

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

Октябрь

OCTOBER

Book X



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

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

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

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

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

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

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Built November 2026.

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THE FIRST DAY OF OCTOBER

October 1

1 октября

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

A Word on the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos

Слово на Покров Пресвятой Богородицы

In the last grievous times, when with the multiplication of our sins our afflictions have increased, in fulfillment of the words of the holy Apostle Paul: "in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren" (2 Cor. 11:26); when, in fulfillment of the words of the Lord Himself, nation rises against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there come famines, pestilences and earthquakes in divers places (Mt. 24:7); when we are oppressed by the invasions of foreign tribes, by civil wars and deadly wounds, the Most Pure and Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Lord, extends to us Her protecting veil, to deliver us from every calamity, to shield us from famine, pestilence and earthquake, to save us from wars and wounds, and to keep us unharmed beneath Her veil. A sign of this appeared in the royal city of Constantinople, in the reign of the pious Emperor Leo the Wise,[1] in the renowned church of the Most Holy Theotokos at Blachernae.[2] There, during the celebration of the All-night Vigil, on a Sunday, the first day of the month of October,[3] at the fourth hour of the night, in the presence of a great multitude of people, St. Andrew, the Fool-for-Christ, lifted up his eyes and beheld the Queen of Heaven, the Protectress of the whole world, the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos, standing in the air

1. Leo VI the Wise, Byzantine emperor from 886 to 912.
2. Blachernae: a district of Constantinople at the western corner of the city. In the days of the flourishing of the Byzantine Empire it was renowned throughout the East for its holy shrines.

and praying, radiant with the light of the sun and covering the people with Her honorable omophorion. Seeing this, St. Andrew said to his disciple, the Blessed Epiphanius:[4]

"Dost thou see, brother, the Queen and Lady of all, praying for the whole world?"

Epiphanius answered:

"I see, holy father, and I am filled with awe."[6181]

As of old St. John the Theologian beheld in heaven a great sign, a woman clothed with the sun, so St. Andrew, in the Blachernae church, which was like heaven, beheld the Unwedded Bride, clothed in a purple of sunlight. The sign seen by John the Theologian prefigured our most merciful Protectress, for a like sign appeared at the time when the seer was shown the destruction threatening all creation: "And there were lightnings and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail. And there appeared a great sign in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun" (Rev. 11:19; 12:1). Why, then, did this sign, which prefigured the Most Pure Virgin, not appear before the lightnings, thunders, voices, earthquake and hail, while all the elements were still at rest, but in the very midst of the most terrible tumult in heaven and on earth? In order to show that our Most Gracious Defender hastens to our help in the most grievous time, when destruction is upon us, and shields us from the glare of the seductive, short-lived worldly vanity, from the voices of worldly pride and vainglory, from the thunders of sudden attack by our enemies, from the storm of the passions, and from the hail of punishment for sins threatening us from above. For when all these calamities press upon us, there immediately appears, like a great sign, a swift Helper for the Christian race, guarding and covering us with her invisible intercession. Such a "banner [the Lord has given to those that fear

3. This vision occurred in the first half of the tenth century, at the end of the life of St. Andrew the Fool-for-Christ (d. c. 936). The feast of the Protection of the Mother of God was established in the Russian Church no later than the middle of the twelfth century. It is remarkable that the vision was granted to St. Andrew, a Slav by birth, and that the feast was established and is celebrated in the Slavic lands. In Constantinople itself, although this feast did not exist, the vision of St. Andrew was remembered. In the Church of Blachernae there was an icon of the Mother of God in the form in which She appeared to St. Andrew.

4. Epiphanius: a noble youth, a disciple of St. Andrew, who, according to some, afterwards took monastic vows with the name Polyeuctus and became Patriarch of Constantinople.

Him], that they may display it because of the truth" (Ps. 59:6); for in this world we are set as it were as a target for arrows. Arrows fly at us from every side: some from the weapons of visible enemies, who hastily bend their bows and boast before us in their pride; others from the bow of invisible enemies, so that we may sorrowfully acknowledge that we cannot endure the arrows of the demons; others from our own flesh, which wars against the spirit; others from the bow of the righteous wrath of God and the thunder of punishment, as the holy David says: "If [a man] does not turn, He will whet His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. He has also prepared for Him the instruments of death; He makes His arrows into fiery shafts" (Ps. 7:13–14).[5] That we might not be mortally wounded by all these arrows, and that we might escape the danger, a sign has been given us: the veil of the Most Pure and Most Blessed Virgin. Covered by Her veil as by a shield, we remain unharmed by the arrows. For our Protectress has a thousand shields for our defense, as the Holy Spirit says to Her: "Thy neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men" (Song 4:4).[6]

Of old David built his tower, fair and very high, between Zion, which stood on a high mountain, and the lower Jerusalem, called the daughter of Zion.[7] That tower was between them as the neck is between the body and the head, for by its height it surpassed Jerusalem and reached to Zion. Upon that tower were hung the shields and all the weapons needed for the war and the defense of Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit likens the Most Pure Virgin to this tower of David: for She, being a daughter of David, is the mediatrix between Christ, the Head of

5. Under the image of the woman clothed with the sun in the Apocalypse, most interpret the Church, and under the sun, Jesus Christ. At the same time, this woman could also represent the Most Holy Mother of God clothed in the divine, heavenly glory.

6. The Tower of David, hung with victorious military weapons and shields, prefigured the Most Holy Mother of God, as will be spoken of further on. Nothing more is known from Holy Scripture about this famous tower of David, except that it was erected on some mountain, and that it was built at Falpioth, a name which also signifies fortifications.

7. Sion, the south-western, largest and highest of the four elevations on which Jerusalem was built, was held sacred by the Jews and originally served as the religious center and stronghold of Jerusalem. Therefore Scripture often calls Jerusalem the daughter of Sion; see, for example, Ps. 9:15; Is. 1:8, 67:11; Jer. 6:23; Mt. 21:5.

the Church, and the faithful, who form the body of the Church; She surpasses the Church, because She is truly higher than all its members, yet She reaches even to Christ, as the one who gave Him flesh. She is the mediatrix also now, when She stands in the air between heaven and earth, between God and men, between Christ the Setter of the contest and the militant Church, like David's tower between Zion and Jerusalem, hung with strong shields. These shields signify Her all-powerful prayers for us to God, heard by those worthy during the vision of Her honorable Veil. She prayed with tenderness, as a Mother to Her Son and Creator, uttering during her prayer the following words, filled with divine mercy and love:

"O Heavenly King! Receive every man who glorifies Thee and calls upon Thy Most Holy Name in every place, and wherever there is remembrance of My name, sanctify that place; glorify those who glorify Thee and honor Me, Thy Mother, with love, receiving from them every prayer and pious vow, and delivering them from every evil and calamity."

Are not such prayers of Hers shields that protect the militant Church? Truly they are unbreakable shields, by which we can quench all the fiery darts.[8]

St. Ambrose, speaking of David's tower,[9] says that it was built for a twofold purpose: for the defense of the city and for its adornment. "David," says Ambrose, "built the tower for the defense and adornment of the city: it was a defense, for from the tower one could see the enemy from afar and drive him away from the city; it was an adornment, for by its height it surpassed all the lofty buildings of Jerusalem." It is not in vain, therefore, that our Protectress is likened to the tower, for She is for us a firm tower before the face of the enemies: truly She defends us and adorns us. She defends us when She drives far from us visible and invisible enemies, when She frees the captives from their bonds,

8. That is, the various earthly circumstances and temptations: and especially the fiery darts of the evil one, the assaults on the part of the devil, that primordial and terrible enemy of the human race, which scorch us as with a deadly fire.

9. In his discourse on Ps. 119, Ambrose of Milan (Milan, in Italy), the most famous father of the Western Church and a Christian writer of the fourth century (d. 397). His memory is celebrated on December 7.

when She delivers those tormented by unclean spirits, when She comforts the sorrowful, becomes the intercessor of the wronged and a quiet haven for those tossed by the storm, when She feeds the hungry and visits the sick. She adorns us, covering before God the shameful nakedness of our life with Her most exalted merits, as with most precious garments, and with abundant grace, as with an inexhaustible treasure, supplying our poverty and making us well-pleasing in the sight of the Lord. She adorns us when She covers us, who have no wedding garment, with Her robe, and makes as it were invisible to the All-seeing Eye our shameful spiritual nakedness, which from the beginning was prefigured by the earth, invisible and unformed, covered with waters (Gen. 1:1–2). The unformed and desolate earth was a figure of the sinful soul, which has lost its spiritual beauty, is deprived of good works, and is alien to the grace of God. The waters that covered the unformed earth prefigured the mercy of the Theotokos, boundless as the sea, and like many-watered rivers, pouring out upon all and covering all. When the Spirit of God moved upon the waters, He moved also over the earth, hidden beneath the waters and unadorned, as if not seeing its unsightliness. This mystically prefigured that a soul covered by the most merciful veil of the Virgin Theotokos, even if it is not adorned with virtues, will not be deprived of the grace of the Holy Spirit; for the veil of the Most Holy Theotokos will cover its unsightliness, as the water covered the unformed earth, and will likewise adorn it with the beauty of Her grace and draw the Holy Spirit to it. The Most Pure Virgin adorns us when She makes the sinful righteous and the unclean pure, as the Blessed Anastasius of Sinai says: "She makes sorcerers apostles and tax-collectors evangelists, and harlots worthy of greater honor than virgins. Thus Mary of Egypt, who was once a harlot, She has made now more honored than many virgins; she who formerly was darkened and unclean now shines like the sun in the Kingdom of Christ, through the intercession of the Most Pure Virgin Mary, who abides as a veil and adornment for all who flee to Her. She also adorns the whole spiritual Jerusalem, that is, the Church of Christ, which thus sings on this present day: 'O wondrous adornment of all the faithful, fulfillment of

the prophecies, glory of the Apostles, and ornament of the martyrs, praise of virginity, and marvelous veil for the whole world.'"[10]

On David's tower, together with the shields, were the arrows of the defenders of the land; and the Most Pure Virgin, this living tower, likewise has with Her the arrows of the mighty—that is, the prayers of the saints who pray with Her. For She did not appear alone in the church, standing in the air, but with the angelic hosts and a multitude of saints, who reverently surrounded Her in white garments. The prayers for us all of these saints are like arrows of the mighty, able to drive away all the hosts of our enemy, the devil. The Most Pure Lady, the Mother of God, knows that our life on earth is a warfare: the enemy wages war against us with all his forces; he has raised his hosts against us and surrounded us with his legions, according to the word of the Psalmist: "For dogs have compassed me about, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet; they gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and roaring lion" (Ps. 21:17, 21:14). Therefore the Queen of Heaven, desiring to help us, has arrayed against our enemy all the powers of heaven; She has summoned the Prophets and Apostles, gathered the Martyrs and virgins, united the Venerable and the Righteous, and appeared with them to give us aid, to surround us with a mighty host, and to grant us victory over our enemies: "By her are victories raised up; by her are enemies cast down."[11] She came with the angelic hosts, for She was the ladder foreseen by Jacob,[12] which a multitude of angels surrounded (Gen. 28:12–15). Recalling here Jacob's ladder, someone might wonder: why did the angels not remain motionless upon it, but continually ascended and descended? But when he understands that that ladder was a prefiguration of the Virgin Mary, according to the words of the Church's hymn, "Rejoice, O bridge leading to the heavens, and lofty ladder which Jacob saw,"[13] he

10. Service of the Protection of the Mother of God, third sticheron at "Lord, I have cried."
11. Akathist, Oikos 2.
12. "The Lord," says St. John of Damascus with regard to this prefiguration, "fashioned for Himself an ensouled ladder, whose foundation is fixed on the earth, and whose top touches the very heavens, and upon which God is established. The spiritual ladder, that is, the Virgin, is fixed on the earth, for She was born on the earth; Her head touched the heavens, for Her head was God and the Father."

will understand why the angels did not remain motionless upon the ladder. For the "Mother of God, who is ever watchful in prayer"[14] commands the angels to help mankind continually with Her: ascending to God, they carry up the prayers of men, and descending, they bring them help and benefactions from God. This same Ladder has even now brought down with Her a multitude of angels from heaven, bringing us protection and defense from on high. She came with angels to charge them to keep us in all our ways; She brought with Her the companies of all the saints, that, having made supplication together for us, they might also offer up together our sinful prayers to Her Son and our God. Among all the saints who appeared in the church with the Most Pure Virgin were two most elect: St. John the Forerunner, than whom "among those born of women there has not risen a greater" (Mt. 11:11), and St. John the Theologian, "whom Jesus loved, who also leaned on His breast at supper" (Jn. 21:20). Our Intercessor raised up both of them with Her, since they have great boldness before God, that together with them She might the more quickly incline God to mercy: "The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16). And the Most Pure Virgin stood between the two virgins, as an ark between two Cherubim,[6192] as the throne of the Lord of Hosts between the Seraphim, as Moses with outstretched hands between Aaron and Hur; then hellish Amalek fell, together with all his dark kingdom and its power (Ex. 17:11–14).[6193]

Thus we celebrate the Protecting Veil of the Most Holy Virgin Mother of God, commemorating Her most glorious appearance in the church of Blachernae, seen by St. Andrew and Epiphanius. We celebrate, giving thanks to our Protectress for Her great mercy, shown to the Christian race, and we earnestly beseech Her that now and always She may mercifully protect us who seek Her protection. We beseech Her because without Her protection it would be impossible for us, who continually provoke God to anger, to live. By sinning often, we fall under many punishments, according to the word of the Psalmist: "Many are the sorrows of the wicked" (Ps. 31:10). We would already have

13. Service of the Annunciation, first sticheron at "Lord, I have cried."
14. An expression from the kontakion of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God.

perished for our iniquities, had not the most merciful Lady interceded for us: "For if this Intercessor had not stood before God in prayer," who would have delivered us from such great troubles, and who would have kept us free until now?[15] The Prophet Isaiah counsels the Jews: "Hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (Is. 26:20). But where can one hide from the wrath of the Lord? In times of suffering we have found nowhere a shelter for our defense, save the one Lady of the world, who says of Herself through the mouth of the Holy Spirit that She "covered the earth like a cloud"[16] (Sir. 24:3). Truly, we take shelter beneath the protection of Her who, like a cloud, covered the earth. But why, O most honorable Virgin Mother of God, dost Thou liken Thyself to so unworthy a thing as a cloud? Hast Thou no sun, moon, or stars to compare Thyself with, especially since the Wise One spoke of Thee with wonder: "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun"[17] (Song 6:10)! What beauty has a cloud, that Thou dost not disdain to be likened to it? This mystery is clear: when a cloud gathers over the earth and covers it, all the beasts are safe from the hunters, for no one can catch them. Therefore the Most Pure Virgin calls Herself a cloud: She hides us from the hunters. We sinners, according to the reasoning of Chrysostom, are beasts because of our inhumanity: we serve the belly like bears, grow fat in the flesh like mules, bear grudges like camels, practice robbery like wolves, grow angry like serpents, sting like scorpions, are cunning like foxes, and carry within us the poison of malice like vipers. Such beasts as we are are pursued by various hunters: the righteous wrath of God overtakes us, punishing our evil beginnings, accord-

15. From the troparion at the minor blessing of water.

16. The Mother of God is called, in general, in both Scripture and the Church hymns, a cloud (a mist): first, because from Her "there arose for us the righteous Sun"; second, because She "pours out for the thirsting the living water of forgiveness" (of sins) and rained down upon us "the cloud of the incorruption of Christ"; third, because by Her divine protection and warm intercession She covers and shields us from all evils and calamities.

17. This prophetic prefiguration is not limited to this one meaning alone. As the morning dawn, dispersing the darkness of night, precedes the radiant sun, borrowing its light from it; so also the Most Holy Virgin directly preceded the "Sun of righteousness," Christ, and from Him received Her glory as Mother of God. With the birth of Christ the darkness of idolatry and polytheism disappeared, and there came the unending day of the knowledge of God and piety.

ing to the words: "O Lord God of vengeance, O God of vengeance, show Thyself!" (Ps. 93:1). Our iniquities also overtake us, so that each of us may say: "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up" (Ps. 39:13). The invisible enemy pursues us as well: "He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places" (Lam. 3:10). The visible enemy also threatens us. He says: "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my soul shall be filled with them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them" (Ex. 15:9). But we have boldness, we have a spiritual cloud covering us—the Most Pure Virgin Mary. In Her we put our hope, to Her we flee; beneath Her protection, not a hair of our head shall perish, if only we cry out with compunction: "Cover us with Thy protection, our Protectress, O Most Pure Virgin: in the day of our evil, cover us!" (cf. Ps. 26:5). But all the days of our life are full of trouble, as the patriarch Jacob once said: "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been" (Gen. 47:9). Especially troubled are those days in which we see evil and ourselves do much evil, "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath"[18] (Rom. 2:5). All these troubled days of ours require Thy merciful protection, O Most Holy Virgin! Protect us, then, all the days of our life, and especially in the day of terror, when the soul is parted from the body. Stand before us with Thy help and hide us from the spirits of evil in the air, and on the day of the Dread Judgment hide us in the secret places of Thy Protecting Veil! Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Today the faithful people celebrate brightly, overshadowed by Thy coming, O Mother of God, and gazing upon Thine all-pure image, we say with compunction: Cover us with Thy precious protection, and deliver us from every evil, beseeching Thy Son, Christ our God, to save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Today the Virgin stands in the church, and invisibly prays to God for us with the choirs of saints: angels with hierarchs worship, and

18. On the day of wrath, that is, the Second Coming of Christ and the last Judgment.

Apostles with Prophets rejoice; for the Mother of God prays to the pre-eternal God for us.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Apostle Ananias

Страдание святого Апостола Анании

The Holy Apostle Ananias, one of the Seventy, was bishop in the city of Damascus.[19] He is known for having baptized the Apostle Paul. One day the Lord appeared to him in a vision and said:

— Arise and go to the street called Straight, and ask in the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus[20] named Saul; he is now praying.

Ananias objected, knowing how much evil Saul had done to the Christians in Jerusalem, and that he had come to Damascus intending to bind all who confessed the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the Lord exhorted Ananias, saying:

— Go, for Saul is chosen by Me to proclaim My Name before the nations and kings and the children of Israel, and I will show him how much he must suffer for My Name.

Obeying the divine command, Ananias went to Saul and, laying his hands upon him, said:

— Brother Saul! The Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the way, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit!

Saul immediately received his sight, and Ananias baptized him. Some time later, when the Jews had agreed among themselves to kill Paul because he had become a preacher of the Name of Christ instead of a persecutor, Ananias, together with the other disciples of Christ, let him down in a basket by the city wall[21] (Acts 9:10–25). Ananias himself entered the Jewish assemblies[22] and boldly preached

19. Damascus: the principal and richest commercial city of Syria, one of the oldest in the entire world; it lies to the north-east of Palestine, on the River Barada, which flows through it, in a beautiful and fertile plain, at the eastern foot of Anti-Lebanon.

20. Tarsus: a large populous city of Cilicia (a south-eastern province of Asia Minor), in its southern part, in a fertile plain on the River Cydnus, which flows into the Mediterranean Sea not far from it. Even now it is still a fairly important commercial city.

the name of the Lord. And he preached the faith of Christ not only to the Jews, but even to the pagans. From Damascus he went to Eleutheropolis,[23] and there, showing the people the way to salvation and healing the sick, he converted many to faith in Christ.

In those days Lucian was governor in Eleutheropolis; he worshipped the creature rather than the Creator. The devil stirred him up against the Christians and prompted him to send throughout his province the following decree:

— If anyone is found honoring Christ and worshipping the Crucified One, we command that he be subjected to mortal torments; but whoever renounces Christ and offers sacrifice to the immortal gods shall be deemed worthy by us of gifts and honors.

When this wicked and treacherous edict was issued, St. Ananias was enlightening the people of that region by preaching the Gospel and healing every kind of disease among them; the Lord was with him, working many miracles through him. The idolaters seized Ananias and brought him before the governor Lucian, who began by various means to compel him to offer sacrifice to idols. But Ananias did not obey him, and answered:

"I will not worship false gods; I worship the one true Lord my God, Jesus Christ. I have seen Him with my own eyes and spoken with Him face to face—not only when He lived on earth as a man, but also after His Ascension into heaven. For when I was in Damascus, He Himself appeared to me and sent me to heal Saul, whom by His wondrous wisdom and power He turned to knowledge of the truth. He delivered us all from the power of the devil and brought us to His Father. Therefore I

21. Among other monuments of antiquity, Damascus still preserves the place of St. Paul's conversion to the faith of Christ, the so-called Straight Street, the house of Judas, where his sight was restored to him and he was given baptism, and the house of the Apostle Ananias, as well as the place from which he was let down by the wall and thus escaped his persecutors.

22. Synagogues (from the Greek: assemblies): places of religious gatherings of the Jews, which were open buildings for the conduct of public worship and instruction, for deciding disputed church questions and conducting legal affairs; these buildings also served as places of assembly for debates, as schools for children, and as libraries. The institution of synagogues goes back to the times of the Babylonian captivity.

23. Eleutheropolis: a city in southern Palestine, on the road between Jerusalem and Gaza. At present there is a village here, lying where the Shephelah plain rises into the hill country of Judah. Not far from it lie the ruins of ancient Eleutheropolis.

worship Him, and not the demons who desire to destroy the whole human race."

Then the governor began to threaten Ananias with torments if he did not do as he was commanded; but he, steadfast as an unshakable pillar, remained firm in his confession of Christ. Raising his hands to heaven, he said:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the blessed Father! Hear my prayer and deem me worthy of the lot of the blessed Apostles in the life to come. As Thou didst save Saul by Thy light, so save me also from the hand of this ungodly man who resists the truth. Let his will not be accomplished upon me, and let him not ensnare me in the nets of his treachery. Do not deprive me of the Kingdom of Heaven, prepared for all who love the path of Thy truth, which Thou hast shown, and keep Thy commandments!"

Unable to endure Ananias's words any longer, the governor ordered him to be laid on the ground and beaten. While the servants were beating the saint mercilessly, the herald cried:

"Obey the governor; do not resist his command. Offer sacrifice to the gods worshipped by the whole world!"

When the beating of the saint had ceased, the governor said to him:

"At least now have pity on yourself, and obey me; renounce the Crucified, lest you suffer even more grievous torments at my hands."

To this St. Ananias answered:

"What I said to you at the beginning, I do not cease to repeat even now: I will not renounce my God, nor bow down before senseless stone and wood, which you honor as gods."

Seeing that the saint was unyielding, the governor ordered his body to be torn with iron claws and his wounds to be burned with candles. But as the saint endured the torments, he lifted his eyes to heaven and prayed fervently. After this torture, the torturer said:

"How long will you persist? Will you not have pity on yourself and worship the great gods? Do you truly prefer to endure these sufferings in vain for some Christ, crucified by the Jews, rather than remain unharmed and healthy? I swear that I will not let you go alive from my hands if you persist in this way!"

The saint answered:

"Do what you will, enemy of God and friend of the devil—for you have heard from me many times already that I will not worship your gods, but will worship the one God alone—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them. In Him have I believed, and He has given me strength to stand firm before you all this day and to endure these torments courageously. Why trouble yourself further? You have heard that I will not obey your will; therefore, do quickly what you have planned!"

Enraged, the torturer ordered the people to take St. Ananias, lead him out of the city, and stone him. The torturer's lawless servants took him, led him to the place of execution, and stoned him like a new Stephen[24]. He cried aloud:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Into Thy hands I commit my spirit."

Thus, after all his torments, he died and passed into the heavenly abodes. When the people saw that he was dead, they left him unburied and went away. At that time some Christians from Damascus happened to pass by. They took the holy body of the Apostle of Christ, carried it with honor to Damascus, and buried him in his native city[25].

* * *

Commemoration of Venerable Roman the Melodist

Память преподобного Романа Сладкопевца

St. Roman was a native of Syria. He was brought up in the city of Emesa[26], and from his youth began to please God, leading a virginal and chaste life. At first he was a church attendant[27] in one of the churches of the city of Berytus[28]; later, during the reign of Emperor

24. That is, just as shortly before this the Jews, for confessing Christ, stoned the first martyr of Christianity, St. Stephen the Archdeacon (Acts 7:59).

25. Later the relics of St. Ananias the Apostle were translated to Constantinople, where they still rested at the beginning of the thirteenth century; about 1200 they were seen by the Russian pilgrim, the monk Antony.

26. Emesa: a city in Syria, east of the River Orontes, which flows into the Mediterranean Sea in north-western Syria.

27. A *ponomar*, or more correctly *paramonar*, was an attendant appointed to guard the church and its sacred places and to keep them clean; by church rule his duties included ringing for services, lighting and extinguishing the liturgical lamps, and preparing and handing the censer.

Anastasius[29], he withdrew to Constantinople and served at the Kyros Church[30], dedicated to the Most Holy Lady our Theotokos. There he led a life of fasting and prayer, disciplining his body with many ascetic labors and all-night vigils. In the evening he would go to Blachernae and stand in prayer there throughout the night, then return. Later he was appointed church attendant at the church of St. Sophia[31]. St. Roman was unlettered, yet excelled in good works, surpassing the wise scribes; with his understanding he sought God far more than those who seek the wisdom of this age. For he was one of those of whom the Apostle said: "God hath chosen the weak things, to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:27)[32]. On account of his virtuous life, Patriarch Euthymius[33] loved him and, seeing how he labored in the church and with what diligence he fulfilled his obedience, gave him an equal

28. Berytus, the present-day Beirut, was an ancient city of Phoenicia on the shore of the Mediterranean. In the 5th century it flourished and was renowned for its higher school of rhetoric, poetics and law. Today it is the chief administrative city of Asiatic Turkish Syria and the most important trading point on the Syrian coast, with a population of up to 80,000.

29. Anastasius I was Byzantine emperor from 491 to 518.

30. Cyrus, the famous poet and prefect of the capital under Emperor Theodosius the Younger, later Bishop of Smyrna and a hymnographer of the Orthodox Eastern Church († 470), gave the capital a monument of his taste and piety: a magnificent church of the Mother of God, which received its name from him and after him was called the Church of Cyrus. Later a monastery arose beside this church. Whether there was a monastery at the Church of Cyrus during Romanus' time is not known; but the Greek original of his Life suggests that Romanus not only served at the Church of Cyrus but also lived in buildings belonging to that church.

31. The principal magnificent cathedral of Constantinople, dedicated to Holy Wisdom, the Wisdom of God, was first built by Constantine the Great. It was afterwards splendidly restored and enlarged by the Emperor Justinian the Great in 537. In 1453, after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, it was converted into a mosque. The Justinianic Church of St. Sophia still represents the most remarkable and most majestic monument of Christian architecture in the Byzantine style, in the most flourishing period of its development.

32. Cf. 1 Cor. 3:18–19. This is because human wisdom, left to itself, not accustomed to listen to the voice of revelation and the reason of God, falls into error, rejects the lofty and saving truths, and judges everything arrogantly and destructively. On the contrary, the foolishness of Christ examines nothing, but humbly receives everything by faith. It seems madness in the eyes of this world, but it is precisely the true wisdom which, according to the Apostle, is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy (Jas. 3:17). This wisdom of the unlearned makes wiser than the learned of the world.

33. St. Euthymius was Patriarch of Constantinople from 490 to 496.

share with the clergy[34]. The clergy, however, murmured against the patriarch, saying:

"You have placed an ignorant man on an equal footing with us!"

They hated Roman and began to plot against him. Once, on the eve of the feast of the Nativity of Christ, when the emperor came to the church and Roman was setting up the lamps there, the clergy seized him and dragged him up to the ambo[35], saying: "You receive an equal share with us—so sing a hymn of praise to God on the ambo, as we do."

They acted thus out of envy, wishing to shame him, for they knew that he did not understand the Scriptures and could not do this. Having endured such humiliation at the hands of the clergy, before the emperor and all the people assembled in the church, Roman felt ashamed and wept. When the service was over and all had left the church, he fell down before the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, weeping bitterly and praying. After spending a long time in tears and prayer, St. Roman rose and went to his home. In his sorrow he took no food, and fell asleep. And behold, in a dream the Most Holy Lady our Theotokos, the consolation of all who sorrow, appeared to him, holding in her hand a small scroll[36], and said to Roman in a gentle voice:

"Open your mouth!"

When Roman opened his mouth, the Lady placed the scroll in it and commanded him to eat it.

Roman swallowed the paper and immediately awoke, but saw no one before him, for She who had appeared had become invisible. His heart was filled with ineffable sweetness and spiritual joy, and he began to

34. By clerics are meant here church servers appointed to this by a special episcopal blessing, through the so-called church rite of *cheirothesia*: readers and singers. It is evident that St. Romanus did not belong to their number until that time.

35. The *ambo* (from the Greek, "elevation") begins from the middle of the other raised place before the sanctuary, the *soleas*, and projects forward into the church by a projection. In ancient churches the ambos rose considerably above the *soleas*, and sometimes stairs even led up to them. The ambos were originally intended not only for the preaching and prayers of the clergy, but also for singers and readers who had received the sacred tonsure, so that they could be seen and heard more conveniently by the worshippers. Later, for this purpose, the *kliros* were set up. But the lower, unordained church servers did not even have the right to enter the ambo.

36. In Greek, *kontakion*, that is, a thin roll of parchment written on both sides; this name was given in particular to rolls with church songs or services.

ponder what he had seen. In his mind he suddenly perceived understanding of the books, for the Virgin Theotokos, as her Son once did for His Apostles, opened his mind to understand the Scriptures (Lk. 24:27). He was filled with great wisdom and began with tears to thank his Instructress for granting him in a moment such knowledge as he could not have attained in many years.

The hour of the All-night Vigil came, and St. Roman, rejoicing in the grace bestowed upon him by the God-blessed Virgin, went to the church.

When it was time to sing the hymn for the feast, St. Roman ascended the ambo and sang in a sweet voice his kontakion, which he had composed in his mind:

"Today the Virgin gives birth to Him Who is above all being, and the earth offers a cave to Him Who cannot be approached. Angels with shepherds glorify Him, and the Magi journey with the star; for unto us is born a young Child, God before all ages."[37]

All who saw and heard this marveled and were delighted by Roman's singing, attending to the meaning of the hymn. When he had finished his song, the patriarch asked him whence came such wisdom to him. Roman did not conceal the miracle of the Theotokos, but confessed her grace and glorified his Heavenly Instructress, who had given him understanding. The clergy who had insulted him were ashamed, repented, and fell at Roman's feet, asking his forgiveness. The patriarch immediately ordained St. Roman a deacon, and wisdom flowed from his mouth like a river; those who had first reproached him for his simplicity and ignorance later had to learn from him themselves. He composed many kontakia[38] for the feasts of the Lord and the Theotokos, and for the commemorations of many saints, so that his kontakia numbered

37. A kontakion for the feast of the Nativity of Christ.

38. Thus Romanus the Melodist was the first to write kontakia and is rightly recognized by the Fathers of the Church as the creator of kontakia. The very name *kontakia* bears the memory of their author, and it took its origin from the Greek name of that parchment scroll which the Theotokos commanded Romanus to swallow in a dream. Under this name there were thenceforth understood in the Church brief liturgical hymns in honor of the feasts of the Lord and of the Theotokos, as well as in honor of the saints and in memory of the departed, setting forth the essence of the feasts and constituting, as it were, the theme for the whole order of their services.

more than a thousand[6218]. He was greatly loved and honored by all. Having lived his life in a God-pleasing and righteous manner, he departed to the eternal abodes, and now with the angelic choirs forever sings to God the Thrice-Holy Hymn[39]. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Having adorned thyself from childhood, O wise Roman, with the divine virtues of the Spirit, thou becamest the Church of Christ's most precious adornment, adorning her with thy beautiful singing, O blessed one. Therefore we beseech thee: grant to those who desire thy divine gift, that we may cry unto thee: Rejoice, O most blessed father, beauty of the Church!

* * *

Life of Venerable Sabbas of Vishera

Житие преподобного Саввы Вишерского

The Venerable Sabbas was a native of the Principality of Tver, from the town of Kashin,[40] and he came from a noble and respected family.[41] There he grew up and was educated. Even in his earliest years he was distinguished by a life of virtue. Though he wore secular dress, he imitated the labors of the monks, prayed and fasted like a perfect monk, and zealously went to the house of God. Moved by love for God, Sabbas resolved to take the monastic habit, and he began to lead a strict monastic life in several of the Tver monasteries, submitting without murmuring to the various monastery obediences: in the kitchen, in the bakery, and in other services. In this he was remarkable for his extraordinary humility. The brethren of the Sabbas Hermitage of Tver,[42] where he soon settled, came to love Sabbas so much and to

39. The life and activity of St. Romanus the Melodist belong to the second half of the 5th century. His death followed at the end of that century.

40. Kashin, now a district town of Tver Province, 188 versts from Tver, on the Volga River, was part of the Principality of Tver; for some time it was an independent appanage, the strongest in it, and a very significant town, but afterwards it lost its former importance.

41. The Venerable Sabbas was the second of eight sons of the Kashin boyar Ivan Vasilievich Borozda, of a famous family distinguished in battles for military valor (whence also arose the family name of this lineage: *borozda*, an old military term for a trench or ditch).

esteem him for his ascetic life that they held him in their midst as though he were an Angel of God, and they chose him as their hegumen. The boyars and all the inhabitants of that land began to honor him as a saint, and the fame of his humility, abstinence and other great virtues spread far and wide. But the fame of men weighed heavily upon the Venerable Father, and fleeing from it he withdrew from his homeland and for a long time lived in complete obscurity in a foreign land. Zealous for the higher labors of the monastic life, Sabbas went to distant Athos, renowned for the holy lives of its ascetics, and there he advanced in the spiritual life.[43]

On his return from Athos the Venerable Father came to Great Novgorod, but he revealed to no one who he was, wandering in the guise of a poor, unknown pilgrim. Guided by God, he came to the River Vishera,[44] set up a cross there,[45] and, building a small hut, began to live the life of a hermit. He had with him an icon of the Most Pure Mother of God, before which he prayed without ceasing. It happened that one of the Novgorodians was passing by that place. It was at the time of the fast of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and the summer weather was sweltering. The saint was immersed in deep prayer, as though not feeling that his face was entirely covered with gnats, so that he could not be seen at all. The astonished Novgorodian told others what he had seen, and from this everyone understood that he was a true man of God. Noticing that he had been recognized, the Venerable Sabbas with-

42. The Tver Sabbas (Sretensky) Hermitage was founded by the Venerables Sabbas and Varsonophius of Tver, contemporaries of Sabbas of Vishera (their memory is celebrated on March 2), in 1397, and was situated 20 versts from Tver, where the village of Savino now stands.

43. Nothing is known of the life of the Venerable Sabbas on Athos, nor can it be determined precisely how long he remained there. But from certain historical indications among the earlier and later events of the Venerable's life, it may be thought that he went to Athos about 1411 and that his stay there lasted no more than three years. From the subsequent life of the Venerable it is seen that the impressions of Athos remained long in his soul. It is also known that he brought with him from Athos to Russia a copy of the *Kormchaya* book, which was afterwards used by Vassian, Archbishop of Rostov.

44. The Vishera is a river of Novgorod Province, a left tributary of the Volkhov. As is seen from the present location of the Sabbas-Vishera Monastery, the Venerable Sabbas settled on the left bank of the Vishera, 10 versts northeast of Novgorod. Sabbas's settlement on the Vishera was not later than 1414 or 1415.

45. This cross still stands today in the chapel at the monastery. At present the cross is merely covered with boards, and on its front side are cast alabaster images of saints.

drew from there and settled in an even more secluded place near the River Sosnitsa.[46] Here he continued to practice fasting and prayer, leading a life filled with even greater privations.

But "a city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Mt. 5:14). The fame of the holy life of the Venerable Sabbas spread through the surrounding area, and the neighboring inhabitants began to come to him and bring him such offerings as they could, necessary for the sustaining of life. Little by little the report of the holy man of God spread throughout the whole Novgorod region and even reached Archbishop John himself, who was then on the Novgorod see.[47] As a result, John sent someone to inquire about the Venerable Sabbas, who and what he was and what his life was like. To the trusted person sent for this purpose the archbishop gave instructions to question Sabbas and to rebuke him for not having honored his episcopal authority and for having settled in the land of Novgorod without his blessing.

The episcopal messenger, appearing before the Venerable Father as though bearing a prohibition from the archbishop, said:

"How did you dare to settle in this place without the permission of the archbishop?"

Sabbas answered humbly with the following parable.

"One maiden," he said, "sat at a window near the square and shamelessly looked at all who passed by; another, sitting at another window, reverently guarded the virginal purity of her soul. Those passing by, noticing the shamelessness of the first maiden, said: 'She will not keep her purity with such vanity and distraction'; but of the second they said that, with such modesty, that maiden would keep her soul's purity unblemished. All the more, it behooves us especially to take heed to ourselves and to guard ourselves on the path we have taken: we live here in the wilderness, not avoiding you, our archpastor, but withdrawing from the world; and we always desire your prayers and blessing, that they may abide with us."

The messenger, returning, told the archbishop everything about the blessed Sabbas, about his life, his fasting and his poverty. Hearing this,

46. A small river, near the Vishera, flowing through a pine forest, from which it received its name.

the archbishop understood that this was an elder of spiritual life, and therefore, moved by a strong desire to see him himself, he went to him in the wilderness.

The blessed Sabbas, clothed in his usual rags, met him even on the way. Seeing the archbishop, Sabbas fell before him with profound humility and bowed to him with the reverence befitting the episcopal rank. The archbishop blessed the Venerable Father, not knowing that this was Sabbas, but taking him for an ordinary wanderer. He bade him sit beside him and ride to Sabbas's dwelling, and he could scarcely persuade him, for the humble ascetic did not dare to allow himself to sit with the hierarch. During the journey, conversation with the Venerable Father showed the archbishop that this was no ordinary man, but a man experienced in the spiritual life, and the bishop came to love Sabbas all the more before he knew who he was. Only just before his dwelling did Sabbas, bowing humbly to the archbishop, reveal that he was the sinner Sabbas. Then the hierarch marveled at his humility and blessed him with love. Afterward both of them entered Sabbas's cell and conversed there for a long time.

For several hours the archpastor instructed the Venerable Father to abide unwaveringly in patience and labors, and he shared with him the desert meal. Returning to Novgorod, the archbishop extolled the great God-pleasing life of the Venerable elder, and from that time he began to cherish deep respect for the blessed Sabbas, regarding him as great, and thereafter he always sent to him everything needed for his life in the wilderness.

Meanwhile the Venerable Sabbas resolved to found a monastery in his wilderness and began to build with his own hands cells for the monastic brethren who came to him. The malicious enemy of the human race could not endure this, and, moved by envy of him, he prompted robbers to do the Venerable Father harm. Thinking that he had some property, they came to him with an evil intent. Sabbas was at that time building a cell. With feigned humility the robbers began to ask the elder for a blessing. But he saw through their treacherous design, and that

47. Archbishop John governed the Novgorod episcopal see from 1387 to 1415.

they were robbers. And so he addressed them with the following request:

"Children! Show love, help me raise a beam onto the wall."

At this the elder told them to take hold of the thin end of the log, while he himself took hold of the thick end. The robbers could not possibly lift their end all together, but the elder, with God's help, easily raised the log onto the wall by himself. Struck by this, the robbers looked at one another in shame and fear, and hastened to leave the Venerable Father, fearing that they themselves might suffer some harm because of him.[48]

After some time, some of the monks of the monastery located on the so-called Lisichya Mountain began to object to the elder continuing to live in that locality, for it lay somewhat higher than the aforementioned monastery. Then the Venerable Sabbas, having heard of the dispute over the land, sent to Novgorod one of his disciples, named Ephraim,[49] to the leaders of the Slavic End,[50] with a request to assign him a place on the River Vishera for a hermitage monastery. They willingly gave him permission for this. After that the Venerable Sabbas settled there permanently and labored as best he could to build the monastery. Having erected cells for the brethren, he resolved to build also a church in honor of the most glorious Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.[51] With God's help the church was soon built and consecrated. From this time many people began to gather around the Venerable Sabbas: some for

48. This miracle is also commemorated in the service to the Venerable. Canon, Ode 6, troparion 3.

49. Ephraim was the beloved disciple of the Venerable Sabbas. After his death he withdrew to the shores of Lake Ilmen, where he founded the Perekomsky Monastery († 1492). The memory of the Venerable Ephraim is celebrated on May 16 and September 26.

50. Great Novgorod was divided into two sides, the Trade Side and the St. Sophia Side, which in turn were divided into so-called *kontsy* (ends). The Slavic End was in the south of the Trade Side. The sides and ends had their own administration and governed the districts of the Novgorod region nearest to Novgorod. The district through which the Vishera flowed and where the Lisichy Monastery was situated was under the jurisdiction of the Slavic End. A seal is known with a cross in the middle and the inscription around it, "Seal of the Slavic End," and on the reverse an image of a saint in a crown with the inscription "Paul the Confessor," from which it is seen that the Slavic End had its own administration.

51. The church with cells was built in the monastery of the Venerable Sabbas in 1418 by the blessing of St. Simeon, Archbishop of Novgorod († 1421). His memory is celebrated on February 10 and June 15.

spiritual benefit and instruction, others to pursue the monastic life in his monastery. He received them all with joy.

At the same time the Venerable Father labored more than anyone to put the new monastery in good order, setting an example to all by his tireless diligence. In the monastery of the Venerable Father, among others, there was then a layman who was very lazy in performing the monastery obediences. He often argued with the elder about his undertaking too many tasks. Sabbas, comforting him, said:

"Do not grieve, child; only endure these days appointed for your performing of the monastery works, and then we will afterward reward you far more than we promised."

The layman, touched by the gentle words of the elder, understood that this had been a hostile temptation to him, and after that he worked and labored far more than the others.

At that time a monk came to the monastery to see the blessed Sabbas, for he had heard from many about his great ascetic life. The elder himself met him. It was his custom, whenever anyone came to him from another monastery, to go out and meet him while still far from his monastery, at the place where the cross had been set up; there, having offered a brief prayer, he would then walk with the guest to the church, where he again offered prayer, and only then lead him to his cell and enter into conversation with him.

When the aforementioned monk had been received in this manner by the Venerable Sabbas, the elder, after a long conversation with him, as the late evening drew on, let the brother who had come rest, while he himself, taking up the millstone, ground rye. And so the newly arrived brother hears that the elder, not far from the cell, is grinding rye through the whole night until Matins, while with his lips he reads the Psalms. The monk was astonished and began to say to himself that he had now seen far more than he had previously heard about the elder from others. Early in the morning, having received the elder's blessing, he set out back to his own monastery, recounting to everyone the greatest ascetic life of the holy man and reproaching himself for sloth and negligence.

After the establishment of the monastery, the Venerable Sabbas set up a pillar for himself, and climbing onto it, spent the whole week until Saturday upon it in fasting and prayer; on Saturday, however, he came down from the pillar to the brethren, communed with them of the Holy Mysteries, listened to the service of the Sunday, shared the meal together with the rest, and, after a soul-profiting instruction to the brethren, climbed back onto the pillar and again labored upon it in the same manner until the following Saturday[52].

During this great pillar-dwelling feat, there came to the Venerable Sabbas at the monastery from Tver a brother of his by the flesh, who had not seen him for a long time, to visit him. But the elder did not wish at all to see him or to converse with him. And when the brother remained a long time at the pillar, entreating the elder at least to see him, the elder at last came down from the pillar and blessed the brother, but without saying anything to him, at once climbed back onto the pillar. The brother of the Venerable, seeing him, returned joyfully to Tver, glorifying God for the wondrous signs of His grace of which he had been granted to be an eyewitness.

Living on the pillar, seemingly removed from the monastery and from its cares, the Venerable Sabbas nevertheless continued to watch over it by his prayers. Once robbers approached the monastery in order to plunder it. The Venerable, standing on the pillar in prayer, saw them from afar, and, perceiving the evil intent with which they had come, began to strike the wall with his staff. The robbers, hearing the knocking, seized with fear, fled; for they were driven away from the monastery by the prayer of the Venerable[53]. From that time the robbers ceased to approach the monastery.

Meanwhile, to the Venerable Sabbas there continued to flock from all quarters both monks and laymen, for the sake of the spiritual benefit which they received from him; for he, according to the Apostle, was all things to all men (1 Cor. 9:22), instructing all, sympathizing with all

52. In praising the pillar-dwelling exploits of the Venerable Sabbas, the Church compares him to "Simeon the Great," that is, St. Simeon the Stylite. The pillar, as it were, replaced for the Venerable the great desert of Athos.

53. The Church sings of this miracle in the service to the Venerable. Stichera 3, on "Lord, I have cried."

and caring for them as for his own members, treating the elders as his brothers and peers, and the younger as his children. And there was no one in the monastery of the Venerable Sabbas who was either offended or offending, for all were comforted and reconciled by the Holy Sabbas.

Persevering in these labors and enduring such severe privations and all manner of sorrows, the Venerable Sabbas, in the seventieth year of his life, fell into a bodily illness. Preparing to be released from the body and to render the last debt to nature, the Venerable summoned all the brethren and addressed them with his final soul-profiting admonitions, especially that they should firmly and unchangingly abide in Orthodoxy and in the observance of the monastic vows, and above all that they should advance in humility.

In conclusion the elder said to them:

"Whatever you have seen me doing in my struggles, that same do yourselves."

After this, having entrusted the monastery and the brethren to the care and oversight of the Archbishop of Novgorod, and the immediate administration of the monastery and the guidance of the monks to the eldest of the brethren, his closest disciples Ephraim and Andrew[54], who had most distinguished themselves by their labors and ascetic feats in that monastery, the Venerable Sabbas, growing ever stronger in spirit, began to weaken in body. Having communed of the Holy Mysteries of Christ, he peacefully committed his soul to the Lord on October 1, 1460. Just before his end the Venerable charged his disciples: "When my soul is separated from the body, do not perform over it any solemn funeral rites, but simply, without any preparations, carry the body to the grave and commit it to the earth."

The disciples of the Venerable, seeing their father and teacher dead, grieved much at parting from him. Then, honoring his memory as their father and teacher unto salvation, with psalmody and funeral chants, they buried his laborious and much-suffering body in the earth between

54. On the Venerable Ephraim see p. 282. Of another disciple of the Venerable Sabbas, Andrew, it is known that he so wore down his body with fasting and vigil that only skin and bones remained. Soon, however, after the death of the Venerable Sabbas, the abbot of the monastery of Sabbas was already Hegumen Gelasius.

the church and the pillar on which he had struggled in the last period of his life.

After the departure of their teacher to God, the disciples of the Venerable Sabbas came to care even more for the ordering of the monastery, that nothing be forgotten of the monastic rules and precepts of their spiritual father, the Venerable Sabbas. They especially cared for their inner spiritual life, imitating in it what they had seen in their teacher and mentor, and striving diligently to correct their own shortcomings. And in this respect they showed such feats that they became a good example for many.

After a fairly long time, when, with the help of God and through the prayers of the Venerable Sabbas, his monastery was flourishing with success, a great fire broke out in it, so that the whole monastery burned down. In this fire there burned, together with the cells, both the church and the pillar on which the Venerable had struggled during his life; but the tomb of the Venerable Sabbas, which was located between the church and the pillar, and the chapel above the tomb, suffered no harm from the fire, so that the flame could not even touch them, though it surrounded them on all sides. This was the first miracle after the repose of the saint. From that time manifold miracles began to be wrought at the tomb of the Venerable Sabbas, by which the Lord revealed him to the faithful as His true servant and gracious wonderworker. The following miracle especially convinced everyone of this. A certain Zachariah, who was preparing to receive monastic tonsure in the Venerable's monastery, had heard much from the monks there about the holy life and posthumous miracles of the Venerable. Reverently amazed at what he had heard, Zachariah for many days pondered this and prayed to God that he too might be granted to be a witness of some such miracle. And so, when once he was standing in prayer and, sitting down to rest, dozed off and fell asleep, suddenly he saw before him some unknown elder, who said to him: "If you wish to see Sabbas, follow me, and then you will see him." Zachariah, as it seemed to him, followed that elder, came to the tomb of the Holy Sabbas, and there saw several hierarchs and among them the Venerable Sabbas, standing

on an elevated place. He bowed to the Venerable, and he spoke to him a few words for edification and confirmed him in his faith.

Meanwhile the sick and all who came with faith to the tomb of the Venerable continued to receive spiritual consolation in their sorrows and miraculous healings from their grievous infirmities. The report of these miracles spread throughout the whole Novgorod region, especially from the time when the abbot of the Sabbas monastery, Hegumen Gelasius, was healed of a poisoning that had befallen him, through prayers to the Man of God, and at his healing he saw in a dream the Venerable Sabbas standing in prayer in bright vestments, with his gaze turned toward the church. Awakening and feeling himself healed, Gelasius glorified God, who works wondrous miracles through His saints, and hastened to go to the Archbishop of Novgorod, to whom he related the vision he had had and his miraculous healing. Then the Novgorod hierarch Jonah arrived at the Sabbas monastery on the Vishera[55], and, hastening to the tomb of the Venerable, performed a moleben before it. Then he ordered an icon of the Venerable Sabbas to be painted[56], a service to be composed in his honor, and his life to be written[57], to the glory of God the Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ, who wondrously glorifies His saints even after their repose.

Afterwards the relics of the Venerable Sabbas were translated into a newly built church in the name of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos[58], and in the Orthodox Russian Church a feast in his honor was established[59]. And even now at his honorable tomb there are gran-

55. St. Jonah, Archbishop of Novgorod, governed the Novgorod Church from 1458 until his death, which followed in 1470. His memory is celebrated on November 5. ... to the Sabbas-Vishera Monastery should be dated to 1461.[1*]

56. This ancient icon of the Venerable Sabbas is preserved in his monastery to this day. Formerly it lay on the shrine of his holy relics; now it is in the monastery Ascension Cathedral, in the side-chapel dedicated to the Venerable Sabbas.

57. The Life of the Venerable Sabbas is attributed to Pachomius the Logothete, the well-known hagiographer of the second half of the 15th century and a contemporary of St. Jonah the Hierarch. However, some copies of the Life that name Pachomius as its author end with a notation stating that “the Life of the Blessed Sabbas was written down and composed by the Hieromonk Gelasius, who was then abbot of that monastery, in the year 6972.” From this it may be concluded that the Life was originally written in 1464 by Abbot Gelasius and afterwards revised by Pachomius the Logothete.

58. This was in the year 1523.

ted inexhaustible healings to all who with faith come to the intercession of the Venerable, who never ceases praying before the throne of the Most High for all who with faith honor his most venerable memory.

Troparion, Tone 4:

From thy youth thou didst most blessedly give thyself wholly to the service of God, and for love of Him thou didst leave thy fatherland and kindred, dwelling in the wilderness and displaying a harsh manner of life; thou didst receive from the Lord the gift of miracles, O Venerable Sabbas: entreat Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

O Venerable Father, thou didst withdraw from thy fatherland and dwell in the wilderness, and there, climbing upon a pillar, thou didst display a harsh life; and having amazed many by thy life, thou didst receive from Christ the gift of miracles. Remember us who honor thy memory, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, Sabbas, our Father.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Domninus

Память святого мученика Домнина

The Holy Domninus was a native of Thessalonica. When the emperor Maximian[60] was building himself a palace in Thessalonica[61], the Holy

59. The feast in honor of the Venerable Sabbas was established in the Russian Church by a conciliar decision of 1549. From that time the Venerable Sabbas became known as the Wonderworker of Novgorod. In 1570, during the reign of Ivan the Terrible, at the time of the Novgorod pogrom, "the sovereign's soldiery destroyed the wonderworker's tomb"; in the following year the relics of the Venerable Sabbas were placed in a new reliquary and deposited in the new stone Church of the Protection in the monastery. At present the relics of the Venerable repose beneath the floor in the Protection chapel of the Ascension Cathedral of the monastery. Two churches in the monastery are dedicated in his name.

60. Maximian Galerius, Roman emperor from 305 to 311 A.D.

61. Thessalonica or Salonica, a very important ancient city of Macedonia, lay at the head of the large Gulf of Thessalonica, or Thermaic Gulf, on the Aegean Sea (the Archipelago). At present this city is known by the name Thessaloniki in Greece.

Domninus was seized as a Christian and brought before the emperor for judgment. The emperor said to him in anger:

"Why, during my stay in the city, do you openly confess another God? Offer sacrifice to the gods, if you wish to remain alive."

Since the saint would not obey, the emperor ordered that his body be torn; and then, seeing in the saint's patience a reproach and rebuke to himself, he commanded that he be led outside the city and that his legs be cut off at the knees. With his legs cut off, the holy martyr lived in suffering for seven days, taking no food; and then, giving thanks to God, whom he had so loved, he committed his blessed soul into His hands.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Michael of Zobia and of the Sufferers with Him

Память преподобного Михаила Зовийского и пострадавших с ним

The Venerable Michael, together with other monks, labored in the reign of Constantine and Irene[62] in the monastery called Zobia, near Sebaste[63]. The Agarene emir Alim[64] attacked that land and seized them. Strengthened by the power of Christ, the venerable fathers did not yield to the exhortations of the unbelievers to renounce Christ. Standing in the midst of the monks, the Venerable Abbot Michael raised his voice, urging them to die for Christ. First they, bowing their heads, were beheaded by the sword, and then the Venerable Michael himself.

* * *

62. Constantine VI Porphyrogenitus, Roman emperor from 780 to 797 A.D. Empress Irene, his mother and the wife of the emperor Leo VI, a zealous defender of the veneration of icons, governed the state for ten years in place of her son and after him reigned until 802 A.D.

63. Here Sebastia in Armenia is meant, in the northeast of Asia Minor.

64. The Agarenes, or otherwise the Saracens, were the Arabian Bedouins. The name Agarenes, which originally meant this nomadic, brigand tribe, was later extended by Christian writers to all Arabs, and then came to mean Muslims in general. The Arabian Bedouins were called Agarenes because, according to Hebrew tradition, they were descendants of Ishmael, son of Hagar, the handmaid of Abraham. Emirs (from the Arabic, meaning “prince”) was the name given to all the independent, purported heirs of Muhammad by descent from his daughter, who led individual tribes and individual brigand bands of Arabs.

NOTES

6181. The account of the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God concludes with the following details. When St. Andrew with Epiphanius were contemplating this wondrous vision, the Mother of God prayed for a long hour, shedding tears over Her God-seeing and most pure face. Having finished Her prayer here, She approached the Holy Table and prayed there also for the people standing before Her. When the prayer was ended, She took off the great and terrible veil, which shone like lightning, which She wore upon Her most pure head, and, holding it with great solemnity in Her most pure hands, She spread it over all the people standing there. For a considerable time those wondrous men gazed upon this veil spread over the people and upon the glory of the Lord shining like lightning; and as long as the Most Holy Mother of God remained there, the veil was visible. But when She departed, it too became invisible. Yet, taking it with Her, She left grace to those who were there.

6192. The Mother of God is rightly compared to the ark. In the Old Testament, in the Tabernacle, and afterwards in the Temple of Jerusalem, there was an inner sanctuary, the "Holy of Holies," accessible to the high priest alone, and that only once a year. In this sanctuary was kept the ark of the covenant, a chest covered with gold within and without, containing the objects most sacred to the chosen people. On its sides were the "Cherubim of glory," golden images of these highest heavenly powers nearest to God. This ark also prefigured the Mother of God, who contained within Herself God Himself, wherefore the Church sings of Her as the "ensouled ark of God" (Canon of the Annunciation, Ode 9). As the unceasing intercessor for the human race before the throne of glory, She appears to us as the ark surrounded by the host of the Cherubic powers, who guard us by their prayers from all evils and circumstances.

6193. During the wanderings of the Israelites in the Arabian desert, they had to engage at Rephidim in battle with the predatory nomadic people, the Amalekites. Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And when Moses lifted up his hands, Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed. When Moses' hands grew heavy, they set him upon a stone, and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, which were held up until the going down of the sun. Then the Israelites, led by Joshua the son of Nun, overthrew Amalek and put his people to the edge of the sword. The raising of Moses' hands here figuratively represented for Israel the power of prayer. The meaning of the comparison is clear: in prayers, the ever-watchful Mother of God, by their power, as if supported by Sts. John the Forerunner and John the Theologian, overthrows, like Moses, the invisible enemy of Christians, the devil with all his powers, who attacks us in this world, which is likened to a desert.

6218. St. Romanus remained in the history of Christian hymnography with the name "the Melodist" and as a hymnographer, both for the richness of the thoughts contained in his hymns and for their poetic inspiration, animation, depth of feeling and loftiness of language. In its hymns the Church sings of him as the harp of sweet sound, the sweet-voiced lyre of the Divine Spirit, the church pipe, the nightingale of divine songs, the string of the glorious words of the Spirit, and so on (*Stichera*). Besides kontakia, St.

Romanus the Melodist is considered the author of the *ikos*, which, according to the testimony of Mark of Ephesus, together with the kontakia were sung in those same beautiful chambers (in Greek, *oikos*, house, chamber) where the holy man was accustomed to spend the nights in vigil; hence they received this name. "Ikoi" is the name in the Church for the more extended hymns in honor and memory of a feast or in memory of the departed. In their content they are similar to kontakia, they are written in one meter and sung in one tone. The ikos always follows the kontakion, since it represents a development of the latter.



THE SECOND DAY OF OCTOBER

October 2

2 октября

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

Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Cyprian and of the Holy Martyr Justina.

Житие и страдание святого священномученика Киприана и святой мученицы Иустины.

In the reign of Decius[1] there lived in Antioch[2] a certain philosopher[3] and famous sorcerer[4], named Cyprian, a native of Carthage[5]. Born of impious parents, he was dedicated by them, while still a child, to the service of the pagan god Apollo[6]. At the age of seven he was handed over to magicians to be taught sorcery and demonic wisdom. When he reached the age of ten, his parents sent him to Mount Olym-

1. Decius—a Roman emperor from 249 to 251.
2. Antioch is a name frequently borne by cities. Here, most likely, Antioch in Phoenicia is meant, between Syria and Palestine, or else Antioch in Pisidia, on the border of Phrygia, in the western part of Asia Minor.
3. That is, a pagan sage, in the sense of a false sage.
4. In antiquity, the name “wise men” or “magi” denoted men of wisdom who possessed high and wide-ranging knowledge, especially knowledge of the hidden forces of nature, inaccessible to ordinary people. At the same time, this name was joined with the notions of sorcery, witchcraft, enchantment, incantations, and various deceptions and superstitions. Sorcery was highly developed among the pagans from the most ancient times; Holy Scripture speaks against it in many places. According to the opinion of many Teachers of the Church, the pagan magi performed their sorceries, sometimes remarkable, under the influence and with the help of the spirits of darkness.
5. Carthage was an ancient and famous Phoenician colony in North Africa, which in ancient history attained the highest degree of power and was destroyed in 146 B.C. On the ruins of ancient Carthage, under the first Roman emperors, a new Carthage arose, which existed with great splendor for a very long time. In Carthage the pagan Greco-Roman cult, with all its superstitions, sorceries, and "magical art," was very strongly developed.
6. Apollo was one of the most revered of the Greco-Roman pagan gods. He was venerated as the god of the sun and of intellectual enlightenment, as well as of public well-being and order, the guardian of law, and the deity of the foretelling of the future. One of the principal sites of his cult was, among others, the Tempe valley in Northern Greece, which lay at the foot of Mount Olympus, famous in antiquity.

pus[7], which the pagans called the dwelling of the gods, to prepare for the priestly service; there was an innumerable multitude of idols, in which demons dwelt. On this mountain Cyprian learned all the diabolical arts: he mastered the various demonic transformations, learned to alter the properties of the air, to summon winds, to produce thunder and rain, to stir up the waves of the sea, to inflict harm upon gardens, vineyards and fields, to send diseases and sores upon men; in general he learned pernicious wisdom and the diabolical activity full of evil. There he saw countless hosts of demons with the prince of darkness at their head, before whom some stood, others served, some cried out extolling their prince, and others were sent into the world to seduce men. There he also saw, in the imagined forms of the pagan gods and goddesses, as well as various phantoms and apparitions, to whose summoning he was taught by a strict forty-day fast; he ate only after sunset, and not bread nor any other food, but acorns of the oak.

When he had reached the age of fifteen, he began to attend the lessons of the seven great priests, from whom he learned many demonic mysteries. Then he went to the city of Argos[8], where, after serving for some time the goddess Hera[9], he learned many seductions from her priest. He also lived for a time in Tauropolis[10], serving Artemis, and from there he went to Lacedaemon[11], where he learned various sorceries and enchantments for calling the dead out of their graves and compelling them to speak. At the age of twenty Cyprian came to Egypt,

7. Olympus is properly a whole (south-eastern) branch of the mountain chain forming the boundary between Macedonia and Thessaly, in Northern Greece. Among the ancient Greeks, Olympus was regarded as the dwelling-place of their pagan gods.

8. Argos was the ancient Greek capital of the eastern region of the Peloponnesus (southern Greece), Argolis; not far from it was the famous temple of the pagan goddess Hera.

9. Hera (Juno) was regarded by the ancient Greeks and Romans as the sister and wife of their chief god Zeus, the most exalted and venerated among the goddesses; she was considered the goddess of the earth and of fertility, and the patroness of marriages.

10. Tavropolos was properly a temple in honor of the goddess Artemis (Diana, goddess of the moon, who was also venerated as patroness of fresh, flourishing life in nature) on the island of Icaria, in the south-eastern part of the Aegean Sea (Archipelago). The name of this place derives from the fact that the Greeks, equating Artemis with the goddess Orsilochus of the ancient inhabitants of the Tauric peninsula, the Tauri, called both indiscriminately "Tavropolos."

11. Lacedaemon, or Laconia, is the south-eastern region of the Peloponnesus (Southern Greece). More specifically, this name denoted the principal city of Laconia, otherwise Sparta, of which only small ruins survive today.

and in the city of Memphis[12] he studied still greater magic arts and sorceries. In his thirtieth year he went to the Chaldeans[13], and having learned astrology there, he completed his education, after which he returned to Antioch, being perfect in every kind of wickedness. Thus he became a sorcerer, magician and murderer, a great friend and faithful slave of the prince of hell[14], with whom he conversed face to face, having been granted great honor by him, as he himself openly bore witness.

"Believe me," he said, "that I have seen the prince of darkness himself, for I propitiated him with sacrifices; I greeted him and spoke with him and with his elders; he came to love me, praised my mind, and before all said: 'Here is a new Zambri[15], always ready for obedience and worthy of fellowship with us!' And he promised to make me a prince when I departed from the body, and during my earthly life to help me in everything; at the same time he gave me a legion of demons for my service. And when I was leaving him, he addressed me with the words: 'Take courage, zealous Cyprian, rise and accompany me: let all the demonic elders marvel at you.' In consequence of this, all his princes also attended to me, seeing the honor shown me. His outward appearance was like a flower; his head was crowned with a crown made (not in reality, but in appearance) of gold and gleaming stones, by which the

12. Memphis was the ancient, mighty capital of all Egypt. It was located in Middle Egypt on the Nile, between the main river and its tributary, which washed the western side of the city. Of the brilliant capital of ancient Egypt, only the most insignificant and meager remains survive today, near the villages of Metrasani and Moganan.

13. The Chaldeans were the Babylonian sages and scholars who pursued the sciences, especially astronomy and the observation of the heavenly luminaries; they were also priests and magi who engaged in secret teaching, divination, the interpretation of dreams, and so forth. Later this name was applied, especially in the East, generally to all kinds of magicians, sorcerers, and diviners, even if they were not Chaldeans, that is, did not come from Babylon.

14. According to the teaching of Holy Scripture, in the dark kingdom of the evil fallen spirits there is a chief leader, whom Scripture often calls "the prince of demons," and also Beelzebub, Belial, Satan, and so forth, clearly distinguishing him from the other demons, who are depicted as subordinate to him. In general, Scripture distinguishes evil spirits according to their degrees and the strength of their power.

15. In the sense of a new impious magician, sorcerer, and obedient servant of the devil. The name Zambrius here evidently refers to the famous ancient Egyptian magician, known from ancient classical writers, who became renowned for his extraordinary enchantments and who, according to the opinion of the Fathers of the Church, was in league with the dark demonic powers.

whole place was illumined; and his raiment was marvelous. When he turned to one side or the other, the whole place trembled; a multitude of evil spirits of various ranks stood obediently before his throne. To him I then gave myself wholly in service, obeying his every command."

Thus Cyprian himself related of himself after his conversion.

From this it is clear what kind of man Cyprian was: as a friend of demons, he performed all their works, doing harm to men and seducing them. Living in Antioch, he led many people into all kinds of lawlessness, destroyed many by poisons and sorcery, and sacrificed youths and maidens to the demons. He taught many his destructive sorcery: some to fly through the air, others to sail in boats among the clouds, and others to walk upon the waters. He was honored and glorified by all the pagans as the chief priest and wisest servant of their abominable gods. Many came to him in their needs, and he helped them by the demonic power with which he was filled: to some he gave aid in fornication, to others in anger, enmity, revenge and envy. He was already wholly in the depths of hell and in the jaws of the devil, a son of gehenna, a partaker in the demonic inheritance and their eternal perdition. But the Lord, who desires not the death of the sinner, by His ineffable goodness and by a mercy unconquered by the sins of men, was pleased to seek out this lost man, to draw him from the abyss, to save one sunk in the depth of hell, that He might show His mercy to all men, for there is no sin able to overcome His love for man. He saved Cyprian from perdition in the following manner.

There lived at that time, also in Antioch, a certain maiden named Justina. She was born of pagan parents: her father was an idol-priest named Edesius, and her mother was called Cleodonia. Once, as this maiden, by then grown to full maturity, was sitting at the window of her house, she chanced to hear words of salvation from the lips of a deacon named Prailius who was passing by. He was speaking of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He was born of the Most Pure Virgin and, having performed many miracles, was pleased to suffer for our salvation, rose from the dead in glory, ascended into heaven, sat at the right hand of the Father and reigns forever. This sermon of the deacon fell upon good soil in the heart of Justina and soon began to

bear fruit, uprooting the thorns of unbelief in her. Justina desired to learn the faith better and more perfectly from the deacon, but she did not dare to seek him out, restrained by maidenly modesty. Nevertheless, she secretly went to the Church of Christ, and often hearing the word of God, under the influence of the Holy Spirit upon her heart, she believed in Christ. Before long she persuaded her mother of this, and then led to the faith also her aged father. Seeing the wisdom of his daughter and hearing her wise words, Edesius reasoned with himself: "Idols are made by human hands and have neither soul nor breath; how then can they be gods?" Pondering this, one night he saw in a dream, by divine permission, a wondrous vision: he saw a great host of light-bearing Angels, and among them was Christ the Savior of the world, who said to him:

"Come to Me, and I will give you the Kingdom of Heaven."

Rising in the morning, Edesius went with his wife and daughter to the Christian bishop, named Ontatus, asking him to teach them the faith of Christ and to perform holy baptism over them. In doing so he related the words of his daughter and the Angelic vision he had himself seen. Hearing this, the bishop rejoiced at their conversion, and having instructed them in the faith of Christ, he baptized Edesius, his wife Cleodonia and their daughter Justina, and then, having communed them of the Holy Mysteries, dismissed them in peace. When Edesius was strengthened in the faith of Christ, the bishop, seeing his piety, ordained him a presbyter. After this, having lived virtuously and in the fear of God for a year and six months, Edesius ended his life in the holy faith. Justina, however, bravely labored in keeping the commandments of the Lord, and, loving Christ her Bridegroom, served Him with diligent prayers, virginity and chastity, fasting and great abstinence. But the enemy, the hater of the human race, seeing such a life, envied her virtues and began to harm her, bringing various calamities and sorrows upon her.

At that time there lived in Antioch a certain youth named Aglaid, son of rich and noble parents. He lived luxuriously, wholly given over to the vanity of this world. Once he saw Justina as she was walking to church, and was struck by her beauty. The devil, however, instilled evil

intentions into his heart. Inflamed with lust, Aglaid strove by every means to win Justina's favor and love, and by seduction to lead the pure Lamb of Christ into the defilement he had planned. He watched all the paths along which the maiden had to pass, and meeting her, he spoke flattering words to her, praising her beauty and extolling her. Showing his love for her, he tried to draw her into fornication with a cunningly woven net of enticements. But the maiden turned away and avoided him, loathing him and not even wishing to hear his flattering and deceitful speeches. Not cooling in his desire for her beauty, the youth sent to her with a request that she consent to become his wife.

She answered him:

"My Bridegroom is Christ; I serve Him, and for His sake I keep my purity. He guards both my soul and my body from all defilement."

Hearing such an answer from the chaste maiden, Aglaid, goaded by the devil, was inflamed with passion still more. Unable to seduce her, he resolved to carry her off by force. Gathering to his aid youths as reckless as himself, he lay in wait for the maiden on the road by which she was accustomed to walk to church for prayer; there he met her, and seizing her, dragged her forcibly toward his house. But she began to cry out loudly, struck him in the face, and spat upon him. Hearing her cries, the neighbours ran out of their houses and snatched the immaculate lamb, Saint Justina, from the hands of the impious youth, as from a wolf's jaws. The lawless ruffians scattered, and Aglaid returned home in shame. Not knowing what to do further, and with the unclean lust in him grown stronger, he resolved upon a new evil deed: he went to the great sorcerer and magician Cyprian, a priest of idols, and, telling him of his distress, asked his help, promising to give him much gold and silver. Having heard Aglaid, Cyprian comforted him, promising to fulfil his desire.

"I," he said, "shall so arrange that the maiden herself will seek your love and will feel for you a passion even stronger than yours for her."

Having thus comforted the youth, Cyprian dismissed him full of hope. Then, taking the books of his secret art, he summoned one of the unclean spirits, confident that he could soon inflame with passion for

this youth the heart of Justina. The demon gladly promised to carry this out and boastfully said:

"This is no difficult matter for me, for I have many times shaken cities, overthrown walls, destroyed houses, caused bloodshed and parricides, sown enmity and great wrath between brothers and spouses, and led many who had vowed virginity into sin. Monks who dwelt in the mountains and were accustomed to strict fasting, and who had never even thought of the flesh, I incited to lustful desire and taught them to serve the passions of the flesh; people who had repented and turned away from sin I have again turned to evil deeds; many chaste persons I have cast into fornication. Shall I then be unable to incline this maiden to the love of Aglaid? Why do I speak thus? I shall by my deed soon show my power. Take this potion" (he handed him a vessel filled with something) "and give it to that youth: let him sprinkle it upon the house of Justina, and you will see that what I have said will come to pass."

