six years already, harming people."

Holy John cast him out of this place too. Seeing this, the priest believed in Christ and was baptized together with his son and his whole household.

After this, John went out to the marketplace, where almost the whole city gathered to him to hear the word of God. Then a woman fell at his feet, weeping and begging him to heal her demon-possessed son, for whose healing she had given almost all her property to physicians. The Apostle commanded that the boy be brought to him, and as soon as the messengers said to the demoniac, "John calls you," the demon immediately went out of him. Coming to the Apostle, the healed youth confessed faith in Christ and was baptized together with his mother.

In the same city there was a particularly revered temple of the idol Bacchus, whom the idolaters called "the father of freedom." Gathering here on his feast with food and drink, men and women made merry, and, drunk, they committed great lawlessness in honor of their abominable god. When John came there during the festival, he rebuked them for their shameful revelry. The priests, who were there in great number, seized him, beat him, and threw him down bound, and then returned to their abominable deeds. Holy John prayed to God that He would not suffer such lawlessness; and at once the idol's shrine was destroyed to its foundations, crushing all the priests. The rest of the people, frightened, freed the Apostle from his bonds and begged him not to destroy them as well.

In the same city there was a famous sorcerer named Nukian. Learning of the fall of the shrine and the death of the priests, he was greatly incensed, and coming to Holy John he said:

"You have not done well in destroying the temple of Bacchus and killing its priests. I beg you to raise them again, as you raised the priest's son in the bath house, and then I will believe in your God."

Holy John answered:

"The cause of their death was their lawlessness; therefore they are unworthy to live here, but let them suffer in Gehenna."

"If you cannot raise them," said Nukian, "then by the name of my gods I will raise the priests and restore the shrine, and you will not escape death."

Having said this, they parted. John went to teach the people, and Nukian went to the place of the fallen shrine. There he circled it, practicing sorcery, until twelve demons appeared in the likeness of the slain priests. He commanded them to follow him and kill John.

The demons said:

"It is impossible for us not only to kill him but even to appear in the place where he is. If you want John to die, go and bring the people here, so that, seeing us, he may be enraged against John and destroy him."

Nukian went away and met a multitude of people listening to the teaching of Holy John, and he cried out to them with a loud voice:

"O foolish ones! Why do you let yourselves be deceived by this wanderer, who, having destroyed your shrine with its priests, will destroy you too, if you listen to him? Follow me, and you will see your priests, whom I have raised; and I will restore the destroyed shrine before your eyes, which John cannot do."

And all, like madmen, followed him, leaving John. But the Apostle, going with Prochorus by another road, came to the place where the demons in the likeness of the risen priests were before them. Seeing John, the demons immediately vanished. Then Nukian came with the people; not finding the demons, he fell into great grief and again began to walk around the destroyed shrine, practicing sorcery and calling upon them, but without success. When evening came, the people, angered, wished to kill Nukian for deceiving them. Some said:

"Let us seize him and lead him to John, and whatever he commands us, that we will do."

Hearing this, Holy John, by the same road, anticipated them and stood in his former place. The people, bringing Nukian to the saint, said:

"This deceiver and your enemy meant to destroy you; but we will do with him whatever you direct."

The saint said:

"Let him go! Let him repent."

In the morning John again taught the people faith in Christ, and many of them, believing, asked John to baptize them. When John led them to the river, Nukian, by his sorcery, turned the water into blood. The Apostle, by prayer, blinded Nukian, and, making the water clean again, baptized in it all who believed. Defeated by this, Nukian came to his senses, and, repenting sincerely, asked the Apostle to be merciful to him. The saint, seeing his repentance and having instructed him sufficiently, baptized him, and he at once regained his sight and led John into his house. When John entered it, suddenly all the idols that were in Nukian's house fell down and were broken to dust. Seeing this miracle, his household was struck with fear, and, believing, they were baptized.

There was in that city a rich and beautiful widow named Proclianía. Having a son, Sosipater, handsome of face, she, through a demonic delusion, became inflamed with love for him and in every way sought to draw him into her lawlessness. But the son abhorred his mother for such a mad passion. Fleeing from her, he came to the place where Holy John was then teaching, and listened with delight to the apostolic instructions. John, to whom by the Holy Spirit all that had happened with Sosipater was revealed, meeting him alone, taught him to honor his mother but not to obey her in an unlawful matter, and to tell no one about it, covering the sin of his mother. Sosipater did not wish to return to his mother's house; but Proclianía, meeting him, seized his garment and with cries dragged him toward the house. At this cry there appeared the governor, who had recently arrived in that city, and asked why the woman was dragging the youth so. The mother, concealing her lawless intention, slandered her son, saying that he had wanted to use violence against her, and tore her hair with weeping and crying. Hearing this, the governor believed the lie and sentenced the innocent Sosipater to be sewn up with deadly reptiles in a leather sack and cast into the sea. Learning of this, John came to the governor, rebuking him

for his unjust judgment, because, without investigating the accusation as he should have, he had condemned an innocent youth to death. And Proclianía slandered John too, saying that this deceiver had taught her son to such evil. Hearing this, the governor commanded that the holy Apostle also be drowned, sewn into one sack with Sosipater and various reptiles. And the saint prayed, and suddenly the earth quaked, and the hand with which the governor had signed the sentence against the saint withered; and Proclianía's two hands withered, and her eyes were distorted. Seeing this, the judge was terrified, and all who were there fell prostrate from fear. The judge begged John to have mercy on him and heal his withered hand; the saint, having instructed him sufficiently about a just judgment and faith in Christ, healed him and baptized him in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus the innocent Sosipater was delivered from calamity and death, and the judge came to know the true God. But Proclianía fled from the youth to her house, bearing upon herself the punishment of God. The Apostle, taking Sosipater, went to her house. Sosipater did not want to go to his mother, but John taught him guilelessness, assuring him that now he would hear nothing lawless from his mother, for she had become chaste. And so it indeed was. For when John with Sosipater entered her house, Proclianía at once fell at the Apostle's feet, weeping and confessing and repenting of her sins. Having healed her of her illness and taught her faith and chastity, the Apostle baptized her with all her household. Thus, having become chaste, Proclianía spent her days in great repentance.

At this time Emperor Domitian was killed. After him Nerva, a very good man, took the Roman throne; he released all who had been in confinement. Released from confinement together with others, John resolved to return to Ephesus, for he had already converted to Christ almost all who lived on Patmos. The Christians, learning of this intention, begged him not to leave them until the end. And since the Apostle did not wish to stay with them but desired to return to Ephesus, they asked him to leave them, as a memorial of his teaching, at least the Gospel that he had written there. For, having once commanded all to fast, he took with him his disciple Prochorus, and, going far from the

city, climbed a high mountain, where he remained in prayer for three days. After the third day a great thunder rolled, lightning flashed, and the mountain shook; Prochorus, from fear, fell to the ground. Turning to him, John raised him up, seated him at his right hand, and said:

"Write what you hear from my lips."

And, lifting his eyes to heaven, he prayed again, and after the prayer began to speak:

"In the beginning was the Word," and so on.

The disciple attentively wrote down all that he heard from his lips; thus was written the Holy Gospel, which the Apostle, coming down from the mountain, commanded Prochorus to copy again. And he consented to leave the copy in Patmos for the Christians, according to their request, while he kept the original for himself. On the same island Holy John also wrote the Apocalypse.[8]

Before his departure from that island, he went around the neighboring cities and villages, confirming the brotherhood in the faith; and it happened that he was in one village where there lived a priest of Zeus named Eucharis, who had a blind son. That priest had long desired to see John. Hearing that John had come to their village, he came to the saint, begging him to come into his house and heal his son. John, seeing that he would win human souls here for Christ, went into the priest's house and said to the blind son: "In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, receive your sight," and the blind youth at once received his sight.

Seeing this, Eucharis believed in Christ and was baptized together with his son. And in all the cities of that island St. John established holy churches and appointed bishops and presbyters for them; having

8. Tradition relates that once John, together with his disciple Prochorus, withdrew from the city into a desert cave, where he spent ten days with Prochorus and another ten days alone. In these last ten days he ate nothing, but only prayed to God, asking Him to reveal what he ought to do. And a voice came to John from on high: "John, John!" John answered: "What dost Thou command, O Lord?" And the voice from on high said: "Endure yet ten days more, and many great things shall be revealed to thee." John remained there another ten days without food. And then a marvelous thing came to pass: Angels from God came down to him and announced to him many things that cannot be told. And when Prochorus returned to him, he sent him for ink and paper, and then for two days he told Prochorus of the revelations he had received, while the other wrote them down.

sufficiently instructed the inhabitants, he took leave of them all and began to return to Ephesus. The believers escorted him with weeping and great lamentation, unwilling to be deprived of such a sun, which by his teaching had enlightened their land; but the saint, having embarked on the ship and given peace to all, set sail on his way. When he reached Ephesus, the believers met him with unspeakable joy, crying out and saying: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

And he was received with honor. Dwelling here, he did not cease to labor, always teaching the people and guiding them on the way of salvation.

We cannot pass over in silence what Clement of Alexandria relates about St. John[9]. When the apostle was going round the cities of Asia, he saw in one of them a youth whose soul was inclined to good works; the holy apostle taught and baptized him. Intending to leave there to preach the Gospel, he entrusted this youth, in the presence of all, to the bishop of that city, so that the pastor might teach him every good work. The bishop, taking the youth, instructed him in the Scriptures, but did not take as much care of him as he should have, nor gave him the upbringing that befits young men; on the contrary, he left him to his own will. Soon the youth began to lead an evil life, to indulge in wine and to steal. At last he struck up a friendship with robbers, who, enticing him, led him away into the deserts and mountains, made him their leader, and committed brigandage on the roads. Some time later John returned and came to that city, and, hearing about that youth, that he had become corrupt and turned robber, he said to the bishop:

"Restore to me that treasure which I entrusted to you for safekeeping, as into faithful hands; restore to me that youth whom I committed to you in the presence of all, so that you might teach him the fear of God."

And the bishop answered with weeping:

"That youth has perished; in soul he is dead, and in body he roams the roads as a robber."

But John said to the bishop:

9. Clement of Alexandria, one of the most renowned Christian scholars of the first centuries of Christianity, died about the year 217.

"Was this how you ought to have guarded the soul of your brother? Give me a horse and a guide, that I may go and seek the one you have lost."

When John came to the robbers, he asked them to lead him to their leader, which they did. The youth, seeing St. John, was ashamed, and rising, fled into the desert. Forgetting his old age, John pursued him, crying:

"My son! Turn back to your father and do not despair over your fall; I will take your sins upon myself; stop and wait for me, for the Lord has sent me to you."

The youth, stopping, fell at the saint's feet, trembling and in great shame, not daring to look him in the face. John, embracing him with fatherly love, kissed him and led him into the city, rejoicing that he had found the lost sheep. And he taught him much, instructing him in repentance, in which the youth, zealously struggling, pleased God, received forgiveness of sins, and departed in peace.

At that time there was a certain Christian who had fallen into such poverty that he had nothing with which to pay his debts to his creditors; in bitter grief he resolved to kill himself, and asked a Jewish sorcerer to give him deadly poison. This enemy of Christians and friend of demons granted his request and gave him a deadly drink. The Christian, taking the lethal poison, went toward his home, but on the way he became thoughtful and afraid, not knowing what to do. At last, making the sign of the Cross over the cup, he drank it and felt no harm whatsoever from it, for the sign of the Cross had taken all the poison out of the cup. He marveled greatly within himself that he remained well and felt no harm. But, again unable to bear the pursuit of his creditors, he went to the Jew, that he might give him stronger poison. Astonished that the man was still alive, the sorcerer gave him a stronger poison. Receiving the poison, the man went to his home. After long deliberation before drinking, he, as before, made the sign of the Cross over this cup too and drank it, but again suffered not at all. He went again to the Jew and presented himself to him in good health. And he mocked the sorcerer, saying that he was unskilled in his sorcery. The Jew, frightened, asked him what he had done when he drank. He said:

"Nothing other than making the sign of the Cross over the cup." And the Jew learned that the power of the holy Cross drives away death; and wishing to know the truth, he gave some of that poison to a dog, and the dog immediately died before him. Seeing this, the Jew went with that Christian to the apostle and related to him what had happened to them. St. John taught the Jew faith in Christ and baptized him, and he commanded the poor Christian to bring an armful of hay, which by the sign of the Cross and prayer he transformed into gold, so that he might pay his debts, and keep his household with the remainder. Then the apostle returned again to Ephesus, where, dwelling in the house of Domnus, he converted to Christ a great multitude of people and worked countless miracles[6060].

When the apostle had reached more than a hundred years of age, he went out from the house of Domnus with seven of his disciples, and having come to a certain place, he bade them sit there. It was already toward morning, and he, having gone off to such a distance as a stone can be thrown, began to pray. Then, when his disciples, according to his will, had dug him a cross-shaped grave, he charged Prochorus to go to Jerusalem and remain there until his death. Having given further instruction to his disciples and kissed them, the apostle said: "Take the earth, my mother, and cover me with it." And the disciples kissed him and covered him up to his knees; and when he kissed them again, they covered him up to his neck, laid a veil over his face, and, kissing him once more, with great weeping covered him completely. Hearing of this, the brethren came from the city and dug open the grave, but found nothing there and wept very much; then, having prayed, they returned to the city. And every year, on the eighth day of the month of May, fragrant myrrh issued forth from his tomb and, through the prayers of the holy apostle, gave healing to the sick[10], to the glory of God, who is glorified in the Trinity unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 2:

O Apostle beloved of Christ our God, make haste to deliver the defenseless people. He receives thee as thou fallest down, He who

received him who fell upon His breast. Entreat Him, O Theologian, to scatter the darkness that lies upon the nations, and beseech Him for us for peace and great mercy.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Who shall declare thy greatness, O Virgin? For thou workest wonders, and pourest forth healings, and intercedest for our souls, as a theologian and friend of Christ.

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NOTES

6060. In the last years of his life John lived the austere life of an ascetic: he fed only on bread and water, did not cut his hair, and dressed in plain linen garments. Because of his old age he no longer had the strength to preach the Word of God even in the environs of Ephesus. Now he only instructed the bishops of the Church and unceasingly encouraged them to teach the people the word of the Gospel, and especially to remember and preach the first and chief commandment of the Gospel, the commandment of love. When, as Blessed Jerome relates, the holy Apostle had reached such weakness that his disciples could barely carry him into the church, and he could no longer deliver lengthy discourses, he limited his addresses to the constant repetition of this exhortation: "Little children, love one another!" And when once his disciples asked him why he repeated this without ceasing, John answered with these worthy words: "This is the Lord's commandment, and if it is kept, that is enough." In the closing days of his life the holy Apostle enjoyed especially great love from the whole Christian world. He was at that time the only Apostle who had seen the Lord with his own eyes, since all the other Apostles had already died. The whole Christian world knew that St. John had been the most beloved disciple of the Lord. For this reason many sought an opportunity to see the Apostle, and considered it an honor and a blessing to touch his garments. Besides his great labors in spreading the Christian faith among the pagans, the holy Apostle John also served the Church of Christ by his written labors. He wrote the Holy Gospel, three Epistles, and the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation.

The Gospel was written by John in his deep old age, at the very end of the first century A.D. The bishops of Ephesus and of all Asia Minor, fearing the lies about the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ which had multiplied at that time, and foreseeing the imminent death of the holy Apostle, asked him to give them his Gospel (a new one, compared with the three already in existence). They wished to have this Gospel with them as a guide in the struggle against heretics who rejected the Divinity of Christ. John granted the bishops' request and gave them the Gospel he had written under the inspiration of the Holy

10. In memory of this miraculous event, an annual celebration in honor of St. Apostle John was established on May 8.

Spirit, which differs from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. In his Gospel St. John speaks chiefly of things of which those evangelists do not speak. He supplements them, omitting what they have related and telling of what they have left out. All the events of the earthly life of the Savior mentioned by John are related by him with the most thorough exactness. For his Gospel St. John received the title of Theologian, that is, a narrator who in his Gospel sets forth chiefly not the events of the Lord's earthly life, but lofty and profound discourses about God, God the Word, that is, the Son of God, and the Savior's discourses on spiritual rebirth in the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:1–36), on the living water (living water) which satisfies the spiritual thirst of men (Jn. 4:1–54), on the living bread which nourishes the soul of man (Jn. 6:1–71), on the mysterious way that leads to truth, on the door through which we enter and go out (Jn. 10:1–42), on light and warmth, and so forth. Under all these names St. John always means the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, since He alone is truly the living water, the spiritual bread, the light, the door of our salvation, the truth, the righteousness, God. He is our Savior, existing from eternity with God, in God, and being Himself God. And God is the Highest Love, who so loved the world that He did not spare even His Son, but sent Him into the world to suffer for the redemption of men and their salvation from sin, curse and death. Because of this lofty content of John's Gospel it has been called the "spiritual" Gospel, and St. John the Theologian is depicted on icons with an eagle: just as the eagle soars high in the heavens, so John in his Gospel rises to the highest religious truths. "Rivers of theology flowed from thy honored lips, O Apostle," the holy Church sings in her hymns to St. John; there she also calls him the divinely moved flute of heavenly hymns, the writer of mysteries, the mouth spoken by God, the eyewitness of ineffable mysteries, the keeper of the ineffable, who has ascended to the heights of theology, and so forth. St. John also unfolds the same thoughts in his three Epistles. All these Epistles were written by him in the city of Ephesus. In them he also refutes the false teachings of the heretics, defends the dignity of Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world, the reality of His Incarnation and the truth of His teaching, and also exhorts believers to be Christians not in name only but in deed. Since at that time heretics appeared who rejected the appearance of Christ in the flesh, the Apostle John warns the faithful against such false teaching and says that only "every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ come in the flesh is of God" (1 Jn. 4:2). Then, in his Epistles, he repeats that "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:16), and therefore men too must love God. Only "he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him" (1 Jn. 4:16). But what is love for God? "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (2 Jn. 1:6). And the commandments of the Lord are summed up in the commandment of love (1 Jn. 4:7–8). And one must love not "in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18). "He who says, 'I have known Him' (that is, God), but does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 Jn. 2:4), just as there is no truth in him who "says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother" (1 Jn. 4:20). "He who loves God loves his brother also" (1 Jn. 4:21). The Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation, depicts the future destiny of the Church of Christ, the struggle of Christ with the Antichrist and the defeat of the Antichrist. The

future destinies of the Church of Christ are depicted here more fully than in any other book of Holy Scripture.



THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 27

27 сентября

New Calendar September 27 · Old Calendar October 10 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of St. Callistratus the Martyr

Житие и страдание святого мученика Каллистрата

Seeing that the chosen flock of Christ was multiplying day by day, the envious enemy, the devil, rose up against it with great fury, intending to plunder and destroy all the rational sheep.[1] For this purpose he chose as his instruments Diocletian and Maximian, the impious emperors of Rome, who in their cruelty became like inhuman beasts. He set them upon the flock of Christ as ravening wolves, and through them tore it to pieces grievously and without mercy: for he put into their hearts such a violent rage against the Christians that these emperors, setting aside all their other concerns of state, expended their strength solely on destroying all the Christians utterly. They reckoned this evil purpose and deed to be a greater and higher merit than all their other great imperial undertakings, their glorious victories and their triumphs over their enemies. For this reason they sent into every corner of the earth governors and torturers, equal to them and even surpassing them in malice, to compel Christians everywhere to sacrifice to the idols, and to torment, slay and destroy by various deaths those who would not obey. When this command began to be carried out, many of the faithful, who were devoted to Christ with their whole heart, crowned with the martyr's wreath, passed from the Church militant into the Church triumphant,[2] singing a song of victory over their enemies. Among many others there appeared also the valiant soldier of

1. That is, rational beings—people whom Christ guards as a shepherd guards his sheep.
2. The Church Militant is the Church comprising Christians living on earth, and the Church Triumphant is the assembly of glorified believers dwelling in heaven.

Christ, Callistratus, who, not alone but together with his numerous company, passed gloriously along the path of martyrdom, and, trampling down the enemy, presented himself to Christ, the Conqueror of the world, bearing upon himself the wounds received for Him and receiving honor for his exploit.

The homeland of this sufferer for Christ was Carthage;[3] from there he was taken into military service and enrolled in the regiment of the voivode Persentinus. In this regiment Callistratus alone shone, like a star in the dark night, by his piety, for all his comrades in arms were darkened by the gloom of idolatry. He alone was enlightened by the light of the holy faith, which he had learned from his father, who had been a Christian; and his father in turn had been taught the faith by his grandfather, named Neocorus, who during the voluntary passion of our Lord Jesus Christ had been in Jerusalem under Pontius Pilate, among the soldiers. Having seen all the wonders that attended the death and resurrection of the Lord, he believed in Him, and, receiving baptism from the Apostles, returned home; here he brought the precious pearl of faith in Christ, with which he enriched his son, the father of Callistratus, and all his household, relating to them concerning Christ Jesus all that he had seen with his own eyes and heard from the Apostles. Having received as an inheritance from his grandfather and father the spiritual wealth of faith, which cannot be stolen, St. Callistratus enriched with it whomever he could, secretly teaching the knowledge of the truth and turning human souls to God. For this reason he was under suspicion among his comrades, and they watched him attentively to make sure whether he was a Christian or not.

When he was with his voivode in Rome,[4] his Christian piety became known in the following way. The blessed man had the custom of rising every night to pray, and of praying long and in secret. Once, when he had risen as was his custom and was praying, some soldiers sleeping near him woke and noticed it; hearing him frequently call upon the

3. Carthage—a city in northern Africa.

4. Here Byzantium is to be understood, which, having become the eastern capital of the Roman empire, came to be called New Rome. In old Rome the veneration of St. Callistratus did not take place. Moreover, the Rome mentioned here, as is seen from what follows, stood right on the shore of the sea, whereas the sea was at a great distance from old Rome (about 4 versts).

name of Jesus Christ, they became convinced that he was a true Christian. Choosing a convenient time, they reported to the voivode Persentinus what they had heard. The voivode at once summoned Callistratus and asked him:

"Is it true, Callistratus, what your comrades say about you?"

The saint answered:

"I do not know what they could have said about me, for I am not aware of any wrongful act on my part."

When Persentinus bade the soldiers speak without concealment, they said to the voivode:

"Master, only command him to offer sacrifice to the gods, and you will immediately learn his thoughts and his faith."

The voivode commanded Callistratus to offer sacrifice to the gods and to worship them; but St. Callistratus answered:

"I have not learned to offer sacrifice to many gods, but only to the One true and living God, who called all things from non-being into being and created man from the earth. The gods you revere, which were made by human hands, I do not call gods but demons, as I have learned from Holy Scripture, which says: 'All the gods of the nations are idols' (Ps. 95:5), and: 'Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands' (Ps. 113:12). From Scripture I have learned to know God who dwells in heaven, to offer the sacrifice of praise and to pay my vows to the Most High. Is it then for this that these men accuse me, that I worship the One true God and not many false gods? They ought to have informed against me only in the case that they had learned that I discharge my military duties badly, that I am a coward and have fled before the enemy; of such acts they might speak against me before you, and such reports it would be fitting for you, voivode, to hear. Knowing that I am guilty of nothing of the kind, why do you listen to slanderers and bring me to judgment merely because the teaching of the faith I follow does not agree with yours?"

In answer to these words the voivode said in anger:

"This is no time for oratorical verbosity, but a time for grievous tortures and savage executions, which you will soon undergo if you do not submit to me and offer sacrifice to the gods, to whom even the emperor

himself bows. Do you not know how cruel I am, for I have the power, even before the torments, to frighten anyone with a single look and voice?"

But St. Callistratus replied:

"Your rage and the gnashing of your teeth, if they instil fear, do so only for a time; but there is a fear and a gnashing of teeth that is eternal, and to fall into it I dread above all things, and the mere memory of it terrifies me."

Unable to restrain his fury, the voivode ordered the saint to be thrown to the ground and beaten; and he, throughout the long torture, showed no impatience, but turned to God, saying: "I have sworn to keep Thy righteous judgments, and I will perform them" (Ps. 118:106–107). And further: "I am weakened, O Lord; quicken me according to Thy word" (Ps. 118:25), and do not permit this impious man to mock me; strengthen me, O Lord, to endure these torments, supplying strength to my humble and weak body and stirring up in me a spirit of courage.

Seeing the blood flowing in streams from the martyr's wounds, the voivode ordered that he be released from the torments and said to him:

"This is only the beginning of the punishments for your disobedience, Callistratus; therefore I give you good counsel: carry out my command, so as to be spared greater torments. But if you do not submit, I swear by the gods that the hands of the torturers will tear your body into pieces, and dogs will lick your blood, and lions will devour your flesh: thus you will perish a dreadful death."

But the valiant Callistratus answered:

"I trust in the mighty God, the living God, that He will deliver me from the lion's mouth and take 'my only soul from the dogs' (Ps. 21:21), the one soul among all these soldiers that knows the true God, from whom I expect that He will take to Himself not only my soul alone but many other souls as well, granting them to know His most holy name![5]"

Even more enraged by these words, the voivode ordered Callistratus to be stripped and dragged over sharp potsherds strewn on the ground,

thereby causing still greater pain to his wounded body. When the saint had endured even these torments, the torturer ordered water to be poured down his throat through a funnel, as into a leather bag. During this torment the voivode said to the saint:

"Callistratus, if you do not offer sacrifice to the gods, I will immediately cast you into the sea, for I fear that you may seduce the other soldiers, if I do not soon put you to death."

"O great lawbreaker," the martyr answered, "you are concerned that the flock under the power of your father, the devil, should not be diminished; but I trust in God that I shall win this flock for my Christ, establish it in the true faith, and build for it a church in the midst of this city.[6]"

Inflamed with rage, the voivode said:

"Impious and wretched man, death is already over your head, and yet you think to build a church and turn many to your God!"

Having said this, the voivode at once ordered a leather bag to be brought, the martyr to be enclosed in it and cast into the depths of the sea, while he himself stood on the shore, wishing to see the saint's destruction. But the bag in which St. Callistratus was enclosed, while he prayed like Jonah in the belly of the whale, was by the will of God driven by the water's current against a sharp rock in the sea and burst open; St. Callistratus was borne up on the backs of two dolphins[7] and gently carried to the shore. The martyr sang with joy: "I came down into the depths of the sea" (Ps. 68:3), "but the tempest of waters did not drown me, nor was I wearied by my calls to Thee, O Lord; Thou quickly heard my prayer and wondrously delivered me from the inextricable bonds and the depths of the sea, when there was no longer any hope of this: 'Thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness' (Ps. 29:12)." As the saint sang this with a joyful voice, a multitude of soldiers marveled, and some of them fell at the saint's feet, ask-

5. To know the name of God means to know the Divine attributes and perfections which are revealed in the governance of the world and of human life.

6. That is, a church in which the martyr-soldiers will be venerated by believers.

7. Dolphins—predatory sea mammals.

ing him to deliver them from the demonic deception and to lead them to Christ, their God. There were forty-nine of them, and they said:

"We have come to know that your God is great and true, for He wondrously delivered you from the depths of the sea."

The blessed martyr said:

"My Lord Jesus Christ does not cast away those who come to Him, for He says: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Mt. 11:28)."

Having spoken these words, he stretched out his hands to heaven and, lifting up his eyes, prayed:

"O Lord, who dwellest on high and lookest upon the humble! Look upon this little flock of Thine, preserve it from every evil, and keep it unharmed by the visible beast—the tormentor Persentin—and by the invisible one, the devil; for Thou alone art glorified unto the ages."

Seeing what had taken place, the voivode marveled and said:

"I swear by the most radiant sun[8] that this man possesses great magical power, for he came out of the sea unharmed and, according to his promise, beguiled my soldiers by magic."

At the same time he said to the saint:

"I shall soon destroy your magic, Callistratus, and you shall learn who Persentin is, servant of the great gods, and who the Crucified One is, whom you honor and in whom you vainly put your trust."

Then he took his seat upon the judgment seat and commanded that all the soldiers who had believed in Christ be beaten severely, their joints being crushed. As they endured the torture, the soldiers spoke as though with one voice:

"Lord Jesus Christ, be a helper to Thy servants, and give us strength to endure unto the end, for it is for Thy sake that we have entered upon such suffering. Preserve our teacher and shepherd Callistratus, that through him we may learn yet more to confess Thee, the one God; for now, O Lord, we are before Thee as lost sheep."

When Persentin's fury had somewhat abated, he ordered the torture to cease and the martyrs to be taken to prison until he could devise

8. The pagans revered the sun as a god, calling it Apollo.

what to do with them; for he was greatly grieved that his regiment had been diminished by fifty soldiers.

When they had been cast into prison with St. Callistratus, they began to learn from him the knowledge of God with all diligence. For the saint opened his mouth and explained everything to them, beginning with the creation of the world and the transgression committed by the first people in Paradise, and continuing through Christ's Incarnation, voluntary Passion, and Resurrection. He spoke to them of the judgment, of the soul and the life to come, of the reward of the righteous and the punishment of sinners in Hades; and, having explained all the holy mysteries of the faith to them, he strengthened them for the contest of martyrdom.

On the following day the voivode, surrounded by a multitude of soldiers, took his seat upon the judgment seat, ordered St. Callistratus and his company to be brought from the prison, and addressed him in these words:

"Tell me, Callistratus! Will you offer sacrifice to the gods and be delivered from grievous torments, or will you persist in your former obstinacy?"

But St. Callistratus said:

"As for myself, I answer that I shall not depart from my Lord until death; but let these speak for themselves. Question them, and you shall hear what they say to you."

Then the voivode said to them:

"You who have been beguiled, what have you to say?"

They answered:

"We are Christians. We confess the one God, who created heaven and earth, and believe in Him, in His Only-begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, as our good teacher Callistratus has taught us."

When the saints had said this with one accord, the voivode ordered them to be beaten cruelly, one after another. Then he commanded that their hands and feet be bound and that they be cast into a pond nearby.

Before this command was carried out, St. Callistratus prayed to God, saying:

"O Lord, who dwellest on high and lookest upon the humble, turn Thine eyes of mercy upon this little flock of Thine, and be pleased to wash them in these waters, as in a laver of regeneration and adoption[9], by the visitation of Thy Holy Spirit, that, having washed away all the defilements of the old man[10], they may become partakers of the inheritance (Col. 1:12) of those who have pleased Thee from of old."

When the martyrs had been bound and cast into the water, their bonds at once fell apart, and they stood in the water with radiant faces, rejoicing in their baptism. At that moment a beautiful crown was seen descending upon them from heaven, and a voice was heard, saying:

"Be courageous, Callistratus, with thy flock, and go to rest with them in the eternal dwellings."

Immediately after these words there was a mighty earthquake, and the statue of a certain unclean pagan god, standing nearby, fell and was shattered to dust. Seeing this, one hundred and thirty-five other soldiers, who had heard the voice from heaven that had come to Callistratus, believed in our Lord. Fearing rumor and unrest in the regiment, the voivode said nothing to them; but he ordered the first forty-nine soldiers, together with Callistratus, to be cast once more into prison. There St. Callistratus said to his company:

"Behold, brethren, by the grace of Christ you have been vouchsafed holy baptism, for which you ought worthily to give thanks to God. Therefore let us arise and pray to Him!"

When all had risen and lifted their hands and eyes to heaven, Callistratus prayed in these words:

"O Lord God, 'who desirest all men to be saved' (1 Tim. 2:4), who hast snatched this flock from the lion's jaws and called it unto eternal salvation! Vouchsafe that we may die in holy faith in Thee, our God, and grant that we may appear before Thy holy countenance blameless and pure, and worship Thee, who art blessed forever."

All the holy martyrs prayed fervently with St. Callistratus. When night came, soldiers entered the prison at the command of the torment-

9. Reference is made to baptism, which from antiquity was performed in special baptismal fonts or bathhouses.—In baptism a person is reborn into a new, holy life and becomes a child of God.

or, with swords drawn, and cut them all to pieces.[11] Thus did St. Callistratus contend valiantly with his company, standing even unto blood (cf. Heb. 12:4) for his Lord. Their holy relics were gathered and buried with honor by those one hundred and thirty-five soldiers who had believed in Christ; and those same soldiers later built a church over their holy relics. Thus was fulfilled the word that St. Callistratus had spoken to Persentin: "In the midst of this city I shall build a church"—though it was built not during his lifetime, but after his martyr's death. And in it the name of the Lord our God and Savior Jesus Christ was glorified; to Him also be glory from us unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having endured manifold wounds and manifestly received crowns from God, pray to Christ for us, O blessed ones, who celebrate your all-festal remembrance: thou, O great Callistratus, with those who suffered with thee, that He may bring peace to the flock and the people; for He[12] *is the establishment of the faithful.*

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Sabbatius of Solovki, the Wonderworker

Житие преподобного отца нашего Савватия Соловецкого, чудотворца

No account has been preserved of the city or village from which Venerable Sabbatius came, of who his parents were, or how old he was when he took the monastic habit. It is known only that in the days of Photius, Metropolitan of All Russia,[13] the most praiseworthy elder Sabbatius struggled ascetically in the Belozersk Monastery of Venerable Cyril, situated in the Novgorod region.[14] The pious ascetic mortified his body by prayer, unceasing vigil, hunger and thirst,

10. The old man—a person who has not received Christian baptism and still remains under the sin of Adam. (See Col. 1:12).
11. St. Callistratus and his company suffered about the year 304 A.D.
12. That is, the Lord Jesus Christ.
13. Metropolitan Photius, a Greek by birth from the Morea, occupied the see from 1408 to 1431.
14. The Monastery of Cyril of Belozersk in the town of Kirillov, Novgorod province, south of the White Lake, was founded in 1397 by Venerable Cyril (†June 9, 1427).

and every kind of other innumerable labor of the strict monastic life; without sloth he attended all the monastery services, in continual obedience to the abbot and the monastic brotherhood. Because of his unwavering fulfillment of the monastic vows, Venerable Sabbatius was loved and honored by all, being an example of virtuous and diligent life to the other monks of the monastery, so that his name was continually praised by the brotherhood and the abbot. But firmly remembering that in this earthly life one should seek praise not from men but from God, the Venerable One was burdened by the glory bestowed upon him; therefore he continually considered leaving the Monastery of Cyril, where he had struggled ascetically for many years, and finding a new place for his monastic labors, where he might live unknown and apart from men.

Having heard that in the Novgorod region there was Lake Nevo,[15] and on it an island called Valaam,[16] where there was a monastery dedicated to the Transfiguration of the Lord, whose monks lived in strict ascetic labors, offering unceasing prayers to God and sustaining themselves by the work of their hands, Venerable Sabbatius began to ask the abbot and brotherhood of the Belozersk Monastery of Cyril to release him with their blessing to live in the Monastery of Valaam. Released by them with their blessing, the Venerable One came to the island of Valaam, where the monastery brotherhood joyfully welcomed him. Here, too, the ascetic spent a considerable time. Emulating the toilsome ascetic labors of the monks there and continually increasing his own labors, Venerable Sabbatius surpassed them all in ascetic struggle here, as he had in the Monastery of Cyril; so that his virtuous life became known to all at Valaam as well, for he mortified his flesh to the utmost and even in his lifetime became a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

In his new place of residence, the Monastery of Valaam, just as in the Monastery of Cyril, Venerable Sabbatius was also honored and praised. Therefore the Venerable One again grieved sorely, being

15. The original name of Lake Ladoga, from which the river Neva flows; the river bears a name derived from the ancient name of Lake Ladoga.

16. In the northern part of Lake Ladoga. The Transfiguration Monastery on Valaam was founded by Venerables Sergius and Herman at the beginning of the fourteenth century. When the blessed repose of both ascetics followed, is not known precisely.

burdened by the brotherhood's honor and praise, and once more considered finding a quiet and secluded place for his ascetic labors. Earlier, the Venerable One had heard of the uninhabited island of Solovki,[17] lying amid the cold waters of the White Sea, two days' sailing from the mainland. Hearing tales of the deserted island, the Venerable One rejoiced in spirit and was seized with ardent desire to settle there and pursue the ascetic life of stillness. He began earnestly to ask the superior of the Monastery of Valaam to release him. But the superior and the brotherhood, loving the Venerable One and honoring him as an envoy of God, did not wish to be deprived of so praiseworthy a companion, who was an example of virtue to all,[18] and entreated the Venerable Elder not to leave them. Yielding to the entreaties of the monks of Valaam, the Venerable One remained in their monastery for a little while longer; then, having prayed to God and entrusted himself to His holy help, he secretly left the monastery by night, unnoticed by anyone.

Guided and kept by God, he set out for Solovetsky Island. Coming to the sea, the Venerable Sabbatius met the inhabitants who dwelt on the seashore opposite Solovetsky Island, and began to question them about the island. They told the Venerable that Solovetsky Island lies far from the shore, that the way to it is difficult and dangerous, and that sailors scarcely reach the island in two days' voyage, and then only in calm weather. Having inquired in detail about the island, the Venerable Sabbatius came to the thought that it was the most suitable place for ascetic labors of silence and monastic solitude. He learned that the island had a circumference of more than a hundred versts; that near it fish and sea animals were caught; that on it there was fresh water fit for drinking, fish-filled lakes, hills whose summits were covered with timber forest, and valleys overgrown with smaller woods; and that it bore many kinds of berries. The Venerable learned that Solovetsky Island

17. The Solovetsky Islands in the White Sea, Arkhangelsk province, six in number, lie 150 versts from the shore of the Kem district and 400 versts from the city of Arkhangelsk. The chief of them, Solovki, is 23 versts long from north to south and 18 versts wide; the circumference of the island along the shoreline is 175 versts.

18. As one experienced in the ascetic life, Venerable Sabbatius, while at the Valaam monastery, served as elder to novice monks, whom he guided in their labors. Among his disciples was Gennadius, afterward Archbishop of Novgorod, who governed the see from 1484 to 1504.

was entirely suitable for human habitation, but that it was uninhabited because communication with the shore was extremely inconvenient. Many who had more than once wished to settle there had been unable to do so for fear of the perils of the sea. Only occasionally, in good weather, fishermen would row out to the island from the shore, but when the fishing was over they immediately returned to the mainland. Having heard all this from the coastal dwellers, the Venerable Sabbatius was kindled with a burning desire to settle on Solovetsky Island. When the Pomors learned of the blessed man's intention, they tried to turn him from this thought, saying:

"O elder! What will you eat, or what will you wear on the island, being of such advanced age and having nothing? And how will you live alone in a cold land, far from people, when you are no longer able to do anything for yourself?"

The Venerable answered them:

"I have, children, such a Lord, Who makes the nature of an old man young again, and Who raises the infant to a ripe old age. He enriches the poor, supplies what the needy require, clothes the naked, and with a little food satisfies the hungry, just as once in the wilderness He fed five thousand men with five loaves (Jn. 6:5–13)."

Hearing the elder's words from the sacred books, some of the Pomors marveled at his wisdom, while others, out of their lack of understanding, mocked him. Meanwhile the Venerable, "cast[ing] his care upon the Lord" (Ps. 54:23), withdrew to the river Vyg[19], where he met the monk Herman[20], who lived there beside a chapel. The Venerable Sabbatius stayed for some time with Herman, and from him he learned about Solovetsky Island the same things he had heard from the Pomors. Having consulted together and relying on God, the two ascetics resolved to go and settle together on Solovetsky Island. They fitted out a boat, took with them a little food and clothing, and also the tools needed for their work; then, having prayed fervently to God and placed

19. The river Vyg flows through the Olonets and Arkhangelsk provinces and pours its waters into the Onega Gulf of the White Sea. The place where Venerable Sabbatius stopped is at the mouth of the river Vyg (now the volost of Soroki, on the Karelian shore).
20. Venerable Herman of Solovki reposed in 1479; his memory is July 30.

all their hope in Him, they took their seats in the boat and began the voyage in calm weather.

By God's help they reached the island on the third day, and, rejoicing and gladdened in soul, they gave thanks to God, who had shown them this desert place[21]. At the spot on the shore where the ascetics' boat came to land, they set up a cross. Going some distance[22] into the island, the Venerable monks saw, on the shore of a lake, a very beautiful hilly place, and there they resolved to stop for permanent dwelling. Here, having built a cell, they began to live for the Lord, and they persevered in labors, obtaining their ascetic food by the sweat of their brow, digging the earth with hoes[23]. The Venerable monks worked with their hands and praised the Lord with their lips, drawing near to Him in spirit through unceasing prayer and the singing of the Psalms of David.

After some time, the Pomors who lived nearest the island began to envy the Venerable elders who had settled there. They planned to drive them away and said among themselves: "We are the island's nearest neighbors, as it were its owners, being native inhabitants of the Karelian land; therefore it falls to us, and after us to our children from generation to generation, to have a share in possessing the island."

Some time later, a fisherman, at the urging of his friends, came with his wife and his whole family to that island and settled not far from the cells of the God-pleasing elders. Living there, he began with his household to catch fish in the lakes. But the blessed fathers, concerned for their salvation, remained in silence and knew nothing of the fisherman's family who had settled there.

One Sunday early in the morning, after the performance of the customary rule, the Venerable Sabbatius, taking a censer, went out to incense the holy cross which he had raised near his cell. At that moment he heard blows and cries, as if someone were being beaten. The Venerable was terrified by that outcry and, supposing it to be only a delusion,

21. Venerables Sabbatius and Herman arrived at the Solovetsky island in 1429.
22. Twelve versts from the present monastery, near Mount Sekirnaya; at this place a hermitage with a chapel of the Venerable Sabbatius was afterwards built.
23. A hoe is a special kind of spade.

protected himself with the sign of the cross; he returned and told the blessed Herman, who lived with him, about the blows and cries he had heard. Going out of the cell and hearing the same thing, the Venerable Herman went toward the cry, found a weeping woman, and asked her what had happened to her and why she was crying. Through her tears the woman told what had befallen her.

"When I was going to the lake to my husband," she said, "two radiant youths met me, seized me, and beat me hard with rods, saying: 'Depart from this place; you are unworthy to live here, for God has appointed it for the dwelling of monks. Go away quickly, lest you perish an evil death.'" After that the radiant youths became invisible.

The blessed Herman, returning to the Venerable elder Sabbatius, told him what he had heard from the fisherman's wife, and both of them glorified God. The fisherman, taking his wife and belongings with him, without delay sailed away to the village where they had lived before. And from that time no layman dared to settle on Solovetsky Island again; only fishermen came to the island from time to time for their fishing.

After several years the blessed Herman withdrew to the river Onega[24], and the Venerable Sabbatius remained alone on the island, with deep faith in God. Only the All-knowing God, who looks down from on high upon His saint, and the holy Angels of God, who visited Sabbatius, the servant of God, who in the flesh imitated the bodiless, knew what his life on the island was, what his fasting was, what his spiritual struggles were! We may judge the labors and privations of the Venerable's ascetic life only from the very character of the place where he settled. For an elder who lived alone on a distant sea island visited by no one, there could be no other occupation than the exercises of constant ascetic contemplation of God. And indeed, sinking in mind into continual prayerful converse with God and turning to Him his tear-filled eyes, the Venerable sighed day and night, desiring to be freed from the body and united with the Lord.

Feeling in his deep old age, after his God-pleasing labors, the approach of death, the Venerable Sabbatius began to think about how he

might be granted to receive the Divine Mysteries, of which he had been deprived since his departure from the Valaam monastery. Having prayed to God about this, he sat down in a small skiff, and after the sea grew calm at his prayer, he crossed over in the course of two days to the other shore. Coming ashore, he went on by land, wishing to reach the chapel on the river Vyg. It happened that at that time the hegumen Nathanael, who had come there to visit the Christians living in that place, was delayed on the Vyg.

Going along the path he had intended, the Venerable, by Divine providence, met the hegumen Nathanael, who was walking with the Divine Mysteries to a remote village to give Communion to a sick man. After the customary monastic greeting, the travelers talked with one another and, learning who each was, were glad to meet. The Venerable Sabbatius rejoiced that he had found what he sought, and the hegumen Nathanael was glad that he was granted to see the honorable gray hair and the saintlike face of the Venerable Sabbatius, of whose virtuous life he had heard much. And the blessed Sabbatius said to Nathanael:

"Father, I beseech your holiness: by the authority given you from God to loose sins, grant me forgiveness of the sins I shall confess to you, and deem me worthy of the reception of the Holy Mysteries of the Most Pure Body and Blood of Christ, my Lord. For many years I have burned with desire to nourish my soul with this Divine food. Therefore, holy father, nourish me now, for Christ my God has shown me your God-loving spirit so that you may cleanse me of the sins which I have committed from my youth until this day in word, deed, and thought."

"May God forgive you, brother," answered the hegumen Nathanael, and after a pause, lifting his hands to heaven, he said with tears: "O, if only I might have your sins, Venerable, to cleanse my negligence!"

Saint Sabbatius said to Nathanael:

"I beseech your holiness to grant me the Divine Communion without delay, for the end of my life is drawing near."

The hegumen answered:

24. The river Onega, in the Olonets and Arkhangelsk Governorates; it flows into the Onega Gulf.

"My lord, Father Sabbatius, go now to the chapel and wait for me there. I am going to the sick man and will soon return to your reverence; early in the morning I will come to you."

To this Saint Sabbatius said:

"Father, do not put it off until morning. We do not know whether we shall still breathe the air until tomorrow, and how can we know what will happen afterward?"

Saint Sabbatius spoke these words foretelling his imminent death.

Seeing in Sabbatius a servant of God, Hegumen Nathanael no longer dared to oppose him; but, fulfilling his wish, after the confession he gave him to partake of the Divine Mysteries of Christ, and, bestowing the brotherly kiss, said:

"Servant of God, I beseech you: wait for me on the Vyg, at the chapel."

The saint agreed to wait for the hegumen there. The latter went to the sick man, while Venerable Sabbatius went to the appointed place where, having given thanks to God for receiving Communion and for all His benefits to him, he entered the cell that stood beside the chapel and, shutting himself in it, prepared his blessed soul to surrender it into the hands of God.

At that time a merchant from Great Novgorod named John, sailing on the river Vyg with his goods, put in to the chapel standing on the bank. Having stepped from his boat onto the shore, he venerated the holy icons in the chapel, and, entering the cell of Venerable Sabbatius, received his blessing. Having given the blessing, St. Sabbatius instructed the merchant from the Divine Scripture, exhorting him to good works. The merchant was very rich, had servants, and wished to repay the saint with all necessities from his goods. But the saint, not wishing to take anything from the merchant, said:

"If you desire to give alms, you have those in need; but I am in need of nothing."

After this the Venerable instructed John about love of the poor, mercy toward members of one's household, and the other virtues. The merchant was saddened that the elder had taken nothing from him. Wishing to console him, the Venerable said:

"Child John! Spend the night here until morning, and you shall behold the grace of God and go safely on your way."

But John wished to sail away from there. And behold, suddenly a storm came on with thunder and lightning, and there arose a tumult on the river and on the sea. Seeing the sudden change of weather and the strong agitation of the water, John was terrified and remained to spend the night there. With the coming of morning he went to the cell, wishing, before setting out on his journey—since the tumult had already subsided—to receive a blessing from Venerable Sabbatius. Having knocked with prayer at the door of the Venerable's cell, he received no answer. After he knocked a second and a third time, the door opened, and, entering inside the cell, John saw the saint sitting in his mantle and hood, with a censer standing beside him. And the merchant said to the Venerable:

"Forgive me, servant of God, for having, out of love and faith toward your holiness, presumed to enter to you. I beseech your reverence, send me on my way with your blessing, that, guarded by your holy prayers, I may travel safely."

When John said this, there was no voice in answer, nor any response, for the holy soul of the Venerable had already departed to the Lord, and at that time a strong fragrance was spreading throughout the whole cell. Seeing that the Venerable made him no answer, and thinking that he was asleep, John approached him and touched him with his hand; but, convinced that he had reposed in the Lord, he was terrified and at the same time moved to tenderness, and warm tears poured from his eyes.

At that time Hegumen Nathanael was returning from the sick man. He entered the cell and, seeing that the saint had reposed, wept bitterly and kissed his honorable body. The hegumen and the merchant told each other about the Venerable: the first, how he had been granted the day before to give the servant of God the Divine Mysteries; the second, how he had been found worthy to enjoy a conversation profitable to the soul with the Venerable. After the funeral chants they buried the holy body of the Venerable, giving earth to earth.

Venerable Sabbatius reposed on the twenty-seventh day of the month of September[25]. On this day his memory is also celebrated, to the glory of God, glorified in the Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, to Whom be honor and worship unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 3:

Withdrawing from the world and dwelling in the wilderness, thou didst labor in good struggle, in ascetic sufferings, in watchfulness, and in prayers; wherefore thou dost send forth healings even after thy death, O our Father Sabbatius. Entreat Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Fleeing the clamor of life, thou didst wisely settle on a sea island, and taking up thy cross thou didst follow Christ, in prayers and vigils and fastings, wasting thy flesh by ascetic sufferings. Thereby thou wast the adornment of the venerable; wherefore with love we keep thy memory, O Venerable Sabbatius. Entreat Christ God unceasingly for us all.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Apostles Mark, Aristarchus and Zenas

Память святых Апостолов Марка, Аристарха и Зины

Holy Apostle Mark, who was also called John[26], of whom St. Luke makes mention in the Book of the Acts of the Holy Apostles (Acts 15:37), was appointed bishop of Babylon by the Apostles and zealously labored in the preaching of the Gospel. He attained such boldness before God that even his shadow healed the sick.

25. In 1435. The relics of the Venerable were translated in 1465 from the place of his repose on the river Vyg to the island of Solovki.

26. A companion of the Apostles Paul and Barnabas on their first apostolic journey; on the second apostolic journey of the Apostle Paul, the Apostle Barnabas, separating from the Apostle of the Gentiles, undertook a separate apostolic journey together with John Mark.

Holy Aristarchus, of whom the Apostle Paul makes mention in his epistles (Col. 4:10; Philem. 1:24), was bishop of Apamea in Syria[27].

Holy Zenas was a lawyer[28] (before his apostleship), and afterward bishop in Diospolis[29].

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Epicharis

Память святой мученицы Епихарии

The Martyr of Christ Epicharis lived in Rome in the reign of Diocletian[30]. The eparch Caesarius commanded that she be seized and brought before him for judgment. For her steadfast confession of the name of Christ she was hanged and scraped, after which forty soldiers beat her with tin hammers; but, through her prayers, an Angel struck them down. After all the tortures, her head was cut off with a sword. From the stone on which the holy martyr had stood, much water gushed forth.

* * *

Commemoration of the Venerable Ignatius

Память преподобного Игнатия

This Venerable lived in the reigns of the emperors Nicephorus Phocas and John Tzimiskes[31], in Cappadocia. From infancy his parents dedicated him to God, as once Samuel[32]. Having reached

27. Apamea in Syria was situated in south-western Syria, on the Orontes, the largest river of Syria, which near this city issues from the earth, forming a large lake. In antiquity Apamea was the principal city of the region of Apamene in Syria, and it received its name from Apama, the wife of Seleucus I Nicator, ruler of Syria, to whom the city owed its importance.

28. St. Zenas was a disciple and co-worker of the Apostle Paul. Around the year 64 A.D., when the Apostle Paul wrote his epistle to Titus, he laboured on Crete together with Titus. The lawyers (otherwise, the scribes) were learned men who, among the coarse and simple common people, formed a class of particularly privileged persons, versed in jurisprudence and managing legal matters in the ecclesiastical courts.

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

30. This was at the beginning of the 4th century.

31. Nicephorus II Phocas, Byzantine emperor, reigned from 963–969; John Tzimiskes, his successor, from 969 to 975.

32. 1 Kgdms. 1:1–28

maturity, he took the monastic rank and was soon ordained presbyter, and afterward hegumen. He did much for his monastery[33]: he enlarged it, adorned and enriched it, built in it two churches in the name of the holy Prophet Elias, and in another town he founded a church in the name of the holy Apostles. Besides this, he built around the monastery a strong and comely enclosure. Once, setting out for Constantinople, where he offered as a gift to one monastery a holy cross and the Holy Gospel, the Venerable on the return journey fell ill with a stomach ailment and reposed in Ammorium[34]. He was buried at one of the churches of that city. When winter had passed, the fathers of his monastery wished to transfer his body. Opening the reliquary, they found his body whole and incorrupt, emitting a wondrous fragrance. They reverently carried him and laid him in the narthex of the church, glorifying God, wondrous in His saints.

* * *

33. The Monastery of the Savior of the Deep River; founded at the beginning of the 9th century A.D., it is located in Asia Minor, on the shore of the Sea of Marmara, near Constantinople.
34. Amorium was situated in Phrygia, in Asia Minor, and was a flourishing and populous city.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 28

28 сентября

New Calendar September 28 · Old Calendar October 11 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Chariton the Confessor

Житие преподобного отца нашего Харитона Исповедника

The Venerable Chariton lived in the city of Iconium, in the Diocese of Lycaonia.[1] He was a pious Christian, distinguished by his virtues, and in the reign of the impious emperor Aurelian he showed himself a confessor of the name of Christ.[2] For when the godless decree of the emperor, commanding that Christians be compelled to offer sacrifice to the idols and that those who refused be put to death, was circulated throughout all the provinces, then, in fulfillment of this edict, Chariton, as the most eminent among the Christians for piety and the most radiant in virtue, was taken into custody in Iconium by the governor of that land. He was bound and brought before the tribunal of the impious, where the governor asked him:

"Why do you not worship the illustrious gods, before whom the emperor and all the peoples bow their heads?"

Chariton answered:

"All the gods of the pagans are demons, who once wished to be made equal to the Most High God and, for their pride, were cast down from heaven into the depths of hell; now they strive to be worshipped as gods by mad and deluded men. Yet both they and those who bow down

1. The Lycaonian province, together with the Lycaonian eparchy, in Asia Minor, comprised 18 cities. Iconium was the chief city of the Lycaonian eparchy. There was a council in it on the question of baptizing heretics (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 7, ch. 6).

2. In the ancient Church, Christians who did not renounce the faith of Christ when they were summoned to the judgment of the pagans and subjected to torments that did not, however, end in death, were called *confessors*. Moreover, this title was also applied to those Christians who led a supremely virtuous life, struggling against the world and its allurements, and thereby bearing witness to their devotion to Christ the Savior.

to them will shortly perish and, like smoke, quickly vanish away. Therefore I do not worship them; I believe in the true God, I serve Him and worship Him, for He is the Creator of all, the Savior of the world, who abides forever."

"By this first coarse answer alone," said the governor, "you have made yourself worthy of death, for you have dared to blaspheme the immortal gods and have presumed to call us, who worship them, mad and deluded. For this alone your slanderous head ought to be struck off with the sword. But since our gods are long-suffering and do not hasten to avenge the dishonor done to them, I will show you indulgence and not destroy you at once. Perhaps, coming to your senses, you will judge wisely and offer sacrifice with us to those whom you now revile, and beg them to forgive the sin you have committed; they, being not vindictive, are ready to receive you and to pardon you for their dishonor."

Chariton answered:

"If your idols are gods, you act wrongly, governor, in forgiving me the insults with which I dishonor them; for everyone ought to stand up for the honor of his god and show his zeal toward him. But if they are not gods, then you command them to be worshipped in vain. Know that no torment will tear me away from the Living God or incline me to honor defiled idols; for I am a disciple of the blessed First-Martyr Thecla,[3] who shone forth in our Iconium as a bright dawn of martyrdom. She was taught to this struggle by the great teacher, St. Paul, with whose words I now also speak: 'Who shall separate me from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or affliction, or sword, or anything else that is hard?'[4]" The governor said:

"If our gods were not gods, as you say, they would not send us a happy life, riches, glory and health."

Chariton answered:

"You are mistaken, governor, in thinking that you have received all this from your false gods, which are themselves poor and possess noth-

3. *Disciple* is used in the sense of a follower, for the Venerable Chariton, who lived in the second half of the third century and the first half of the fourth, could not have been an actual disciple of the Venerable Thecla, a contemporary of the Apostles.

ing but their own destruction; for even the demons have no power over swine without God's permission (Mt. 8:31–32). Can idols give anyone anything, when they themselves have nothing? They do not stretch out their hands, they do not walk with their feet, they do not speak with their tongue, they do not see with their eyes, they do not hear with their ears, for there is no soul in them. If you wish to know the truth, test it in practice and you will see their nothingness: apply a lit candle to the lips of the idol and scorch it—will it feel pain? Take an axe and cut its legs—will it cry out? Bring a hammer and shatter its ribs—will it groan? Truly you will hear nothing, for it has neither life nor breath."

Hearing this, the governor flew into a rage and, like a drunken man, shouted in fury, not letting the saint finish his speech. At once he ordered that the saint be seized, stripped, stretched out in the form of a cross, and beaten mercilessly with sinews; the saint endured bravely, resolved rather to die for Christ the Lord than to live in lawlessness, having renounced his Creator.

While the saint was being beaten, the tormentor questioned him:

"Will you offer sacrifice to the immortal gods, Chariton, or do you wish to receive still greater wounds?"

"Even if I could die a thousand times for my Savior," the martyr answered, "I would agree to it sooner than to live and bow down to demons."