Having said this, the demon vanished. Cyprian summoned Aglaid and sent him to sprinkle secretly from the diabolical vessel the house of Justina. When this had been done, the lustful demon entered there with arrows of carnal lust set aflame, to wound the maiden's heart with fornication and to kindle her flesh with unclean desire.

Justina had the custom of offering prayers to the Lord every night. And so, when she, as was her custom, rising at the third hour of the night, prayed to God, she suddenly felt within her body an agitation, a storm of carnal lust, and the flame of Gehenna. She remained for a considerable time in this agitation and inner struggle: the youth Aglaid came to her memory, and evil thoughts arose in her. The maiden was amazed and ashamed of herself, feeling that her blood was boiling as in a cauldron; she now pondered upon that which she had always loathed as defilement. But, through her prudence, Justina understood that this struggle had arisen in her from the devil; at once she had recourse to the weapon of the sign of the Cross, and fled to God with warm prayer, and from the depths of her heart she cried out to Christ, her Bridegroom:

"O Lord my God, Jesus Christ! Behold, my enemies have risen against me, they have prepared a snare to catch me and have wearied

my soul. But I remembered Thy name in the night and rejoiced, and now, when they press upon me, I flee to Thee and hope that my enemy shall not triumph over me. For Thou knowest, O Lord my God, that I, Thy handmaiden, have kept the purity of my body for Thee and have committed my soul to Thee. Keep Thy sheep, O good Shepherd; deliver not to be devoured by the beast that seeks to swallow me up; grant me victory over the evil desire of my flesh."

Having long and diligently prayed, the holy virgin put the enemy to shame. Overcome by her prayer, he fled from her in shame, and again there came calm to the body and heart of Justina; the flame of desire was extinguished, the struggle ceased, the boiling blood grew still. Justina glorified God and sang a song of victory. The demon, however, returned to Cyprian with the sorrowful news that he had accomplished nothing.

Cyprian asked him why he had not been able to overcome the maiden.

The demon, though unwillingly, revealed the truth:

"I could not overcome her because I saw upon her a certain sign, and I was afraid of it."

Then Cyprian summoned a more malicious demon and sent him to tempt Justina. He went and did far more than the first, attacking the maiden with greater fury. But she armed herself with warm prayer and undertook an even stronger ascetic labour: she clothed herself in a hair shirt and mortified her flesh by abstinence and fasting, taking only bread and water. Thus subduing the passions of her flesh, Justina overcame the devil and drove him away in disgrace. He, like the first, having accomplished nothing, returned to Cyprian. Then Cyprian summoned one of the princes of the demons, told him of the weakness of the demons he had sent, who could not overcome a single maiden, and asked his help. The prince sharply reproached the former demons for their unskilfulness in this matter and for their failure to kindle passion in the heart of the maiden. Encouraging Cyprian and promising to tempt the maiden by other means, the demon prince took the form of a woman and entered to Justina. And he began to converse with her piously, as if desiring to follow the example of her virtuous life and

chastity. Conversing thus, he asked the maiden what reward there might be for so strict a life and for the keeping of purity.

Justina replied that the reward for those who live chastely is great and ineffable, and it is most remarkable that people take no care at all for so great a treasure as angelic purity. Then the devil, revealing his shamelessness, began with cunning speeches to tempt her:

"But how could the world exist? How would people be born? For if Eve had kept her purity, how would the multiplication of the human race have taken place? Truly marriage is a good thing, which God Himself established; and Holy Scripture praises it, saying: 'Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled' (Heb. 13:4). And did not many holy servants of God also live in marriage, which the Lord gave to men for consolation, that they might rejoice in their children and glorify God?"

Hearing these words, Justina recognized the crafty seducer, the devil, and more skilfully than Eve she overcame him. Not continuing the conversation, she at once took refuge in the protection of the Cross of the Lord and placed its honourable sign upon her face, and turned her heart to Christ, her Bridegroom. And the devil at once vanished, with even greater shame than the first two demons.

In great confusion the proud demon prince returned to Cyprian. Cyprian, learning that he too had accomplished nothing, said to the devil:

"Can it be that you too, strong prince and more skilled than the others in such a matter, could not overcome the maiden? Who among you can do anything with this unconquerable maiden's heart? Tell me with what weapon she fights against you, and how she makes your mighty strength powerless."

Overcome by the power of God, the devil unwillingly confessed:

"We cannot look upon the sign of the Cross, but we flee from it, for it scorches us like fire and drives us far away."

Cyprian was indignant with the devil for having put him to shame, and, reviling the demon, said:

"Such is your strength, that even a weak maiden overcomes you!"

Then the devil, wishing to console Cyprian, made one more attempt: he took the form of Justina and went to Aglaid, in the hope that the youth, taking him for the real Justina, would satisfy his desire, and thus neither the demon's weakness would be revealed nor Cyprian put to shame. And when the demon came to Aglaid in the form of Justina, the youth leapt up in inexpressible joy, ran to the seeming maiden, embraced her and began to kiss her, saying:

"It is good that you have come to me, fair Justina!"

But no sooner had the youth uttered the word "Justina" than the demon at once vanished, being unable to endure even the name of Justina. The youth was greatly frightened, and running to Cyprian told him what had happened. Then Cyprian, by his sorcery, gave him the form of a bird and, making him able to fly through the air, sent him to the house of Justina, advising him to fly into her chamber through the window. Borne through the air by the demon, Aglaid, in the form of a bird, flew to the house of Justina and wished to alight upon the roof. At this moment it happened that Justina looked out of the window of her chamber. Seeing her, the demon abandoned Aglaid and fled. At the same time the phantom appearance of Aglaid, in which he had seemed a bird, vanished, and the youth nearly dashed himself to pieces as he fell. He caught hold with his hands of the edge of the roof, and hanging by it, he remained suspended; and if he had not been lowered from there to the ground through the prayer of the holy Justina, he would have fallen, the impious one, and been killed. Thus, having accomplished nothing, the youth returned to Cyprian and told him of his misfortune. Seeing himself put to shame, Cyprian was greatly grieved, and himself resolved to go to Justina, trusting in the power of his sorcery. He transformed himself both into a woman and into a bird, but before he could reach the door of Justina's house, the phantom likeness of a beautiful woman, and likewise that of the bird, vanished, and he returned in sorrow.

After this, Cyprian began to avenge his disgrace, and by his sorcery brought various calamities upon the household of Justina and upon the households of all her kinsfolk, neighbors, and acquaintances, as the devil once did upon righteous Job (Job 1:15–19, 2:7). He slew their

livestock and smote their servants with plagues, and thus plunged them into excessive grief. He also struck Justina herself with illness, so that she lay in bed, and her mother wept for her. But Justina comforted her mother with the words of the Prophet David: "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord" (Ps. 117:17).

Not only upon Justina and her kinsfolk, but upon the whole city, by God's permission, did Cyprian bring calamities, in his unbridled fury and great humiliation. Plagues appeared among the animals, and various diseases among the people; and, through demonic agency, a rumor spread that the great priest Cyprian was punishing the city because Justina resisted him. Then the most honored citizens came to Justina and angrily urged her not to grieve Cyprian any longer, but to marry Aglaias, so that still greater calamities might not befall the whole city on her account. She quieted them all, saying that soon all the calamities wrought by Cyprian with the help of demons would cease. And so it came to pass. When St. Justina prayed fervently to God, all the demonic delusion ceased at once; all were healed of the sores and recovered from their illnesses. When this change had taken place, the people glorified Christ and mocked Cyprian and his sorcery, so that, out of shame, he could no longer show himself among the people and avoided meeting even his acquaintances. Convinced that nothing could overcome the power of the sign of the Cross and the Name of Christ, Cyprian came to his senses and said to the devil:

"O destroyer and deceiver of all, source of every impurity and defilement! Now I have learned your weakness. For if you fear even the shadow of the Cross and tremble at the Name of Christ, what will you do when Christ Himself comes upon you? If you cannot overcome those who sign themselves with the Cross, whom will you tear from the hands of Christ? Now I understand how worthless you are; you cannot even take vengeance! I, wretched man, was deceived when I listened to you and trusted in your cunning. Depart from me, accursed one, depart —for I must implore the Christians to have mercy on me. I must turn to devout people, that they may deliver me from destruction and take thought for my salvation. Away, away from me, lawless one, enemy of truth, adversary and hater of every good."

When the devil heard this, he rushed upon Cyprian to kill him, and, falling upon him, began to beat and crush him. Finding no refuge anywhere, and knowing not how to help himself or escape the cruel hands of the demons, Cyprian, already scarcely alive, remembered the sign of the Holy Cross, by whose power Justina had withstood all the might of the demons, and cried out:

"O God of Justina, help me!"

Then he raised his hand, made the sign of the Cross, and the devil at once sprang away from him like an arrow shot from a bow. Taking courage, Cyprian grew bolder; invoking the Name of Christ, he signed himself with the Cross and steadfastly resisted the demon, cursing and reproaching him. But the devil, standing far off and not daring to approach, in fear of the sign of the Cross and the Name of Christ, threatened Cyprian in every way, saying:

"Christ will not deliver you from my hands!"

Then, after many fierce assaults upon Cyprian, the demon roared like a lion and departed.

Then Cyprian took all his books of sorcery and went to Anthimus, the Christian bishop. Falling at the bishop's feet, he implored him to show him mercy and to administer holy Baptism to him. Knowing that Cyprian was a great sorcerer, feared by all, the bishop thought that he had come to him with some trick, and therefore refused him, saying:

"You do much evil among the pagans; leave the Christians in peace, lest you soon perish."

Then Cyprian confessed everything to the bishop with tears, and gave him his books to be burned. Seeing his humility, the bishop taught and instructed him in the holy faith, and then commanded him to prepare for Baptism; and his books he burned before all the faithful citizens.

Departing from the bishop with a contrite heart, Cyprian wept for his sins, sprinkled ashes upon his head, and sincerely repented, crying out to the true God to cleanse him of his lawlessness. The next day, when he came to church, he listened to the word of God with joyful compunction, standing among the faithful. When the deacon commanded the catechumens to go out, proclaiming, "All catechumens, de-

part"[16]—and some had already gone out—Cyprian would not leave, saying to the deacon:

"I am a servant of Christ; do not drive me from here."

The deacon said to him:

"Since holy Baptism has not yet been administered to you, you must leave the church."

To this Cyprian replied:

"As Christ lives, my God, who delivered me from the devil, preserved the maiden Justina in purity, and had mercy on me, you shall not drive me from the church until I become a perfect Christian."

The deacon told the bishop of this, and the bishop, seeing Cyprian's zeal and devotion to the faith of Christ, called him to himself and immediately baptized him in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

When St. Justina learned of this, she gave thanks to God, distributed much alms to the poor, and made an offering to the church. On the eighth day the bishop appointed Cyprian a reader; on the twentieth, a subdeacon; on the thirtieth, a deacon; and after a year he ordained him a priest. Cyprian wholly changed his life: each day he increased his ascetic labors, and, continually mourning his former evil deeds, he was perfected and ascended from virtue to virtue. Soon he was appointed bishop, and in this rank he led so holy a life that he equaled many great saints; moreover, he zealously cared for the flock of Christ entrusted to him. He appointed the maiden St. Justina a deaconess, and afterward entrusted to her a convent of maidens, making her abbess over the other Christian maidens. By his conduct and instruction he converted many pagans and won them for the Church of Christ. Thus the worship of idols began to cease in that land, and the glory of Christ increased.

Seeing the strict life of St. Cyprian, his care for the faith of Christ and for the salvation of human souls, the devil gnashed his teeth at him

and stirred up the pagans to slander him before Eutolmius, the governor of the eastern region, saying that Cyprian had put the gods to shame, turned many people away from them, and glorified Christ, who was hostile to their gods. And so many impious men came to the governor Eutolmius, who ruled those lands, and slandered Cyprian and Justina, accusing them of being hostile both to the gods and to the emperor and to all authorities; they said that the two stirred up the people, deceived them, and led them after themselves, inclining them to worship Christ crucified. They also asked the governor to condemn Cyprian and Justina to death for this. Having heard their request, Eutolmius ordered Cyprian and Justina to be seized and thrown into prison. Then, as he was setting out for Damascus, he took them with him to be tried there. When the Christian prisoners, Cyprian and Justina, were brought before him for judgment, he asked Cyprian:

"Why have you forsaken your former glorious activity, when you were a famous servant of the gods and brought many people to them?"

St. Cyprian told the governor how he had learned the weakness and deception of the demons and understood the power of Christ, whom the demons fear and dread, vanishing at the sign of the Precious Cross; he also explained the reason for his conversion to Christ, for whose sake he was ready to die. The tormentor did not take Cyprian's words to heart, but, unable to answer them, ordered the saint to be hung up and his body scraped, and St. Justina to be struck on the mouth and eyes. Throughout their long torments they continually confessed Christ and endured all things with thanksgiving. Then the tormentor shut them in prison and tried by gentle persuasion to turn them back to idol worship. When he proved unable to persuade them, he ordered them to be cast into a cauldron; but the boiling cauldron did them no harm, and they

16. In the ancient Church, the name "catechumens" denoted adults who desired to receive baptism and prepared for it through instruction in the teaching of the Church. Having the right to enter the church to hear Holy Scripture and the instructions, and even to be present at the beginning of the Liturgy (the Liturgy of the Catechumens), they were required, before the beginning of the most important and essential part of the Liturgy, the Liturgy of the Faithful, to leave the church immediately, of which they were notified aloud by the deacon through the exclamation that is preserved in the Church to this day in the celebration of the Liturgy.

glorified God as though they were in a cool place. Seeing this, a priest of idols named Athanasius said:

"In the name of the god Asclepius[17], I too will cast myself into this fire and put those sorcerers to shame."

But no sooner had the fire touched him than he died at once. Seeing this, the tormentor was frightened, and, unwilling to try them any further, he sent the martyrs to the governor Claudius at Nicomedia,[18] describing everything that had happened to them. This governor condemned them to beheading by the sword. When they were brought to the place of execution, Cyprian asked for a little time for prayer, so that Justina might be put to death first; he feared lest Justina should lose heart at the sight of his death. She, however, joyfully bowed her head beneath the sword and departed to her Bridegroom, Christ. Seeing the innocent death of these martyrs, a certain Theoctistus, who was present there, was deeply grieved for them, and, kindled in heart toward God, he threw himself upon St. Cyprian and, kissing him, declared himself a Christian. Together with Cyprian he was at once condemned to beheading. Thus they committed their souls into the hands of God; their bodies, however, lay unburied for six days. Some of the pilgrims who were there secretly took them and carried them to Rome, where they gave them to a virtuous and holy woman named Rufina, a kinswoman of Caesar Claudius.[19] She honorably buried the bodies of the holy martyrs of Christ: Cyprian, Justina and Theoctistus. At their tombs many healings took place for those who came to them in faith. May the Lord, through their prayers, heal also our bodily and spiritual infirmities!

Kontakion, Tone 1:

Turning from magic arts to the knowledge of God, O God-wise Cyprian, with Justina, thou didst show thyself to the world a most wise physician, granting healings to those who honor thee. Pray

17. Asclepius, or Aesculapius, was the Greco-Roman god of the medical art.
18. Nicomedia was a city in Asia Minor. Of the ancient flourishing Nicomedia, many ruins still survive, bearing witness to its glorious past.
19. The Roman emperor Claudius II reigned from 268 to 270. The repose of Sts. Cyprian, Justina, and Theoctistus took place about the year 268.

with her to the Lord who loveth mankind, that our souls may be saved.

* * *

Life of St. Andrew, Fool-for-Christ

Житие святого Андрея, Христа ради юродивого

In the reign of the Greek emperor Leo the Great and Wise,[20] son of the emperor Basil the Macedonian,[21] there lived in Constantinople a certain man named Theognostus. He bought many slaves, among whom was a youth, a Slav by birth, named Andrew.[22] This youth was handsome in appearance and distinguished by a good disposition. Theognostus loved him more than his other slaves, appointed him his most trusted servant, and gave him over for instruction in the holy books. Having studied Holy Scripture, Andrew often went to the churches, prayed to God and read the sacred books. One night, as he stood in prayer, the malicious devil, seeing this, envied the good work and began to strike violently at the door of the room where the youth was. Andrew was seized with terror, ceased praying, hastily lay down on his bed and covered himself with a goatskin. Seeing this, Satan rejoiced and said to another devil:

"Do you see this youth? Only recently he was still eating beans, and now behold, he is already arming himself against us!"

Having said this, Satan vanished. The blessed one, from fear, fell into a deep sleep, and in his sleep he had the following vision. It seemed to him that he was in a great square, on one side of which stood a multitude of Ethiopians, and on the other a multitude of holy men in white garments. Between the two sides there seemed to be a contest and a struggle. The Ethiopians, having on their side one black giant, proudly

20. The Byzantine emperor Leo VI the Wise reigned from 886 to 912.

21. Basil the Macedonian, his father, reigned from 867 to 886 and began the so-called Macedonian dynasty.

22. In all the Slavonic hagiographical lists, St. Andrew the Fool-for-Christ is called a Slav; in the Greek original he is called a Scythian. For a long time the Greeks mistakenly called the Eastern Slavs in this way as well, confusing them with the wild nomadic people, the Scythians, who had formerly inhabited Eastern Europe.

challenged those clothed in white to produce from their midst such a champion as would be able to wrestle with their black Ethiopian, the chief of thousands of their countless host. The black-visaged Ethiopians boasted of their strength, but the white-robed ones made them no answer. The blessed Andrew stood there too and looked on, desiring to know who would venture to enter the struggle with this terrible adversary. And then he saw a beautiful youth descending from on high, holding in his hands three crowns: one of them was adorned with pure gold and precious stones, another with large, shining pearls, and the third, the largest of the wreaths, was woven of unfading white and red flowers and branches of God's paradise. These crowns were of such wondrous beauty that not even the human mind can comprehend it, and it cannot be described in human speech. Seeing this, Andrew thought how he might obtain at least one of those three crowns. Approaching the youth who had appeared, he said:

"For Christ's sake, tell me, do you sell these crowns? Though I myself cannot buy them, wait for me a little while, and I will go and tell my master—he will pay you for these crowns whatever price you ask."

The youth, radiant in countenance, said to him:

"Believe me, beloved, that if you brought me the gold of the whole world, I would not sell you, or anyone else, a single flower from these crowns, for these crowns are woven from the heavenly treasures of Christ, not from the adornments of the vain world. With them are crowned those who overcome those black Ethiopians. If you wish to receive—and not one only, but all three crowns—then enter into single combat with that black Ethiopian, and when you have conquered him, you shall take from me all the wreaths that you see."

Hearing this, Andrew was filled with resolve and said to the youth:

"Believe me, I will do what you have said; only teach me his tricks."

The youth said:

"And do you not know wherein his skill lies? Are not the Ethiopians terrible and dreadful in appearance—and yet they are weak in strength? Fear not his huge stature and his frightful glance: he is feeble and rotten like rotting grass!"

Strengthening Andrew with these words, the beautiful youth began to teach him how to wrestle with the Ethiopian.

He said:

"When the Ethiopian seizes you and begins to wrestle with you, do not be afraid, but grasp him crosswise, and you shall see the help of God."

After this the blessed one stepped forward and cried out to the Ethiopian with a strong voice:

"Come out to the struggle!"

Threatening and menacing, the Ethiopian approached, seized Andrew, and for a very long time turned Andrew this way and that. The Ethiopians began to clap their hands, while those clothed in white garments seemed to grow pale, for they feared lest this Ethiopian should dash Andrew to the ground. Andrew was already being overcome by the Ethiopian, but, recovering himself, he threw himself upon him crosswise. The demon fell like a huge felled tree, and in falling struck his forehead against a stone and cried out: "Woe, woe!" Those clothed in bright garments were filled with great joy. They raised Andrew up on their hands, began to kiss him, and rejoiced in his victory over the Ethiopian.

Then the black warriors, in great shame, turned to flight, and the beautiful youth gave Andrew the crowns and, kissing him, said:

"Go in peace! From this time you shall be our friend and brother. Go forth to the struggle of virtue, be naked and a fool for My sake,[6267] and you shall appear on the day of My kingdom a partaker of many good things."

Having heard this from that beautiful youth, the blessed Andrew awoke from sleep and marveled at the extraordinary dream. From that time he became a Fool-for-Christ.

On the next day, rising from sleep, he prayed, took a knife, and went to a well; there he took off his clothes and, pretending to be deprived of reason, cut them into pieces. Early in the morning the cook came to the well for water, and seeing Andrew as one beside himself, went and told their master about it. Grieved for Andrew, his master went to him and found him as one senseless, speaking unreasonably. Thinking that An-

drew was possessed by a demon, he put iron fetters on him and ordered him to be led to the church of St. Anastasia. Through the day Andrew pretended to be without reason, but at night he prayed to God and to St. Anastasia. In the depth of his heart, however, he pondered whether the undertaking he had begun was pleasing to God or not, and he desired to receive an answer about it.

As he was thus pondering, he saw in a vision five women and one radiant old man going about, healing and visiting the sick; they also came to Andrew, and the old man said to the eldest woman:

"Lady Anastasia! Why do you not heal him?"

"Teacher," the woman answered, "he has been healed by Him who said to him: 'Become a fool for My sake, and in the day of My kingdom you shall be a partaker of many good things.' He has no need of healing."

Having said this, they went into the church, from which they did not return, although Andrew gazed after them until the bells rang for Matins. Then the blessed one, understanding that his ascetic labor was pleasing to God, rejoiced in spirit and struggled all the more zealously —at night in prayer, and by day in the labors of folly for Christ.

Once, at night, the blessed Andrew, as was his custom, offered up prayers to God and to the holy martyr Anastasia in the depth of his heart. And there came to him, in a plainly visible form, the devil with a multitude of demons, holding an axe; the rest of the demons carried knives, trees, stakes and spears, as if intending to kill the blessed one. The former Ethiopian also appeared, in the same form as when he had wrestled with Andrew, and growled at him from afar. Rushing upon the saint, he meant to hew him with the axe he held in his hands. The other demons rushed after him too. The saint, lifting up his hands with tears, cried out to the Lord:

"Do not deliver to the beasts the soul that gives Thee glory and honor!"

Then he cried out again:

"Holy Apostle John the Theologian, help me!"

And behold, there was a clap of thunder, a multitude of people appeared, and there stood a comely old man whose face was brighter than

the sun, and with him a great multitude of servants. He said sternly and sharply to those with him:

"Shut the gates, so that not one of these may escape!"

At once the gates were shut, and all the Ethiopians were seized. And Andrew heard one demon secretly saying to his companion:

"Cursed be the hour in which we were enticed! For John is merciless and means to torment us cruelly!"

St. John commanded the men who had come with him, clothed in white garments, to take the iron fetters from Andrew's neck. Then he stood at the gates and said:

– Bring the Ethiopians to me, one after another.

They brought the first demon and stretched him out upon the ground. Taking the chain, the Apostle folded it threefold and gave the demon a hundred blows. And the demon cried out like a man:

– Have mercy on me!

After this they stretched out another demon, and he too was subjected to blows; then a third, and he received as many blows. The blows with which the Lord punished the demons were no phantom blows, but actual punishments, which inflict suffering upon the race of demons. When all the Ethiopians had thus been punished, John said to them:

– Go and show your father, Satan, the wounds inflicted upon you—will they please him?

After those clad in white garments had departed and the demons had disappeared, that venerable elder approached the servant of God, Andrew, and, laying the chain upon his neck, said to him:

– You see how hastily I came to your aid, for I care greatly for you, since God has entrusted me with your care. Therefore endure: soon you will be released and will go about as you please, wherever you wish.

– My lord, – said Andrew, – who are you?

The elder answered:

– I am he who reclined upon the Lord’s breast (Jn. 13:22, 21:20).

Having said this, he shone like lightning and vanished from the young man’s sight. And blessed Andrew glorified God for sending His beloved disciple to help him.

After the appearance of St. John the Theologian, his conversation with him, and the torments inflicted upon the demons, blessed Andrew, still bound in chains, lay down, wishing to sleep—and at that same time entered into an ecstatic state. He saw himself in the royal palace. A King sat upon a throne in great glory, summoned Andrew to Him, and asked:

– Do you desire with all your soul to labor for Me?

Andrew answered:

– I desire it, O Lord!

The King gave him something very bitter to taste, and said to him:

– Such is the sorrowful path of those who serve Me in this world.

After this He gave Andrew something whiter than snow and sweeter than manna to taste. Having tasted it, Andrew rejoiced and forgot the bitterness of the first food. And the King said to him:

– Such is the food I have for those who serve Me and endure manfully unto the end. And do you too manfully complete your contest, as you have begun it; for, having borne a little suffering in this life, you will abide forever in life without end.

Waking from his sleep, Andrew came to understand that the first food he had seen, being bitter, prefigured endurance in this world, while the last, being sweet, signified eternal life.

After this Andrew's master kept him with him for four months, and then set him free. Feigning to be bereft of reason, Andrew began to run about the streets. He went about the city "in want, afflicted, tormented; those of whom [he of whom] the whole world was not worthy" (Heb. 11:37–38). Some mocked him as a madman; others drove him away, loathing him as a stinking dog; still others regarded him as possessed by a demon, while little children jeered at and beat the blessed man. He endured all this and prayed for those who reviled him.

If any merciful lover of the poor gave Andrew alms, he accepted them, but gave them to other poor people. Yet he distributed them in such a way that no one knew he was giving alms: pretending to be angry with the beggars and as though wishing to beat them, he, like a fool, flung the money he held in his hands into their faces, and the beggars picked it up. Sometimes he tasted no bread for three days; at other

times he went hungry for a whole week, and if no one could be found to give him a piece of bread, he went without food for a second week as well. Andrew's clothing was a worthless rag, barely covering his naked body. In all things he resembled the holy Simeon, the Fool-for-Christ: by day he ran about the streets, and by night he continued in prayer. Though he lived in so vast a city, among so great a multitude of people, he had "nowhere to lay his head." The beggars drove him from their huts, and the rich would not let him into the courtyards of their houses. When it became necessary for him to sleep and give his exhausted body a little rest, he sought out a rubbish heap where dogs lay and settled down among them. But even the dogs would not let the servant of God come near them. Some drove him away by biting him, while others fled from him themselves. Never did he sleep under a roof, but always in cold and heat, lying in dung and filth like Lazarus, trampled underfoot by men and animals. Thus suffered the voluntary martyr, and thus the fool laughed at the whole world, "for the foolishness of God is wiser than men"[23] (1 Cor. 1:25). And the grace of the Holy Spirit dwelt in him, and he received the gift of clairvoyance, for he began to perceive the thoughts of men.

Once, in Constantinople, the daughter of a certain nobleman died; she had lived her life in virginal purity. As she was dying, she bequeathed that she be buried outside the city, in the cemetery for the poor, which lay in her father's garden. When she died, they carried her to that place and buried her according to Christian custom. At that time there was in Constantinople a grave robber who dug up graves and stripped the dead of their clothing. Standing by the road, he watched to see where the maiden would be buried. Having marked the place of her tomb, he resolved, when night came, to dig up the grave and strip the dead woman of her garments.

It happened that St. Andrew too, performing his customary feats of folly for Christ's sake, went to that place. As soon as he noticed the

23. Here it is nonetheless necessary to be clearly aware of the Apostolic understanding of foolishness: that the world perceives the self-sacrifice of Christ and His followers as madness, as foolishness. Therefore, to adduce these words in explanation of the way of life of the Fools-for-Christ is not entirely correct: "for God loveth none save him that dwelleth with wisdom" (Wis. 7) (note of Hieromonk Nathanael).

grave robber, he perceived by the spirit his evil intention. Wishing to turn the thief from his design, and foreseeing the punishment that would follow, St. Andrew looked at him sternly and, as if in great anger, said:

– Thus speaks the Spirit, who judges those who steal the garments of them that lie in the tombs: you shall see the sun no more; you shall see neither day nor the face of man; the gates of your house shall be shut against you and shall never again be opened. The day shall grow dark for you and shall never again shine.

Hearing this, the grave robber did not understand what the saint meant, and went away, paying no heed to his words. But the saint looked at him a second time and said:

– Are you going away? Do not steal! For if you do this, I bear witness in the name of Jesus: you shall never see the sun.

Understanding that the saint was speaking to him, the grave robber wondered how he knew his intention, and, returning to the saint, said:

– You are surely possessed by madness and, at the prompting of a demon, speak of things mysterious and unknown! But I shall go there on purpose, to see whether your words will come to pass!

After this the saint went away, continuing in his folly. When evening came, the thief chose a suitable moment, rolled away the stone from the tomb, entered it, and first took the dead woman's outer garment and all her ornaments, for they were of great value. Having taken these, he intended to leave, but some inward voice prompted him: "Take off her shirt too, for it is fine." Having removed the maiden's shirt, the grave robber wished to climb out of the tomb. But by God's command the dead maiden raised her right hand and struck the grave robber in the face, and he was immediately blinded. Then the wretched man was terrified and trembled, so that from fear his jaws, teeth, knees, and all his bones began to break.

The dead maiden opened her mouth and said:

– Wretched and rejected man! You did not fear God, nor did you consider that you too are a man! You ought to have been ashamed of a maiden's nakedness; what you had already taken should have been enough for you—at least you might have left the shirt upon my naked

body. But you showed me no mercy and dealt cruelly with me, intending to make me a laughingstock before all the holy virgins on the day of the Second Coming of the Lord. But now I shall deal with you in such a way that you will never steal again, so that you may know that Jesus Christ, God, lives, and that after death there are judgment, reward, and punishment.

Having spoken these words, the maiden rose, took her shirt, clothed herself in it, and, putting on all her garments and ornaments, lay down and said: "Thou alone, O Lord, makest me to dwell in safety" (Ps. 4:9).

With these words she again reposed in peace. But the rejected man had scarcely enough strength to get out of the tomb and find the garden wall. Groping with his hands along first one wall and then another, he emerged onto the nearest road and made his way toward the city gates. When people questioned him because of his blindness, he told them a story quite different from what had actually happened. But later he told all that had befallen him to one of his friends. From that time he began to beg alms for himself, and thus obtained his livelihood. And often he would say to himself:

– Cursed be my throat, for because of you blindness has befallen me!

He also remembered St. Andrew and wondered how everything had come to pass in accordance with what the saint had foreseen and foretold.

Once, as St. Andrew was walking through the city, he saw a dead man being carried toward him. The deceased was a very rich man, and a great multitude of people followed his coffin with candles and censers. The church ministers sang the customary funeral hymns, while the dead man's relatives and friends wept and lamented. Seeing with his clairvoyant eyes what was happening to the dead man, the saint stopped and watched. And then, having fallen for a long while into complete insensibility, he saw with spiritual eyes a multitude of Ethiopians following the coffin and crying aloud:

– Woe to him, woe to him!

Some of them held sacks from which they scattered ashes upon the people surrounding the dead man. Other demons danced and laughed

shamelessly, like shameless harlots; others barked like dogs, and still others grunted like swine. The dead man was for them an object of joy and merriment. Some of the demons, surrounding the corpse, sprinkled it with a foul water; others flew through the air about the bier on which the dead man lay. From the body of the dead sinner there rose a suffocating stench. Following after the dead man, the demons clapped their hands and stamped their feet terribly, mocking those who were singing and saying:

"May God not grant any of you to see the light, wretched Christians, for you sing over this dog: 'With the saints give rest to his soul,' and you call him, a partaker of every evil, the servant of God."

Looking a second time, Andrew saw that one of the princes of the demons, with a fiery gaze, was approaching the coffin of that reprobate with pitch and sulphur, to burn his body. When the rite of burial was completed, Saint Andrew saw an Angel, walking in the form of a beautiful youth and weeping bitter tears. As he passed by, the Angel drew near to Saint Andrew. The latter, thinking that this youth was one of the dead man's kinsmen and therefore weeping so, went up to him and said:

"I beg you in the name of God of heaven and earth: tell me the cause of your weeping. For never have I seen anyone weeping so bitterly over a dead man as you do."

The Angel answered:

"This is why I shed tears: I was assigned to guard the deceased whom you saw when he was carried to the grave. But the devil has taken him to himself. This is the cause of my weeping and sorrow."

To this the saint said to him:

"Now I understand who you are. I beseech you, holy Angel, tell me what sins the deceased had, on account of which the devil seized him into his hands?"

"Andrew, chosen of God!" answered the Angel. "Since you wish to learn of this, I will tell you, hiding nothing. I see the beauty of your holy soul, shining like pure gold; seeing you, I am somewhat consoled in my sorrow. This man was held in great honor by the emperor. But he was a terrible sinner and led a criminal life. He was a fornicator and

an adulterer, infected with the sin of Sodom, a flatterer, merciless, a lover of silver, a liar and a hater of mankind, vindictive, a taker of bribes and a perjurer. His poor household servants he starved, beat and left naked, leaving them in winter time without footwear and clothing. Many of his slaves he even killed and buried beneath the floors of the stables. Possessed by a lust hateful to God, he defiled as many as three hundred souls with the vile and abominable sins of fornication. But for him too the time of harvest came, and death found him unrepentant and burdened with unspeakable sins. His soul was seized by demons, and his loathsome body, as you yourself saw, was escorted with mockery by evil spirits. This is why, holy soul, I grieve; possessed by deep sorrow, I weep, because the one I guarded has now become a laughingstock for the demons."

Upon these words of the Angel of God, the saint said:

"I beg you, friend, cease this weeping: the deceased acted wickedly, therefore he died without repentance; let him then be fed with the fruits of his deeds. But you, fiery in form, filled with every virtue, servant of the Almighty Lord of Hosts, from now on will forever be under the grace of your God."

After these words, the Angel invisibly departed from Andrew. And those passing by, thinking that the saint was conversing with himself, said to one another:

"Look at this fool, how he amuses himself and talks senselessly to the wall."

Saying this, they pushed him and drove him away, saying:

"What do you want, fool? Unworthy to converse with people, are you talking to a wall?!"

The saint withdrew in silence and, secluding himself in a hidden place, wept bitterly over the perdition of the unfortunate man whom he had seen carried to the grave.

Once Saint Andrew was walking in a crowd of people in the market-place, near the column which the Emperor Constantine had erected[24]. A

24. This evidently refers to the famous purple Roman column, erected by Constantine the Great in grateful memory of the victory he won over Maxentius by the power of the Cross of Christ, and afterwards transported by him to Constantinople.

certain woman named Varvara, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, saw with dread in the crowd the blessed Andrew shining like a fiery pillar. Meanwhile some senseless people pushed him, and others beat him; many, looking at him, said:

"This man is mad: he has lost his reason. May this not befall our enemies!"

The demons, following Saint Andrew in the form of black Ethiopians, said:

"Oh, if only God did not send to the earth another like this one; for no one has dried up our hearts as this man has, who, not wishing to work for his master, has pretended to be a fool and mocks the whole world."

And that woman saw that the Ethiopians were marking those who beat the saint, and they said among themselves:

"It pleases us that they beat him senselessly, for for the torment of an innocent servant of God they will be condemned at their hour of death, and there is no salvation for them."

Hearing this, the blessed one, by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, rushed upon them like a flame, destroyed with wondrous power the signs of the demons, and, angered at them, said:

"You must not mark those who beat me, for I pray to my Master that He not reckon to them as sin the inflicting of blows upon me. They do this out of ignorance, and on account of their ignorance they will receive forgiveness."

When the saint said this, suddenly the heaven opened like a gate, and from there there descended over the saint a multitude of most beautiful swallows, and in their midst a large snow-white dove, holding in its beak a golden olive leaf. And the dove said to the saint in human language:

"Take this leaf; the Lord Almighty has sent it to you from paradise as a sign of His good pleasure toward you, for you show mercy and forgive those who inflict blows upon you, and you pray for them, that this may not be reckoned to them as sin."

With these words the dove alighted upon the head of the saint. Seeing all this, the pious woman marveled, and, coming to herself after the vision, said:

"How many lamps God has upon the earth, and no one knows them!"

She many times intended to tell others of her vision, but the power of God restrained her. Afterwards Saint Andrew met her in one place and said to her:

"Keep my secret, Varvara, and tell no one of what you have seen, until I come 'into the place of the wondrous tabernacle, even unto the house of God' (Ps. 41:5, Slavonic)."

"Precious lamp and holy one of God," answered Varvara, "even if I wished to tell anyone of my vision, I could not, for an invisible power of God restrains me."

Walking through the city, Saint Andrew once met a certain nobleman, and, perceiving his life, spat upon him, saying:

"Crafty fornicator, reviler of the Church, you pretend that you are going to church: you say, 'I go to Matins,' but you go to Satan for foul deeds. O lawbreaker, who rises at midnight and provokes God! The time has already come for you to receive according to your deeds! Or do you think you will escape the dreadful, all-seeing and all-searching eye of God?"

Hearing this, the nobleman struck his horse and rode away, so as not to be shamed still further. After a few days he fell seriously ill and began to waste away. His attendants carried him from one church to another and from one physician to another; but this brought him no benefit. Soon this reprobate departed into eternal torment. One night the saint saw near the house of that nobleman an Angel of the Lord who had come from the west. The Angel had the appearance of a fiery flame and held a large flaming club. When the Angel drew near the sick man, he heard a voice from on high:

"Strike this reviler, this abominable Sodomite, and as you strike him, say: 'Do you still wish to commit sins and defile various people? Will you go on in diabolical lawlessness, pretending that you are going to Matins?'"

The Angel began to carry out what he had been commanded. The voice of the Angel and his blows were heard, but the Angel himself was not seen. In such torments that man gave up his spirit.

Once, coming to the market, Saint Andrew met a monk whom everyone praised for his virtuous life. True, he labored as monks should, but he was immoderately inclined to love of silver. Many of the city's inhabitants, confessing their sins to him, gave him much gold to distribute to the poor. But he, possessed by an insatiable passion of avarice, gave to no one, and put everything into his purse, and rejoiced to see the increase of his money. As the blessed Andrew was walking along the same road as that wretched monk, he saw with his far-seeing eyes that a terrible serpent was coiled about this lover of silver. Coming close to the monk, the saint began to examine that serpent. The monk, taking Andrew for one of the beggars asking alms, said to him:

"May God have mercy on you, brother; I have nothing to give you."

Having gone a short distance from him, the blessed one noticed that around him, in the air above the serpent, there was written in dark letters:

"The root of every lawlessness is the serpent of avarice."

Looking back, the saint saw two youths disputing with each other: one of them was black and had dark eyes; this was a demon. The other, the Angel of God, was white as the heavenly light. The black one said:

"The monk is mine, since he does my will. He is merciless and avaricious; he has no part with God and works for me like an idol-worshipper."

"No, he is mine," the Angel objected, "for he fasts and prays, and moreover he is meek and humble."

Thus they argued, and there was no agreement between them. And there came a voice from heaven to the light-bearing Angel:

"You have no part in that monk; leave him, for he labors not for God but for mammon."

After this the Angel of the Lord withdrew from him, and the spirit of darkness gained the ascendancy over him. Seeing this, the blessed Andrew marvelled that the hostile demon had overcome the bright An-

gel in the contest. Meeting that monk once in the street, the Saint took him by the right hand and said:

"Servant of God, hear me, your servant, without irritation, and graciously receive my humble words, for on your account a great grief has come upon me, and I can no longer bear that you, who were first a friend of God, should now become a servant and friend of the devil. You had wings like a Seraph: why then did you surrender yourself to Satan, so that he cut them off at the root? Your countenance was bright as lightning: why then has it grown dark? Alas for me! You had a sight as it were of many eyes, and now the serpent has blinded you altogether. You were a sun, but you have gone down into a dark and wretched night. Why, brother, have you destroyed your soul? Why have you befriended the demon of covetousness, and allowed him to remain with you? Why do you gather gold? Will you be buried with it? After your death it will pass to others! Do you really want avarice to destroy you? While others die of hunger, cold and thirst, you rejoice, gazing upon your abundance of gold. Are these the ways of repentance? Is this the rule for monks, which commands us to despise worldly vanity? Have you thus renounced the world and what is in the world? Have you thus crucified yourself to the world and all its vanity? Have you not heard the Lord saying: 'Take no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats' (Mt. 10:9–10)? Why then have you forgotten these commandments? Behold, today or tomorrow our life will end: 'then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?' (Lk. 12:20). Do you not know that the Angel who guards you has departed far from you with weeping, and that the devil stands beside you, and the serpent of covetousness has wound itself about your neck, though you do not notice it? I tell you the truth: as I passed by, I heard the Lord disowning you. I beseech you: distribute your possessions to the poor, the orphans, the widows, the needy and the strangers who have no place to lay their heads. Strive, then, to become a friend of God again. But if you do not heed me, you will perish a dreadful death. In the name of Jesus Christ I testify that you shall see the devil at once."

After this he added:

"Do you see him?"

And the monk's spiritual eyes were opened, and he saw the devil, black as an Ethiopian, beast-like, with a terrible mouth; but the devil stood at a distance and, seeing Andrew, did not dare to approach. Then the monk said to the Saint:

"Servant of God, I see him, and a dreadful fear has seized me. Tell me: what is needed for the salvation of my soul?"

Andrew said to him again:

"Believe me: if you do not heed me, I will send him upon you, so that he torments you, and so that of your shame not only these citizens but all four quarters of the world shall hear. Beware, then, and do what I tell you."

Hearing this, the monk was afraid and promised to do all that the Saint commanded. And at once Andrew saw a mighty spirit come from the east in the form of lightning and strike that serpent, destroying its power; the serpent, unable to bear it, turned into a raven and vanished. The black Ethiopian also perished, and over that monk the Angel of God again took authority. Parting from the monk, the blessed one charged him:

"Take care not to tell anyone about me. I will remember you in my prayers day and night, that the Lord Jesus Christ may guide you on the good path."

After that the monk went and distributed all his gold to the poor, and afterwards he was glorified still more by God and men; many brought gold to him that he might give it to the needy. But he instructed the donors to distribute it with their own hands, saying:

“What profit is it to me to concern myself with another’s rubbish?”

While he lived in this way, as befits a monk, the holy Andrew appeared to him in a vision with a joyful face, showed him in a field a bright tree bearing the colour of sweet fruit, and said:

"Give thanks to God, Father, that He has snatched you from the serpent's jaws and made your soul like a flowering tree. Strive, then, to turn this blossom into sweet fruit. This beautiful tree that you see is an image of your soul."

Coming to himself, the monk grew still stronger in spiritual labour, and always gave thanks to God and to His servant Andrew, who had guided him on the way of salvation.

Saint Andrew so pleased God, and the Lord so loved him, that once he was, like the Apostle Paul, caught up to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2) and there heard unspeakable words and beheld the beauties of Paradise that are invisible to mortals. He himself told of this before his death to his faithful friend Nicephorus.

Once a harsh winter came, and in Constantinople a severe frost lasted for two whole weeks; all dwellings were buried in snow; trees were broken by the storm, and birds fell dead to the ground, finding no food. Then all the poor and beggars were in great sorrow and distress; groaning, weeping and trembling with cold, they died from privation, hunger and chill. Then the blessed Andrew, having neither shelter nor clothing, suffered no small affliction from the cold. When he, wishing to take shelter for a time under some roof, came to other beggars, they drove him away with sticks like a dog, shouting at him:

"Get away from here, dog!"

Having no refuge from the calamity that had befallen him, and despairing for his very life, he said to himself:

"Blessed be the Lord God! If I die of this cold, let me die for my love of Him. But God is able to grant me the patience to bear this cold."

Turning into a certain alley, the Saint saw a dog lying there, and wishing to warm himself by it, he lay down with it. But, seeing him, the dog got up and went away. And Andrew said to himself:

"O how sinful you are, wretch. Not only men but even dogs despise you!"

As he lay thus, trembling from the fierce cold and wind, his body frozen through and turned blue, he thought that the time of his last breath had come, and he began to pray that the Lord would receive his soul in peace. And suddenly he felt an inner warmth within himself, and, opening his eyes, he saw a certain beautiful youth whose face shone like the sun. He held in his hand a branch covered with various flowers. Looking at Andrew, the youth said:

"Andrew, where are you?"

Andrew answered:

"Now I am 'in darkness, in the deep' (Ps. 87:7)."

Then the youth who had appeared lightly touched Andrew's face with the flowering branch he held in his hand, and said:

"Receive revival for your body."

Saint Andrew breathed in the fragrance of those flowers; it penetrated his heart, warmed him and quickened his whole body. After this he heard a voice saying:

"Lead him, that he may rest here for a while, and afterwards he shall return again."

With these words a sweet sleep came upon him, and he saw the unspeakable revelations of God, which he himself related in detail to the aforementioned Nicephorus, in these words:

What happened to me, I do not know. By the Divine will, for two weeks I remained in a sweet vision, like a man who, having slept sweetly throughout the night, awakens in the morning. I saw myself in a beautiful and wondrous paradise, and, marvelling at this in my soul, I pondered: “What does this mean? I know that I live in Constantinople, but how I came here, I do not know.” And I did not understand whether I was “in the body, I know not; or out of the body, I know not: God knoweth” (2 Cor. 12:2). Yet I saw myself clothed in a bright garment, as though woven of lightning; upon my head lay a wreath plaited of many flowers; I was girded with a royal belt, and greatly rejoiced at the sight of such beauty. In mind and heart I marvelled at the inexpressible loveliness of God’s paradise, and delighted as I walked through it. There were many gardens, filled with tall trees whose swaying tops gladdened my eyes, and from whose branches came a great fragrance. Some of those trees were ever in bloom, others adorned with golden foliage, and still others bore fruit of indescribable beauty. In their beauty these trees could be likened to no tree on earth, for they had been planted not by the hand of man, but by God. In those gardens were countless birds with golden, snow-white, and many-coloured wings. They sat upon the branches of the trees of paradise and sang so beautifully that, at the sweetness of their song, I forgot myself; so delighted was my heart that I thought their singing could be heard even at the

highest height of heaven. Those beautiful gardens stood in rows, as one regiment stands opposite another. As I walked among them with joy in my heart, I saw a great river flowing through the midst of paradise, watering those beautiful gardens. On both its banks grew vines, spreading their tendrils adorned with leaves and golden clusters. There, from all four sides, blew gentle and fragrant breezes, at whose breath the gardens swayed, their leaves making a wondrous rustling. After this, a kind of terror came upon me, and it seemed that I stood upon the summit of the heavenly firmament, while before me walked a certain youth, his face bright as the sun, clothed in purple. I thought that this was the one who had struck my face with a flowering branch. As I followed in his footsteps, I saw a great and beautiful Cross, in appearance like a rainbow; around it stood singers, fiery in aspect as a flame, singing a sweet hymn and glorifying the Lord, Who had once been crucified upon the Cross. The youth who went before me approached the Cross, kissed it, and motioned to me also to kiss the Cross. Falling before the holy Cross with fear and great joy, I kissed it fervently. As I kissed it, I was filled with an indescribable spiritual sweetness and smelled a fragrance stronger than that of paradise. Passing by the Cross, I looked down and saw beneath me what seemed to be a sea of fathomless depth. It seemed to me that I was walking in the air; afraid, I cried out to my guide:

"My lord, I fear that I may fall into the depths."

He turned to me and said:

"Fear not, for we must ascend yet higher."

And he gave me his hand. When I took hold of it, we were already above the second firmament. There I saw wondrous men, their rest and the joy of their feast, which cannot be conveyed in human speech. After this we entered a certain wondrous flame, which did not scorch us, but only shone upon us. I began to be afraid, and again my guide turned, gave me his hand, and said:

"We must ascend yet higher."

And so, after these words, we ascended above the third heaven, where I saw and heard many heavenly powers singing and glorifying God. We came to a certain veil, flashing like lightning, before which

stood great and strange youths, in appearance like flames of fire; their faces shone brighter than the sun, and in their hands they held fiery weapons. As I stood there in fear, I saw a countless host of the heavenly army. And the youth who was guiding me said:

"When the veil is opened, you will see the Lord Christ. Then bow down before the throne of His glory."

Hearing this, I rejoiced and trembled, for terror and unspeakable joy had seized me. I stood watching, waiting for the veil to open. And then a fiery hand opened the veil, and I, like the Prophet Isaiah, saw my Lord, "sitting upon a high throne... the Seraphim stood round about Him" (Is. 6:1–2). He was clothed in a purple garment; His face was most radiant, and His eyes looked upon me with love. At this sight I fell prostrate before Him, worshipping the most radiant and awesome throne of His glory. What joy seized me as I beheld His face cannot be expressed in words; even now, when I recall that vision, I am filled with unspeakable joy. I lay trembling before my Lord, marvelling at such mercy on His part, that He had permitted me, an impious and sinful man, to stand before Him and behold His Divine beauty. Reflecting upon my unworthiness and beholding the greatness of my Lord, I was moved to tenderness and repeated within myself the words of the Prophet Isaiah: "Woe is me! I am undone! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips; and mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Is. 6:5). And I heard my most merciful Creator utter three Divine words to me with His sweetest and most pure lips. These so sweetened my heart and kindled it with love that, from spiritual warmth, I melted all over like wax, and David's word was fulfilled in me: "My heart is become like wax; it is melted in the midst of my inward parts" (Ps. 21:15). After this, all the heavenly host sang a wondrous and unspeakable song, and then—I do not understand how—I found myself once more walking in paradise. I pondered that I had not seen the Most Pure Lady, the Theotokos. And then I saw a man, bright as a cloud, bearing a Cross and saying:

"Did you wish to see here the most radiant Queen of the heavenly powers? But she is not here. She has departed to the many-sorrowful world to help people and comfort those who grieve. I would show you

her holy place, but there is no time now, for you must return again to the place from which you came: this is the command of the Lord."

As he spoke these words, it seemed to me that I had fallen into a sweet sleep; then, awakening, I found myself in that very place where I had been before, lying in a corner. I marvelled at where I had been during the vision and that I had been vouchsafed to see such things. My heart was filled with unspeakable joy, and I gave thanks to my Lord, Who had willed to show me such grace.

Before his end, St. Andrew related this vision to his friend Nicephorus and made him swear not to tell anyone of it until he had been released from the bonds of the body. Nicephorus earnestly entreated the saint to tell him at least one of the three words the Lord had spoken to him; but the saint would not reveal this. Thus St. Andrew, caught up like the Apostle Paul, saw what no mortal eye had seen, heard what no mortal ear had heard, and in revelation enjoyed such heavenly beauties as the human heart had never conceived (1 Cor. 2:9). And since, when the heavenly mysteries were revealed to him, he had not seen the Most Pure Lady, the Theotokos, he was vouchsafed to see her on earth in a vision at the Blachernae Church, when she came to help people and appeared in the air with the Prophets, Apostles, and the orders of Angels, praying for the people and covering them with her precious omophorion. When the blessed man saw her, he said to his disciple Epiphanius:

"Do you see the Queen and Lady of all, praying?"

Epiphanius answered:

"I see her, holy father, and I am filled with awe."

Leading a wondrous life, St. Andrew worked many miracles and endured much mockery and beating, as is related in a separate book of his life, written by Nicephorus[25]. He foretold the future and brought many sinners to repentance. Then he departed to the eternal abodes[26], to which he had formerly been caught up for a time; and now, dwelling

25. In the Greek original of the Life of St. Andrew the Fool-for-Christ, at the conclusion, the writer says: "I, Nicephorus, by the mercy of God the Almighty, numbered among the priests of the Great Church of the royal city called the Wisdom (Sophia) of God (that is, the Cathedral of Sophia), have written the wondrous and glorious life of the honorable Father Andrew among the saints, as I saw with my own eyes and learned from the renowned Epiphanius, who was afterwards a bishop."

there forever, he rejoices with the Angels and stands in blessedness before God, One in Three Persons: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

Having heard the voice of Thine Apostle Paul, who saith, "We are fools for Christ's sake," Thy servant Andrew became a fool on earth for Thy sake, O Christ God. Wherefore, honouring his memory now, we pray Thee: O Lord, save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having willingly taken upon thyself the guise of foolishness, thou didst utterly despise the beauties of this world; thou didst wither the wisdom of the flesh by fasting and thirst, by heat and the cold of frost, and, never turning aside from rain and snow or from the other hardships of the air, thou didst purify thyself like gold in the furnace, O blessed Andrew.

* * *

NOTES

6267. Foolishness properly means madness. Foolishness for Christ represents a special, higher form of Christian ascetic struggle. Inspired by fervent zeal and burning love for God, the Fools-for-Christ, not content with all the other privations and self-denials, renounced the chief distinction of man among earthly creatures, the ordinary use of reason, voluntarily taking upon themselves the appearance of a deranged person, one who knows neither propriety nor a sense of shame, and who permits himself at times actions which are apparently scandalous. [...] Despite all the difficulty, the feat of foolishness demanded of the holy ascetics also great wisdom, so that they might turn their disgrace to the glory of God and to the edification of their neighbors, admitting nothing sinful in what was ridiculous and nothing scandalous or offensive to others in what appeared improper. The first ascetics of foolishness for Christ appeared very early, in the cradle of primitive monasticism, Egypt, in the second half of the fourth century.

26. St. Andrew the Fool-for-Christ reposed at the age of 66. His repose took place about the year 936.

THE THIRD DAY OF OCTOBER

October 3

3 октября

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

Life and Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Dionysius the Areopagite

Житие и страдание святого священномученика Дионисия Ареопагита

The Hieromartyr Dionysius the Areopagite[1] was born of noble pagan parents and was brought up in the renowned city of Athens.[2]

In his youth he was sent to study Hellenic wisdom,[3] in which he made such progress that, at the age of twenty-five, he surpassed all his peers in philosophical knowledge. Desiring to perfect himself still further in the philosophical sciences, he withdrew to the Egyptian city of Heliopolis,[4] where renowned teachers had dwelt from ancient times. There Dionysius studied astronomy[5] together with his friend Apollophanes. On that very day when Christ the Lord was crucified for our salvation, and when at midday the sun was darkened and darkness endured for three hours, Dionysius cried out in amazement:

"Either the God, the Creator of the whole world, is suffering, or this visible world is coming to an end!"

He spoke thus of Christ's suffering through the inspiration of the Spirit of God, and not according to the wisdom of this age. Upon re-

1. Areopagite – a member of the supreme Athenian state council and court – the Areopagus.
2. Athens – the capital of the ancient Greek state; it was renowned for its buildings, statues, and the development of trade and industry, and especially for its schools. Here, until later times (the 6th century B.C.), there were famous philosophical schools in which the inhabitants of the ancient lands received their education.
3. Hellenic – Greek; sometimes this word means pagan. By the time of the Nativity of Christ the Greeks were the most educated people of antiquity.
4. Heliopolis – a city in Africa; it lies on the right bank of the Nile, on one of its eastern branches, in the south of Lower Egypt.
5. Astronomy – the science that studies the laws of motion of the heavenly luminaries. Egyptian scholars, namely the priests, were especially renowned for the study of this science.

turning from Egypt to Athens, Dionysius married and, being foremost among his fellow citizens in nobility, understanding, and integrity, became a member of the Areopagus. When the holy Apostle Paul came to Athens and preached there in the Areopagus before the elders about Christ crucified and risen,[6] Dionysius listened attentively to the words of the holy Apostle and engraved them upon his heart. The other elders of the city received the Apostle's preaching with distrust and told him that they would hear him speak of Christ another time. But Dionysius, being wiser than the others, began to converse with Paul in private.[7] The Apostle Paul asked him:

"Whom do you revere as God?"

Dionysius showed him in the city Cronus, Aphrodite, Zeus, Hephaestus, Hermes, Dionysus, Artemis, and many others.[8] As the Apostle Paul examined these gods together with Dionysius, he saw a shrine bearing the inscription: "To the Unknown God." He asked Dionysius:

"Who is this 'Unknown God'?"

"He," Dionysius replied, "who has not yet appeared among the gods, but who will come in His own time. He is the God who will reign over heaven and earth, and His kingdom shall have no end."

Hearing this, the Apostle began fruitfully to sow the seed of God's word in good soil. On the basis of these very words of Dionysius, the Apostle told him that this God had already come, that He was born of the Most Holy Ever-Virgin Mary, and that, nailed to the Cross, He suffered for the salvation of mankind. Unable to endure the sight of His suffering, the sun was changed into darkness and for three hours withheld its light from the universe. This very God rose from the dead and

6. During the second great journey of the Apostle Paul with the preaching of the Gospel – about A.D. 54.

7. This is related in detail in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles: Acts 17:15–34.

8. Cronos or Chronos – the god of time, son of Uranus (Heaven). The Greeks thought that he brought forth on earth the golden age, which existed in the first period of human life. – Aphrodite or Venus – the goddess of feminine beauty and love. – Zeus (or Jupiter among the Romans) was revered by the Greeks as the chief deity, father of gods and men, ruler of heaven and earth, of thunder and lightning, of winds and rains. – Hephaestus – the god of fire-breathing mountains and patron of the smith's craft. – Hermes – the god, patron of commerce and of every kind of intercourse between men and gods, messenger of the will of the gods. – Dionysius or Bacchus – the god of wine and merriment. – Artemis or Diana, the well-known pagan goddess among the Greeks, personified the moon and was considered the patroness of forests and of the hunt.

ascended into heaven. "Therefore, Dionysius," the holy Apostle Paul concluded, "believe in Him, know Him, and serve righteously the true God, Jesus Christ."

Dionysius remembered the darkness that had covered the whole earth, of which the holy Paul had also spoken, and at once believed that at that time God had suffered in a human body. After this, he opened his heart to the knowledge of the God hitherto unknown to him, the Lord Jesus Christ. Enlightened by the light of divine grace, Dionysius began to entreat the Apostle to pray to God for him, that He might have mercy on him and number him among His servants.

As the Apostle Paul was leaving the city of Athens, a blind man, known to all as having been unable to see from birth, entreated the Apostle to grant him sight. The holy Apostle, signing the blind man's eyes with the sign of the Cross, said:

"May my Lord Jesus Christ, Who 'spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay' (Jn. 9:6), and granted him sight, enlighten you also with His glory!"

And immediately the blind man received his sight. The Apostle Paul commanded him to go to Dionysius and say:

"Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ, has sent me to you, that, according to your promise, you may come to him and, being baptized, receive forgiveness of sins."

The blind man went and told him what the Apostle Paul had commanded; at the same time, he proclaimed the divine benefaction granted him through the Apostle. Seeing the man he knew, who had been blind, now restored to sight, Dionysius was confirmed still more in his faith in Christ. Together with his wife Damaris,[9] his sons, and all his household, he came immediately to the Apostle Paul and was baptized by him. After this, Dionysius left his home, wife, and children, joined the Apostle Paul, and followed him for three years wherever the Apostle went. What Dionysius learned from the Apostle Paul is attested by his writings, *On the Divine Mysteries*.[10] Later, Dionysius was ordained bishop by the Apostle Paul and sent from Thessalonica to Athens, to

9. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles also mentions Damaris: Acts 17:34.

labor there for the salvation of the people. This Dionysius heard the preaching not of the Apostle Paul alone, but of all the Apostles. He was among their company when they were all gathered for the burial of the Most Pure Lady, the Theotokos. In his books he writes of himself that he was in Jerusalem at the Lord's Tomb, where he saw and heard James, the brother of God,[11] and Peter, the chief of the Apostles. There Dionysius also saw John the Theologian, together with the disciples of the Apostle Paul, the holy Timothy and Hierotheus, and many other brethren, while he preached there concerning the mysteries of the faith.

After his conversion to Christ, the holy Dionysius lived in Athens for a considerable time and greatly enlarged the Church of God founded there by the holy Apostle Paul. Then Dionysius, like the holy Apostles, desired to preach the Gospel in other lands as well and to suffer for the name of Christ, as had his teacher, the blessed Paul, who suffered for Christ under Nero[12] in Rome. Having appointed a bishop in his stead for the Athenians, Dionysius withdrew to Rome, where he was joyfully received by St. Clement, Bishop of Rome.[13] After living with him for a short time, the holy Dionysius was sent by Clement to Gaul,[14] together with Bishop Lucian, the priest Rusticus, the deacon Eleutherius, and the rest of the brethren, to preach the word of God to the pagans there. Arriving with them in Gaul, the holy Dionysius began to preach the word of God to the inhabitants of that land, and in the city of Paris[15] he converted many from idol worship to faith in the Lord. There he built a church[16] with funds gathered by the newly converted Christians. In

10. The "Mystical Theology," as this work is otherwise called, teaches that all human conceptions and definitions of God do not express His essence, and that the knowledge of God must consist in mystical contemplation of the incomprehensible Divine Being.

11. The Holy Apostle James the Less was the son of Alphaeus (Clopas) and of Mary, the sister of the Mother of God (Jn. 19:25; Mk. 15:40, 47, 16:1; Lk. 24:10; Mt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3). He took especial care for the organization of the Church in Jerusalem and suffered a martyr's death in A.D. 62. After him there remained the most ancient order of the Liturgy, which he composed.

12. Nero – the Roman emperor (A.D. 54–68) – was the first cruel persecutor of the Christians. In 66 or 67, during this persecution, the Holy Apostle Paul suffered a martyr's death, condemned to die by beheading with the sword.

13. St. Clement, the third bishop of the city of Rome (from A.D. 92 to 101). He suffered a martyr's death under the emperor Trajan (in 101). The monument of his activity for the benefit of the Church remains his Epistle to the Corinthians.

14. Gaul – present-day France.

15. Paris – now the capital of France, on the river Seine; in antiquity it was called Lutetia.

this church Dionysius offered the bloodless Sacrifice, praying God to grant him strength to bring many rational sheep into the Church. As the word of God thus spread there, a second persecution after Nero's began, raised by Domitian.[17] This emperor sent his commander Sisinius to Gaul to put the Christians there to torture. When he arrived in the city of Paris, Sisinius ordered that Dionysius, renowned for miracles and divine wisdom, be seized first and tortured; Rusticus and Eleutherius were taken with him, while the rest of the brethren withdrew to preach in other lands. At this time the holy Dionysius was already very old and wearied by his labors in preaching the Gospel. When he was brought, bound fast, together with Rusticus and Eleutherius, before the commander Sisinius, the latter looked at him and said in anger:

"Are you that wicked old man Dionysius, who blasphemes our gods,[18] overthrows all worship offered to them, and defies the emperor's commands?"

The holy man answered:

"Though, as you yourself see, I am already old in body, my faith blooms with youth, and my confession ever begets new children for Christ."

When Sisinius asked whom he revered as God, the holy Dionysius proclaimed to him the word of truth and confessed the great Name of the Most Holy Trinity—the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

But the voivode, like a deaf asp,[19] unwilling to hear the saving preaching, asked all three of them—Dionysius, Rusticus, and Eleutherius—whether they wished to obey the emperor and offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. They answered as with one voice:

"We are Christians; we revere the One God Who is in heaven, and Him do we worship. We will not obey the emperor's command."

Then Sisinius ordered Dionysius to be stripped and beaten mercilessly with ropes. The saint endured all this, giving thanks to God that

16. Afterward there was here the famous monastery of "Saint-Denis," the burial place of the ancient French kings.

17. Domitian reigned from A.D. 81 to 96.

18. The Romans had the same gods as the Greeks, only with other names.

19. Aspid – a kind of poisonous serpent. In the liturgical books this word is sometimes used to denote the devil.

He had deemed him worthy to bear His wounds in his body. Rusticus and Eleutherius were tortured in precisely the same way; but they too, strengthened by the example of Dionysius and, above all, by God Himself, glorified Christ in their endurance. Sisinius, perceiving that the executioners' hands would sooner grow weak than the saints' endurance fail, ordered the martyrs cast into prison that same day. In the morning, servants brought St. Dionysius out of the prison and, at the torturer's command, laid him upon red-hot iron. Meanwhile, the saint chanted the psalm: "Thy word is exceedingly pure [kindled], and Thy servant hath loved it"[20] (Ps. 118:140). After this, they took the saint off the iron and cast him to be devoured by wild beasts. But the saint remained unharmed by the beasts, for God shut their mouths. Then they cast the saint into a fierce fire, but there too he remained unharmed, for the fire did not touch him nor cause him any injury; after this he was again cast into prison with Rusticus and Eleutherius. Many of the faithful came to Dionysius in prison, and there the saint celebrated the Divine Liturgy for them and gave them Communion of the holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. When he celebrated the Divine Liturgy, the faithful saw an ineffable light above blessed Dionysius: the King of Glory appeared with a host of Angels, and, so far as was possible for the bodily eyes of the faithful, they beheld Him. After some time, Dionysius, Rusticus, and Eleutherius were brought out of prison and presented to the military commander, who again urged them to offer sacrifices to idols. The saints disobeyed, but confessed Christ, the true God. Then the torturer, in anger, ordered the saints to be beaten without mercy, and afterward condemned them to be beheaded with the sword.

As the saints were being led out of the city to a mountain called Areos,[21] Dionysius prayed, crying aloud:

"O God, my God, who hast created me and taught me Thy eternal wisdom, who hast revealed to me Thy mysteries and been with me

20. The psalmist speaks in this verse of the psalm about the word of God, the commandments of God, which he loved above all. Enduring fiery torments, St. Dionysius seems to forget them, having on his lips only the word of God.

21. Of Ares, that is, of Mars. Ares or Mars was the pagan god of war.

wherever I have been: I thank Thee for all that Thou hast wrought through me for the glory of Thy most holy name, and for visiting my old age, wearied with labors and longing to behold Thee, and calling me to Thyself with my friends. Therefore I pray Thee: receive me and my friends; be merciful to those whom Thou hast acquired with Thy Blood, and numbered us among Thy servants for our service to Thee, for Thine is the power and dominion, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages."

Then, having uttered the word "Amen," the saint bowed his holy head for the most holy name of Jesus Christ, and was beheaded with a blunt axe. With him, the holy Eleutherius and Rusticus also laid down their heads for Christ.

After the death of His servant Dionysius, God showed a most glorious miracle. The saint's body, though beheaded, by the operation of God's power stood upon its feet and, taking its head in its hands, walked with it two stadia[22] to the place where the Christians had built a church. Then, giving his head to a pious woman named Catulla, the body fell to the ground. Many unbelievers, seeing this miracle, believed in Christ. Having received the saint's head, Catulla wished to take his body also, but the pagans would not permit her. Then Catulla invited the guards to her house, warmly entertained them, and gave them gifts, while at the same time ordering the Christians to take the holy body of Dionysius. The Christians took Dionysius' body and buried it in the very place where his head had been given to Catulla.

St. Dionysius suffered in the ninetieth year of his life, in the ninety-sixth year after the Nativity of Christ. Many miracles were wrought at his tomb, to the glory of Christ our God, who is glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto the ages. Amen.[23]

22. A poprishche – a measure of distance; it equaled our 690 sazhens. Two poprishches thus make 1380 sazhens, or 2.75 versts.

23. Besides the aforementioned, the following works also belong to Dionysius the Areopagite: a) "On the Celestial Hierarchy," in which the teaching is set forth about the nine orders of Angels, with an explanation of the properties and duties of each; b) "On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy," in which the teaching is set forth about the degrees of the church hierarchy, with the same kind of explanation; c) "On the Divine Names," in which Dionysius explains the meaning of the names of God used in Holy Scripture; and d) "Ten Letters to Various Persons."

Troparion, Tone 4:

Having learned goodness and been temperate in all things, thou didst clothe thyself in priestly holiness with a good conscience, and didst draw ineffable things from the chosen vessel;[24] *having kept the faith, thou didst finish the same course. Hieromartyr Dionysius, pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved.*

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Having passed through the heavenly gates in spirit, O Dionysius, as a disciple of the Apostle who reached the third heaven,[25] *thou wast enriched with all knowledge of ineffable things, and didst enlighten those who sat in the darkness of ignorance. Therefore we cry: Rejoice, father of the whole world!*

* * *

Account of St. Dionysius concerning St. Carpus

Повесть святого Дионисия о святом Карпе

St. Dionysius the Areopagite, in his epistle[26] to the monk Demophilus, written to instruct him in meekness and guilelessness, recalls the following event.

"It happened to me," he says, "while visiting the island of Crete,[27] to stay at the house of blessed Carpus, a disciple of the holy Apostle Paul.[28] This man was great in virtue and distinguished

24. By the "chosen vessel" is meant here the Holy Apostle Paul, who enlightened St. Dionysius with the light of Christianity.

25. That is, of the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 12:2).

26. This epistle, as is evident from the "Great Menaia of Chetii," was written to Demophilus concerning his expulsion from the church of a certain priest, who had received into ecclesiastical communion a brother who at that time was under excommunication.

27. The island of Crete (otherwise called Candia, from its chief city of the same name) lies in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, south of the Aegean Sea. By its vastness and fertility it was formerly called the "queen of the islands" of the Mediterranean Sea. Christianity began here already in apostolic times; its first beginnings were laid by eyewitnesses of the event of the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, for Cretans were also present at this (Acts 2:11). Then it was established and spread here by the Apostle Paul, as can be seen from his epistle to Titus, whom the Apostle appointed bishop in Crete to complete what he himself could not finish and to ordain presbyters (Titus 1:5). In the seventeenth century the island of Crete passed into the possession of the Turks; now it belongs to Greece.

by such exalted purity of mind that he possessed great capacity for visions of God: he would not even begin to celebrate the most pure and life-giving Mysteries until he had been deemed worthy of a divine vision appearing to him from heaven. This holy man, as he himself related to St. Dionysius, was grieved by one of the unbelievers. The cause of his grief was that the unbeliever had turned one of the faithful away from the Church to his own impiety. Blessed Carpus was greatly distressed by this. He ought, of course, to have remained patient and continually exhorted the one who had fallen away from the faith with helpful words, and to have overcome the unbeliever by his own good temper; he ought earnestly to have besought the Lord that He might turn back to His holy Church the one who had been led astray into impiety, and enlighten with the light of faith the one abiding in the darkness of unbelief. But Carpus, who had never before shown impatience in anything, was on this occasion exceedingly grieved in his soul. Late in the evening, when midnight was drawing near, he rose to pray. (He was always accustomed to rise and pray at the midnight hour.) As he stood at prayer, he could not overcome within himself the deep sorrow caused him by those two men. It began to seem to him that these lawless men, who pervert the straight ways of the Lord, were undeservedly allowed to live upon the earth; and he began to pray that fire might fall from heaven upon them and consume them both. As he prayed thus, suddenly the chamber in which he stood shook and split open above in two, so that it seemed to him that he stood in a courtyard, and a bright, fiery flame descended to him from heaven. Raising his eyes upward, he saw the heavens opened, and in them Jesus Christ seated, surrounded by a countless multitude of Angels in human form. Then, lowering his eyes, he saw the earth split open, and within it a deep, dark abyss; at the edge of the abyss stood the two men whose destruction Carpus had angrily asked of God. They stood with pleading looks and in great fear

28. St. Carpus (Apostle of the Seventy) was a disciple and fellow-worker of the holy Apostle Paul, as is evident from the mention of him by the chief of the Apostles in his epistle to Timothy: "When you come, bring the cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the leather ones" (2 Tim. 4:13). Carpus carried the epistles of the Apostle Paul at his direction; he was bishop of the Macedonian city of Beroea and zealously cared for the spread of the Christian faith. The memory of the holy Apostle Carpus is celebrated on May 26.

and trembling, for they were near to falling into the abyss; and in that abyss a serpent crawled, gnashing its teeth. There were also certain other people there, who struck and pushed those two sinners and dragged them toward the terrible serpent. When Carpus saw that the men who had grieved him were about to fall into the abyss and be devoured by the serpent, he was filled with great joy; and Carpus looked not so much at the opened heavens and Jesus Christ seated therein as at the imminent destruction of those two sinners. But since they did not fall into the abyss, Carpus again became indignant and sorrowful, and once more began to pray to God that they might fall and perish. When he raised his eyes to heaven, as before, he saw that Jesus Christ, rising from the Heavenly Throne, drew near to those men standing at the edge of the abyss and gave them His helping hand; and the Angels supported those men and, strengthening them, drew them back from the abyss. And Christ said to Carpus:

'Why do you desire the destruction of your brethren? Imitate Me, and do not desire the death of a sinner, for I am ready to suffer again for the salvation of men, if only men will turn from their evil ways and hate their sins.'