The saint was beaten so over his whole body that his inner parts could be seen; for the flesh fell away from the bones, blood flowed like a river, and his whole body became one continuous wound. Finally noticing that he was barely alive, they stopped beating him, and thinking he would soon die, they lifted him on their shoulders and carried him to the prison. He could not walk at all, nor could he utter even a single word, but only breathed faintly, so grievously was he wounded. Having laid him in the prison, the tormentors departed.

Seeing the endurance of His sufferer, God strengthened him with His help, quickly healed him of his wounds, and made living and whole the one whom the impious had hoped to see dead, so that he could say

4. A slightly altered text from Rom. 8:35, in which the Apostle Paul expresses his devotion to Christ the Savior.

with David: "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord" (Ps. 117:17). Then he was brought again before the tribunal, and, showing even greater boldness than the first time, he roused still greater fury in the tormentor. The governor ordered the saint's body to be scorched with candles, so that his whole body was roasted like meat prepared for food. But he, enduring such torments for Christ his Lord, rejoiced, and was again cast into the same prison.

At that time the emperor Aurelian died, having been punished by the wrath of God for the shedding of Christian blood. While traveling between Byzantium and Heraclea, he was first terrified from heaven by a great thunder, which foretold his imminent death, and then during the same journey he was killed by his own household, and thus wretchedly ended his earthly life. After his death the persecution of the Christians ceased, and the prisoners of Christ were released from exile, chains and prison; for the emperor Tacitus, who after Aurelian's death took up the imperial scepter, instructed by the punishment of the caesar who had reigned before him, sent throughout all the subject lands a decree that all Christians be set free. He feared that he would suffer as Aurelian had if he were cruel to the Christians. Then there came a great joy to the faithful: the prisoners were let out, the exiled returned from banishment, and from the deserts and caves came out bishops, priests and laymen who had hidden from fear of the tormentors, and, greeting one another, rejoiced in the tranquility of the Church. Then the Venerable Chariton the Confessor too was released from prison. But he did not rejoice that he had not been allowed to suffer to the end, for he desired rather to complete his martyr's crown by suffering than to remain alive; it would have been more pleasing to him to die for Christ than to be released into freedom. Nevertheless, the Divine Providence prolonged his life for the benefit of many, so that he might stand before God in the heavenly mansions not alone, but with a host of voluntary martyrs, as a shepherd with his sheep and a father with his children.

From that time the holy Chariton, a warrior of Christ adorned with wounds, renounced the world and all that is in the world; taking up his cross, he walked a difficult path and became a living dead man—dead to

the world, but alive to God. For, bearing on himself the marks of the Lord Jesus (Gal. 6:17), he wholly gave himself to Him and was crucified with Him; and in order always to have before his eyes the Divine sufferings of Him, he went to Jerusalem, where our Lord breathed out His spirit upon the cross. When he was on his way there and was already near Jerusalem, he fell into the hands of robbers, who, finding nothing of value on him, seized him and led him into their cave to deliver him to a cruel death there. However, they did not kill him, for they hastened off to seek travelers to rob; and they left the holy Chariton lying bound in the cave. And he, as before, when he was in chains and torment, gave thanks to God, ready to accept whatever death might befall him by God's permission. At this time he boldly spoke to the demon:

"I know, devil, that you, fearing to meet me yourself, have sent robbers upon me, and wishing to place an obstacle to my purpose, have set a snare for me on this road. But know, accursed one, that it is not you who will triumph over me, but I over you, with the help of my God; for even if the robbers kill me, I trust in the mercy of God that I shall receive as my inheritance the holy rest of God, while you shall inherit gehenna.[5] I shall rise to eternal life, while you have died an eternal death, and there will be no end to your torment. Yet my Master can still deliver me alive from the hands of the robbers here and free me from death, as He delivered Isaac from the sacrifice (Gen. 22:1–24), the youths from the furnace (Dan. 2:1–49), Daniel from the lions (Dan. 14:1–42), and St. Thecla from the fire and the beasts."

As the saint was speaking these words, a serpent crept into the cave and, finding a vessel of wine there, began to drink from it; having drunk its fill, the serpent vomited the wine back into the vessel together with its poison, and then crept away. The robbers returned home, and being tormented by thirst, they all, one after another, drank from that vessel, and were at once poisoned by that venom: for they all fell to the ground and died in terrible agony. Thus they received a worthy punishment for their sins and ended their lives in a dreadful manner.

5. *Gehenna* is the same as hell.

Having been delivered from death, St. Chariton was freed by God's help from his bonds, and in that cave he found a great quantity of gold which the robbers had gathered over many years by their brigandage. This wealth, acquired by the robbers through unlawful means, St. Chariton spent for good purposes; with the rest he built on that site a monastery named Pharan[6], and, turning the robbers' cave into a church, he gathered a brotherhood there. The fame of him spread through all that land, and many came to him for the sake of his virtuous life; having received the tonsure from him[7], they lived a quiet life in that monastery, receiving benefit from their teacher and guide, the Venerable Chariton, on whose holy life they gazed as upon a bright lamp, and were edified by it. For he was perfect in virtues and in monastic labors, loving fasting and abstinence as sweet food, counting toil as rest and keeping poverty as wealth; he was at the same time merciful and hospitable, compassionate, loving of the brethren, meek, silent and accessible to all. He had on his lips a word seasoned with the salt of wisdom[8], by which he always instructed the brethren on the way of salvation. In his monastery he established that they should take food once a day, and that in the evening, and not specially prepared dishes or drinks, but only bread and water, and that in moderation, lest, by burdening the belly with excess of food and drink, the brethren should be slothful in rising from sleep at midnight and in prayer. He also established that the brethren, after prayer, should be occupied with handwork, taking care not to spend even one hour in idleness, lest the devil, finding a monk idle, should easily ensnare him in the net of sin, for sloth and idleness are the beginning of falls. The saint further commanded the brethren to remain in their cells and keep silence, not moving from place to place and not gathering for idle conversations, for much temptation arises from empty talk, as Scripture testifies: "Evil communications corrupt good manners"[9] (1 Cor. 15:33). The Venerable

6. The monastery of Phare, or Pharus, lay six miliaria, or 60,000 paces, south of Jerusalem.
7. *Tonsure* is the special liturgical rite of admission into the monastic state; it is so named because in antiquity the cutting of the hair was the first external sign of dedication to the monastic life. Only after the tonsure was the one being dedicated clothed in the monastic garment.
8. That is, his speech was seasoned with wisdom, as it were with salt, without which food is not tasteful. See Col. 4:6.

also taught them to keep the purity of conscience as the apple of the eye, to love poverty more than gold and silver, and to have obedience as a helper conducive to salvation; humility, love, patience, meekness and all the other monastic virtues he taught them to acquire as a precious treasure and to enrich themselves with them.

Having thus taught the brethren and brought the monastery into fitting order, the Venerable commanded all to assemble, and, choosing from among the brethren the one best known for his virtue, he set him in his place as their shepherd, while he himself resolved to go into the deepest desert, loving silence and avoiding men; for he had the grace of healing diseases and casting out demons, so that people gathered to him from everywhere, bringing their sick with them. Men of high rank also came to receive his blessing, so that he could not have full monastic quiet. Wearied by this disturbance, he resolved to withdraw into solitude, fleeing worldly glory. The brethren, however, earnestly begged him not to leave them, and when these entreaties were without success, they wept for him as orphans for a father. Nevertheless the prayer of a good father, pleasing to God, did not forsake his children, for by his prayers all prospered in fulfilling the commandments of the Lord, and, like lilies[10] planted in the desert, they flourished in holiness. Thus, having taken leave of the brethren, blessed them and committed them to God, the Venerable went off into the distant deserts and trackless wildernesses[11].

Having walked one day's journey[12], the Venerable found another cave not far from the borders of Jericho[13], and settling in it he lived for God, day and night glorifying Him like an Angel[14]. His food was the greenery growing around that place, but most of all he nourished himself with the Word of God, with unceasing prayers and warm tears is-

9. That is, good customs and morals are often corrupted by participation in evil company and idle talk. See 1 Cor. 15:33.
10. That is, the lilies of the field, the wild lilies.
11. *Debr* means a valley or lowland covered with dense forest, or an area confined by rocks.
12. That is, as much as a pedestrian ordinarily covers in a day.
13. Probably in the Judean desert.
14. According to the word of Holy Scripture, the angels glorify God unceasingly. Ps. 21:4.

suing from love of God in his heart, saying in the words of the psalm: "My tears have been my bread day and night" (Ps. 41:4).

When he had been there for some time, God revealed him to men as a treasure hidden in a field[15]. Since many grieved at his departure and lamented the loss of a good father, some of the brethren, agreeing among themselves, went to seek their shepherd in the desert; God Himself willed that a skilled teacher and good ruler of many should lead and guide to the Kingdom of Heaven not only himself but others as well. From this time the place of his solitude became known, and monks and laymen began to come to him, desiring to live with him, to see his angel-like face and to be nourished by his useful conversation. Before long a considerable flock of spiritual sheep had gathered, and another monastery was established on the same order and rule as the first. Thus the glory of God grew and spread more in desert and trackless places than amid crowded cities, where lawlessness and contention dwell. But the father did not remain long with his children; for, having arranged the whole monastic order as was fitting, he again withdrew into the deepest desert, fourteen or more stadia distant from the land of Tekoa[16], and there, imitating Elijah and the Forerunner, "Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness" (Ps. 54:8). He moved from place to place, through thickets, precipices, hills, clefts and earthly abysses, wholly committing himself to God. Who could tell of his labors in the desert? God alone, who knows what is hidden, knew his exploits, saw his toils, and prepared for him a heavenly reward for them.

After the Venerable had wandered in the desert for a long time, God willed that this lamp, shining with virtues, should come out again from under the desert's bushel[17] and give light by his way of life to all who wish to walk the narrow path that leads to eternal life. Some of the ascetics passing through the desert found him again, and, falling at his feet, they begged him to command them to stay with him and to imitate his pious labors. When others learned of this, many began to gather to

15. See the parable of the treasure hidden in a field. Matt. 13:44.
16. Fecua was an ancient Jewish town located not far from Bethlehem.
17. A *spud* was a measure of dry goods, with which a lamp was sometimes covered for the night when one did not wish to extinguish it; "under a spud" means secretly.

the Venerable, fleeing the vain world. He, having now gathered a third flock of Christ's sheep and taught them monasticism, founded a third monastery, which afterwards was called in the Syriac tongue Sukiya, and in Greek was called the Old Lavra. Then he climbed to the summit of the mountain there and settled on a height that had a small cave, to which one could ascend only by a very high ladder. There he stood as upon a pillar[18], withdrawing from the earth and drawing near to the heavenly dwellings. From there, like a good shepherd standing watch, he prayed for his monasteries and cared for the salvation of the brethren gathered there; standing as it were at the stern of a ship, he directed from there the voyage of so great a number of souls, for from all the monasteries he had founded, those in need of spiritual food came to him. And he lived in that place until deep old age, in fasting, prayer and such exploits that it is impossible even to relate; for, increasing his labors day by day, he seemed incorporeal even in the flesh. That place was without water, and the father did not wish any of the brethren to labor for him by bringing water to him from afar, nor could he carry it himself, both because of the difficult ascent of the high hill and because of the weakness of his aged body, worn down and enfeebled by labors. Therefore he offered fervent prayer to God that He would bring forth water from the rock, as He did for Israel in the desert; and this came to pass, for the Lord fulfills the desires of those who fear Him and hears their prayer, and suddenly by God's power a spring of water flowed from the dry and unbreakable rock. So great was the power with God of the prayer of this virtuous father.

Having lived in perfect piety and reached, like a ripe cluster, the extreme limit of years, the Venerable drew near to his blessed end. Having learned of it from God, he summoned from his three monasteries the abbots and brethren, who by his prayers and his intercession before God had multiplied in that desert like the stars of heaven, and told them of his approaching death.

"I am leaving you," he said, "as the Lord commands me; for the time has come which I have long awaited eagerly, so that, being parted from

18. Evidently meant are those small wooden towers which Palestinian shepherds erected to watch over their flocks scattered across the vast pasture.

union with the flesh, I may go and appear before the face of my God. But you, children, take care for your salvation, so that each of you, escaping the snares of the enemy, may be made worthy at his death to enter into the Lord and receive mercy from Him."

On hearing this, all wept and said:

"You are leaving us, your children, our father and teacher! You are leaving us, our shepherd and guide! You are going out, our lamp and the leader on our way!"

But he comforted them, saying:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ promised to abide with us inseparably until the end of the age, and He will not forsake you; and if I am counted worthy by Him, I will pray to Him, the Good One, that He not separate you from one another, as sheep from goats at His Dread Judgment, but that He set you all at His right hand[19] and gather you into one fold in His Kingdom."

The brethren asked him:

"What disposition will you make, father, concerning your body? Where shall we bury you?"

He said:

"Give the earth to the earth wherever you wish: 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof'[20] (Ps. 23:1)."

But they said:

"No, father; you have founded three monasteries and gathered three flocks; each of them would wish to have your relics[21] among them; therefore, that there be no strife among us, tell us now where we are to lay your relics."

In fulfilment of their desire, he consented to be buried in the first of his monasteries, where he had been seized by brigands and wondrously delivered from them by the grace of God. The monks of all three monasteries took him up and brought him to that monastery. There, having given the brethren many instructions concerning the perfect monastic

19. To stand at the right hand means to be justified by God. Matt. 25:33.
20. That is, everything belongs to God, every piece of earth. Ps. 23:1.
21. *Relics* means the body of a deceased Christian in general, and then, in particular, the holy remains of glorified servants of God.

life and having imparted peace to them, he lay down upon his bed and yielded up his holy soul into the hands of the Lord, without having suffered any bodily illness[22].

Thus fell asleep our Venerable Father Chariton, Martyr of Christ, Confessor and good ascetic. All the Fathers of the desert wept over him, and the whole desert was filled with lamentation for so great a father and teacher, who shone upon the world like the sun. Having mourned him for a considerable time, the monks buried his holy relics with honour, glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having delighted in abstinence, O wise one in God, and restrained the desires of thy flesh, thou wast revealed as one nourished by faith; and like the tree of life thou didst flourish in the midst of Paradise, O most blessed and most holy Chariton.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Baruch

Память святого пророка Варуха

The Holy Prophet Jeremiah was a witness of the Babylonian captivity when he was seventy years old, and the Holy Baruch, his disciple, did not forsake his teacher. When Jeremiah lamented the destruction of Jerusalem, Baruch, withdrawing into a cave, likewise wept bitterly. After some time he came out of the cave and, in sorrow, was present at the stoning of his teacher Jeremiah. The Holy Baruch prophesied with especial clarity concerning the incarnation of the Son of God; this prophecy of his begins with these words: "This is our God, and no other shall be compared with Him" (Bar. 3:36–38). He also foretold the fate of Jerusalem. After the death of the Holy Jeremiah, whom he buried, he himself soon fell asleep[6118].

* * *

22. Around 350 A.D.

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Alexander, Alphaeus, Zosimas, Mark, Nicon, Neon and Heliodorus

Память святых мучеников Александра, Алфея, Зосимы, Марка, Никона, Неона и Илиодора

All these holy martyrs suffered under the emperor Diocletian[23], in Antioch of Pisidia, under the hegemon Magnus. When they ascended a certain mountain, they saw the Holy Mark, who was tending a flock of sheep; and a beast, which the soldiers were pursuing, lay at his feet and licked them. Hearing of this, Magnus commanded thirty soldiers to bring him before him; but all these soldiers turned to Christ, having been instructed by the Holy Mark. The hegemon had some of them bound, and sent the rest to Nicaea, where their heads were cut off. After this three Christian brothers were found: Alphaeus, Alexander and Zosimas. The Holy Mark, together with them, was crucified and afterwards beheaded with the sword. Magnus sent his head to the temple of his goddess Artemis; no sooner had the head of the holy martyr been brought into the temple than all the idols that were there fell down and were shattered. Seeing this miracle, Nicon, Neon and Heliodorus also believed in Christ and were put to death on the same spot.

* * *

Life of St. Wenceslas, Prince of Bohemia

Житие святого Вячеслава, князя Чешского

St. Wenceslas was of the princely line that ruled in Bohemia[6120], and was the grandson of the holy martyr Ludmila; his parents, Vratislaus[24], Prince of Bohemia, and his wife Dragomira, had, besides him, two more sons, Boleslaus and Spytihněv, and several daughters; among them all he excelled in his gifts and his goodness. When St. Wenceslas grew up, his father, according to the custom of that time, asked the bishop and the priests with the whole church clergy to

23. At the beginning of the fourth century A.D.
24. He ascended the Czech princely throne in the last years of the ninth century.

call down God's blessing upon him. The bishop, having celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the church of the Most Holy Theotokos and then placed the youth upon the steps of the church, blessed him with these words:

"O Lord God, Jesus Christ, bless this child, as Thou didst bless Thy righteous ones, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and crown him, as Thou didst crown the orthodox emperors, the Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine and Helen."

From this time especially, by the grace of God, the youth began to grow and to advance. His grandmother, the Holy Ludmila, entrusted him to a priest, her spiritual father, to teach him Slavonic letters, which the saint mastered completely very quickly. Seeing his progress, his father sent him to the city of Budeč to learn Latin and other sciences; in all of these he advanced to the astonishment of his teachers.

But by the will of God it came to pass that Prince Vratislaus died soon[25], and St. Wenceslas, still young in years, ascended his father's throne. Here, in the rank of ruler, he showed his gifts especially: together with his mother he laboured to improve the governance of the land, and took care of his family: he gave his sisters in marriage into neighbouring principalities, watched over the upbringing of his younger brothers, and did not neglect the opportunity to extend his own knowledge, so that he soon mastered thoroughly not only Slavonic and Latin but also Greek letters, surpassing in this respect any priest or even bishop. God blessed his activity, endowing him with wisdom. He for his part zealously strove to please God, cared for the poor, fed them, received strangers according to the word of the Gospel: "For I was hungry, and ye gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in" (Mt. 25:35); he honoured the clergy, built and adorned churches, and treated all with love, both rich and poor, and throughout his brief life he thought only of what was good.

But the devil, the ancient enemy of the human race, now too sought in every way to sow strife: certain evil-minded nobles wished to take

25. Prince Vratislaus died in 920 A.D.

advantage of the saint's youth, since after his father's death he remained only eighteen years old. And so, at first they began to turn Prince Wenceslas against his mother, saying that she had killed his grandmother, the Holy Ludmila, and was plotting against him. Wenceslas at first believed these words and sent his mother to the city of Budeč, but soon he remembered the words of the Apostle Paul: "Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise" (Eph. 6:2); he brought his mother back to his house and, with bitter tears, repented, saying:

"O Lord my God, lay not this to my charge as a sin," and he repeated the words of the Psalmist: "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions" (Ps. 24:7).

From then on he honoured his mother in every way, so that she rejoiced in his piety and goodness: he nourished the infirm, cared for widows and orphans, ransomed captives, did good to all, and everywhere the name of the good and righteous Prince Wenceslas was glorified.

The malicious nobles, seeing that their schemes had failed through the wisdom and good conduct of the saint, began to stir up against him his brother Boleslaus, who, being the younger, was obliged to submit to Wenceslas. They persuaded Boleslaus that Prince Wenceslas, with his counsellors and his mother, was plotting to destroy him, and advised him, for the sake of saving his own life, to kill the holy prince and himself to occupy the princely throne. These wicked counsels of the seducers troubled the mind of Boleslaus, and he began to contemplate the death of his brother, just as, almost a hundred years later[26], Sviatopolk the Accursed, desiring to be sole ruler in the Russian land, conceived the plan of slaying his brothers.

Wishing to carry out his criminal intention, Boleslaus invited his brother to him for the consecration of a church, which was to take place on a Sunday, which in that year coincided with the commemoration of the Holy Cosmas and Damian. St. Wenceslas, having come and heard the Holy Liturgy, wished to return to Prague[27], but Boleslaus began to detain him, begging him not to offend him by refusing the feast he had

26. In 1015.
27. The capital of Bohemia, located on the river Vltava, a tributary of the Labe.

prepared. The saint agreed to remain, although, when he went out into Boleslaus's courtyard, the servants warned him of his brother's designs. The saint did not believe this, placing all his hope in God. They spent that whole day together in joy; meanwhile at night the villains gathered in the courtyard of one of the conspirators, named Hněvsa, and together with Boleslaus deliberated how they might kill St. Wenceslas, and resolved to attack him as soon as he rose and went to Matins, since they knew that out of piety the saint would not miss the service. And their designs were fulfilled: no sooner had the bell for Matins sounded than Wenceslas immediately rose, saying:

"Glory to Thee, O Lord my God, that Thou hast given me light and allowed me to live to this morning."

Then he dressed and, having washed, went to the church; at the gate of his house Boleslaus overtook him. The saint, turning round, said:

"Good day, brother; yesterday was good..."

But he had not finished his speech when Boleslaus, at the instigation of the devil, drew his sword from its scabbard and struck his brother on the head, saying:

"Today I wish to treat you even better."

Wenceslas cried out:

"Brother, what have you planned?"

And seizing him and throwing him to the ground, he asked:

"My brother, what evil have I done to you?"

But at that moment one of the conspirators ran up and struck the saint in the hand. Then he, leaving Boleslaus, ran toward the church. The conspirators rushed after him, and two of them, Cesta and Tira, cut him down in the very doorway of the church, while a third, Hněvsa, pierced him with a sword in the ribs. The blessed one breathed out his spirit, saying:

"Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

After the prince's murder the villains began to slaughter his retinue, to plunder, and to drive out all those whom the Holy Wenceslas had sheltered in his house; the conspirator Tira began to advise Boleslaus to attack the mother as well, so as to be rid of both brother and mother

at once, but he replied that there was still time for that, since she had nowhere to hide.

The conspirators hacked the body of St. Wenceslaus to pieces and cast it out unburied; only a certain priest covered it with a cloth. At that time the saint's mother, hearing of his murder, rushed to seek him, and upon seeing his mangled remains burst into bitter tears. She gathered all the parts of his body and, not daring to carry them to her own home, washed and dressed them right there in the courtyard of that church's priest; then they were carried into the church and laid there. Having rendered this last duty to her son, who had died a martyr's death, the mother of St. Wenceslaus, fleeing from death, took refuge in the land of the Croats[28], so that when Boleslaus later sent murderers after her too, they could no longer find her.

The remains of the blessed prince remained for some time in the church, awaiting burial, until at last they were permitted to summon a priest to perform the funeral service for the holy martyr and bury him. And his blood, shed at the church doors, could not be washed away, however hard they tried. After three days, however, it vanished of its own accord in a miraculous manner[29].

Soon the fratricide Boleslaus recognized his grievous sin and wept bitterly, repenting and saying:

"I have sinned; my transgression and my iniquities I know. O God, help me, a sinner."

He sent priests and his courtiers to transfer the relics of St. Wenceslaus to the royal city of Prague, and they were solemnly laid on the right side of the sanctuary in the church of St. Vitus, which the saint himself had founded.

* * *

NOTES

6118. The Prophet Baruch reposed in Egypt, probably in the twelfth year after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, that is, in 595 B.C. A special book in Holy

28. A Slavic tribe living along the shore of the Adriatic Sea and along the rivers Sava and Drava, tributaries of the Danube, south of Bohemia.

Scripture bears the name of this prophet. The purpose of writing this book, as can be seen from its contents, was to show the Jews that the Lord had sent all the calamities that befell them upon them for the sins of their ancestors and of themselves, and thereby to arouse in them a feeling of heartfelt contrition and repentance; at the same time, to give them, amid the calamities that had befallen them, consolation through the promise of impending freedom from captivity, and still more through the coming of the blessed Messianic times. The Book of the Prophet Baruch is regarded as a supplement or addition to the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah and is nowhere found separately from it. Among the holy Fathers of the Church it is often joined directly with the Book of Jeremiah under the latter's name. Even the paremia taken from this book for the eve of the Nativity of Christ (Bar. 3:36–38, 4:1–5) is read under the name of the Prophecy of Jeremiah, not of Baruch.

6120. Bohemia occupies the central European plateau, surrounded on almost all sides by mountains and watered by the river Labe (Elbe) with its tributaries. In remote antiquity this land was occupied by the Celtic people, the Boii, from whom it takes its other name, Bohemia. Shortly before the birth of Christ the Boii were driven out by the Germanic Marcomanni, who waged long wars with the Romans and finally disappeared in the middle of the fifth century; soon after this, presumably, the Slavic tribes of the Czechs settled in the deserted land, and the country was named after them, Czechia. When the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius were preaching among the Slavic lands, Moravia and Pannonia, the Czechs too were baptized by them, and divine service in the Slavonic language was introduced among them; Christianity spread very strongly among the Czechs, and soon holy ascetics appeared among them; in the Orthodox Church are known the Blessed Ludmila, St. Wenceslaus, and the Venerable Procopius, who lived already in the eleventh century (his memory is celebrated on September 16). But even before the baptism of the Czechs by the holy first-teachers of the Slavs, German missionaries had appeared in Bohemia as well, who began to spread Divine services in the Latin language, and since they enjoyed the protection of the powerful German states neighboring the Czechs, they gradually succeeded in completely supplanting the Slavonic worship, which in the eleventh century the Venerable Procopius had to defend, although in places it continued to survive later.

29. The martyric death of St. Wenceslaus, Prince of Bohemia, took place in 935, on the 28th day of September.

THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 29

29 сентября

New Calendar September 29 · Old Calendar October 12 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Cyriacus

Житие преподобного отца нашего Кириака

The Venerable Cyriacus was from Corinth[1] and was the son of John, a presbyter of the cathedral church; his mother was called Eudoxia. He was born in the last years of the reign of Theodosius the Younger[2]. The Venerable's kinsman, Peter, Bishop of Corinth, made him a reader of the cathedral church while he was still a youth. Occupying himself with reading the Divine Books from morning till evening and from evening till morning, Cyriacus studied Holy Scripture, marveling at how God from the very beginning of the world had wisely ordered all things for the salvation of mankind, how in every generation He had granted great honor to those who pleased Him and bestowed great glory upon them. For He glorified Abel for his sacrifice (Gen. 4:4), and honored Enoch with translation into Paradise because he had greatly pleased Him[3]. For the sake of Noah's righteousness He preserved from the flood this spark of the human race[4] (Gen. 7:1–24, 8:1–22); for the sake of Abraham's faith He showed him to be the fath-

1. Corinth, the most ancient, famous and wealthy city of ancient Greece, lay on the Isthmus of Corinth, which joins the Peloponnese (southern Greece) with the rest of Greece, in a beautiful and fertile plain at the southeastern corner of the Gulf of Corinth, between the Ionian and Aegean Seas. The beginning of Christianity in Corinth was laid by the Apostle Paul. At the present time the ruins of ancient Corinth are located near the present Corinth, called Kuronto, which has only about 5,000 inhabitants.

2. Around 448 A.D.

3. Gen. 5:24: "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." This expression is usually understood in the sense of Enoch's being taken up into heaven. "It must be thought," says Metropolitan Philaret, "that in Enoch, when his inner man had attained the predestined measure of the age of grace, the mortal was swallowed up by life (2 Cor. 5:4), in some more noble manner than that which we call bodily death."

er of many nations[5] (Gen. 12:4–5); He showed that the good priesthood of Melchizedek was pleasing to Him[6] (Gen. 14:18–20; Heb. 7:1–28); He exalted Joseph for the sake of his chastity (Gen. 41:39–57); in Job He gave all mankind an example of patience (Job; Jas. 5:10–11); He made Moses a lawgiver, allowed Joshua the son of Nun to stop the course of the sun and the moon (Josh. 10:12–14), revealed in David a prophet, a king and an ancestor of Christ our Savior, and turned for the youths the flame of the Babylonian furnace into dew (Dan. 3:50). Cyriacus marveled most of all as he pondered the seedless conception and the ineffable birth of Christ: how a Virgin became a Mother while keeping her virginity unharmed, and how God the Word, without change, became man, took captive hell by the Cross and, trampling down the seducing serpent, led Adam back into Paradise. Pondering this and reading the lives of the saints, Cyriacus was kindled in spirit, and the fear of God entered his heart; he began to strive to imitate the servants of God, and he considered how he might go to the holy city of Jerusalem and there, renouncing the world, serve God alone. Occupied with such thoughts, once on a Sunday he heard in church the words of the Gospel appointed for that day: "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mt. 16:24). Cyriacus, understanding that these words applied to him, at once left the church and, without telling anyone of his intention, went down to the shore where there was a quay; finding there a ship bound for Palestine, he entered it trusting in God and sailed away on it. Cyriacus was eighteen years old when, like a new Jacob, he left his father's house (Gen. 28:7–10), forsaking all for God. Soon he arrived in the holy city of Jerusalem, where Anastasius was bishop; this was in the eighth year of his episcopate and the ninth year of the reign of Emperor Leo[7].

4. Noah may be called the spark of mankind, both because, when the human race was universally corrupted before the Flood, in him alone, as a spark amid ashes, the true knowledge of God and righteousness was preserved, and because after the Flood a numerous posterity sprang from him, just as a great flame is kindled from a single spark.

5. The very name "Abraham" means "father of a multitude." The Lord gave this name to Abraham, who until then had been called Abram, before the birth of Isaac from Sarah.

6. Melchizedek, king of Salem, was at the same time priest of God Most High, combining in his person the royal and the priestly dignity, and he prefigured the priesthood and royal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Heb. 7:1–28.

Having visited the holy places, Cyriacus came to a man of God named Eustorgius, who had founded a monastery near holy Zion[8], and being received by him, he spent the winter there. Beholding the ascetic labors of the monks, Cyriacus himself began to labor in the monastic life and, as though by a ladder, step by step, ascended to the very summit of a virtuous life. While living in the monastery of Eustorgius, he heard from many about the holy Euthymius, who had founded a laura[9] in the desert, and about his perfect life; therefore he besought the blessed Eustorgius to release him to the Laura of Euthymius, for he loved the desert and wished to live in it. Having given Cyriacus suitable instruction, Eustorgius released him with prayer and blessing to the Venerable Euthymius. Euthymius received him with love, foreseeing in him the gifts of God that were to be revealed; soon he tonsured Cyriacus as a monk with his own hands and sent him to the Jordan to St. Gerasimus, who had taken the place of the great Theoctistus, who had departed to the Lord. Seeing that Cyriacus was still too young, St. Gerasimus commanded him to live in the monastery's common life and to labor in various obediences[10].

Cyriacus showed himself ready for every kind of labor and remained in the kitchen, chopping wood, carrying water and preparing food; in general he performed every obedience with gratitude, giving himself no rest, and in this way wearied his body. For by day he worked with all zeal for the monastery, and by night he stood in prayer, only occasionally forgetting himself in sleep for a short time; and he fasted so strictly that he took bread and water only every second day. When, according

7. St. Leo I, Byzantine emperor, reigned from 457 to 474. St. Anastasius I was Patriarch of Jerusalem 458–478. Venerable Cyriacus secretly departed from his parents for Jerusalem around 465.

8. Zion is the southwestern hill of Jerusalem, on which Jerusalem was built and on which the Jerusalem citadel rises. In Holy Scripture Zion is called the holy mountain, the dwelling and house of God, and very often it is taken for Jerusalem itself; in this sense the name is used in the present case.

9. The Lavra of St. Euthymius was located not far from Jerusalem.

10. Euthymius the Great did not admit very young monks into his Lavra, since they were not yet prepared for the harsh, desert life of the Lavra and were unworthy of the consecration to the "Great Schema," which was obligatory for the Lavra's hermits, for whom strict seclusion within the monastery was likewise obligatory; in the cenobitic monasteries, however, life was in some respects less severe.

to the custom observed on feast days, it happened that he tasted a little wine, he first diluted it with water, and likewise he mixed dill juice into his oil.

Seeing such abstinence at so young an age, the Venerable Gerasimus marveled at it and came to love Cyriacus. Gerasimus had a custom of withdrawing for the Holy Forty Days into the deep desert called Ruva, whither the Venerable Euthymius sometimes also retreated. Loving the blessed Cyriacus, Gerasimus took him with him into the desert, that he too might be given the opportunity to practice a particular abstinence. There Cyriacus received Holy Communion from the hands of Gerasimus every week; thus they dwelt in desert silence until Palm Sunday, and then returned to the monastery with great profit to their souls. Some time later the Venerable Euthymius reposed, which St. Gerasimus learned while in his cell, for he saw the Angels of God joyfully bearing the soul of the Venerable up to heaven. He at once took Cyriacus with him and went to the Lavra of Euthymius, where he found the Venerable had died in the Lord; having committed his honorable body to burial, Gerasimus returned with his beloved disciple to his cell.

In the ninth year after Cyriacus's arrival in Palestine, the great servant of God Gerasimus passed from earthly dwellings to eternal ones. Then Cyriacus, being twenty-seven years old, returned again to the Lavra of the Venerable Euthymius, where he had once received the angelic habit from his holy hands[11]. The abbot of the Lavra at that time was Elias; having asked him for a secluded cell, Cyriacus began to live in it in silence. In the Lavra he found a friend, a monk named Thomas, a great faster and one perfect in the monastic life, and he came to feel great love for him in the Holy Spirit: each of them received benefit from the other, for both were filled with the grace of God. But they did not long enjoy their friendly life together, for the will of God separated them. Thus the blessed Thomas was sent by the deacon Phidus to Al-

11. *Angelic image* (*angel'skiy obraz*): the consecration to the monastic rank, by which people are to become, as it were, like the incorporeal Angels, devoting all their time to contemplation of God, to prayer, and to various lofty spiritual struggles directed toward the overcoming of the flesh.

exandria to buy certain things needed by the monastery. On this journey he was given by Bishop Martyrius[12] a letter to Timothy, Archbishop of Alexandria[13]. Archbishop Timothy detained Thomas, who had come to him, having discerned the grace abiding in him, and, ordaining him, made him bishop over the land of Ethiopia[14]. Arriving there, the blessed Thomas enlightened with the light of Christianity all the regions of that country, and, having worked many signs and wonders, was a good shepherd of the flock entrusted to him.

Having lost his friend, the monk Thomas, St. Cyriacus bound himself by a vow of deep silence and lived shut up in his cell, as though buried in a tomb, conversing with God alone. And he remained in that monastery, where he had been ordained deacon, for ten years. At that time both monasteries, that of Euthymius and that of Theoctistus, had one common life and one administration, keeping the rule of the great Euthymius. But the enemy stirred up disorder in these monasteries and sowed division and strife between them. Grieved by this division between the monasteries, St. Cyriacus withdrew to the monastery of Souka, which had been founded and organized by the Venerable Chariton, and began to perform monastic obediences. After spending four years in various services, in the bakery and in the infirmary, and winning the approval of all the fathers, he was admitted to serve as a deacon; and three years after this, in his fortieth year of life, Cyriacus was ordained presbyter, and afterwards made canonarch[15], and he bore this obedience for eighteen years; in all he lived in the monastery of Souka more than thirty years. He himself testified that during the time when he was canonarch, the sun never saw him eating or angry with anyone.

12. By the bishop here is to be understood the Patriarch of Jerusalem Martyrius, who held the patriarchate from 478 to 486.

13. Timothy II Salophakiolos was Patriarch of Alexandria in 460–482.

14. Ethiopia was the ancient name of a vast country lying to the south of Egypt. Here one is to understand chiefly Abyssinia, where Christianity had spread already in the fourth century.

15. *Kanonarch* means the initiator of the established chanting. In antiquity, on account of the poverty of the monasteries, which did not permit them to have liturgical books in the necessary number of copies, and also on account of the small number of literate singers, the custom arose of chanting sacred hymns to dictation. One of the monks, holding a book, pronounced phrase after phrase in a loud voice, while the other choristers sang these phrases as each was uttered. The "canonarching" (*kanonarkhanie*) still exists in the monasteries.

He also said that every evening, after standing in prayer in his cell, he would read and chant the Psalter until the striking of the signal[16] for the midnight office.

Desiring to live an even stricter life, Cyriacus, in his seventieth year of life, withdrew into the desert. He took with him one disciple and, traveling through the desert for a long time, came to that part of it called Naṭuf, where he settled. Having nothing for sustenance, for the vegetation of that desert was extremely bitter, he prayed to God and, trusting in His mercy, said to his disciple:

"Go, child, gather some bitter herbs and boil them: blessed is almighty God, who will feed us even with that herbage!"

The disciple did as the saint had instructed him. But God, who nourishes all who place their hope in Him, changed the bitterness of that herb into sweetness, and it served them for food for four years. At the end of the fourth year, a chief of the comites[17] from Tekoa heard of Cyriacus from shepherds who pastured sheep in the wilderness. He placed a sack of bread on a donkey, came to Cyriacus, and asked for his blessing and prayers. After praying, Cyriacus spoke with him about matters profitable to the soul, and then dismissed him with his blessing; from that time they began to eat the bread brought by the chief. But one day Cyriacus's disciple, without the blessed elder's instruction, boiled some of the herb, and when he tasted it, he felt such bitterness that he could not utter a word. Understanding the cause of his speechlessness, the elder prayed over him, gave him Communion of the Most Pure Mysteries, and thereby healed his affliction. Then he said to him by way of instruction:

"God will not work miracles at all times, but only in our afflictions and when we are in the greatest need. When we had no bread, God sweetened the herb for us, so that we might eat it. Now, however, we

16. *Bilo*: a metal or wooden board which in antiquity, and in some places still today, takes the place of bells for calling the faithful to divine worship.

17. The *comites* were the imperial bodyguards. Later this title came to be applied to the officials who formed the retinue of the higher office-holders in general: proconsuls, provincial governors, and governors; the duties of the *comites* later came to include the collection of taxes for the state treasury.

have bread; is there any need for that miracle, that the bitter herb should be turned sweet?"

But then the bread ran out, and food was scarce once more; so the elder said again to his disciple:

"Blessed be God, child; gather and boil the herb."

The disciple did as he was told, but when the time came to eat, he did not wish to taste it, fearing that he might again bring suffering upon himself. The elder, however, made the sign of the Cross over the food and tasted it first; then, looking at the elder, the disciple also dared to taste it. Neither of them suffered any harm, for they found the food sweet, as before, and from that time they ate of that herb.