Relating this account in his epistle to the aforementioned monk Demophilus, St. Dionysius teaches us by it not to be harsh toward those who sin, but to desire for them not punishment, but repentance and conversion; to pray earnestly to God, who desires not the death of sinners, for such people, that He Himself may turn them and have mercy on them by His grace, for He loves the righteous, yet also has mercy on sinners. Glory to the Lord unto the ages. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of Venerable John of Choziba, Bishop of Caesarea

Память преподобного Иоанна Хозевита, епископа Кесарийского

Our Venerable Father John of Choziba[29] was a native of the city of Thebes in Egypt. He was tonsured a monk by his grandfather

and, at the elder's counsel, went to the holy places in Jerusalem. On his return, he spent several days with the elder, then withdrew from him to a narrow ravine, where he found a small cave and lived there, feeding only on roots and herbs. When God willed to glorify His servant, He made this known in the following way. In those parts lived a great faster named Ananias. One day a man brought to him his son, who was tormented by an unclean spirit. Ananias did not receive him, but said with great humility that they should go farther into the country and seek John the Egyptian, who could heal the boy. When those sent to find John found him, they told him why they had come. At first John refused, but after much entreaty he consented to cast out the unclean spirit and prayed to God. Then, turning to the demon, he said:

"In the name of Jesus Christ—not I, but Ananias commands you, unclean spirit, to come out of this boy."

By the word of the saint, the unclean spirit came out of the youth, and the youth was made whole and proclaimed to everyone the glorious miracle wrought upon him. Afterward St. John was obliged, against his will, to accept the episcopate in Caesarea; but, unable to bear honors and desiring to live the monastic life, he left Caesarea and withdrew once more into the wilderness, where he remained until the end of his life.

God glorified His ascetic with wondrous miracles. A man had a young son who was tormented by an unclean spirit. The father placed him in a basket, covered him over with grass, and brought him to John and set him down before the saint's cave. When the child cried out, the saint rose and at once knew that an unclean spirit dwelt within the child; having driven out the demon, John healed the child. But the expelled demon was not appeased and began to take revenge upon the as-

29. The Venerable John received the surname Chozebite from the Lavra of Chuziba, in which he spent the greater part of his monastic life. This Lavra was situated in the desert of Chuziba or Chozeba, between Jerusalem and Jericho, to the right of the great road and not far from the descent into the low-lying Jordan valley. The Lavra was set in a wild locality. The churches and cells of the monks were in the depth of a ravine and, hanging at a height of fifty sazhens, were as it were affixed to the rocky cliffs. The Lavra of Chuziba arose in the fifth century. The name of its first founder is unknown. The time of the particular flourishing of the Lavra of Chuziba was the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries, when it was especially renowned for the strictness of life of its ascetics. This Lavra still existed in the twelfth century. Nothing is known of its later fate.

cetic, assuming a human form. Meeting the saint in a ravine by the shore, the demon fell at his feet, as though seeking a blessing. The servant of God, unexpectedly seeing his face, was astonished; and the demon, seizing the saint by the feet, hurled him down toward the shore. The saint fell headlong, but by the grace of God he remained unharmed, so that the murderer gained nothing. Then the evil spirit gave the servant of God into the power of a robber, who beat the saint, stripped him of his clothing, and even burned his hut. The saint bore all this patiently and only said to himself:

"O Lord Most High! I thank Thee, if this is pleasing to Thee."

Then, by the will of the Most High, the robber was seized and died a shameful death, and the servant of God found rest for a time. But the wicked one did not, however, cease his struggle with the blessed man. When the saint once set out to visit the brethren, a woman met him on the road and fell at his feet, beseeching him to enter her house and sanctify it with his prayer and blessing. The saint was moved by her entreaties, and he entered. Then the vile temptress locked the doors and, fully undressed, committed all manner of abominations, in order only to defile the undefiled. But the steadfast man stood unshaken against the demonic stratagem, and, pushing her away, went out unharmed.

The blessed John, having heard of a certain ascetic named Marcian, whose fame was spread everywhere, desired to see him. Meanwhile St. John, to avoid every occasion of temptation, had resolved never to leave his cell under any circumstances, and to this end he had bound himself, considering these bonds unbreakable. And behold, an Angel of the Lord snatched Marcian from his cell and suddenly set him before the blessed John. They greeted one another and rejoiced in spiritual converse. Then Marcian was taken again by the Angel and became invisible.

St. John cast out demons from many people, healed grievous diseases, brought forth water from springs by prayer, called down rain from heaven, and performed many other miracles by the power of God; and in deep old age he peacefully committed his holy soul to God.

* * *

Memory of the Blessed Hesychius the Horebite

Память блаженного Исихия Хоривита

St. Hesychius at first utterly neglected the salvation of his soul. But he fell ill, and during his sickness he repented. Then he besought all those around him to leave him, and he remained in seclusion for twelve years, in complete silence[30], nourished only by bread and water, and spending all his time in prayer and tears.

When the time of his death came, the brethren of the monastery entered, breaking down the doors; and however they spoke to Hesychius, they heard from him only this:

"Forgive me! Whoever keeps the memory of death in his soul will not sin." The brethren marveled at the change that had come over him by the grace of God, and after his death they buried his body with honor. After some time they sought his holy relics and did not find them. Through this the Lord showed everyone the power of true repentance for those who desire to amend, even after long negligence concerning salvation[31].

* * *

30. Silence constitutes an important Christian ascetic labor for spiritual perfection. The holy ascetics were conscious of the whole importance of this labor and loved silence. St. Ambrose of Milan writes: "To know how to keep silent is more difficult than to speak. I know that many speak because they do not know how to keep silent. Therefore he is wise who knows how to keep silent. Thus it is well said in Scripture: 'A wise man will keep silence until the time' (Sir. 20:7)."

31. The account of St. Hesychius is found in St. John Climacus, abbot of the Monastery of Sinai (Word 6), who was a contemporary of St. Hesychius. The Blessed Hesychius lived in the sixth century and labored on Mount Horeb, whence he received the name Horebite.

THE FOURTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 4

4 октября

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

Lives of the Saints Gurias, Archbishop of Kazan, and Barsanuphius, Bishop of Tver.

Житие святых Гурия, архиепископа Казанского, и Варсонофия, епископа Тверского.

Venerable Gurias, in the world Gregory, was born in the city of Radonezh[1] of poor and little-known boyars named Rugotin. In his youth Gregory was given into service in the house of Prince Ivan Penkov. Gregory was of a meek and yielding disposition; he loved to go often to the house of God for prayer, and he prayed also at home; he watched carefully over his chastity, kept a strict fast, loved also to give alms to the poor, and was distinguished by other Christian virtues. By his good conduct and honesty Gregory won the love of his master, and the prince entrusted to him the whole management of his household. But this aroused the envy of Gregory's fellow servants, and they slandered him before the prince, accusing him of adultery with his wife.

The prince, believing the slanderers, ordered Gregory to be put to death. But the prince's son, more cautious and prudent than his father, entreated him to spare Gregory and not to disgrace his family by his sentence; and learning that all this was slander, he saved Gregory from death. Yet the prince, overcome by malice, cast the innocent Gregory into a deep ditch. For two years the blessed man endured in it, tormented by hunger, for he was given food unfit for a human being: every third day they threw him a single sheaf of oats and a little water. Heavy was the condition of the innocent sufferer, but he strengthened

1. Radonezh – was situated 54 versts from Moscow in the direction of Rostov, and 10 versts from the present Trinity Lavra, in the direction of Moscow.

himself by the example of the ancient martyrs and was encouraged by the thought that the dungeon had delivered him from the temptations and cares of the world, and that his solitude gave him complete freedom to prepare himself for eternity.

The second year of his imprisonment was already drawing to its end when one of Gregory's former friends entreated the jailer to permit him to approach the window of the dungeon and speak with Gregory; the jailer agreed. The friend came up to Gregory by night and offered to supply him with suitable food. But Gregory refused to accept any other food than that which was brought to him, saying that "the abundant and overflowing grace of God nourishes him." Then Gregory asked his friend that, instead of food, he bring him paper, ink and pens for writing primers, by which children are taught to read. Gregory entrusted these primers to his friend to sell, and asked him to distribute the money to the poor.

After two years the merciful Lord, seeing the good patience of His servant who suffered innocently, was pleased to free him from his bonds, as from hell, and with the invisible hand of His power He opened the prison gate for him. Suddenly Gregory saw light in the doorway of the dungeon; he was seized with terror, thinking it a diabolical delusion, since for two years those doors had not been opened, and rising, he began to pray. And again the light appeared in the doorway, even brighter than before. Then Gregory, going up, touched the door with his hand, and the door immediately opened. Perceiving that God Himself was sending him deliverance from this prison, Gregory gave thanks to the Lord, and taking with him the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, which he had with him in the dungeon, he went out unseen by anyone, although it was already day. He left that house and that city, and came to the Dormition monastery of Joseph[2]. Here Gregory received the tonsure as a monk with the name Gurias, and became a good monk and ascetic; for his exemplary monastic life he was afterwards chosen abbot of the monastery of Joseph. Having been superior of that monastery for about nine years, he left the monastery because

2. The Monastery of Joseph is situated 18 versts from Volokolamsk. It was founded by Venerable Joseph of Volokolamsk, and the monastery received its name of Joseph's from him.

of illness and lived two years in retirement, spending his time in fasting and contemplation of God. Then Gurias was sent as abbot to the monastery of Selizharov[3], but he remained there not more than a year.

When God subjected the city of Kazan to Tsar John Vasilyevich[4], then, on the counsel of Metropolitan Macarius[5], by a council of the hierarchs of the Russian Metropolia, Gurias was appointed by lot the first Archbishop of the city of Kazan[6]. The Tsar sent him to Kazan with great honor, gave him a multitude of icons, precious church vessels and many books, and besides this he presented Gurias himself with many precious things. The hierarchs and various monasteries on their part also brought, as gifts for the needs of the newly enlightened land, a multitude of precious things[7]. On the Sunday of the Holy Fathers after Pascha, May 26, 1555, with the ringing of all the bells of the Kremlin, Metropolitan Macarius, with Bishop Nifont of Krutitsy and all the Moscow archimandrites and abbots, and also St. Gurias with his archimandrites and the consecrated clergy, in the presence of the Tsar and the whole court, solemnly served a farewell moleben in the Dormition Cathedral. At the conclusion of the moleben, St. Gurias with a cross procession went to the Moscow River, sat down there in the prepared boats, and set out on the journey with prayers and the ringing of bells. On the way, in every city, St. Gurias was met by the clergy with a cross procession and performed solemn molebens, so that the whole journey of St. Gurias, right up to Kazan, was almost a continuous prayer.

After two months St. Gurias arrived in the city of Kazan and took up the episcopal throne. In the rank of hierarch he lived the same God-

3. The Trinity Selizharov Monastery stands on the river Selizharovka, 44 versts from the town of Ostashkov, in the Diocese of Tver; it was founded in the fifteenth century.

4. Kazan was conquered by the Russians in 1552.

5. Macarius – Metropolitan of All Russia (1542–1564) – occupies a prominent place in the history of the Russian Church and literature. During his time there took place the famous Council of the Hundred Chapters (1551); during his time the first printing press for the printing of sacred books was opened; at his wish, and with his direct participation, the so-called "Great Menaia-Chetii" were compiled.

6. The ordination of St. Gurias took place on February 7, 1555.

7. To assist St. Gurias there were appointed, at his direction, two worthy hieromonks: Herman, formerly archimandrite of the Staritsa Monastery (Diocese of Tver), who lived in retirement at the Monastery of Joseph, and Varsonophius, abbot of Pesnosha.

pleasing life: he fed the poor, supplied all necessities to the needy, interceded for the poor, widows and orphans, and delivered them from various calamities. Adding labors to labors, St. Gurias spent the night in prayer, and by day he taught the unbelievers the knowledge of God and faith in the Holy Trinity, and by his teaching he brought many to Christ[6310]. The great labors of the hierarch, with his bodily strength weakened by the heavy imprisonment of his youth, utterly undermined the health of St. Gurias, and he fell ill. Bodily sickness in no way diminished his piety of soul: unable himself to perform the services, he nevertheless attended the sacred rites performed by others, for which he ordered himself to be carried to the Divine Liturgy in the church of the Annunciation of the Mother of God, which he had built; here he sat or even lay, listening to the service. Yet even during his illness St. Gurias did not abandon his usual works that were still feasible for him[8], while never ceasing to subdue his flesh by fasting and abstinence. Thus the hierarch labored for three years. Feeling the approach of his departure to God, St. Gurias summoned Archimandrite Barsanuphius, to whom he had "a great spiritual love," and desired to receive from him the great angelic habit, that is, the schema[9]. The blessed repose of the hierarch followed on December 4, 1564. His honorable body was buried in the Transfiguration of the Savior monastery[10], behind the sanctuary, by the great church.

Venerable Barsanuphius, in the world John, was a native of Serpukhov[11]. He was the son of the priest Basil, and at an early age was taught letters and Holy Scripture. Before he had reached his majority, John fell into captivity to the Crimean Tatars[12]. Submitting to the will

8. "The whole present time," said St. Gurias, "is a time of labors. The reward is received in the life to come. The heavenly joys will be bestowed only upon him who struggles on earth and, in order to obtain the incorruptible goods, forsakes the corruptible. One must struggle on, despite all difficulties and displeasures, for 'the present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that shall be revealed in us' (Rom. 9:18)."

9. The schema – the acceptance of the great Angelic image, the great schema, the schema-monastic state – is the most perfect separation from the world, a greater desire to be released from the world and to be with Christ (Phil. 1:23). (The word *schema* is Greek and means form, appearance, rank.)

10. It was founded by Venerable Varsonofius in 1556, who was also its first archimandrite.

11. Serpukhov – a district town of the Moscow Province.

of the Lord, he diligently performed the works and labors laid upon him. In captivity he found consolation in frequent and fervent prayer to God, chanting by heart the psalms that he remembered. The unbelievers, seeing John's good conduct, his zeal in labor, his humility and unquestioning obedience in work, lightened the burden of his labors and allowed him to live more freely. In captivity John learned the Tatar language, so that he could speak it freely and also write in it. After three years his father ransomed John from the Tatars. He then came to the royal city of Moscow and was tonsured in the monastery called Andronikov[13], when he was named Barsanuphius. Here Barsanuphius began to lead his life in strict ascetic exploits of piety and virtue; for his strict ascetic life Barsanuphius was appointed by Metropolitan Macarius abbot of the Pesnosh monastery[14]. Afterwards he was archimandrite in the city of Kazan[15]; there he founded a monastery in honor of the glorious Transfiguration of the Lord, and set up churches and cells in it. In the rank of archimandrite Barsanuphius lived the same God-pleasing life: he mortified his body with great abstinence and vigil, and wore chains upon his body, though no one knew of it. Thus in everything he was a model of virtue for the brethren. In Kazan Barsanuphius zealously assisted St. Gurias in spreading Christianity among the Muhammadans and pagans. His knowledge of the language and his acquaintance with Tatar customs were of great benefit to him in this: he converted many unbelievers to God and baptized them. To St. Gurias, Barsanuphius bore sincere love and obeyed him in all things.

From Kazan St. Barsanuphius was summoned to the episcopal throne in Tver[16]. Here, being a good shepherd of the rational flock of

12. Crimea – a peninsula in the southern part of European Russia. It was conquered by the Tatars in 1237 and subdued by the Russians in 1783.

13. The monastery of Andronikov, or otherwise "Spaso-Andronikov," is situated on the bank of the river Yauza in Moscow. It was founded around 1360 at the expense of St. Metropolitan Alexis and through the labors of Venerable Andronikos, a disciple of Venerable Sergius.

14. The Pesnosh (or Peshnosh) Monastery of Nicholas and Methodius is situated 26 versts from the town of Dmitrov, Moscow Province, at the confluence of the little river Peshnosha with the river Yakhroma. It was founded in 1301 by Venerable Methodius, a disciple of St. Sergius of Radonezh, who was also its first hegumen. Venerable Varsonofius was appointed hegumen of the Pesnosh monastery in 1544.

15. Varsonofius was appointed archimandrite to Kazan in 1555, whither he departed together with St. Gurias.

Christ's sheep, he devoted himself especially to ascetic labors and always remained in fasting, prayers, tears and all-night vigils. He healed many sick, for he was also skilled in the medical art; but he took no payment for this from anyone, and healed for nothing; he became especially renowned for healing the passions of the soul, which he cured by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Nor did he neglect manual labor, and his customary occupation was the sewing of klobuks, which he gave to his brethren, asking them to pray to God for him.

When the saint had reached a great age, he left his flock and again moved to the monastery he had founded in the city of Kazan. Here he received the Great Schema. Despite his advanced years and great infirmity, he did not depart from the rules of ascetic life; and when, through weakness of age, he could no longer serve in the church himself, he asked his disciples to carry him there. At last, when he had grown utterly feeble and felt that his departure from this world was near, he received the Holy Mysteries of Christ and reposed in the Lord on 11 April 1576. He was buried there in the monastery, near St. Gurias.

Thirty-two years after the repose of St. Gurias, and twenty years after the repose of St. Barsanuphius, by command of Tsar Theodore Ioannovich they began to build a stone church on the site of the wooden one, in honor of the Transfiguration of the Lord. When they began to dig the trenches and uncovered the tombs of Sts. Gurias and Barsanuphius—on 4 October 1596—they informed Metropolitan Hermogenes[17], who was then the archpastor of Kazan. After celebrating the Divine Liturgy and a panikhida, the metropolitan came to the monastery with the entire Consecrated Council. When they opened the tomb of St. Gurias, they found it filled with fragrant myrrh; corruption had

16. St. Varsonofius was appointed Bishop of Tver in 1567; he was ordained by Metropolitan Philip of Moscow.

17. Hermogenes was raised to the rank of Metropolitan of Kazan in 1589. In Kazan he showed great zeal in the work of converting the local non-Russians to Orthodoxy. In 1606, under Tsar Basil Shuisky, Hermogenes was made Patriarch of All Russia. For his opposition to the Poles and the rebellious boyars he was subjected to harsh imprisonment in the Chudov Monastery, and there he died of starvation on 17 February 1612. – While he was Metropolitan of Kazan, Hermogenes composed a detailed life of Sts. Gurias and Varsonofius.

touched only a little of the upper part of his lips, and even the hierarch's vestments were intact and seemed stronger than new ones. In like manner they opened the tomb of St. Barsanuphius, and likewise found his relics whole and incorrupt, as were the relics of St. Gurias; corruption had touched only the venerable one's feet, but had not destroyed the bones, which were wholly sound. They transferred the venerable relics of the hierarchs from those tombs into new reliquaries and, while the funeral hymns were sung, placed them above ground, so that all who came might see them and kiss them with faith. Word of this was sent by letter to Tsar Theodore Ioannovich and Patriarch Job[18]. The pious Tsar and most holy Patriarch, the entire imperial council, and a multitude of people, having learned of this, glorified God, who glorifies His saints. The pious Tsar commanded that the holy and wonderworking relics of the hierarchs be kept in a special chapel on the south side of the sanctuary of the great church, which, for the sake of this holy treasure, was soon adorned with great beauty. In this chapel, once it had been prepared, the relics of the hierarchs rested in the aforementioned new reliquaries[19], granting healings to the faithful, to the glory of God, who is glorified in the Trinity, now and ever. Amen.

Troparion of Sts. Gurias and Barsanuphius, Tone 3:

First teachers of Kazan, formerly dark, but now illumined and newly enlightened; first heralds of the way of salvation, true guardians of the apostolic traditions, steadfast pillars, teachers of piety and guides in Orthodoxy, Gurias and Barsanuphius, entreat the Master of all to grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls.

Kontakion of Barsanuphius, Tone 6:

18. Job was the first Patriarch of All Russia, from 1589. By the order of the False Dmitry, in 1605 Job was deprived of the patriarchate; he died in 1607.

19. For a long time the holy relics of Gurias and Varsonofius rested in a side chapel of the new church built in honor of these hierarchs, until Metropolitan Matthew transferred them in 1630 from the Transfiguration Monastery to the cathedral of the Annunciation. The translation was performed solemnly on the 20th day of June. Afterwards the holy relics were moved from a wooden reliquary into a silver one. There is a service to Sts. Gurias and Varsonofius: it was written by St. Demetrius of Rostov (see the Menaion Service under 4 October).

Having subjected thy body to the Spirit through abstinence, thou madest thy soul equal to the angels; therefore thou art honored with the rank of hierarch and standest in purity before the Most Pure One. Entreat Christ God, O hierarch, to save our most powerful emperor, the protector of piety, and thy people, O holy one, that we may all cry unto thee: Rejoice, venerable Father Barsanuphius, praise and bulwark of our city of Kazan.

Kontakion of Gurias, Tone 4:

Having conquered the passions of the flesh, thou didst shine forth like the sun in purity, preserving a pure life unto the end; and thou didst lead many from unbelief to faith in Christ. Wherefore thou wast honored by God with incorruption and art marveled at for thy miracles. We beseech thee, O hierarch Gurias: deliver us from afflictions by thy prayers, that we may cry unto thee: Rejoice, wondrous Father, praise and bulwark of the city of Kazan.

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Commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyr Hierotheus, Bishop of Athens

Память святого священномученика Иерофея, епископа Афинского

St. Hierotheus was one of the members, or counselors, of the Areopagus. He was converted to Christianity by the holy Apostle Paul, who also appointed him bishop of the city of Athens. Present with the Apostles at the burial of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos, St. Hierotheus sang divine hymns as he accompanied the most pure body of the Mother of God to the tomb; all who heard and saw this recognized him as a righteous and holy man. Having lived piously, as becomes a saint, and having pleased God by his life and his good governance of his flock, St. Hierotheus died a martyr's death in the first century A.D.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

We praise thee, sacred hierarch of Athens, as those taught by thee things mysterious, strange and ineffable; for thou didst appear as

a God-pleasing singer of hymns. But entreat, O all-blessed Hierotheus, that we may be delivered from every fall into sin, that we may cry: Rejoice, Father wise in God.

Life of Our Venerable Father Ammon

Житие преподобного отца Аммона

Our Venerable Father Ammon was an Egyptian by birth. Although he lost his parents while still very young, he was brought up in the fear of God and from his earliest years acquired a love for reading the divine books. When Ammon came of age, his uncle began to urge him to marry. Preferring virginity to marriage, yet wishing to fulfil his uncle's will, Ammon considered how he might unite a virginal life with marriage. And so, on the wedding day, when he and the bride had been led into the bridal chamber and everyone had left, he shut the doors and said to the maiden:

"Listen to me, sister, and agree to what I shall say to you: the marriage into which we have entered is in no way better than virginity. Therefore we shall do well to sleep apart from one another, so that, preserving our virginity, we may please God thereby."

Having said this, he took from his breast, where he had kept it beneath his clothing, a book, and began to read to the maiden, who knew not the Scriptures, the saving words of divine teaching, as though speaking in the person of Christ and the Apostles. To what he read he added, by the grace given him by God, his own instruction, and counselled her to lead a pure, angelic life. She, being moved, said:

"My lord, I agree to all that you say; and since you prefer a virginal life, I too desire the same and agree to do all that you command me."

Then Ammon said:

"I wish us to live apart: you in one house, and I in another."

But the maiden, not wishing such a separation, said:

"No, my lord, we shall live in one house, but sleep apart."

Thus they began to lead a virginal life. Their marriage was like a garden blossoming with the lilies of virginity, fenced about with chastity and refreshed by the dew of the Holy Spirit. They lived many

years in such a marriage, spending their time in great ascetic labors—in fasting, abstinence, vigils and prayers, and bodily toil. The maiden labored and attended to the household, while Ammon daily mortified his flesh, working all day in his garden. When he came home in the evening, he ate a little bread with his wife—or rather, his sister. At midnight they both rose for prayer, and early in the morning Ammon went out again to his work and labored until evening. Thus this pair, in the flower of their youth, lived as though amidst fire, yet were not burned, for they overcame within themselves every carnal desire. They lived together in this manner for eighteen years and attained perfect purity and holiness. Then one day the maiden said to Ammon:

"My lord, I wish to say something to you; and if you will listen to me, I shall know from this that you truly love me in God."

He answered:

"Speak, sister, and if it be profitable, I will listen to you."

Then the maiden said:

"It is more fitting for us, my lord, to live apart, since you are a holy, righteous, and chaste man, and I shall follow your life as far as I am able. Let others also profit from us; let us live separately. It is not right that so great a virtue of yours should be hidden from those who could benefit from it and imitate your chastity, because you live together with me."

Hearing this, Ammon glorified God, who had inclined the maiden's heart toward a separate life, which he himself had long desired. And he said to her:

"My sister, if this is pleasing to you, let us cease living together: you remain in this house, and I shall go elsewhere."

After praying to God, they parted from one another: Ammon went to Mount Nitria[20] and became a monk, while his wife in name remained in her own house; before long she gathered many maidens and betrothed them to Christ, and herself became their abbess.

Having settled on Mount Nitria, Ammon began to lead the life of a hermit, laboring and striving for God, whom he served day and night

20. Mount Nitria is located in Lower Egypt, 70 miles from the city of Alexandria.

with all the fervor of his spirit. He spent twenty-two years in the desert and attained perfection in the monastic life. God glorified His servant, granting him the gift of healing, and the saint healed the various illnesses of those who came to him.

Once a boy who had been bitten by a mad dog was brought to him. In fits of madness he was biting his own body. The boy's parents fell at the feet of St. Ammon and begged him to heal their son. But the saint said to them:

"Why do you trouble me, asking of me what is beyond my power? The boy's illness and his healing are in your hands, for you stole an ox from a widow—whose name the saint mentioned—and secretly killed and ate it. Therefore, return to her a living ox, and your son will be healed."

When the parents of the possessed boy heard this, they were amazed that the saint knew their secret; confessing their crime, they solemnly promised to make restitution for what they had stolen. Then the saint prayed, healed the boy, and sent them away in peace. They returned home joyfully and at once gave the widow another ox in place of the one they had killed.

On another occasion two men came to the Venerable Father for his blessing. The Saint asked them to bring him water for the needs of those who came to him, for one of the visitors had a camel and the other a donkey. Taking a large vessel, they went down the mountain for water. When they had filled the vessel, the one who had the camel said:

"The vessel is large and the mountain is high, and so I do not wish to wear out my camel with such a burden."

And leaving his companion, he went on his way without returning to the Saint. The other, however, loaded the water onto his donkey and with great difficulty brought it up the mountain to the Venerable Father. Seeing him, the Saint said:

"Child! May God bless you for your labor. Know, however, that your companion, who refused to bring water for our needs, is at present in misfortune, for he has lost his camel."

Then that man set out after his companion and found him weeping, for his camel had been devoured by wolves.

Of this Venerable Ammon, St. Athanasius of Alexandria makes mention in the Life of the Venerable Antony, where he writes of him as follows.

Once the Venerable Ammon was walking with Antony's disciple Theodore. When they had to cross a large river called Lykos[21], which required them to undress, Ammon asked Theodore to move a little away from him, so that they would not see each other's bodily nakedness. When they had separated, Ammon began to consider how he might cross the river without taking off his clothing, for he was so chaste and modest that he was ashamed even of his own nakedness, and throughout his whole life had never exposed his body. As he pondered this, an Angel of the Lord caught him up, carried him across the river, and in the twinkling of an eye set him down on the other bank. Theodore, however, with great difficulty barely swam across the river. Seeing Ammon standing on the other bank, he marveled that he had crossed so swift a river so quickly; noticing that Ammon's clothing was perfectly dry, he was astonished, and falling at the Saint's feet, he begged him to tell how he had crossed the rushing stream. Compelled by his companion's entreaty, Ammon revealed to him that he had been carried across by an Angel. At the same time he forbade his companion to speak of this to others until he, Ammon, should depart from this world. Coming to St. Antony, the Venerable Father heard from him these words:

"God has revealed to me the day of your death. Therefore I have summoned you, that we may take comfort in converse while you have not yet departed to God: let us then pray for one another."

Having spent time in lengthy conversation with one another, they received consolation from the Holy Spirit, and Ammon, having received the blessing, departed from St. Antony.

And so, after a few days, Antony the Great, sitting on a hill, lifted his eyes to heaven and saw the soul of Ammon, joyfully borne up to heaven by Angels. Seeing this, Antony was greatly gladdened; then his disciples asked him:

21. A fairly frequently occurring name for swift rivers.

"Father, what is the cause of your joy?"

He answered:

"Today Abba Ammon has departed, and I see his holy soul borne up to heaven by Angels."

The disciples noted the day on which St. Antony told them of Ammon's repose. After some days brethren came from Nitria[22] and reported that St. Ammon had reposed in the Lord[23]. Reckoning the days, Antony's disciples found that Ammon had reposed on the very day when Antony had seen his soul ascending to heaven with the Angels, and they glorified God.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Paul the Simple

Житие преподобного отца нашего Павла Препростого

This Paul was a farmer in a certain village. He was an unlearned man, but very simple and guileless of soul. He entered into marriage with a woman beautiful of face but wicked in soul and conduct; for a long time she lived an adulterous life in secret from her husband. Once, returning home from work, Paul found his wife with another man. Then, smiling a little, he said to the adulterer:

"Good, good! I pay no heed to this at all. I call Jesus Christ to witness that I no longer desire to live with her. Since you have possession of her, feed the children as well, and I will go away and become a monk."

And at once, leaving everything, Paul went out of the house; he said nothing to anyone, and did not reproach his depraved wife in the least, but silently went off into the desert. There he came to the Venerable Antony the Great[24], and knocked at the door of his cell. Antony asked him:

"What do you want?"

Paul answered:

22. That is, from the Nitrian desert, where St. Ammon labored.

23. The blessed repose of Venerable Ammon followed about the year 350. – Venerable Ammon wrote 19 "admonitory chapters," filled with experienced spiritual wisdom.

"I want to be a monk."

Antony, seeing that he was already old, said to him:

"Elder, you are already about sixty years old; you cannot be a monk. Return again to the village and perform your work, giving thanks to God; for you will not be able to bear the labor of the desert or endure temptations."

But Paul answered:

"Father, I am ready to do all that you command."

Antony, however, not heeding him, said:

"I have told you that you are old and cannot be a monk now. Go away from here. And if you wish to be a monk, go to a monastery where many brethren live who can bear your infirmities; but I live here alone, and for five days at a time I eat nothing; therefore you cannot live with me."

Having said this, Antony shut the door and for three days did not come out of his cell. But the elder remained all this time near the cell, going nowhere. On the fourth day Antony opened the door and again saw Paul, and, to make him withdraw, said:

"Go away from here, elder. Why do you trouble me? I have told you that you cannot remain here."

"I will die here, but I will not leave," answered the elder.

Antony, seeing that the elder had neither bread nor water, and that he had already remained for four days without food, thought to himself: "This elder, not accustomed to fasting so long, may die of hunger, and it will be a sin upon my soul on his account." Therefore he consented to keep him with him and said:

"You can be saved if you will be obedient and do what I command you."

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24. St. Antony the Great, the first founder of the monastic life, an Egyptian by birth, labored on the eastern bank of the river Nile, near the Thebaid. There, wearing a hair shirt and nourishing himself only on herbs and roots, he lived for 20 years in obscurity, in constant labor and prayer, overcoming by the grace of God the spirit of the seducer, who troubled him with temptations and fear. At last, the sanctity of his life and his miracles drew many ascetics into the desert to Antony; they settled near him and took the rules given by Antony as the pattern of their life, which was the beginning of monastic life. St. Antony reposed in the year 356, at the age of 105. His memory is celebrated on 17 January.

Paul replied:

"Father, I am ready to do all that you tell me."

Antony, testing him, said:

"Stand and pray in this place until I come and bring you that over which you must labor."

Leaving Paul, Antony went into the cave.

For a whole week he did not come out to him, but secretly through a window watched him and saw him all that time standing motionless, day and night, in one place.

Then, coming out of his cell, Antony brought the elder date-palm fronds, and, soaking them in water, said to him:

"Weave, elder, a rope in the same way as I weave."

And Paul wove the rope until the ninth hour, and with great difficulty wove fifteen cubits[25]. Antony, looking at the work, said:

"You have woven badly; unweave it and weave again."

And it was already the seventh day since he had given him anything to eat. Yet Antony did this in order to drive Paul away from himself, for he thought that he would leave him, unable to endure the trial. But Paul went on with great difficulty unweaving the rope and weaving it again; and however hungry he was, he was in no way grieved or murmured. Then Antony took pity on him, and when the sun was already setting, he said to Paul:

"Elder, would you not like to eat a little bread?"

"As you wish, Father," answered Paul.

Antony was moved to tenderness by these words of Paul, who, though suffering from hunger, did not hasten to satisfy it with bread, but surrendered himself to Antony's will.

They ate a little bread with water and, rising from the table, gave thanks to the Lord.

St. Antony also tested Paul in prayer, sleeping not at all through whole nights and singing psalms with many prostrations; but in this too Paul proved patient and vigilant.

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25. A *lakot* or *lokot* (cubit) – a measure of length equal to 10.5 vershoks (approximately half a meter).

Once, when they were eating, Antony bade Paul eat more than he himself ate, for he pitied him as one not yet accustomed to strict fasting.

But he answered:

"If you, Father, eat more, then I will too."

"I have enough," said Antony, "because I am a monk."

And Paul answered:

"I too have enough, because I too want to be a monk."

And always Paul performed all that Antony commanded him.

Once Antony ordered that a garment be sewn for him; when Paul had sewn it, Antony said:

"You have sewn it badly; rip it out and sew it again."

And again he bade him unpick the newly sewn garment and sew it anew.

All this Antony did in order to test the patience and obedience of Paul. And Paul in no way murmured at it, but with zeal and diligence performed all Antony's commands.

At last Antony became convinced of Paul's aptitude for desert life and said to him:

"Now you have indeed become a monk in the name of the Lord Jesus."

And Antony bade him live in solitude, making a cell for him at a distance of four stone-casts[26] from his own. And the blessed Paul dwelt near St. Antony in that separate cell, laboring day and night in monastic exploits; for this he received from God power over unclean spirits, to cast them out and heal infirmities.

Once a youth was brought to St. Antony who had in him an unclean spirit, very evil and strong, one of the princes of darkness, who blasphemed God.

But Antony said:

"This is not my business, for I have not received from God power over the strongest demons, but Paul the Simple has this gift." And he went with the youth to Paul and said to him:

26. That is, at such a distance from his cell as one could throw a stone four times.

"Abba Paul! Cast the unclean spirit out of this youth, that the youth may return to his house healthy, praising God."

But Paul said:

"And you, Father, why did you not cast him out?"

Antony answered:

"I have one urgent matter, and therefore I have brought him to you."

And leaving the demoniac youth and Paul, Antony went away. And Paul, after praying to God, said to the demon:

"Devil! Abba Antony commands you to come out of this man."

The devil, however, answered with abuse:

"I will not come out, you all-malicious and lying old man!" Then Paul, taking the skin he wore, began to beat him, saying:

"Come out! Thus St. Antony has commanded you."

But the devil did not wish to come out. Then Paul said:

"Either you come out, or I shall pray to Christ, and it will go ill with you."

But the demon, blaspheming Christ, said:

"I will not come out."

Then Paul was wroth with the demon, and at noon, when in Egypt the sun burns like a fiery furnace, he climbed upon a stone and stood upon it like an immovable pillar, crying out to Christ:

"Lord Jesus Christ, crucified under Pontius Pilate! Thou knowest that I shall not come down from this stone, even though I should die upon it, and I shall not taste bread or water until Thou hearest me and casteth the demon out of this youth."

While he was still speaking thus, the demon began to cry out:

"I am coming out, I am coming out, and I know not where I shall be." And coming out of the youth, the demon became a great serpent, seventy cubits long, and settled in the Red Sea[27]. Thus did St. Paul overcome the devil by his simplicity and his humility; for lesser demons are cast out by men through the power of faith, while the princes of

27. The Chermnoe, or so-called Red Sea, is a long, narrow strait of the Indian Ocean, separating the Arabian peninsula from Egypt and Asia from Africa. Through this sea the Jews crossed under Moses on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land, that is, Palestine (Ex. 14:1–31).

demons who hold command are overcome by men through the power of humility, as was this St. Paul.

The Blessed Paul also possessed the gift of discernment. Once, entering a certain monastery, he stood by the church, observing who entered it and with what thought. It was Vespers, and all entered the church with joyful faces and enlightened souls, and with each of them there entered with joy also his guardian Angel. But one brother came to the church with a gloomy face and an embittered soul, surrounded by demons, each of whom was dragging him toward himself; while his guardian Angel followed at a distance, in dejection and in tears. Seeing this, the saint was grieved and sorrowed greatly over the perishing brother; in his great sorrow St. Paul did not even enter the church, but sat outside it weeping. When the church service was ended, all the brethren came out just as they had gone in, and the Divine light illumined them. Paul also saw the one who had formerly been gloomy; and behold, his face shone as the face of an Angel, the grace of the Holy Spirit overshadowed him, and his guardian Angel joyfully supported him by the hand; but the demon, from afar, wept and did not dare to come even a little nearer to him.

Seeing so swift a change come over the brother, the Blessed one rejoiced, and, stopping him, he told those around what he had seen, and then asked the brother the cause of his sudden transformation.

The brother, seeing himself exposed by a Divine revelation in the presence of all the people, related everything about himself:

"I am," he said, "very sinful: for many years up to this day I have lived in lawlessness. Entering the church today, I heard the reading of the book of the prophet Isaiah, or rather of God Himself speaking through the prophet: 'Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; learn to do well: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow' (Is. 1:16–18)[28]. Hearing this, I was moved in my soul; my spiritual eyes were opened, and, recognizing my wickedness and impiety, I said in my soul to God with

28. ("Crimson," that is, dark red.) That is, I will wash from you those sinful stains, cleansing you of them completely (cf. Ps. 50:9). God, in His mercy toward men, forgives their sins, but only on the condition of sincere repentance and moral correction.

contrition: 'Thou, O Lord, didst come into the world to save sinners, as Thou hast now made known to me through Thy prophet; fulfil this in deed with me the sinner. For I vow from now on, with Thy help, not only to do no evil to anyone, but also to abandon all lawlessness and to serve Thee, O Master, with a pure conscience; only do Thou Thyself receive me repenting and reject me not, who fall down before Thee.' With such resolutions," he continued, "I went out of the church, having determined in my heart to sin no more before God."

Hearing this, all with a loud voice glorified God, who receives everyone who turns to Him in repentance.

So far-seeing was St. Paul, for through his simplicity and guilelessness he was filled with the grace of God. And who indeed is more pleasing to God than the guileless? "Integrity and uprightness," says the Lord through the mouth of the Psalmist, "let them preserve me" (Ps. 24:21).

The Venerable one lived many years in his holy simplicity, and having wrought many miracles, he departed to the Lord[29]. He who on earth was simple and unlearned has now become the wisest in heaven, more than all the wise men of this world, and with the wise Cherubim he beholds Christ, the Power of God and the Wisdom of God. For true wisdom consists in this: to fear God, and in purity of soul and guilelessness of heart to serve Him and to be well-pleasing to Him.

By the prayers, O Lord, of Thy servant Paul the Simple, make us also wise in the fulfilment of Thy commandments. Grant that we may have the fear of Thee as the beginning of wisdom, so that, from reverence for Thee, turning aside from sin, we may do good before Thee and receive Thy mercy for ever. Amen.

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Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Gaius, Faustus, Eusebius and Chaeremon

Память святых мучеников Гаия, Фавста, Евсевия и Херимона

29. Venerable Paul died in the fourth century.

These saints were disciples of St. Dionysius of Alexandria. Sts. Gaius and Faustus were persecuted and received a martyr's death together with their teacher. Eusebius and Chaeremon, after the exile of St. Dionysius, by God's help visited those imprisoned in the dungeons, buried the bodies of the martyrs, and lived until the reign of the emperor Decius. For confessing the faith of Christ they endured cruel torments, but remained unshaken. They taught the faith of Christ to a multitude of pagans and baptized them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit—some secretly, others openly. Afterwards they were seized, beheaded with the sword, and gave up their blessed souls to the Lord[30].

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Davictus and his daughter Callisthenia

Память святого мученика Давикта и дочери его Каллисфении

This Davictus[31] was the governor of Ephesus[32] in the reign of the emperor Maximian. For refusing to give his daughter in marriage to the impious pagan emperor, Davictus was deprived of honor and wealth, exiled to Melitene[33], and there beheaded with the sword. Callisthenia at first took refuge in Nicomedia, then withdrew into Thrace[34] and settled there with a certain woman, and by her prayer healed the eyes of the woman's daughter. After the death of Maximian, Callisthenia returned to her homeland and went to the wife of the em-

30. Faustus, Eusebius and Chaeremon, according to the testimony of their teacher himself, St. Dionysius, were deacons. Eusebius (the church historian) adds that Eusebius the deacon later became bishop in the Church of Laodicea in Syria, while Faustus, a venerable elder, died a martyr's death during his lifetime, having been beheaded. – They died in the second half of the third century.

31. According to Greek sources, Davikt is called Adauctus.

32. Ephesus – the principal city of the Asian province of Asia Minor; situated on the river Cayster. At present, on the site of ancient Ephesus there is a poor Turkish village called Ayasoluk.

33. Melitene – a region in the northern part of Lesser Armenia, not far from the river Euphrates. Under the emperor Trajan (98–117) the village of the same name as the region grew here to the size of a considerable city.

34. Thrace – a region in the Byzantine Empire, in the northeastern part of the Balkan peninsula.

peror Licinius, Constantia, who was the sister of St. Constantine the Equal-to-the-Apostles and professed the Christian faith. There she related everything about herself to the empress. The empress received her kindly and helped her to recover her father's estate, which had been taken away by Maximian. Having received this property, Callisthenia distributed it all to the poor. She transferred the body of her father from the place of his confinement to Asia and built a church in his memory. As for herself, having spent the rest of her life in a God-pleasing manner, she reposed in peace in the Lord.

* * *

Commemoration of the Venerable Martyr Peter, Presbyter of Capetolia

Память преподобномученика Петра, пресвитера Капетолийского

St. Peter was born and grew up in the city of Capetolia[35]; he was married and had three children, distinguished himself by wisdom, and turned many to the right path. Afterwards he received the monastic tonsure and, against his will, was ordained presbyter by the bishop of Bostra[36]. As a Christian teacher he was seized by the Agarenes and led to Damascus for torment. There they cut out his tongue, but miraculously he afterwards began to speak even more clearly. Then they cut off his right hand and foot, gouged out his eyes, nailed him to a cross, and finally severed his head, and burned his body[37].

* * *

NOTES

6310. In the very first period of his governance of the Diocese of Kazan, St. Gurias took care to establish monasteries in the Kazan region with missionary aims. He wished that the future monks of the Kazan monasteries should spend all their time preaching the word of God among the unbelievers and engaging in the teaching of young children. To these ends it seemed necessary to St. Gurias to provide the monasteries with estates

35. Capitolias – a city on the road from Jerusalem to Damascus, between Gadara and Adraa.
36. Bostra – a city in Arabia.
37. The time of St. Peter's repose is placed in the third or the beginning of the fourth century.

(*votchiny*); he expressed his intentions in a letter to the Tsar—a letter whose content is known from the reply to it of Ivan the Terrible. "Thou hast written to me," writes the Tsar to the bishop, "that in the city of Kazan thou art establishing a monastery ('Zilantov'), and that thou intendest to build others. It is a good work thou undertakest: may God help thee in it... Good is your proposal, that the elders should teach children and convert the unbelievers to the faith. To teach infants not only to read and write, but to understand what they read, so that they may in turn teach others and the Mohammedans. O God! How happy would the Russian land be, if all its bishops were elders such as the most reverend Macarius and thou!" The labors of St. Gurias were not fruitless—the aliens (chiefly Tatars) in considerable numbers were converted to Christianity.



THE FIFTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 5

5 октября

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

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Charitina,

Страдание святой мученицы Харитины,

In the reign of Diocletian there lived in Pontus a certain noble and wealthy man named Claudius; by nature he was kind and merciful to the poor. Once Claudius saw a little girl named Charitina, who in her childhood had been deprived of her parents. Claudius took pity on her, took her into his household, raised her and loved her as his own daughter. And indeed, Charitina was fully worthy of love. When she grew up she became not only beautiful of face, but was also distinguished by excellent moral qualities: meekness, humility, obedience, silence, chastity and prudence. Believing in Christ, she was kindled toward Him with a fervent love, and having betrothed herself to Him she preserved her virginity and therefore dwelt in a separate, secluded dwelling. Claudius, her guardian and master, not only did not oppose such a good purpose of hers, but greatly rejoiced in her chaste and holy life. He built for her a special house, where she lived in solitude, day and night instructing herself in the law of the Lord. Believers began to visit her, and she instructed them unto salvation, teaching them profitable discourses for the soul. And those who did not believe she brought to the true faith, preaching Christ to them. Thus Charitina was a teacher of faith and of God-pleasing life to all.

At that time the impious Roman emperor Diocletian[1] raised a severe persecution against the Christians. By his command, Christians were sought out everywhere and subjected to torments. Especially did the persecutors pursue those of whom report went out as particularly virtu-

1. The Roman emperor Diocletian reigned from 284 to 305 A.D.

ous and wise people. As such, the holy Charitina was also slandered before the city governor Domitian; she was accused of being herself a Christian and of having converted, and of converting, many others to faith in Christ. Hearing of this, the governor wrote a letter to Claudius, commanding that Charitina be sent to him. Claudius, having read the governor's message, was greatly grieved, put on sackcloth and wept for her, clearly understanding that it was impossible to resist the governor. Nevertheless, when soldiers were sent for her, he, being unable to part with Charitina, resisted them as much as he could, weeping and holding her with his own hands, and not surrendering her to her seizers. The soldiers dragged her toward themselves, while Claudius hindered them, not letting her out of his hands. Being pulled in different directions, the holy Charitina said to her master:

"Let me go, my master, and do not grieve, but rejoice, for I shall be a sacrifice pleasing to God for my sins and for yours."

The soldiers, greatly enraged, forcibly tore Charitina from the hands of Claudius, snatching her as wolves snatch a sheep from the flock, and led her to the governor. Accompanying her, Claudius said with tears:

“Remember me before the Heavenly King, when you stand before Him in the company of the holy women martyrs!”

The holy Charitina was brought to the governor and stood before him, calling upon God with all her heart for help.

The governor asked her:

"Is it true what I have heard about you, maiden, that you yourself are a Christian and that you are enticing many others, turning them to that same impious faith?"

The holy Charitina answered him boldly:

"That I am a Christian is true, but that I lead other people astray is a lie; I do not lead others astray, but turn them from impiety and error and set them on the true path, bringing them to Christ, faith in Whom is not impious, as you unjustly think, but holy and righteous. Yet your faith is full of every uncleanness, for you believe in foul and deceitful demons and carry out their will."

Hearing such an answer from the holy Charitina, the governor was greatly enraged and commanded that she be cruelly beaten. Then, placing an iron collar on her neck, he sent her for judgment to the ruler of the province. This unrighteous judge, having shown Charitina all the instruments of torture, said to her:

"Have pity on yourself, lest you perish in cruel torments. Listen to my counsel and offer sacrifice to the immortal gods, and then you will gain a threefold benefit for yourself: you will appease the gods, win the favor of the emperor, and keep your blooming beauty unharmed by cruel tortures."

In answer to this the martyr raised her eyes to heaven, asking protection for herself from there. Then, making the sign of the Cross, she said to the judge:

"You are crafty, judge, and unjust! But you will not ensnare me either by your cunning or by the fear of torments, nor will you draw me to your impiety or change my ardent desire to suffer for Christ. Rather think about what will be more profitable for your soul, and do not yourself worship lifeless idols, lest you perish together with the demons whom you honor as gods."

Hearing such words, the judge began to revile the holy martyr and commanded that the hair of her head be cut off. The saint, silent as a sheep before its shearer, kept silence, conversing in her soul with her beloved Bridegroom Christ and beseeching Him to help her accomplish the feat of martyrdom. When she had been shorn, immediately, in the sight of all, other hair grew on her head, longer and finer than before. Seeing this, the judge fell into a violent rage and commanded that burning coals be poured upon the martyr's head, by which she was sorely scorched. Then, for a greater torment of the saint, her scorched body was doused with vinegar mixed with gall. But the saint endured everything patiently, praying to the Lord and saying:

"Lord Jesus Christ, strong helper of those who hope in Thee, who didst preserve unharmed Thy three holy youths in the midst of the burning flame, hasten to help me also and strengthen me in the torments endured for Thee, lest my enemies say: where is her God?"

Having prayed, she felt relief in her sufferings and gave thanks to God. But the tormentor devised for her ever greater and greater torments: heating iron rods, he commanded that her breasts be pierced and that her ribs be scorched with burning candles. And the holy Charitina, as if not feeling the material fire, was kindled by the spiritual flame of divine love and did not cease to confess Jesus Christ with heart and lips. Seeing such firmness in the saint, the tormentor ordered that she be drowned in the sea. The servants, taking her, led her to the sea. And the saint, as she went, cried out to God:

"I thank Thee, Lord my God, that for the sake of Thy holy Name, after the torment of fire, I shall pass through the water of the sea; vouchsafe that I appear pure on the day of resurrection; and now, as always, show Thy wonders in me, that Thy great Name may be glorified yet more."

Meanwhile the servants brought Charitina to the sea and, tying a large stone to her neck, cast her into the depths of the sea. But the stone immediately came loose from her neck and vanished in the sea, while the saint, invisibly strengthened by the power of God, stood upon the waves and walked upon them as upon solid ground. Coming out onto the shore, she returned to the judge and said to him:

"Behold the power of my Christ, and believe in Him!"

The judge, seeing that Charitina had not drowned but was alive, was so greatly frightened that he almost lost consciousness and was silent. Scarcely coming to himself, he said that she was a sorceress and had been saved from drowning in the sea by magic, and commanded that she be taken and bound naked to a wheel beneath which various sharp iron instruments, knives and swords, and a multitude of burning coals had been placed. The judge ordered the servants to turn the wheel with the saint fastened to it, so that the sharp instruments placed beneath the wheel would tear her body and the burning coals would scorch it, thereby causing the saint still greater torment. But the servants could not carry out the tormentor's command, for by the will of God the wheel did not turn, their hands grew weak, and the burning coals went out. The saint remained unharmed, for the Angel of the Lord protected and guarded the bride of Christ. Seeing this, the judge

again fell into a rage and commanded that her fingernails and toenails be torn out and her teeth knocked out—and the saint bore these torments also with courage. Then the lawless judge decided to violate her virginity, and for this purpose commanded that a multitude of dissolute men be gathered, to give the saint over to them for defilement. The holy Charitina, hearing this godless command of the unrighteous judge, said:

"My Christ is with me: He will destroy all your wicked design and will take me to Himself undefiled."

Having said this, the martyr raised her hands and fixed her gaze toward heaven, fervently praying to God that He would deliver her from the hands of the impious. When the gathered debauchees were already about to defile her, she suddenly yielded her pure and blameless soul into the hands of her Lord,[2] and her virginal body lay dead among the vile men, filled with unclean desire. Seeing that the saint was dead, the judge commanded that her body be placed in a skin bag, and, having poured sand into the bag, that it be cast with the body of the saint into the sea. Thus she who in life had walked unharmed upon the waters was drowned in the sea dead! Three days later the sea waves cast the body of the saint upon the shore, undamaged by the water. Claudius, who had raised the holy Charitina as his own daughter, took her honorable and much-suffering body and, with tears and joy, gave it a fitting burial, glorifying Christ the Savior, born of the Most Pure Virgin, to Whom be honor and glory unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

O Charitina, with strong mind, having established thy soul in faith, thou didst openly put to shame the adversary who fought against thee; thou standest before Christ, O all-blessed one, bearing the crimson garment of thy blood, and rejoicing evermore with the Angels: pray for us, O passion-bearer.

* * *

2. St. Martyr Charitina suffered about 304 A.D. in the city of Amisus, in Pontus, on the southern shore of the Black Sea.

Life of the Venerable Damian of the Kiev Caves

Житие преподобного Дамиана Печерского

When we, afflicted with illnesses of soul and body, shall, according to the word of Scripture, call upon the presbyters for help, that they may anoint us with oil, let us call to mind with them also the presbyter and healer who pleased God, the blessed Damian, who contended in the good contest at the holy Kiev Caves Monastery in the days when the Venerable Theodosius was abbot.

This monk, worthy of wonder, zealously imitated the angelic life and all the virtues of his Venerable Father and teacher, Theodosius. According to the testimony of many, he was humble in heart, obedient, and submissive to all; those who dwelt with him in the same cell were especially witnesses to his meekness, his keeping vigil by night, his diligent reading of the holy books, and his frequent rising for prayer. These same witnesses tell also of the many other labors of this man, who was so great a faster and so distinguished for abstinence that, apart from bread and water, he ate nothing else until his very death. For his godly life, he was deemed worthy to receive from the Lord the gift of working miracles, and especially the grace of healing the sick, like St. Damian the Unmercenary and Wonderworker, whose name he bore. Whenever anyone brought a sick child to the Venerable One, or led to him an adult suffering from some ailment, Theodosius would command the blessed Damian to pray over the sick person. With humility and uncomplaining obedience, deeming himself unworthy of the gift of healing, Damian would then offer prayers over the sick and anoint them with holy oil; and by the grace of God, all received healing and departed in health.

Thus the blessed Damian labored for many years in the monastic life, pleasing God, and, having accomplished many works for the salvation of his soul, became worthy of eternal life. When he had reached the end of this temporal life, he fell ill, and, seeing his end approaching, began to pray to God with tears:

"My Lord, Jesus Christ! Deem me worthy to share in the glory of Thy saints, and with them to be deemed worthy of Thy, my teacher,

the Venerable Theodosius; but number me together with him in Thy light, which Thou hast prepared for the righteous."

As he prayed thus, an Angel suddenly appeared at his bedside in the likeness of the Venerable Theodosius. Bending over Damian and kissing him lovingly, he said to him:

"Child! The Lord to whom you pray has sent me today to tell you that your petition shall be fulfilled: you shall be numbered among His saints and shall dwell with them in the Kingdom of the Heavenly Master. And when the Lord commands you to depart from this world and go to Him, then we shall be inseparable in that light also."

Having said this, the Angel became invisible. The blessed Damian understood that a vision from God had been granted him, for he had not seen the one who spoke to him enter or leave by the doors, but had seen him become invisible in the very place where he had appeared. At once he summoned a novice and sent him to the Venerable Theodosius, asking him to come to him. When the saint came immediately, the blessed Damian asked him with a joyful countenance:

"Will it be so, holy Father, as you promised me today in the vision?"

The Venerable Theodosius, knowing nothing of this, answered:

"I do not know, my son, what I promised you."

Then the blessed Damian told him how he himself had prayed, and how someone had appeared to him in the likeness of the Venerable Theodosius and had made him this promise.

Hearing this, the God-inspired Theodosius gave praise to God and said with tears to the Venerable One:

"Truly, child, it shall be as was promised you, for an Angel of God appeared to you in my likeness; but I myself, being a sinner, how can I promise such glory as is prepared for the righteous?"

The blessed Damian, hearing these words, was filled with joy and hope. Meanwhile, the monks gathered in his cell; he kissed them all, and, making a good confession, peacefully gave his soul into the hands of the Lord, when the Angels came to receive it, and his face shone, revealing the joyful parting of soul from body[3]. Then the Venerable

3. Venerable Damian reposed in 1070. His relics rest in Antony's Cave in the Kiev Caves Lavra.

Theodosius ordered the beater to be struck, that all the brotherhood might gather; with chanting and great honor they buried in the cave the precious body of Christ's servant, to the glory of God, praised in the Trinity.

Through the prayers of this blessed healer, Damian, may the Lord deem us also worthy to be participants throughout the endless ages in His Kingdom, where there is no sickness. Amen.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Jeremiah of the Kiev Caves

Житие преподобного Иеремии Печерского

Our Russian land, too, was made illustrious by a Prophet Jeremiah —not the ancient one, but a new one—and it is of him that we shall speak here. Our blessed Father Jeremiah of the Kiev Caves attained a great and venerable age; he even remembered the baptism of the Russian land, which took place in the days of the Right-believing Grand Prince Vladimir[4]; at that time the blessed Jeremiah also received holy Baptism. Many years later, he came to the holy Monastery of the Kiev Caves to our Venerable Fathers Anthony and Theodosius, received the great angelic habit, the schema, and therein labored in a manner pleasing to God, imitating the lives of the holy Fathers. For his great virtue he received from God the gift of foreknowing the future and discerning the thoughts of men; when the Venerable One saw an evil thought in someone, he rebuked him privately and urged him to beware of the devil's prompting, especially if some brother was planning to leave the monastery. Then Jeremiah, having discerned this, would go to the brother, rebuke his intention, and comfort him, exhorting him to endure, to wage a steadfast and unceasing warfare against the hater of good and our enemy, and not to give way to wavering; and he strengthened the brother so greatly by his counsel that the latter abandoned his intention forever. And whatever the blessed man foretold to anyone, whether good or ill, the elder's word always came to pass.

Having lived many years in this manner and benefited many by his foresight, St. Jeremiah reposed at a great age[5], and, leaving in the cave

the covering of his soul—his body—departed to the ancient Prophets, there to behold, face to face, the mysteries of Him who is the Ancient of Days, God the Father, to whom be glory, with His Only-begotten Son and the Spirit of one Essence, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Matthew of the Kiev Caves

Житие преподобного Матфея Печерского

The blessed Father Matthew of the Kiev Caves was like the first of the Apostles and Evangelists not in name alone: as to that Apostle it was given to see the land of Ethiopia and reprove its people's unbelief, so this blessed man, while living the monastic life in the Monastery of the Kiev Caves in the days of the holy founders[6] of that monastery, was deemed worthy, for his great labors, to receive from God such a gift that he could clearly see the faces of the subterranean Ethiopians—the demons—reprove them, and reveal their secret plots for the benefit of those seeking salvation.

The blessed elder Matthew once stood in church in his place. Raising his eyes, he looked upon the brotherhood standing in the two choirs and singing, and saw a demon in the guise of a warrior walking among the brethren; on the skirts of his garment were sticky flowers. Taking a flower, he would throw it at one of the singers; the brother to whom the flower clung, after standing for a little while, would allow his mind to grow weak, devise some excuse for himself, leave the church, go to his cell, and give himself over to sleep, never returning to the church for the singing. But if the flower thrown by the devil did not cling to a monk's garment, that monk would stand alert through Matins to the end, and only then go to his cell. The elder told the brotherhood of his vision, and thereafter they all took care not to leave the church.

The blessed elder had the custom, at the end of Matins, when the brotherhood dispersed to their cells, of being the last to leave the

4. The Baptism of the Russian land under the holy Prince Vladimir took place in 988.
6. Sts. Antony and Theodosius.

church. Once, having thus left the church, he sat beneath the church's beater, wishing to rest a little, for his cell was far from the church. And behold, he saw what seemed a great crowd coming from the monastery gates. Raising his eyes, he saw a demon sitting proudly upon a swine, with many demons accompanying him. The elder asked them:

"Where are you going?"

"For Michael Tobolkovich," answered the demon sitting on the swine.

Having made the sign of the Cross, the elder went to his cell. When it began to grow light, the saint, understanding the meaning of the vision granted him, said to his disciple:

"Go and ask whether Michael is in his cell."

The disciple went, and was told that Michael had gone outside the monastery enclosure after Matins that day. Then the elder told the abbot and the senior brethren of the vision. The abbot summoned the brother, questioned him, instructed him with edifying counsel, and dismissed him to his cell.

Father Matthew, who had the gift of foresight, also taught the other brethren with love and advised them to remain in their cells, constantly remembering God and praying for the forgiveness of their sins.

During the time of Venerable Matthew, the blessed Abbot Theodosius reposed; after him Stephen was abbot, and after Stephen, Nikon. Under this abbot it befell the blessed Matthew to see the following vision. Once, while standing at Matins, he raised his eyes, wishing to see the abbot, the blessed Nikon, but saw that an ass was standing in the abbot's place; then Matthew understood that Nikon had not come to Matins. The elder related his vision, and the abbot understood that this vision had been given for his admonition, and he repented bitterly. From that time, setting aside not only idleness but every urgent monastery task, he made it his custom to come to the church before all others. Thus this vision moved him to strive all the more toward blessedness. Many other visions also came to this blessed elder, and he related them for the benefit of the brethren. Having attained a great old age, he reposed in the Lord in a good confession[7]; his honorable relics lie incor-

rupt in the cave[8] with the holy fathers, and he himself prays for us, standing before the throne of the Lord, that we may be delivered from the snares of the enemy and receive eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of Holy Martyr Mamelchfa

Память святой мученицы Мамелхфы

Holy Martyr Mamelchfa, a native of Persia, was at first a priestess of a certain pagan goddess[9]. Once she saw in a dream an Angel, who revealed to her the mysteries of the Christian faith. Waking in fear, she related her dream to her sister, who was a Christian. The sister brought her to the bishop. The bishop, hearing of Mamelchfa's dream, persuaded her to accept Christianity and baptized her, her sister standing as her sponsor at the holy font. Enraged at Mamelchfa's conversion to the faith of Christ, the pagans stoned her while she was still clothed in the garment of baptism[10]. Her body was cast into a ditch, from which it was taken up by two Christians and given honorable burial. Afterward the bishop of the city where Holy Mamelchfa suffered martyrdom obtained from the Persian king permission to destroy the temple of the pagan goddess and to build on its site a church in the name of Saint Mamelchfa[11]. In this church the body of the holy martyr

7. In 1088.
8. In Antony's Cave.
9. According to some copies of the Prologue, Mamelchtha was originally a priestess of the Greek pagan goddess Artemis, whose veneration was especially widespread in the East.
10. In antiquity Christians wore white garments, in which they were baptized, for 8 days after baptism. Probably this white garment served in the eyes of the pagans as a clear sign of Mamelchtha's belonging to the Christian community, and was the cause of Mamelchtha's swift martyr's end. According to a fuller account of this, the pagans, soon after Mamelchtha's baptism, approached her, demanding that she offer sacrifice to Artemis; but she refused and bravely declared herself a Christian, for which she was subjected to many torments, during which she died.
11. The time of the martyr's end of St. Mamelchtha may conjecturally be assigned to the 5th century. The Byzantine emperor Theodosius II the Younger, in 422, concluded peace with the Persians, which lasted until 502; this explains why the Persian king permitted the Christian bishop to destroy the above-mentioned pagan shrine, evidently from a desire to maintain good, peaceful relations with the mighty Byzantine Empire.

was laid. At the translation of the relics of Holy Martyr Mamelchfa, many wonders and healings were wrought by them, and many of the pagans turned to Christ.

* * *

Celebration of the Moscow Hierarchs Peter, Alexis, Jonah and Philip

Празднование святителям московским Петру, Алексию, Ионе и Филиппу

As three great pillars of Orthodoxy, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom preserved undamaged the edifice of the ancient Eastern Church during the persecutions that fell upon her from the heretics, so also three great hierarchs of the Church of Moscow, Peter, Alexis and Jonah, preserved Orthodoxy unharmed on the holy land of Russia in the grievous times of its internal disorders and calamities from numerous external enemies. And as the Universal Church, besides the celebrations assigned to each of the three Ecumenical hierarchs individually, established a special feast dedicated to all three hierarchs together, firmly remembering that they had one faith, one zeal for it, and one love for their neighbors, which led them equally to expose their lives to dangers for those neighbors, so also in holy Russia, from the time of Tsar Theodore Ioannovich and Patriarch Job (from 1596), the three sacred names of the Moscow primates were joined in one common celebration on October 5.

But the Russian land had among the Moscow primates yet another guardian of Orthodoxy, a punisher of evil morals and a sufferer for the faith and the truth, whose name for unknown reasons remained for a long time unjoined to the celebration of October 5. This was St. Metropolitan Philip.

The first to call attention to this was His Eminence Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow. In 1875 the Most Holy Synod, at his petition, ordained that together with the sacred memory of the Moscow metropolitans Peter, Alexis and Jonah, the memory of St. Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow, should be commemorated on October 5. In that same year the rite of celebration for all four hierarchs together, composed by Met-

ropolitan Innocent, was confirmed by the Most Holy Synod. This celebration is observed in Moscow to the present day. On the eve of the feast, that is, on October 4, in the Great Dormition Cathedral a short Vespers is served with the solemn moleben singing to the hierarchs, as is customarily done in all the Moscow churches and monasteries on their patronal feasts. Then at the proper time an All-night Vigil with festive ringing is served in all the churches of the capital from the evening. At the sound of the bell for Vespers, the local icon of St. Alexis is carried in procession from the Chudov Monastery to the Dormition Cathedral, where it remains until Vespers of the following day.

Troparion, Tone 4:

First hierarchs of Russia, keepers of the apostolic traditions, unshaken pillars, teachers of Orthodoxy, Peter, and Alexis, Jonah and Philip, pray to the Lord of all to grant peace to the world, and great mercy to our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Among hierarchs you lived piously, and you led the people to godly wisdom, and you were well pleasing to God; wherefore from Him you were glorified with incorruption and with miracles, as disciples of the divine grace.

Life of Saint Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria

Житие святого Дионисия, епископа Александрийского

Saint Dionysius was born in Alexandria[12] of wealthy and noble parents who were pagans[13]. In his youth he received a good pagan education and was devoted to paganism. Upon completing his edu-

12. Alexandria was a famous city founded by Alexander of Macedon in 331 B.C. on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, in Lower (Northern) Egypt, at the mouth of the Nile. After Rome, Alexandria was the first city in the world, and it served as a center of trade, industry, and especially of pagan learning; in the first centuries of Christianity it became a nursery of Christian enlightenment. Christianity was brought there, according to tradition, by the Evangelist Mark, around the years 59–60 A.D. At present Alexandria (in Turkish and Arabic, Iskandariya) belongs to the number of the most strongly fortified port cities and most important commercial centers on the Mediterranean Sea, with a population of more than 230,000 inhabitants.

13. St. Dionysius of Alexandria was born about 195.

cation, Dionysius first served as a rhetor[14] and taught young men eloquence in the spirit of the pagan learning he had studied. But his clear and bright mind could not fail to see the coarse errors and superstitions of the pagan faith in which he had been born and raised, and the shortcomings of the pagan philosophy in whose principles he had been trained. His inquiring spirit, hungering and thirsting for truth, could find no satisfaction in pagan knowledge and beliefs; his heart sensed the vanity and falsehood of paganism and, not yet having come to know the true God, already strove toward Him. And so Dionysius, desiring to know the truth, became acquainted with various human teachings and beliefs and compared them with one another. This sure path of impartial investigation of human doctrines led Dionysius, in his ardent striving to attain the true faith, to the knowledge of the one true God and to the conscious acceptance of the faith of Christ. Saint Dionysius later said of himself that he "turned to Christ by the path of free inquiry, impartially testing human doctrines."

At that time in Alexandria, renowned for its pagan schools and scholars, alongside the many-sided development of the learning of the pagan world of that day, Christian enlightenment had also reached a considerable degree of flourishing. The distinguished leaders of the Christian so-called "catechetical"[6355] school that had arisen there combined in their teaching, by the power of their gifts, theological and philosophical learning, and were well acquainted with pagan learning and its representatives. Under the influence of these Christian teachers, the best of the pagans often came to know the true faith of Christ and abandoned their pagan impiety. Dionysius, already acquainted with many Christian writings, entered into close fellowship with the Alexandrian Christian teachers, at the head of whom were Heraclas[15] and especially the renowned Origen[6357]. Many pagans gathered to Origen, as to a distinguished scholar, to hear philosophy and mathematics, and

14. That is, he taught the science of the art of oratory, which at that time had reached the highest degree of flourishing and was highly prized not only in the pagan but also in the Christian world, and had great religious, political and educational significance.

15. Heraclas, the well-known Christian teacher, was at first Origen's assistant in teaching at the Alexandrian Catechetical school. In 231 Heraclas succeeded Origen in directing the Catechetical school; in 233 he was raised to the episcopal see of Alexandria, † 246.

Origen made use of this and laboured successfully for the glory of the name of Christ, applying his labours and knowledge so as to bring these listeners to union with Christ.

Dionysius soon became a zealous disciple of Origen, and with all the ardor of an inquiring spirit he set about studying the truths of the Christian teaching, whose superiority over the pagan he at once recognized. With great diligence and love he read the Apostolic Epistles, especially the Epistles of the holy Apostle Paul, which made a deep impression on him and effected a decisive transformation in all his beliefs and views, the result being his fully conscious conversion to Christianity. Having become fully convinced of the truth of Christianity, he lost no time in receiving holy Baptism[16], partly under the influence of Origen, and he entered the Catechetical School, becoming a true ornament of it. From that time holy Dionysius applied himself ever more zealously to probing the profound truths of Christian teaching, guarding its purity against the heretical false teachers and erroneous opinions that intruded into it. He was especially close to his teacher Origen, cherishing for him reverent gratitude and warm affection, and he did not sever his bond with him even when Origen was afterwards compelled to leave Alexandria, and even when he was held in prison[17]. The remarkable progress of holy Dionysius in the knowledge of the truths of Christianity and his pious life drew the attention of Heraclas, the teacher of the Alexandrian school. After a short time, holy Dionysius was raised to the rank of presbyter. When Origen departed from Alexandria, Heraclas took his place as head of the Alexandrian catechetical school. When Heraclas was raised to the rank of Bishop of Alexandria, Dionysius became head of the catechetical school; and after the death of Heraclas, he succeeded him in the Alexandrian see[18].