In the fifth year of Cyriacus's dwelling in the wilderness, a certain man, a native of Tekoa, heard of the blessed one. Bringing his son to him, who at every new moon was tormented by a fierce demon, he begged the saint to have compassion on his son and drive out that evil tormentor. Having offered a prayer, Cyriacus anointed the sick boy with oil, making the sign of the Cross over him, and by this drove out the demon. The man returned home with his son healed, and told everyone of this miracle.

News of the saint spread throughout that land, and many people began to flock to him—one seeking his blessing, another seeking healing, and yet another wishing to speak with him and gain benefit for his soul. To avoid human praise, St. Cyriacus withdrew into the inner wilderness called Ruva, where he remained for five years, feeding on the roots of a plant called melagria and the fresh shoots of reeds.[18] But even there some found him and brought to him their sick and those suffering from unclean spirits; and the saint healed them all by the sign of the Cross and by prayer.

Finding no rest for himself even there, the saint departed from Ruva and settled in a desolate and hidden place, where there was not a single hermit. This place was called Susakim and lay ninety stadia from the Monastery of Souka.[19] Two deep rivers once flowed together there, but

18. *Melagria*: a little-known desert plant of Palestine with a bitterish taste. By "reed" (*trostnik*) here is to be understood the so-called fragrant reed, a plant with an aromatic and pleasant but bitter-tasting root.

later dried up, leaving only a deep and broad channel. Some say that these were the rivers of Itham, of which David spoke to God in the Psalms: "Thou didst dry up mighty rivers"[20] (Ps. 73:15). Cyriacus remained there for seven years, pursuing a life equal to that of the angels.

By divine permission, famine and pestilence came upon those regions. Fearing the impending calamity, the fathers of the Lavra of Souka came to St. Cyriacus and begged him to come to their monastery, for they believed that if St. Cyriacus were with them, the wrath of God would be turned away from them. And so it came to pass. At the brethren's request, the Venerable Cyriacus came to the Lavra and dwelt near the monastery, in the hermit's cave where the Venerable Chariton had formerly lived.

At that time the heresy of Origen[21] was growing stronger, and St. Cyriacus labored greatly to uproot it, opposing the godless heretical teaching, turning those who had been deceived back to the true path by prayer and word, and strengthening the Orthodox in the faith. The writer of this Life, Cyril, speaks of this as follows:

"At that time, leaving the Lavra of Euthymius the Great, I came to the Lavra of St. Sabbas, to the Venerable Bishop John the Silent. He sent me with a letter to Abba Cyriacus, to inform him of the dissension caused by heretics in the holy city, and to beg him to offer unceasing prayers to God for the overthrow of the pride of the heretical leaders, Nonnus and Leontius, who were repeating Origen's blasphemies against Christ. When I came to the Monastery of Souka, I went to the cave of the Venerable Chariton and, bowing before the blessed Cyriacus, gave him the letter, and also told him what the wondrous John the Silent had charged me to say. The saint answered me:

19. 90 poprishchi, by our reckoning, are about 124 versts.

20. *Ifamskie*: in translation from the Hebrew, means impassable, deep, and swift.

21. Origen, the famous Christian teacher of the Alexandrian Church (d. 254), was a marvel of his age by the vastness of his mind and the depth of his learning. Many of the most eminent Fathers of the Church treated the theological labors and merits of Origen with profound respect; but later he was condemned as a heretic, already during his lifetime at two local Alexandrian councils and, after his death, at the local Constantinopolitan council of 543. Without setting forth his non-Orthodox opinions as indisputable truths, Origen nevertheless thought erroneously about many truths of the Christian Church, for which reason some considered his steadfastness in the chief Christian dogmas to be doubtful.

'Let the father who sent you not grieve, for soon, by God's mercy, we shall see the fall of the heresy.'

He foretold the imminent deaths of Nonnus and Leontius, the preachers of Origen's teaching. As Cyriacus continued his edifying discourse, he made clear to me the madness and deception of the Origenists, and told me how divine revelation had shown him the harm caused by this heresy and the destruction of those seduced by it. Learning in our conversation that I was a monk from the Lavra of Euthymius the Great, the blessed one said:

'Then, brother, you are from the same monastery as I.'

He began to tell me much about Euthymius, for the benefit of my soul, and, having nourished my soul with edifying accounts in his sweet discourse, sent me away in peace. Soon the prophecy of the blessed Cyriacus was fulfilled, for the leaders of the heresy died suddenly, the heretical faction broke apart, and the persecution of the Orthodox came to an end. Then Cyriacus, freed from care, left the cave of the Venerable Chariton and returned to Susakim, in the ninety-ninth year of his life, and spent eight years there in silence.

Wishing once more to see the saintly face of the Venerable One and delight in his sweet discourse, I set out for the Monastery of Souka. Finding his disciple John there, I went with him to Susakim, to the blessed Cyriacus. As we drew near that place, a huge and fearsome lion met us. Seeing that the beast had filled me with terror, John, the saint's disciple, said to me:

'Do not be afraid, brother Cyril: this lion is our father's servant and does no harm to the brethren who come to him.'

Indeed, when the lion saw that we were going to the elder, it moved out of our way. When Abba Cyriacus saw me, he said:

'Look, brother Cyril, from my own monastery has come to me.'

After praying, we sat down and began to converse. Then his disciple John said to him:

'Father, brother Cyril was greatly afraid when he saw the lion.'

The elder said to me:

'Do not be afraid of that lion, child Cyril, for he lives with me and guards these few vegetables from the wild goats.'

Then the saint told me much about Euthymius the Great and the other desert fathers who led virtuous lives, and afterward ordered food to be set before me. As we ate, the lion came and stood before us. The elder rose, gave it a piece of bread, and said:

'Go and guard the vegetables.'

Then he said to me:

'Do you see this lion, child? He not only guards the vegetables, but also drives away robbers and barbarians from here. Evil men have attacked this poor place many times, but the lion drove them away.'

Hearing this, I marveled and glorified God, who had made the wild beasts subject to His servant as sheep. I stayed with him for one day and learned much; in the morning, after praying, he gave me his blessing and sent me away in peace, telling his disciple to accompany me. As we left the saint, we met the lion on the road, lying there and devouring a wild goat. Not daring to pass by it, we stopped; but when it saw us standing there, it left its prey and moved aside, allowing us to pass.

The place where the Venerable One lived was dry and without water, and there was no well there. The blessed one hollowed out a basin in the rock and collected water in it during the winter; this water sufficed for himself and for watering his vegetables throughout the summer. But one year, in the month of July, the water collected in the rock dried up from the great heat. Grieved by the lack of water, the saint lifted his eyes to heaven and prayed in these words:

'O God, who gavest drink to thirsty Israel in the wilderness (Ex. 17:1–6; Num. 20:2–12), give me also a little water here in this wilderness, enough for the needs of my poor body.'

And immediately a small cloud appeared over Susakim, rain fell around the saint's dwelling, and filled all the hollows among the rocks. Thus swiftly did God hear His servant.

"I consider it useful," says the same writer of this Life, Cyril, "to tell here also what the blessed Cyriacus's disciple, Father John, related to me. As we were walking together in the wilderness, he showed me a certain place, saying:

'Here is the dwelling of blessed Mary.'

I begged him to tell me about her, and he began his account:

‘Some time ago,’ he said, ‘when I was going with my friend, Brother Paramon, to Father Cyriacus, we saw from afar a man standing, and thought he was some hermit. We hastened toward him, wishing to bow before him, but when we drew near that place, he immediately disappeared from sight. Thinking that it was an evil spirit, we were greatly afraid, and so began to pray. After we had finished praying, we looked around and found a cave in the ground, and understood that this was not an evil spirit, but some servant of God who had hidden from us. Coming up to the cave itself, we begged and entreated him to appear to us and not deprive us of his prayers and edifying conversation. And from within the cave we heard this reply:

“What benefit do you seek from me? I am a sinful and simple woman.”

Then she asked us:

“Where are you going?”

And we answered:

"We are going to Father Cyriacus, the hermit. But tell us, for God's sake: what is your name, how do you live, where are you from, and why have you come here?"

She answered:

"Go where you intended, and when you return I will tell you everything."

We assured her, saying:

"We will not leave until we hear what your name is and what your life has been."

Seeing that we would not go away, she began to speak of herself without showing herself to us from the cave:

"My name is Mary. I was a psaltress[22] at the church of the Resurrection of Christ, and the devil tempted many people through me. Fear arose in me lest I become guilty of someone's impure thoughts and fall, and lest through this I increase my own sins. So I earnestly prayed to God that He would deliver me from such a temptation. Then one day, moved in heart and filled with the fear of God, I went to Siloam, drew

22. The psalm readers were responsible for reading the psalms at the liturgical assemblies of Christians.

water into a vessel, and took with me a basket of soaked beans. Entrusting myself to God's divine protection, I left the holy city by night for the desert. God was pleased to bring me here, and for eighteen years now I have lived in this place. By God's mercy, to this day the water in my vessel has not run short, and the beans in my basket have not diminished. Now I beg you, go to Father Cyriacus and finish your business. And when you return, visit me, a poor woman."

Hearing this, we went to Father Cyriacus and told him all that we had heard from the blessed Mary. Cyriacus marvelled and said:

"Glory to Thee, our God! How many hidden saints Thou hast, not only men but women, who serve Thee in secret! Go, my children, to the God-pleasing woman, and keep in your memory what she tells you."

Returning from the Venerable Cyriacus, we came to the cave of the blessed Mary and called to her, saying:

"Servant of God Mary! Behold, we have come at your bidding."

But there was no answer. Entering the mouth of the cave, we offered a prayer, but Mary did not answer us. When we went into the inner part of the cave, we found Mary had reposed in the Lord, and from her holy body there came forth a great fragrance. We had nothing with us in which we could clothe her and bury her, so we went to the monastery and brought back everything that was needed. Having clothed the blessed woman, we buried her in the cave and closed the entrance with a stone.

Thus Father John related this to me. I, marvelling at such a life of that servant of God, resolved in my mind to commit this account to writing for the edification of those who hear it, and to the glory of God the Lover of mankind, who gives patience to those who love Him."

At the end of the eighth year of his stay in Susakim, the Venerable Cyriacus reached extreme old age, for he was already one hundred and seven years old. The fathers of the monastery of Souka, gathering together, consulted among themselves:

"We cannot allow such a father," they said, "to repose far from our monastery; otherwise we shall not know of his honorable repose, and we shall be deprived of his last blessing."

Going to the saint, they entreated him for a long time that he would move from Susakim to the cave of the Venerable Chariton, which was near the monastery and in which he had lived before, when he struggled against the Origenists. At last Cyriacus agreed to their request and settled in the cave of Chariton two years before his departure to God.

"I, a poor man," writes the author, "often came there, comforted him, and received great benefit for my soul from his holy conversations and great labors. Despite his advanced years, St. Cyriacus was remarkable for the strength of his body; he was diligent and very active. Never remaining idle, he either prayed or worked. He was accessible to all, far-seeing, instructive, and orthodox in faith, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit and the grace of God. When our Lord was pleased, after the many labors of the saint, to transfer him to the heavenly rest, the Venerable fell into bodily illness, but he remained in it only a short time. Calling to him the abbot of that monastery and the brethren, he spoke an exhortation about the salvation of the soul, and, kissing them all, he blessed them. Then, looking up to heaven and stretching out his hands, he prayed for all the brethren and committed his honorable and holy soul into the hands of the Lord, on the twenty-ninth day of the month of September[23]. He lived only one hundred and nine years."

The brethren, weeping much over him, buried his holy body with fitting psalms and chanting, glorifying God and commemorating the many years of labor of His servant.

May glory also be from us sinners to our God, now and ever and unto ages of ages! Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As a steadfast champion and intercessor, the holy Lavra, always honoring thee, celebrateth thy memory yearly,[24] and, as thou hast boldness before the Lord, preserve us from the enemies that assail us, that we may cry: Rejoice, most blessed Father.

* * *

23. Venerable Cyriacus reposed in 556.
24. That is, he celebrates your memory annually.

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Dada, Gavedday, and Kazdoi

Память святых мучеников Дады, Гаведдая и Каздои

In the days of Sapor, king of Persia, the father of the holy martyr Gavedday, there lived at the royal court a Christian named Dada, the first of the royal nobles, greatly loved and esteemed by the king. The king sent him to govern one of the provinces of the Persian kingdom, not knowing that he was a Christian. Soon it was reported to the king that Dada confessed Christ. Then the king sent a nobleman, Andromelech, to investigate whether this was true. Having been convinced that it was true, Andromelech wrote of it to Sapor. The king then gave this nobleman full power over the Christians of his kingdom, and he himself, together with his son Gavedday, began to interrogate Dada; and from conversation with him he became even more clearly convinced that he believed with his whole soul in the Lord Jesus Christ and desired to die for Him. Then they lit a large bonfire and wished to cast the holy Dada into it. The bonfire was so great that all who saw it were terrified. When the holy Dada approached the brightly burning flame, he made the sign of the Cross over himself. Suddenly everyone saw that the fire went out and, instead of fire, water flowed, and they marvelled at so great a miracle. And the royal son Gavedday asked the holy martyr:

"Who taught you such enchantments?"

The holy Dada answered him:

"If you also wish to follow the teaching which I follow, you too will be counted worthy to perform the same miracles."

"Can it be," asked Gavedday, "that if I believe in your Christ, I shall perform such wondrous signs?" The holy Dada said to him in reply:

"You will not only perform them, but you will also reign with Christ."

Then Gavedday ordered a large fire to be kindled, invoked the name of Christ, and the fire went out. Seeing such a miracle, the prince fell at the feet of the holy Dada and confessed his faith in Christ. The royal nobleman Andromelech reported all this to the king Sapor. Learning

that his son Gavedday believed in Christ, the king ordered four servants to beat the prince with knotted clubs. When these four were exhausted from long beating, the king ordered others to take their place. During the beating, the holy Gavedday called upon God for help. An Angel appeared to him and strengthened him, saying:

"Be bold, I am with you."

After this the holy martyr was cast into prison, where he remained five days. Soon Sapor entrusted the power to judge all the Christians of his kingdom to a certain Gargal, who ordered the holy Gavedday to be beaten with thongs of oxhide. Enduring such torment, the holy martyr reviled his father's faith. Then Gargal ordered two strips of skin to be flayed from his body, from feet to head, saying:

"I will see whether your Christ will come to heal you." But the holy martyr at once became completely well. Gargal shut him up in prison, but by the power of God his bonds were also loosed. The judge became frantic with rage and went to report all this to the king, who said to him:

"Kill the impious one, for he is no longer my son but a man of evil thoughts, because he has believed in Christ."

Gargal heated an iron rod and pierced the head of the holy martyr through the ears. But while the martyr was praying, an Angel appeared, drew out the rod, and healed the holy sufferer. Seeing this, Gargal began to tear his body with sharp iron spikes, saying:

"We shall see whether your Christ will come and heal you."

But the holy Gavedday prayed again and received healing. The prison guards, witnesses of all this, were seized with fear and cried out:

"Great is the God of the Christians."

But the judge raged still more and ordered iron spikes to be driven into the martyr's shoulders and had him hung, leaving him in this position from the third to the ninth hour. The saint hung and prayed. Then he was taken down and led back to prison. His mother and sister wished to visit him in prison, but they feared the king. And Sapor himself, learning that the martyr was still alive, subjected him to a new torment: he ordered the skin to be stripped from his head, his face to be covered, and he was again shut up in prison. The saint endured all this

glorifying God. Learning that the martyr was still alive, the king ordered his fingernails and toenails to be torn out and all his teeth to be knocked out. Having shut him up again in prison, he forbade anyone to give him drink or to admit anyone to him.

The martyr's sister secretly went into the prison and gave him water to drink, and she forbade the prison guard, under threat of execution, to speak of it. Amid all his sufferings the holy martyr rejoiced and healed the diseases and infirmities of all who came to him, and all marvelled at this.

At that time another Gargal, a sorcerer, was sitting in the prison, punished for many of his crimes. Seeing the patience of the holy Gavedday, and also the miracles which he performed, this sorcerer fell at his feet and said:

"I beg you, servant of God: remember me before your Christ."

The saint answered him:

"Believe in Him, and He will deliver you from all your evils."

Gargal cried out:

"I believe in Thee, Lord Jesus Christ!"

He then joined Gavedday. On the following day the tormentor ordered both of them brought before him for judgment; and having stripped Gargal, he had him beaten with rods. During the beating the martyr gazed up to heaven and prayed thus:

"Lord Jesus Christ, for Thy name's sake I suffer: strengthen me!"

Having said this, he commended his spirit to the Lord. And holy Gavedday was placed upon a rotating wheel and the skin was stripped from his feet. Then they began to burn the muscles of his hands with red-hot iron hammers, and again cast him into prison.

The prisoners who were in it were anointed with the blood flowing from his wounds, and received healing for their own wounds; and all the sick received healing and glorified God. When Prince Gargal heard of this, he did not believe it. But great was his terror when the holy martyr, brought out of the prison after fifteen days, proved to be whole and in perfect health. Then he ordered him to be thrown into a red-hot cauldron filled with pitch and sulphur, but even after this the martyr remained unharmed.

Having taken counsel with his courtiers, the tormentor commanded the holy martyr to be crucified, and then for a long time he was shot at with bows in the presence of a great crowd. Then there followed a new and glorious miracle: not only did the saint himself remain unharmed, but the very arrows shot at his body rebounded and wounded those who shot them. All this struck the people with terror. The matter was reported to the king. He sent his daughter Kazdoya to comfort the holy Gavedday. Kazdoya, however, having come to Gavedday and seen all that had happened to him, was herself instructed by him and believed in Christ. Sapor was greatly angered and commanded that his daughter be stretched upon the ground and beaten with rods, after which she too was cast into prison. Kazdoya, lying in the prison and suffering from her wounds, said to the holy Gavedday:

"Pray for me, that I may be able to endure these torments."

The holy martyr answered her:

"Your faith in Christ will help you; do not grieve. I trust in the Lord that, by His will, torment will not touch you, and you will not be tortured any longer with another torment."

King Sapor commanded that the holy martyr be brought out, his hands and feet bound, and then cast into the middle of the horse-race course, so that during the night the saint might be trampled by horses. But by the grace of God the holy martyr was preserved unharmed from them, and he blessed God for it. When on the following day they saw that the saint had been loosed and was in perfect health, all marveled at this miracle. Then they began to scorch him with lighted brands, but he continued to pray and ceaselessly glorified the Lord with joy. And Dadius and Avdius, who were Christians and stood there, fearing the king's wrath, secretly recorded the sufferings of the holy martyr. The saint said to them:

"If it is possible, bring me water and oil, that I may be baptized; and if this is impossible, pray that the Lord may forgive me my sins."

And behold, a small cloud poured water and oil upon the martyr's head. And from the cloud a voice was heard:

"Servant of God, you have already received holy baptism!"