From the time Dionysius entered the Alexandrian see, his whole life became an unbroken series of self-sacrificing labors against the diverse

16. St. Dionysius was converted to Christianity comparatively late, in mature years. He was baptized by the Alexandrian bishop Demetrius himself (189–231).

17. Thus Dionysius wrote a letter to Origen when the latter was imprisoned under Decius. There is preserved the report that after Origen's death Dionysius wrote a letter to Theoctistus, Bishop of Caesarea, in praise of him.

enemies of the Church, external and, especially, internal. At that time the Church of Christ suffered greatly from the external persecutions of the pagan authorities, and was still more torn asunder by various dissensions, heretical false teachings and schisms, which threatened to disrupt the ecclesiastical unity and inner peace of the Church. In such a grievous time holy Dionysius was predestined by God Himself to serve as a firm support for the faithful. Thanks to him, indeed, peace in the Church remained unshaken amid all dangers and turmoil. And the holy, strictly pious life of the archpastor, his self-sacrificing love for his flock, his meekness, sincerity and humility inspired general respect for him, even among his foes and heretics. His whole life was devoted to zealous and unceasing service to the Church of God. With especially fervent zeal he cared for the conversion of unbelievers; with heartfelt, paternal meekness he treated those who had gone astray, and he took care to reconcile those who were divided. In sorrows he displayed exalted courage, in faith unshakable steadfastness, and throughout his life a remarkable, profound humility, while the whole Christian world marveled at his learning and virtues.

Having inherited from Origen a love for every kind of knowledge, holy Dionysius found it possible to harmonize this with Christian doctrine, and he continued to read attentively and examine the writings of the best pagans and of the various heretics who in his time troubled the Church of God with their false teachings. Guarding the purity of the Christian ecclesiastical teaching against heretical false doctrines and dissensions, holy Dionysius rejected them, however, only after he had personally ascertained their untenability, and only then did he arm himself with force and courage against the impious heretics.

With all his intellect and learning, meek and humble, holy Dionysius was distinguished, even in the pastoral see, by a spirit of gentleness and moderation. In that grievous time for Christians, during the cruel persecution of the impious Roman emperor Decius[19], some bishops, not

18. St. Dionysius became head of the famous Alexandrian school in 233 and held this position for 14 years.

19. The Roman Emperor Decius reigned from 249 to 251. He was a cruel persecutor of Christians; under him came the first general persecution of Christians.

out of fear of persecutions and tortures, but so as not to leave without guidance, edification and consolation the rational sheep of the flock of Christ entrusted to their care, withdrew from their cities to safer places and from there governed their flocks[6362]. So too, in that difficult time, by divine prompting, did holy Dionysius act, not out of fear of death for the name of Christ, but out of necessity and for the good of the Church of Alexandria, so as not to leave the flock without a shepherd. The prefect Sabinus sent a spy to search for holy Dionysius. For four days the saint remained at home, but the spy, being certain that he had fled, sought him in the fields, on the roads and along the rivers, and it did not occur to him to enter the archpastor's house. After this, obeying an inner prompting, holy Dionysius fled with some of his brethren, but he was seized and sent to Taposiris for torments. However, God preserved His faithful servant. Quite unexpectedly he was miraculously delivered from the hands of the soldiers by a crowd of Christian villagers. It happened in the following manner.

A Christian named Timothy had not been seized together with holy Dionysius and the other believers. Finding the house under guard, he fled in great confusion and reported the arrest of the archpastor to a villager who was on his way to a festive celebration. The news disrupted the entire celebration, and all the guests rushed to the place of the hierarch's capture with such impetuosity that the guards fled. Dionysius and his companions were laid, half-dressed, on bare beds, and, taking the villagers for brigands, they begged them not to put them to death. But the hierarch was seized by the hands and feet by some unknown friends and, despite his resistance, was carried off from there and set on an unsaddled donkey. Then, against his will, he was taken to a safe place. Who these friends were who saved the hierarch remained entirely unknown: evidently the Lord miraculously preserved holy Dionysius for the good of the Church, which at that time was persecuted, humiliated and beset by internal upheavals and disturbances.

While dwelling in a hidden place, holy Dionysius continued to govern the Alexandrian flock, sending letters to it through trusted presbyters. In that agonizing time the Church endured terrible sufferings and sorrows at the hands of the fierce pagans. Unable to bear the tortures

and torments, many of the faithful renounced Christ. Afterwards, with deep repentance and heartfelt grief, they again turned to the bishop, humbly begging to be received once more into the bosom of the Church of Christ. The meek and humble Dionysius indulgently received them among the children of the Christian Church, imposing upon them this or that prohibition or penance, and thereby saved them from utter despair[20].

To crown the evils threatening the Church of Christ, in this grievous time there appeared the schism of the Novatianists, which tore it still more with internal strife. Novatian and his followers openly and resolutely opposed the reception into the Church of those who had fallen away, and thereby aggravated its calamities and drove many to despair[6364]. Then holy Dionysius, who received the fallen with love, especially at the intercession of the confessors of Christ, rose against the Novatianists and urged Novatian to abandon this schism, so pernicious to the Church of God.

"You ought to have endured everything possible, but not to rend the Church of God," the zealous archpastor wrote to this false teacher. "It is no less glorious to die so as not to tear the Church asunder than to die so as not to offer sacrifice to idols. In my judgment, the former is even higher, because in the latter case men die for the salvation of their own soul, but in the former for the good of the whole Church."

And the indulgent pastor exerted all his strength so that afterwards, at a council, he might restore the desired peace in the Church, which had been disturbed by this pernicious schism, and in this he succeeded through his self-sacrificing labors in the spirit of Christian meekness and moderation[6365].

After the death of the impious Decius, during the brief reign of the emperor Gallus[21], the persecution of the Christians ceased, and peace was established in the Church of Christ. This peace of the Church was

20. St. Dionysius and his famous contemporary, St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, acted unanimously and in full agreement with respect to such lapsed persons. Before admitting the lapsed to communion, they required from them proof of repentance, and they did not hesitate to forgive them, contrary to the extreme opinions of many of their contemporaries, who too vehemently opposed the lapsed as having committed mortal sin. The intercession of the martyrs and confessors of Christ for the lapsed also had great significance in the practice of the Church of that time.

all the more desirable because it allowed holy Dionysius to turn with pastoral care to quieting the agitation caused by Nepos, bishop of Arsinoë, who preached a heresy called chiliasm[22]. The holy father not only wrote, in a spirit of love, a work against Nepos[23], but in the same spirit he conducted conciliar deliberations with the defenders of this heresy, and he succeeded in bringing all of them back to ecclesiastical unity[6369]. Holy Dionysius also took a lively part in the dispute then raised in the Church about the baptism of heretics[6370], caring above all to calm the agitation which this dispute had produced in the Church, and in this he succeeded through his exhortations. At the same time he zealously struggled against the impious and dangerous heresy of Sabellius, which had arisen in the Alexandrian Church. Seeking to counteract this pernicious heretical false teaching, which had caused no small scandal in the Church of Christ and had even ensnared some bishops in its net, holy Dionysius convened councils and wrote encyclical epistles against Sabellius, striving to dispel the willfulness of a proud mind that did not acknowledge the Trinity of Persons in God: God the Father, the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit[6371].

But the cares of St. Dionysius for the inner peace and welfare of the Church were suddenly interrupted by the persecution of the new Roman emperor Valerian.[24] At the very beginning of this cruel persecu-

21. Gallus reigned from 251 to 253; he was distinguished by a peaceable character and by leniency toward Christians.

22. Nepos was bishop of the city of Arsinoë, or Arsinoe, in Middle Egypt. Chiliasm appeared very early and by the end of the second century already had many followers. In the middle of the third century Nepos is its energetic representative; he had many adherents, all the more so since his teaching appeared as, so to speak, the nearest consolation of Christians in persecutions and tortures. Nepos taught that, according to the words of the Apocalypse (Rev. 20:2–6), the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ on earth must soon come, in which the believing and pious would appear as its inhabitants; the Chiliasts represented this reign in a sensuous, material sense as an earthly kingdom with earthly pleasures. The heretical teaching of Nepos became known only after his death.

23. His extensive work *On the Promises*, of which only the second part survives in its entirety, along with small fragments of the first. In this work St. Dionysius explained that the promises concerning the Kingdom of Christ are to be understood not in a sensual but in a spiritual sense, and he proved this admirably both from Revelation and by considering the nature of man. In the same work he also reasoned about the Apocalypse in general.

24. The Roman emperor Valerian reigned from 253 to 259. The persecution of Christians which he raised was distinguished by a particular, excessive cruelty.

tion, the great shepherd of Alexandria was seized, despite his grievous illness, and together with the presbyter Maximus[25] and the deacon Faustus, Eusebius and Chaeremon, was brought before the prefect Aemilianus.[26] The persecution at that time fell with its full weight especially upon the bishops and presbyters, as the representatives of the Church. Therefore the tormentors sought in every way to induce Dionysius to renounce Christ and offer sacrifice to the idols, for the others would follow his example. But Dionysius boldly answered them:

– We must obey God rather than man.

Then Aemilianus, forbidding the saint all communion with Christians, and still more any address to them with a word of edification or the preaching of the Gospel teaching, exiled him to the remote village of Cephro, which lay in the wild desert of Libya.[27] But even there, in defiance of the prohibition, the saint continued to teach the word of God and, as a valiant martyr of Christ, refused to carry out the command of the tormentors. For this the pagans stoned him many times. Notwithstanding all this, Dionysius had the consolation of converting many pagans to the holy faith of Christ even in the desert. The success of Dionysius' preaching still further exasperated Aemilianus, and he sent the holy bishop to the settlement of Colluthion, which lay in an even more distant and wild part of the Libyan desert.[28] But even from here he had the consolation of communicating with the friends of Christ and with his flock, and not only with his own flock but also with other churches. St. Dionysius had always acted thus before, clearly recognizing that he, as the head of one of the principal churches, whose voice influenced both other churches and Christian communities, must care not only for

25. Maximus was secretly sent to Alexandria to console the persecuted Christians. Afterwards he became the successor of Dionysius in the see (†282).

26. Aemilianus was prefect of Alexandria, that is, its governor, representative and deputy of the Roman emperor. But in reality he governed independently and was one of the so-called "thirty tyrants" who at that time seized imperial power in Egypt.

27. The Libyan desert, the eastern part of the vast African Sahara Desert, is a fairly low-lying country abounding in oases with towns and villages. The region to which St. Dionysius was exiled must not be understood in the strict sense of a desert, but only in the sense of the desolateness, remoteness and wildness of that place.

28. But this was next to the road, so that St. Dionysius and the brethren exiled with him could easily be seized at any moment.

his own flock but for the whole Church of Christ, especially so as to resist every attempt to disturb the general peace in the Church.

St. Dionysius spent three years in this cruel and savage captivity, and what sorrows and sufferings he endured there is known to God alone. After the accession of Gallienus,[29] he was returned from captivity, to the great consolation of his flock and of the whole Church of Christ.

Yet even in Alexandria this valiant sufferer for Christ was awaited not by peace and prosperity but by bloody turmoil and afflictions. After the sorrows of civil war there followed a grievous famine, and after the famine a plague which raged with terrible severity. With true paternal love Dionysius cared for the unfortunate, whoever they were, pagans or believers. Describing the calamities endured by the inhabitants of the Alexandrian region during this deadly plague, the bishop wrote among other things the following: "Many of our brethren, through their great love, forgetting care for their own lives, but caring for one another, boldly visited the sick, ministered to them constantly, healed them in Christ; willingly they died together with them, taking upon themselves their sufferings, as it were drawing the disease to themselves and gladly wiping away their sores. Many of those who so cared for the sick and restored them to health themselves died... And this kind of death, through piety and steadfastness of faith, is in no way inferior to martyrdom. They took the bodies of the saints in their own hands and upon their knees, closed their eyes and mouths, carried them on their shoulders, laid them down, entwining themselves with them, washed them and clothed them in garments."[30]

Thus touchingly St. Dionysius describes the feats of Christian love in that grievous time for Alexandria, especially on the part of the clergy; but he himself was for the faithful the best example of such self-sacrifice, surpassing the martyr's feat: for "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn. 15:13). And

29. Gallienus, Roman emperor from 260 to 268. He halted the persecution of Christians begun by Valerian and issued decrees by which the exiles were returned and freedom of worship was proclaimed.

30. The letter of St. Dionysius to the Church of Alexandria, offering consolation in the calamities of famine; it is cited in the Church History of Eusebius.

St. Dionysius, spending all his strength for the consolation and help of the sick, did not spare his own life for them, remembering the words of the Savior: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Mt. 25:40).

To these sorrows and his own grievous bodily infirmities there was added for St. Dionysius a new sorrow: this unwavering pillar of Orthodoxy and champion against unbelief and heresies was suspected of unsound doctrine, and he was compelled, not so much for his own defense as for the pacification of the Church, to write an epistle in which he set forth his Orthodox teaching concerning the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity.[6379] The truth prevailed, and the high esteem of the whole Church for him and for all his strictly Orthodox views, which guarded the purity of the faith in this troubled time for the Church, remained unshaken.

At last the bodily strength of the Confessor of Christ had quite failed from advanced years, sorrows and excessive labors, although his spirit was strong. When the heretical teaching of Paul of Samosata[6380] began to disturb the Church, a council of holy fathers and teachers of the Church was assembled at Antioch,[31] to which St. Dionysius was among the first invited, for everyone expected from him a decisive voice and the pacification of the Church. But the great shepherd of the Alexandrian church, weighed down by old age, felt himself wholly unable to bear the burden of so distant a journey and was compelled to decline the invitation; yet, instead of his personal oral word, he sent the council fathers a lengthy letter in which he set forth his Orthodox view of the teaching of Paul of Samosata.[32] A few days after this he peacefully

31. The Council of Antioch against Paul of Samosata assembled in 264, consisting of bishops of Syria, Asia and Arabia. At this council Paul, however, managed to cloud his heretical errors and calmed the members of the council by speaking in a conciliatory spirit and promising to refrain from all scandals; but he did not fulfill this promise. Therefore two further councils were afterwards held at Antioch (in 267 and 269), and at the last he was deprived of the episcopate; his teaching was recognized as heresy, and the baptism performed by him as invalid, since he used the names of the Persons of the Holy Trinity not in the Orthodox sense.

32. In his epistle, which has not survived to the present time, St. Dionysius, according to the testimony of the fourth-century Church historian Eusebius Pamphili, pronounced a strict judgment on the heretical opinions of Paul of Samosata, and condemned his error with decisive clarity.

yielded up his spirit to God (in 265), at the very time when the heads of the Christian churches had gathered at Antioch to denounce Paul of Samosata. The Church grieved greatly over this heavy loss, for in the person of St. Dionysius it lost a great teacher and father of the Church and an unwavering pillar of Orthodoxy.[6383]

By the prayers of the hierarch may the Lord God save His Church from all falsely named knowledge and division, and preserve church unity and peace, in a spirit of meekness and Christian love.

* * *

NOTES

6355. In Alexandria, the center of pagan learning, where there had long been the famous Museum of literary, mathematical and philosophical sciences, there arose, from apostolic times onward, in opposition to paganism, a Christian school as well, the so-called "Catechetical" school, whose influence on the future of Christianity was manifold and immeasurable. Tradition reverently ascribed the founding of this school to the Apostle and Evangelist Mark himself. In the beginning only the rudimentary instruction for those wishing to receive baptism was taught there, as the very name "Catechetical" of the Alexandrian school already indicates, and at the same time catechists themselves were trained there. But later the Alexandrian Catechetical school, by its position at the center of universal education and learning, took on the character of a theological-scholarly educational institution. This was especially promoted by one of its catechists (teachers), the famous Pantaenus (180–191), and by his no less remarkable pupil and successor, Clement of Alexandria, who commended philosophy to his hearers as a guide to faith. The Alexandrian Catechetical school reached an even more flourishing state under Origen.

6357. Origen, the pupil of Clement of Alexandria, the most famous Christian teacher of the third century, was at first outstanding among the teachers of the Alexandrian Catechetical school, but afterwards he was attacked by the Bishop of Alexandria and other representatives of the Alexandrian Church and, on the charge of certain heretical views he propagated and of voluntary self-castration, was deprived of the presbyterial rank and expelled from Alexandria, with a prohibition against church teaching; after this he established his residence in Caesarea of Palestine, where he founded a new school to which people flocked from all sides to hear the famous teacher. After that he spent some time imprisoned in a dungeon, then zealously and successfully struggled against the heretics of his time, then during the persecution of Maximian he hid from the persecutors, and in the persecution of Decius he earned the glory of a courageous confessor of Christ, and he died in Tyre in 254, in the 70th year of his life. In his numerous writings Origen advanced certain opinions of an unorthodox and heretical character, for which they were condemned as heretical, although Origen did not present his unortho-

dox opinions as indisputable truths, and was not a heretic in the proper sense. Even the most eminent of the Fathers of the Church treated Origen's theological works and merits with profound respect. In his schools he trained many remarkable fathers and teachers of the Church, some of whom owed their conversion from paganism to the Christian faith to him; he wished to harmonize knowledge and philosophy with that faith. Especially remarkable also are his labors in the study of Holy Scripture, in its interpretation, and above all in the restoration and purification of its true text, as well as his writings directed toward the defense of Christianity against heretics and enemies of Christianity. In general he accomplished very much not only for his own time but for later times as well, and all the great teachers of the Church of the fourth century made considerable use of Origen's labors.

6362. Thus acted, among others, St. Cyprian of Carthage, who courageously accepted a martyr's death for Christ (†268). Likewise, earlier than Dionysius and Cyprian, St. Polycarp of Smyrna acted in this way for a time (he died a martyr in 167), and after them St. Athanasius of Alexandria (†373). In his letters to Domitius and Didymus (251), and also to Fabius, Bishop of Antioch, St. Dionysius relates a very touching account of the Alexandrian martyrs who perished during the first persecution under Decius by beating, fire, or sword; in this he counts himself among those for whom a very long life did not prove a sufficient guarantee of pleasing their Lord, although he believed that Christ had preserved him for another opportune time. A certain bishop named Germanus, apparently, reproached him, just as St. Cyprian of Carthage was reproached for cowardice and for abandoning his flock. In reply to this (258–259) Dionysius calls God to witness that he fled not of his own desire, and (like Cyprian) appeals in justification to a divine intimation.

6364. Novatian was an outstanding and eloquent Roman presbyter during the persecution of Decius, although according to the conciliar canons he could not be ordained, since he had received only clinical baptism (that is, baptism on a deathbed) without subsequent chrismation. Later he vigorously sought the episcopal throne in Rome, but, disappointed in his calculation, he separated from the Church, becoming a bishop of the Novatians, and thereby began the pernicious schism in the Church that bears his name and threatened the Church with great disturbances and calamities. Novatian especially opposed the second favorable reception into the Church of those who had fallen away from it. According to the Novatians, the Church is a society of saints; therefore all who had fallen away and committed mortal sins after baptism must be cast out of it and in no case may be received back; the Church, it was held, has no right to forgive grievous sinners, and if it does forgive them, it itself becomes unclean and ceases to be holy. The Novatians therefore called their society, into which grievous sinners were not admitted, and into which apostates from the Orthodox Church were received only by rebaptism, "Cathari," that is, the society of the pure. Novatian societies spread widely in Carthage, Alexandria, Syria, Asia Minor, Gaul and Spain.

6365. Thus Dionysius wrote to Novatian a gentle, peaceable epistle, from which are taken the above-quoted words of the Alexandrian hierarch that martyrdom undergone with the aim of hindering schism is as glorious as martyrdom for refusing to bow down

to idols. At the same time he admonished Novatian paternally that if he could not persuade his followers to renounce the false step they had taken, then at least he could save his own soul; and if, as Novatian says in his defense, he was consecrated bishop against his will, then he must prove the sincerity of his declaration by voluntarily renouncing the rank, "in order to avoid the rending of the Church of God." Despite this peaceable epistle, Dionysius, in his own words, was hostilely disposed toward Novatian because "he cut the Church into pieces and drew some of the brethren into impiety and blasphemy, introduced the most unwelcome teaching about God, and falsely represented the merciful Lord as pitiless," and so on. Against the Novatians the hierarch wrote several epistles and struggled vigorously against them. But although, through his labors and those of certain other representatives of the Church, peace was restored in her, the Novatians had many followers, and their societies existed even to the seventh century.

6369. To this end Dionysius hastened to Arsinoë, where he demanded a conference with the followers of Nepos, and spent three days examining his book. He endeavored to speak of him with love and reverence, calling him his father and brother, and commending him for his faith, his diligence, his earnest study of Holy Scripture, and likewise for his great skill in psalmody, by which many of the brethren were delighted. "I deeply love this man," says St. Dionysius, "and also because he passed to his rest before us. Nevertheless, truth must be prized and honored above all things." The result of the conference was that the hierarch succeeded in persuading the chiliasts, and he received heartfelt thanks for his admonitions from their leader, the presbyter Coracion. The latter was so convinced that he renounced his opinion and asked that no further attention be paid to him, that no one discuss, mention or teach about him any longer. The other brethren present were also very well pleased with this conference, as well as with the conciliatory spirit and general agreement which all displayed. From this time chiliasm almost entirely died out in the Eastern Church.

6370. Clement, Tertullian, St. Cyprian of Carthage and certain other teachers of the Church, as well as some local councils, required the rebaptism of heretics when they were received into the Church; only at Rome were they received through repentance alone. Dionysius, in his views, adhered to the latter opinion, and in the surviving fragments of some of his epistles he firmly rejects the rebaptism of those heretics who had been baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, a view which was afterwards adopted at the First Ecumenical Council (325). But above all, in this hotly debated question he again acted in the admirable role of mediator. He wrote several letters on this subject to Pope Stephen of Rome. In one of the surviving letters he spoke to him of the common peace of the churches; but when Stephen refused to have communion with Firmilian, Bishop of Cappadocia, who defended the opposite view, he admonished him to take into account the serious consequences of his course of action. After Stephen's death, Dionysius wrote on the same subject to his successors Sixtus II and Dionysius of Rome, and considered this matter at greater length in his book *On Repentance*.

6371. Sabellius, proceeding from the Christian concept of the unity of God, fell into an extreme which led him to a heretical teaching contrary to the most essential foundations and dogmas of the Christian faith. He taught that if God is one in essence, then there

cannot be a Trinity of the Divine Being existing together, and that the Trinity must be understood only in the sense of the successive revelation of one and the same Person in His relation to the world and to man. According to the teaching of Sabellius, there are not three Persons of the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit are only certain forms in which God appears to men: in the Old Testament, as giving them the law, He appears as the Father; in the New, as saving men, He appeared as the Son and continues to appear as the Spirit who sanctifies them. Sabellianism, arising in the middle of the third century, had already weakened by its end, although it still had adherents even in the fourth century.

6379. The orthodoxy of St. Dionysius was called into question on account of those very letters which he wrote to various persons in defense of the orthodox teaching against Sabellius. The holy father began to be reproached with unsound belief, as if he taught incorrectly concerning the Son of God, because in his letters Dionysius had used imprudent expressions about the Holy Trinity, for which he was rebuked by his contemporary and namesake, the Pope of Rome. Then Dionysius of Alexandria hastened to write in his own defense to Dionysius of Rome an epistle pointing out the incorrectness of the interpretation of his words and expressions, partly renouncing what he considered to be errors and rash expressions, and setting forth the strictly orthodox teaching concerning the Son of God. After this all doubts concerning the orthodoxy of St. Dionysius disappeared, and he, on the contrary, came to be regarded even more than before as a pillar and mainstay of Orthodoxy.

6380. Paul of Samosata (by his place of birth), Bishop of Antioch, preached an evil heresy concerning the Holy Trinity, and chiefly concerning the Son of God. According to his teaching, there is no distinction of Persons in the Godhead: God, the Word and the Holy Spirit exist in the Father in the same way as reason and spirit exist in man. He did not acknowledge the Son of God who came down from heaven, and considered Jesus to be a mere man in whom the Godhead dwelt, as in the prophets, only to a greater degree, and who for this reason alone is called the Son of God. In addition to his heretical views, Paul introduced all the greater confusion and scandal into the Church in that he was distinguished by depraved inclinations, lived a luxurious life, abolished in his diocese the ancient church chants, replaced the hymns in honor of the Savior with hymns in honor of himself, permitted himself bodily gestures unseemly for the church pulpit, and demanded applause and the like.

6383. Antiquity unanimously ascribed to St. Dionysius the name of Great; his contemporary, St. Athanasius of Alexandria, called him the teacher of the universal Church, and the Church ascribed to him the name of Hieromartyr, for although he did not receive a martyr's death for Christ, yet all his life he bravely and valiantly struggled and labored for Christ and His holy Church, and endured condemnations, reproaches, dangers, persecutions, wanderings, difficulties and every kind of calamity and misfortune no less than the holy martyrs. The writings of St. Dionysius were of first-rate importance in the history of the development of Christian thought, through their influence on the theologians of the fourth century. Dionysius was distinguished by high learning and was well acquainted both with the objects of faith and with general erudition. The

subjects of his writings, which have come down to us only in fragments and by no means all of them, are chiefly dogmas, the interpretation of Holy Scripture, and church order, which he strove to establish not only in the churches of Egypt but also at Rome, in Armenia and in other places. Besides the above-mentioned epistles in defense of Orthodoxy against the heretical teachings of his time, his profound dogmatic work *On Nature* and the so-called *Paschal* epistles deserve particular attention; these were written in accordance with an ancient custom by which the bishop of Alexandria, where astronomy and mathematics flourished, bore the obligation of determining for the whole Church the time of the celebration of Pascha in each year; to the announcements concerning this day Dionysius always added dogmatic and moral reflections on the Risen Savior; these epistles were required to be read before the assembly of the faithful in the churches.



THE SIXTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 6

6 октября

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

Life and Passion of the Holy Apostle Thomas

Житие и страдание святого Апостола Фомы

The Holy Apostle Thomas, called the Twin[1], was born in the Galilean city of Paneas[2]. When our Lord Jesus Christ, during His sojourn on earth among men, passed through cities and villages, teaching the people and healing every illness, Thomas, having heard His preaching and seen His miracles, clung to Him with all his soul. Nourished by the sweet words of Jesus Christ and the contemplation of His most holy countenance, Thomas followed Him and was deemed worthy by the Lord to be numbered among the twelve Apostles, with whom he followed Christ even to His saving Passion. After the Lord's Resurrection, St. Thomas, by his unbelief in the words of the other Apostles concerning it, made the faith of the Church of Christ yet more firmly established; for while the other disciples of Christ said, "We have seen the Lord," he would not believe them until he himself saw Christ and touched His wounds. Eight days after the Resurrection, when all the disciples had gathered together and Thomas was with them, the Lord appeared to them and said to Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing."

1. Thomas, in translation from the Hebrew, means "twin"; he was also called Didymus, a Greek word with the same meaning.
2. Galilee is the northern part of Palestine. Paneas was a city of northern Palestine, at the foot of Mount Hermon, at the eastern source of the Jordan, on the northern boundary of the tribe of Naphtali. It received its name from Panion, a locality and cave at the foot of the southern slope of Lebanon. The son of Herod, king of Judea, Philip, renamed the city Caesarea (Caesarea Philippi) in honor of the Caesar (the Roman emperor) Tiberius. Today this once-flourishing city lies in ruins, and only a small village stands on its site.

Seeing Christ and touching His life-bearing side, Thomas cried out: "My Lord and my God" (Jn. 20:24–29).

This event concerning Thomas most plainly convinces all of the truth of the Lord's Resurrection, for Christ appeared to His disciples not as a phantom, nor in some other body, but in that very body in which He suffered for our salvation.

After the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven and the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles cast lots among themselves to determine where each should go to preach the Word of God. The lot fell to Thomas to go to India, to enlighten lands darkened by paganism and teach the true faith to the various peoples dwelling there—the Parthians and Medes, Persians and Hyrcanians, Bactrians and Brahmans, and all the most distant inhabitants of India.[6386]

Thomas grieved greatly that he was being sent to such savage peoples; but the Lord appeared to him in a vision, strengthening him and commanding him to be courageous and not to fear, and promising to be with him Himself. He soon showed him, too, a way to enter those lands.

Gundafor, king of India, desiring to build himself a palace with the greatest skill, sent his merchant Abban to Palestine, to seek there a skilled builder, experienced in construction, who could build halls like those of the Roman emperors. The Lord commanded Thomas to go to the lands of India with this very Abban. While Abban was seeking skilled architects in Paneas, Thomas met him and presented himself as a man experienced in the art of building. Abban hired him, and they boarded a ship and set sail with a favorable wind.

When they put in at a certain city, they heard the sound of trumpets and other musical instruments. The king of that city was giving his daughter in marriage, and he sent heralds to announce throughout the city that rich and poor, slaves and strangers alike, should come to the wedding; and if anyone did not wish to come, he would be subject to the king's judgment. Hearing this, Abban and Thomas, fearing as strangers to anger the king if they disobeyed him, went to the royal palace for the wedding feast. When all had sat down and begun to make merry, the Apostle took the very last place and ate nothing, took

no part in the merriment, but gave himself to contemplation. Everyone regarded him as a stranger and foreigner. Those who reclined beside him[3] said to him:

"Why have you come here, when you neither eat nor drink?"

The Apostle answered:

"I have come here not to eat and drink, but to fulfill the king's will, for the heralds loudly announced that anyone who did not appear at the wedding would be subject to the king's judgment."

Among those feasting at that time was a certain Jewish woman who played the flute beautifully, singing a greeting to each of those reclining at table. Seeing Thomas, who did not make merry but often lifted his eyes to heaven, she understood that he was a Jew; and as she played before him, she sang this refrain to him in the Hebrew language: "There is one God, the God of the Jews, who created heaven and earth."

The Apostle listened to this refrain with pleasure and asked her several times to repeat those words.

The cupbearer, seeing that the Apostle was not making merry, struck him on the face, saying:

"You were invited to a wedding; do not be sorrowful, then, but make merry and join those who are drinking."

Then the Apostle said to the man who had struck him:

"May the Lord requite you for this even in this life, and may I see the hand that struck me dragged by a dog before many witnesses!"

Some time later, the cupbearer who had struck the Apostle went out to a well, intending to bring water for the guests to dilute the wine. Suddenly a lion attacked him there, knocked him down, and killed him; then, having sucked his blood, it went away. At that, dogs came running, tore his body to pieces, and one black dog seized his right hand, dragged it to the feast, and cast it down before everyone. All those present, seeing this, were horrified and asked whose hand it was. The woman who played the flute cried out:

"Something extraordinary and mysterious is happening among us today: either God or a messenger of God is among those reclining here.

For I saw the cupbearer strike a man, and I heard that man say in Hebrew: 'May I see your right hand dragged by a dog before many witnesses!' And this, as you all see, has come to pass."

After these words, fear fell upon them all.

When the feast was over, the king, hearing what had happened, summoned the holy Apostle Thomas and said:

"Go into the palace and bless my daughter, who has been given in marriage."

The Apostle entered the bridal chamber and began to teach the newlyweds chastity and the keeping of pure virginity. Then, having prayed for them, he blessed them and departed. In their sleep the newlyweds saw Jesus, who appeared to them in the likeness of the Apostle Thomas and lovingly embraced them. The husband, thinking that Thomas stood before him, said:

"You left us before everyone else; how is it that you have come here again?"

The Lord answered:

"I am not Thomas, but his Brother; and all who renounce the world and follow Me as he does shall not only be My brothers in the life to come, but shall also inherit My kingdom. Therefore, My children, do not forget what My brother counseled you; and if, according to his counsel, you keep your virginity undefiled, you shall be deemed worthy of incorruptible crowns in My heavenly chamber.[4]"

Having said this, the Lord became invisible. Awakening from sleep, they told one another what they had seen in their dream; then they arose and prayed fervently to God throughout the night, keeping the words spoken to them in their hearts as precious pearls.

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3. In antiquity, both among the Jews and among other peoples, it was the custom not to sit but to recline at meals.

4. Such an exaltation of virginity in no way testifies that salvation within the marital union is impossible for spouses. But according to the teaching of the ancient Fathers of the Church, virgins will receive the higher reward in the Kingdom of Heaven, in accordance also with the apocalyptic image (Rev. 14:1–5). Therefore the Lord, by His Divine foreknowledge, knowing the spiritual strength and capacity of the aforementioned young spouses for a chaste life devoted exclusively to God, also urges them to preserve their virginity. In this connection, according to the Greek original of the martyrdom acts of St. Apostle Thomas, the Lord also indicated to the young spouses that the children who might be born of them would be sickly, wicked, and unfortunate.

In the morning the king entered the bridal chamber where the newlyweds were, and found them sitting apart from one another. Perplexed, he asked them the reason for keeping such a distance between them. They answered him:

"We are praying to God to grant us strength to keep perfect chastity in marriage until the very end of our lives, as we now remain in it, so that we may be crowned in the heavenly chamber with incorruptible crowns, as the Lord who appeared to us promised."

Then the king understood that the stranger who had been in the palace the day before had persuaded them to keep their virginity. He was exceedingly angered and immediately sent his servants to seize the Apostle; but they did not find him, for he had already sailed to India with Abban.

When they arrived before the Indian king Gundafor, Abban said:

"Behold, my lord, I have brought you from Palestine a skilled builder, who can construct halls to suit your majesty's pleasure."

The king rejoiced, showed Thomas the place where he wished the halls to be built, and, having determined their dimensions, gave him a large quantity of gold for the construction, then departed for another country.

Thomas received the gold and began distributing it to those in need, the poor and destitute; meanwhile, laboring in the preaching of the Gospel, he brought many to faith in Christ and baptized them.

At that time the young man who, at Thomas's counsel, had promised to keep his virginity together with his wife heard that the Apostle was preaching Christ in India, and came to him with her. Instructed by the holy Apostle in the faith of Christ, they received holy Baptism from him. The maiden was given the name Pelagia, and later shed her blood for Christ; the young man was named Dionysius and was later deemed worthy of the rank of bishop.

Returning to their homeland with the Apostle's blessing, they spread the glory of the Name of God, turning unbelievers to Christ and building churches in the cities.

After two years had passed, the king sent to the Apostle to inquire whether the construction of the halls would soon be finished. The

Apostle answered the messengers that only the roof remained to be laid. The king rejoiced, supposing that Thomas was indeed building him a palace on earth, and sent him much more gold, commanding him to construct a magnificent roof for the halls as quickly as possible.

Thomas received more gold, lifted his eyes and hands to heaven, and said:

“I thank Thee, O Lover of mankind, that Thou dost bring about the salvation of men in diverse ways!”

Again he distributed the gold sent by the king to those who asked his help, while he himself continued zealously to preach the Word of God.

After some time, the king learned that Thomas had not even begun to carry out his command, that all the gold had been distributed to the poor, and that the builder was not thinking of building at all, but was going from city to city and village to village preaching some new God and performing wondrous miracles. The king flew into a great rage and sent his servants to seize the Apostle. When St. Thomas was brought before the king, the king asked him:

"Have you built the palace?"

Thomas answered:

"I have built it, and indeed a splendid and beautiful one."

Then the king said:

"Come, then, and let us see your palace."

The Apostle answered:

"In your lifetime you cannot see this palace; but when you depart from this life, then you shall see it, and, dwelling in it with joy, you shall live there forever."

The king, thinking that he was mocking him, was greatly offended and commanded that he be cast into prison together with the merchant Abban who had brought him, where they were to languish awaiting a painful execution: the king intended to flay them alive and burn them on a pyre.

While they sat in the prison, Abban began to reproach the Apostle:

"You," he said, "have deceived both me and the king, calling yourself the most skilled of builders. And now you have squandered the king's

gold to no purpose, and you have ruined my life. Because of you I suffer and must die a cruel death: the king is harsh and will put us both to death."

But the Apostle, comforting him, said:

"Do not be afraid; the time for us to die has not yet come. We shall be alive and free, and the king will honor us for the palaces which I have built for him in the Kingdom of Heaven."

On that very night the king's brother fell ill, and he sent word to the king:

"Because of your grief I too have begun to grieve, and from this sorrow I have fallen into an illness of which I am now dying."

Immediately after this, the king's brother indeed died. The king, forgetting his former grief, fell into a new sorrow and wept inconsolably over the death of his brother. But the Angel of God, taking the soul of the deceased, carried it up into the heavenly abodes, and, passing through the dwellings there, showed it many magnificent and shining palaces, among which one was so beautiful and radiant that its beauty cannot be described. And the Angel asked the soul:

"In which of all these palaces would you most like to dwell?"

And she, gazing at that most beautiful palace, said:

"If I were permitted to dwell even in a corner of that palace, I would need nothing more."

The Angel said to her:

"You cannot live in this palace, for it belongs to your brother, and it was built with his gold by the stranger you know, Thomas."

And the soul said:

"I beg you, lord, let me go to my brother, and I will buy this palace from him, for he does not yet know its beauty; and after buying it I will return here again."

Then the Angel returned the soul to the body, and the deceased immediately came to life, and, as if awakening from sleep, he asked those around him about his brother and begged that the king come to him quickly. The king, hearing that his brother had come to life, rejoiced greatly and hastened to him, and, seeing him alive, became even more joyful. The one who had risen then began to speak to him:

"I am certain, king, that you love me as your brother; I know that you wept inconsolably for me, and if it were possible to free me from death, you would give for it even half of your kingdom."

The king answered:

"Yes, this is perfectly true."

"If you love me so," said the king's brother in reply, "then I ask of you one gift; do not refuse me it."

The king answered:

"All that I possess in my kingdom, I give to you, my beloved brother"—and he confirmed his promise with an oath.

Then the brother who had risen said:

"Give me your palace which you have in heaven, and take in exchange all my wealth."

The king, hearing such words, was confounded and remained silent, as though he had lost the power of speech. Then he said:

"How can I have a palace in heaven?"

"Truly," answered the king's brother, "there is in heaven such a palace, of which you know nothing and which you have never seen under all heaven. Thomas, whom you hold in prison, built it for you; I saw it and marveled at its inexpressible beauty, and I asked to be placed even in one corner of it, but this was not permitted to me, for the Angel who led me said: 'You cannot live in it, because it is the palace of your brother, which was built by the Thomas you know. I asked the Angel to let me go to you, so that I might buy that palace from you. So, if you love me, give it to me, and take in its place all my estate.'

Then the king rejoiced at his brother's return to life and at the palace built for him in heaven. And he said to his brother who had risen:

"Beloved brother! I swore not to refuse you anything on earth that is subject to me, but I did not promise you that palace which is in heaven. But if you wish, we have a master builder who can build you such a palace as well."

Having said this, the king at once sent servants to the prison to bring out St. Thomas together with the merchant Abban who had brought him. When they came before the king, the latter hastened to

meet the Apostle and fell at his feet, asking his forgiveness for the sin he had committed against him in ignorance. The Apostle, giving thanks to God, began to teach both brothers the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and they, moved in their souls, received his words with love. Soon afterward he baptized them and taught them to live as Christians, and the brothers, by their many almsdeeds, created for themselves eternal dwellings in heaven. Having spent some time with them and strengthened them in the holy faith, the Apostle went to other neighboring cities and villages, laboring for the salvation of human souls.

At the time when Thomas was enlightening the Indian lands with the preaching of the Gospel, the time arrived for the honorable repose of the Mother of God,[5] and all the Apostles from various lands were caught up on the clouds of heaven and transported to Gethsemane,[6] to the bier of the All-Blessed Virgin. Then the holy Apostle Thomas also was caught up from India, but he did not arrive in time for the very day of the burial of the God-glorified body of the Most Pure Theotokos. This was arranged by the will of God so that believers might be assured that the Mother of God was taken up into heaven with her body. For just as we were more firmly established in faith in the resurrection of Christ through the unbelief of Thomas, so with regard to the taking up of the Most Pure Virgin Mary the Theotokos into heaven in the flesh, we learned through the delay of Thomas. The Apostle arrived only on the third day after the burial and grieved that he had not been in Gethsemane on the very day of the burial, to accompany with the other Apostles the body of the Mother of his Lord to the place of burial. Then, by the common agreement of the holy Apostles, the tomb of the All-Holy Theotokos was opened for St. Thomas, so that he, seeing the

5. The Dormition of the Mother of God took place in the fifteenth year after the Ascension of the Lord, or in A.D. 48, according to the ancient, generally accepted tradition.

6. Gethsemane is a village or place near Jerusalem, beyond the Kidron brook, at the foot of the Mount of Olives, where there was a garden in which the Lord prayed before His sufferings, and where the Most Pure Mother of God bequeathed that Her most pure body be laid. This place received its name from the olive trees growing there in great numbers, from which much olive oil was produced (in translation from the Hebrew, Gethsemane means "place of olives," or "press," the vise for squeezing juice from olives). The Garden of Gethsemane is shown to this day at the foot of the Mount of Olives, on its southern side, where stands the burial cave of the Most Holy Mother of God, in which Her tomb is still to be found.

most honorable body, might venerate it and be comforted in his sorrow. But when the tomb was opened, they did not find the body, but only the burial shroud lying there. And from this all were firmly convinced that the Mother of God, like her Son, had risen on the third day and had been taken up into heaven with her body.

After this Thomas again appeared in the Indian lands and preached Christ there, turning many to the faith by signs and miracles. Arriving at Meliapor,[7] he enlightened many there with the preaching of the Gospel and confirmed them in the holy faith by the following miracle. In one place lay a tree of extraordinary size, which not only men but even elephants could not move from its place; Thomas, however, tied his belt to this tree and with that belt dragged the tree ten stadia[8] and gave it for the building of a church of the Lord. Seeing this, the believers were even more strengthened in the faith, and many of the unbelievers came to believe. The Apostle worked there another miracle, even greater than the first. A pagan priest killed his son and accused St. Thomas of this, saying:

"Thomas has killed my son."

A tumult arose among the people, and the gathered crowd seized St. Thomas as a murderer and demanded that the court condemn him to torment. But when no one could be found who might testify that Thomas was not involved in that murder, the Apostle of Christ began to beseech the judge and the people:

"Let me go, and I will, in the name of my God, question the dead man, that he himself may say who killed him."

All went with him to the body of the priest's murdered son. Lifting his eyes to heaven, Thomas prayed to God, and then said to the corpse:

7. Meliapor or Malipur was a city on the eastern (Coromandel) coast of the Indian peninsula. Among the Christians of this part of Asia there has existed from ancient times a tradition that the Christian faith was first planted among them by the Apostle Thomas or his disciples. When the Portuguese first arrived at the shores of India in 1500, they found in Malipur a settlement of Christians who said that they had received the faith from the Apostle Thomas, and at the end of the last century this city was called the city of St. Thomas. In general, Indian Christians from ancient times have called themselves Christians of the Apostle Thomas and trace the beginning of their Church to this Apostle.

8. A stadion is about 88 sazhens, hence 10 stadia are about 1½ versts.

"In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ I command you, young man: tell us, who killed you?"

And at once the dead man said:

"My father killed me."

Then all exclaimed:

"Great is the God whom Thomas preaches."

The Apostle was released, and the priest thus himself fell into the pit which he had dug for the Apostle. After this miracle a great multitude of people turned to God and received baptism from the Apostle.

Then the Apostle went still further, into the land of Calamidia, where King Muzdius reigned. Preaching Christ here, the saint converted to the faith a woman named Syndicia, the niece of Mygdonia, wife of the royal favorite Charisius. Syndicia persuaded Mygdonia to come to know the truth and to believe in the One God, Creator of the whole universe, whom Thomas preached. Then Mygdonia said to Syndicia:

"I would like to see that man myself who preaches the true God, and to hear his teaching from him."

Sindicia answered:

"If you wish to see the Apostle of God, dress in poor clothing, as though you were a simple and poor woman, so that you will not be recognized, and then come with me."

Mygdonia did so and went with Syndicia. They found the Apostle preaching Christ in the midst of a large crowd of simple and poor people. Mingling with the crowd, they listened to the teaching of Thomas, who spoke much about Christ the Lord and taught faith in Him, speaking also of death, of judgment and of gehenna, and of the Kingdom of Heaven. Hearing all this, Mygdonia was moved in her heart and believed in Christ; returning home, she meditated constantly on the Apostle's words, and, conversing with her niece Syndicia about Christ, she was confirmed in love for Him. From that time she began to shun unbelievers as enemies of God and to avoid all association with them in conversations and at feasts, and at the same time to withdraw in general from worldly pleasures. She also resolved to end conjugal cohabitation with her husband. This deeply grieved him, and when he could not make Mygdonia change her decision, he asked King Muzdius to send

his wife, Queen Tertiana, to persuade Mygdonia not to disdain conjugal life (Queen Tertiana and Mygdonia, the wife of Charisius, were sisters). The queen went to Mygdonia and asked her why she did not obey her husband.

Mygdonia answered:

"Because he is a pagan and an enemy of God,[9] while I am a servant of the one true God, Jesus Christ, and I do not wish to be defiled by an unbelieving and impure man."

Tertiana wished to know who this Jesus Christ was, whom Mygdonia calls the true God. Then Mygdonia set before her the preaching of the Apostle Thomas and taught her the knowledge of the true faith. Tertiana, desiring to know more definitely about Christ and to learn the faith better, wished to see the Apostle himself and to hear his preaching. Having consulted with Mygdonia, she secretly sent for the Apostle, and when he came, both of them entreated him to set them on the way of truth. He, preaching Christ to them, enlightened them with the light of faith, washed them in the font of holy baptism, and taught them to keep the commandments of God and all the virtues. Tertiana and Mygdonia, having fixed in their hearts all that had been said to them, agreed to serve the Lord in purity and not to live with their husbands as with unbelievers. The Apostle, by the power of God, continued to work numerous miracles and to heal every kind of infirmity, and many, not only from among the common people but even from among the royal courtiers, seeing the signs performed by the Apostle and hearing his teaching, turned to Christ. One of the king's own sons, named Azan, believed and was baptized by the Apostle; for the Lord Himself worked through the Apostles, multiplying His Church and spreading the glory of His name.

Queen Tertiana, returning from Mygdonia, persevered in prayer and fasting and continued to refuse carnal cohabitation with her husband.

The king, astonished at such a change in his wife, said to his friend Charisius:

"Wishing to return your wife to you, I have lost my own, and mine has become even worse toward me than yours toward you."

After this, the king and Charisius conducted the strictest inquiry into the cause of the change they had noticed in their wives, and they learned that a certain foreigner, a stranger named Thomas, by teaching them the Christian faith, had persuaded them to end their marital cohabitation with their husbands. They also learned that the king's son Azan, and many of the servants of the royal household, as well as the officials and an innumerable multitude of the common people, had believed in Christ as a result of Thomas's preaching. All this roused their anger, and they seized Thomas and cast him into prison. After this the Apostle was brought before the king for judgment. The king asked him:

"Who are you, a slave or a free man?"

Thomas said:

"I am the slave of Him over whom you have no power."

The king said:

"I see that you are a wicked slave who has run away from his master and come into this land to corrupt people and trouble our wives. Tell me, then, who is your master?"

"My Master," the Apostle answered, "is the Lord of heaven and earth, the God and Creator of every creature. He has sent me to preach His holy Name and to turn people from error."

The king said:

"Cease, deceiver, your crafty speeches, and obey my command: as you by your cunning turned our wives away from us so that they would not live with us, so now turn them back to us. For if you do not bring it

9. According to the teaching of St. Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 7:12–14), this should not hinder a Christian woman from continuing the marital union with a pagan husband; but with regard to Migdonia and Sindikia, the Apostle Thomas made a stricter demand, or, rather, they themselves were stricter and did not wish to continue marital cohabitation with pagan spouses. This circumstance is explained, without doubt, by the fact that only through the fulfillment of this requirement could the conversion of their husbands to Christianity be brought about, which is confirmed by the very outcome of the whole affair.

about that our wives live with us again in their former love and fellowship, we will hand you over to a cruel death."

The Apostle answered:

"It is not fitting for the handmaidens of Christ to have marital fellowship with lawless husbands, nor for believers to be defiled by wicked and unbelieving men."

Hearing this, the king ordered red-hot iron plates to be brought and the Apostle to be set barefoot upon them. When this was done, water suddenly appeared beneath the boards and cooled them. Then Saint Thomas was thrown into a furnace heated to a great heat, but on the next day he came out of it alive and unharmed.

After this Charisius gave the king this counsel:

"Compel him to bow down and offer sacrifice to the god of the sun,[10] so that by this he may anger his God, who keeps him unharmed in his sufferings."

When the Apostle was brought before the idol of the sun, the idol immediately melted and dissolved like wax. The believers rejoiced at the sight of such power of the Heavenly God, and a multitude of unbelievers turned to the Lord. The idol-priests, however, murmured against Thomas for the destruction of their idol, and the king himself, greatly offended, thought about how he might destroy him; he feared, however, the people and his servants and many of the nobles who had believed in Christ.

Taking Thomas, the king went out of the city with his soldiers, and everyone thought that he wished to see some miracle from the Apostle. Having gone about a verst, the king handed Thomas over to five soldiers, ordering them to ascend a mountain with him and there pierce him with spears, while he himself went on to the city of Axum. Azan, the king's son, and a man named Sifor hastened after the Apostle, and overtaking him, wept over him. Then Thomas, having asked the soldiers' permission to pray, prayed to the Lord and ordained Sifor a priest and Azan a deacon, and charged them to take care for the in-

10. In all the most ancient pagan religions the deification of the sun played a very important role. In particular, the worship of the heavenly luminaries (so-called Sabeism) was widespread in antiquity chiefly among the Eastern peoples.

crease of believers and the spread of the Church of Christ. After this the soldiers pierced him with five spears, from which he died. Sifor and Azan mourned him long and buried his holy body with honor.[11] After the burial, they sat near the Apostle's tomb and grieved. And behold, the saint appeared to them, bidding them go into the city and strengthen the brethren in the faith. Following this command of their teacher, Saint Thomas the Apostle, aided by his prayers, they successfully governed the Church of Christ. King Muzdius and Charisius for a long time tormented their wives, but were unable to bring them to fulfill their desire. Understanding that the wives would never obey them until death, they were obliged to let them live freely, according to their own will. Freed from the burden of the yoke of marriage, the women spent their lives in strict abstinence and prayer, serving the Lord day and night, and by their virtuous lives they brought great benefit to the Church.

Some years later, one of the sons of King Muzdius fell into demonic possession, and no one could heal him, for a very fierce demon dwelt within him. The king was extremely distressed by his son's illness and resolved to open the tomb of the holy Apostle, with the aim of taking one of his bones and fastening it on his son's neck so that he might be freed from the demonic torment, for he had heard that Saint Thomas, during his life, had cast out many demons from people. When the king was about to do this, Saint Thomas appeared to him in a dream and said:

"You did not believe the living one; do you think to find help from the dead? But do not remain in your unbelief, and my Lord Jesus Christ will be merciful to you."

This dream still further intensified in the king the desire to open the Apostle's tomb. Going to the place of the saint's burial, Muzdius opened the coffin, but did not find his relics there, for a certain Christian, having secretly taken the holy relics, had carried them away into Mesopotamia and laid them there in a fitting place. Taking earth from that place, the king fastened it to his son's neck, saying:

11. The place of the martyric death of St. Apostle Thomas is shown at Calamina, on a high rock about 6 versts from Malipur, whither the Apostle often went for prayer.

"O Lord Jesus Christ! Through the prayers of Thy Apostle Thomas heal my son, and I will believe in Thee."

And the demon immediately left the king's son, and the lad was restored to health. Then King Muzdius believed in Christ, and with all his nobles received baptism from the priest Sifor. Great joy filled the hearts of the believers, for the idols were overthrown and their temples destroyed, and in their place churches of Christ were built. The word of God spread and the holy faith was strengthened. The king, after receiving baptism, repented of his former sins and asked everyone for help and prayers. The presbyter Sifor said to all the faithful:

"Pray for King Muzdius, that he may receive mercy from our Lord Jesus Christ and forgiveness of his sins."

And the whole Church prayed for the king. In the same place where the holy body of the Apostle had been buried, many miracles, through his prayers, were accomplished to the glory of Christ our God.[6396] To Him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and worship from us forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 2:

Thou wast a disciple of Christ and a partaker of the divine apostolic assembly; by thine unbelief thou didst make known the Resurrection of Christ, and by touching His most pure Passion thou didst assure us of it, O Thomas, most laudable; wherefore now entreat for us peace and great mercy.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Filled with the wisdom of grace, O Christ's Apostle and true servant, in repentance thou didst cry out to Him: "Thou art my God and my Lord."

* * *

NOTES

6386. In the modern geographical sense, India is the southern part of the Asian continent, comprising the middle of the three southern peninsulas of the continent and the adjoining part of the mainland up to the great mountain chains that separate it from Cent-

ral Asia. But ancient writers often gave the general name "India" to all the rich southern lands of Asia, about which they had only vague notions. The Medes lived next to Persia, in the western part of Iran, south of the Caspian Sea, and were later conquered by the Persians. The Parthians also lived next to the Persians, in a vast country from the Euphrates to the Oxus and from the Caspian Sea to the Indian Ocean; in the third century B.C. they were subdued by the Romans. The Persians inhabited the southern part of Iran. The Hyrcanians lived on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris and were conquered by the Persians. The Bactrians inhabited the northeast of Iran. The Brahmins were the inhabitants of India proper, chiefly Indian priests.

6396. According to the testimony of church writers, the relics of St. Apostle Thomas were afterward (in 385) transferred from India to Mesopotamia, to the city of Edessa (now Urfa). In the ancient Western martyrologies, under July 3, the commemoration of the translation of his relics to this city is entered. But since it is known that there are still relics of St. Apostle Thomas in India, the report of their translation to Edessa must be understood to mean that only part of them was transferred from India. In Edessa a magnificent church was built over the relics of the holy Apostle, to which pilgrims flocked from distant lands. Afterward part of the relics of the Apostle Thomas was transferred to Constantinople, where a church was built in his name under the emperor Anastasius (490–518) by the court official Amantius. During the Fourth Crusade (1204) the crusaders, among many other holy relics, found the right hand of the holy Apostle, which, after the Fifth Crusade, King Andrew II of Hungary brought with him to Hungary.

THE SEVENTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 7

7 октября

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

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus,

Страдание святых мучеников Сергия и Вакха,

The Holy Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus, Romans by birth, were high-ranking officials[1] and the foremost of the nobles at the court of Emperor Maximian. The Emperor greatly loved and honored them for their prudent counsel in assemblies, their courage in war, and their faithfulness in service. Rarely could anyone approach the Emperor with a petition except through these most trusted counselors of his: they enjoyed his favor as no others did. Yet Sergius and Bacchus sought favor not so much with the earthly Emperor as with the King of Heaven, for they believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, strove to please Him by their lives, and served Him fervently. But for fear of the Emperor, they concealed their faith in Christ for a time, since Maximian regarded Christians with measureless hatred and unbridled fury. The light of faith in Christ, however, was not hidden beneath a bushel in them for long, and soon it was plainly revealed to all.

Some, envying their high position and the Emperor's affection for them, and wishing to bring upon them his hatred and wrath, reported to him that Sergius and Bacchus were Christians and refused to worship idols. Maximian did not wish to believe that men who enjoyed such favor with him could disagree with him in the worship of the gods; and he was ashamed to ask them about it or accuse them without yet know-

1. In the original Life, Sergius is called a "primicar," that is, the first commander of the "Gentile regiment," which consisted of allies of the Romans (who were called *gentilles*), while Bacchus is called a "secondotarius," that is, the second commander of this regiment.

ing the truth. Nevertheless, he resolved to test them in the following manner.

One day he appointed a feast in honor of his gods and set out with all the princes and officials, soldiers and servants, surrounded by all the majesty of his royalty, to the temple of the chief god Zeus,[2] in order there to offer him a solemn sacrifice. At the same time, he watched carefully to see whether his beloved nobles, Sergius and Bacchus, would enter the idol temple with him. But when the Emperor entered the temple, the servants of Christ remained outside and did not enter the abominable shrine with him. Standing at a distance, they prayed to the true God, asking Him to illumine the blindness of the darkened eyes of that impious people and to glorify through them His Most Holy Name. Seeing that Sergius and Bacchus had not entered the temple with him for the feast, the Emperor sent servants to seize them and bring them into the temple by force.

When the saints had been brought into this gathering hostile to God, Maximian ordered them to worship the idols with him, offer sacrifice, and partake of the offerings sacrificed to idols.

But Sergius and Bacchus were unwilling to obey this command of the Emperor.

"We have," they said, "a God in heaven, a God who is neither false nor insensible, as your idols are insensible, but true and living, and who holds the whole world in His power; and Him we worship."

And they began to rebuke the Emperor for his false belief, because he rendered to idols—blind, deaf, and dumb—the honor due to the One God.

Then the Emperor, becoming enraged, ordered that all the insignia of their high rank be stripped from them: their military belts, gold collars, rings, and all their garments; that, to their disgrace, they be clothed in women's undergarments; and that iron collars be placed about their necks. In this guise the saints were led about the city, so that these illustrious and noble Roman dignitaries might be mocked and ridiculed before all the people for worshipping the One true God and re-

2. Zeus, or Jupiter, was the Greco-Roman god whom the pagans revered as ruler of heaven and earth, and father of all gods and men.

viling the false pagan gods—or, rather, the demons themselves—to whom these servants of God, who had already offered themselves as a sacrifice to Christ, had refused to sacrifice.

When the sacrifices hostile to God were finished, Maximian returned to his palace and, taking pity on Sergius and Bacchus because he loved them greatly, summoned them to him and said:

"My dear and faithful friends! Why did you resolve to dishonor our gods and grieve your Emperor, who is so gracious and kindly toward you? Why have you brought such disgrace upon yourselves as well? Although I love you greatly, I cannot endure the reviling of my gods, and must deliver you to torments, even against my will. Therefore I beg you, my friends: abandon this Son of the Carpenter,[3] whom the Jews hanged on a cross with evildoers as though He were a criminal, and do not be led astray by Christian fables and sorceries. Return to our great gods, and I shall show you still greater honor and kindness; you shall enjoy my favor and share with me, without division, in all the blessings of my kingdom."

But Sergius and Bacchus, unwilling to fall away from the love of God for the sake of the Emperor's favor, or to lose eternal things for temporal blessings, did not obey him. Filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, they boldly and persuasively demonstrated to the Emperor the utter impotence of his false gods, fearlessly confessed before him the might and divinity of Jesus Christ, and urged the Emperor himself to know this heavenly truth. The impious Emperor, whose heart was hardened and whose understanding was blinded, did not accept their good counsel; instead, he burned with still greater anger and fury. Because he loved them, and did not wish to deliver them to torments himself, he sent them to Antiochus, the eastern hegemon.[4] This man was a cruel persecutor and tormentor of Christians; he had attained the rank of hegemon through the intercession of Sergius and Bacchus before the

3. That is, Jesus Christ, whom the Jews of His own time also called "the Son of the Tekton" (Mt. 13:55), considering Him the son of Joseph, the betrothed of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, who practiced the craft of carpentry ("tekton" means "carpenter" or "builder" in Greek). This name was afterwards adopted by the Roman pagans as well, applying it to Christ in mockery and derision of the King of the Christians.

4. That is, to the ruler of the eastern, Asiatic provinces of the Roman Empire.

Emperor, and afterward had been sent to the East. It was to this hegemon that the saints were now sent.

The Emperor thought that they would be terrified by his cruelty, whose fame had spread throughout the empire, and at the same time ashamed to be in the power of one who had once been almost their slave, and that thus, out of fear and shame, they would renounce Christ. But even if this did not come to pass, the Emperor in any case preferred that they be tortured in a distant region rather than before his own eyes.

And so the saints were led from Rome in chains. After a full day's journey, the soldiers escorting them stopped for the night at an inn. Here, at midnight, while the soldiers who were leading them slept soundly, Sergius and Bacchus rose to pray and began to ask God for strength to endure courageously all the sufferings that lay before them.

As they prayed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to them, shining with heavenly light and strengthening them with these words:

"Take courage, servants of Christ, and arm yourselves against the devil as good soldiers: soon you shall conquer him."

After these words, the Angel became invisible.

Sergius and Bacchus, filled with unspeakable joy, began to send up praise to the Lord, who had deigned to visit His servants through such an Angelic appearance.

Throughout their long journey to the East, the Holy Martyrs spent their time in prayer and the chanting of psalms, and thus armed themselves still more against the invisible spirits of evil. Having passed through many cities and villages, they at last reached the eastern city of Barbalissos,[5] where the hegemon Antiochus was then staying. The soldiers handed over to him the prisoners they had brought, together with a royal letter of the following contents:

"Maximian, eternal Emperor, to Antiochus, hegemon of the Eastern region. Rejoice! Our gods do not permit any man, especially the champions and servants of our kingdom, to be impious or to abstain from offering sacrifices to them. Therefore we have condemned Sergius and

5. Barbalissos was a city in Mesopotamia, on the western side of the Euphrates River.

Bacchus and, as followers of the impious Christian faith, judged them deserving of death. But since they are unworthy to receive punishment from the Emperor himself, we have sent them to you. If, having repented, they obey us and sacrifice to the gods, show them mercy and release them from the torments appointed for them; and promise them that we too shall be gracious to them, that each shall receive his former dignity, and that he shall earn from us favor greater than before. But if they do not obey and remain in their former impious faith, subject them to the torments they deserve and condemn them to death by the sword. In hope of long life, be well."

After reading the royal letter, Antiochus ordered Sergius and Bacchus to be kept under guard until morning. In the morning, entering the praetorium,[6] he sat in the judgment seat and, having the Holy Martyrs placed before him, spoke to them as follows:

"My fathers and benefactors, who obtained this rank for me, the cause of my present glory—how your circumstances have changed! Now I sit before you as judge, while you stand bound before me as prisoners—you, before whom I once stood as a servant. I beg you, do not bring such harm upon yourselves. Obey the emperor and sacrifice to the gods, and you shall again receive your former rank and once more be honored with glory. But if you will not do this, then, even against my own will, I shall have to compel you by torments to obey this royal command; for you yourselves have heard what the emperor orders me in his letter. Therefore, my lords, have mercy upon yourselves, and upon me as well, for I would not at all wish to be a cruel tormentor to you, my benefactors."

The saints answered him:

"In vain you seek to deceive us with your words: for those who seek heavenly life, honor and dishonor, life and death, are altogether indifferent. 'For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain' (Phil. 1:21)."

Sergius and Bacchus spoke of many other things besides, rebuking and exposing the idolatrous worship and the godlessness of the impi-

6. The praetorium was the highest court in the central cities of the Roman provinces, where cases were decided by the governors of the Roman emperors—that is, by hegemons, or rulers of several provinces.

ous. Thereupon Antiochus, enraged, ordered that St. Sergius be cast into prison, and that Bacchus be stripped, laid upon the ground, and beaten without mercy. The saint was beaten over his whole body for so long a time that even the servants who beat him, growing weary, took turns with one another. From these blows the body of the holy martyr seemed to come apart from its bones, and blood poured from him like water. Amid such torments the holy Bacchus gave up his soul into the hands of the Lord. Antiochus commanded that the body of Christ's sufferer be carried out of the city and cast somewhere far off as food for beasts and birds. But the Lord preserved his bones: some of the Christians who, for fear of the idol-worshippers, had hidden outside the city in caves and ravines, came out of their refuges by night, took the body of the saint, and buried it with honor in one of those caves in which they themselves had been hiding.

Sergius, sitting in prison and hearing of the death of his friend, was greatly grieved and long mourned the parting from him.

"Woe is me, my brother Bacchus," he repeated many times, "now we can no longer sing together: 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' (Ps. 132:1): you have left me alone."

While St. Sergius was thus lamenting, on the following night St. Bacchus appeared to him in a dream, with an angelic countenance and in a garment shining with heavenly light. He began to comfort him, announcing to him the reward prepared for them in heaven, and strengthened him for the martyr's struggle that was soon to come, for which he would receive from Christ the Lord great mercy and boldness. After this vision Sergius was filled with joy, and in gladness of heart he began to sing praises to the Lord.

Soon the governor, setting out for another city called Sura[7], ordered Sergius to be led with him. There, seated on the judgment seat, he began to speak to the saint thus:

"A godless man named Bacchus would not offer sacrifice to the gods, and chose rather to die a violent death than to honor them; and so

7. Sura was a city on the western side of the Euphrates.

he has received a punishment worthy of his deeds. But you, Sergius, why are you enticed by this godless teaching and expose yourself to so great a misfortune? My benefactor, do not hand yourself over to torment! I am ashamed of your former kindnesses toward me and of your rank: for you stand before me as one condemned, while I, seated, pass judgment upon you. Once a man of no account, I am now, thanks to your intercession before the Emperor, raised to a high rank and am now above you; and you, who have obtained so much from the Emperor and so much good for many, now desire evil for yourself. I beg you, listen to my counsel: fulfill the Emperor's command, offer sacrifice to the gods, and you will be restored to your former rank and honored with your former glory."

St. Sergius answered him:

"Temporal honor and glory are vain, and temporal dishonor is followed by eternal glory; and for me this earthly dishonor is nothing, nor do I seek temporal glory, for I hope to be counted worthy by my Savior of true and eternal honor in heavenly glory. You recall my former kindnesses to you, that I obtained for you from the earthly emperor so great a rank; but now I say to you: listen to me, and, having known the truth, renounce your false gods and worship together with me the Heavenly God and King of ages, and I promise to obtain for you from Him still greater good than I obtained from Maximian."

Then Antiochus, perceiving that he could not turn him away from Christ or compel him to submit to the Emperor's will, said:

"You force me, Sergius, to forget all your kindnesses and to deliver you to cruel torments."

Sergius answered:

"Do what you will: I have Christ as my helper, who once said: Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. You now have power over my body to torment it, but over my soul neither you nor your father, the devil, has any power."

Then Antiochus, enraged, said:

"I see that my long-suffering only makes you the more bold," and he ordered that iron boots be put on him, with sharp and long nails on the soles, which pierced the saint's feet. In such footwear Antiochus

ordered Sergius to be driven before his chariot, while he himself rode to the city of Tetrapyrgium[8], from where he was to set out for the city of Rosafa[9].

Enduring such sufferings, the saint sang on the way: "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry; He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings" (Ps. 39:2–3).

When they came to the city of Tetrapyrgium, which was twenty versts from Sura, the martyr was led into the prison. On the way to it he sang: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon me, and raise me up, that I may requite them" (Ps. 40:10–11).

At night in the prison, while the martyr was praying, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him and healed his wounds. On the next day Antiochus ordered the holy Sergius brought out of the prison, thinking that from pain he could not even set foot on the ground. But seeing from afar that he was walking like a perfectly healthy man, without the least limp, the tormentor was struck with fear and said:

"Truly this man is a sorcerer, for how can one walk without limping after such torments? And it is as though he had never suffered in his feet at all."

After this Antiochus commanded that the martyr be shod in the same boots and led before him to Rosafa; and the distance from the city of Sura to it was seventy stadia. Here, ascending the tribunal, Antiochus began to force St. Sergius to worship the idols; but he could not turn him from his confession of Christ, and sentenced the martyr to death. When the saint was led outside the city to the place of execution, he asked for time to pray. During his prayer he heard a voice from heaven calling him to the heavenly mansions, and, bowing his head gladly beneath the sword, he died. His body was buried by the Christians in the same place.

8. Tetrapyrgium was a city between Sura and Rosafa, near the Euphrates.
9. Rosafa, or Resafa, later renamed Sergiopolis after the renowned monastery founded there in honor of the holy Martyr Sergius, was a city 6 versts from Sura.

Some time later the Christians of the city of Sura agreed secretly to take the body of the saint from Rosafa and transfer it to their own city. When they approached the tomb by night, a column of fire rose from the sepulchre, its height reaching to heaven itself. Some of the soldiers living in Rosafa, seeing at midnight a column of fire lighting up their whole city, went armed to that place and saw the citizens of Sura seized with terror at the sight of this fiery manifestation. Soon the wondrous column disappeared. After that the citizens of Sura understood that St. Sergius did not wish to leave the place where he had shed his blood and laid down his soul for Christ; in honor of the martyr they set up only a wondrous stone tomb on that spot. When Christianity had spread, a church was built in the city of Rosafa in the name of the holy martyr Sergius. Fifteen bishops of the neighboring cities, gathering together, solemnly transferred into the newly built church the incorrupt and fragrant relics of the holy martyr, and decreed that his memory be celebrated on the 7th of October, the day of his death. In both places, both in the church at the relics of the martyr Sergius and where he died and was buried, many demoniacs and sick people received healing from their infirmities[6406].

It is worthy of note that every year, on the day of the saint's memory, wild beasts, as if observing some law, came out of the surrounding deserts and gathered at the place where the holy martyr had first been buried. At that time their savage nature gave way to the meekness of lambs: they attacked neither men nor cattle, but, walking calmly around the holy place, returned again to their deserts. Thus did God glorify His servant, that He inspired not only men but also beasts, as it were, to keep his memory.

By the prayers of St. Sergius may the Lord also restrain the fury of our enemies, as He once tamed the ferocity of these wild beasts, to His glory forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having manfully armed your minds against the foe, you destroyed all their deceit, and receiving victory from on high, O all-praised

martyrs, you cried out with one accord: "It is good and fair to be with God."

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Julian and Caesarius

Память святых мучеников Иулиана и Кесария

In the reign of the Roman Emperor Claudius, who had slain his own mother, a secret Christian, and who from then on spared no Christians, there came to the city of Tarracina[10], which belonged to the Roman Empire, a certain deacon named Caesarius. Seeing the sacrifices offered to the idols, he spat upon the idols and shattered them. For this he was cast into prison, where he remained for three days, tormented by hunger. Then his hands were bound behind him, and soldiers led him before the chariot of the city governor to the temple of Apollo. When they drew near the temple, the saint prayed, and at once the temple collapsed to its foundations and crushed the priests and all who were within it.

Seeing this, the ypatikos[11] Leontius fell on his knees before the saint and believed in Christ. The Christian presbyter Julian baptized him publicly and gave him Communion of the Holy Mysteries, and at once, by the saint's prayer, Leontius breathed his last. The governor of the city, Loxorius, seeing this, commanded that the saints be sewn into sacks and cast into the sea.

Then the saints said to him:

"We shall be cast into the sea, but you too shall be put to death by a fierce serpent, and shall perish a cruel death."

Two days after this, as Loxorius was walking on the seashore sand, a huge serpent coiled around him and crushed all his limbs. Loxorius

10. Tarracina, now Terracina, is a coastal city of Italy south of Rome, 92 versts from it.

11. This name was given to persons in the service of "hypati," or imperial governors. Leontius, mentioned here, apparently served the prince, or ruler, of that country, Loxoria, who was then the emperor's governor.

immediately breathed his last, and, swollen all over, lay as a terrible sight for all who passed by.

Meanwhile, by the power of God, the bodies of the saints were carried by the waves to the shore. The Christians received them with honor and buried them near the city. But the son of the hypaticus Leontius cut off their honored heads and cast them into the river. Then the presbyter of the city of Capua[12], Quartus, instructed by an Angel of God, took the relics of the saints and laid them in a separate place, to the glory of God.[13]

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Polychronius

Память святого мученика Полихрония

St. Polychronius, from the region of Gamphanis[14], was the son of the husbandman Vardan, who taught the boy the truths of the Christian faith, as well as the reading of the Divine books and the observance of what was written in them. During a drought, since water was far away, a spring appeared in that place at the prayer of the boy Polychronius; for through his temperance and piety he had been deemed worthy of the gift of working miracles. When he came of age, he took up the cultivation of vines and, having gone to Constantinople, hired himself out there and worked alongside the others, taking food every two or three days and drinking only a little water. His master marveled at this servant of God, was moved by his virtues, and, sending him a large sum of money, ordered him to say:

"Go home and pray for me."

Polychronius took the gold and, having returned home, wrought many miracles; with the gold he had received, he built a church. Later he was present at the 1st Ecumenical Council as a reader, and afterward was deemed worthy of the priestly rank as well. After the death

12. Capua was a city and fortress in southern Italy on the left bank of the Volturno River, the chief city of the ancient Italian region of Campania, and one of the oldest cities in all Italy.

13. The relics of the holy Martyr Caesarius rest in Rome in the Church of the Holy Cross, and his venerable hand is in the Church of the Holy of Holies.

14. The region of Hamfanidia belonged to the same diocese or district as Constantinople.

of Constantine the Great, when the Arian heresy grew strong, he was once caught by heretics at the holy altar. They rushed upon him, stabbed him, and hacked him with their swords.[15]

* * *

Life of our Venerable Father Sergius of Nurma, Vologda and Obnora Wonderworker

Житие преподобного отца нашего Сергия Нуромского, чудотворца Вологодского и Обнорского

Venerable Sergius began his monastic life on holy Mount Athos.[6413] From there he came to the Muscovite realm of the great Russian state and settled within the bounds of the Radonezh region.[16] He came to the monastery of the great luminary of Russia, Sergius of Radonezh, the Wonderworker.[17] St. Sergius was still alive then, and shone like the sun throughout the whole universe, enlightening the world by his good works and governing his brotherhood in God. Venerable Sergius of Nurma remained for a long time under the guidance of the great luminary Sergius, attending to him and following his holy life. Here he exercised himself in many struggles and accomplished many good works, so that Sergius of Radonezh himself, the Wonderworker, marveled at him, seeing such zeal for God, and loved to converse with him concerning spiritual discipline. And Venerable Sergius of Nurma, seeing the labors and struggles of this great luminary, likewise strove to imitate them and fell short of him in no virtue. All these things Venerable Sergius of Nurma received into his heart, as fruitful earth receives seed and drinks in the rain, and he bore fruit to God a hundredfold. For this reason he was loved and esteemed by all. But he did not love worldly glory, seeing in it harm to the soul, and began to consider

15. St. Polychronius suffered martyrdom around the middle of the 4th century, during the reign of Constantius II (337–362), son of Constantine the Great, who favored the Arians and persecuted the Orthodox.

16. The site of ancient Radonezh is now occupied by the village of Gorodishche, or Gorodok. It lies between Moscow and the Holy Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra, 12 versts from the latter. (Note from the beginning of the century.)

17. The brotherhood began gathering around Venerable Sergius of Radonezh approximately in the middle of the 14th century. Venerable Sergius reposed in 1392 on September 25.

how he might withdraw from people, remembering the words of the Prophet David: "Far away would I flee, and remain in the wilderness; I would hasten to escape from the tempest and the storm" (Ps. 54:8–9). As he continually pondered this, he came to his instructor, Sergius, bowed down to the ground before him, and, bathing his cheeks in tears, confessed his thoughts and asked his blessing to withdraw into the wilderness. Sergius of Radonezh discerned with the eyes of understanding that he was a vessel filled with the Holy Spirit and would be an instructor to monks and a good shepherd of Christ's flock. He blessed him, gave him counsel on how to dwell in the wilderness, and sent him on his way in peace, saying:

"Go, child; God be with you."

Having received the Venerable Father's blessing, blessed Sergius of Nurma rejoiced and secretly set out for the wilderness. His spirit flew like a bird to its nest, and he sought the place where God would direct him, having with him nothing but soul and body. Heading toward the northern lands, he came to a region covered with thickets, forests, moss, and marshes. There he found a place in the Obnora district, on the River Nurma,[18] where later he built a monastery. The great Paul, the Obnora Wonderworker,[19] also dwelt in that same region; at that time he was still living in seclusion, in the inner wilderness on that same River Nurma, and had as yet neither a monastery nor a brotherhood in Christ.

Having come to that place and surveyed it, Venerable Sergius greatly loved it and gave thanks to God, for He had not despised his prayer but had brought him to this place. And he spoke in the words of the Prophet David: "This is My rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it" (Ps. 131:14); and again: "How beloved are Thy dwellings, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God. For the sparrow

18. The Nurma River (in Gryazovets District, Vologda Province) is a tributary of the Obnora River, which flows through Vologda and Yaroslavl Provinces and empties into the Kostroma River.

19. Venerable Paul of Obnora reposed in 1429 on January 10.

finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at Thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God!"

"Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they shall continually praise Thee. Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee, and whose heart is set on the paths [that lead to Thee]. As they pass through the valley of weeping, they make it a place of springs, and the rain covers it with blessings ... O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee!" (Ps. 83:2–7, 13).

And the Venerable Father prayed to God, the All-Merciful: "O Lord Almighty, God of our fathers, who didst save Israel from bondage and the three youths from the fiery furnace (Ex. 13:1–22, Dan. 3:1–100), look upon this place and bless it; deem me worthy to serve Thee in this place all the days of my life, for I have come here to serve Thee for ever, that through me also Thy most holy name may be glorified, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen."

Having prayed, the saint set up a cross in that place and erected a chapel and a small cell. Blessed Sergius remained there many years, exercising himself in many struggles. Pleasing God, he led an angelic life, mortifying his flesh by keeping vigil and the All-night Vigil, and overcoming the enemy through prayer, fasting, and virtue. Thus he labored with great patience, enduring the afflictions inflicted upon him in the wilderness by demons and unenlightened people. While the saint was living in such struggles, serving the Lord, the devil, who has hated mankind from the beginning, envied his virtue and laid snares for him, stirring up against the blessed one unenlightened, foolish, and evil-doing people, wishing through them to frighten him and drive him from that place. But God, ever ready to help His servants, did not forsake the blessed one.

Once, evil and frenzied robbers attacked the saint. Seizing him, they beat him mercilessly, so that from his many wounds he almost gave up the ghost. Leaving him barely alive, those evil robbers went away. The blessed one, having scarcely recovered from his wounds, lifted his hands to heaven and said with tears:

"Master and most good King, look down from heaven upon the wounds I have received because for Thy sake I withdrew into this wil-

derness. I thank Thee that Thou hast deemed me worthy to share in suffering with Thine elect and to bear upon my body the marks of Thy holy name. Deem me worthy of the portion of Thy saints. Behold how my enemies are multiplied and hate me with unjust hatred. Preserve my soul and deliver me, that I may not be put to shame, for I have hoped in Thee."

After his prayer, the blessed one felt relief from his sufferings and gave thanks to the Lord that for love of Christ he had been deemed worthy to receive wounds upon his body. And he said to himself:

"I will not leave this place, even if the enemy should raise up myriads of snares against me. I desire to die in this place, for I came here seeking Christ."

Thus the saint spoke, strengthening himself with the word of the Lord: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two little birds sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without [the will of] your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore: ye are of more value than many little birds. But he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Mt. 10:28–31, 22).

Laying all these things up in his heart, the blessed one was strengthened and armed himself like a good soldier of Christ, arraying his spirit against the host of invisible spirits; and he pressed on to greater struggles, adding labor to labor, fasting to fasting, prayer to prayer, in hope of the reward of the Heavenly King.

But the demon, the chief of evil, again roared against the saint like a lion and tormented his soul with many afflictions. Yet all these afflictions from evil demons and unjust people the saint endured with joy, steadfast in soul like a strong adamant.[20] Seeing himself brought low, the malicious demon again stirred up evil and wicked robbers against the saint, wishing through them to inflict upon him a painful death in that place.

20. Adamant (diamond) is a stone so hard that it draws lines on and cuts other stones without being harmed. In Church literature, this name is given to many Fathers and teachers of the Church celebrated for the firmness of their faith and character.

And so, one night, evil robbers again attacked the saint. At that time the blessed one stood in his cell at prayer, offering his nightly supplications to God. But the evil and savage robbers rushed upon him like wild beasts, wishing to drag him out of his cell and tear him to pieces like wolves. Hearing their approach, the saint lifted his eyes to God and prayed with tears:

"Forsake me not, O Lord my God; depart not from me, but attend unto me, help me, and save my soul."

The Lord is ever ready to help His servants, as the Prophet said: "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, and upon them that hope in His mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to feed them in famine" (Ps. 32:18–19).

When the Saint called upon God for help in prayer, the evil robbers were at once seized with fear and hesitated to carry out their wicked design. As though a spear had pierced their hearts, the fear of God struck them; and, dreading the Judgment of God, they fled from that place, never returned there, and did the Saint no harm whatever. Upon them were fulfilled the words of the Prophet David: "The wicked have drawn out the sword and bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, to pierce those who walk uprightly: their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken; suddenly shall they be wounded" (Ps. 36:14–15, 63:8).

All this was accomplished by the prayer of the Saint. For the prayer of the saints draws down upon the earth the mercy of God, His help as a burning fire, and fear; for the Lord strikes terror into all who oppose Him and burns them with an unseen fire. We ought to marvel at the power and help of God manifested in this holy Father, for the Lord saved His servant not by weapons or by a host, but by His strong right hand and arm; by the weapon of hope in prayer He granted, invisibly and from on high, the victory. Armed with this weapon, all the saints were made partakers of the power of God: they overcame kingdoms, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, and turned to flight the armies of the enemy. Of them the Apostle says: "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. 6:10). Together with them we

ought to marvel at this holy man, who by neither weapons nor strength, but by hope and prayer, was able to overcome all who rose up against him. For those fierce robbers, when they entered the dwelling of the Saint, had deadly weapons in their hands, desiring to overcome him; he, however, had nothing of the kind, but held in his hands only a small cord, his prayer-rope, while in his heart and upon his lips he had tearful contrition and prayer. And at once he overcame them and their weapons, and the prayer of the Saint became his victory and triumph: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them" (Jas. 5:16; Wisd. 3:1).

The Venerable Sergius, seeing that the mercy of God rested upon him, gave himself with still greater zeal to fasting and prayer, adding labor to labor, fire to fire, desire to desire, zeal to zeal. Keeping in his heart the future blessedness of the righteous, he labored unceasingly and mortified his flesh by all-night vigils and fasting, while his soul was always turned toward the things on high.

God, merciful in His bounty, heard the prayers, labors, and virtues of the blessed one. Not wishing that the blessed one should remain longer unknown and hidden from people, as it were concealed from their eyes, but desiring that he should stand forth like a strong city set on a height, the Lord made the blessed one manifest to all and revealed him, like a lamp that had until then been hidden under a bushel. And so the Lord made the Saint known to all, that those who came might see the city and those who looked might see the light. The fame of the Saint spread throughout all the Russian regions; many came to him for the profit of their souls, and some brought him also what the body needed. From many monasteries monks came to the Saint and remained to live with him, learning from his ascetic deeds. The Venerable Sergius received all with joy, as though sent to him from God, and cared for all as a loving father, according to the word of the Apostle: "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). By the help of God the number of brethren with the Saint grew to 40; but they had neither church nor cells. Then the Saint began to build a church and cells. He erected a church in the name of

the All-Merciful Savior, in memory of the Origin of His Honorable and Life-Giving Cross; he also set up cells and established the monastery.

At that time, on the same river Nurma, in the inner wilderness, the great Father of ours, Paul, lived a silent and solitary life. He had come here from the same glorious Lavra of the great Russian luminary Sergius from which the Venerable Sergius, the Wonderworker of Nurma, had also come. While still under the guidance of the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh, the Saint Paul attentively learned from his way of life about God. By the blessing of the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh, the great Paul withdrew into this wilderness, where afterward he also founded a monastery. The monastery of the blessed Sergius of Nurma was about four versts distant from the dwelling of the great Paul. The Venerable Wonderworkers of Nurma often visited one another and conversed together about all spiritual correction, strengthening one another in spiritual labors. Besides this, the Venerable Paul received the Holy Life-Giving Mysteries, the Body and Blood of Christ our God, from the holy hands of the blessed Sergius, confessing to him all his thoughts; and the Venerable Sergius was the spiritual father of the great Paul. Therefore in every matter they disclosed to each other their thoughts, being servants and followers of the One Lord. Taking counsel together concerning the fierce hardships and the demonic terror of the wilderness, they shared their sorrows and were strengthened in spirit and by the word of God, being confirmed by the hope of future good things[21].

Once the Venerable Paul went out of his cell, wishing to walk about the wilderness. When he returned, he saw that his cell had been torn apart from the top down to its foundation. Seeing this, our great Father Paul, as a man, was afraid. Grieved and frightened, he came to the Venerable Sergius and told him what had happened. The Venerable Sergius, however, regarded this as a demonic delusion and said:

"Go, Brother Paul. You will find your cell not destroyed."

21. Venerable Paul so esteemed Venerable Sergius that, after visiting him, he accompanied him for more than two-thirds of the way from his own dwelling. The place to which the saints customarily came is marked by a chapel.

And he recalled to him the prophetic word: "God is our refuge and strength" (Ps. 45:2).

Indeed, the great Paul, returning to his dwelling, found his cell whole and unharmed, as the Venerable Sergius had said.

Once the Venerable Sergius came to Saint Paul for spiritual conversation, and found him standing beside his cell and feeding birds from his hands. A multitude of little birds sat on the head and shoulders of the Venerable, and before him stood wild animals: a bear, a fox, and a hare. Thus even the dumb creatures were drawn by love to the hermit.

After many labors and ascetic struggles the Venerable Sergius attained to deep old age. Through old age and labors he fell into a grave illness and for a long time lay in complete weakness. Learning of the infirmity of the Venerable Sergius, the great Paul came to visit him, thinking that his passing from earthly life to eternal life was near. Losing his friend and companion, Paul shed tears and asked his blessing and forgiveness. At first tears kept them from speaking. Finally, restraining his sobs, Saint Paul told the Venerable Sergius that in one place in his wilderness, beneath a hill on the river Nurma, he had heard a great ringing and seen an ineffable light shining more brightly than the rays of the sun. Hearing this, the Venerable Sergius did not regard it as an ordinary thing, but understood it as the work of God.

"In that place," said the Venerable, "a monastery shall be built to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity, and many shall be saved in that place."

Thus the blessed one prophesied. After this the Wonderworkers of Nurma kissed one another with tears, and the great Paul withdrew into his inner wilderness. From then on he began to receive brethren and to build a monastery[22]. In the very place where he had heard the ringing and seen the light, Saint Paul erected a church in the name of the Most Holy Life-Originating Trinity, according to the prophecy of Sergius, the Wonderworker of Nurma.

At last, from great illness and old age, the blessed Sergius was utterly exhausted. Seeing himself drawing near to his end, and understanding his departure to God, he called to himself all the brethren in

22. The monastery of Venerable Sergius, 60 versts from Vologda (closed in 1764), was 4 versts from the Monastery of Paul, farther down the course of the Nurma River.

Christ. When they came and saw their Father drawing near to his end, they burst into tears and, falling before him, said:

"Do not forsake us, good Father, but remain with us a while longer."

The Venerable, lifting his eyes to heaven, said to them:

"The end of my earthly life has drawn near, brethren, and I must render the common debt of the body. Such is the will of the Lord. I commit you, children, to God and to the Most Pure Mother of God. May the God of peace and His Most Pure Mother be with you unto the end of the age, keep you, and establish you in His love. But you, children, do not grieve at my departure; abide in the love of God and keep His commandments, remembering with fear and trembling the word of the Lord and Master Christ: 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me' (Jn. 14:21). Guard your hearts with the fear of God, that it may teach you every good work, for 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Prov. 1:7); adorn one another with humility, turn away from lying speech, speak to each brother the truth, hate slander, and avoid enmity. But if any of you admits anger into his heart, admonish him with love, for it is said: 'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath' (Eph. 4:26). Submit to your teachers, for they watch over your souls, as they must give an account for you to God. Perform the Church services without slothfulness. If you live thus, you will be blessed."

As they listened to this last instruction of their father, the brethren shed streams of tears from their eyes. When the Venerable Father had grown quite weak and was near his last breath, he received the Holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ our God. After receiving the Holy Mysteries, he raised his hands to heaven and offered up a silent prayer. Having prayed, St. Sergius folded his hands crosswise upon his breast and yielded up his spirit to the Lord. Thus the Saint passed into eternal life. And his face, after his repose in God, was bright, so that one could say that he had not died but was resting in sleep, for his life had been blameless. Seeing their father, the Venerable Sergius, reposed, his disciples wept and sobbed, bereft of their shepherd and teacher in God. Some, falling down at his bed, kissed his holy body

with sobs, as though they did not wish to be parted from the Saint's body. Others, standing at a distance, gazed with tenderness upon the body of the Venerable Father, bathing their cheeks with tears and weeping. Taking his holy relics, the weeping brethren carried them upon their heads into the church with funeral chants and lit candles, and they buried the labor-worn and holy body of their shepherd near the church of the Procession of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord, which the Venerable Father himself had built[23]. The Venerable Sergius reposed in the year 1421, on 7 October, on the day of commemoration of the holy martyrs Sergius and Bacchus. Such were the labors and endurance of our Venerable Father Sergius in this place, such were his sufferings and correction. Honoring the life of the Saint, let us emulate his virtues and inscribe in our hearts his labors and his holy life in God. If we do so, we shall have in him an unceasing intercessor before God.

It is impossible for a city set on a hill to be hidden, or for a lamp that is burning to be concealed from all. Nor can the virtues of the saints long remain hidden beneath the earth, as under a bushel, and sink into the depths of oblivion over many years, for the Lord desires to make them plainly manifest to all.

After his death our holy father Sergius too was granted this divine gift.

Many years after the Saint's repose, the following came to pass by the providence of God:

In the Nuromsky monastery there dwelt a certain holy man named Nikifor. One night, after a vigil of prayer, he fell into a light sleep and saw St. Sergius, who came to him and said:

"Tell the abbot and the brethren to cleanse the place of my burial, for the Lord does not wish it to be unknown and neglected."

Brother Nikifor asked:

"Who are you, my lord?"

The Saint answered:

"I am the sinner Sergius, who was the head of this holy place."

23. At present, the relics of the Venerable One rest in the church.

The Saint also showed the place of his burial.

Nikifor, however, regarded the vision as a fancy and said nothing to the abbot. Then the Saint appeared to him a second time. Nikifor disregarded the vision a second time as well. The Saint appeared to him a third time and said with reproach:

"If you do not fulfil what I have said, you will be delivered to Satan for punishment."

The elder did not heed this either, again regarding the vision as a fancy. Then he suddenly became paralyzed. The abbot and the brethren performed a moleben for his healing. Having recovered somewhat from his ailment, Nikifor related to the abbot and the brethren everything that had happened to him: how the Saint had appeared to him and bidden him tell the abbot and the brethren of the place of his burial, how he had disobeyed, regarding the vision as a fancy, how the Saint had appeared to him a second and a third time with the same command, and how he had been punished for his disobedience. And Nikifor showed them the place where the honorable body of the Saint lay. The abbot and the brethren then led Nikifor to the burial place of the Venerable Sergius, and there Nikifor was suddenly healed of his illness through his prayers, and he ended his life in the monastery of the Venerable Sergius, weeping at his tomb.

The abbot and the brethren soon cleansed the place where, according to Nicephorus's indication, the Saint's tomb was located. This tomb was beneath the porch of the church. They placed over the Venerable Father's grave a reliquary, constructed a tomb, and adorned it with holy icons and candles. And from that time there were many miracles and healings from the Saint's tomb: the possessed were freed, the blind received sight, the lame regained the ability to walk, and those afflicted with all manner of diseases found relief. The Saint's miracles were beyond counting; as an inexhaustible spring always gives water, so from this Saint there always flowed healing of ailments of soul and body. No one is able to recount all his miracles; here some of them shall be related.

A certain man named Ivan, called Chukholystov, who dwelt in the Ledam region, fell into so grievous an illness that for a long time he re-

mained in complete paralysis. As he lay on his bed in his sickness and suffered greatly, a light sleep suddenly overcame him. And in his dream he saw a radiant elder come to him, who said:

"Ivan, why do you lie so many years on your bed and suffer grievously? Now the time has come for you. Go to the monastery of the All-merciful Savior on the Obnora, and pray at the tomb of Sergius; he will intercede with God for you, and you shall be healthy. But for this you must always remain in chastity."

The man awoke, and believing the vision, ordered that he be taken to the monastery of the All-merciful Savior, to the tomb of the Venerable Father. Having prayed at the tomb, he was healed of his infirmity through the Saint's prayers, and he returned to his house, rejoicing and glorifying God.

A resident of Lezhsky Volochek, Isidore, lay ill on his bed; his jaws had stiffened, and for many years he had been mute and paralyzed. Hearing of the Venerable Sergius, that God gave healings to the human race through him, Isidore ordered that he be taken to the monastery of the wonderworker Sergius, to the All-merciful Savior, on the Obnora. When prayer was offered for him at the tomb of the Venerable Father, and the abbot began to read the Holy Gospel, the sick man's lips were immediately opened and he began to speak, as though he had never been mute. After the moleben was sung, the sick man was sprinkled with holy water, and at once all his limbs regained strength, and he was healed, as though he had never suffered this ailment. And he glorified God and gave thanks to the Venerable wonderworker Sergius, who had obtained for him such grace from God.

There was a man named Zinovy, a native of Beloozero, whose mind had become disturbed, so that terror seized those who saw him. They brought him to the monastery of the All-merciful Savior and the Venerable Sergius, and began to serve a moleben for him. At that time the stove in the refectory was lit. And so, during the singing of the moleben, this possessed man broke free from the people attending him, ran into the refectory, and threw himself into the burning stove. They scarcely drew him out from there and led him to a separate room. Here the sick man saw a multitude of demons. Suddenly he saw a radiant

elder approach him, holding an icon of the Most Pure Mother of God in his arms, who named himself Sergius. When the demons saw the Venerable Sergius with the icon of the Most Pure One in his arms, they immediately were seized with terror and vanished like smoke. Some of them fled into the wild forest, others beneath the flooring of that chamber, and still others, as it seemed to the sick man, vanished into a crevice. And from that time the possessed man was healed through the Saint's prayers.

A certain woman named Matrona, from the village of Ramensky, likewise fell into a disturbance of mind. Her relatives brought her to the monastery of the All-merciful Savior, to the tomb of the Venerable Sergius. After the rule of prayer was completed, they tied her up by the bell tower. Then the enemies of the human race, the demons, came to her, having taken on the form of a dog and a cat, called her by name and said:

"Go away from here: you are free."

When she left the monastery, the demons immediately began to plot against her. Taking on human form, they met her and directed her to go into the wilderness where there was a marsh. But the All-bountiful Lord, not desiring the death of the sinner but wishing to bring her to the true understanding, seeing His creature perishing from the apostate demons, had compassion and was pleased to show mercy to this woman, for of this the prophet said: "He will not be angry unto the end" (Ps. 102:9).

And so the Lord, desiring to glorify still more His servant, the Venerable Sergius, by His divine command arranged the following. When this woman went into the great wilderness where the wicked demons had told her to go, suddenly there appeared to her a radiant elder, adorned with wondrous gray hair. Naming himself Sergius, he also called her by name and said:

"Where are you going, woman? Turn back, go to my tomb, and do not go where you are going; the demons are leading you there."

Having said this, the Venerable one became invisible. The woman at once came to her senses, understood the visitation of the Saint and the demonic mockery, and came to the tomb of the Saint. Here she felt her-

self fully healthy and returned to her house, rejoicing, glorifying God, and giving thanks to the Venerable wonderworker Sergius.

A certain priest lived 40 versts from the monastery of St. Sergius. This priest had a wife named Paraskeva, who suffered paralysis of all her limbs. She was ill with this affliction for a long time. And then one night, after severe suffering, she fell into a light sleep. And she saw the Venerable Sergius come to her with a staff in his hands, and say to her:

"Why do you suffer so grievously, woman? Rise from your bed, take up a staff, and go to the All-merciful Savior, to the Nurma, to the monastery of Sergius. If you do this, you will receive mercy."

At once the Saint granted her health, healed her infirmity, and said:

"Behold, you are healthy. Go to my monastery and offer prayer to the merciful God."

Having said this, he became invisible. The woman awoke from sleep and felt herself completely well, as though she had never been ill. Having received healing from her sickness, she forgot the visit and mercy of the Venerable One and was heedless of his command: she did not go to the monastery to his tomb, nor did she have a moleben served. But even then Venerable Sergius was not angered with her; as a merciful servant of the merciful Master, he had mercy on her, as the Lord had mercy on the sinful woman (Lk. 7:37–47). He appeared to her a second time and reproached her, saying:

"O woman, why have you forgotten my words and failed to fulfill my command—to go and pray to the All-Merciful Savior? Go now, then, and fear nothing. But if you do not go and do not obey me, you will suffer something yet more bitter."

When she awoke, she remembered that she had not fulfilled the words of the Venerable One and, overcome with terror, went at once to the monastery of the saint. Falling down before his healing-bearing tomb, she tearfully asked the Venerable One to forgive her disobedience, and made a vow at his tomb to come to the monastery and pray every year. Then she returned to her home, glorifying God.

A woman named Anastasia, from the village of Aleksino in the Obnora region, had no use of her arm; it was as though it were someone else's arm. She could neither move it nor turn it. Her family brought

Anastasia to the monastery of the All-Merciful Savior and Venerable Sergius. There a moleben for her health was served according to custom. After praying, they led her to a well which the Venerable One had dug with his own hands and washed her with water from that holy well. The woman's arm was healed at once and became as strong as the other. Giving thanks to God and glorifying Venerable Sergius, Anastasia returned to her home.[24]

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NOTES

6406. From ancient times, the holy Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus were greatly venerated throughout the East, and many made pious pilgrimages to their relics. An annual celebration in honor of the Martyr Sergius is known from as early as the beginning of the 5th century. In that same century, Alexander, Bishop of Hierapolis, built a splendid church in honor of these martyrs. Their venerable, incorrupt heads were kept for a time in Constantinople, where Russian pilgrims saw them: the monk Anthony (1200) and Stephen of Novgorod (about 1350). The Byzantine Emperor Justinian the Great (527–565) fortified the city of Rosafa, where St. Sergius had suffered and where his relics lay; early in his reign, he also built near his palace in Constantinople a splendid church in the name of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus, in thanksgiving for their deliverance of him from prison before his accession. When the Persian king Khosrow (532–579) advanced against Rosafa, by then renamed Sergiopolis, the few inhabitants who had fortified themselves in the city handed over all their valuables so that he would spare the city, except for the relics of the holy Martyr Sergius, which rested in an oblong silver-clad reliquary. When Khosrow learned of this, he moved his entire army toward the city; but upon its wall appeared an innumerable multitude of warriors armed with shields and ready to defend it. Khosrow understood that the martyr was working this miracle and, struck with fear, withdrew from the city. The renowned Frankish chronicler of the 6th century, Gregory of Tours, writes that in his time this saint was greatly venerated in the West for the many miracles and benefits shown to those who came to him in faith.

6413. Mount Athos is a narrow, mountainous peninsula in southern Europe, extending into the Archipelago (the Aegean Sea). Monastic life there is of ancient origin, though it began later than in Syria and Palestine. From ancient times there have been several Slavic monasteries on Athos (Hilandar, founded in the 12th century by the Serbian emperor Simeon and his son Sava; the Monastery of St. Panteleimon, founded in the 11th century by Russians; and others). The monasteries of Athos served as a center of spiritual enlightenment for the Slavs: monks distinguished by their learning and ascetic life came from there to the Slavs, and books were copied and translated there from Greek

24. By 1584, as many as 80 miracles of the Venerable One had been recorded.

into Slavonic. Russia's ties with Athos began very early, with St. Anthony of the Kiev Caves, the founder of Russian monasticism (and 1073). Russian pilgrimages to Athos and sojourns there continued through every century, from the 11th century to the present. Relations with Athos grew especially strong from the 15th century, to which the first accounts of Athos by Russian pilgrims belong. As one of the most venerated holy places of the Orthodox East, Athos is visited every year by thousands of pilgrims from Russia, the Balkan Peninsula, and the Asiatic territories of Turkey. At present, Athos is home to 20 large monasteries, several sketes, and many individual cells, numbering up to 700.



THE EIGHTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 8

8 октября

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

Life of Our Venerable Mother Pelagia

Житие преподобной матери нашей Пелагии

We ought always to render great thanksgiving to our Lord, for He does not desire the death of sinners, but patiently awaits their turning to a righteous life. "A wondrous event," writes James, deacon of the church of Heliopolis[1], "took place in our days; therefore I relate it to you, holy brethren, that, reading attentively, you may receive great benefit."

The Most Holy Archbishop of Antioch[6424] summoned to himself, on church business, eight bishops from the surrounding cities.

Among them was the holy man of God, my bishop Nonnus, a most wondrous man, who had formerly been the strictest monk in the Tabenna[2] monastery. Because of his virtuous life, he was taken from the monastery and appointed bishop[3]. Nonnus came from Heliopolis,

1. Heliopolis of Palestine, situated in the north of Palestine, in Coelesyria, in the present Syrian region of Asiatic Turkey, was in remote antiquity the central point for all the pagan East, but in the 4th century it became a nursery of Christianity and had its own bishops; afterwards this city was gradually destroyed.

2. The monastery of Tabennisi was the first coenobitic monastery. It was located in Tabennisi, in Upper (Southern) Egypt, north of its ancient capital, Thebes, on the bank of the Nile. It was founded around 340 by St. Pachomius the Great, whose memory is 15 May, and whose rule quickly spread throughout the Christian world. The monastery of Tabennisi had such enormous significance in the history of ancient Christian monasticism, and the success of the rule of Pachomius was so great, that even before his death about 7000 monks gathered in Tabennisi and its environs. Afterwards Tabennisi, a name which at first belonged to one island on the river Nile and later passed also to the neighbouring shore-lands of the river where St. Pachomius and his disciples settled, was renowned for its monasteries.

3. Nonnus was first elected bishop of the see of Edessa in 448, in place of the deposed Ibas. When, however, the Council of Chalcedon in 451 restored the see of Edessa to Ibas, Nonnus took the see of Heliopolis.

taking me with him. When the bishops had gathered in the church of the holy Martyr Julian, they desired to hear an instruction from Nonnus, and all sat by the church doors. Nonnus at once began to instruct them orally for their benefit and salvation. All listened reverently to his holy teaching. At that time a certain woman—a pagan, a harlot known throughout Antioch—passed by the church doors with great pride, dressed in costly garments, adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls, and surrounded by a multitude of maidens and youths in fine clothes, with golden necklaces. She was so beautiful of face that the worldly youths could never have their fill of gazing upon her beauty. As she passed by us, she filled all the air with fragrant perfume. When the bishops saw her walking so shamelessly, bareheaded and with her shoulders uncovered, they closed their eyes and, sighing softly, turned away as from a great sin. But blessed Nonnus gazed intently and for a long time at her, until she disappeared from view; then, turning to the bishops, he said: "Did you not admire that woman's beauty?"

They made no reply. Nonnus bowed his head, weeping, and wet with his tears not only the handkerchief he held in his hands, but also his breast. Sighing from the depths of his heart, he again asked the bishops: "Were you not delighted by the sight of her beauty?"

They were silent. Nonnus said: "Truly, I have learned much from her; for the Lord will set this woman before us at His terrible Judgment, and by her He will condemn us. What do you suppose: how much time did she spend in her chamber, bathing, dressing, adorning herself in various ways, and looking at herself in the mirror, setting all her thoughts and care upon appearing more beautiful than all others to the eyes of her mortal admirers? Yet we, having an Immortal Bridegroom in the heavens, upon whom the Angels desire to gaze, take no care to adorn our wretched soul, defiled, naked, and full of shame; we do not strive to wash it with tears of repentance and clothe it in the beauty of virtues, that it may appear well-pleasing before the eyes of God and not be put to shame and rejected at the marriage of the Lamb"[4].

4. An expression borrowed from the apocalyptic mysterious imagery (Rev. 19:7), under the figure of a marriage: the triumph of Christ the Victor and of His Holy Church after the final victory over Satan, the antichrist and their servants, at the end of times.

Having finished this moral instruction, blessed Nonnus took me, his sinful deacon, and we went to the cell that had been given us by the same church of St. Julian. On entering his chamber, my bishop threw himself face down upon the ground and, weeping, said: "Lord Jesus Christ! Forgive me, a sinner and an unworthy man. This woman's care in adorning her body has surpassed all my care for my wretched soul. That woman, to please her perishable admirers, showed such diligence in adorning herself; but I do not strive to be pleasing to Thee, my God, and remain in idleness and negligence. With what face shall I look upon Thee? With what words shall I defend myself before Thee? Woe is me, a sinner! Standing before Thy sanctuary, I do not offer Thee that beauty of soul which Thou seekest from me. That woman, in her vanity, promised to please mortal men by appearing before them in such splendid attire, and she does what she promised; but I promised to please Thee, my God, and through my idleness I have lied. I am naked, for I have not kept Thy commandments. I place no hope in my deeds, but in Thy mercy, and from it I hope to obtain salvation."

For a long time the holy Nonnus thus cried aloud amid sobs. He also prayed for that woman, saying: "Lord, destroy not the work of Thy hands. Let not such beauty remain in wantonness, under the power of demons, but turn her unto Thyself, that Thy holy Name may be glorified in her; for all things are possible unto Thee."

When that day and night had passed, after Matins (it was Sunday), St. Nonnus said to me: "Brother James, listen to the dream I had this night. It seemed to me that I stood in one corner of the sanctuary. And behold, during the service, a certain black dove appeared, covered with filth and filling the air with a foul stench; it flew round about me, and I could not endure its stench. But when the deacon proclaimed, 'As many as are catechumens, depart,' the dove flew away, and I did not see it again until the Liturgy was ended. When the Liturgy had been completed and we were leaving the church, I suddenly saw that same filthy dove again, flying round about me. I stretched out my hand, took it, and cast it into the water that stood in the church narthex. There the dove washed away all its filth, flew forth clean and white as snow, and, rising into the heights, became invisible."

Having told me this dream, blessed Nonnus took me with him and went with the other bishops to the cathedral church, where, after greeting the archbishop, they celebrated the Divine Service. At the conclusion of the holy service, the Archbishop of Antioch invited blessed Nonnus to instruct the people. Nonnus opened his mouth and taught the people by the power of the wisdom of God that dwelt in him. His words were not distinguished by the elaborate wisdom of this world, but were simple, intelligible to all, and effective; for the Holy Spirit spoke through his mouth. He spoke of the Dread Judgment and of the recompense to come for the righteous and the sinners. All who were present were so moved by his words that they watered the earth with their tears.

By the providence of the merciful God, it came to pass that this harlot of whom we speak—who had never before entered a church or remembered her sins—happened to enter that very church at that time. Hearing the instruction of St. Nonnus, she was seized with fear of God; pondering her sins and hearing St. Nonnus teach of the eternal torment awaiting them, she fell into despair, poured streams of tears from her eyes, and in the contrition of her heart could not restrain her weeping. Then she said to two of her servants: "Wait here, and when that holy man who gave the instruction comes out, follow him, find out where he lives, and, when you return, tell me."

The servants carried out her command and told their mistress that the holy man lived by the church of the holy Martyr Julian. Then she immediately wrote with her own hand this letter to blessed Nonnus: "To the holy disciple of Christ, from a sinner and disciple of the devil. I have heard about your God, that He bowed the heavens and came down to earth not for the righteous, but to save sinners. He humbled Himself so far as to eat with publicans[5]. He upon whom the Cherubim dare not gaze had fellowship with sinners and conversed with harlots (Lk. 7:37–50; Jn. 8:3–11, and elsewhere).

"My lord! If you are, as I hear from the Christians, a true servant of Christ, you will not reject me, who desire, with your help, to come to the Savior of the world and behold His most holy Face."

Having read this letter, St. Nonnus wrote her this reply: "Whatever manner of woman you may be, both you yourself and your intention are known to God. Therefore I beg you: do not tempt me, unworthy as I am; I am a sinful servant of God. But if you truly have a good desire to believe in my God and to see me, there are other bishops here with me; come, then, and you will see me together with them. But you ought not to meet with me alone."

Having received and read this, the sinner was filled with great joy, hastened to the church of St. Julian, and sent word to blessed Nonnus that she had come. He gathered seven other bishops to him and ordered her to enter. Appearing before the assembly of holy bishops, she threw herself weeping upon the ground and clung to the feet of St. Nonnus, crying: "I beseech you, my lord, be an imitator of your Teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ; show me your grace and make me a Christian. I am a sea of sins, my lord, and an abyss of iniquities; wash me, then, in baptism."

All the bishops and clergy who had gathered there wept, seeing the harlot come with such repentance and faith. Blessed Nonnus could scarcely make her rise from his feet.

"The canons of the Church," he said, "forbid the baptism of a harlot without sponsors, for fear that she may return again to the same life of fornication."

Hearing this reply, she again fell at the saint's feet, washing them with her tears and wiping them with the hair of her head, as the sinful woman of the Gospel once washed the feet of Christ (Lk. 7:37–38).

"You will answer to God for my soul if you do not baptize me," she said. "Then may God require my soul at your hands, and may He charge you with my wicked deeds. If you reject me unbaptized, you will

5. Publicans were persons appointed by the Romans to collect taxes from the Jews. They usually took the collection of these duties on lease and employed every possible means to extract the greatest profit for themselves. As covetous and insolent agents of the pagan power, the publicans were regarded by the Jews as traitors and betrayers of their country and of the Lord God. "Sinner," "pagan" and "publican" meant the same thing to them; to speak with them was considered a sin, to associate with them was defilement, although among them too there were good and God-fearing people. But Christ did not disdain them either, for which He was often subjected to reproach (Mt. 11:19; Lk. 5:30, 7:34, 15:1–2).

be the cause of my continuing in my life of fornication and uncleanness. If you do not now deliver me from my evil deeds, I shall turn away from your God and worship idols. If you do not now make me a bride of Christ and bring me to your God, you will have no part with Him and His saints."

All who were present, hearing this and seeing how such a harlot had been so greatly inflamed with longing for God, glorified the God Who loves mankind. The blessed Nonnus immediately sent me, humble James, to the Archbishop to tell him of this. When the Archbishop heard what had happened, he rejoiced greatly and said to me: "Go, tell your bishop: 'Honored Father, this task was appointed for you, for I know well that you are the mouth of God, according to His word: "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth"' (Jer. 15:19)."

And calling for the Lady Romana, who was the first deaconess of the Church,[6429] he sent her with me.

When we arrived, we found Pelagia still lying on the ground at the feet of the blessed Nonnus, who could scarcely persuade her to rise, saying: "Arise, daughter, that you may be instructed before baptism."

She arose, and the bishop said to her:

"First confess your sins."

She answered with tears:

"If I begin to examine my conscience, I shall find no good deed in myself. I know only that my sins are more numerous than the sand of the sea, and there is not enough water in the sea to wash away my filthy deeds. But I hope in your God, that He will lighten the burden of my iniquities and look upon me with mercy."

The bishop asked her:

"What is your name?"

She answered:

"My parents called me Pelagia, but the citizens of Antioch renamed me Margarita[6] because of the beautiful and costly ornaments with which my sins adorned me."

6. Margarita, in translation from the Greek, means "pearl."

Then the bishop instructed her, baptized her in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, anointed her with chrism, and gave her Communion of the Most Pure and Life-giving Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. The deaconess Romana was Pelagia's spiritual mother; receiving her from the baptismal font, she led her from the church into the room of the catechumens, for we were there as well. The blessed Nonnus said to the other bishops: "Let us eat, brethren, and rejoice with the Angels of God, for we have found the lost sheep. Let us partake of food with oil and wine, for the sake of spiritual consolation."

When all had come and sat down to eat with the newly baptized woman, the demon began to cry out for all to hear. Weeping in a human voice, he said:

"Woe, woe is me! What I suffer from this talkative winebibber! O wicked old man! Were thirty thousand Saracens, whom you baptized, not enough for you—you stole them from me? Was not Heliopolis enough, which you took from me and brought to your God—though once it was mine, and all who dwelt there worshipped me![7] And now you have taken away my last hope as well. What am I to do, stubborn old man, deceiver? I cannot endure your stratagems. Cursed be the day on which you were born, wicked old man! The streams of your tears have flooded my dwelling and made it desolate.[8]"

Thus the devil cried aloud, weeping, before the door of the room where we were, and all who were there heard his voice. Then, turning again to the newly baptized woman, the demon said:

"What are you doing to me, Lady Pelagia? You are imitating Judas. He, honored with the glory and dignity of an Apostle, betrayed his Lord, and you have done the same to me."

7. At the beginning of the fifth century paganism was still quite widely spread in Heliopolis, but through the labours of St. Nonnus its influence was finally undermined here. By "Saracens" are meant the Arabs, whom St. Nonnus, during his stay on the Heliopolitan see, converted to Christ in number up to 30,000 people.

8. By the desolate dwelling, lost to the devil, is meant here Pelagia. According to the biblical view, just as a pious man is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19), so a wicked man is a temple of the spirit of malice. Therefore the devil calls Pelagia his former dwelling, which became desolate for him after her conversion to Christ.

Then the bishop commanded the handmaid of God, Pelagia, to seal herself with the sign of the Cross. Making the sign of the Cross of Christ upon her face, she said to the devil:

"May Jesus Christ, Who delivers me from you, drive you away!"

When she had said this, the devil vanished at once.

Two days later, while Pelagia was sleeping with the Lady Romana, her spiritual mother, the devil appeared to her, woke her, and began to say:

"My dear lady, Margarita, what evil have I done to you? Did I not enrich you with gold and silver? Did I not adorn you with precious stones, ornaments, and garments? I beg you, tell me: what grief have I caused you? Whatever you command me, I shall do at once; only do not abandon me and do not make a mockery of me."

Having sealed herself with the sign of the Cross, Pelagia answered:

"May my Lord Jesus Christ, Who delivered me from your teeth and made me a bride of His heavenly bridal chamber, drive you away from me."

And at once the devil vanished.

Pelagia immediately woke the holy Romana and said to her:

"Pray for me, my mother, for the evil one is pursuing me."

Romana answered:

"My daughter, do not fear him, for now he is afraid and trembles even at your shadow."

On the third day after her baptism, Pelagia called one of her servants and said to him: "Go to my house, take inventory of all that is in my treasuries, and of all my ornaments, and bring everything here."

The servant went and did as he had been commanded. Then the blessed Pelagia summoned the holy Bishop Nonnus and gave everything into his hands, saying: "Here is the wealth with which Satan enriched me; I entrust it to your holy hands. Do with it as you will, but I must seek the treasures of my Lord Jesus Christ."

The blessed Bishop Nonnus summoned the church steward and, in the presence of all, handed him the treasures Pelagia had entrusted to him, saying: "I adjure you by the name of the Holy and Undivided Trinity to bring none of this gold into the bishop's house, or the church

of God, or your own house, or the house of any of the clergy; but distribute all of it with your own hands to orphans, the poor, and the infirm, so that what was gathered through evil may be spent on good, and sinful wealth become wealth of righteousness. But if you break this oath, let your house be anathema, and let your lot be with those who cried out, 'Take him, take him, crucify him'[9] (Lk. 23:21)."

The handmaid of God, Pelagia, kept nothing of her possessions, not even enough for her own sustenance, but lived at the expense of the deaconess Romana, for she had sworn to use nothing of her sinful wealth. Calling together all her male and female servants, she set them free, giving each a sufficient amount of silver and gold.

"I free you from temporal slavery," she said to them; "do you, in turn, strive to free yourselves from slavery to this vain world, filled with sins, so that we who lived together in this world may be granted to dwell together in the blessed life as well."

Having said this, Pelagia let her servants go.

On the eighth day, when, according to the custom for the newly baptized, she was to take off the white garments received at baptism (it was Sunday), Pelagia rose very early, removed the white garments in which she had been baptized, and put on a hair shirt. Taking the old garment of the blessed Nonnus, she secretly departed from Antioch, and from that time no one knew where she was. The deaconess Romana grieved and wept for her. But God, Who knows all things, revealed to the blessed Nonnus that Pelagia had gone to Jerusalem, and Nonnus consoled Romana, saying: "Do not weep, my daughter, but rejoice: Pelagia, like Mary, 'hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her'" (Lk. 10:42).

A few days later, we were dismissed by the Archbishop and returned to Heliopolis. Three years later, I desired to go to Jerusalem to venerate the holy Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ,[10] and I asked my bishop, the blessed Nonnus, to give me leave. As he dismissed me, he said: "Brother James! When you come to the holy places, seek out a

9. That is, with the Christ-betrayers and God-killers, the Jews (Lk. 23:21).
10. That is, the Church of the Resurrection of Christ, built on the site of the Lord's Resurrection, the Lord's Sepulchre and the other greatest Christian holy places located there.

certain monk there, whose name is Pelagius. He is a eunuch,[11] exceedingly virtuous, and has lived in seclusion for several years. Find him and converse with him, and you will receive great benefit from him, for he is a true servant of Christ and a monk who has attained perfection."

Nonnus spoke thus of the handmaid of God Pelagia, who had made herself a cell near Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives,[6436] where our Lord once prayed, and, having secluded herself there, lived for God. But Nonnus did not reveal this to me.

I set out for the holy places, venerated the holy Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and His precious Cross, and the next day sought out the monk named Pelagius, as my bishop had instructed me. I found his cell on the Mount of Olives. The cell was enclosed on every side and had no door; I saw only a small window in the wall. I knocked upon it, and when it was opened, I saw the handmaid of God. She recognized me, but did not reveal herself to me. I did not recognize her. And how could I have recognized one whose great beauty had so quickly withered, as a flower withers? Her eyes were deeply sunken; from much and excessive abstinence, the bones and joints of her face stood out. The whole country of Jerusalem believed her to be a eunuch; no one knew that she was a woman, nor did I know it myself, for my bishop had spoken to me of a eunuch monk, and I received her blessing as from a monk—a man. She said to me:

"Tell me, brother, are you not James, deacon of the blessed Bishop Nonnus?"

I marvelled that she had called me by name and recognized me as the deacon of the blessed Nonnus, and answered:

"Yes, my lord."

She said to me:

"Tell your bishop to pray for me, for he is truly a holy man and an Apostle of Christ."

"And I ask you also, my brother," she added, "to pray for me."

Having said this, the blessed recluse closed the little window and began to sing the Third Hour. I offered a prayer and departed; the

11. A eunuch is a person incapable of sexual passions; in the higher, spiritual sense, one who has mortified himself, who has died to the passions.

sight of that angel-like ascetic and her sweet conversation were of great benefit to me.

Returning to Jerusalem, I went about to various monasteries, visited the brethren, conversed with holy men, received their blessings, and gained much benefit for my soul. The good reputation of the eunuch Pelagius spread throughout all the monasteries, and the example of his life benefited everyone. Therefore I desired to go to him again and be consoled by his soul-profiting conversation. When I came to his cell, I knocked at the little window with a prayer, and dared to call him by name, saying: "Open, Father Pelagius!"

But he answered me nothing.

I thought that he was at prayer, or resting, and after waiting a little while I knocked again, asking to be let in, but there was no answer. Again I waited some time, and again I knocked. Three days I spent thus, sitting by the little window and knocking at intervals, having a strong desire to see the holy face of Pelagius and to receive his blessing; but there was neither voice nor response. Then I said to myself: "Either he has gone out of this cell, and there is no one in it, or he has reposed."

I ventured to force open the little window, and I saw that Pelagius lay dead upon the ground. I was horrified, and it grieved me very bitterly that I had not been granted to receive his last blessing. Having closed the window, I went to Jerusalem and told the holy fathers who lived there that Abba Pelagius, the eunuch, had reposed. Immediately the news spread through all Jerusalem that the holy Pelagius, a monk filled with the Spirit, had died in the Lord. For the burial of his honorable body there gathered monks from all the surrounding monasteries, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and a countless multitude of people from Jericho and from the other side of the Jordan. Having broken open the window of the cell, they made an opening sufficient for one man; through the opening so made, the reverent men carried out the honorable body. The Patriarch of Jerusalem also came, with many other fathers. When, according to the rite, they began to anoint the body with fragrant oils, they saw that the departed ascetic had been a woman by nature.

"O God, wondrous among the saints," those present then cried out with tears, "glory to Thee: for Thou hast upon earth hidden saints, not only men but also women."

They wished at first to conceal the mystery of Pelagia from the people, but they could not: for it pleased God not to hide, but to make known and glorify His servant. A great multitude of people assembled; the nuns also flocked from their monasteries with candles and censers, with psalms and church chants, and, taking the honorable and holy body of Pelagia, they bore it with fitting honor into the same cell where she had ascetically labored, and there they buried her.[12]

Such was the life of the former harlot, such the conversion of the lost sinner, such her labors and ascetic feats by which she pleased God. May our Lord Jesus Christ grant that we, together with her, receive mercy on the Day of Judgment! To Him be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having wasted thy body with fasting, by sleepless prayers thou didst beseech the Creator concerning thy deeds, that thou mightest receive perfect forgiveness; and thou didst find it, O Mother, having shown the way of repentance clearly.

* * *

Life of Venerable Thais

Житие преподобной Таисии

In the land of Egypt[13] there once lived a woman, dissolute, shameless and impure in her life. Having a daughter named Thais, she taught her the same shameful manner of life to which she herself had become accustomed, led her to a house of harlotry, and gave her

12. The repose of Venerable Pelagia took place when Nonnus, according to the Life, was bishop of Heliopolis; he was bishop from 451 to 458. Pelagia's conversion took place during the same period of his governance of the Heliopolitan Church, consequently her repose should be dated to the end of his stay in Heliopolis, around 457.

13. The homeland and the city which witnessed the sorrowful conquests of Thais during her sinful life are unknown.

over to the service of Satan, to the ruin of many human souls, through their being enticed by her beauty; for Thais was exceedingly beautiful in her outward appearance and was renowned everywhere for the beauty of her face. Because of carnal desire for Thais, many brought her much gold and silver and bright and costly garments. Enticing her admirers, she brought them to such ruin that many, having lost their property for her sake, fell into poverty, and others, quarreling among themselves over her, beat one another and covered the threshold of her house with their blood.

Hearing of this, the Venerable Paphnutius,[14] dressed in worldly clothes and taking with him a gold coin, entered the house where Thais lived. Seeing her, he gave her the coin as payment, as if desiring to stay with her. Thais, taking the money, said to him:

"Come into the room."

Paphnutius entered with her and saw a high bed spread out; sitting upon it, he said to Thais:

"Is there not another room, a secret one, where we might shut ourselves in, so that no one would know about us?"

Thais answered:

"There is; yet if you are ashamed before people, you may hide from them even in this one, for the doors are closed and no one will come in and learn of us. But if you fear God, there is no place that could conceal you before Him; even if you hid yourself beneath the earth, God sees you there too."

Hearing such words from her, Pafnutius said to her:

"Do you too know of God?"

Thais answered:

"I know of God, and of the blessedness of the righteous, and of the torment of sinners."

14. By Venerable Paphnutius is meant here the abbot of the monastery of Heraclea. Among the Greeks Heraclea, among the Jews Hanes, among the Arabs Anas, was one of the cities of the Heptanomis province, situated between Lower and Upper Egypt, and reckoned as belonging to Upper Egypt. According to the testimony of Rufinus in his History of Monasticism (ch. 16) and of Palladius in his *Lausiac History* (ch. 57), Paphnutius was so high an ascetic that he was regarded as an Angel of God. Zealous for the salvation of souls, he turned many erring laymen to the path of salvation.

Then the elder said to her:

"If you know of God, and of future blessedness and torments, why do you defile people and why have you already ruined so many souls? Condemned to the fiery Gehenna, you will suffer torments not only for your own sins but also for those whom you have defiled."

At these words, Thais with weeping fell down at the elder's feet, crying out:

"I know also that for those who have sinned there is repentance, and for sins there is forgiveness; and I hope by thy prayers to be delivered from my sins and to receive the mercy of the Lord. But I beseech thee, wait for me a little, only three hours, and afterwards I will go wherever thou dost command, and whatever thou dost tell me, I will do."

The elder pointed out to her the place where he would wait for her, and went away. Then Thais, gathering all her treasures acquired by debauchery, worth up to four hundred litrae of gold, carried them out into the middle of the city, and, kindling a fire, laid all of it upon it and burned it before all the people, crying out: "Come, all you who sinned with me, and see how I burn what you gave me."

Having given to the fire the wealth impurely acquired, she went to the place where Paphnutius was waiting for her. The elder led her to a convent of virgins, and, having obtained a small cell, led Thais into it and shut her in there; the doors of the cell he firmly sealed and nailed up, leaving only a small window through which a little bread and water could be passed to her.

"How do you bid me, Father, to pray to God?" Thais asked St. Pafnutius.

"Thou art unworthy," the elder answered, "either to utter the name of the Lord or to lift thy hands to heaven, for thy lips are full of defilement and thy hands are soiled with impurity; only say, often turning toward the east: 'O Thou who didst create me, have mercy on me!'"

And Thais remained in that enclosure for three years, praying to God as Paphnutius had taught her, eating only a little bread and water, and that only once a day.

After three years had passed, Paphnutius, moved by compassion for her, went to the great Anthony,[15] desiring to learn whether God had forgiven her or not.

Coming to the elder, he told him all about Thais's life. Anthony summoned his disciples and commanded them each to shut himself up separately in his cell and to pray to God all night, that He might reveal to one of them concerning Thais, who was repenting of her sins. The disciples fulfilled their father's command and implored God: He revealed about her to one of them, named Paul, who was called the Simple. Standing in prayer at night, he saw in a vision the heavens opened, and a bed standing, spread very richly and shining with great glory; three maidens, radiant of face, stood and guarded it, and a crown lay upon that bed. Seeing this, Paul asked:

"Surely this bed and crown are prepared for no one else but my father Anthony."

Then a voice sounded to him:

"It is not prepared for Father Anthony, but for Thais, the former harlot."

Coming to himself, Paul began to ponder what he had seen, and when morning came he went to the blessed fathers Anthony and Paphnutius and told them of his vision. They, hearing of it, glorified God, who receives those who truly repent. Then Paphnutius went to the convent of virgins where Thais lived in enclosure, and, breaking open the doors, wished to bring her out. But she begged him:

"Allow me, Father, to remain here until my death and to grieve over my sins, for they are so many."

The elder answered her:

"God, the Lover of mankind, has already accepted thy repentance and forgiven thy sins" — and he led her out of the enclosure.

Then the blessed Thais said:

"Believe me, Father, that as soon as I entered the enclosure I set all my sins before the eyes of my mind, and gazing upon them I wept unceasingly. Not even until now have all my evil deeds departed from my

15. Antony the Great was the first founder of the monastic life.

eyes; they stand before me and terrify me, for I shall be condemned for them."

Having come out of the enclosure, the blessed Thais after fifteen days fell ill, and after suffering three days in sickness, by the grace of God she reposed in peace. From her bed of sickness she was carried to that bed which Paul the Simple had seen prepared for her in heaven, where she is glorified with the venerable saints and rejoices forever. Thus the sinner and harlot went before us into the Kingdom of God.[16]

* * *

Commemoration of St. Pelagia the Virgin

Память святой Пелагии девы

St. Pelagia, who lived in the reign of Diocletian in Antioch of Syria, was of a noble family.[17] The governor of the city, learning that she was a Christian, sent soldiers to take her. The soldiers, carrying out the governor's command, surrounded the house where Pelagia lived. Then she began to beseech the soldiers to wait, and when they consented, the saint turned to the east, to the place where she was accustomed to pray, and, stretching out her hands and lifting her eyes to heaven, fervently prayed to God that she might not be given into the hands of the soldiers, but depart to Him as a pure and undefiled sacrifice. After this she dressed herself in her best garments, threw herself from the top of the house, and yielded up her spirit to God.[18]

* * *

16. In accordance with the word of the Saviour: "Verily, verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Mt. 21:31). The repose of Venerable Thais took place around (not later than) 340, since her ascetic labours and repose occurred in the time of Antony the Great (†356) and Paul the Simple (†340).

17. St. Pelagia was a disciple of the Hieromartyr Lucian, presbyter of Antioch (†312), whose memory is celebrated on 15 October.

18. St. Pelagia was only 15 years old when she so willingly suffered for the sake of preserving her virginity. This was at the beginning of the fourth century. St. Ambrose sets St. Pelagia, although she did not succeed in suffering tortures for Christ at the hands of the persecutors, as an example of martyrdom. St. John Chrysostom has two homilies about her, in which this young blessed martyr is glorified.

NOTES

6424. Antioch in Syria was one of the ancient and wealthiest cities of Syria, and its capital. It lies on the river Orontes, about 10 versts from where it flows into the Mediterranean Sea, between the mountain ranges of Lebanon and Taurus. It was founded 300 years B.C. by Seleucus Nicator and named after Antiochus, his father. For the Christian Church, Antioch has especial importance: as the second great centre of Christianity after Jerusalem, and as the mother of the Churches from among the pagans. The famous Church of Antioch was first planted by Sts. Apostles Paul and Barnabas, and afterwards confirmed also by the Apostle Peter. In Antioch there were many remarkable councils of the pastors of the Church during the heretical (Arian and Nestorian) disputes. The Church of Antioch from ancient times enjoyed special prerogatives, on a par with the Churches of Alexandria, Jerusalem, Constantinople and Rome; its hierarchs held the title and prerogatives of patriarch, for which reason in the present passage of the Life of Venerable Pelagia one should understand not an archbishop but a patriarch. At present Antioch is under Turkish rule and presents a small and poor town, in which there are counted up to 10 thousand inhabitants.

6429. Deaconess, from the Greek: a female servant. This was the name of a special class of ministers in the Church, whose institution goes back to apostolic times (Rom. 16:1; cf. 1 Tim. 5:3–10). Elderly women (not younger than 40 years) who were virgins or widows were chosen to the office of deaconess. Their duties were to instruct women and maidens who were converting as to how they should conduct themselves during baptism, to attend the bishop at their baptism and, in his place, to perform the anointing of other parts of the body besides the forehead, etc., to oversee order and decorum among the women during Divine Service, to visit the sick, the needy, and those imprisoned in dungeons, to minister to confessors and martyrs held under guard, to help the destitute, and the like. Concerning deaconesses there are several canonical rules, namely: rule 15 of the IV Ecumenical Council, rule 14 of the VI, and rule 44 of St. Basil the Great.

6436. The Mount of Olives, or Olivet, is one of the mountains of Judea, and is so called for the multitude of olive trees growing on it, as well as various other trees. It lies to the east of Jerusalem, separated from it by the Kidron valley, and higher than the other neighbouring mountains; from its summit a magnificent view opens in all directions. The Mount of Olives is hallowed in the New Testament history by various momentous events from the earthly life of the Saviour, especially by the Ascension of the Risen Lord into heaven from it. Now this so remarkable mountain, with all its surroundings, presents a most mournful aspect and is deprived of its former rich vegetation. The cave of Venerable Pelagia, located near the very place of the Ascension (the middle summit of the mountain), was seen in the 12th century by the Russian pilgrim, Hegumen Daniel. The Western pilgrim Anselm wrote in 1509: "below the place of the Ascension, descending some 20 steps or so, is the place or little cell where St. Pelagia performed her penance."

THE NINTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 9

9 октября

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

Life of St. Apostle James the Son of Alphaeus

Житие святого Апостола Иакова Алфеева

Holy Apostle James was the son of Alphaeus and the brother of the Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, who had formerly been a tax collector. When our Lord Jesus Christ, while dwelling on earth in the flesh, chose simple and pious men for the apostolic dignity, that He might send them to preach the Gospel throughout the universe, He chose this James also and, as one worthy, numbered him in the apostolic company (Mt. 10:3; Mk. 3:18; Lk. 6:15). And James became one of the number of the twelve apostles, an eyewitness and servant of Christ, a preacher of His mysteries and His follower.[1] Having received, together with the other apostles, the Holy Spirit who descended upon them in tongues of fire,[2] he went out to the pagans to preach Christ and to instruct the erring on the path of salvation. Kindled with the fire of divine zeal, he burned away the thorns of godlessness, shattered idols, laid waste their temples, healed various infirmities, drove evil spirits from people, and brought a great multitude of people to Christ, through which he also acquired a new name: the Divine Seed. For he sowed the word of God in human hearts, planted faith, and nurtured piety; for this reason he was named the Divine Seed.

Traversing many lands, he sowed the heavenly seed, gathered the harvest of human salvation, and completed his earthly course in the

1. Together with the other apostles, James the son of Alphaeus was sent by the Lord to preach. Mt. 10:3.

2. After the Ascension of the Lord, James the son of Alphaeus remained together with the other apostles in Jerusalem in the upper room on Sion (Acts 1:13), as also for some time after the descent of the Holy Spirit (6:2).

footsteps of Christ: being an imitator of Christ's sufferings, he yielded up his spirit to God, nailed to the cross.[3]

And this divine seed, St. James, was gathered with fruits borne a hundredfold into the heavenly granary; there, being himself satisfied with the vision of the face of God, he also intercedes for us with his prayers for the same satisfaction.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Let us all praise with hymns James, the divine herald, who firmly implanted the dogmas of wisdom in the souls of the pious; for standing before the throne of the Lord's glory, he rejoiceth with all the Angels and ceaselessly prayeth for us all.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Andronicus and Athanasia

Житие преподобных Андроника и Афанасии

In the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius the Great,[4] there lived in Antioch a man, a goldsmith named Andronicus. He took to wife the daughter of another goldsmith, named John, whose name was Athanasia, meaning "immortality."[5] And indeed, St. Athanasia, by her holy life, as her repose also shows, acquired for herself immortal glory. This married couple, Andronicus and Athanasia, leading an honorable and God-pleasing life, adorned themselves with every virtue. They divided their increasing wealth into three parts: one part they spent for the benefit of the poor, another for the adornment of the Church, and the third for household needs. For their meekness and

3. The Apostle James the son of Alphaeus carried out his apostolic ministry first in Judea, then accompanied the Apostle Andrew the First-called to Edessa (Edessa is the present Urfa, the ancient famous city of Mesopotamia on the river Euphrates), preached the teaching of Christ in Gaza (one of the most ancient cities of the Philistines on the border of the Jewish kingdom, which in apostolic times belonged to Syria) and Eleutheropolis (a city of southern Palestine on the road between Jerusalem and Gaza) and the places adjoining them, from where he set out for Egypt, and here, in the city of Ostracine (a seaport on the border with Palestine), he sealed his apostolic labours with a martyr's death on the cross.

4. Theodosius the Great was Roman emperor from 379 to 395. In his reign the Christian faith was finally established in the Roman Empire.

5. From the Greek *athanasia*, immortality.

good deeds, Andronicus and Athanasia were loved and honored by all the citizens. After they had borne a son, John, and a daughter, Mary, they ceased carnal marital cohabitation and lived in purity as brother and sister. They had particular concern and care for the destitute. Serving them, they carried the sick in their arms, washed them, fed and clothed them, and at their own expense provided every kind of comfort to beggars and wayfarers. In addition, every week Andronicus and Athanasia spent Wednesday and Friday in fasting and prayer.

While they continued to live so virtuous a life, God was pleased to call them to a still more perfect life, that, setting aside all earthly things, they might follow the One Lord, their Jesus Christ, who left us an example by which we ought to follow in His steps.

One day, after twenty years of married life, Athanasia, returning home from Matins in church, found her children delirious and, troubled, sat down beside them on the bed. Andronicus, returning from church somewhat later, began to call his wife, supposing that she was asleep. Athanasia answered:

"Do not be angry with me, my lord, for our children are in a high fever."

Having ascertained this, Andronicus withdrew from the sick children, saying:

"Let the will of the Lord be done!"

After this he went to the suburban church of the holy martyr Julian, where his parents had been buried. Here he remained in prayer until the sixth hour.

While Andronicus was in church, both of his children, his son John, who was in his twelfth year, and his daughter Mary, ten years old, died. Returning from prayer, Andronicus heard weeping and wailing in his house and, dismayed, ran more quickly. He found a great crowd of the inhabitants of his city around his house, and saw both of his children lying dead. Withdrawing into his oratory, Andronicus prostrated himself before the icon of our Savior, uttering the words of the righteous Job:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" (Job 1:21).

In tears over her dead children, Athanasia was so overcome by strong grief that she even desired death for herself, for she kept repeating:

"Oh, if only I too might die with my children!"

On the day of the burial of the children of Andronicus and Athanasia, all the citizens gathered to them, and the patriarch himself came with all his clergy. The children were buried in the church of St. Julian, where their forebears also rested. When the rite of burial was completed, Athanasia did not wish to return home, but sat weeping beside the grave of her children.

At midnight, St. Julian the martyr appeared to her here in the form of a monk and addressed her with the following words:

"Woman! Why do you not leave in peace those who rest here?"

Athanasia answered:

"Lord, do not be angry with me, for I am in dreadful grief: I had two children, and today I have buried both of them together!"

St. Julian the martyr asked Athanasia:

"And how many years old were your children?"

Athanasia answered:

"One was twelve, and the other ten years old."

Then the saint said to her:

"Why do you weep for them? It would be more profitable for you to weep for your own sins. I assure you that just as human nature requires food, so too the dead children are nourished with heavenly blessings in Christ. They pray to Him: 'Righteous Judge! Thou hast deprived us of earthly blessings; do not deprive us of heavenly ones!'"

Hearing these words, Athanasia was moved to tenderness, and instead of sorrow she rejoiced, saying:

"If my children continue to live in heaven, why should I weep?"

Speaking thus, Athanasia turned, wishing to converse longer with the one who had appeared to her, but she no longer saw him. Athanasia searched for the one who had appeared to her throughout the whole

church, but found no one. Then she disturbed the doorkeeper who guarded the church doors and asked him:

"Where is that monk who was speaking with me?"

The doorkeeper answered:

"Do you not see that the doors are locked and no one has entered here? Why do you say that someone was speaking with you?"

Then Athanasia, convinced that it had been only a vision, was afraid, and returning home she recounted to her husband what she had seen and heard, and at the same time was consoled in her grief.

"My lord," Athanasia said to Andronicus, "even while our children were alive I intended to tell you of a certain purpose of mine, but I was embarrassed; now, however, after their death, I will tell you without embarrassment: release me to a monastery, that there I may weep over my sins. And then the Lord, who has taken our children from us, may make us better prepared for His service."

Andronicus answered:

"Go, test your purpose for one week, and if you do not change it, we will consult about this together."

Athanasia, having endured the test, did not change her purpose, and after many days, on the contrary, became filled with a still stronger desire for the monastic life, and again began to beseech her husband to release her to a monastery.

Then Andronicus, summoning Athanasia's father, said to him:

"Behold, we wish to go to venerate the holy places; therefore we entrust our house and all our property to you, and we ask you: if on the way some misfortune should befall us, distribute our property to those in need, and turn our house into a hospital for beggars and a shelter for wayfarers."

Thus Andronicus, entrusting his house and his property to his father-in-law, at the same time freed all his male and female slaves.

One night Andronicus and Athanasia, having gathered together, took with them for the road a little of their property and went out of the house, unnoticed by anyone. Surrendering themselves to the will of God, they began to perform the ascetic labor of wandering pilgrimage.

As morning came the following day, outside the city, the blessed Athanasia looked back and saw her house in the distance; then, raising her eyes to heaven, she said:

"O God, who said to Abraham and Sarah: 'Go forth from thy land, from thy kindred and from thy father's house, to the land that I will show thee' (Gen. 12:1)! Look upon us also and guide us in Thy fear. Behold, for Thy sake we have left our house open; do not shut the doors of Thy kingdom against us."

After this, both of them, weeping, continued on their way. Having reached Jerusalem, Andronicus and Athanasia venerated the holy places, and, receiving the blessing of many fathers, conversed with them. Then they went also to Alexandria to venerate the relics of the holy martyr Menas. On the way there, Andronicus, looking back, noticed some layman quarreling with a monk, and said to the layman:

"Why are you quarreling with the monk?"

The layman answered:

"The monk hired my donkey to ride on it to the Skete, and I advised him to set out at once, so that we might make the journey by night, when there is no strong heat of the sun, and in the morning, about the sixth hour, be already at the Skete. Meanwhile the monk does not wish to accept my advice."

Then Andronicus asked the layman:

– Have you another donkey?

He answered:

– I have.

Andronicus said:

– Go, then, and bring him, and I will hire him from you, for I too wish to go to Scetis.[6]

6. *Skit* is an Egyptian word meaning scales, a test of the heart. Others derive it from the Greek word for skin, which indicates that the first ascetic hermits did not have properly built houses, but were content to make shelters of the skins of wild animals. In the present case what is meant is not a particular kind of monastic dwelling in the sense of separate cells for solitary hermits, but a known region at a day's journey (25–30 versts) from Mount Nitria, in the north-western part of Egypt. This was a waterless stony desert, a favourite place of the Egyptian desert-dwellers, renowned for the ascetic exploits of the monks who lived there. From this region, later, the solitary monastic communities in which the most zealous monks settled for the strictest solitude and unbroken silence, for the sake of abiding in the One God, received the name of *skete*.

Andronicus said to his wife Athanasia:

– Wait here until I have gone to Scetis to receive a blessing from the fathers there.

– Take me with you as well, begged Athanasia.

– Women, Andronicus replied, are not permitted to be in Scetis.

Then Athanasia said to her husband with tears:

– If you leave me without placing me in a women's monastery, you will have to answer for it to the holy Martyr Menas.

Andronicus promised not to leave his wife until he had fulfilled her wish.

After this Andronicus went to Scetis, where in each Lavra[7] he received a blessing from the fathers of Scetis.