And the martyr's face shone like the sun, and a fragrance spread through the air. Hearing this voice, holy Gavedday gave thanks and glorified God. Then Gargal commanded that his body be pierced with sharp spears. For several hours the holy martyr endured this torment and at last, with prayer upon his lips, yielded up his spirit into the hands of the Lord. Gargal ordered his body to be cut into three parts and scattered in different directions. Dadius and Avdius, who were priests, and Armazat the deacon took his holy relics with great honor, brought them to their own house, and, anointing them with fragrances, buried them with reverence, glorifying God. And the holy and glorious Dada, a kinsman of the king, whom they had also tortured much before, was at last cut into pieces, and so he died in the Lord. Some God-loving men took his body and, having prepared it with honor, laid it in a special place. When the aforementioned men (Dadius, Avdius and Armazat) were together that night performing the chant, at the midnight hour holy Gavedday stood among them and said to them:

"Be strengthened in the Lord, brethren."

They rejoiced greatly at such a vision. The saint again said to them:

"May the Lord reward you for what you have done!"

And bowing his head toward Dadius, he said to him:

"Take from my head the horn with oil, and taking a portion of the Body of my Christ, enter the royal palace and anoint my sister Kazdoya with the oil, and then give her the holy Body of Christ."

Dadius did as the holy martyr had said: he baptized her and communed her with the Holy Mysteries, saying:

"Sleep, sister, until the coming of the Lord!"

And behold, the Angel of the Lord took her soul, and she passed over into heaven. When her mother came to her, she found her already dead. Then she went in to the king and said to him:

"See how inhuman and cruel you are, that you have not spared even your own children! Rejoice that your son, after many tortures, has been killed, and your daughter too has been killed! Woe to your hard heart! But your children, who have died so untimely, no longer fear your wrath."

Hearing such words from his wife, the cruel and inhuman king did not in the least grieve, though she spoke all this to him with tears; he remained just as unbending and cruel. Seeing his inhumanity, the queen took precious fragrances, censed the holy body of her daughter with incense, and, clothing it in royal purple, laid it beside the body of her son Gavedday, weeping quietly and crying out piteously:

"My beloved children! Remember me, your mother, on the day of your joy, when you rejoice with Christ, that I too, wretched as I am, may obtain forgiveness of my sins in the glory of Christ God!" [25]

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Theophan

Память преподобного Феофана

In the city of Gaza[26] there lived a rich man named Theophan, very merciful, who received and sheltered wanderers and performed other good works. After some time all his property was distributed to the beggars and the poor, and he himself became utterly impoverished. But he did not grieve over it, and only sighed over his sins. After this, by the permission of God, he fell into a grievous illness, so that his hands and feet swelled with water and began to decay, from which much pus flowed. But he patiently endured all this in humility, thanking God and praising Him. When the time came for him to die, there arose such a violent storm that his body could not be carried out of the house for burial.

His wife, with bitter tears, cried out:

"Woe is me, my master, what am I to do? How am I to carry your body out for burial?"

He answered her:

"Do not weep, wife: until now the trial has continued, but now mercy comes from the merciful God. For at the hour of my death, by the will of God, the storm will cease."

25. The sufferings and death of the holy martyrs Dada, Gavedday, and Kazdoi took place about the middle of the fourth century.

26. Gaza was a considerable seaport city of Asia Minor, in southern Syria, formerly belonging to the Philistines, one of the most ancient cities in the world.

So it happened: at the very hour when he yielded up his soul into the hands of God, perfect stillness settled upon the earth and in the air. His neighbors came, began to wash his body, and saw that there was not a single wound or sore upon him; they reverently buried him. After four days he appeared in a dream to a certain man and told him to roll away the stone from his grave. When this was done, a great fragrance spread from his body, and instead of pus there flowed myrrh, which healed all the sick who came and were brought to the relics of St. Theophan.

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THE THIRTIETH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

September 30

30 сентября

New Calendar September 30 · Old Calendar October 13 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Gregory, Bishop of Great Armenia, and with Him Thirty-Seven Virgins

Житие и страдание святого священномученика Григория, епископа великой Армении, и с ним тридцати семи дев

St. Gregory, Enlightener of Great Armenia,[6153] was born to noble and distinguished parents who nevertheless dwelt in the darkness of unbelief. His father, named Anak, was of the Parthian people[1] and a kinsman of the Persian king Artabanus and his brother, the Armenian king Kursar. Anak came to Armenia under the following circumstances. When the Persian kingdom had fallen under the rule of the Parthians and the Parthian Artabanus had become Persian king, the Persians chafed at being under foreign domination. At that time one of the most distinguished Persian nobles was Artasir, who, having first come to an understanding with his friends and like-minded men, incited an uprising against King Artabanus, killed him, and himself ascended the throne of the Persian kings. When the Armenian king Kursar heard of the murder of his brother Artabanus, he grieved deeply, and, gathering the whole Armenian army, went to war against the Persians, avenging the shedding of his brother's blood. For ten years Persia suffered attacks from the Armenians and great harm at their hands. Being in great sorrow and perplexity, Artasir took counsel with his nobles on how to repel the attacks of his enemies, and swore to make co-ruler

1. The Parthians lived in Parthia, a country which in antiquity occupied approximately the area of the present Iranian province of Khorasan. The population was at first subject to the Persians, but from 156 B.C. to A.D. 299 it lived independently, forming an independent kingdom, after which it was again conquered by the Persians.

with himself whoever would kill Kursar. At the council held by the king was also Anak, Gregory's father, who promised to defeat Kursar without war and, by a certain cunning device, to kill him. To this Artasir said:

"If you fulfill your promise, I will place the royal crown upon your head, and you will rule together with me; and the Parthian kingdom shall remain with you and your house."

Having thus agreed and confirmed the terms between them, they parted. To carry out the plan, Anak invited his brother to help him. They set out from Persia with all their property, wives, and children, and, under the pretext that they were exiles who had escaped Artasir's wrath, came into Armenia to the Armenian king, as to their kinsman. He received them cordially and, granting them leave to settle on his land, made them his close counselors. He entrusted all his plans to Anak, and even his own person, appointing him chief counselor in his royal council. Anak, for his part, craftily insinuated himself into the king's heart, while in his own heart he plotted how to kill the king and sought a suitable opportunity.

Once, when the king happened to be on Mount Ararat, Anak and his brother expressed the wish that the king speak with them in private.

"We have," the brothers said, "a certain beneficial and useful counsel to tell you in secret."

And so they came in to the king when he was alone, struck him a mortal blow with a sword, then went out, mounted horses prepared in advance, and galloped off, intending to make for Persia. After a short time the chamberlains entered the royal chambers and found the king on the floor, barely alive and lying in his blood. The chamberlains were struck with great terror, and reported all that had happened and that they had seen to all the voivodes and nobles. These hastened in pursuit of the murderers, overtook them at a river, killed them, and drowned them in the water. The wounded King Kursar, dying, ordered that the whole family of Anak and his brother, with their wives and children, be put to death, and this was carried out.

While the house of Anak was being exterminated, one of his relatives succeeded in snatching away two of Anak's sons, still in swaddling

clothes—St. Gregory and his brother—and, hiding them, raised them. Meanwhile a great rebellion broke out in Armenia; hearing of it, the Persian king Artasir came with his army into Armenia, conquered the Armenian kingdom, and brought it under his power. After the Armenian king Kursar there remained a young child named Tiridates, whom Artasir spared and sent away to the Roman lands, where he came of age, grew very strong, and became a soldier. Of Anak's infant sons who had escaped slaughter, one was taken to Persia, and the other, named Gregory, of whom our account treats, was sent into the Roman Empire. Having come of age, he dwelt in Caesarea in Cappadocia, learned there the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and lived as a good and faithful servant of the Lord. There he married and had two sons, Orphanus and Arostan, whom from the day of their birth he dedicated to the service of the Lord. When they reached maturity, Orphanus was granted the rank of presbyter, and Arostan became a hermit.

Soon after the birth of these two sons his wife died, and from this time the blessed Gregory began to serve God still more zealously, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and precepts of the Lord. At that time Tiridates, serving in the Roman army, received an honorable post, since he was of royal descent. Hearing of Tiridates, St. Gregory came to him, as though quite unaware that his father Anak had killed Kursar, Tiridates' father. Keeping secret the murder of Kursar, he became a faithful servant of Tiridates, atoning for and making amends for his father's sin by his faithful service to Kursar's son. Seeing Gregory's zealous service, Tiridates loved him; but afterwards, when he learned that Gregory was a Christian, he grew angry with him and reviled him. Gregory, disregarding his master's unjust anger, continued to keep the blameless faith in Christ God.

In those days the Goths[2] invaded lands belonging to the Romans, and the Roman emperor of that time had to set out to war against the Goths. When the Roman and Gothic armies drew near and stood face

2. The Goths were a Germanic tribe which originally lived to the south-east of the Baltic Sea. In the era of the great migration of peoples (fifth century) this tribe divided into the Eastern Goths, the Ostrogoths, whose kingdom (in the fourth century) lay in present-day southern Russia and extended eastward to the river Don, and the Western Goths, the Visigoths, who lived adjacent to the Eastern Goths.

to face, the Gothic prince challenged the Roman emperor to single combat. The latter, fearing to answer the Gothic prince's challenge himself, sought instead a warrior who could engage him; such a warrior he found in the brave Tiridates, whom he clothed in royal armor and, presenting as the emperor, set against the Gothic prince. Engaging the latter in single combat, Tiridates, without a sword, overthrew him, took him alive, and brought him to the Roman emperor. By this deed victory was won over the whole Gothic army. For this exploit the Roman emperor raised Tiridates to his father's throne, made him king of Armenia, and concluded peace between the Armenians and the Persians on his behalf. The blessed Gregory also withdrew into Armenia with him, as his faithful servant.

When King Tiridates offered sacrifices to the idols, and above all to the goddess Artemis, to whom he was most zealously devoted, he often and earnestly urged Gregory to offer sacrifice to the idols together with him. Gregory refused and confessed that there is no God in heaven or on earth except Christ. Hearing these words, Tiridates ordered that Gregory be cruelly tortured. First they placed a piece of wood between his teeth, forcibly opening his mouth wide so that it could not close for him to speak. Then, tying a large piece of rock salt to his neck (such stones are dug out of the earth in Armenia), they hung him head downward. The saint hung patiently in this position for seven days; on the eighth day they began mercilessly to beat him from above with rods, and then for another seven days they tormented him, hanging head downward, with the smoke of dung kindled beneath him. And he, hanging there, glorified the name of Jesus Christ, and after the piece of wood had been taken from his mouth, he taught the people standing by and watching his sufferings to believe in the one true God. Seeing that the saint remained unshaken in the faith and bore his sufferings with courage, they clamped his legs between boards, bound them tightly with cords, and drove iron nails into his heels and soles, commanding him at the same time to walk. So he walked, singing the psalm: "By the word of Thy lips I kept myself from the paths of the oppressor" (Ps. 16:4). And again: "He who goes forth weeping, bearing the seed, shall come again with rejoicing, bearing his sheaves"[3] (Ps. 125:6). The tormentor ordered special instruments to bend the saint's head, then poured salt mixed with sulfur into his nostrils, poured vinegar over him, and bound his head in a sack filled with soot and ashes. In this position the saint remained for six days. Then he was hung head downward again, and they forcibly poured a great quantity of water into his mouth, mocking the saint; for those who were full of every shameless

3. According to the interpretation of St. John Chrysostom, this place of the psalm refers to the Jews carried away into the Babylonian captivity. "As those who sow after their labours enjoy the fruits, so also you, says the prophet, when you went into captivity, were like sowers, experiencing various privations and shedding tears. As rain is to seeds, so are tears to those who suffer. But behold, he says, for these labours you have received a recompense." Applied to St. Gregory, this place of the psalm must be understood thus: the saint, grievously suffering torments, comforted himself with the hope of the future recompense from the Lord.

uncleanness had no shame. After such torments the king again tried to seduce the sufferer with crafty words into idolatry; when the saint did not yield to the promises, the tormentors hung him up again and scraped his ribs with iron claws. Having thus lacerated the saint's whole body, they dragged him naked over the ground, covered with sharp iron nails. The martyr endured all these sufferings and at last was cast into prison, but there, by the power of Christ, he remained unharmed.

On the following day St. Gregory was brought out of the prison and stood before the king with a cheerful countenance, without a single wound on his body. Seeing all this, the king was amazed, but still hoping that Gregory would fulfill his will, he began to speak peaceably with him, so as to turn him to his own wicked ways. When St. Gregory did not heed the flattering words, the king commanded that he be shod in iron boots and, fastened in stocks, kept under guard for three days. When three days had passed, he summoned the saint to him and said:

"You are vainly trusting in your God, for you have no help from Him."

Gregory answered:

"Mad king, you are preparing torments for yourself; but I, trusting in my God, shall not grow faint. For His sake I will not spare even my flesh, because as the outward man perishes, so the inward man is renewed."

After this, the torturer ordered tin to be melted in a cauldron and poured over the saint's whole body; but, enduring all this, he continually confessed Christ.

While Tiridates was devising how he might overcome Gregory's steadfast heart, someone in the crowd said to him:

"Do not put this man to death, O king. He is the son of Anak, who killed your father and delivered the Armenian kingdom captive to the Persians."

Hearing these words, the king was inflamed with still greater hatred on account of his father's blood, and ordered Gregory to be bound hand and foot and cast into a deep pit in the city of Artaxata. This pit was dreadful to anyone even at the mere thought of it. Dug for those con-

demned to die a cruel death, it was filled with marshy mire, serpents, scorpions, and poisonous reptiles of every kind. Cast into this pit, St. Gregory remained there for fourteen years, unharmed by the reptiles. By God's providence toward him, a certain widow cast him a piece of bread each day, by which he sustained his life. Thinking that Gregory had long since perished, Tiridates ceased even to remember him. After this the king waged war against the Persians, conquered their lands as far as Syria, and returned home with a brilliant victory and great glory.

In those days the Roman emperor Diocletian sent messengers throughout his realm to seek for himself the most beautiful maiden of all. Such a one was found in the person of the Christian Rhipsime, who, having betrothed her virginity to Christ, lived in fasting and prayer in a convent of maidens, under the care of the abbess Gaiania. The messengers ordered a portrait of Rhipsime to be made and sent it to the emperor. The emperor was exceedingly pleased with Rhipsime's portrait on account of its beauty; inflamed by it, he sent her an offer to become his wife. Upon receiving the offer, Rhipsime cried out in her heart to Christ:

"My Bridegroom, Christ! I will not depart from Thee, nor bring reproach upon my holy virginity."

She took counsel with the sisters of the convent and with her abbess, Gaiania; then, having gathered together, she and all the sisters secretly fled from the convent. After indescribable hardships on the way, enduring hunger and countless difficulties, they came to Armenia and settled near the city of Ararat[4]. There they lived among the vineyards, while the strongest of them went to work in the city, where they earned the means of providing the necessities of life for themselves and the other sisters. The maidens who consented thus to suffer, and to endure privations and sorrows in their wanderings for the sake of preserving the purity of their virginity, numbered thirty-seven.

Having received word that Rhipsime and the other sisters of the convent had fled to Armenia, Diocletian sent the following message to

4. Probably here one should understand the present-day Akkori, a place renowned for its vineyards and destroyed by an earthquake in 1840.

the Armenian king Tiridates, with whom he was on very friendly terms:

"Some Christians have led astray Rhipsime, whom I wished to make my wife, and now she prefers to wander in shame through foreign lands rather than be my wife. Find her, then, and send her to us, or, if you wish, take her for your own wife."

Then Tiridates ordered that Rhipsime be sought everywhere, and, learning where she was, commanded that guards be posted around her dwelling to prevent her escape. When he received word from those who had seen Rhipsime that she was of surpassing beauty, he was kindled with ardent desire to possess her and sent her all the adornments befitting a royal station, so that, arrayed in them, she might be brought to him. At the counsel of the abbess Gaiania, under whose guidance she had been raised from her youth, Rhipsime rejected all the adornments sent by Tiridates and would not go to him. The abbess Gaiania herself said to the messengers from the king:

"All these maidens are already betrothed to the King of Heaven, and it is impossible for any of them to enter into an earthly marriage."

After these words, a deafening thunderclap suddenly sounded, and a heavenly voice was heard, saying to the maidens:

"Be of good courage and fear not, for I am with you."

The soldiers sent there were so terrified by the thunderclaps that they fell face down upon the ground; some fell from their horses and were trampled to death beneath their hooves. The messengers returned to the king empty-handed, in great terror, and recounted to him all that had happened.

Filled with furious anger, the king then sent one of the princes with a large detachment of soldiers to cut down all the maidens with swords and bring Rhipsime to him by force. When the soldiers attacked the maidens with drawn swords, Rhipsime said to the prince:

"Do not destroy these maidens; take me to your king."

The soldiers took her and led her away, doing no harm to the other virgins, who hid themselves after the soldiers had departed.

On the way, Rhipsime called upon her Bridegroom, Christ, for help, and cried out to Him: "Deliver my soul from the sword, and my only

one from the dogs"[5] (Ps. 21:21). When Rhipsime was brought into the royal bedchamber, she lifted her bodily and spiritual eyes on high and prayed earnestly to God with tears, that by His almighty hand He would preserve her virginity unharmed. At the same time she remembered His wondrous and merciful help, which He had of old shown to people in distress: how He had saved the Israelites from the hand of Pharaoh and from drowning (Ex. 14:1–31, 15:1–27), preserved Jonah unharmed in the belly of the whale (Jon. 1:1–16), kept the three youths unharmed from the fire in the furnace (Dan. 3:1–100), and delivered blessed Susanna from the adulterous elders (Dan. 13:1–64). She prayed that she too might thus be saved from the violence of Tiridates.

At that moment the king entered Rhipsime's chamber, and, seeing her extraordinary beauty, was greatly inflamed by her. Moved by an evil spirit and bodily lust, he approached her and, embracing her, attempted to violate her; but she, strengthened by the power of Christ, resisted him steadfastly. The king struggled with her for a long time, but could do her no harm. For this holy virgin, with God's help, proved stronger than the renowned and mighty warrior Tiridates. He who had once conquered the Gothic prince without a sword and defeated the Persians was now unable to overcome Christ's virgin, for, as once with the First Martyr Thecla, bodily strength was bestowed upon her from on high.

Having accomplished nothing, the king left the bedchamber and ordered Gaiania to be summoned, knowing that she had been Rhipsime's instructress. She was soon found and brought to the king, who began to ask Gaiania to persuade Rhipsime to fulfil his will. But when Gaiania came to her, she spoke to her in Latin, so that the Armenians present could not understand her words. She said to Rhipsime not what pleased the king, but what was beneficial to her virginal purity. She diligently instructed and admonished Rhipsime to preserve to the end the

5. According to the interpretation of St. Athanasius, by the weapon and hand of dogs the Lord depicts the malice and madness of the Jews. "Only-begotten" means the solitary soul, abandoned by all. Praying in such words, St. Rhipsime asked the Lord to deliver her from the outrage at the hands of King Tiridates.

virginity she had betrothed to Christ; to remember the love of her Bridegroom and the crown prepared for her virginity; and to fear the Dread Judgment and the Gehenna that shall consume whoever does not keep her vow.

"It is better for you, O virgin of Christ," Gaiania said, "to die here for a time than there forever. Do you not know what your most beautiful Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, says in the Gospel: 'And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul' (Mt. 10:28)? Never consent to commit sin, even if the impious king resolves to kill you. This will be the finest praise of your virginity before your pure and incorrupt Bridegroom."