Having heard of Venerable Daniel,[8] Andronicus overcame great difficulties and came to him. He bowed before him and, after prayer, told him all about himself and his wife Athanasia. Venerable Daniel said to Andronicus:

– Go, bring your wife, and I will give you a letter for the Thebaid,[9] so that you may take her there freely and place her in the women's monastery of the Tabennesiots.[10]

Returning to Athanasia, Andronicus brought her by night to the holy elder Daniel. Elder Daniel conversed with them about the paths of salvation and greatly profited their souls. Then, giving them a letter, the elder blessed them and sent them to the Tabennesiot monastery.

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

8. The memory of the Venerable Daniel of Skete is kept by the Church on the Saturday of Cheesefare.

9. The Thebaid was the region of the Egyptian city of Thebes, famous in antiquity; by this name, from its principal city, the whole of Upper (southern) Egypt was also called.

10. Among the other monasteries here, the women's monastery of Tabennisi was renowned for its strict asceticism.

Having come to the monastery, blessed Andronicus placed his holy wife Athanasia in the women's monastery. Having received the Angelic habit there, Athanasia began to lead an angelic life. He himself returned to Venerable Daniel, the superior of the Lavra, who tonsured him as a monk and, instructing him in a virtuous life, assigned him a separate cell, that Andronicus might dwell there alone and strive in stillness.

And so blessed Andronicus, striving worthily, continued in the ascetic labors of stillness for twelve years. After this, he entreated Father Daniel to let him go to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places. Venerable Daniel offered a prayer and sent him forth with his blessing.

As he was passing through the regions of Egypt, Andronicus once sat down to rest for a little while beneath juniper bushes. And there, by Divine providence, he saw his wife, blessed Athanasia, walking in men's clothing. They greeted one another. Athanasia recognized her husband Andronicus, but he did not recognize her. And how could he have recognized Athanasia, when her face had grown thin from abstinence and she had become black as an Ethiopian woman? Moreover, Athanasia had changed her appearance and was wearing men's clothing. She asked Andronicus:

– Are you not a disciple of Father Daniel, named Andronicus?

– Yes, I am, Andronicus replied.

Then she asked him again:

– Abba Andronicus, where are you going?

– I am going to venerate the holy places, Andronicus replied. "And you," he asked Athanasia in turn, "where are you going, and what is your name?"

She answered:

– I too am going to the holy places, and my name is Athanasius. (She had so changed her name that, instead of Athanasia, she called herself Athanasius.)

– Let us go together, said Andronicus. Athanasia replied:

– If you wish to go with me, then "set a guard upon thy mouth" (cf. Ps. 140:3), so that we may journey in silence.

Andronicus said:

– Good; let it be as you wish.

Athanasia continued:

– Let us go, and may the prayers of your holy elder accompany us.

When Andronicus and Athanasia reached Jerusalem, they went about all the holy places there to venerate them. After this they went to Alexandria to venerate the relics of the holy Martyr Menas. There, after prayer, Athanasia said to Andronicus:

– Father, would you like us both to dwell in one cell?

Andronicus answered:

– Let us stay together—but first I will ask the elder whether he will permit us to dwell in one cell.

Athanasia continued:

– Go and ask, while I wait for you in the skete called Octodecaton,[11] and if the elder permits it, come for me, and we shall dwell in a cell in stillness, just as we journeyed in silence. But if you are unable to remain in silence, do not come back for me, for I do not wish to live without the ascetic labor of stillness, even if the Venerable Father should command it.

Andronicus went to Abba Daniel and told him all about his companion Athanasius.

Then Daniel said to Andronicus:

– Return, love silence, and remain with Athanasius, for he is a perfect monk.

After this Andronicus took Athanasia with him and led her to his cell, where she lived in the fear of God and in stillness for another twelve years. Yet Andronicus did not recognize his wife, for she earnestly prayed to God that her husband might not recognize her. Abba Daniel often came to them and instructed them. Once, after staying with them and conversing about many things profitable to the soul, Daniel was returning to his cell. Before he could reach it, blessed Andronicus caught up with him and said:

– Father Daniel, Athanasius is departing to the Lord!

11. The monasteries of the Scetic desert were distinguished by numbers, according to their distance from Alexandria (the "Octodecatic", the eighteenth).

The elder returned and found Athanasia in a high fever. At the sight of the elder, Athanasia began to weep, but the elder said to her:

– You should rejoice, not weep, for you are going to meet the Lord.

Athanasia answered:

– I weep not for myself, but for Andronicus. But, father, show me this kindness: after my repose, you will find a letter at my head. Read it, and then give it to Andronicus.

Then, after prayer, Athanasia partook of the Divine Mysteries and departed to the Lord. The brethren came to bury the body and saw that it was a woman. Abba Daniel found a letter at the head of Athanasia's bed, read it, and gave it to Andronicus. Then Andronicus learned that Athanasia had been his wife.

After this all glorified God. Word of this spread through all the Lavras, and Abba Daniel sent out monks to summon all the fathers of Egypt and those who struggled in the inner desert. The inhabitants of all the Alexandrian Lavras gathered, together with the skete-dwellers who wore white garments (for those skete-dwellers had the custom of wearing white garments), and with honor they buried the holy body of blessed Athanasia, glorifying God, Who had granted her such patience.

After Athanasia's burial, Elder Daniel lived with Andronicus for seven days. On the last of these days, remembering the departed, Daniel wished to take Andronicus to his cell. Meanwhile Andronicus entreated the elder, saying:

– Father, leave me here, that I may be buried with my companion Athanasia.

Leaving him, the elder went away; but before he had reached his cell, another monk caught up with him, saying:

– Father Andronicus is departing to the Lord.

The elder immediately sent again for the fathers who had gone away and said to them:

– Return with me to Father Andronicus.

They returned and found Andronicus still alive, and received his blessing. When Andronicus reposed in peace,[12] a great dispute arose

12. He died in the first half of the fifth century.

between the skete-dwellers of the Octodecaton monastery and those of the other monastery, where Venerable Athanasia had struggled and whose monks wore white garments.

The latter said:

– The departed one is our brother, and we wish to take him to our skete, that his prayers may help us.

The fathers of the Octodecaton skete likewise said:

– This brother is ours; therefore let him be laid beside his blessed sister Athanasia.

Then the skete-dwellers of the other monastery said:

– We shall do as the archimandrite of the Octodecaton skete directs.

The elder commanded that Andronicus be buried with Athanasia. Meanwhile, the white-robed skete-dwellers did not wish to obey him, because they were the greater number, and they said:

– The elder is above passions, and moreover he does not fear rivalry; but we, being younger, wish to have our blessed Andronicus with us, that he may help us by his prayers. It is enough for us that we left Athanasia to you!

After this the skete-dwellers were scarcely pacified, and they buried Venerable Andronicus together with blessed Athanasia, praising God, wondrous in His saints. Glory to Him unto the ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Life of St. Abraham the Righteous

Житие святого праведного Авраама

After God confused the tongues at the building of the Tower of Babel,[13] people were scattered over the earth and divided into many nations. They forgot the true God and began to worship idols made by their own hands, animals, the sun and moon, and other phenomena of nature. Then, to renew the Old Testament Church and preserve within it the true knowledge of God, the Lord chose a godly man

13. This event is identified with the time of the birth to the patriarch Eber of a son, Peleg, who received his name in memory of this event (Peleg, from the Hebrew, means division, separation); that is, approximately, almost 2600 years B.C.

named Abraham. Abraham was first called Abram and was the youngest son of Terah,[14] who had two other sons besides him: Haran and Nahor. The former died young, leaving behind a son, Lot, whom Abram took under his care. Terah lived with his sons in Ur of the Chaldees,[15] but it pleased the Lord to separate godly Abram, His chosen one, from the corrupt company of idolaters. And Abram received this command from God:

– Go out from your land, from your kindred and from your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, bless you, and magnify your name, and you shall be a source and an example of blessing for many. I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you, and in you all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed.[16]

Abram received the command of God with faith and obedience, and went out of Ur of the Chaldees with his wife Sarai, his father Terah and his nephew Lot. He tarried for a time in Haran[17], where his father died[18], and then continued his journey alone with his household and with Lot. Having come into the land of Canaan, he passed through it as far as Shechem, to the oak grove of Moreh[19]. There the Lord appeared to him and promised to give this land to his posterity. In memory of this theophany, and in thanksgiving to God for the promise, Abram

14. Terah was the tenth patriarch from Noah. Abraham was born nearly 2000 years B.C.

15. Ur of the Chaldees was one of the royal cities of Chaldea, in Mesopotamia, not far from the mouth of the Euphrates; it was the principal place of commercial exchange. Now the name of Ur is given to the ruins lying to the west of the bed of the Euphrates (six miles off), at the point where it joins the Hatch-el-Hie (a branch of the Tigris flowing into the Euphrates).

16. This divine promise has a Messianic meaning, as St. Apostle Paul clearly shows, referring to these words of God to Abraham. "Know ye therefore," he writes, "that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. 3:9).

17. Haran was a city in the north-western part of Mesopotamia, between the Chabor (a tributary of the Euphrates) and the Euphrates, on a broad plain surrounded by mountains, to the south-east of Edessa; in antiquity it was an important trading point on the great trade road between the Mediterranean and the East. Today it is an insignificant little town of Mesopotamia.

18. Some teachers of the Church explain the death of Terah in Haran as a wise dispensation of Divine Providence; for it was not God's pleasure that Terah, guilty of idolatry, should bring the infection of superstition to the generation that was to be separated from him. Therefore Scripture notes this event so precisely.

built an altar in that place. After this Abram traversed the whole length of that land toward the south, and between Bethel and Ai he built another altar to the Lord[20].

Abram, together with his household and Lot, settled in the valley of Shechem. At first the two of them lived together and were rich in cattle, silver and gold; but afterward, to avoid strife between their household members and servants, Abram parted from Lot and left him the choice of land. Lot chose for himself the flourishing plain watered by the Jordan[21].

After Lot had separated from Abram, God appeared to His chosen one and said:

"Lift up your eyes, and from the place where you now stand look to the north, and to the south, and to the east, and to the west: all the land that you see from the mountain I will give to you and to your posterity forever[22]. And I will give you offspring like the dust of the earth. Arise, walk through this land in its length and breadth, for I will give it to you and to your posterity forever."

19. By the land of Canaan, in the narrowest and strict sense, is meant the land on this side of the Jordan, Phoenicia (the northern part of Canaan) and the land of the Philistines; in more recent times the land of Canaan is often understood as all of Palestine, the whole promised land, which the Israelites later occupied on both sides of the Jordan. Shechem was an ancient city of the land of Canaan, in Samaria, on Mount Ephraim, eighteen hours' journey from Jerusalem; Abraham passed through the land of Canaan, not as far as Shechem itself, which did not yet exist, but to the place where Shechem was afterwards built. Moreh was an oak grove near Shechem.

20. Bethel was the most ancient city of Canaan; in the time of Abraham it was called Luz. It lay north of Jerusalem, in the hill country of the tribe of Ephraim, and it gave its name to the mountain beside it, which was called Bethel Mount. The place is exceedingly wild, and at the present time it is nothing other than a shepherds' pasture upon heaps of ruins. Ai was an ancient city of Canaan, in the northern part of the territory of the tribe of Benjamin, to the east of Bethel.

21. The Jordan valley, which Lot chose for his dwelling, and in which the bed of the Jordan lay, was fairly wide. The Dead Sea, as most scholars suppose, did not yet exist at that time; the Jordan spread out through several channels and probably, by way of the valley, reached the Gulf of Arabia, or Red Sea.

22. The fulfilment of God's promise pertains to the descendants of Abraham not by flesh alone but also by faith, and for this reason the promise is called everlasting. The fulfilment of all these promises is in Christ, Who by His blood made this land holy and obtained it for all believers, making it the homeland of the Christian soul. This is why, apart from the countless remnants of the chosen people who were afterwards scattered over the whole face of the earth, Abraham has yet another posterity by faith, for whom Palestine is a land of salvation, truly the land of promise.

Obedient to the command of God, Abram moved toward the south and settled by the oak grove of Mamre[23], where he built an altar to the Lord.

Meanwhile, in the Jordan plain which Lot had chosen for his dwelling, there were five cities[24], governed by their own kings, but for twelve years already they had been in subjection to the king of Elam[25]. In the thirteenth year they rebelled against the king, but were defeated by him, and many inhabitants of that country, including Lot, were taken captive. Learning of this, Abram armed his servants, defeated the enemies, freed Lot and all the captives, and recovered all the booty carried off by the enemy, which he returned to the kings according to their due. As Abram was returning in victory, the kings came out to meet him. Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High[6469], brought out bread and wine and blessed Abram, saying:

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Lord of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hands."

Abram offered Melchizedek a tenth part of all the spoils of war; but when the king of Sodom offered him to keep for himself the goods recovered from the enemies, he refused to take anything.

After this Abram became very well known in the land of Canaan. His successes aroused envy and apprehension among its inhabitants. Then the Lord, by night, in a vision said to Abram:

"Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; a very great reward is being prepared for you."

Abram said:

"O Lord! What can You reward me with? I have no children: You have not given them to me. Eliezer of Damascus looks after my house: he will be my heir."

23. Mamre is properly the name of the Amorite, an ally of Abraham (Gen. 14:24). The oak grove of Mamre was situated near Hebron, the most ancient city of Canaan, which lies on the road to Jerusalem, in a fertile and beautiful region.

24. In the flourishing Jordan valley where Lot settled there were the following five cities: Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Bela (otherwise Balak).

25. The Elamites were a people descended from Elam, the firstborn of Shem. Their country lay in Mesopotamia, adjoining the land of Canaan.

"Not he," said the Lord, "but your own son will be your heir."

After this the Lord brought Abram out into the courtyard and said:

"Look up to heaven and count the stars, if you are able: so many will your descendants be[26]."

Abram believed the promise, and this faith was reckoned to him as righteousness[6471], and became the foundation of a righteous and God-pleasing life.

On the day following, Abram, by the command of God, cut in two a three-year-old heifer, a she-goat and a ram, and laid one part opposite the other; to them were added a turtledove and a young pigeon[27]. Abram kept the carcasses from the birds of prey[28]. At sunset a sleep fell upon him, and deep dread and thick darkness seized him. Then the Lord drew near to him and said:

"Know that your descendants for four hundred years will be strangers in a land not their own, and will be in bondage and oppression[29]. But I will execute judgment upon the nation which they will serve, and afterward they will come out here with great possessions. And you shall go to your fathers in peace, and be buried in a good old age. Your descendants, however, will return here only when four gen-

26. This promise of God to Moses must not be restricted merely to the literal understanding, in the sense of descent from Abraham of the numerous Hebrew people. This promise has a Messianic meaning and stands in indissoluble connection with the other promises of God to Abraham.

27. This was the visible sign of God's covenant with Abraham, or the agreement that God would indeed fulfil His promise concerning the posterity of Abraham and the inheritance by him of the whole land of Canaan. Among the ancients, persons entering into a covenant would usually pass between the halves of cut-in-two animals, as a sign that just as these parts had formerly constituted one living creature, so from that time they would constitute one soul, one life, would be guided by one spirit and form one society. The animals indicated here are those which from of old were customarily used in sacrifices, for Abraham here performs a real sacrifice, and indeed of the kind that was used in the conclusion of solemn covenants.

28. Many take the birds of prey here as a prophetic image of the enemies of the posterity of Abraham: they represent all the idolatrous tribes which sought either to exterminate the people of Israel or to hinder the fulfilment of the covenant by drawing it into idolatry.

29. Here is meant the enslavement of the Hebrews in Egypt. The round number 400 years is given instead of 405, because that many years passed from the birth of Isaac to the Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt. Isaac, as the first sojourner and stranger from the posterity of Abraham, was born in 1901 B.C., and the Hebrews went out of Egypt in 1496 B.C.

erations have passed[30], for the measure of the iniquities of the Amorites is not yet full[31]."

When the sun had set and darkness had come, smoke as from a furnace and a flame of fire passed between the divided animals[32]. And on that day the Lord thus made His covenant with Abram, saying:

"To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates[33]."

Many years had passed since Abram had moved into the land of Canaan. After the revelation that had come to him in Ur of the Chaldees, God had three more times repeated to him the promise of a numerous posterity that was to come from him; but Sarai, his wife, did not bear children, and meanwhile they were both advanced in years. Childlessness was a great trial for Abram[34].

30. If one counts approximately, the four successive generations or lineages may be represented by Levi, son of Jacob, Kohath, Amram and Moses, within a span of 268 years.

31. The Amorites, a Canaanite people, descended from Amorite, son of Canaan, son of Ham, were constant and stubborn enemies of the Hebrews; they formerly lived on the western side of the Dead Sea, but later spread to other places as well, to the eastern side of the Dead Sea and the Jordan; they occupied chiefly the middle of the land of Canaan and formed several powerful kingdoms. By the filling of the measure of iniquity is understood in Scripture the final spiritual decay and death of societies and peoples, their abandonment by God, judgment upon them and their destruction.

32. Abram did not pass between the cut animals; only the visible image of the Lord passed, that is, this was a covenant of mercy, a benefaction promised and confirmed tangibly by the rite of the covenant. Smoke and flame are two symbols representing the posterity of Abraham amid the temptations and burdens of slavery, and the Lord Himself, whose revelation and promise are light and consolation in the darkness of sorrow. Thus the smoke signified the sufferings of Israel, and the flame, deliverance.

33. The River of Egypt is the Nile. The Euphrates is the great river of Mesopotamia, which flows from the mountains of Armenia and empties into the Persian Gulf. The country indicated here would have been wholly the possession of Israel if he had remained faithful to the covenant with God. But although the decline of the people hindered the fulfilment of what had been ordained, all the lands lying between the eastern mouths of the Nile and the Euphrates were for a time under the dominion of the posterity of Abraham.

34. Barrenness was always regarded among the Hebrews as a reproach, and fruitfulness signified a special blessing of God. It was for this reason that Sarah offered her husband her servant, so that the promise might be fulfilled sooner. Abraham, however, according to the customs of the East, having no direct indication from the Lord that he would have a son by Sarah, could take a second wife without even resorting to divorce from the first, although divorce was not only permitted by custom but was even incorporated into the law of Moses.

Then Sarai, thinking that the obstacle to the fulfillment of God's promise lay in herself, proposed that Abram take also her maidservant, the Egyptian Hagar, as a wife, and she bore him a son, Ishmael[35].

When Abram had reached ninety-nine years, the Lord appeared to him and said:

"I am God Almighty; walk before My face, and be blameless: and I will establish My covenant with you and give you a most numerous posterity."

Abram, in a feeling of reverence and devotion, fell on his face. God said to him:

"Now you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham[36]; for I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. Nations and kings shall come from you; and I will establish My everlasting covenant with you and your descendants[37], that I will be God to you and to your descendants after you, and will give you all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession[38]. The visible sign of the covenant between Me and you shall be that all your males are circumcised. Every male child shall be circumcised at eight days old, not only of your children but also of the slaves bought with silver from foreigners. An uncircumcised person, as a breaker of My covenant, is cut off from his people[6484]. Sarai, your wife, shall not be called Sarai, but her name

35. Ishmael, in Hebrew, “heard by God,” was so named because the Lord looked upon the affliction of Hagar, when, pregnant, she fled into the wilderness from the oppression of Sarah; He commanded her to return and granted her a son.

36. The name Abram is an honorific title, meaning "exalted father," "high father." Abraham, however, is a name expressing the fulfilment of the promise, meaning "father of a multitude," or "father of many nations." Metropolitan Philaret remarks that renaming was used in the East by kings when they elevated someone. In keeping with this, here too God, exalting Abraham, renames him.

37. The everlasting covenant is concluded in the person of Abraham not only with his fleshly posterity, the Israelite people, but still more with the whole of mankind, understanding under this name those who by faith received the promise; and it is therefore called an everlasting covenant in the Messianic sense.

38. The everlasting inheritance of the land of Canaan must be understood in a mystical, typological sense, understanding by it the Kingdom of God and the Holy Church of Christ.

shall be Sarah[39]. I will bless her, and nations shall come from her, and kings of peoples shall come from her."

Abraham rejoiced and laughed, but at the same time asked himself in perplexity:

"Shall a child be born to a man of a hundred? And shall Sarah bear a child at ninety?"

But the Lord repeated His promise and foretold the very name of their future son: Isaac.

Soon after this, the Lord appeared to Abraham again by the oak grove of Mamre, in the following manner. One day at noon Abraham was sitting at his tent. Lifting up his eyes, he saw three travelers before him. He at once hastened to meet them and, bowing down to the earth, said to the first of them:

"My lord! If I have found favor in Your eyes, do not pass by Your servant. Let me bring a little water and wash your feet[40]; then rest under this tree[41]. And I will bring bread so that you may refresh yourselves for the road."

The travelers[42] agreed to his request. Then Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah and told her to knead quickly fine flour and bake unleavened cakes; then he ran to the herd, chose a tender, good calf, and ordered his servant to prepare it. When the unleavened cakes and the calf were ready, Abraham also took curds and milk, and set all this be-

39. The first name, Sarai, means "dominion," that is, "mistress," and represents a general title of honor. Sarah, however, means "princess" or "exalted woman"; in the very name there is contained the prophecy, expressed further on, that kings would come from her.

40. In antiquity travelers wore only sandals (wooden or leather soles fastened to the feet with straps), and the washing of the feet after a journey was the first act of hospitality, especially in the East.

41. The Oak of Mamre, under whose shade Abraham was granted to receive the Lord Himself, according to the testimony of the Blessed Jerome, existed even before the time of the Emperor Constantius (that is, approximately before the middle of the 4th century), and at all times it was pointed out to reverent pilgrims to the holy places. At the present time this sacred locality, with the tree surviving on it, belongs to the Russian Jerusalem Mission.

42. One of these wayfarers, in whose form the Angels appeared to Abraham, was the Lord Himself, Jehovah, who in this place of the Book of Genesis (Gen. 17:9) is clearly distinguished from the other Angels. In the appearance of the three Angels some see a manifestation of the great mystery of the Holy Trinity, for which reason, to depict this mystery, recourse is often had to the image of the appearance of three wayfarers to Abraham.

fore the guests. They began to eat, while Abraham stood under the tree, attending them. During the meal the travelers asked Abraham:

"Where is Sarah, your wife?"

"She is here, in the tent," answered Abraham.

Then one of them, who was the Lord Himself, said: "When I come to you again at this same season next year, your wife Sarah will have a son."

Sarah was standing at the entrance of the tent. Hearing the prediction, she laughed, thinking to herself:

"Shall I, in old age, have this consolation? And my lord is old too."

But the Lord said to Abraham:

"Why did Sarah laugh? Is anything impossible with God? At the appointed time I will come to you, and Sarah will have a son."

Then Sarah was seized with fear. She felt that she stood before a higher, Divine Power that sees her inner feelings, and in confusion she began to assure Him that she had not laughed. But the Lord rebuked her and once again repeated that she had laughed. Thus He showed Himself as the Searcher of hearts, and taught Sarah to be more attentive to her own thoughts and more submissive to the Divine promises.

After this the travelers arose and set out from there toward Sodom. Abraham, however, according to the word of the Apostle, "against hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was said: 'So shall your offspring be.' And, not weakened in faith, he did not consider that his own body, being nearly a hundred years old, was already as good as dead, nor that Sarah's womb was dead; he did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that He was able also to perform what He had promised. Therefore it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (Rom. 4:18–22)[43]. Believing in the gracious promise of a numerous posterity that was to come from

43. Rom. 4:18–22. On the significance of this faith of Abraham see above. "Righteousness" means justification; "hoping against hope, he believed" — that is, having no ground for hope, he nevertheless believed, being stirred to hope by that which the eye had not seen and the mind had not comprehended, namely, God and His promise.

him, Abraham accompanied his Divine visitors with the liveliest feelings of joy, gratitude and reverence.

On the way the Lord revealed to Abraham His intention to destroy the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah for their countless iniquities. Abraham began to beseech God to spare the wicked cities for the sake of the fifty righteous men who might be found in them. But such a number was not found in those cities. After this the Lord promised Abraham, in answer to his prayer, to spare the wicked cities if forty, then thirty, twenty, and finally at least ten righteous men were found in them. But not even that number of righteous was found in Sodom and Gomorrah. Then the fate of the wicked cities was sealed. Yet Abraham's intercession was not in vain and entirely fruitless, for his nephew Lot was saved from the general destruction.

In the evening two Angels who had visited Abraham came in the form of wayfarers to Sodom, when Lot was sitting at the gate of the city. Seeing the wayfarers, Lot bowed down to the earth before them and said:

– My lords! Turn aside into the house of your servant and spend the night, and wash your feet, and in the morning you shall go on your way.

When the wayfarers began to refuse, testing Lot, and to decline his hospitality, he urged them strongly, and they entered his house. Lot prepared unleavened bread and offered them a meal, and they ate. They had not yet lain down to sleep when the men of Sodom, from every quarter of the city, surrounded Lot's house and demanded that the wayfarers be given up. Lot went out to calm them and persuade them not to do harm to the wayfarers who enjoyed his hospitality; but they reviled him and threatened to break down the doors. Then the Angels, who had appeared in the form of wayfarers, struck the men of Sodom with blindness, and they brought Lot into the house and bade him take his relatives and depart from the city, condemned to destruction for its iniquities; at this the Angels revealed to Lot who they were, declaring plainly that they had been sent to him by the Lord. Dawn was already breaking, and Lot still lingered. Then the Angels, taking him by the

hand, and his wife and daughters, led them out. One of the Angels said to Lot:

– Save your soul; do not look back, and do not stop anywhere in this plain; escape to the mountain,[44] lest you perish.

But Lot said:

– No, Lord! Behold, your servant has found favor in your eyes, and great is the mercy which You have shown me in saving my life; but I cannot flee to the mountain, lest the calamity overtake me and I die. Behold, this city is nearer, and it is small; grant me to flee to it, that my life may be preserved in it.

The Angel answered:

– To please you I will do this also, and will not destroy this city; flee to it, but do not delay in the least, for I cannot accomplish my task until you have gone there.

So great is the mercy of God toward the righteous! For the sake of Lot, weak in will but pure in soul, and for the sake of his kinship with God's chosen one, Abraham, the Lord not only grants salvation to the city, but, in His mercy, delays the execution of His just judgment upon the wicked cities until Lot has had time to be saved.

When Lot reached that city, the sun had already set. Then the Lord rained down from heaven upon Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim sulfur and fire in the form of rain, and destroyed those cities and the whole plain with all their inhabitants, and that whole land was turned into a salt lake.[45]

Lot's wife did not obey the Angel's command: on the way out of Sodom she looked back, and at once she was turned into a pillar of salt.

44. By "the mountain" are meant the mountains of Moab. Zoar, in which Lot found refuge from destruction — in the Hebrew text Tsoar, formerly Bela — was one of the five allied cities situated in the valley of the Jordan and was the southernmost city of that land, halfway to the mountains of Moab.

Lot himself, fearing to remain in Zoar, withdrew with his two daughters into the mountain and lived there in a cave.

Meanwhile God at last visited Sarah with His mercy. When Abraham was a hundred years old, she bore him a son, whom he, in accordance with God's own prediction, named Isaac. On the eighth day Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. And Sarah, now ninety years old, said:

– God has made laughter of joy[46] for me; whoever hears of me will rejoice. Who could have said to Abraham, "Sarah will nurse children"? For I have borne him a son in his old age.

When the child had grown and was weaned, Abraham made a great feast on this occasion. Sarah, seeing that Ishmael, whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, was mocking her son Isaac, said to Abraham:

– Cast out this slave woman and her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit with my son Isaac.

It grieved Abraham to hear these words; as a father he loved and pitied Ishmael. But God said to him:

– Do not be distressed for the lad and for your slave woman; in all that Sarah says to you, obey her voice; for in Isaac shall your seed be called. Nevertheless, from the son of the slave woman also I will make a nation, because he too is your seed.[6493]

Then Abraham, in complete submission to the will of God, sent Hagar away with her son Ishmael. Wandering, they lost their way in the wilderness and were already dying of thirst, but God wondrously

45. The Salt, or Dead, Sea lies at the southern end of the Jordan valley, surrounded by sharp, bare cliffs. It is called Salt because it contains a great deal of salt; besides this, there is a multitude of asphalt, or mountain pitch, which even now rises from the bottom of the lake, floats to the surface, and produces vapors in the air. It is called Dead because no living creature can exist in its waters. Even its shores, covered with crystals of salt, present a spectacle of complete absence of life; the very stumps, saturated with saline lye, become petrified. Thus the Dead Sea serves as a striking monument of the divine curse and punishment upon the wicked cities. The Dead Sea has an elongated shape and stretches from north to south for 20 hours' journey; its depth in the northern part reaches 1,318 feet, or about 190 sazhens, while the southern part is very shallow.

46. Isaac, in Hebrew, means "laughter." Isaac was so named because Sarah, his mother, laughed on hearing the promise of his birth; but he was also named so because there is contained in him a mystical prefiguring of the appearance of the day of Christ, of which the Savior Himself said: "Abraham your father rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it and was glad" (Jn. 8:56).

saved them and comforted the grieving mother with the promise to make a great nation from her son.[47]

At that time Abraham enjoyed great influence and respect among the neighboring kings and rulers of Canaan. The high protection and special blessing of God upon Abraham was so evident to all that Abimelech, king of Gerar, sought an alliance with him. But even after this Abraham lived as before, as a wanderer, never having a permanent dwelling for himself.

Abraham's whole life passed amid manifold trials, presenting an example of patience, of steadfast and unshaken faith and hope in God, and of the most perfect submission to His will. Yet his faith was to become still firmer after all the Lord's mercies toward him. And so, after many years of his life, the Lord sends him a final trial, surpassing the powers of an ordinary man. Testing Abraham's faith, God called to him and said:

– Take your son, your only one, whom you love, Isaac, go into the land of Moriah, and there offer him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I shall show you.

Despite the extraordinary nature of such a command and his great parental love for Isaac, Abraham did not in the least doubt that it came from God, and that it must be carried out without any resistance. His devotion to God was so great that he did not spare his only beloved son, but was ready to offer him up to God. At the same time he believed that Isaac, who was now to die childless, would, in accordance with the promises given before, be the progenitor of a nation and the ancestor of the promised Deliverer. He thought, as the Apostle says, that God was able to raise the son of promise even from the dead (Heb. 11:19). And so, without revealing his intention to anyone, Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, took with him Isaac and two servants, split wood for the burnt offering, and set out for the highland of the Jebusites, to the place of which the Lord had told him.[48] On the third day,

47. Indeed, from Ishmael there came a numerous posterity. His twelve sons were the progenitors of the twelve Arabian tribes, which to this day remain nomadic, preserving the independence and wild character of their progenitor. Living in Arabia, they afterward mingled with other nomadic peoples under the common name of Arabs or Arabians.

by a special sign from God, Abraham saw from afar the mountain appointed for the sacrifice. Then he bade his servants remain here with the donkey, and, taking the wood for the burnt offering, had Isaac carry it, while he himself took in his hands the fire and the knife, and they both went together up the mountain.

And Isaac said to Abraham:

– My father! Here are the fire and the wood; where is the lamb for the burnt offering?

Abraham answered:

– God will provide Himself a lamb for the burnt offering, my son. And they went on together.

Having reached the place which God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there, laid out the wood, and, binding his son Isaac, laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

But at that moment a divine voice sounded from heaven:

– Abraham! Abraham!

Abraham stopped to hear God's command.

– Do not lay your hand upon the lad, – the Lord continued, – and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, and have not spared your only son for Me.

Then Abraham, in a feeling of profound joy and gratitude to God, lifted his eyes from the earth and saw behind him a ram, caught by its horns in a thicket. Then he untied Isaac, and, taking the ram, offered it as a burnt offering in place of Isaac, his son.[6496]

After this the Lord again called to Abraham from heaven:

– By Myself I swear, that because you have done this thing and have not spared your only son for Me, I will surely bless you, and I will mul-

48. The Jebusites — a Canaanite people tracing their origin to Jebus, son of Ham — belonged to the most ancient inhabitants of the land of Canaan. Their country lay in the same locality where Jerusalem was afterward built, on the site of their city Jebus on Mount Zion. Moriah — from the Hebrew: "the place pointed out by God" — was the name of the land of the Jebusites and of the mountain in it on which Abraham, at God's command, wished to offer Isaac in sacrifice to God. St. Ephraim the Syrian hands down the ancient tradition that the offering of Isaac in sacrifice took place on the summit of the same mountain on which the most holy Cross-sacrifice of Christ, the Son of God, was accomplished.

tiply your seed as the stars of heaven and the sand on the seashore, and your seed shall possess the cities of their enemies, and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.

Having received this great and gracious promise, Abraham and Isaac, in fear and joy, came down from the mountain and returned to Beersheba,[49] where Abraham then lived.

Twelve years after this, Sarah, the wife of Abraham, died and was buried in the cave of Machpelah[50] opposite Mamre, afterward Hebron, in the land of Canaan.

Three years later, when Isaac had reached the age of forty and Abraham was a hundred and forty years old, the holy and righteous forefather had the consolation of marrying his son to the virtuous Rebekah, granddaughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother. Afterwards Abraham himself entered into a new marriage with Keturah, by whom he had six more sons. Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years, and then delivered up his spirit in peace to the Lord God, whom he had served so faithfully and pleased throughout his life, being a vessel and a pattern of faith in the true God, which he preserved for his posterity from generation to generation. For the high qualities and merits of Abraham, the Lord loved him, and therefore calls Himself his God above all (Gen. 17:7, 26:24, 28:13), and Holy Scripture calls him the friend of God (2 Chr. 20:7; Is. 41:8; Jas. 2:23). His Old Testament descendants, and even the saints before God, Moses and David, invoked Abraham as an intercessor before God. From this progenitor of the Jewish people, in whose line the true faith was preserved on earth, Christ Himself came according to the flesh, and all who truly believe in Christ are called children of Abraham (Rom. 6:7–8; Gal. 3:7, 26–29). And as to our fu-

49. Beersheba – from the Hebrew: "well of the oath" – received its name from the fact that in that region (in the southern extremity of Palestine on the border of the land of the Philistines) Abraham dug a well and here concluded a covenant of oath with Abimelech, king of the Philistines (Gen. 21:32). Here Abraham afterwards planted a grove and dwelt for a long time. Later a city was built here.

50. The cave of Machpelah, opposite Mamre in Hebron, Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite for the burial there of Sarah. Here afterwards were buried, besides Sarah, Abraham, and Isaac with Rebecca, and their son Jacob with his wife Leah. Later a monument was erected over this cave, which constitutes the chief sight of Hebron and attracts the attention of all travelers.

ture lot beyond the grave, only with faithful Abraham can we hope to receive the inheritance of eternal life and salvation. The Lord Himself, in His parable of the rich man and Lazarus, points to Abraham as the dweller in the blessed abode in the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt. 8:11; Lk. 16:22; Gal. 3:9, 29), to which may Christ grant all of us to attain through the prayers of the holy and righteous Abraham, His forefather according to the flesh. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Peter

Память преподобного Петра

St. Peter, in the world Leontius, lived in the reign of the emperor Theophilus[51], and came from Galatia[52], of the parents Theophilus and Eudocia. He was distinguished by a handsome and stately appearance and great bodily strength, for which he was chosen as an imperial *komes*[53] and was honoured by the emperor with various military distinctions. But Leontius remained in service only a short time. Leaving everything, he hastened to the monastic life and received the tonsure, with the name Peter, in a monastery called Daphneon[54]. He then set out for Olbia[55], visited various holy places[56], was in Laodicea and Attalia[57], bravely enduring the hardships of the journey and the dangers from the Muslims, and afterwards returned again to Olbia. He spent the end of his life, already in the reign of Basil the Macedonian[58],

51. Theophilus – Byzantine emperor from 829 to 832, a well-known iconoclast.
52. Galatia – a small mountainous province of Asia Minor, lying between Phrygia, Bithynia, Pontus and Cappadocia.
53. Comites were originally the companions of the highest official personage in a province, and later the companions of the emperors, who formed their most intimate retinue. From the time of Constantine the Great this name became the title of all court and state ranks, even of those who did not belong to the imperial retinue.
54. This monastery was situated near Antioch in Syria and received its name from the suburb of the city where it was located, Daphne.
55. Olbia – now Astak – a city in the north-western region of Bithynia.
56. Here are meant chiefly the places of Palestine hallowed by the life, teaching, sufferings and death on the cross of the Savior.
57. By Laodicea here is probably meant the chief, once flourishing city of Phrygia, on the river Lycus. Attalia – now Adalia – is a coastal city of Pamphylia.
58. Basil the Macedonian – Byzantine emperor from 867 to 886.

in the monastery of St. Phocas[59], where, after many monastic labours, he delivered up his spirit in peace.

* * *

Memory of St. Poplia

Память святой Поплии

St. Poplia, in the reign of Julian, was a deaconess of the Church of Antioch and was renowned for her virtuous life. In her youth she remained in marriage for a short time and had a son, John, who afterwards became a pious presbyter. After her husband's death she gathered about her a choir of virgins[60], with whom she praised the Lord. Once she and these virgins were singing Matins, and among other things they loudly sang the psalm: "The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; they have eyes, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not, neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them..." (Ps. 134:15–18). By chance, at that time the emperor, who had arrived in Antioch, was passing by, and hearing this singing he commanded them to be silent. But Poplia began to sing even louder. Then the enraged emperor ordered the leader of the choir to be brought before him and commanded each of the soldiers accompanying him to strike her on the face. The saint, during this, fearlessly denounced Julian for his impiety and said that she held the truth of God above all. At last she was sent back to her home, where she continued as before to sing praises to God together with her virgins. Soon after this she delivered up her spirit in peace to the Lord[61].

59. The monastery of St. Phocas the Hieromartyr was located in Constantinople.

60. In the ancient Church, even before the appearance of women's monastic communities and in the early period of their existence, there was a special class of virgins who dedicated themselves wholly to the service of God and gave a vow of virginity. Such persons were called virgins, and they enjoyed great respect in the Church and were regarded as its adornment. They gathered for the ascetic labors of silence, contemplation and prayer in private houses under the direction of experienced spiritual elders – instructresses. Very often the Church entrusted them to the direction and oversight of the most respected of the deaconesses.

61. † at the beginning of the second half of the fourth century.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the holy soldier-martyrs Eventius and Maximus. See 5 September, where Eventius is otherwise called Juventinus.

NOTES

6469. Melchizedek probably came from the Canaanite people, the Amorites, who then lived in Palestine, for he was both their king and priest; at that time piety could still be preserved among the Canaanite tribes, and the measure of the sins of the Amorites was not yet full. By Salem is understood the same place that was afterwards Jebus and then Jerusalem (Ps. 75:3). By his designation as priest of God Most High, Melchizedek is distinguished not only from the worshippers of false gods, but also from the other kings, and even from Abraham, and therefore one could not fail to see in him a special servant of the true God, glorified throughout all Palestine. Holy Scripture has concealed the particulars about him and his lineage, presenting him as a type of Christ the Saviour. Already in the Old Testament, the king and prophet David, in the extraordinary priesthood of Melchizedek, saw a type of the priesthood of the Messiah, when he spoke of the Son of God: Thou art a priest for ever after the order (that is, the likeness) of Melchizedek (Ps. 109:4). The typological meaning of Melchizedek is revealed most clearly and in detail by the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 7:1–28). Melchizedek, by the meaning of his name, is king of righteousness; by his office, king of Salem, that is, king of peace, and at the same time priest of God Most High; he is presented without father, without mother, without genealogy; his priesthood is eternal, for we see neither his predecessors nor his successors; his blessing is the higher, for in the name of the Most High he brings down blessing upon the father of the faithful, and Abraham himself highly esteemed and reverently received this blessing, as the lesser from the greater. All these high qualities and this pre-eminence are united only in the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

6471. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness," says the Apostle (Rom. 4:3), and he shows that Abraham owed his justification to faith alone (the word "righteousness" here is understood also in the sense of justification). Abraham believed God, that is, he came to believe in His truthfulness, holiness, wisdom, power and eternity, when, despite his hundred years, he received with faith the promise of God concerning the birth of a son from him; and this faith of Abraham was reckoned to him for that which by its very nature it cannot be, namely, for righteousness. Righteousness here denotes perfect obedience to the will of God, which Abraham had not yet attained at that time; God then accepted his faith in reckoning, as having the same worth as obedience. Metropolitan Philaret remarks that the reckoning of Abraham's faith as righteousness took place after a slow, gradual revelation. "Faith," he says, "was the con-

sequence and the end of the mysterious guidance of God; and it was also the beginning and the foundation of God's favour."

6484. Circumcision (of the foreskin, the hidden flesh) served as the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham and his descendants, and it was the seal that set the Old Testament believers apart from the pagans. In its higher, mystical sense, circumcision served as a type of Christian Baptism. The Apostle Paul explains this significance when he calls the circumcision of Abraham "a seal of the righteousness of the faith" (Rom. 4:11), and calls our circumcision, which is not made with hands, "the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11). In the first there is the promise; in the second, its fulfillment, in which the inner man is circumcised, renouncing the devil and all his works. This is the circumcision which, as the Apostle says, is accomplished in the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter. As through circumcision a man entered into the community of believers, so through Baptism a man enters into the community of those who believe in Christ (Jn. 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:13). And as circumcision had its great significance on the condition of faithfulness to God and exact fulfillment of His commandments, so Baptism saves us not by the washing away of fleshly uncleanness but by the putting off of sins or, in the Apostle's words, by the putting off of the body of the sinful flesh, the pledge of a good conscience, and the Resurrection of Christ (1 Pet. 3:21; Eph. 5:26–27; Phil. 3:3, 9–11; Col. 2:11–13; Rom. 6:2–14). And since the Apostle places the circumcision which is not made with hands (Baptism) in close connection with the Resurrection of the Savior, the Fathers of the Church see in the very appointment by God of the eight-day period for Old Testament circumcision a prefiguring, an indication of the day of the Resurrection of Christ, which took place after the seventh, Sabbath day, on the eighth, the Lord's day, foreshadowing our justification in Christ and the putting off of fleshly defilement in Baptism. Therefore, in the first centuries of Christianity, the baptism of infants was often performed on the eighth day after birth.

6493. As the Apostle Paul sets forth in detail in the Epistle to the Galatians, Hagar and Sarah serve as types of the two covenants, the Old and the New, just as Ishmael and Isaac are types of the members of the Old and the New Testament Church (Gal. 4:22–31). Hagar, the bondwoman, is the image of the Old Testament Church, under the law, which had a servile character. Thus Ishmael, the son of the bondwoman and of Abraham according to the flesh, prefigured the Jews, who were considered until Christ to be the sole possessors of the divine promises. Sarah prefigured the New Testament, just as Isaac prefigured Christians, the free children of the New Testament, children of promise, like Isaac, and not of fleshly origin; for in the sacrament of Baptism, entering into the Church of Christ, we are born not by nature but by the promise of God. And as Hagar and Ishmael were cast out by Abraham, so also the Jewish synagogue, with the appearance of the New Testament, was rejected, and the servile yoke of the law was removed from the children of the free Church of Christ; the inheritance of grace and of all the promises of eternal life in Christ will be received by the sons of Christian freedom, and the Jews, sons of bondage, who wished to appropriate it exclusively to themselves, will be deprived of it. As Sarah was formerly barren and afterward bore the son of promise, so the New Testament Church, barren until Christ, will bring forth, according to the words of the prophet (Is. 64:1), more children than she who has a husband, that

is, the Jewish synagogue; for the promise of God extends to all nations, and by the power of grace all are received into the New Testament Church of Christ.

6496. The sacrifice of Isaac offered by Abraham to God, according to the teaching of the Church, mystically prefigured the cross-sacrifice of the Savior, His death and resurrection. As Abraham, having surrendered himself wholly to the will of God, did not spare his only son but was willing to offer him in sacrifice to God, so God "did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32) to the sufferings of the cross and to death. The Fathers and teachers of the Church see Messianic prefigurative features in the very details of Isaac's sacrifice. Isaac goes forth from his father's house to the place appointed for the sacrifice: Christ was to go forth outside the gate of Jerusalem and suffer there (Heb. 12:11). As Isaac went to the slaughter, the ass and his servants followed after him; so Christ, when He was about to go to His passion, sat upon the colt of an ass, showing the calling of the Gentiles, and His disciples followed Him with palms. But Isaac was separated from his servants when he went up the mountain to be slain; Christ too was separated from His disciples when He went to Golgotha to die for us (Cyril of Alexandria). In the fact that wood was laid upon Isaac for the sacrifice, and that he carried it on his shoulders to the place of sacrifice, the Fathers of the Church see a figure of Christ's carrying of the cross. In the whole history of Isaac's sacrifice his perfect obedience to his father is seen; in the history of the sufferings of Jesus Christ we see His boundless obedience to His Father, to whom He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). Isaac is offered in sacrifice without having committed any fault; Christ suffers, endures reproach, is bound, is crucified – though He is sinless. "Isaac," says St. Ephraim the Syrian, "went up the mountain like a meek lamb – and the Savior went up to Golgotha, that He might be slain for us as a lamb. Seeing there the knife, understand the spear. Looking at the altar, understand the place of the skull. In the bundle of wood, notice the cross. Seeing the fire, embrace in your mind the love and zeal." – But Isaac was slain only in the intention of his father, as Chrysostom observes; in his place a ram is offered in sacrifice. But here, having ceased to be the image of the suffering Christ, Isaac becomes the image of the risen Christ, and the lack of an image of suffering is supplied by the ram, in which the Fathers of the Church unanimously recognize the image of the slain Lamb – Christ, who suffered in the flesh (the ram), but did not suffer in the Godhead (prefigured by Isaac). And as his mother Sarah saw Isaac alive on the third day, so the Church on the third day after the Savior's death on the cross sees Him risen and unharmed. – Finally, as after Isaac's sacrifice God poured out abundant blessing upon Abraham and all his posterity, so Christ's sacrifice brings down innumerable blessings upon the whole human race.

THE TENTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 10

10 октября

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

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Eulampius and Eulampia,

Страдание святых мучеников Евлампия и Евлампии,

In the reign of Maximian, a fierce persecution was raised against the Christians; many of the faithful, fearing the persecutors, left their homes and hid themselves in mountains, caves, and deserts. At that time there lived a young man of noble birth, a native of the city of Nicomedia, named Eulampius, a Christian in faith and in deeds. While hiding with other Christians, he was sent by them into the city to buy bread and secretly bring it to the desert. When Eulampius came to Nicomedia, he saw on the city gate an imperial edict, written on parchment, commanding that Christians be put to death. When Eulampius read the edict, he laughed at the emperor's senseless command, for the emperor was arming himself not against the enemies of his homeland, but against innocent people, and was himself laying waste to his own land by killing an innumerable multitude of Christian people. At once Eulampius was seized, bound, and brought before an unjust tribunal. The lawless judge, seeing before him Eulampius, young and handsome, at first tried by deceitful words to entice him to bow down to the idols, saying:

"Your face shows that you are not of common, but of noble and honorable birth. Do not ruin your beauty in vain, fair youth, nor exchange your nobility for dishonor; rather, strive to gain glory and honor for yourself and all your family. If you obey the emperor's command and bow down with us to the gods, you will receive honor and glory from us all, a reward and some great rank from the emperor, and will spend your days in prosperity. Listen to my good counsel and be of one mind

with us. Behold, all the temples are open to you; in them stand various gods, the altars are filled with sacrifices, and all rejoice in their gods and bow down to them. Enter, then, and bow down; thus you will gain great blessings for yourself, bring us joy, and the gods will ever be gracious to you."

St. Eulampius, filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, answered the judge:

"Your heart is full of treachery, and deceitful words are in your mouth, but all your promises are vain and false. You can neither beguile me by anything nor turn me away from Christ. O, if only you would heed my truthful words and sincere counsel, and come to know the True God, Whom I honor and to Whom I bow down! I would promise you from Him not temporal and fleeting honor and glory, but eternal and true honor and glory, and rewards and riches such as neither you, nor your emperor, nor all the world now possesses. But since you are deaf as an asp[1] and will not heed me, who speak only what is profitable to you, you will share the lot of your gods in the fiery Gehenna, and for offering foul sacrifices to the gods, you yourself will become food for the sleepless worm. But I will not sacrifice to demons; rather, 'I will offer to God the sacrifice of praise, and will pay my vows unto the Most High' (Ps. 49:14)."

Hearing this, the judge began to threaten the saint with torments. But Eulampius fearlessly showed himself ready to endure every torment for Christ his Lord. Then the judge ordered him to be stripped, laid on the ground, and beaten with thongs. The saint was beaten long and mercilessly, but endured the torments courageously: though he felt intense pain from the wounds inflicted upon him, he appeared as if he felt no pain at all—such was the greatness of spirit he displayed! The torturer, seeing his long endurance, was filled with even greater fury and ordered him to be hung on a tree and his body torn with iron instruments, with which the martyr was so grievously wounded that his bones could be seen through the deep wounds. After long torment he lay on the ground, covered in blood and bruises; his body was one con-

1. The asp is a particular kind of serpent whose venom is very strong and causes death. Figuratively this name is used to denote an extremely evil, harmful person.

tinuous wound. Yet his sufferings did not end there: the judge devised a new torment for him. He ordered the fingers of his hands and feet to be bound with a thin cord and tightly squeezed, causing the sufferer terrible pain, for his limbs were forcibly torn from their joints. Yet even after this the torturer's fury was not sated. He added a further torment to the martyr's former sufferings: he ordered an iron bed to be heated red-hot and the saint laid upon it, so that his body might melt upon that bed like wax in the force of the flames. When the bed was thoroughly heated, St. Eulampius crossed himself, mounted it, and lay down upon it as upon a soft bed. The body of the holy martyr, scorched by the fire, began to melt and be consumed. It would seem that he must have died amid such terrible torments. But Almighty God sustained the life of His servant and, by supernatural means, preserved his soul in his body, so that all might behold both the power of God, made perfect in weakness, and the endurance of the martyr. When everyone already supposed that Eulampius would surely die upon that red-hot bed, the saint felt new strength within himself, rose from the bed, and began to walk, whole and sound, as though he had suffered no torment. Firmly believing in his heart in the Lord his God, Eulampius made it appear as if he renounced his confession and agreed with the godlessness of the impious pagans. Therefore he was led with honor into the temple of the idols, and all, together with the judge, rejoiced, thinking that Eulampius had denied Christ and wished to bow down to their gods. A multitude of people followed him on the way to the temple. But as he went to the shrine, the saint fervently prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ to manifest His power, enlighten the blinded people, and glorify His holy Name. When Eulampius entered the temple, he saw the idol of Mars[2], the largest and most beautiful of all the idols in that temple. Going up to it, he said:

"In the Name of my Lord Jesus Christ, I command you, mute and lifeless idol: fall to the ground and turn to dust!"

2. Mars or Ares: the Greco-Roman god of war.

As soon as the saint had spoken, the idol at once fell with a great crash and was shattered into tiny pieces. Seeing this, the people cried out:

"The God of the Christians is one, great, and mighty!"

And many believed in Christ. But the judge fell into great fury and ordered Eulampius to be seized and taken again to the place of torment.

Eulampius' sister, a maiden named Eulampia, heard that her brother was suffering for Christ, ran to the place of torment, stood in the midst, and said to her brother:

"Did not one mother give birth to us? Did she not nourish us at the same breasts? Were we not taught to believe in one God? Why, then, when you suffer for Christ, do you deprive me of the same lot? Why did you not tell me, so that from the very beginning I might endure all the torments together with you? I too wish to die for my Lord, as you do. Let all the torturers know that I am a Christian and am ready to die for Christ."

And she said to the judge:

"Hear, judge, and know who I am. I am Christ's handmaiden. Christ is my life and the joy of my soul; I love Him and wish to be sacrificed to Him. Prepare the fire, bring out the beasts, set up the wheels of torture, sharpen the swords, devise various torments, and torment me for my Christ as you will; I am ready to endure all, even as my beloved brother Eulampius!"

Hearing these words, the torturer marveled at her courage and ordered her to be struck in the face. The saint was beaten for a long time, until her face was completely disfigured and blood flowed from her nose and mouth. St. Eulampius strengthened his sister with words, saying:

"Fear not, sister, 'them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul' (Mt. 10:28)."

Then, by order of the torturer, a cauldron was prepared and made to boil fiercely, so that both Eulampius and Eulampia might be cast into it. Eulampius hastened to enter the cauldron himself. But Eulampia, being a young maiden, began to hesitate, as though afraid. Seeing her

hesitation, her brother began to call her to him into the boiling cauldron as if it were a cool place, saying:

"Fear not, sister; be courageous and come here. Behold, you see that I am unharmed and feel no pain; you too, as soon as you touch the hot cauldron, will at once feel God's help and remain unharmed."

Hearing her brother's words, the saint hastened into the cauldron, and at once the force of the fire abated, the cauldron grew cool, and the saints remained unharmed, singing and glorifying God. The people, seeing such a miracle, marveled, and two hundred men believed and confessed themselves Christians; for this, the impious idolaters beheaded them with the sword. The lawless judge ordered Eulampius' eyes to be put out, and his sister to be hung by her hair and beaten. Amid her torments she cried out:

"I thank Thee, O God and my Creator, that Thou hast deemed me, Thy handmaiden, worthy to suffer for Thy holy Name."

Then the torturer ordered a furnace to be heated fiercely, so that the martyrs might be cast into it. When the furnace had been kindled, St. Eulampius, now blind, was led by the hand, brought to it, and cast into the furnace. But St. Eulampia, without waiting for anyone to lead and cast her in, went forward gladly herself and hastened into the fiery furnace as into a fair chamber. Yet here too the saints remained unharmed: the heat was turned to cold. The holy martyrs in the furnace sang the song of the three youths and blessed God. The torturer, not knowing what more to do with them, condemned them to be beheaded with the sword. The soldiers took them away with their hands bound behind them. When they came to the place of execution, St. Eulampius himself laid his honorable head beneath the sword and was beheaded. But St. Eulampia, before the execution, gave her soul into the hands of God, and the soldiers, seeing that she was dead, did not cut off her head.[3] Thus St. Eulampius and his sister, St. Eulampia, having completed the contest of martyrdom, departed together to Christ, the Judge

3. The blessed repose of the holy martyrs followed in the year 303. Saint Theophanes "the Graptos," who lived in the 9th century, wrote a canon in their honor; in his time healings were effected from the relics of Saints Eulampius and Eulampia.

of the contests of martyrs, to receive from Him the crown of righteousness.

Through their prayers may Christ the Lord deem us also worthy of His kingdom, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory unto the ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Let us honor the good martyrs, and the siblings according to the flesh, the wise Eulampius and Eulampia; for by the power of Him Who was crucified they put to shame the utterly lawless plots. Therefore they were revealed as the glory of martyrs and, together, their praise.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Theophilus

Житие преподобного Феофила

The blessed Theophilus was born of pious parents near the Bulgarian city of Tiberiopolis[4], and was enlightened by holy Baptism at the age of three. Once his parents went with him to Mount Selentia, to receive a blessing from the holy Father Stephen. St. Stephen blessed them and their child, the blessed Theophilus, conversed with them at some length, instructed them, and sent them away in peace. From that time, through the blessing of the Venerable Father, the boy Theophilus made progress in reading and studying the divine books, and was always of good conduct and gentle. When he had reached the age of thirteen, Theophilus came again to the Venerable Father Stephen. Seeing him, the saint said:

"Why have you come to me, child?"

The boy answered:

"You called me, honorable Father, and I, leaving my parents, have come to you."

The Venerable Father said:

"When, child, did I call you, and what did I say to you?"

4. Tiberiopolis: a city in Macedonia, now Strumica.

And the boy said:

"When I was in my own city, Father, you appeared to me and, looking upon me, said: 'Theophilus! You have turned away from the Lord, Who says: "Take up your cross and follow Me" (Mt. 16:24).' These words touched my heart, and I followed you as far as the very gates of the monastery. When we had come here, you became invisible to me, and I found the gates shut. Now, holy Father, do not turn your face away from me, who desires to be saved."

The Venerable Father marveled at the words of Theophilus, knowing that he had not gone anywhere from his cell. Giving thanks to God for so wondrously calling the guileless boy, he took him to himself, to teach him the fear of God, monastic life, service, and the ascetic labor of fasting. After three years, when the boy had learned well all the monastic ascetic struggles from his good instructor, the Venerable Stephen summoned the abbot from the Lavra and gave him the obedient and gentle boy to be tonsured. The abbot took him and brought him to the Lavra, where he performed the tonsure upon him. Having received the tonsure, Theophilus became an experienced monk, adorned with every virtue; he lived among the brotherhood like an Angel and was of benefit to all.

His parents, not knowing where their beloved son was, grieved deeply for him and sought him everywhere continually, wishing to find the one who, for love of God, had hidden himself from all his acquaintances and served the Lord in secret among the good ascetics. After several years, his parents at last learned where their son was. They came to the Lavra and, weeping, begged the abbot to show them their son. For a long time the abbot would not consent to show them Theophilus, but, moved by their earnest entreaties, their grief, and their bitter tears, he had pity on them. When the parents saw their son in monastic clothing, instead of rejoicing they began to weep even more bitterly. They remained in the Lavra for several days, observing the life of the holy Fathers and listening attentively to their edifying conversations. There they resolved to establish, at their own expense, a monastery in which Theophilus might strive in the ascetic life. Therefore they earnestly began to beg the abbot to send Theophilus home with some of the

brethren, promising to carry out their plan as quickly as possible. The abbot would not agree with them, saying that it was not fitting for a young monk to live among his relatives and acquaintances. But God, Who orders all things for the benefit of mankind, desired to reveal His will concerning Theophilus. When the parents continued their unceasing entreaties to the abbot, he summoned the brethren and commanded them to fast and pray through the night, until God Himself should make known to them whether Theophilus might be sent away at his parents' request or not. After fervent prayer, on the third day a voice was heard in the church, commanding that Theophilus be sent away. Then all understood that God Himself required this, and, having prayed for him, they sent him away with a blessing, giving him some of the brethren as helpers, so that the glory of God might increase. His parents took him and joyfully went home, and soon founded a monastery, where they gathered many brethren, providing them with everything necessary and giving the servants of God complete repose. Theophilus, while dwelling in this monastery, shone with virtues like a light; and all who saw his good works and benefited from them glorified the Heavenly Father.

Theophilus had already struggled in the ascetic life for many years when the enemy of mankind stirred up persecution against the honorable and holy icons and subjected those who venerated them to torture at the hands of the lawless Emperor Leo the Isaurian[5]. This emperor hated the beauty of the house of God and stripped the churches of the Lord of their adornment: he cast the holy icons into the mire, trampled them underfoot, burned them with fire, and put many of the faithful to death for venerating icons. St. Theophilus strongly opposed this, and taught all to honor the icons as was fitting and to venerate the person depicted upon them. When the lawless emperor learned of this, he sent soldiers to seize the blessed Theophilus and, setting him before himself, ordered him to renounce the veneration of the honorable icons. When the blessed Theophilus refused to do so, the emperor commanded that the saint be beaten with ox sinews; then, having his hands bound be-

5. Leo the Isaurian: Byzantine emperor who reigned from 714 to 741.

hind his back, he had him led through the city like a criminal, amid mockery and insults. One of the soldiers, named Longinus, joined Theophilus, denounced the madness of the torturer, and taught the veneration of the holy icons. For this the torturer stretched him out on the ground and burned many icons upon his head. St. Theophilus, having passed through the whole city of Nicaea, appeared once more before the tribunal of the lawless emperor and spoke boldly to him, defending the icons and reproving his error. The emperor could not endure the saint's rebukes, and ordered that the saint, naked, be crucified crosswise upon two posts and beaten in front and behind with dry sinews. When he saw the blood flowing from the saint's lacerated body during the torments, the emperor became like a savage beast. As wild beasts grow more savage when they see blood, so the torturer, seeing the martyr's blood, fell into yet greater rage: rising from his throne, he himself beat the saint for a long time. Then he ordered iron boots to be heated red-hot, put upon him, and that he be driven along the road. All these torments the holy sufferer endured courageously. One of the emperor's dignitaries, seeing this and marveling at his courageous endurance, took him from the hands of his tormentors, brought him to his own house, and said:

– Are you alone, Theophilus, in bowing down to the icons, and are you mad, or are we all mad who do not bow down to them? Surely the Emperor and his whole senate[6] do not have enough good sense to judge whether one should bow down to the written image of God or not? If one were to bow down to icons, God would not have commanded in the Law: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness" (Ex. 20:4).

The saint answered:

"I see, prince, that you know the Scriptures; then let us converse."

St. Theophilus began to speak to him about the veneration of the holy icons, showing from divine Scripture that even in the Old Testament the veneration of icons was commanded: in the bronze serpent raised by Moses in the wilderness, and in the golden Cherubim set

6. Synklit: the military and civil government of the most important imperial counselors and dignitaries.

above the Ark of the Covenant. In the New Testament, the Lord Himself showed His image upon a cloth to Abgar of Edessa. Theophilus spoke at length and reproved the dignitary, until the latter said to him:

"Your words are true, honorable elder. I will try, insofar as I am able, to convince the emperor of this also. But accept your release from me, and go to your cell."

But the saint was grieved that he had not received the full measure of torment, though, having wounds, he rejoiced, saying in the words of the Apostle: "I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ for His body, which is the Church" (Col. 1:24).

After this he returned to his monastery, where all the brotherhood rejoiced. Before his repose, of which he had received a foretelling, Theophilus composed discourses for his flock, and departed in peace to the Lord.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Theotecnus

Страдание святого мученика Феотекна

Once the impious Emperor Maximian came to Antioch, held a festival in honor of his foul gods, and issued an order that the soldiers should first offer sacrifices to the idols, and then the whole people. Among the soldiers were many Christians who, unwilling to obey the emperor's command, cast off their military belts and went to suffer torments for Christ. Among them was a man known throughout Antioch, named Theotecnus. Maximian addressed him in these words:

"And you, Theotecnus, do not believe in the gods Zeus and Apollo? Yet I had wished to make you their high priest."

To this Theotecnus said:

"I believe in Christ God, and I desire to offer myself as a sacrifice to Him."

Then Maximian ordered that his military clothing be taken off and women's garments put on him, and compelled him to spin with the women. Three weeks later, Maximian summoned him again and said:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, or you will die amid terrible torments."

Theotecnus said not a word in reply. Then the emperor ordered him to be tied to a tree, red-hot iron to be placed beneath the soles of his feet, and all his sinews to be cut with iron rods. Seeing that he remained steadfast even after this, the emperor ordered a cauldron of boiling sulfur and pitch to be prepared and the saint to be cast into it. When he was thrown in, the fire was immediately quenched by the power of Christ, the cauldron grew cold, and the martyr remained unharmed. Maximian was terrified and ordered the holy martyr to be taken to prison, where he was placed in the charge of a centurion named Zegnat, that he might torture him as he wished.

At that time a maiden named Alexandra was in the prison for confessing Christ. Zegnat threw Theotecnus in with her and said to them both:

"Behold, I give you three days to consider. If you agree to obey the emperor's command, you shall receive great honor; but if not, I will destroy you amid terrible torments."

After three days, Zegnat brought them out of the prison and asked whether they intended to obey the emperor's command and bow down to the idols. But they remained faithful to Christ. Then Zegnat ordered two soldiers to outrage the holy virgin.

Theotecnus, desiring to save Alexandra from dishonor, came to her before those soldiers. Taking off his own clothing, he gave it to her, saying:

"Flee, flee, lest the impious defile your purity."

He himself put on her clothing and sat down to await the soldiers. The soldiers, entering the prison, found in place of the maiden Theotecnus sitting in woman's clothing. They seized him and brought him to Zegnat. Zegnat was greatly enraged and first ordered that his tongue be cut out, and then that he be beaten for a long time. Then he commanded that a millstone be tied around the martyr's neck and that he be cast into the river. Thus the martyr of Christ ended his life.[7] The honorable relics of the martyr were found near the city of Rhosus in Ci-

7. The repose of the holy martyr belongs to the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century.

licia; the Christians, taking them, honorably placed them in his homeland, glorifying the One God in Trinity. To Him be glory forever. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Venerable Vassian

Память преподобного Вассиана

The Venerable Vassian was a native of eastern Syria. In the reign of the pious emperor Marcian[8] he arrived in Constantinople. Two distinguished men, Severus and John, provided him with the means to build a monastery in Constantinople. The Venerable Vassian was glorified during his lifetime for his virtues and wonderworking. Many, hearkening to him, renounced the world and received the monastic life. The number of the Venerable Vassian's disciples reached 300 persons. He delivered many from the power of the devil and led them to God, cast out demons, healed diseases, and worked other countless miracles. The Venerable one reposed in deep old age.[9]

* * *

8. Marcian: Byzantine emperor, who reigned from 450 to 467.
9. † at the end of the 5th century.

THE ELEVENTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 11

11 октября

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

Life of St. Philip the Apostle,

Житие святого Апостола Филиппа,

The Holy Apostle Philip was a native of Caesarea in Palestine.[1] Having entered into marriage, he had four daughters, who prophesied (Acts 2:19). Afterward he was chosen by the holy Apostles as a deacon, and, having been ordained together with the holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen, he began to serve the faithful with all zeal, taking care of the poor and of widows.[2] After the persecution that fell upon the Church of Jerusalem, in which the holy Stephen was slain, and all Christians, with the exception of the twelve Apostles, were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, the holy Philip also came at that time to Samaria.[3] Here he preached Christ, and all the inhabitants of Samaria listened unanimously to his preaching. The holy Philip confirmed his preaching with many miracles, healing every kind of disease and casting out unclean spirits, which came out of people crying with a loud voice. And there was then great joy in that city, because those who received Philip's preaching and believed in the

1. Caesarea is a Palestinian city on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, built by Herod, king of the Jews, on the site of the ancient city of Straton and named in honor of Caesar Augustus (the Roman emperor Octavian Augustus). The city suffered repeated destruction, and at present its site is only ruins overgrown with wild plants.

2. The holy Apostle Philip was one of the seven deacons whom the Apostles charged with caring for widows and orphans and serving at the common Christian meals. Acts 6:1–5.

3. Samaria, as a country or region of Palestine, occupied the middle of Palestine, west of the Jordan. Its boundaries were: on the north, Galilee; on the south, Judea; on the east, the Jordan; on the west, the Mediterranean Sea. Samaria, the principal city of the land of Samaria and at one time the capital of the Kingdom of Israel, lay at a distance of nearly three versts to the north of Jerusalem. At the present time not one stone remains upon another of the ancient and glorious city; in its place stands only a poor village, Sabustiye (formerly the city of Sebaste).

true Messiah were healed not only of bodily but also of spiritual infirmities. There was also there a certain very famous and renowned sorcerer named Simon, who astonished all Samaria with his magic arts, and everyone considered him to be someone very great. Seeing the great signs and wonders performed by the hands of Philip, and hearing the Apostle's proclamation of the Kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ, Simon believed and was baptized together with the others (Acts 8:5–13).

Once the Angel of the Lord appeared to the Apostle Philip, commanding him to go south, to the road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza.[4] Walking along this road, the holy Philip met an Ethiopian, a eunuch of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians,[5] who was returning from Jerusalem, whither he had gone on pilgrimage, to Gaza, which was under his administration. Sitting in his chariot, the eunuch was reading the books of the prophets. The Apostle taught him faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and, continuing the journey with him, baptized him right there on the way.[6]

After the baptism of the eunuch, the Apostle Philip was caught up by an Angel and transported to Azotus,[7] and, passing through, he preached the word of God in all the cities until he came to Caesarea. Here he had his own house, in which he lived for some time together with his four daughters, virgin prophetesses. After this he again returned to Jerusalem. Having been ordained there as a bishop by the holy Apostles, he was then sent to preach in Asia Minor, to the city of

4. Gaza was one of the most ancient Philistine cities, serving as the boundary of the Canaanites in the south of Palestine. In later times this flourishing city lost all its significance, and now only sandy hills and miserable ruins bear witness that a great city once existed here. Not far from here stands a new city of later origin bearing the same name.

5. Candace was the queen of Ethiopia, or of Meroë, a state that existed in ancient Ethiopia, in Africa, to the south of Egypt. The name Candace was the common title of the queens of Ethiopia. A eunuch was a guardian of the royal harem in the East; in later times this designation became a general title for courtiers. The eunuch converted by St. Philip was a proselyte, that is, one converted from paganism to the Jewish faith; as a devout adherent of this faith, he had come to Jerusalem to worship.

6. See the account of this in Acts 8:26–39.

7. Azotus was an ancient and well-known Philistine city on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, not far from Gaza. Today there is a small village here, Ezdud.

Tralles.[8] Having converted many there to Christ and worked great miracles, the Apostle Philip departed to the Lord in deep old age.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Most wondrous fisher of tongues, and converser with the disciples of Christ, the chosen one among the Apostles, Philip, today grants the world the riches of healings; he covers from distress those who praise him. Therefore we sing to him in harmony: O Apostle, save all by thy prayers.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Theophanes the Confessor and Composer of Canons

Житие преподобного Феофана исповедника и творца канонов

The Venerable Theophanes was born of pious parents who lived in Palestine. They were God-fearing people and were especially zealous in hospitality to strangers. Theophanes had a brother, who was later named Graptos (the Inscribed) for the sufferings he endured from the iconoclasts.[9] Through the care of their parents, Theophanes and his brother Theodore were taught all bookish wisdom and became skilled philosophers.[10] Having comprehended the vanity and inconstancy of the present world, "for the form of this world is passing away" (1 Cor. 7:31), having left everything, the brothers came to the Lavra of St. Sabbas and there dedicated themselves to the monastic life, in which they labored zealously, advancing in prayer and in all the

8. Tralles was a Lydian city in the northwest of Asia Minor.

9. The memory of the Venerable Martyr Theodore, brother of St. Theophanes, is celebrated by the Church on 27 December, because upon their faces, after the cruel tortures to which they were subjected as defenders of the veneration of icons, the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus ordered shameful verses to be inscribed; by the painful inscribing of these, with heated needles, the faces of the confessors were burned down to the very eyebrows.

10. *Philosopher*: in Greek means a lover of wisdom, that is, a learned man who has devoted himself to the investigation of the highest questions of being: concerning God, concerning the beginning and laws of the world and of man, concerning the destiny of man and the final purposes of the existence of the world, and so on.

virtues. For his virtuous life Theophanes was deemed worthy of the rank of presbyter.

At that time an impious persecution against the holy icons began,[11] which troubled the whole Church of God, and many Christians suffered persecutions and torments for venerating the holy icons. Then these wise teachers and defenders of Orthodoxy were sent by the Patriarch of Jerusalem,[12] like lambs to a wolf, to the Emperor Leo the Armenian,[13] to rebuke his impiety. Coming to Constantinople and standing before this enemy of God, they boldly denounced him for his impiety. As a result of this the brother philosophers suffered much, and not from the Emperor Leo the Armenian alone, but also from the emperors who came after him, Michael the Stammerer and Theophilus.[14] They endured manifold torments, wounds and chains, hunger and thirst, exiles and branding of their faces, imprisonments, and other innumerable misfortunes. For more than twenty years, from 817 to 842, they were tormented and persecuted by the iconoclasts. Amid these calamities, the holy Theodore reposed,[15] while Theophanes lived to see peace restored in the Church. The son of the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus, Michael,[16] having taken up the scepter of the Byzantine emperors together with his mother Theodora, restored the veneration of the holy icons, brought them back into the churches of God, and released from exile all the holy men who had suffered for the veneration of icons, showing great honor to all of them. Then also the holy Theophanes was released from exile and, after receiving ordination from Patriarch Methodius,[17]

11. The iconoclastic heresy and the persecutions of the venerators of icons arose in Byzantium in the first half of the eighth century and continued almost until the middle of the ninth century, from the reign of Leo the Isaurian (714–741) to Michael III and his mother, the Empress Theodora.

12. The Patriarch was St. Nicephorus, who was later exiled to imprisonment for defending the Orthodox veneration of icons. His memory is celebrated on 13 March.

13. Leo V the Armenian, Byzantine emperor and iconoclast, reigned from 813 to 820.

14. Michael II Balbus, or the Stammerer, reigned from 820 to 829. Theophilus reigned from 829 to 842.

15. About 840.

16. In the first period after the accession of Michael III to the imperial throne (in 842), the state was governed by his mother, St. Theodora. The restoration of the veneration of icons was effected at the Council of Constantinople of 842, and in memory of this there was established at that time in the Church a special "Order of Orthodoxy," which is still celebrated on the first Sunday of the Holy Great Lent.

who abolished the iconoclastic heresy, was appointed to the metropolitan see of the Church of Nicaea.[18]

The holy Theophanes composed a solemn canon on the veneration of the holy icons and left to the Church of Christ many other useful writings.[19] He passed from this earthly life to the Lord,[20] and, after his many painful labors, now enjoys blessedness in the heavenly mansions.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having thundered forth the divine incarnation of Christ, thou didst utterly refute the bodiless enemies, O wondrous Theophanes. Wherefore all of us faithfully and piously cry to thee: Pray unceasingly for us all.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Zenaida and Philonilla

Память святых мучениц Зинаиды и Филониллы

The holy sisters Zenaida and Philonilla were natives of Tarsus in Cilicia and were kinswomen of the Apostle Paul.

Having left their mother and renounced their property, they studied the art of healing and performed a truly apostolic work. They came to the city of Demetrias,[21] in the vicinity of which they settled in one cave. Here Zenaida healed all manner of diseases, while Philonilla, devoting herself to fasting and vigils, worked great miracles.

17. St. Methodius I was Patriarch of Constantinople from 842 to 846.

18. Nicaea (now Iznik) is in Asia Minor; in antiquity and in the Middle Ages it was a rich and flourishing city, now poor and sparsely populated. Nicaea enjoyed particular attention from the Roman and later the Byzantine emperors, and the metropolitan see of Nicaea was considered one of the most prominent. In this city the First and Seventh Ecumenical Councils were held.

19. St. Theophanes left behind many writings in defense of Orthodoxy and is especially known as a writer of canons, whose number reaches 148. His best canons are the canon for the Sunday of Orthodoxy and all the canons to the Apostles and for the departed. Besides these, St. Theophanes also wrote stichera for some days.

20. About 850.

21. Demetrias was a city of Cilicia, to the north of Tarsus, which received its name from the Greek pagan goddess Demeter, considered the patroness of the plant world, of grain, of agriculture and of fertility.

The pagans, coming to them at night, stoned them both. Thus they peacefully fell asleep in the Lord and in a blessed sleep passed into the heavenly mansions.

* * *

Account of a Miracle That Occurred from an Icon of the Lord Jesus Christ

Воспоминание чуда, бывшего от иконы Господа Иисуса Христа

In the city of Berytus,[22] near a Jewish synagogue, there lived a certain Christian who had an icon of our Lord Jesus Christ. After some time this Christian bought himself another house, to which he moved, carrying from the first house everything except the icon of the Lord, which he left behind by the special providence of God. After the Christian, a Jew occupied the house where the icon of the Lord was, and lived in it without noticing the holy icon.

Once he invited to dinner his friend, also a Jew. During the meal the guest, glancing at the wall of the house, noticed an icon hanging there, and said to the host:

"How is it that you, being a Jew, keep this icon in your house?"

The host began to swear that until that time he had not noticed it. The guest, however, went away and slandered his friend in the synagogue.

"This man," he said, "although he is a Jew, has in his house an icon of Jesus the Nazarene."

Then all who were in the synagogue were terribly stirred by this circumstance, but could do nothing that day, since evening had already come. In the morning, however, the Jewish people, the priests and the elders, having gathered, went to the house where the holy icon was. Entering the house noisily, they seized the icon and carried it out of the house. Here they stood around the icon and resolved to mock it just as their fathers had mocked the One depicted on it. They began to spit

22. Berytus, now Beirut, is a very ancient seaport city on the Phoenician coast at the source of the river Magara. At the present time it is the principal city of the Asiatic Turkish province of Syria and the most important trading center of the Syrian coast.

upon the icon and to strike the image of the Face of Jesus Christ, and then they said:

"We have heard that our fathers nailed Him to a tree: let us do the same to this icon."

Taking nails, they nailed the icon to a tree in the places where the hands and feet were depicted. Then, having put a sponge with vinegar[23] on a reed, they applied it to the lips of the Lord, and finally they brought a spear and ordered one of them to strike the side of the Lord. And as soon as he pierced the icon with the spear, blood and water immediately flowed from it.[24] At the sight of so great a miracle, great fear seized all who were present. Having collected the blood and water in vessels, they decided to bring the blind, the lame, and the demoniacs and anoint them with this blood.

"If those who are brought receive healing," they said, "we shall all believe in the Crucified One."

Then a man who had been lame from birth was brought, and after he was anointed with the blood that flowed from the holy icon, he was immediately healed. Then the blind were brought, and a multitude of demoniacs, who were freed from their infirmity after they were anointed with this blood.

Learning of this, the inhabitants of the city hastened to see such a wondrous miracle. They brought with them all the sick, the paralyzed, and the lepers, who received healing. Then the whole Jewish people dwelling in that city believed in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Jews, falling down before the image of the Lord, said with contrition:

Glory to Thee, O Christ, Son of God, Who workest such wonders! Glory to Thee, O Christ, Whom our fathers crucified, but in Whom we now believe; receive us, as we fall down before Thee, O Master!

After this, all the Jews of that city—men, women, and children—came to the bishop and entreated him to enlighten them with holy Baptism. They showed him the icon from which blood and water had flowed, and told him of all the outrages they had committed against the

23. Vinegar mixed with gall. This stupefying drink, which dulls the senses, was given to those condemned to execution to drink, in order to lessen somewhat the painfulness of their sufferings.
24. This miracle took place about the year 765.

holy icon. Seeing their sincere repentance, the bishop received them with joy, instructed them in the holy faith, and baptized them with their wives and children; and he turned their synagogue into a church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Great joy filled all the inhabitants of the city, not only because many of the sick had received healing, but also because the unbelieving Jews had been baptized and had embraced the holy faith as a result of the miracle wrought by the icon of the Lord.

Therefore everyone ought to perform veneration before the holy icons with faith and love, and especially before the icon—in honor and glory of the Divine Hypostasis, which became God-Man, our Lord Jesus Christ—to Whom, together with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, worship is due unto the ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Seventh Ecumenical Council

Воспоминание Седьмого Вселенского собора

On October 11, the holy Orthodox Church commemorates the holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council. The occasion for its convocation by the pious Empress Irene and Tarasius, Patriarch of Constantinople, was the so-called heresy of the iconoclasts.

The beginning of this heresy goes back to the time of the Emperor Leo the Isaurian, who issued an edict ordering that the holy icons be removed from churches and homes and burned in the squares, and that images of the Savior, the Mother of God, and the saints, set up in public places in the cities or on the walls of churches, likewise be destroyed. When the people began to resist the execution of this edict, Leo added their zealous venerators to the holy things he persecuted. An order was immediately issued to kill all who had gathered in the crowd. Many—women especially—fell that day beneath the swords of the iconoclasts for their love and zeal for the holy icons. Then the emperor ordered the higher theological school of Constantinople closed, thereby depriving the Orthodox of the victorious weapon they knew how to wield against the iconoclasts: a sound theological education. Some Byzantine historians even say that, for the same purpose, he burned the

rich library attached to the school. But everywhere the persecutor met with fierce opposition to his commands. From Syria, from Damascus, St. John of Damascus wrote against them. From Rome, after the death of Gregory II[6543], his successor, Pope Gregory III, continued to write against them. And from other places there came even open rebellions.

Leo's son and successor, Constantine Copronymus[25], did not depart from the course his father had taken on the question of the veneration of holy icons, and resolved to act chiefly against the clergy, since bishops and monks were everywhere the most active opponents of the iconoclasts.

To this end he sought to convene a council[26], at which the veneration of icons was condemned. The immediate consequence of this false ecumenical council was that icons were cast out of churches and for the most part burned, while the sacred painted and mosaic images on church walls were covered over with lime. Even the magnificent Church of the Theotokos at Blachernae did not escape this fate. On its walls the finest artists had depicted the whole earthly life of the God-Man, all His miracles, and all the events of Gospel history, ending with the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. From persecution of the icons, Copronymus turned to persecution of the holy relics, ordering them to be cast out. Thus, for example, on September 16, the holy relics of the Great Martyr Euphemia were removed from the church and cast into the sea, while the magnificent Chalcedonian church dedicated to her name was turned into barracks. Considering monks the chief champions of the veneration of icons, Copronymus resolved to close all the monasteries. Many monasteries in Constantinople, beginning with the famous Dalmatian Monastery, were turned into barracks or destroyed. Many monks were tortured to death. They would commonly

25. Constantine Copronymus reigned from 741 to 775.

26. The council took place in 754. The place of its sessions changed several times: at one time they were held in the imperial palace called Hiereia on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus, at another in the Blachernae church of the Mother of God in Constantinople itself. Many curses were heard from the lips of this council against all the zealots of Orthodoxy of that time. Many false accusations were brought against them. As the basis of its false iconoclastic sophistries the council laid down fabricated narratives and spurious sayings of the Fathers of the Church.

smash the monks' heads upon the very icons in whose defense they had taken their stand.

During the reign of Copronymus's successor, Leo IV[27], the venerators of icons were able to breathe somewhat more freely. But the full triumph of the veneration of icons came only under Empress Irene[28], who, while her son Constantine was still a minor, took the throne of her husband Leo IV after his death. Upon taking the throne, she first recalled from exile all the monks banished for venerating icons, and entrusted most of the episcopal sees to zealous icon-venerators. Then she restored to the holy relics all the honors the iconoclasts had taken from them. But the Empress understood that all this was still insufficient for the complete restoration of the veneration of icons. It was necessary to convene an Ecumenical Council which, by condemning the recent council convened by Copronymus, would re-establish the truth of the veneration of icons. Tarasius[29] had particularly insisted upon this when he was elected to the patriarchal throne.

"If it is indeed the Empress's desire," he declared, "that Tarasius undertake the burden of patriarchal rule, he is willing, but only on condition that an Ecumenical Council be convened."

Having heard this explanation from Tarasius, the Empress brought him before the senators and clergy gathered in the Matarus Palace to elect a patriarch. In a forceful and eloquent speech before that assembly, Tarasius declared that if they wished him to accept the patriarchate, they must convene an Ecumenical Council to affirm the veneration of icons. Most of those gathered judged Tarasius's demand just, and Tarasius was consecrated patriarch on the feast of the Nativity of Christ in the year 784. Soon a letter was sent in the name of Empress Irene and her son Constantine, whose minority led her to govern the state, to Pope Adrian of Rome, inviting him to the council. Patriarch Tarasius also added an invitation of his own to the letter. The Pope de-

27. Leo IV reigned from 775 to 780.
28. Empress Irene was brought up in a pious family of venerators of icons, and she manifested her zeal for the holy icons already during the lifetime of her husband, Leo IV, for which she was subjected to disgrace and was even removed from the palace.
29. St. Tarasius was Patriarch in Constantinople from 784 to 806. His memory is celebrated on 25 February.

clined the honor of attending the council in person. He sent two legates in his place: Peter, the archpriest of the Church of the holy Apostle Peter in Rome, and Peter, abbot of the Monastery of St. Sabbas, also in Rome. Representatives of the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch also arrived in Constantinople. They were their senior syncelli[30], the presbyters John and Thomas. In addition to credentials from their own patriarchs, they brought a letter from the Patriarch of Jerusalem, in which he expressed his agreement with the affirmation of the veneration of icons. The bishops of the Patriarchate of Constantinople were also summoned to the capital. At first it was intended that the council open in the summer of 786 in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople. Everything had been prepared for the opening of the council's sessions when, on the eve of their opening, a revolt suddenly broke out among the troops in Constantinople and prevented the council from meeting. The council opened only in the autumn of the following year, on September 24, and not in Constantinople but in nearby Nicaea, where the First Ecumenical Council had also been held, in the Church of St. Sophia. The exact number of council members is not known. In any case, there were more than three hundred, for 307 bishops signed the acts of the council. The council began with an address by Patriarch Tarasius, after which the imperial letter to the council was read. When it had been read, the council proceeded to examine the culpability of the bishops implicated in iconoclasm.

After this, the imperial secretary Leontius reminded the council that it was necessary to hear Pope Adrian's letter concerning the holy icons, addressed to the Emperor and the Patriarch. These letters draw aside before us the veil of the most ancient apostolic age and make clear how the holy Church regarded icons at that time[6550]. After both letters had been read, the Pope's representatives wished to know whether the Patriarch and all the members of the council agreed with them.

Tarasius replied that he accepted everything written by the Pope.

"We must follow this," he said; "to contradict it would be unreasonable. And we ourselves, having examined the truth on the basis of the

Scriptures, reasonings, and proofs, and having recognized it through the teaching of the Fathers, have firmly and irrevocably confessed, and shall confess, in accordance with the ancient tradition of the holy Fathers, the painted icons, venerating them with ardent love, since they are made in the name of the Lord God, our immaculate Lady, the Holy Theotokos, the holy Apostles, and all the saints; but worship and faith we shall direct to the One True God."

"The whole holy council teaches likewise," came the reply from all the members of the council.

Then there were read the encyclical letter of Patriarch Tarasius, which he had written to the bishops and presbyters of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem upon taking the patriarchal throne, and the reply to it from the Eastern Patriarchs. After these letters had been read, the Fathers of the council declared unanimously: "We are wholly in agreement with them; with love we receive and honor the holy and venerable icons, and venerate them."

At the beginning of the next session, at the suggestion of Patriarch Tarasius, it was resolved to review all passages from Holy Scripture, the writings of the Holy Fathers, and accounts of the lives of the saints that might serve as grounds for affirming the dogma of the veneration of icons. Among the latter were included a great multitude of accounts of miracles wrought through holy icons and relics. Here are some of them:

In the account of the martyrdom of St. Anastasius the Persian (the Persian † 628. His feast is celebrated on January 22), it is related that when his relics were being translated to Caesarea in Palestine, and people were flocking from every direction to meet them, a woman named Areta fell into doubt and said:

"I will not venerate relics brought from Persia." A few days later, the holy Martyr appeared to Areta in a dream and asked:

"Do you suffer from an ailment in your hips?"

Areta had not yet answered him that she was well when suddenly she felt that she had indeed been stricken with an ailment. She suffered

long from her illness; then, having felt a temporary relief from it, she began to ponder for what reason such an illness had befallen her. She spent four days in this reflection. At dawn on the fifth day the holy Martyr appeared to her again and said:

"Go to the Tetrapylon[31]. Pray to St. Anastasius, and you will be well."

When she was carried to the place indicated, and saw the icon of the holy Martyr, she cried aloud:

"This is indeed the one I saw in my dream." Throwing herself upon the pavement, she wept long with tears of repentance, and rose up completely healed.

After the account of this miracle had been read at the Council, the representatives of the pope declared that this icon of St. Anastasius, together with his venerable head, was still to be found in one of the monasteries of Rome; and Bishop John of Taormina added to their statement that he knew a woman from Sicily who, while in Rome, had received healing from the icon of the holy Martyr.

Then Peter, Bishop of Nicomedia, related a miracle wrought through the icon of the Lord in Berytus, and the account of the Edessan miracle wrought through the image of the Savior not made by hands was read from Evagrius.[32] The miracle was as follows:

"Once Chosroes, king of Persia, laid siege to Edessa. From the enormous earthworks built at his command, his soldiers shot over the city walls at its inhabitants. The besieged inhabitants resolved to tunnel beneath the earthworks and then set them on fire. But the fire they kindled in the tunnels went out each time, because no fresh air could reach it. Then the people of Edessa took the image not made by hands and brought it to the trenches they had dug.

Having sprinkled the image with water, they flung the drops that ran down it upon the faintly burning fire among the piled-up logs, and

30. A *synkellos* was the name for clerics who lived in the same cells as a bishop. Ordinarily bishops chose as synkelloi men of greater learning who could assist them in resolving the most important questions.

31. Tetrapylon was a place in Constantinople where the relics and an icon of the saint were kept and where at that time a church in his name was being built.

32. Evagrius was a church historian of the sixth century.

at once all the logs were seized by an extraordinary blaze. The flames reduced them to charcoal, then passed to the timbers above and swiftly destroyed all the structures of Chosroes."[33]

As this account was being read, a reader of the Great Church of Constantinople said:

"I myself, an unworthy servant, when I went to Syria with the imperial envoys,[34] was in Edessa and saw this image not made by hands; the faithful venerate it and bow down before it."

Many other extracts, like those already given, from the writings of the Holy Fathers were read at the Council's sessions that followed the first. When the Fathers of the Council, as Patriarch Tarasius put it, "had been filled with the testimonies of the Holy Fathers," a venerable icon was brought into the center of the assembly, and all the Fathers present at the Council kissed it and pronounced twenty-two brief declarations, repeating each three times. In them all the chief positions of the iconoclasts were condemned and anathematized.

The following sessions were devoted to examining the decrees of the false Ecumenical Council of Copronymus. This examination was conducted with the greatest care. Throughout, it proceeded by the agency of two persons, as though representing two sides: one read what the false Council had decreed, while the other read the refutation of what was erroneous in those decrees. The passages of Holy Scripture that had been wrongly interpreted by the Council of Copronymus were now given a new interpretation. For example, in support of their views, the iconoclasts pointed to the prohibition in the Decalogue in the Old Testament: "Thou shalt not make unto thyself a graven image" (Ex. 20:4). The Fathers of the Council answered this:

"Words spoken to the people of Israel, who served the calf and were not free from Egyptian errors, cannot be applied to the divine assembly of Christians. As God intended to bring the Jews into the promised land, He gave them the commandment, 'Thou shalt not make unto thy-

33. The attack on Edessa by the Persian King Khosrow I belongs to the year 545.

34. Apocrisiarii were the temporary or permanent representatives of the bishops of the principal churches at the sovereign's court, who managed all the dealings of their church and its primates with the supreme authority.

self a graven image,' because idolaters dwelt there, worshipping demons, the sun, the moon, the stars, and other created things—even birds, four-footed beasts, and reptiles—and not worshipping God alone, the Living and True God. But when, at the Lord's command, Moses made the Tabernacle of Testimony, he showed that all things serve God by fashioning from gold cherubim in human form, representing the image of the rational Cherubim."

Some passages from the writings of the Holy Fathers, too, had been falsely interpreted by the false Ecumenical Council. In their defense, the iconoclasts cited, for example, this passage from the writings of St. Athanasius of Alexandria:

"How can we not pity those who venerate created things because those who see bow down to things that see not, and those endowed with hearing to things that hear not? A creature will never save a creature."

But the Council explained that St. Athanasius had the pagans in mind in this passage, and that his words were directed against them; Christians had never served creation instead of the one God of all, as the iconoclasts accused them of doing. It also became clear that the iconoclasts often quoted the words of the Holy Fathers in fragments—without connecting them with what preceded or followed—so that these words could be made to convey the meaning they desired.

Finally, some of the statements cited by the iconoclastic Council proved to be entirely spurious.

Once it became clear that the grounds on which the false Ecumenical Council had based its definitions of the faith were false and inadequate, it became self-evident to all that the definitions themselves, founded upon such grounds, were also false. The Fathers of the Council therefore soon proceeded to draw up their own final definition of the faith. In this final definition, the Fathers of the Council deemed it necessary first to mention the reason for convening the Council and the labors it had undertaken, then to set forth the entire Symbol of Faith verbatim, together with the refutation of all those heresies already refuted by the six preceding Ecumenical Councils, and, finally, to establish the dogma of the veneration of icons for all time:

"We decree that the holy and venerable icons be offered for veneration in the same way as the image of the precious and Life-giving Cross, whether made of paints, or mosaic tiles, or any other material, provided they are made in a fitting manner; and whether they are found in the holy churches of God, on sacred vessels and vestments, on walls and panels, or in houses and by the roads; and whether they are icons of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, or of our immaculate Lady, the Holy Theotokos, or of the venerable Angels and all the saints and righteous men. The more often these icons become the object of our contemplation, the more those who gaze upon them are stirred to remembrance of the very prototypes[35] and acquire greater love for them, and the more they are moved to offer them a kiss, veneration, and worship—but by no means that true service which, according to our faith, is due to the divine nature alone. Those who gaze upon these icons are moved to offer incense to them and set candles before them in their honor, as was done of old; for the honor paid to an icon passes to its prototype, and he who venerates an icon venerates the person[36] depicted upon it. Those who dare to think or teach otherwise, if they be bishops or clerics, are to be deposed; if monks or laymen, they are to be excommunicated."

The Council concluded with all the bishops, officials, military officers, and other citizens of Constantinople glorifying the Lord; countless numbers of them had filled the halls of the palace. Copies of the acts of the Council were sent to the pope, the Eastern patriarchs, the empress and emperor, and all the churches of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Thus the Seventh Ecumenical Council, which restored the truth of the veneration of icons and is to this day commemorated annually on October 11 by the whole Orthodox Eastern Church, came to a solemn conclusion.[37]

35. That is, those who are depicted upon the icons (the *prototypes*).
36. *Hypostasis*, translated from the Greek, means essence, being; in relation to an icon it signifies the one to whom the icon is dedicated.
37. If 11 October falls on one of the days of the week, the service to the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council is celebrated on the nearest Sunday.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

The Son, who shone forth ineffably from the Father, was born of a Woman, twofold in nature. As we behold Him, we reject not the form of His image; but, piously depicting it, we venerate it faithfully. Therefore the Church, holding fast to the true faith, kisses the icon of Christ's incarnation.

* * *

NOTES

6543. Pope Gregory II wrote two epistles to the emperor. In his first epistle Gregory explained all the passages of Holy Scripture which on the one hand command, and on the other seem to forbid, the making of sacred images, and then adduced testimonies of antiquity. "During the sojourn of Christ in Jerusalem," he writes, "Abgar, the then prince and ruler of Edessa, having heard of the miracles of Christ, wrote to Him a letter, and Christ sent him a reply in His own hand and a holy, glorious image of His Face. Send for this image not made by hands, and look upon it. Thither multitudes of peoples of the East flock and offer prayers." Having acquainted the emperor with such testimonies, the pope vividly depicts all the hatred which the imperial decrees arouse among the Orthodox population of the West: "Everywhere they have begun to cast your portraits upon the ground," he writes, "to trample them underfoot and to disfigure your face," and so forth. He concludes his epistle with a fervent prayer that "God, who came down from heaven, may grant peace to all the Christian churches for ages of ages." The emperor sent back a threatening reply, to which Pope Gregory II wrote his second epistle, again with firmness persuading the emperor to abandon the matter he had conceived.

6550. Besides testimonies from remote antiquity concerning the veneration of the holy icons, these epistles contain excerpts from the writings of the Fathers. For example, the following excerpts are cited there: 1) the words of Basil the Great to Julian the Apostate: "I receive also the holy Apostles, prophets and martyrs, who offer up prayers to God. Therefore I honor also their images upon icons, and openly venerate them. This was handed down by the holy Apostles and must not be forbidden; therefore in all our churches we portray their history." 2) The words of St. Stephen, Bishop of Bostra: "Concerning icons we confess that they, like every work done in the name of God, are a good and holy work, because an icon is one thing and an idol or statue is another. Every image made in the name of the Lord or of the Angels, of the prophets or Apostles, of martyrs or righteous men, is holy, because the worship is offered not to the wood but to that which is contemplated upon the wood and which is perceived. We all honor rulers and receive them with love, although they are sinners; why then should we not honor the servants of God? Why should we not make images of them in memory, lest they be

forgotten?... In remembrance of the saints we paint their icons, so that everyone, seeing them on an icon, may recall them and glorify the Lord who glorified them."



THE TWELFTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 12

12 октября

New Calendar October 12 · Old Calendar October 25 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Tarachus, Probus and Andronicus,

Страдание святых мучеников Тараха, Прова и Андроника,

In the reign of Diocletian and Maximian, when Numerius Maximus was proconsul in Tarsus of Cilicia, three Christians, Tarachus, Probus and Andronicus, were seized in the city of Pompeiopolis[1] and brought to Tarsus before the proconsul Maximus for judgment[2]. Looking upon them, the proconsul saw that Tarachus was an honorable man and advanced in years, and he said to him:

"What is your name? For as the eldest in years you should be questioned before the others."

"I am a Christian," Tarachus answered.

The proconsul said:

"Do not speak to me of your impious faith, but tell me your name."

"I am a Christian," Tarachus said again.

Then Maximus commanded his servants:

"Strike him on the mouth, and tell him: do not answer the judge so."

Tarachus, while they were beating him, said:

"What name do I have? I say: I am a Christian; this name is dearer to me than the name given by my parents. But if you also wish to learn

1. Pompeiopolis, otherwise Soli, a considerable ancient city of Cilicia; at present only ruins remain of it.

2. The accounts of the sufferings of the Holy Martyrs given below are authentic Acts of the Martyrs, which, as is seen from the letter of the Christians of the city of Anazarbus (in Cilicia), where the Holy Martyrs suffered their death, to the Christians of the city of Iconium, were procured by the Christians of Anazarbus through an intermediary for 200 denarii.

that name of mine, I was named Tarachus by my parents, and when I was a soldier they called me Victor[3]."

The proconsul asked him:

"What is your family, Tarachus?"

"I come," Tarachus answered, "from a Roman military family in the Syrian city of Claudiopolis[4], and having become a Christian I gave up my military rank."

The proconsul said:

"You were unworthy to serve as a soldier. Yet tell me how you left military rank."

"I asked the commander Publio," said Tarachus, "and he released me."

The proconsul said:

"Spare your old age and obey the command of our emperors, that I may respect you. Come forward and offer sacrifice to our gods, for the emperors themselves, who rule the whole world, worship them."

Tarachus answered:

"They have fallen into error, beguiled by Satan."

After this answer of Tarachus, the proconsul commanded his servants:

"Break his jaws, for he speaks against the emperors, saying that they have been beguiled and have fallen into error."

Tarachus, while they were beating him, said:

"As I affirmed, so I still affirm: they have fallen into error as men."

The proconsul said:

"Abandon your folly and offer sacrifice to our gods."

"I serve my One God," Tarachus answered, "and to Him I offer in sacrifice not blood, but a pure heart."

The proconsul said:

"Sparing your old age and showing you indulgence, I advise you to abandon the mad Christian faith and offer sacrifice to the gods."

"I will not commit such an iniquity," Tarachus answered, "for I love the law of my God and will not turn away from it."

3. Victor in Greek means "victor."
4. Claudiopolis, a city of Isauria, which formed part of Cilicia.

The proconsul said:

"There is another law that must be kept, you wicked head."

Tarachus answered:

"Your law is destructive, commanding you impious men to honor stones and trees, the works of human hands, and to worship them."

The proconsul ordered those standing by to strike Tarachus on the neck. The martyr, bearing the blows patiently, said:

"I will not depart from this confession, which saves me."

"I will compel you," said the proconsul, "to turn away from this madness, and I will make you wise."

"Do what you will," the martyr answered, "you have power over my body."

The proconsul Maximus said:

"Strip him of his clothes and beat him with rods."

Tarachus, while they were beating him, said:

"Now you have truly made me wise and prudent, for in these torments I trust even more in God and in His Christ."

"Most impious and criminal man," said the proconsul, "at first you said you served the One God, and now you confess two, God and His Christ. How, then, do you serve two, and reject our many gods?"

"I confess," Tarachus answered, "the One True God."

The proconsul said:

"Did you not name God and His Christ?"

Tarachus answered:

"Christ is the Son of God (One with the Father and the Holy Spirit in His Godhead), the hope of all Christians, and we are saved by suffering for Him."

The proconsul Maximus said:

"Cease your long speeches and offer sacrifice to our gods."

"I am not speaking idly," said Tarachus, "but I speak the truth. I have lived sixty-five years believing thus, and now I will not depart from the truth."

A centurion standing there, named Demetrius, said:

"Spare yourself, old man, and bow down to the gods; heed my counsel."

"Get away from me," Tarachus answered, "with your counsel, servant of Satan."

After this, the proconsul Maximus ordered the sufferer of Christ to be bound with iron chains and cast into prison, and said to the servants:

"Bring me the next one."

Upon this, the centurion Demetrius said:

"Here, master, he stands before you."

The proconsul Numerius Maximus, seeing the other Christian standing before him, said to him:

"First of all, tell me your name." The one standing there answered:

"My first and most honorable name is Christian, and the other name, given by men, is Probus."

The proconsul asked:

"What is your family, Probus?"

"My father," Probus answered, "was from Thrace, and I was born in Perge of Pamphylia[5], and I am a Christian."

The proconsul Maximus said:

"This name brings you no benefit. Obey me: offer sacrifice to the gods, and you will receive honor from the emperors and become our friend."

Probus answered:

"I want no honor from emperors, nor do I desire your friendship, for I had no small wealth, which I left behind in order to serve the Living God."

The proconsul said:

"Strip him, stretch him out, and beat him with raw sinews." While the saint was being beaten, the centurion Demetrius said to him:

"Spare yourself; do you not see that your blood is running onto the ground?"

"My body," Probus answered, "is in your hands; torment it, and your torments serve as oil to me."

The proconsul Maximus said:

5. Pergia, a city in Asia Minor.

"Will you abandon your madness, or will you harden yourself in your obstinacy?"

"I am not vain," said Probus, "but I am far more courageous than you, for I have the foundation of courage in the Lord."

Then the proconsul said to the servants:

"Turn him over and beat him on the belly."

At this cruel torment, Probus cried out:

"Help me, Thy servant, O Lord!" The proconsul said to the servants:

"As you beat him, ask: where is your helper?" And when the servants asked him, Probus said:

"The Lord helps me and will help me, and I so despise your tortures that I will not bow to your will."

The proconsul Maximus said:

"Look at your body, wretched man; the earth is covered with your blood."

"Know," Probus answered, "that when my body suffers for Christ, then my soul is healed and revived."

Having ordered the saint to stop being beaten, the judge said: "Bind his hands and feet with chains and cast him into prison, and let no one be admitted to him, that no one may care for him."

After this, by the proconsul's command, the third Christian was brought to judgment. Questioned about his name, he answered:

"I am a Christian."

The proconsul said:

"Those who were before you gained no benefit from this name, and you ought to answer otherwise."

He said:

"My customary name is Andronicus." The proconsul Maximus said:

"What is your family, Andronicus?"

"I am from an honorable family," Andronicus answered, "the son of one of the foremost citizens of Ephesus."

The proconsul Maximus said:

"Spare yourself and obey me as a father. For those who were here before you and spoke foolishly gained nothing for themselves. Offer sacrifice to the gods, who are our lords and fathers."

"You have rightly called them fathers," said Andronicus, "for your father is Satan, and you are sons of the devil, doing his works."

The proconsul Maximus said:

"You are a youth, and you dishonor me! Do you not know that great torments have already been prepared for you?"

"You consider me, tyrant," Andronicus answered, "so mad that I would prove unworthy of the former sufferers. I am ready for every torment."

The tyrant said:

"Strip him, bind him, and hang him up."

The centurion Demetrius said to Andronicus the same that he had said to the first two:

"Wretched man, listen to what you are commanded before your flesh is torn from your bones."

"Let my body perish rather," Andronicus answered, "provided you do not do to my soul what you intend."

The proconsul Maximus said:

"Yield to us and offer sacrifice to the gods before you perish."

"From my youth," Andronicus answered, "I have never served idols, and now I will not offer them sacrifice."

The proconsul Maximus said:

"Tear his body."

The centurion Anxius, of another detachment, who was standing there, said to Andronicus:

"Obey the proconsul. I am a father to you by years, and I give you good counsel."

"You are old," Andronicus answered, "yet you have no understanding. You give me such counsel that I should bow down to a stone and offer sacrifice to demons."

During the torments of the holy martyr, the proconsul said:

"Wretched man, do you not feel the suffering of such torments? Why, then, do you not spare yourself and turn away from that empty faith, which cannot save you?"

"What you call mad faith," Andronicus answered, "is for those who have hope in the Lord the most precious confession; your temporal wisdom prepares eternal death."

The proconsul asked:

"Who taught you such madness?"

"The Word of God," said Andronicus, "which gives life and by which we are revived, having the Lord in heaven, the hope of our resurrection."

The proconsul Maximus said:

"Abandon your folly before I subject you to the cruel torments prepared for you."

"My body," Andronicus answered, "lies before you; the power is yours: do what you will."

The proconsul said:

"Strike him on the mouth as hard as you can."

"Let the Lord see," Andronicus answered, "and let Him judge you, for you torment me as a murderer."

The proconsul said:

"You do not heed the imperial commands and you hold my judgment as nothing."

"I endure these sufferings," Andronicus answered, "because I trust in God and hope in His mercy and righteousness."

The judge retorted:

"Then have the emperors sinned? You deserve death."

"Indeed they have sinned," answered Andronicus, "for if you will judge with a sound mind, you will learn that to offer sacrifices to the gods is a great sin and an iniquity."

Then the tormentor said to those who were beating him:

"Turn your weapons around and strike him in the sides."

And Andronicus repeated:

"Behold, I am before you: deliver my body to whatever torments you wish."

During this torment Andronicus said:

"My flesh has been hardened by the wounds."

"By slow sufferings," said the tormentor, "I will destroy you."

"I do not fear your threat," answered Andronicus, "my mind is higher than the designs of your malice; therefore I disdain the torments."

Then the tormentor said to the servants:

"Put fetters on him, and having shackled his feet, keep him under guard."

After some time had passed, the proconsul Numerius Maximus again took his seat at the tribunal, and the Christians were brought up for interrogation[6]. And first Tarachus, as the eldest in years, the judge pressed to offer a pagan sacrifice, promising him honors. When Tarachus not only did not obey, but also answered the judge sternly, then the judge ordered his mouth to be crushed with stones and his teeth knocked out; then he said to the servants:

"Bring fire, and, stretching out Tarachus' hands, place it upon them."

And Tarachus said:

"I do not fear your temporal fire, but I fear lest, yielding to you, impious one, I fall into the unquenchable fire."

And when the fire was laid upon his hands, the proconsul said:

"Behold, your hands are being burned with fire; why then will you not abandon your folly and offer sacrifice to the gods?"

"You want," answered Tarachus, "to bring me by your cruelty to such folly that I submit to your will; but know that I, with the help of my God, am ready with steadfastness to endure all the torments which you prepare for me."

After this the proconsul ordered him to be hung head downward and a fire kindled beneath him, and then strong vinegar mixed with salt and mustard to be poured into his nostrils. He tormented Probus also in various ways, and Andronicus as well — with beating, burning, scraping with sharp iron instruments, and sprinkling of salt into the wounds;

6. The second examination of the Holy Martyrs took place in Mopsuestia, a city of the province of Cilicia in Asia Minor.

but, achieving no success, he ordered them to be kept in fetters until morning.

In the morning the proconsul said to the centurion Demetrius:

"Summon the impious Christians to me."

The centurion said:

"Here they stand before you, lord."

"Have the torments, wounds, and fetters not yet tormented you?" said the proconsul to Tarachus. "Obey me, Tarachus, and abandon your faith, which is useless to you; offer sacrifice to the gods, through whom all things came into being."

"How could they," answered Tarachus, "who are destined for fire and eternal torments, establish the world — and not only they, but also all who carry out their will?"

The proconsul continued:

"Will you cease to speak evil, impious one? Do you not know that for your shameless words I shall at once take your head, and thus you will sooner receive an end to your torments?"

And Tarachus answered:

"At first I had such a desire, that my sufferings be shortened by a swift death; but now prolong my torments, so that my ascetic feat of faith in the Lord may increase."

"With you," said the proconsul, "your friends too must suffer and die, according to the law."

Tarachus answered:

"You speak foolishly, promising us death, for only those who do evil die, but we, who know no evil, yet suffer for our Lord, await to receive from Him a recompense."

"Criminal and worthless one," said the proconsul, "what recompense do you expect, living wickedly and lawlessly?"

"It is not for you, a pagan, to know," answered Tarachus, "what recompense the Lord has prepared for us in heaven, for the sake of which we endure your furious wrath."

"Do you have the right," said Maximus, "to speak so boldly with me, as if you were my friend?"

Tarachus answered:

"I am not your friend, but I have the right to speak, and no one can forbid me this, when God strengthens me."

"The right that you have," said Maximus, "I shall abolish, impious one!"

Tarachus answered:

"No one can take this right from me, neither you, nor your emperors, nor your father — Satan."

The proconsul Maximus said:

"Bind him, for he is mad."

"If I were mad," answered Tarachus, "I would have yielded to your impiety."

When the saint had been bound, the proconsul said:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, before I subject you to torments according to your deeds."

"Do what you want," answered Tarachus, "although you should not subject me to the usual torments, because I was a soldier; nevertheless, so that you will not think that I fear torments and wish to submit to your will, turn upon me all the artifices of your malice."

The proconsul said:

"Soldiers always offer sacrifices to the gods for the health of their emperors and receive the honor they have earned, but you are the worst of all, because you deserted military service and do not wish to offer sacrifice; for that the most cruel torments are being prepared for you."

Tarachus said:

"Why are you angry? I tell you — do what you want, impious one!"

"Do not think," said Maximus, "that I will destroy you all at once; I will not cease to torment and exhaust you, and the remains of your body I will give to the beasts to be torn apart."

"Do not promise in words," said Tarachus, "but quickly carry out in deed what you want to do."

Maximus said:

"You think that after your death some women with spices will bury your body; but I shall take care to utterly destroy your remains."

"Both now," answered Tarachus, "and after death, do what you want with my body."

"First offer sacrifice," said Maximus.

"Madman," said Tarachus, "I have said many times that I will not offer."

Then the tormentor Maximus said to the servants:

"Strike his face and mouth."

When the servants were beating Tarachus, he said:

"You have disfigured my face, but in return you have quickened my soul."

"Unhappy one," said the tormentor, "abandon your mad thoughts and offer sacrifice to the gods, that you may be delivered from these torments."

Tarachus answered:

"You consider me mad because, hoping in the Lord, I am sure that I shall live in heaven; but you, pleasing the flesh, live temporarily, and you will destroy your soul forever."

Then the proconsul said to the servants:

"Heat iron and apply it to his jaws." Enduring such torment, Tarachus said:

"Even if you do something greater, you will not compel the servant of God to offer sacrifice to the gods."

Then the judge ordered a razor brought, the martyr's ears cut off, and the skin stripped from his head, and burning embers placed upon his head. And Tarachus said:

"Even if you order the skin to be stripped from my whole body, I will not withdraw from my God, Who strengthens me to endure the instruments of your malice."

While all this was happening, the proconsul said:

"Gather the iron instruments and, heating them even more, place them under his armpits!"

And Tarachus, enduring this, said:

"May the Lord see this from heaven, and judge you!"

The proconsul asked:

"Whom do you call upon as Lord, criminal?"

"The One whom you do not know," answered Tarachus, "the One Who will render to each according to his deeds."

Then the proconsul ordered Tarachus taken under guard, and another brought up for interrogation. When Probus was brought before the proconsul, the centurion Demetrius said:

"Behold, lord, Probus stands before you."

"I advise you, Probus," said the proconsul, "not to subject yourself to the former torments, for those who before you persisted have repented of it; but now offer sacrifice, and you will be honored both by us and by the gods."

Probus answered:

"We are of one mind, and with one heart we labor for God; do not expect to hear anything else from us, for you have already heard and seen that you cannot turn us away from God. Behold, I now stand before you and do not fear your threats; what more do you wait for?"

"You have agreed," said the proconsul, "in your malice to reject the gods."

Then, commanding that he be bound and hung head downward, he continued:

"Spare your body, while you are not yet tormented; for you see what torments are prepared for you."

"Do," answered Probus, "what you want; all the evil that you have prepared for me will be a consolation to my soul."

The proconsul said to the servants:

"Heat rods and scorch his sides, so that he will not rave."

And Probus said:

"As much as you consider me mad, so much am I wise in the law of the Lord."

Again the proconsul said to the servants:

"Thrust the heated rods into his back."

And Probus, enduring this, said:

"May the Lord see from heaven my humility and patience!" After this the tormentor, ordering sacrificial meat and wine to be brought, said:

"Pour in the wine and put the meat into his mouth."

When the servants were doing this, Probus said:

"May the Lord see from the height of His throne this cruelty, and pronounce sentence upon your judgment!"

"You have suffered much, unhappy one," said the judge, "and yet you have received food offered to idols."

"It is nothing important," answered Probus, "that you have done, by using violence upon me; the Lord knows my will."

"You," said the judge Maximus, "ate and drank what was sacrificed."

"The Lord knows," Probus replied to this, "and sees the violence which I endure."

The proconsul Maximus said:

"Strike his shins with heated rods."

And Probus repeated:

"Neither fire, nor torments, nor your father — Satan — can tear the servant of God away from confessing Him."

"Heat," said the proconsul, "sharp nails and drive them into his hands."

"I thank Thee, O Lord," said Probus, "that Thou hast given my hands also to suffer for Thy Name."

The proconsul said:

"From so many torments you have lost your mind."

"Your great power," answered Probus, "has not only made you mad, but has blinded you, for you yourself do not know what you are doing."

The proconsul said:

"Mutilated one, do you dare to speak such words to me? Since I have left his eyes intact — put them out!"

When this had been done, Probus said:

"Though you have taken away my bodily eyes, yet you can never take away the living eyes of faith."

The proconsul said:

"After such tortures, do you still hope to remain alive? Or do you think that we will leave you to die in peace?"

"It is for this that I labor," replied Probus, "that I may perform a good and complete confession, and be put to death by you without mercy."

Then the proconsul said to the servants:

"Take him from here, and bind him and keep him under guard, lest any of his acquaintances come to him and honor him for his impious disobedience."

After this he said:

"Bring Andronicus before me."

"Here he is," replied the centurion, "standing before you, my lord."

And the proconsul said to Andronicus:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, and you will receive release from your chains."

"That will never be, tormentor," replied Andronicus, "that I should do anything contrary to the law of my God."

The proconsul said:

"You are raving, Andronicus."

"If I were raving," replied Andronicus, "I would obey you; but, confessing my Lord, I am not raving. You yourself are possessed and blind, since you do the works of devils."

Then the proconsul said to the servants:

"Make bundles of matting, soak them in oil, and burn them upon his belly."

And at once the servants, stripping Andronicus and laying him on the ground, kindled on his belly a quantity of tow soaked in oil. He said:

"Even if you burn me wholly, you will not conquer me, impious one, for the Lord who strengthens me, whom I serve, stands before me."

The proconsul said:

"Heat iron rods and insert them between his fingers."

Andronicus said:

"Mad enemy of God, you are wholly full of devilish designs; you see my body wasted by your torturing, and think that I fear you. I have Christ, the Son of God, with me, and I disdain you."

"Lawless one," said the proconsul, "you do not know whom you call upon: a Man who was executed by Pontius Pilate, and concerning whose torment written records exist."

"Be silent, impious one," replied Andronicus, "for it is not fitting for you to speak evil of Him."

The proconsul said:

"What benefit is it to you to hope in that Man whom you call Christ?"

"A truly great benefit," replied Andronicus, "and a great reward, for which reason I endure all this with patience."

Then the proconsul said to the servants:

"Open his mouth, put sacrificial meat into it, and pour wine down it."

When they had done so, Andronicus said:

"Lord, Lord! Look upon the violence which I endure."

The proconsul said:

"How long will you suffer, being subjected to torments? For behold, you have already tasted of the sacrifice to our gods."

Andronicus said:

"Let those who worship idols perish, you and your emperors!"

"You revile, evil head," said the proconsul, "the emperors, who for a long time have pacified the world."

"I have cursed the destroyers and bloodsuckers," replied Andronicus, "who break the peace, whom the Lord with His mighty hand shall overthrow and destroy."

Then the proconsul said to the servants:

"Put iron into his mouth, knock out his teeth, cut out his blasphemous tongue so that he may not revile the emperors, and burn his tongue." And the servants did all that the tormentor had commanded. After this Andronicus was led away under guard.

Here ends the account of the sufferings of the holy martyrs, taken from the court records made by the scribes at the very time when the saints were being examined and tormented. Concerning the remaining sufferings and death of the saints, three pious men, Macarius, Felix and Berius, who beheld the end of the holy martyrs, wrote the following in their epistle to the faithful[7]:

"Numerius Maximus, proconsul of Cilicia, having summoned Terentianus, the priest of Cilicia, commanded that by morning an amphitheatre be prepared a thousand paces from the city,[8] in which the mar-

7. The indication concerning the death of the Holy Martyrs is also found in the Letter of the Christians of Anazarbus.

tyrs were to be given to the beasts to be devoured. When the amphitheatre was filled with people who had come to watch the torments, Maximus came to see the spectacle, while we[9] stood in a hidden place and watched with great fear. First the other condemned, who were very many, were given to the beasts; then Maximus commanded the soldiers to bring in the Christian martyrs: Tarachus, Probus and Andronicus.

The soldiers made the men carry the martyrs on their shoulders, for from many wounds they could not walk. And when we saw them carried in to the spectacle, we turned away and wept. The saints were thrown into the middle of the arena. Then fear fell upon everyone, and they began to murmur against Maximus for such a judgment; and many left the spectacle, reviling Maximus and his savage cruelty. Seeing this, Maximus ordered the soldiers standing by to take note of those who had left, so that he might later investigate their guilt.

And so he commanded that the beasts be released upon the martyrs; and when these did not touch them, he ordered the organizers of the spectacle to be beaten, demanding that they release the fiercest beasts. A bear was released which on that day killed three men; and when it came up to Andronicus, it sat down and began to lick his wounds. Andronicus, however, began to provoke it, that it might devour him, but it was gentle. The angry proconsul commanded the spearmen to kill the bear. Then Terentianus, fearing the proconsul, hastened to release upon the martyrs a lioness that had been sent from Antioch. Released into the arena, the lioness, running about, frightened the assembled spectators terribly; but, coming up to the martyrs, she bowed down and lay before Tarachus. He, taking hold of her with his hand, dragged her, so that, thus provoked, she might devour him; but the lioness remained gentle as a sheep beside Tarachus.

Seeing this miracle, the people raised a great outcry. Shamed and angered by this miracle, the proconsul commanded his servants to pro-

8. An amphitheatre: an oval, open building intended for combats of beasts and men. In its middle was the arena, strewn with sand (the place where the combats themselves took place). Around the arena ran a barrier. Behind this barrier rose, in tiers of steps, the benches for the public.
9. The speech is in the name of the Christians.

voke the lioness, but she, roaring loudly, went to the doors and began to gnaw at them with her teeth. The whole people, in fear, cried out:

"Open the doors for the lioness, for the doors are already breaking!"

Then Maximus, enraged, summoned Terentianus and commanded that the holy martyrs be slain. Tarachus, Probus and Andronicus were pierced with swords and cut into pieces, and thus they died.[10] Leaving the spectacle, Maximus left ten soldiers to guard the martyrs' bodies, commanding that they be laid together with the corpses of the impious, so that they might not be recognized and carried off by Christians. But we, seeing this, prayed to the Lord to grant us a favorable time when we might secretly take them. After this, drawing nearer, we saw the guards at supper and the fire kindled for the night watch; then, kneeling, we prayed to the Lord and to His Christ, that He would fulfill our desire, send help from heaven and give us the bodies of the saints. Suddenly there was an earthquake, with thunder, lightning and a rainstorm. We prayed again and, approaching the bodies, found the fire extinguished, and there was not a single soldier, for they had fled from the rain and the storm. Then we lifted our hands to heaven, praying that the Lord would by a special sign reveal to us the relics of the holy martyrs, so that they could be recognized among the multitude of other corpses. The night was very dark. Suddenly three candles, like stars, appeared above the relics of the saints. Taking the relics of the holy martyrs secretly, we departed, preceded by those heavenly candles. Following them, we came to the other side of the mountain, and the heavenly candles became invisible. Finding there a cave hollowed out in the rock, we placed the bodies of the saints in it and sealed the entrance tightly, so that they might not be found by any of the unbelievers.[11] After this we went into the city to learn what was happening, and heard that the guards had been killed by Maximus. And we gave thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives unto ages of ages.

"I, Macarius, Felix and Berius, wish to spend the remaining time of our life here, so that our bodies may be buried here together with the

10. The death of the Holy Martyrs belongs to the year 304.

holy martyrs. May our souls be granted to be fed with eternal life in heaven together with the holy sufferers. And those whom we send to you with this epistle, receive with reverence, for they are servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. We beseech you to remember us in your prayers. May the grace of God be with you. Amen."

Troparion, Tone 5:

The heavenly powers were exceedingly astonished at the steadfastness of the holy martyrs, for in mortal bodies they vanquished the incorporeal foe invisibly by the power of the Cross, having fought well; and they pray unto the Lord, that He have mercy on our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Valiant warriors of Christ, Martyrs, Tarachus, Probus and Andronicus, ye have shown us the glory of the Trinity; for ye have wholly exposed the impiety of the tormentors, suffering with valor and faith.

* * *

Cosmas of Maiuma, Composer of Canons

Космы Маюмского, творца канонов

The parents of St. John of Damascus[12], while living in the city of Damascus, took into their home a certain Christian orphan named Cosmas, who was originally from Jerusalem and had been orphaned at a very tender age. Being exceedingly pious and compassionate toward the poor, they took him in place of a son and raised him together with, and on an equal footing with, their own son John. Having bought from the Hagarenes[13] as a slave a monk named Cosmas

11. The glory of the martyrs was great in antiquity. Auxentius II, Bishop of Mopsuestia, in the middle of the fifth century, built in that city a church in the name of these holy martyrs, and, having received from Anazarbus parts of their relics, placed them in this church.
12. St. John of Damascus, the most remarkable Christian hymnographer and theologian, died in 776. The Church commemorates him on 4 December.
13. That is, among the Arabs, who, according to tradition, descended from Ishmael, son of Abraham by Hagar.

also, they gave both boys, John and Cosmas, to him for instruction. Cosmas learned from this learned monk all the wisdom of Christian knowledge, and having attained perfect understanding and maturity, forsook the vain world and withdrew to a monastery,[14] where he took upon himself the burden of the monastic tonsure and labored well therein. As a star in the firmament of heaven, so did he shine in the Church of Christ through his life and God-enlightened wisdom. When iconoclasm arose in the Church, Venerable Cosmas urged St. John of Damascus to come forth in defense of the holy icons and to write a treatise for the Orthodox on the veneration of icons, sharing with John of Damascus the labor of composing works against the iconoclasts. He also adorned the services of the Church with beautiful, inspired troparia and canons. He honored in song the raising of Lazarus, the voluntary sufferings of Christ, and certain feasts of the Lord.[6572] Later, St. Cosmas was ordained by the Patriarch of Jerusalem as Bishop of Maiuma,[15] in which office he labored greatly and in a manner pleasing to God, guiding his flock to the saving pastures of Christ; and afterward he reposed peacefully in the Lord, having attained a great age.[16]

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Adorned with virtues, God-inspired Cosmas, thou wast an adornment of the Church of Christ, for thou didst adorn her blessedly with hymns. Pray now to the Lord that we may be

14. The famous monastery of St. Sabbas the Sanctified was this monastery. In the desert St. Cosmas shared the learned labours of Damascene and, as John of Jerusalem says, zealously imitated Damascene in his love for spiritual songs; he composed for the Church sweet, harmonious hymns, representing himself by his tireless ascetic labours as a most harmonious Psalter to the Lord. It is remarkable that in the oldest edition of the hymns of Sts. Cosmas and John, as well as in the ancient manuscripts, the songs of St. Cosmas are constantly called the songs of Cosmas of Jerusalem, which confirms the view of the same John of Jerusalem that St. Cosmas wrote his hymns in the monastery of St. Sabbas.

15. Maiuma was a port city of Palestine, serving as the harbour for Gaza, a considerable ancient city of that country, not far from Jerusalem. Cosmas was elected Bishop of Maiuma by a council, against his own will, and ordained by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, John V, about the year 735. And after his ordination as bishop he did not cease his fraternal relations with St. John of Damascus.

16. St. Cosmas of Maiuma † about 787.

delivered from every snare of the enemy, as we cry unto thee:
Rejoice, O thrice-wealthy father.

* * *

Life of St. Martin the Merciful, Bishop of Tours

Житие святого Мартина Милостивого, епископа Турского

St. Martin was from Pannonia, from the city of Sabaria.[17] His parents were pagans. His father had first served as an ordinary soldier, but through his diligent service rose to the rank of military tribune[18] and attained a high position. Martin's childhood passed in Ticinum,[19] whither his father, while Martin was still a child, was obliged to move on account of his military duties. From his earliest years, the saint pleased God by his meekness, mercy, and purity of soul, manifesting within himself signs of a calling from on high. At that time the Christian faith was spreading swiftly and openly throughout the Roman Empire, and Martin, having made the acquaintance of believers, heard from them the truths of the faith of Christ and began with all his soul to yearn for it, apprehending the truth with his pure and uncorrupted heart. Kindled with love for the virtues and holy life of Christians, the boy became a catechumen at the age of ten, against his parents' wishes. He did not study the sciences, being content with the teaching of Christ alone. At the age of twelve he conceived the pious desire to become a hermit, following the solitary ascetic life of St. Anthony. But God ordained otherwise, so that his piety might be made manifest even before he was illumined in the font of baptism. Martin's father was exceedingly displeased by his son's friendship with Christians and his pious inclinations, especially since, consumed by ambitious aspirations, he wished to make this strong and active boy a distinguished soldier who would bring glory to his name on the field of battle. And so, when

17. Pannonia was one of the considerable Danube provinces of the Roman Empire; it now forms part of Hungary. Sabaria is now Stein am Anger. St. Martin was born in the first half of the fourth century.
18. That is, before the rank of commander of a separate regiment in the army.
19. Ticinum is now Pavia, a considerable city of northern Italy on the river Ticino, not far from its confluence with the Po.

Martin reached the age of fifteen, in accordance with the imperial decree that the sons of veterans[20] must enter the army, his father seized him, put him in chains, and by force compelled him to take the military oath. As the son of a tribune, and a prominent and sturdy young man, Martin became a cavalry officer and won great confidence from his commanders.

Martin's new and distinguished position did not alter his humble and pious manner of life. His means enabled him to keep two or more soldiers as attendants; but he was content with only one, whom he treated not as a slave but as a friend and brother, and whom he served more than he accepted service from him. He showed great love to his fellow soldiers and inspired in them not only sincere affection but respectful admiration for his strictly virtuous life amid constant examples of temptation. Even as a soldier, Martin devoted himself wholly to works of Christian mercy. Keeping from his pay only what was needed for his sustenance, and denying himself everything else, he used the remainder to help the unfortunate, clothe the naked, feed the poor, and perform other works of mercy.

Martin served in Gaul.[21] With the army he was stationed for the winter at Amiens.[22] The winter was exceedingly harsh, and Martin, who was always distinguished by his mercy, was all the more generous at that time in giving of his own means for the sustenance and support of the poor. One day, as he was passing through the city gate, he met a half-naked beggar, almost entirely frozen from the bitter cold. Those passing by paid him no heed and left him without any help, probably because they themselves were in need and had nothing to spare. Martin, too, had nothing; he could give the beggar no alms, for he had just given away all his money. But his heart was constricted with sorrow and compassion at the sight of this unfortunate poor man. Then Martin, without lingering in thought and wishing only to help the wretched

20. Among the Romans, in the days of the empire, this was the name for old soldiers who had not yet been discharged; they were free from all labours and were called to regular military service only for the defence of the fatherland against external enemies.

21. Gaul is present-day France.

22. Amiens is now the chief city of the French department of the Somme, on the bank of the river of that name, 124 versts north of Paris.

man as quickly as possible, swiftly removed his military belt, took off his cloak, and, dividing it into two parts, gave one to the beggar suffering from the cold, while he wrapped himself in the other half. Some passersby witnessed this deed and began to laugh at him when they saw his strange attire. But the heart of the merciful soldier was filled with joy; he was not dismayed by their mockery, remembering the words of the Divine Savior: "I was naked, and ye clothed Me ... Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Mt. 25:36).

And the Lord strengthened Martin in this faith and comforted him for his great mercy by a heavenly vision. At night, while asleep, Martin saw the Lord Jesus Christ, who appeared to him clothed in part of that cloak and bade him look to see whether it was not the very half he had given to the beggar at the gate. Martin stood in reverent silence, while Christ turned from him to the company of Angels standing nearby and said aloud:

"With this cloak Martin clothed Me, although he is as yet only a catechumen."

Rejoicing in so wondrous and consoling a vision, the young man awoke. This was three years after he had entered military service. After this, Martin hesitated no longer and immediately received holy baptism, being eighteen years of age. After his baptism he became still more zealous in his desire to leave military service, which was wholly foreign to his pious inclinations and at variance with his cherished longing for a solitary, ascetic life. Yet he was obliged to give up the immediate fulfillment of his desire. His tribune, who was a Christian, was most reluctant to part with him. When Martin told him of his intention to leave military service and become a monk, the tribune promised that, if Martin would wait until his own service had ended, he too would leave the service with him and forsake the world. Martin was compelled to yield to the tribune's wish and remained in the army for another two years, taking part in the difficult campaigns of Emperor Constantius against the savage Alemanni.[23]

During these campaigns, undertaken to repel the continual incursions of numerous barbarians into the border provinces of the Roman Empire, command of part of the army, in which Martin also served, was entrusted by the emperor to his cousin Julian, who had been appointed Caesar.[24] The detachment was not large enough, and Julian, to encourage his troops, decided to distribute among them gifts from the spoils taken from the Alemanni. To inspire the soldiers more strongly in view of the coming battle, Julian ordered each soldier to be called by name and personally handed out the gifts. When Martin was called, he stepped forward and boldly said to his commander:

"Caesar! Until now I have served you in the cavalry, but now allow me to enter the service of God. Let another, who will continue in your service, make use of your gift! But I am a soldier of Christ, and therefore ought no longer to fight for you."

"You are a coward, Martin," Julian replied angrily and reproachfully. "Tomorrow there will be a battle. It is fear of the battle, and not fear of God, that makes you shirk your service."

But Martin continued boldly:

"If you take my renunciation for cowardice and not for fidelity, then place me alone tomorrow, without any weapon, in the most dangerous part of the battle. Then you will see that, unarmed, with nothing but the name of Christ and the sign of His holy Cross, I shall advance fearlessly against the enemy's ranks."

"Let it be so," said Julian, and ordered Martin to be kept under guard until the following day.

But on the next day the Alemanni, seeing the well-ordered army of Julian, sent envoys to him to negotiate peace, offering complete submission. Peace was concluded. After this, Martin was released from his military oath and hastened at once to leave the army. He went to Hil-

23. The Alemanni were a wild people of the Germanic tribe, living between the rivers Danube, Main and the upper Rhine, adjacent to the frontier provinces of the Roman Empire, upon which they made frequent devastating raids. The campaigns of the Emperor Constantius against the Alemanni belong to the years 354–355.

24. That is, an assistant and co-ruler of the emperor, who could count in time on becoming his successor. By Julian is meant the cousin and successor of Constantius, who remained in history under the name of Julian the Apostate.

ary, Bishop of the city of Poitiers[25], renowned for the holiness of his life and for his Orthodox Christian learning, in order to place himself under the spiritual guidance of this holy man. Hilary received the young man with warm affection and, after a brief testing of his character, wished to ordain him deacon; but Martin, out of profound humility, declined this rank, and he could be persuaded to accept only the more modest, though more burdensome, office of exorcist[26]. Having served for a short time in his new office, Martin became troubled by the thought that his parents were still pagans, and, following a vision in a dream, a little while later he set out for his homeland to bring them to Christ. He had to cross the Alps[27], often losing his way in the trackless mountain wilderness and facing dangers from robbers. Once he fell into their hands. One of the robbers raised his sword to cut off Martin's head, but his companion, taking pity on the young man, restrained the attacker. Martin was bound and placed under the guard of the robber who had saved his life:

"Who are you?" asked the robber.

"I am a Christian," the young man answered meekly.

After this a lengthy conversation followed between them, during which Martin made such an impression on the robber that the man was ashamed of his wicked, shameful life. He immediately released Martin and, with tears, begged him to pray for him. After this, the former robber began to lead a pious life and afterwards lived as a monk in the Gallic monastery of St. Martin.

At last entering the borders of Italy and continuing on his way, amid many trials and difficulties, Martin met a man of extremely repulsive and frightful appearance, who attacked him with a multitude of

25. St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, the famous Father of the Church and defender of Orthodoxy, † 368. The Roman Church commemorates his memory on 14 January. In the present menologies of the Greek Church his name is absent, although the sanctity of his life is undoubted and confirmed by miracles. Poitiers is the chief city of the French department of Vienne, 340 versts south-west of Paris.

26. This was a special office within the clergy in the early Christian Church, consisting in reading special prayers over those possessed by evil spirits, the demoniacs, those suffering from epilepsy and similar sick persons. At present no such special office exists in the Church.

27. The Alps are the highest mountains of Europe, which stretch in an arc around the whole of upper (northern) Italy, separating the Apennine peninsula on all sides from the mainland.

inquisitive questions, especially striving to elicit an answer to the question of where he was going.

"I intend to go," answered Martin, "wherever the Lord calls me."

"Good," said his interlocutor angrily, "but remember that wherever you go and whatever you undertake, I will always be your adversary."

This encounter and conversation made a deep impression on Martin; yet he was not frightened, but only meekly and with firm trust in the all-good Providence of God remarked:

"The Lord is with me; I do not fear what man may do to me."

At these words his interlocutor instantly vanished. Then it became clear to Martin that it had been the ancient enemy of the human race, the devil, who had taken on a human form.

Arriving at his native home, Martin found his parents alive. His father regarded him very unfavorably and remained unyielding to his preaching. But his mother was won over by his persuasions and was enlightened by the light of the Gospel, as were many other inhabitants of his native town. But the success of the saint's Gospel preaching in Sabaria was short-lived. At that time, through the protection given by the impious emperor Constantius to the Arians, their heresy spread throughout all of Pannonia. Martin armed himself against this godless teaching and for this was subjected to persecution and, after bodily torments, was expelled from the city. He went to Italy and, stopping at Mediolanum[28], built there a hermit's cell for himself, but even from here, after all manner of persecutions and insults, he was driven out by the Arian bishop Auxentius. Then the saint resolved to become a hermit on the solitary rocky island of Gallinaria, from which he later moved to Capraria[29], which was completely uninhabited, since it was entirely overrun with venomous snakes. There he lived in the ascetic labors of contemplation and prayer with a single companion, feeding only on desert plants. Divine Providence miraculously guarded the holy ascetic, and he suffered no harm from the snakes.

28. Mediolanum, now Milan, the most considerable city of northern Italy, in the region of Lombardy; founded in the remotest antiquity, it always held great importance.
29. Gallinaria is an island in the Tyrrhenian Sea, in Liguria in upper (northern) Italy. Capraria is a small island in the same sea.

Hearing that his teacher, Hilary, who had been expelled from Poitiers by the Arians, had received permission to return, Martin went to him at Poitiers, and they, after a five-year separation, embraced each other with joy. Hilary again urged him to accept the rank of presbyter or, at least, of deacon, but Martin stubbornly refused, desiring to remain a simple monk to the end of his days. Hilary permitted him to found a monastic community and set aside for this a place not far from Poitiers, in the village of Locotiacum, or Ligugé[30]. Around the pious young man friends and disciples quickly gathered, to learn from him the perfect monastic life. Martin received everyone with love and served for all as the best model of an ascetic, God-pleasing life. Having received almost no education, he nevertheless, by the power of the grace of Christ dwelling in him, enlightened by contemplation and the labors of a virtuous monastic life, instructed and guided onto the path of true Christian life even learned men and deeply enlightened persons, some of whom, under his influence, renounced the vain world, dedicating themselves wholly to the service of God and to desert labors. The monastery of St. Martin flourished and became famous in a short time, becoming the first monastery in Gaul and the renowned nursery of monasticism in that land.

At that time one of the catechumens, who had entered St. Martin's monastery to receive edifying instruction in the holy faith and pious life, but had not yet been baptized, suddenly fell ill with fever and died. The Venerable was not in the monastery at that time. Returning, he found the lifeless body of the catechumen amid the weeping brethren. The Venerable sent everyone out of the cell and, prostrating himself in prayer, after two hours, by the grace of Christ, called the dead man back to life. Restored to life, he at once received holy baptism and afterwards lived in a God-pleasing manner for a long time. Later he related that when his soul was separated from his body, he was set before a certain dread Judge, who pronounced a sentence of condemnation upon him; but two Angels told the Judge that he was the one for whom Mar-

30. The monastery of St. Martin was situated about 8 versts from Poitiers. This was the first properly organized monastery in the West, and Martin is one of the principal founders of monasteries in the West.

tin was praying, after which the Judge commanded that he be returned to Martin.

From that time, the fame of Martin spread abroad as of a holy and wondrous apostolic man, clothed with power from on high.

Attracting to himself numerous disciples[31] from persons of various ranks and conditions, and influencing them by the example of his virtuous and strictly ascetic life, St. Martin had great influence over them also through his teaching. He himself clearly saw the truth of Christ and was firmly convinced of it, and with the same clarity, liveliness, simplicity and persuasiveness he knew how to communicate and explain it to believers and unbelievers alike. He loved to teach by parables, which made a strong impression on his hearers.

Seeing the great exploits of St. Martin, and not enduring his holy, God-pleasing life, the ancient enemy of the human race, the devil, raised against him a malicious war, appearing to him and tempting him in every way. But although the saint constantly saw demons around him and the prince of devils himself, he never showed the slightest fear before them. He even openly challenged the devil to battle.

"If you have any share in me," he said, "then show it in deed."

Then Satan tried to deceive and beguile the saint by assuming the appearance of a bright Angel, for, as the Apostle says, sometimes "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). And so one day he appeared to Martin during prayer, preceded and surrounded by a purple light, clothed in royal garments, adorned with a crown of pearls and gold, in sandals covered with gold, with a cheerful and joyful face. At the sight of this extraordinary, marvelous apparition, Martin at first fell into great confusion, and for a long time they both kept silence. At last the devil said:

"Do you recognize, Martin, whom you see now? I am Christ. Before I appear again for My Second Coming, I have desired to reveal Myself to you."

31. Among them was a rich man named Sulpicius Severus, one of the most educated ancient writers of the Western Church, who later became the biographer of Martin, and one of the saint's closest and best disciples, Gallus, from whose accounts Sulpicius recorded much of the life of Martin.

The saint paused and gave no answer.

"Why do you hesitate to believe in the vision?" said the crafty one. "I am Christ."

Then Martin, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, recognized that this was the devil, and said:

"My Lord Jesus Christ did not promise that He would appear in purple and a dazzling crown. I will not believe that I see the return of Christ until He comes in the same form in which He suffered, and above all shows visibly those wounds which He endured on the cross."

Then the devil vanished like smoke, and filled the cell with such a dreadful stench that there was no doubt left that it had been the devil.

But, together with these seductive visions, the saint also received consoling and grace-filled manifestations of Angels and of the saints of God from the world beyond the grave. Thus the holy Apostles Peter and Paul appeared to him many times and comforted him with converse inspired by God. The grace of God manifestly rested upon St. Martin, making its abiding presence with him visible to all his disciples, especially when he celebrated the Divine Service with tender devotion, and at the time when he blessed the people. Once they saw that when he raised his right hand in blessing, an extraordinary radiance went forth from it. At another time they saw a halo appear around his brow.

"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. 5:15). Thus it became clear to all concerning St. Martin that God had predestined him not merely for silent labors in solitude and in the stillness of the monastic cell, but to set him high upon the candlestick of the Church, that he might, by his gracious gifts, good works and holy life, illumine the faithful as the shepherd of the numerous flock of Christ. His great and ever-increasing fame made it certain that the people of some church would sooner or later call him to the rank of bishop. And so, when the episcopal see in the city of Tours[32] became vacant, the people desired to have St. Martin as their hierarch. But at the same time all knew the profound humility

32. Tours is a city in Gaul, on the left bank of the Loire, 238 versts south-west of Paris.

of Martin, which had earlier moved him to refuse persistently the acceptance of the presbyterate or even the diaconate. Then they resolved to resort to guile and force. A citizen named Ruricius came to the saint in his monastery and, falling at his feet, asked him to come and pray for his sick wife. The saint went; but there a great crowd of people surrounded him, forcibly led him into the city, and with one voice proclaimed him bishop.

Raised to the episcopal see, St. Martin was in no way changed; as before he remained for all an example of profound humility, was content with plain clothing and the most meagre food, and devoted the greater part of his time to monastic labors, withdrawing from the world and striving after stillness. Not far from the city he chose for his monastic labors a wild and secluded place; it was enclosed by cliffs, with the river Loire on one side, and access to it was possible only by a single footpath. Here St. Martin built a wooden cell. Beside him other ascetics of piety, seeking the desert life, began also to settle. Some built similar huts, others hollowed out caves in the mountain rock. And thus there gathered about St. Martin as many as eighty brethren, and a new monastic monastery was formed. It was called the Monastery of Martin, also the Great Monastery, and afterward Marmoutier[33]. The monks of this monastery adopted the rule of Martin and labored in the ascetic exercises of fasting and prayer under his experienced guidance, profiting from his soul-benefiting and at the same time readily accessible, simple teachings, and from the example of his own highly ascetic life. The brethren had nothing of their own; all things were held in common. Nothing might be bought or sold, and of the manual labors only the copying of manuscripts of the Divine and edifying books was permitted to the young monks; the elder ones were exclusively occupied with prayer. They seldom went out of their cells except for common services; none drank wine except perhaps the sick; their food, which they took only once a day, consisted of bread, vegetables and olives alone; their clothing was of coarse camel's hair, although many of the monks were of noble birth. The brethren lived in complete obedience and for the

33. The monastery of Marmoutier afterwards acquired great renown and held great importance in the history of monasticism not only in Gaul but in the whole West.

most part in silence. From this monastery came not a few bishops, many of whom labored much in spreading Christian enlightenment among the pagans.