Some of those present who knew Latin understood what Gaiania was saying to Rhipsime and told the other royal servants. Hearing this, the latter struck Gaiania on the mouth with a stone, knocking out her teeth, and insisted that she say what the king commanded. When Gaiania did not cease instructing Rhipsime in the fear of the Lord, she was led away. Having struggled long with Rhipsime and seeing that nothing could be gained from her, the king began to tremble and roll upon the ground like a man possessed. Meanwhile, as night fell, Rhipsime fled from the city unobserved. Meeting the sisters who had struggled alongside her, she told them of her victory over the enemy and that she had remained undefiled. Hearing this, they all praised and gave thanks to God, who had not delivered His bride to shame; and throughout that night they sang hymns, praying to their Bridegroom, Christ.

In the morning the impious seized Rhipsime and put her to a painful death. First they cut out her tongue; then, having stripped her, they bound her by her hands and feet to four pillars and scorched her with candles. After this they slit open her belly with a sharp stone, so that all her entrails fell out. Finally, they gouged out her eyes and cut her whole body into pieces. Thus, through a bitter death, the holy virgin departed to her sweet Bridegroom, Christ[6].

After this they seized the remaining maidens, the sisters and companions of St. Rhipsime, thirty-three in number, and put them to death

6. The event described here belongs to the beginning of the fourth century.

with swords, casting their bodies to be devoured by beasts. The abbess Gaiania and two other maidens who were with her were put to death in the most cruel manner. First, their legs were pierced, and they were hung upside down and flayed alive; then the backs of their necks were cut open, and their tongues were pulled out and cut off. After that, their bellies were slit open with a sharp stone, their entrails were pulled out, and the martyrs' heads were cut off. Thus they departed to their Bridegroom, Christ.

Tiridates, however, being as one mad, only on the sixth day after the death of these virgins came to himself, and went out hunting. By a wondrous and marvelous providence of God, on this journey such a dire chastisement struck him that, in the state of raging frenzy, he lost not only his reason but even the very likeness of a man, becoming in appearance like a wild boar, as once Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (Dan. 4:30). And not only the king himself, but all the commanders, soldiers, and in general all those who had approved the torments of the holy virgins, became possessed and ran about the fields and groves, tearing their garments and devouring their own flesh. Thus the wrath of God did not delay to punish them for innocent blood, and no one could help them, for who can stand before the wrath of God?

But the merciful God, Who "will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever" (Ps. 102:9), often chastises men for their own benefit, that He may correct the human heart for the better. And the Lord, in His mercy, showed compassion upon them in the following manner: to Kusarduchta, the king's sister, there appeared in a dream a certain terrible man in great glory, who said to her:

"Tiridates will not be healed unless Gregory is brought up out of the pit."

Awakening, Kusarduchta related the vision to her attendants, and to all this dream seemed strange, for who could expect that Gregory, cast into a swamp full of all manner of reptiles, would remain alive after fourteen grievous years spent there! Nevertheless, they came to the pit and cried aloud, saying:

"Gregory, art thou alive?"

And Gregory answered:

"By the grace of my God, I am alive."

And he, pale, overgrown with hair and nails, emaciated and blackened by the slime of the swamp and by extreme privation, was brought up out of the pit. The saint was washed, clothed in new garments, and, having been strengthened with food, was led to the king, who had the appearance of a boar. All came out to St. Gregory with great reverence, bowed down, fell at his feet, and besought him to entreat his God for the healing of the king, the commanders, and all his army. The blessed Gregory first inquired of them concerning the bodies of the slain holy virgins, for they had lain unburied for ten days.

Then he gathered together the scattered bodies of the holy virgins and, lamenting the inhuman cruelty of the impious tormentors, buried them in a fitting manner. After this he began to instruct the tormentors, that they should turn away from the idols and believe in the One God and His Son Jesus Christ, trusting in His mercy and grace. St. Gregory declared to them that the Lord God had preserved him alive in the pit, where the Angel of God often visited him, so that he might have the opportunity to lead them from the darkness of idolatry to the light of piety; thus the saint taught them faith in Christ, laying penance upon them.

Seeing their humility, the saint commanded them to build a great church, which they accomplished in a short time. Into this church Gregory brought with great honor the bodies of the blessed martyrs, set up in it the holy Cross, and commanded the people to gather there and pray. Then he brought King Tiridates to the bodies of the holy virgins whom he had destroyed, and he asked them to pray before the Lord Jesus Christ for him. And no sooner had the king done this than his human form was restored to him, and from the raging commanders and soldiers the evil spirits were driven out. Soon all Armenia was converted to Christ; the people destroyed the idol temples and, in their place, built churches to God. The king himself openly confessed before all his sins and his cruelty, proclaiming the chastisement of God and the grace manifested upon him. After this he became the leader and initiator of every good work. He sent St. Gregory to Caesarea in Cappadocia to Archbishop Leontius, that he might ordain him bishop. Returning

from Caesarea after his ordination, St. Gregory took with him from there many presbyters whom he deemed most worthy. He baptized the king, the commanders, the whole army, and all the rest of the people, beginning with the courtiers and ending with the humblest peasant. Thus St. Gregory brought to the confession of the true God an innumerable multitude of people, building churches of God and offering in them the unbloody sacrifice.

Passing from city to city, he ordained priests, established schools and set teachers in them—in a word, he did everything that pertained to the benefit and needs of the Church and was necessary for the service of God; and the king gave rich estates to the churches. St. Gregory converted to Christ not only the Armenians but also the inhabitants of other lands, namely the Persians, Assyrians and Medes. He founded many monasteries, in which the work of evangelical preaching flourished successfully.

Having thus set everything in good order, St. Gregory withdrew into the desert, where, pleasing God, he ended his earthly life.[7] King Tiridates lived in such exploits of virtue and abstinence that he was equal in this to the monks. In place of St. Gregory there was taken to Armenia his son Arostan, a man distinguished by high virtue; from youth he led the monastic life, and in Cappadocia he was ordained priest to establish the churches of God in Armenia. The king sent him to the Ecumenical Council at Nicaea, convened to refute the Arian heresy, where he was present among the three hundred and eighteen holy fathers.

Thus Armenia believed in Christ and served God for a long time, flourishing in all virtues and humbly glorifying God in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be glory now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Let us all now faithfully praise in hymns and songs the blessed hierarch, the sufferer for the truth, the vigilant shepherd and

7. The repose of St. Gregory belongs to the year 335.

teacher Gregory, the luminary of the world and its champion; for he prays to Christ that we may be saved.

* * *

Life of our Venerable Father Gregory, Abbot of the Monastery on the River Pelshma, Wonderworker of Vologda

Житие преподобного отца нашего Григория, игумена обители на Пельшме реке, Вологодского чудотворца

Venerable Gregory was born in the city of Galich[8] of the noble and pious Galician nobles, the Lopotovs, and was carefully brought up in book learning. Having come to know the vanity of the present world, he rejected it and left his parental home. Seeking a suitable place for contemplation, he came to the Zheltovodsky Monastery to Venerable Abbot Macarius[9], received tonsure from him, and in his monastery was instructed in the exploits of the monastic life, excelling especially in fasting. For his strict and virtuous life the blessed Macarius counted him worthy to receive the dignity of the priesthood. Then Venerable Gregory was appointed abbot of the Monastery of the Nativity of the Theotokos near Lake Galich, and thus his labors and cares were multiplied. The report of the Venerable's virtuous life soon reached the princely palaces. The Prince of Galich, Yuri[10], besought the Venerable to baptize two of his sons, and the Grand Prince of Moscow, Basil Dmitrievich[11], desired to make the Venerable archimandrite in the city of Rostov. Avoiding human glory, the Venerable left the abbacy of the Monastery of the Nativity of the Theotokos and withdrew to places unknown to anyone and impassable. Hearing of the Venerable Dionysius of Glushitsa[12], he came to the monastery of the latter and lived ten

8. A district town of Kostroma Province.
9. The Makariev Zheltovodsky Monastery, near the lake Zheltye Vody on the left bank of the Volga in Nizhny Novgorod Province, was founded by the Venerable Macarius, who reposed on 25 July 1444.
10. Yury Dmitrievich of Galich, son of Dmitry Donskoy.
11. The brother of Yury, son of Dmitry Donskoy, died in 1425.
12. The Venerable Dionysius of Glushitsa, founder of the monastery bearing his name in Vologda Province, reposed on 1 June 1437.

years in obedience to him. Then Venerable Gregory withdrew into the desert east of the Glushitsa Monastery, where he lived in unceasing labors and God-pleasing deeds. When the brethren began to gather to him here, he built a church in the name of the "Honorable Council of the Most Holy Theotokos," surrounded the monastery with an enclosure, and remained within the monastery walls in continual labors and unslackening all-night prayers. He was especially distinguished by his ability to reconcile those at enmity and in anger. When Prince Basil Vasilievich[13] was driven out of Moscow and the grand-princely throne was forcibly seized by Prince Yuri, Venerable Gregory came to Moscow and with bold and wise words admonished Prince Yuri not to hold another's hereditary throne, and to return to his patrimony, Galich. There, through the intercession of the Venerable, peace was restored between Princes Yuri and Basil, and each occupied the princely seat that belonged to him. At that time Prince Dmitry[14] came to Vologda with a great army and caused many calamities to the townsfolk. St. Gregory, zealous for the welfare of the Christian inhabitants of the city, went to Prince Dmitry and rebuked him for all the outrages which he had inflicted upon the Christians. Unable to bear the Venerable's rebukes, the prince commanded that he be thrown from the bridge into the river. The Venerable bore this insult with joy, giving thanks to God.

After many years of God-pleasing life, sensing the approach of his death, the Venerable summoned the brethren of the monastery, gave them instruction, and appointed an abbot in his place. After this the Venerable grew weak. When his end drew near, he gave the brethren his last testament, saying:

"When my soul is separated from my body, do not grant me any honors, but simply, taking my body by the feet, drag it into the swamp."

Saying this, he lay down upon his bed, made the sign of the Cross over himself, and gave up his holy soul[15] into the hands of Christ God,

13. Vasily Vasilievich the Dark, son of Vasily Dmitrievich, reigned from 1425 to 1462. He was expelled from Moscow for the first time by his uncle, the Prince of Galich Yury Dmitrievich.
14. Dmitry Shemyaka, son of Yury Dmitrievich.

Whom he had loved from his youth and Whom he had pleased in his life with all zeal, righteousness and holiness of life.

Now Venerable Gregory, in the host of saints and venerable ones, standing before the throne of God, prays to His goodness for us sinners, who believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God in Trinity, glorified and worshipped now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

Illumined by the love of Christ, O God-wise one, thou didst shine forth with virtues, and having abhorred every fleshly delight, thou didst dwell in the desert, where thou didst labour greatly in this temporal life, in hymns, vigils and fastings. Wherefore Christ also enriched thee with the gift of miracles. But remember us who honour thy most bright memory, O Venerable Father Gregory, and entreat Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Wounded by the love of Christ, O Venerable One, thou didst follow Him with an irrevocable desire. Having abhorred every fleshly delight, and having dwelt in the desert, where thou didst labour greatly, thereby Christ also enriched thee with the gift of miracles. Remember us who honour thy most bright memory, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, Venerable Gregory, our father.

* * *

Memory of St. Michael, Metropolitan of Kiev and of All Russia, Wonderworker

Память святого Михаила, митрополита Киевского и всея России чудотворца

St. Michael was the first Metropolitan of Kiev and of All Russia, and he governed our Church in the days of St. Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Prince.

15. The Venerable Gregory reposed on 30 September 1441.

Having conquered the Greek city of Korsun,[16] Prince Vladimir received holy Baptism there and entered into marriage with the princess Anna, a sister of the Byzantine emperors.[17] But, having a firm resolve to enlighten with the light of the Christian faith his entire great realm, the Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince then sent from Korsun an embassy to Constantinople, to the emperors and the Patriarch, asking them to send pastors of the Church for the baptism of the Russian land, darkened by the gloom of idol-worship, and for the governance of the Russian Church. The Patriarch of Constantinople, St. Nicholas Chrysovergis,[18] together with a council of bishops, chose and ordained as Metropolitan for Rus Michael, wise in mind, a teacher, and holy in life. No records have been preserved of the circumstances of St. Michael's life before his ordination as Metropolitan; the chronicles even give different accounts of the hierarch's origin: some call him a Syrian, others a Bulgarian. Having received from the Patriarch a parting exhortation, St. Michael set out to Prince Vladimir, accompanied by the clergy destined to assist him in the governance: six bishops and numerous presbyters and clerics. The Prince met the hierarch with great joy and solemnity, and soon after that, together with him and with his consort the princess, hastened to the capital, Kiev. The procession of the newly baptized prince and the newly ordained metropolitan to the mother of the cities of Rus was as it were a holy campaign for the uprooting of pagan polytheism and idol-worship in Vladimir's patrimony. They brought with them holy relics, crosses, icons and sacred church vessels. They were accompanied by a cross-bearing host: the pastors of the Church who had come from Greece and were taken from the conquered Korsun.

The whole brief time of St. Michael's governance of the Russian Church passed in apostolic labours: in preaching the Gospel to the pa-

16. Korsun, otherwise Tauric Chersonesus, is an ancient Greek city on the south-western shore of the Tauric peninsula, or Crimea, near the present Sevastopol. Ruins remain after it.
17. All this took place in the year 988. The Byzantine emperors at that time were Basil II Bulgaroktonos and his brother Constantine VIII, sons of Emperor Romanus II. For nearly the whole time they reigned jointly: Basil from 975 to 1025, Constantine from 979 to 1028, but the true ruler was Basil, the more capable and active of the two.
18. St. Nicholas II Chrysoberges governed the Church of Constantinople from 983 to 996.

gans, in baptizing them, and in confirming the newly enlightened in the faith. In the words of the church hymnody,[19] St. Michael "brought to the land of Russia, possessed by the poverty of unbelief, the Gospel of Christ from the Royal City, and bestowed it upon her."

The first act of the hierarch in the place of his archpastoral service was the baptism of the family of the Prince, his sons; after this followed the baptism of the Prince's retinue and boyars.

Our Church extols St. Michael as the baptizer of the capital city of Kiev, and sings: "Kiev the city glorieth, clothed until this day in the robe of baptism from thee, O hierarch." This important work was accomplished with great labour, but also with great success. The holy Metropolitan, the bishops and the numerous presbyters instructed the dark people in the faith of Christ, preparing them to receive holy Baptism, destroying their pagan superstitions, "with the axe of the evangelical teaching, hewing down the idol-image." At this time Prince Vladimir furthered the success of their preaching by his authority: he commanded his servants to shatter the idols and to mock them, and commanded the people, from small to great, men and women, nobles and commoners, slaves and freemen, to go on an appointed day to the river to be baptized. And the inhabitants of Kiev gathered on the bank of the Dnieper for baptism, which St. Michael performed with the numerous clergy in the presence of the Prince, his family and the boyars.

With the baptism of Kiev a firm beginning was laid for the enlightenment of Rus with the light of the evangelical truth: the faith of Christ, which the Prince and the boyars confessed, became also the faith of the Russian capital. But now it was necessary to make it the faith of the whole Russian land, from end to end, of the whole land which Vladimir's power embraced, and for whose church governance St. Michael had been appointed. The hierarch himself had to gather together the flock of rational sheep, to be their shepherd and teacher. And therefore the zealous archpastor, with the assistance of the Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince, strove to plant the faith of Christ in the cities of the Russian land. The Church honours St. Michael as a witness of the

19. In this place and in those that follow, words are quoted from the service to St. Michael.

truth and a preacher of the Gospel of Christ, who uprooted "the thorn of polytheism and sowed the fruitful good seed in the Russian land." The chief cities of Rus after Kiev at that time were: Great Novgorod, the capital of Prince Vladimir's northern domains, and Great Rostov, the principal city of the Zalesskaya land.[20] To these two cities St. Michael made journeys for the conversion of the pagans to the Christian faith. In the year 990, accompanied by bishops, the Prince's voivode Dobrynya, and Anastas the Korsunian,[21] the hierarch visited Novgorod; there he shattered the idols, baptized many, built several churches, and set presbyters over them. The following year St. Michael undertook a similar journey with the preaching of the Gospel to Rostov. His preaching was more successful this time: he baptized people without number, raised up many churches, set presbyters and deacons over them, and established the order of church worship and governance.

In the year 992 the holy Metropolitan Michael reposed. St. Vladimir mourned and wept inconsolably, for in the departed hierarch he lost not only a good and zealous pastor, but also his wise counsellor in the affairs of state governance.

Shortly after the baptism of Kiev, St. Michael had blessed Prince Vladimir to build the Tithe Church in honour of the Most Holy Theotokos. The hierarch did not live to see its construction completed, but this church received his remains, serving as the place of his burial.[22]

Found incorrupt in the twelfth century, the relics of St. Michael were then translated to the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, into the Cave of St. Anthony, and from there in 1730 were translated to the Great Dormition Church of the Lavra, where they rest incorruptly and remain to this day.[23]

* * *

20. Novgorod stands on the river Volkhov where it leaves Lake Ilmen; today it is a provincial capital. Rostov, on Lake Nero, is at present a district town of Yaroslavl Province.

21. Dobrynya was Vladimir's maternal uncle. Anastas the Korsunian was a Greek who handed over Korsun to Vladimir. Afterwards he became the senior priest at the Tithe Church.

22. The Tithe Church received its name from the tithe (the tenth part of the estate) assigned for its maintenance by Prince Vladimir. It was built by masters summoned from Greece over the course of seven years (from 989 to 996). Before its consecration the relics of St. Michael were probably kept temporarily somewhere else; it is also possible that they were buried in the unfinished church.

NOTES

6153. Armenia is a mountainous country between the river Kura and the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates; it was inhabited by Armenians, so named after King Aram, and was governed by kings of their own tribe from the second century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. It was called Great Armenia, in contrast to Lesser Armenia, the region between the upper reaches of the Euphrates and the Halys, which formed part of the kingdom of Mithridates of Pontus, and from A.D. 70 part of the Roman Empire. This country was the second cradle of the human race, for Noah's ark came to rest on Mount Ararat (Gen. 8:4), which lies in Great Armenia. The place-names that exist to this day confirm the biblical account of the circumstances of the life of the patriarch Noah after the flood: for example, Erival, "the appearance," the place where Noah first saw the land; Akori, "the planting of the vine" (on Mount Ararat), where Noah first planted the vine; Arrnoiton, "at the feet of Noah," that is, the place of Noah's burial, and others. This country was for the most part under the subjection of other peoples (Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes, Persians, Macedonians, Byzantines, Turks). The beginning of Christianity in Armenia is traditionally referred to the time of the earthly life of Jesus Christ and the Apostles Thaddeus, Bartholomew, Simon the Cananaean and Jude Lebbaeus. Certain traces of Christianity may be found here already in the second century, and in the fourth century the country became wholly Christian and was the first Christian state. Gregory the Illuminator was the first Apostle of Armenia (born about 257, ordained bishop in 302).

23. The memory of St. Michael was originally celebrated on 15 June, according to tradition the day of his repose. Since 1730 it has been transferred to 30 September.

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