St. Martin himself zealously labored to convert the pagans, and overthrew idolatry in the greater part of Gaul. In this apostolic service he showed himself a courageous, fearless and self-sacrificing preacher of the truth of Christ. For this purpose Martin often left his beloved monastery and went about the surrounding lands, destroying pagan shrines and cutting down the sacred trees of the idolaters, building churches and instructing the pagans in the faith of Christ. St. Martin's evangelical preaching had all the greater success because it was often accompanied by signs and miracles, which the saint performed by the power of Christ before the eyes of the unbelievers. The first place of conversion of the pagans was Amboise[34]. Having founded a church there by his preaching, he entrusted its governance and care to some of his disciples. But paganism there was still strong, and the Christians were threatened with great danger from the unbelievers; for there still stood a pagan temple with a large idol, which was revered by the people. The disciples of St. Martin did not dare to destroy this refuge of idolatry, despite the saint's command. Martin himself came again to Amboise, but became convinced that indeed that temple was difficult to destroy. Then he, choosing a secluded place, spent the whole night in fervent prayer to God. And the Lord heard the prayer of His servant: in the morning a terrible hurricane arose, which destroyed the pagan temple to its foundations and crushed the idol that stood within it.

Passing with the word of the Gospel through the land of the Aedui[35], St. Martin reached the city of Augustodunum[36] and stopped here to pray at the tomb of the holy martyr Symphorian and to help Bishop Simplicius in the destruction of paganism. Near the chapel in which the relics of St. Symphorian rested[37] there rose a pagan temple in honor of

34. Amboise is a city 22 versts from Tours.
35. The land of the Edui was situated south-east of Paris, between the rivers Loire and Saône.
36. Augustodunum was the chief city of the Aedui, who inhabited the land of the Aedui; today it is Autun in the department of the Saône-et-Loire, with many ruins.
37. Martyr Symphorian, honored by the Roman Church, suffered under the emperor Marcus Aurelius in 178.

Saron[38], where the most esteemed priests among the pagans lived — the so-called Druids of Saron[39]. Fearlessly St. Martin entered this pagan temple and overthrew the statue and altar of Saron. Then a crowd of armed pagans, embittered by this, fell upon him. One, bolder than the rest, had already raised a sword over him, but an invisible power cast him down at the feet of the hierarch, and, struck with fear, the bold pagan humbly, with tears, begged the saint for forgiveness and mercy. At the sight of this miracle, all the other pagans there believed in Christ, and the pagan shrine was turned into a sanctuary of the true God.

No less striking a miracle took place through the saint's prayer in the village of Leprosum[40]. Moved by apostolic zeal, he also wished to destroy here a temple greatly revered by the pagans; but the inhabitants drove him away. Then he withdrew to a safe place nearest the village, where he remained three days in fasting and prayer, beseeching God for the destruction of the pagan shrine. In answer to his fervent prayer, two bright Angels appeared to him, as if in armor, who declared that they had been sent by God to help him against the pagans.

Hearing this, Martin hastened to return at once to the village and, by the power of Christ's grace, miraculously reduced the altars and idols to dust before the eyes of the people, who were bound invisibly by Divine power. Seeing such a miracle and the wondrous destruction of the temple, the inhabitants of that village recognized the vanity of the idols and turned to Christ.

Once St. Martin, with some of his disciples, on the way to the city of Carnutum[41], was passing near a populous village. A huge crowd came out to meet them, consisting wholly of pagans, for no one in that region knew Christ or had heard the truths of the faith of Christ. So great was the fame of this holy man that it drew to him a multitude even of the pagan people, who covered the fields over a wide expanse. Martin saw

38. Saron was a legendary king of Gaul, whom the Aedui honored as a god, the patron of their land.

39. The Druids were the highest priestly order, which from time immemorial had held sway in Gaul and enjoyed among the Gauls enormous respect and influence.

40. Leprosa is today Levroux, a small town about 250 versts south of Paris.

41. Carnutum is today Chartres, a town 84 versts southwest of Paris.

that he must act and take advantage of this occasion to convert the unbelievers to Christ. And so, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, he began loudly his fervent preaching, proclaiming the word of God to the pagans and often sighing from the depths of his soul that so great a multitude of people did not know the Lord and Savior.

At this time a woman, whose son had recently died, brought his lifeless body and, laying it at the feet of the hierarch, stretching out her hands to him, said:

"We know that you are a friend of God. Return to me, then, my son, for he is my only one."

The crowd of people joined the unhappy mother and echoed her entreaties.

St. Martin took the body of the dead youth into his hands, knelt together with all the people, and, having offered a prayer, rose and gave the boy back to his mother alive. At the sight of this, all who were there began with one accord to confess Christ as God, and, falling at the feet of the saint, earnestly besought him to make them Christians. The hierarch at once, there on the field, laying his hands upon them, instructed them with the word of truth. The report of this miracle quickly spread throughout the whole land[42]. With like success St. Martin spread the light of the Gospel in other regions of Gaul as well.

Once a certain layman named Evanthius, stricken with a grievous illness and already near death, sent for Martin. The saint set out to him at once; but before he had gone half the way, the sick man, feeling the power of the one who was coming and suddenly receiving healing, went out himself to meet St. Martin and the disciples accompanying him. The next day Martin prepared to return, but remained at the urgent entreaty of the man he had healed. Meanwhile, a serpent stung one of Evanthius's household, a boy, mortally. The latter carried the dying boy on his shoulders to the feet of the holy man, believing in his great wonderworking power and convinced that nothing was impossible for him. The serpent's venom had already spread throughout all the boy's limbs; his veins were swollen, and his insides distended like a wineskin. Mar-

42. In memory of this miracle a church was afterwards built at Chartres in the name of "St. Martin the Merciful, who gives life."

tin stretched out his hand, passed it over all the boy's limbs, and pressed his finger close to the very wound made by the serpent's deadly sting. Then all who were present saw with amazement that the venom began to drain from the whole body toward Martin's finger and to flow out with the blood through the opening of the wound. After this the boy rose, entirely well, and all who had witnessed the miracle glorified God, wondrous in His saints.

No less astonishing a miracle was wrought by St. Martin in the city of Carnotum upon a mute maiden. A twelve-year-old girl, mute from birth, was brought to Martin. Her father implored the saint to loose her tongue by his prayer. The saint entrusted this to the bishops Valentinus and Victricius, who were with him, declaring that it was beyond his power, and that for them, as more perfect in virtue, all things were possible. But they, joining their entreaties to those of the unhappy father, urged Martin to perform what was expected of him. Then Martin ordered the people standing before him to depart, and, in the presence of only the bishops and the girl's father, prostrated himself and prayed fervently. Afterward he blessed a little oil and poured it into the girl's mouth, holding her tongue with his fingers. And a wondrous miracle justified the saint's faith. When the hierarch asked the girl her father's name, she answered him clearly at once; and her father, embracing the hierarch's knees, cried out with joy and tears, and bore witness before all who had gathered that this was his daughter's first word.

Once, as Martin was entering Paris, accompanied by a great multitude, he met a leper in the most wretched state, whom everyone shunned. But the saint, taking pity on him, kissed and blessed him—and behold, the sufferer was suddenly cleansed of leprosy, and the next day came to the church, giving thanks for his healing.

Paulinus, a pious dignitary of state, who later became renowned for his holy life, began to suffer grievously from an eye disease, and a dark gloom had already covered his pupil; but St. Martin touched his eye with a little cloth, and the pain immediately ceased.

The works of mercy and Christian love shown by St. Martin toward the unfortunate and the poor were beyond number, for which he also acquired the name "the Merciful." Once, in the winter months, on his

way to church, he met a half-naked beggar, who asked him for clothing. The saint summoned the archdeacon and ordered him to clothe the freezing man; then, entering the secretarium[43], he sat there alone, as was his custom. But since the deacon gave the beggar no clothing, the latter burst in upon the blessed man and began to complain of the cleric and of the cold. Then the saint secretly took off the tunic[44] he wore beneath his outer garment, ordered the poor man to put it on, and sent him away. A little later the deacon came in and announced to the holy bishop that it was time to celebrate the solemn service, for the people were waiting in the church. To this the saint replied, meaning himself:

"First the poor man must be clothed: I cannot go to church unless the poor man receives clothing."

The deacon understood nothing, for he had not noticed that the saint was naked underneath, and excused himself by saying that he could not find the poor man.

But Martin insistently repeated:

"Let them bring me the garment that has been prepared: the poor man shall not remain unclothed."

Driven by necessity, the cleric angrily took a short, coarse garment from the nearby stalls for five coins and threw it down at Martin's feet, saying:

"Here is the garment, but the poor man is nowhere to be found."

The saint calmly ordered him to wait a little outside the doors and, having secretly put on the garment, went out into the church to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. And the Lord did not delay in rewarding Martin for this secret act of Christian charity. On that day, as he blessed the holy altar during the service, a fiery sphere, shining above his head, appeared, so that its flame, rising upward, sent forth a long ray. This most glorious manifestation was seen that day, amid a great multitude of people, only by a few chosen ones: one pious disciple of St. Martin, named Gallus, one of the virgins, one of the presbyters, and three monks.

43. The secretarium was a special section attached to the church.
44. The tunic, the ordinary undergarment of Roman citizens, was a kind of shirt and was made for the most part of wool.

The meekness that distinguished Martin made even pagans love him. He had scarcely any enemies at all; but if he did have any, they hated him for the virtues they themselves lacked and could not imitate. Meanwhile Martin condemned no one and returned evil to no one for evil. In the face of every insult he was so patient that at times he endured without retaliation insults from the lower members of his clergy: he never deposed them for the grief they caused him and, as far as it lay within his power, did not deprive them of his love. No one ever saw him angry, or troubled, or laughing. He was always the same, bearing upon his face something like heavenly joy. Nothing was ever upon his lips but the name of Christ. Nothing was ever in his heart but piety, peace, and compassion. Often he wept for the sins even of those who reviled him and who, in his presence or in his absence, attacked him with serpentine mouths and venomous tongues.

How great were the patience and meekness of St. Martin toward those who insulted him is plainly shown by the following example. Among the clergy in the monastery was a young man named Brictius, who came from the lowest station, but whom Martin had taken in and raised, and later ordained as a deacon. Stirred up by evil spirits, Brictius began terribly to revile his guileless teacher to his face and behind his back. The holy man tried to bring him to his senses with gentle admonitions; but these had no effect upon the madman, who continued to utter even greater blasphemies and then ran away. On the road he met a sick man who asked him where he might find St. Martin, and Brictius called the hierarch an old deceiver and gave him other shameful names. Shortly afterward, when the sick man had been healed, Martin met Brictius and merely asked him gently:

"Why did you call me a deceiver?"

"I never called you that," the deacon replied.

"Was not my ear close to your lips, although you were speaking behind my back?" the hierarch observed. "You too, when I die, will become a bishop, and you will have much to suffer."

After this Brictius began to suffer fits of madness, and once, as Martin sat on a bench before his cell, Brictius rushed upon him with

furious abuse, while on the neighboring rocks he could see two demons urging him on to his madness.

"I am holier than you," said the deacon. "I was raised in the monastery, whereas you were once a soldier."

The brethren demanded that Brictius be subjected to exemplary punishment and deprived of his sacred rank; but Martin calmly endured his abuse. A little later, Brictius, moved by the saint's meekness, came to his senses and fell at his feet, tormented by remorse. Martin merely remarked:

"Brictius has harmed only himself, not me. The Lord Jesus Christ endured even Judas at His side; ought I, then, not to endure this young man at mine?"

Martin's prophecy was fulfilled. Brictius afterward changed so greatly that, after the saint's death, he was made his successor; then he had to endure many sorrows and insults, and afterward reposed in peace.[45]

How irresistible and powerful was St. Martin's influence even over the most haughty and hard-hearted people, and even over the mighty of this world, is shown by the following examples. Early in his episcopate, Tours was thrown into terror by the visit of the cruel provincial governor Avitianus, whose fury equaled that of wild beasts. Long lines of prisoners followed in his train, and the cruel ruler sought to strike terror into the city by their execution. Martin, the lover of mankind, did not fear the ruler's fury, but resolved to intercede both for his prisoners and for the city of his episcopal see, and at midnight went to the doors of Avitianus's palace. That night the governor's restless sleep was suddenly interrupted by what seemed to him a violent thrust, and an unknown voice said to him:

"You sleep here, while the servant of God lies outside the doors, at your threshold."

Avitianus ordered his servants to look outside the doors; but they made a careless search and assured him it was mere imagination. Reas-

sured, he fell asleep again, but soon he was awakened a second time by a loud voice: “Martin is standing at the doors.” Then the servants found that it was indeed so. The provincial governor ordered the hierarch brought before him and asked:

“Why have you done this?”

“I know your intention,” St. Martin answered boldly, “before you have spoken it. Go, and do not allow the wrath of heaven to destroy you.”

Struck with fear by the inspired, prophetic voice of the hierarch, and reproved by his own conscience, Avitian hastened to carry out his command: he released the prisoners and left the city. The reproofs of St. Martin continued afterwards to have a good effect upon the character of this cruel governor. Once, when Avitian again visited the city of Tours, the saint entered his room and, in silence, gazed fixedly upon him.

"Why do you look at me so fixedly, holy man?" asked Avitian.

"I am not looking at you," replied Martin, "but at the loathsome demon who sits upon your neck."

And the word of the hierarch again had a salutary effect and restrained the cruel governor from carrying out his evil intentions.

The Emperor Valentinian I,[46] hearing on all sides of the fame of St. Martin, expressed a desire to enter into friendly relations with him; but his wife Justina, who was a zealous Arian, would not permit it. Therefore, when once Martin, on important business, arrived at Trier,[47] where the court of the emperor then was, the emperor, prejudiced against him by his wife, gave orders that he should not be admitted to his presence. After fruitless efforts to present himself to the sovereign, the hierarch devoted himself to prayer and fasting. On the seventh day an Angel appeared to him and commanded him to go to the palace of

45. Brictius was chosen as bishop of Tours after Martin, but after 33 years he was expelled from his see by the people in disgrace, on a false accusation, and only after seven years of harsh exile was he restored to his episcopal see, where at last he died in peace. Brictius was so changed in his morals and so renowned for his virtuous life that he was afterwards numbered among the saints by the Roman Church (his memory is celebrated there on 13 November).

46. Valentinian I, emperor of the Western Roman Empire, reigned from 364 to 375.

47. Trier, or Treves, was the populous and flourishing chief city of the northern region of ancient Gaul (the so-called Belgica).

the emperor. Having received this divine intimation, Martin hastened to the palace and, finding the doors open, appeared before the emperor without any announcement. Valentinian fell into a violent rage, but suddenly felt that the chair beneath him seemed all surrounded below by fire. Compelled to rise, he was at once changed and received the saint with a warm embrace, conversed with him for a long time, kept him with him as a dear guest for several more days, promised to grant him whatever he might ask, and, at parting, offered him rich gifts, which the hierarch, however, declined, and thereby aroused still greater respect for himself.

In 383 the Roman legions proclaimed Maximus emperor, and the son and successor of Valentinian I, Gratian,[48] having suffered defeat through the treachery of his soldiers, was slain; his brother Valentinian II was compelled to flee and was deprived of the throne, retaining only a part of his dominions. Then St. Martin set out for Trier to petition the Emperor Maximus on behalf of those who had been on the side of Gratian and were threatened with death. It was of the highest importance to Maximus to secure the loyalty of the clergy and, above all, if possible, of so beloved and renowned a bishop as St. Martin. He therefore received his arrival most graciously and invited the saint to the imperial banquet. But Martin declined and replied with extraordinary boldness:

"I cannot sit at the table of a man who has deprived one emperor of life and another of his throne."

At the same time Martin warned the emperor that although at first he might be successful in his affairs, nevertheless his reign would be of short duration and he was destined for a speedy destruction.[49] Maximus restrained his anger and earnestly represented to the hierarch that he had not himself, of his own will, assumed the crown, but that the soldiers had placed it upon him for the defense of the realm against its en-

48. Gratian was emperor of the Western Roman Empire from 375 to 383.

49. The prediction of St. Martin was fulfilled exactly: at first Maximus did indeed drive Valentinian II out of Italy in 387. But the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, Theodosius II the Younger, who had earlier taken Valentinian II under his protection during his minority, in the very next year triumphantly restored the latter to his rights. Maximus suffered defeat, was brought before Theodosius, and was executed.

emies. At last, yielding to the entreaties of the emperor, St. Martin consented to come to the imperial banquet, to which the highest dignitaries and the most distinguished persons had been invited; Martin was seated in the most honorable place, and the priest who accompanied him was given a place between the brother and the uncle of the emperor. During the feast a cup of wine was handed to the emperor, and he ordered that it be offered first to Martin, that he might take it back from the hands of the hierarch. But Martin, having tasted from it, handed it back not to the emperor but to one of those present, as though the latter were a person of higher rank than the emperor. This astonished the emperor and all who were present. Yet Maximus not only did not become angry, but from that time began to show St. Martin still greater respect. The emperor often summoned Martin and received him with reverence in his palace, conversing with him both about contemporary affairs and about the future life, the eternal glory of the saints, and other matters profitable to the soul. The pious empress, with tenderness and tears, listened to the holy conversations and admonitions of Martin, and at last, with the consent of her husband, arranged a meal for St. Martin alone, which she herself prepared, personally served, sitting at his feet, and presented the food and drink; then, at the end of the dinner, she gathered all the crumbs and remnants and made from them a meal for herself. But St. Martin received all this with the greatest humility, and in heart and mind remained in his monastic cell, among the simple monks whom he had gathered about him.

Toward the end of his life Martin, hearing that a bitter dispute had arisen among the clergy in the district of Candes,[50] hastened there to restore peace between the quarreling clerics. Having gathered his monks, he foretold to them the approach of his death, and set out on his journey, accompanied by their tears and lamentations. Having restored peace in Candes, the saint was seized there by a severe fever and, feeling the approach of his death, commanded his disciples to lay him on the floor in a shroud and ashes, for so, as he himself said, Christians

50. A city at the confluence of the Loire and the Vienne.

ought to die. As he lay thus, he seemed to see the devil standing near him.

"Why do you stand here, dreadful beast?" said the saint. "You have no part in me: the bosom of Abraham will receive me."

These were his last words, and the brethren who surrounded him were struck by the radiance and beauty of his face as he lay dead.[51] Two thousand monks and a choir of virgins accompanied his body to Tours, where, amid a great concourse of people, he was given a solemn burial. After the blessed repose of His great servant and wonderworker, God granted him incorruption of the body, and at his tomb great and numerous miracles were wrought[52] to the glory of God, who is wondrous in His saints forever. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Domnica

Память святой мученицы Домники

St. Domnica struggled under the Emperor Diocletian. Brought to trial before Lysias, the governor of Anazarbus in Cilicia, for confessing Christ, she was first beaten with ox sinews, and her feet were burned with red-hot iron; then she was so cruelly beaten with rods that her joints were broken. Finally cast into prison, she there, giving thanks for her martyr's wounds, yielded up her spirit to the Lord (286 A.D.).

Celebration in Memory of the Translation of the Maltese Relics

Празднование в память перенесения Мальтийских святынь

51. St. Martin reposed on 11 November about 400, being about 80 years of age.

52. Bishop Perpetuus erected a magnificent church over the tomb of St. Martin. Parts of his relics were afterwards distributed among various churches. In 1562 the Protestants plundered his tomb and burned his relics at Tours. The remaining parts of the relics were laid up and are preserved to this day in the cathedral of Tours. Many of the posthumous miracles of St. Martin were first described in the sixth century by Gregory of Tours, who was numbered among the saints in the West, and who himself experienced on his own person the wondrous, miracle-working power of the saint of God.

In the Russian Church, on October 12, the translation from the island of Malta to Gatchina of three great relics is celebrated: a portion of the Wood of the Life-Giving Cross of the Lord, the wonderworking icon of the Mother of God of Philermos, written by St. Luke the Evangelist, and the right hand of St. John the Baptist. Let us briefly relate the history of the origin of each of these relics and of the establishment of the feast in their honor.

I.

In 326 the Cross of the Lord was miraculously discovered on Golgotha by St. Helena the empress. Soon after this, by imperial command, a new church of the Resurrection of Christ was founded here, which was destined to become for many years the keeper of this great relic of the whole Christian world. This church preserves the relic to the present day. But it cannot be presented in its entire wholeness, as it was when it was discovered by St. Helena the empress. Tradition tells us of many parts of the Cross of the Lord, separated from it in remote antiquity and dispersed to all the ends of the world for its sanctification.[53] The East kept these particles, and so did the Christian West.

Likewise, holy Rus during the thousand-year period of her Christian life more than once received from the East portions of the Life-Giving Cross of the Lord, which are preserved to this day both in cathedral churches and ancient monasteries, in parish churches, in royal palaces, and even in private houses. One of these particles, however, she received from the West, from the knights of the Order of Malta. The destinies of this Order were always closely bound up with the destinies that befell the Orthodox East, and even with the destinies of that Precious Tree which was its constant unshaken bulwark and its victorious

53. To this St. Cyril of Jerusalem also bears witness, he who lived in the fourth century (the same century in which the Cross of the Lord was discovered). In one of his "Catechetical Lectures" he says that the whole world already in his time possessed parts of the wood of the Cross. And even in the narrative of the discovery of the Cross of the Lord it is mentioned that the holy Empress Helena separated a part from the discovered Cross and sent it to her son Constantine for the blessing of his kingdom. In the fifth century the particles of the Cross of the Lord were already the possession not only of many churches of the East, but, as St. John Chrysostom testifies, even private persons "many, having encased a particle of the Cross in gold, wore it about their necks."

instrument against all calamities and snares on the part of the alien Muslim and pagan world.

While some of the Western Christians, staff in hand as pilgrims, undertook pious journeys to the East to venerate its holy places, of which the Life-Giving Wood of the Cross has always indisputably held the first place, and others, clad in the armor of war, rushed thither to shed their blood in defense both of the pilgrims and of the holy places that drew them to themselves,[54] – still others made it their obligation, by uniting into brotherhoods, to give shelter in a strange land to the first and to heal the wounds of the second. One of the oldest of such brotherhoods is the Order of the Hospitallers of St. John,[55] so called because the church of the hospital attached to it was dedicated to St. John the Baptist. At first an institution pursuing only charitable aims, the Order later, when its leadership was entrusted to the energetic Frenchman Raymond du Puy,[56] received a new rule, by which the aim of its activity became also the armed protection of pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. This extension of its activity was received with great sympathy in Europe: pious knights of various states hastened to join the new Order. Its seven-hundred-year struggle against the infidels in defense of Christianity covered the Hospitallers with everlasting glory. Afterwards the Hospitallers were obliged to leave Palestine, but they had already shown extraordinary courage and self-sacrifice during their stay in Jerusalem (1118–1187) in battles with the armies of the Egyptian and Baghdad caliphs.[57] As a reward for their exploits they then received a particle of the Life-Giving Cross of the Lord, which they kept

54. Especially remarkable in this respect are the armed expeditions of Western Europe at the end of the eleventh century, known under the name of the Crusades. The name given to them clearly testifies to what impelled Western Christians to cross in countless hosts unknown lands, seas, and deserts: it impelled them to the desire to see the tree of the Honorable Cross not dishonored. The most considerable expeditions were eight: the first in 1096, the second in 1147, the third in 1190, the fourth in 1202, the fifth in 1217, the sixth in 1228, the seventh in 1248, and the eighth in 1270.

55. The Order of the Hospitallers arose in 1047. Its founder is considered to be the rich merchant Maurus of Amalfi, who together with some others obtained from the Egyptian caliph permission to build in Jerusalem a shelter and a church for pilgrims.

56. Raymond du Puy was elected head of the Order of the Hospitallers in 1118.

57. Caliph (Khalif) is the title of the successors of Muhammad, who held the highest spiritual and secular authority among the Muslims.

with reverence both in Ptolemais and on the islands of Cyprus, Rhodes and finally Malta,[58] whence they carried it to Russia in the reign of Emperor Paul.

II.

At the same time as the particle of the Life-Giving Wood of the Cross of the Lord was brought to Russia from the island of Malta by the Hospitallers, another holy object, also venerated by them and kept for a long time, was transferred: the Philermos icon of the Mother of God, the Hodegetria.[59]

An ancient tradition states that it was painted by the holy Evangelist Luke and consecrated by the blessing of the Ever-Virgin Herself, upon whose blessing the Evangelist-painter was accustomed to offer the works of his hands. About the year 46 it was brought to the homeland of St. Luke, to Antioch, where it was preserved until the time of Constantine the Great, when, together with other material monuments of the earthly life of Jesus Christ and the apostles, it was transferred to Jerusalem, which Constantine had restored. About the year 480 the Empress Eudocia sent it, as a blessing, to Constantinople to St. Pulcheria, sister of Emperor Theodosius the Younger. Here St. Pulcheria built the new Blachernae church, where this holy icon of the Mother of God was placed, which for many centuries became the guardian of Constantinople.

Already from the time of St. Pulcheria, in the Blachernae church, by the will of its foundress, it was ordained that a moleben be served before the icon of the Mother of God on Tuesdays, and from 626, from the time of Her miraculous glorification, a reading of the Akathist was added to the moleben.[60] And unceasing praises in honor of the Mother of God resounded in this church, until the grievous times of iconoclasm came, when, in the words of one contemporary, she was stripped "like a queen of her purple."

58. Ptolemais is a city of Phoenicia, south of Tyre; Cyprus is an island in the northeast of the Mediterranean Sea, near the shores of Asia Minor; Rhodes is the easternmost island of the Aegean Sea; Malta is an island in the Mediterranean Sea, between Sicily and the northern coast of Africa.

59. The Mother of God is called Hodegetria, the Guide, because She directs people on the path of salvation.

After the restoration of icon veneration, the icon of the Mother of God again took its fitting place in the church built in Her honor, which once more became famous for the miraculous appearance in it of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos and for a new intercession of Hers against the ancient enemies of Constantinople, the Saracens.[61] But the faith of the inhabitants of Constantinople waned, and they lost their Protectress. New enemies joined the Muslim foes: the Western Christians, the Crusaders. During the Fourth Crusade the icon of the Hodegetria, together with many other shrines of Constantinople, was taken by the Crusaders from the Blachernae church and sent to the West. Brought back again to Palestine, it fell to the Hospitallers. When, at the end of the Crusades, the latter had to leave Ptolemais, where they had lived until then, and move to the island of Rhodes, the holy icon was also carried there by them. And it remained their inalienable possession through all their further migrations, until they presented it as a gift to Emperor Paul.

III.

The right hand of St. John the Baptist is the third holy object in whose honor the celebration of 12 October was established in Russia. The Evangelist Matthew, relating the circumstances of the martyr's death of St. John the Baptist, remarks that his disciples, coming, took the body (except the head) and buried it.[62] At the place of burial of the Forerunner in the Samaritan city of Sebaste,[63] a church dedicated to his name had already been built in the third century. The commemoration

60. In 626, in the reign of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius, Sivar, a commander of the Persian king Chosroes, besieged Constantinople, which was utterly defenseless, by sea and land (the emperor was away with his army on a distant campaign). And when Patriarch Sergius immersed the robe of the Mother of God in the waters of the bay, a storm arose which stirred up the waters of the bay and sank the enemy ships standing there. In memory of this event a song of thanksgiving to the Mother of God was composed, which those who prayed were required to hear standing; for this reason it received the name of the "unseated song," or akathist.

61. Saracens, otherwise called Arabs.

62. Mt. 14:12. According to the testimony of some writers, during the reign of Julian the Apostate, the relics of St. John the Baptist, which rested at Sebaste, were burned to ashes and scattered to the wind.

63. Sebaste was the chief city of Samaria. This city received such a name after it was given by Augustus to Herod the Great, who completely restored and adorned it, and in gratitude to Augustus he named it Sebasta, or Sebastia, which means the city of Augustus.

of his memory and the veneration of his honorable relics took place even in apostolic times.

According to a tradition going back to antiquity, the holy Evangelist Luke, preaching Christ in Sebaste, venerated the remains of the relics of His Forerunner and asked the inhabitants of Sebaste to allow him to transfer them to Antioch, where they could be saved from insult and destruction by the infidels. But the Sebastians allowed him to take only the right hand of the Baptist, which he transferred with reverence to Antioch. From the time this relic remained in Antioch there has survived a tradition of one remarkable miracle that proceeded from it.

In the region of Antioch there was a certain monster, to which, according to the superstition of the pagans there, one of the city's undefiled maidens was offered in sacrifice each year by lot. Once the fatal lot fell upon a young Antiochene girl, the daughter of a Christian. Her father, crushed by grief and unwilling to give Christian blood over to the mockery of pagan superstition, turned for help from on high. After fervent prayer in the church of the holy Forerunner, he kissed his incorrupt relics, which were kept there, and bit off a part of one of the fingers, concealing it on his person. When the time came for the dreadful sacrifice, and the approaching monster was already opening its jaws to seize the innocent maiden, her father, who had arrived there by then, cast into its mouth the piece of the Forerunner's right hand that he had with him, and the monster immediately fell lifeless. Great was the astonishment of the pagans who witnessed this spectacle. When they learned the true cause of the monster's sudden death, many of them abandoned their former superstitions and turned to Christ. At the place of their superstitious sacrifices they built a church in honor of the Forerunner. The tradition concerning this wondrous event explains the present appearance of the Forerunner's right hand, from which a part of the little finger is missing. Great, too, was the faith of the Antiochenes in the precious holy relic preserved in their city. Julian the Apostate knew of this relic, and knew also of the Antiochenes' love for it, for in his youth he himself had lived in Antioch. When, marching to war against the Persians (in 362), he came to Antioch, he could not overlook this holy relic, while consigning to the flames everything that

recalled Christianity. It so happened, moreover, that just at that time the temple of Apollo at Daphne, which he loved, was burned down.[64] Suspecting the Christians of setting it on fire, the enraged emperor ordered, in vengeance upon them, that Antioch's chief holy relic—the right hand of St. John the Forerunner—be publicly burned. But, as it turned out, the faithful Antiochenes had hidden their relic in one of the city's towers even before Julian arrived, and all the searches for it by those carrying out the emperor's command proved fruitless. After Julian's death, they placed this relic once more in the city's chief church, where it remained for about six hundred years, until the time when Syria was conquered by the Muslims. In 639 Antioch fell, and with it the Forerunner's right hand came into Muslim captivity. The Byzantine emperors tried many times to retrieve it from Antioch, but all their efforts failed to attain their desired end. At last, the Lord ordained that this Christian holy relic should be translated from a city enslaved by an impious people to the capital of a Christian realm. In 959, the pious deacon Job of the Antiochian Church—who had repeatedly tried to persuade the sacristan of the church of St. Peter, where the Forerunner's right hand was kept in a special chamber together with sacred vessels and other precious objects, to give him this holy relic, but always in vain—at last resolved to take advantage of the sacristan's weakness. While the latter slept soundly after drinking too much wine, Job took the keys to the church and stole the relic by night. With his precious burden, he set out straight for Constantinople. Upon reaching Chalcedon,[65] he sent word to Constantinople of the treasure he had carried away from Antioch. Soon thereafter, a royal ship arrived in Chalcedon with the patriarch and the emperor's dignitaries. A little while later, the emperor and all the people met on the Bosporus, with great solemnity, tenderness, and delight, the holy relic obtained with such difficulty, "as though the Forerunner himself had come down from heaven." It was taken to the palace church. Remarkably, the Forerunner's right hand, which had once touched the head of the Lord and Master, was brought into this church on the very eve of Theophany,

64. Daphne was a suburb of Antioch.
65. Chalcedon was a city near Constantinople.

just before the blessing of the water. This coincidence of events increased the solemnity of the translation and the reverent joy of the emperor and the people. Without joining the feast of the translation of the Forerunner's right hand to the feast of Theophany, the Greek Church appointed the commemoration of this event for January 7, the feast of the Synaxis of St. John the Forerunner. As in Antioch, it was likewise established in Constantinople that the right hand of the Lord's Forerunner should be raised up before the people; but this rite was performed not on the Elevation of the Cross of the Lord (as in Antioch), but on the day of the Forerunner's Nativity—June 24. When Constantinople fell[66] beneath the onslaught of the Turks, Sultan Mehmed II, who entered the city, ordered that the Forerunner's right hand, along with other Christian holy relics, be placed in his royal treasury and sealed with his seal. But the order of the Knights of St. John, mentioned above, which at that time had its home on the island of Rhodes, rose up in defense of the outraged city and its profaned holy relics. The Knights of St. John not only bravely repelled all the Turks' attacks on Rhodes, but also began to threaten their own territories. Then Bayezid II, the successor of Mehmed II, wishing to win their favor, sent[67] the Forerunner's right hand as a gift to the master of their order, Pierre d'Aubusson. A treasure of no value to a Muslim treasury was a precious treasure to the Christian knights, whose order, from its very foundation, had been placed under the heavenly protection of St. John the Forerunner. Wherever the Knights of St. John settled, they built churches in honor of the Forerunner, and from then on, with every new settlement, his right hand was carried to the new churches as well. Aubusson built such a church on the island of Rhodes; and later, the Master of the Order, La Valette, built another on the island of Malta.

IV.

When the island of Malta was taken by Napoleon, and the master's crown of the order passed[68] to the Russian Emperor Paul Petrovich, who from childhood had admired the glorious history of the Knights of

66. The fall of Constantinople took place in 1453.
67. This was in 1484.
68. In 1798, on 29 November.

Malta, the grateful Knights of St. John, in return for his protection, resolved to place in his possession all three great treasures, none of which had they ever parted with since receiving them.

The right hand of John the Forerunner was the first of the holy relics they brought to Russia. In 1798 it was temporarily placed in the Order's chapel in St. Petersburg. In the following year, 1799, on October 12, the other two holy relics were brought with it to Gatchina[69]: particles of the Cross of the Lord and the Icon of the Mother of God of Philerme.

The imperial court received the holy relics offered to it as a gift with great solemnity. At 10 o'clock in the morning that day, a whole procession set out from Gatchina Palace in the direction of Ingeburg, where the reception of the relics was to take place, with the Emperor at its head, accompanied by members of the imperial family and a numerous retinue. The meeting took place at the so-called Spassky Gate, from which the solemn procession began its return to the palace. The clergy went first in a cross procession. Behind them, in the court's golden carriage, the right hand of St. John the Forerunner was borne in a golden reliquary upon a crimson velvet cushion. The Icon of the Mother of God and a particle of the Life-giving Cross of the Lord were borne in the same manner behind it. The Emperor himself, in the full vestments of the Grand Master of the Order of Malta, walked behind the first carriage. When the procession drew near the palace, the Emperor himself took the Forerunner's right hand and, while its appointed troparion was being sung, carried it into the court church, newly adorned, and placed it in the prepared place. The Icon of the Mother of God and the particle of the Life-giving Wood were placed there also. All the details of this solemn event were later incorporated into the service composed by order of the Most Holy Synod for October 12. In it, "the God-chosen emperor, who joyfully bears into his house, as once of old into Sion, the new ark, more precious than the ancient one, is likened to David, meek and pious. For there was the vessel bearing manna; here, the image of her who bore Christ in her womb. There, the tablets of the Old Coven-

69. Gatchina is a town in the Tsarskoye Selo district of the St. Petersburg province.

ant; here, the hand that foreshadows the New Covenant, proclaiming salvation and great mercy to the world. There, the rod; here, the Cross of Christ, guardian of the universe."[70]

In his heartfelt joy, Paul presented the holy relics with rich golden reliquaries adorned with diamonds and other precious stones, and the Icon of the Mother of God with an equally precious new riza.

October 12 was entered by the Most Holy Synod among the feast days of the Russian calendar.

Gatchina, however, was not long the place where the Maltese holy relics dwelt. When the imperial family left for St. Petersburg in the autumn, it took them along, so that in the following year, 1800, the feast of their translation was celebrated already in the church of the Winter Palace. For more than fifty years, the very celebration established in honor of their translation to Russia was held there on January 7 instead of October 12. Emperor Nicholas Pavlovich once more turned his attention to forgotten Gatchina. In memory of his father, the founder of Gatchina, he built there a cathedral church in the name of the Apostle Paul. For the consecration of this church,[71] the Maltese holy relics were brought once more from the Winter Palace to Gatchina. In the autumn of that same year, the Sovereign visited it. The parishioners who had gathered there, thanking the emperor who had built their church, joined their gratitude to a request that the newly built church become the permanent home of the Maltese holy relics, once brought to Gatchina for the first time.

In response to this request, the Sovereign told them that he could not give the property of the Reigning House into the ownership of a private church, but agreed only to an annual temporary offering of them from St. Petersburg. Thus was restored the celebration of the feast of 12 October, which is carried out at present both in the court church and in the Pavlovsk Cathedral. The relics are brought from St. Petersburg already on the eve of the feast. Their veneration on this day takes place in the court church at the All-night Vigil. On the following day, after the early Liturgy in the court church, they are transferred to

70. Sticheron at the Aposticha.
71. The consecration of the church took place in 1852.

the cathedral, where they remain for ten days until the day of the feast of the Icon of the Mother of God of Kazan, when, after a procession of the Cross through the town, they are taken back to St. Petersburg.

12 October is not only the principal and general feast of the people of Gatchina, but also the day of veneration of the Maltese relics for many pilgrims who come to Gatchina from the capital, from the surrounding villages and towns, and even from other provinces of Russia. On this day all Russia gives glory to God, "who hath glorified her hitherto with a multitude of holy relics, and still does not cease to glorify her now: for behold, a precious treasure, hitherto hidden in various lands, He has been pleased to bestow upon her"[72].

* * *

NOTES

6572. Besides the hymns for Palm Sunday, the Raising of Lazarus, and the Sufferings of Christ, which are rightly considered the finest and most solemn works of this most remarkable hymnographer of the Orthodox Christian Church, there have survived from St. Cosmas inspired canons for the Dormition of the Mother of God, the Nativity of Christ, the Exaltation of the Cross of Christ, the Meeting of the Lord (with stichera), the Baptism of the Saviour, the Transfiguration of the Lord (with stichera), Pentecost, and triodes for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday of Holy Week. In this connection the well-known church historian of the fourteenth century, Nicephorus Callistus, writes that St. Cosmas was the first to begin writing triodes "in the image of the Holy Trinity." To St. Cosmas of Maiuma also belongs the composition of the inspired hymn in honour of the Mother of God, "More honourable than the Cherubim," the canon for Maundy Thursday, the tetraodia for Maundy Thursday, the oikos and fourteen kontakia for the Dormition of the Mother of God, the canons to Joseph the Betrothed, to King David, to the Great Martyr George, to Gregory the Theologian, and some other church hymns. Concerning the most famous Theotokion, "More honourable than the Cherubim," there has survived a church tradition according to which this song was very pleasing to the Most Pure One; and She, appearing to the venerable one with a joyful countenance, said: "Thy songs are pleasing to Me, but this one is more pleasing than all the others; those who sing spiritual songs are dear to Me, but I am never so near to them as when they sing this new song of thine." Nicephorus Callistus adds that those capable of contemplating spiritual things have many times afterwards seen the Most Pure One blessing those who sang this song. This tradition is confirmed also by the daily use, which is prescribed, of this song on the lips. In all the hymns of St. Cosmas of Maiuma the thought is always full and at the same time concise, harmonious, filled with solemn

72. Stichera of the feast.

grandeur, reverence and a highly artistic Christian inspiration. In the Greek service we read of St. Cosmas: "Behold, the spiritual zither, the sacred lyre, calls all to the secret feast: Cosmas the holy and glorious offers honey-flowing, holy-sounding songs ... The leader of hymnographers, equal to the teachers, the right image of spiritual harmonious songs, the sweet-sounding trumpet, the fair fount of melodic songs, the zealot of Angelic hymnody, Cosmas, I wish to adorn with songs." The hymns of St. Cosmas of Maiuma have from of old always been held in the highest and deepest veneration by the Church.



THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 13

13 октября

New Calendar October 13 · Old Calendar October 26 (civil dates)

Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs Carpus, Papylus, Agathodorus and Agathonica,

Страдание святых мучеников Карпа, Папилы, Агафодора и Агафоники,

It is very profitable to call to mind those who suffered for Christ, for the very remembrance of their torments may kindle love of God in our soul and give our striving after virtue, as it were, certain wings, so that we, for the sake of the future recompense, may in thought endure those very sufferings which the martyrs bore in the flesh. Among the host of passion-bearers who in this life undertook the martyrs' struggles belong Carpus and Papylus, great pillars and foundations of the Church[6631].

Both of them were born in the glorious city of Pergamum[1] of pious parents, and by their virtuous life they manifested the virtue of those who begot them: for a holy branch grows from a holy root, a good fruit points to a good tree, and a pure stream brings glory to its source. Both of them were content in food and drink with only what was most necessary, rejecting everything that serves variety and excess; and they used even the necessities so sparingly that they differed from the Angels only in flesh, so that by their great abstinence they seemed almost bodiless. When they had attained perfection in virtue through such a life,

1. Pergamum, a city in Greater Mysia (in the northwestern part of Asia Minor), was the capital of the kingdom of Pergamum. In antiquity it was renowned for its wealth, luxury, and extensive library, and also for the invention, or more precisely the improvement, of the preparation of parchment (which took the place of present-day writing paper). Later this city was annexed to the Roman Empire. It is mentioned in the Apocalypse (Rev. 2:12). In the Apostolic Constitutions (7:46) mention is made of the first bishop of Pergamum, Gaius, ordained by the Apostle John. This is the Gaius to whom the Apostle John addressed his Third Catholic Epistle (3 Jn. 1:1).

they were found worthy to be entrusted with the governance of the Church: Carpus was ordained bishop and preached the word of God to the inhabitants of Thyatira[2], while Papylus, whom Carpus honored with the rank of deacon, displayed zeal, in keeping with his office, in similar labors.

The fame of the holy Carpus and Papylus spread throughout all the surrounding lands, for virtue generally cannot remain hidden but always becomes manifest. Therefore a great multitude of people began to gather to these holy men, and, listening with zeal to their teaching, were converted to Christianity. The enemy of all good, the devil (cf. Jn. 8:44), seeing this, could not remain at peace; finding zealous servants of his malice, he prompted them to denounce the saints to the impious Emperor Decius[3]. And so it was reported against Carpus and Papylus that they not only did not worship the gods but, on the contrary, cursed them and followed the Christian teaching. Decius, hearing of this, was greatly enraged and sent to Asia his counselor Valerius, a zealous pagan and a cruel man; at the same time the Emperor told him all that he knew about the saints and gave him full power over them. Valerius, receiving the order, hastened on his way, and on arriving at the place where the saints lived, wished to offer sacrifices to his gods. At once a decree went out from him throughout all the regions of the land of Thyatira, that all its inhabitants should immediately assemble at the place of sacrifice to worship the gods. Thus the impious man not only was himself a zealous worshipper of the pagan gods, but wished also to incline others to the same. When all had gathered at the place of sacrifice, there were not found among them two Christians, Carpus and Papylus, for they were offering the true sacrifice to the True God in another place, that is, prayer. Not finding them among those assembled, the tormentor ordered that they be sought; and when they were found and brought before him, he asked them proudly:

"Why did you not appear together with the others to offer sacrifice to the gods?" And then he added: "Hasten before my eyes to correct

your transgression, so that the hatred of those who slandered you may turn back upon their own heads, and your glory thereby may be increased more than before."

But the saints, not fearing terror and not seeking human glory, bravely answered this:

"It is not fitting for us, O judge, to anger our God and be ungrateful for His benefits toward us! For the very beasts would be the accusers of our ingratitude, for they too know their master; and we would prove to be ignorant of our Creator if we honored false gods, forsaking the True Lord of ours."

While they were speaking thus, God confirmed their words by the following sign: suddenly a strong earthquake occurred, and all the idols were overthrown and crumbled to dust. But the malice of Valerius was strong and unyielding: instead of marveling at the ineffable power of God and laughing at the utter nothingness of the false gods, he became yet more mad and senseless. Put to shame by the nobility and meekness of those men, he refrained from inflicting on them at that time the most grievous torments, and ordered iron chains to be placed upon their necks and for them to be led naked through the city. Thus the valiant ascetics, worthy of high honor, were led through the streets with dishonor; those deserving countless praises were mocked and subjected to outrage. The judge, thinking that, punished by such dishonor, they would now change the steadfastness of their confession, resolved to win them to his side by flattering speeches, and began to say:

"If I did not consider you prudent, I would never offer you good counsel, but would incline you to our faith by torments, against your will. But since your prudence and good conduct show your skill, proper to great men, in judging a matter soundly, I have resolved to be a good counselor to you. It is not unknown to you, I think, that glory and honor have been rendered to the immortal gods from ancient times, and this remains so until now not only among us, who know the Greek and

2. Thyatira, a city in Lydia on the border with Mysia, southeast of Pergamum; originally it belonged to the Syrian monarchy, and later came under Roman rule. Christianity began to spread here already in the age of the apostles. Thyatira is mentioned in Acts 16:14; Rev. 1:11, 2:18, 24.

3. Decius reigned from 249 to 251 A.D.

Roman tongues[4], but also among the barbarians; for through such zeal for the gods cities are governed by good laws, victories are won over enemies, and peace is strengthened. Why then did the Roman emperors and princes attain such glory that they overthrew cities and peoples and subjected all enemies to their power? Was it not because they honored the gods and worshipped them? Honor them then also yourselves. And if, through the words of ignorant people, you have been seduced by the senseless and only recently appeared Christian faith, then come to your senses now and return to what is better. Then the gods too will have mercy on you, and you will enjoy the many good things that we possess; and from the Emperor great favors await you. But if you remain in your former obstinacy, you will lose these blessings too and force us to treat you with the utmost cruelty."

When the saints heard this, they raised their eyes to heaven, made the sign of the Cross, and answered Valerius:

"You hope to turn us at once to your impiety, as if we were some ignoramuses, but know that before you stand neither faint-hearted nor foolish men. We do not consider your faith worthy of honor merely because it is an ancient faith, for not everything that is old is necessarily honorable: malice too is ancient, and yet it is not worthy of honor on account of its antiquity. One should consider not whether your faith is ancient, but whether it ought to be accepted. We have resolved to turn away from it and, as far as possible, to root it out from our midst, as a faith that prepares the dreadful Gehennian fire for those who love it. If you wish to know the truth, reflect, and you will find that your gods are nothing other than the work of human hands: they are mute and deaf and cannot bring any benefit not only to others but even to themselves. The True God is unrepresentable in His essence, incomprehensible to our reason, immeasurable in time, for He has no beginning of His being; He brought into being all that is visible and comprehensible to our reason; He created man, introduced him into paradise, and gave him a commandment, that man might learn to be obedient to the Creator.

4. That is, educated people. The Greeks and Romans regarded all other people, who did not belong to them by birth and did not know their languages, as rude and uneducated, and called them barbarians.

Through the envy of the devil, man fell into disobedience and became subject to death. But the devil was not content with such a fall of man and hastened to turn away from God also his offspring, so that people would die not only bodily but also spiritually: thus, forsaking God and turning their eyes away from the light of truth, people fell into the darkness of idolatry. Therefore the merciful and most compassionate Creator, to deliver man from the power of the devil, came down to earth, while yet remaining in the bosom of the Father, and was like us, except in sin; being nailed to the Cross, He died to deliver us from the fall into sin. Having by His death vanquished our enemy the devil, He ascended into heaven and calls us thither as well, having made our ascent to Him easy."

"You, O judge, can you say anything like this about your gods? And are you not ashamed to call them gods?"

"As for your riches and honors at the Emperor's court, of which you are so fond, we disdain them, for we await our reward from God, for whose sake we have firmly resolved to suffer and to die."

Hearing these words, Valerius was greatly enraged. He cast off his hypocritical meekness and, no longer concealing his cruelty, first gave the saints' property over to be plundered by their slanderers, and then, binding the saints themselves to horses, ordered them to be driven to Sardis[5]. And they drove the horses, with the saints bound to them, very swiftly and without rest, so as to reach Sardis from Thyatira in one day[6]. Grievous was that road for the valiant sufferers, for, unable to keep pace with the horses, they were dragged by force and, striking the ground, endured much pain. Following after them was the servant of the holy martyrs, the blessed Agathodorus, sympathizing and grieving with his masters. Arriving at Sardis, they did not rest after the grievous journey, but spent most of that night in prayers and divine song. When they had slept a little, the Angels of God comforted them in a vision and strengthened them to endure the torments. Awakening from

5. Sardis or Sardes, a city in Lydia (in the western part of Asia Minor), south of Pergamum and Thyatira, was the capital of the Lydian kingdom and was renowned for its wealth. In the time of the apostles there were many Christians here. The Church of Sardis is mentioned in Rev. 1:11, 3:1–4.

6. The distance between this city and the other was about 33 miles.

sleep, they told one another what they had seen and rejoiced greatly, thanking God for consolation in sorrow and for the promise of help in torments, and fervently desired to suffer for Christ.

Valerius came to Sardis in the hope that the sufferers, after the torments they had endured on the journey, could more easily be persuaded to apostasy; the lawless man did not know that the saints had been still more strengthened for their ordeal by the grace of God, which had been revealed to them in a vision. When, however, Valerius saw that their faces were brighter than before, that they were strong in spirit and fearless in heart, he lost hope of overcoming them by torments, and again turned to guile, desiring to beguile and ensnare the saints, whose faith in Christ was firm, with soft words and all manner of flattery. It seemed as though a fox were struggling with lions, for his enticements achieved nothing and could not overcome those whom the help of the Most High sustained. When Valerius saw that he would accomplish nothing, he resolved to deal with them differently: Carpus and Papylus, men steadfast and chosen, he put under guard; but the glorious Agathodorus, servant of the martyrs, who was himself a perfect martyr and, through his love for them, had become their friend and sharer in their sufferings, this Agathodorus he stretched out upon the ground and ordered to be beaten without mercy with ox-sinews. And the judge and the martyr contended with one another: the judge wished to vanquish the martyr by the multitude of wounds inflicted upon him, while the martyr received his wounds with such joy that it seemed he feared the strikers might grow weary and bring the torments to an end too soon. During so cruel and prolonged a beating, streams of blood flowed from the martyr as from a spring, flesh was torn away, his inner parts were laid bare, his limbs were parted from their joints; truly the valiant man had to bear great suffering. Yet he endured the torments with such firmness that he seemed not to feel pain at all; in silence he bore the grievous wounds, and the thought that he suffered for Christ was for him sufficient consolation amid the cruel sufferings. When Valerius grew weary, the strikers grew weary too, but for Agathodorus the torments only increased his joy. Christ, looking down from heaven upon his struggle and preparing the reward, seeing the valiant endurance of

His servant, called him to Himself, that he might find rest after so many labors. He at once yielded up his spirit into the hands of his Lord, leaving his lifeless body to his tormentors. By the command of Valerius it was left unburied, to be food for beasts and birds; but at nightfall some of the faithful took the body of the holy martyr and secretly committed it to burial.

After this Valerius, summoning the holy martyrs Carpus and Papylus, said to them:

"Your foolish servant has received a death worthy of his deeds, because he would not offer sacrifice to the immortal gods. Why then do you, being wise, not choose for yourselves what is profitable, but wish to be like a man truly unhappy, who foolishly preferred a painful death to life and joy?"

Hearing this, the saints rebuked Valerius and called him a madman; praising St. Agathodorus for the courage with which he met death, they said that they themselves desired the same death for Christ.

Then the tormentor, kindled with rage, again commanded that Carpus and Papylus be tied to horses and driven swiftly before him from Sardis to Pergamum. Again the saints were pursued and dragged along the road, suffering great torments and anguish, and each of them spoke together with David: "By the word of Thy lips I have kept myself from the paths of the oppressor" (Ps. 16:4). At night, to their sufferings from their wounds were added tight fetters and harsh confinement in a dungeon. The saints, however, after the grievous journey, remained awake, offering prayers to God through the whole night. And the Lord again vouchsafed to visit them: the Angel of the Lord appeared to them, healed their wounds and filled their hearts with divine joy, strengthening them for a greater struggle. When morning came, the tormentor thought that the saints could not possibly walk after the previous day's journey, and commanded them to be brought before him, to look upon their sufferings. But seeing that they were healthy and strong, that their feet were unharmed and their faces bright and cheerful, he ascribed this to the power of their sorcery, and therefore increased their sufferings all the more. Binding the bodies of the saints with heavy iron fetters, he drove them onward on a still longer road.

During the journey, at one place, he offered sacrifice to the idols and sat down in judgment. Summoning Carpus, he began to speak to him in a friendly way, as if truly regretting him:

"Behold, the gods, out of compassion for your old age, have helped you to pass such a road without toil. Why then do you prove ungrateful to your benefactors, subjecting their honor to outrage? Listen to my good counsel, and let us go to the gods together with me, for I respect your old age, I grieve for you and weep over your misfortune, not as for a stranger's but truly as for my own. But what is to be done? You know that you have greatly offended me, and I can no longer endure it: and if now you will not heed my good counsel, I shall not suffer your disobedience, if not for my own dishonor, then for the sake of the gods."

St. Carpus replied to this:

"No one can call your counsel good, which leads from light into darkness and from life to death; it should rather be called a deception and a snare. If you respect my old age, why then do you not believe me when I offer you counsel as a father? For I grieve for your perdition more than you grieve for my sufferings, and I am deeply saddened by your misfortune, that you have placed your hope in vanity[7] and honor gods who will not deliver you from eternal torments: for they are lifeless, made by human hands, and cannot truly be called gods, being vain and worthless idols."

Valerius could no longer bear the dishonor done to his gods, and commanded the executioners to take St. Carpus and, binding him, to beat him cruelly with thorn rods. When the saint was beaten, his whole body was wounded, and pieces of flesh, torn away by the blows, fell to the ground. But this was still too little for the tormentor: he summoned other executioners. Some of them scorched Carpus's ribs with candles, others poured salt into his wounds, so that the ground was watered with the saint's blood; his sinews were torn and caused him very grievous pain; the martyr, however, the more his torment increased, the more firmly he was strengthened in the love of God and in patience.

7. That is, the vain and false gods, which in reality are not gods.

Standing bound, he smiled amid his torments, and the prince asked him:

"Why, Carpus, did you laugh?"

He said:

"I saw the grace of my Christ prepared for me, and therefore I rejoiced. For the saint saw at that moment the heavens opened, the Lord seated upon a throne, and the Cherubim and Seraphim around Him."

Thus the Lord comforted His servant amid the torments, and the grace of God overcame all his sufferings, so that the saint forgot his painful wounds and the grievous torments which he valiantly endured. He was tormented until the tormentors grew weary, and then, cast after the torments into a dungeon, he gave thanks to God, who had granted him to suffer for Him.

Afterwards, summoning St. Papylus to judgment, Valerius began to question him, as if seeing him for the first time:

"Of what race and country are you, and what is your occupation?"

"You already know about me," the saint answered, "that I was born of noble parents in the city of Pergamum, and that I practise the art of healing, not that which depends on herbs growing upon the earth, but that which is given from above by God; this healing not only cures the body, but also heals the diseases of the soul."

Then the judge said:

"There can be no skilled healing apart from the study of what is written by Galen[8] and Hippocrates[9], to whom the art of healing was given by the gods."

Papylus answered:

"Galen, Hippocrates and their disciples can heal the sick only if my Christ, in His ineffable mercy, is pleased to grant him His remedy. Otherwise their skill is in vain and their experience in the healing art is

8. Galen, also called Galenus, the famous scientific physician. He was born in Pergamum in 131 A.D.; he studied much and traveled much; he was court physician to the Roman emperors of his time, and died at the very beginning of the third century. He had an enormous influence on physicians throughout the world, and his authority was unshaken in their eyes until the sixteenth century.

9. Hippocrates, another famous Greek physician from the island of Cos, lived long before Galen (from 460 to 356 B.C.). Several of his writings have survived, and Galen studied them.

useless; and those whom you call gods, how can they care for anyone's health, if they cannot help themselves in anything! And if you wish to know the truth, test it in deed: you see that the man sitting beside you is blind in one eye; let your gods then give him sight, and after that I will say nothing more."

"Can anyone be such as to heal him?" said Valerius in reply.

"Not only this," the saint answered, "but also all other incurable diseases will be healed by him who calls upon Christ, the Healer of every infirmity."

"Then let us now see what you say," said Valerius, "and if you are able, heal him before us, that he may see."

"I do not wish to do this at once," Papylus answered, "lest you should ascribe the miracle to your demons; but first let your physicians call upon one of their gods, and then I too will show the power of my Christ."

Then Valerius gathered his priests and commanded them to call upon the gods, that they might heal his blind counsellor. They cried out to their vain gods, each calling upon his own god: one Apollo, another Asclepius, one Zeus, another Hermes. And it was a deed worthy of laughter: the whole day they prayed to those who could give no help whatever, they cried to the deaf, offered sacrifices to the lifeless, and, being themselves blinded in soul, proved unable to enlighten even the bodily eye of one man.

What, then, does the servant of Christ do? He raised his bodily and spiritual eyes to heaven and called upon the merciful Lord; then he touched the blind eye with his hand, made the sign of the Cross over it, and the sick man immediately received his sight. In this, he did not only recover sight with the bodily eye, but was also enlightened in the eyes of the soul: for the divine light touched his heart, and he, as if awakened from sleep, came to know the weakness of the vain gods and understood the power of the One God, Jesus Christ, the true Light, which enlightens every man coming into the world (Jn. 1:9), and believed in Him. Not only that man, but many other people through this miracle came to the knowledge of the truth; for who would not be brought to wonder and faith by so glorious a miracle? And everyone,

seeing and hearing this, said: "Truly great is the power of Christ, and He is the true God!" But although all glorified the true God, the lawless Valerius would not come to know Him, and was inflamed with still greater wrath against St. Papylus; instead of gratitude for such a benefit, he ordered him to be bound to a tree and beaten without mercy.

During these blows, St. Papylus grieved not that he was being beaten, but that he was not yet receiving still heavier torments. On the contrary, Valerius, seeing that the courage of the martyr overcame the tortures, grew ever more and more enraged, and added suffering to suffering: he scorched the sides of Papylus with fire and ordered stones to be thrown at him. But the martyr endured the fire patiently, and the stones fell to another place, as if honoring the body of the martyr suffering for Christ; not doing the saint any harm, the stones struck those who threw them. When Valerius grew weary and did not know what further torment to inflict on the saints, he decided to delay somewhat, thinking that if the saints were released for a time, their wounds would ache and, increasing their sufferings, would make them weaker for the trial that lay ahead. But the martyrs, having Christ as their physician, for whose sake they willingly bore their wounds, were healed not only of the suffering but also of the wounds and sores, so that no trace of their wounds could be seen, which greatly irritated the mad tormentor: the more their sufferings were eased, the more Valerius's heart was tormented and burned with rage like a fire.

After a short time, the tormentor again sat down at the tribunal, breathing cruelty and gazing with a furious eye. The holy martyrs stood before him with bright countenances and cheerful faces, as if called to a feast. The lawless man wished to terrify them by his very fury; but from their fearless hearts and from their bold lips he heard such words:

"Why, O tormentor, do you weary yourself and your servants, often bringing us and leading us away, tormenting us and not pronouncing the final sentence upon us? Do you hope to turn us away from Christ and from the truth? You will sooner see us dead than we shall submit to your godless command."

After this, by the tormentor's command, potsherds and iron nails were scattered on the ground; the naked martyrs were laid face down upon them and began to be dragged, with cruel blows inflicted meanwhile. But even amid these torments the Lord did not forsake His servants. He hastened to them with His help, "breathing into their faces and taking away the offense from them" (Nahum 2:1): suddenly these potsherds and iron nails vanished without a trace, and the saints remained unharmed. This aroused in the judge still greater anger, and he ordered their sides to be cut with razors; but the saints, glorifying God, bravely endured all this.

After this he gathered fierce beasts and arranged a spectacle: the martyrs were brought out, and a she-bear was released upon them. Everyone thought she would immediately kill and tear their bodies, but she showed no bloodthirstiness and, as if honoring the saints, lay down at their feet and embraced them. Afterwards a lion was released, which proved not only gentle, like the she-bear, but the power of God was revealed in him in an even more wondrous manner, for, roaring, he spoke with a human voice, rebuking the persecutors and their obstinacy in cruelty. They, however, stopped their ears, considering all this to be sorcery, and the judge ordered the holy martyrs to be cast into a pit filled with lime. But in vain did the madman labor, opposing God, Who everywhere preserved His servants unharmed, for after remaining in that lime for three days, they came out healthy and unharmed.

The more Valerius became convinced that he could not overcome the saints, the more he burned with anger against them; having put them into iron boots filled with sharp nails, he made them run in them; but even by this he could not conquer the invincible soldiers of Christ. Then, having heated a furnace strongly, he threw the saints into it; together with them there entered into the flame the blessed Agathonika, sister of St. Papylus, desiring to share in the same struggles and to die for Christ. But the fiery furnace not only did not scorch them, but, by the power of Christ, became a cool place, for a great rain came down, quenched the fire and cooled the furnace. When the saints came out of the furnace unharmed, they were again shut up in prison, where they sang to God as in a church. The tormentor, not knowing what else to

do, and ashamed that he had been defeated, pronounced the final sentence upon the martyrs, commanding that their heads be cut off with the sword. The saints, as they were led together with Agathonika to the place of execution, rejoiced, and, lifting their eyes and hands to heaven, prayed not only for themselves but also for those who were killing them, and thus completed their struggle, being beheaded with the sword. Their holy bodies were shamefully cast out and were not guarded; the faithful, taking them secretly, gave them honorable burial, glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and worship forever. Amen.[10]

Kontakion, Tone 2:

As a precious treasure, the Master gave your relics upon the earth, as a fountain pouring forth streams of healings, driving away the ailments of various passions and giving grace unceasingly to souls. Wherefore, in harmony and love, we celebrate your festival, O Divine Martyrs.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Florentius

Память святого мученика Флорентия

The holy martyr Florentius was a native of the city of Thessalonica. Being a Christian and a zealot of true piety,[11] he reproached and denounced belief in the false pagan gods and cursed the serving of them. At the same time, instructing all in the true faith of Christ, he confirmed Christians in it and urged them to fulfill the commandments of God. For this, Florentius was taken to judgment before the ruler of that land, but at the interrogation he openly confessed faith in the Lord our God Jesus Christ, and called the pagan gods wood, stones, gold, silver, copper and iron, soulless and insensible idols. By

10. The holy and equal-to-the-apostles Empress Helen built in Constantinople a monastery in the name of Carpus and Papylus, after the likeness of the Lord's Tomb. The pilgrim Antony, in 1200, says: "The holy Carpus and Papylus lie in one tomb in a women's monastery; and there (that is, in Constantinople) Emperor Constantine built a church."

11. Saint Florentius was a disciple of the apostles.

this he enraged the governor of that land, and was condemned by him to torments. They subjected him to cruel beating, scraped his body with sharp instruments, after which he was thrown upon a great fire kindled beneath him, in which he, with joy, praying and giving thanks to God, departed this life.[12]

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Nicetas the Confessor[13]

Память преподобного Никиты Исповедника

St. Nicetas was born in Paphlagonia[14] to pious parents. He was a distant relative of the Empress Theodora, wife of the iconoclast Emperor Theophilus. After his education, Nicetas came to Constantinople at the age of seventeen. At that time the imperial throne was held by Irene, widow of the late Emperor Leo IV, on account of the minority of her son Constantine[15]. Taken into imperial service, Nicetas soon rose in rank: he was raised to the dignity of patrician and made overseer of the entire imperial palace, and afterward appointed commander of the troops in Sicily[16]. Having attained a high position, Nicetas came to see the complete vanity and emptiness of worldly rank and goods, and conceived a pious desire to receive the monastic tonsure. But the Emperor Nicephorus and his son Stauracius[17], valuing Nicetas's services to the state, would not release him from his post or let him go to a monastery. When Michael Rhangabe[18] afterward ascen-

12. At the beginning of the third century.

13. In the ancient Christian Church, confessors were those persons who, during persecutions of Christianity, having openly declared themselves Christians and having endured tortures, were spared by their tormentors and remained alive. Such persons enjoyed special respect in the Christian community; for example, they were granted the right of reconciling fallen members with the Church.

14. Saint Nikita was born about the year 763. Paphlagonia was a harsh mountainous region in the northern part of Asia Minor, bordering on Pontus and Bithynia.

15. Leo IV the Khazar reigned from 775 to 780. His wife Irene governed the state during the reign of her young son Constantine VI Porphyrogenitus, and afterward herself reigned from 797 to 802.

16. The island of Sicily was at that time under Byzantine rule, which lasted from the middle of the sixth century until 827, when the island was conquered by the Arabs.

17. The Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus I reigned from 802 to 811. His son Stauracius reigned after him for only two months and six days.

ded the throne, Nicetas requested of him permission to leave his service and be tonsured a monk[19]. He was not permitted, however, to withdraw from the capital; the emperor ordered that he be given lodging at the Golden Gate, in the so-called Chrysokhiria[20], where he was to remain at all times. In this dwelling St. Nicetas remained without leaving until the reign of the iconoclast Emperor Leo the Armenian[21]. When St. Nicetas saw the outrages to which the holy icons were subjected by this lawless emperor, he left Constantinople and joined the lowest rank of the brethren of a monastery outside the city, and there spent his time in fasting and labor. Meanwhile the iconoclasts, learning that he possessed an icon of the Savior which he had acquired from Rome, reported this to the emperor. Officials were sent to Nicetas who, with threats, compelled him to surrender the icon. But since St. Nicetas firmly refused to give it up, the emissaries found a monk who showed them where the holy icon was kept. Then they entered the church, took the holy icon, and mocked it in every way. This blasphemy caused St. Nicetas great grief. Not content with this, the imperial emissaries, on leaving the monastery, forbade him to go out from it under any pretext whatever. Afterward, when another iconoclast sovereign, Theophilus[22], ascended the imperial throne, a courtier named Theodosius was sent to the venerable one, who, before all those assembled, under threat of exile demanded of him that he acknowledge the iconoclast patriarch Antony[23] and renounce the veneration of icons. But the saint said to this:

"I will never cease to worship the icon of Christ and my God; and Antony I will call not patriarch but adulterer and transgressor... As for you, do what you wish."

For this courageous act of confession of the faith, St. Nicetas was at once expelled from the monastery. Giving thanks to God and taking

18. Emperor Michael I Rhangabe reigned from 811 to 813.
19. The tonsure of Saint Nikita as a monk is placed about the year 813. At this time he was already fifty years old.
20. In the Asian part of Constantinople, on the site of the ancient city of Bithynian Chrysopolis, which formed, as it were, a suburb of Constantinople.
21. That is, until 820.
22. In 829.
23. Antony I, an iconoclast, was patriarch from 821 to 832.

with him three of the brethren, he set out for another monastery, where he kept the Great Lent and the time until Pentecost, and then left this monastery as well. After many wanderings and hardships, he finally settled in a seaside monastery, where he ended his life in the seventy-sixth year of his birth[24]. Both during his life and after his death he performed many miracles.

* * *

Memory of the holy martyr Benjamin the deacon

Память святого мученика Вениамина диакона

The holy deacon Benjamin lived in the reign of the Persian king Yazdegerd[25]. Having converted many Persian pagans to Christianity, he was slandered, seized, subjected to cruel beatings, and cast into prison, where he spent two years. A Greek who had been sent to the Persian court, learning of the fate that had befallen Benjamin, asked the king to release him. The king agreed to grant this request if Benjamin would give a promise not to convert the Persians to Christianity. The petitioner gave this promise on Benjamin's behalf. But Benjamin, hearing of it, said:

"It is impossible for me to exchange that light which I received in the font of baptism. Great are the torments deserved by him who hides the talent given to him, or by him who knowingly conceals the teaching of the Gospel!"

Unable to bear these words, the king commanded that twenty sharpened spikes be driven under the nails of Saint Benjamin's hands and feet. After this, seeing that the saint regarded these sufferings as a kind of joy, the king subjected him to still greater and unbearable tortures, and finally ordered that he be pierced through with a thick, knotted stake, whereupon this valiant ascetic yielded up his spirit to God[26].

24. About the year 838.
25. The Persian king Yazdegerd I reigned from 399 to 420. In his time the teacher and bishop of Benjamin the deacon, St. Abdas, suffered martyrdom (in 418). His memory is commemorated on March 3 (16).
26. St. Benjamin the deacon suffered three years after the martyr's death of St. Abda, under his successor Yazdegerd's son, Bahram V, in the year 421.

* * *

NOTES

6631. In calling the holy martyrs the pillars and foundations of the Church, the thought is expressed that they greatly contributed to the establishment of Christ's Church, both by the example of their valiant lives and by the grace of God which is imparted to believers through them. In Holy Scripture the cornerstone and foundation of the Church is called the Perfecter of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ (Ps. 117:22; Is. 28:16; Mt. 21:42; 1 Pet. 2:4; 1 Cor. 3:11, etc.). The martyrs of Christ, as well as the prophets and apostles, may be called foundations of the Church only in a conditional sense, as themselves being founded upon Christ. They are, as it were, the first row of stones in the building of Christ's Church, laid upon its great and eternal foundation, Christ. The following rows of stones in this building are we who believe in Christ, of whom the Apostle writes: "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone" (Eph. 2:20).

THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 14

14 октября

New Calendar October 14 · Old Calendar October 27 (civil dates)

Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs Nazarius, Gervasius, Protasius and Celsus,

Страдание святых мучеников Назария, Гервасия, Протасия и Кельсия,

Saint Nazarius was born in Rome; his father was a Jew, and his mother, named Perpetua, was a Christian: she had received holy Baptism from the Apostle Peter himself. Coming to the years of youth, Nazarius long pondered which faith he should hold, his father's or his mother's. At last he resolved to be an imitator of his holy mother, whose prayer greatly contributed to his enlightenment, and he was baptized by Bishop Linus[1].

When Saint Nazarius reached mature age, he was also perfect in the virtues: zealously serving the Lord, he cared not only for his own salvation but also for the salvation of others, for he converted many unbelievers to Christ. But soon Nazarius left Rome; he took from his parents the portion of the estate that belonged to him, and there he began to do good to the needy; and coming to Mediolanum, he distributed there all that he had, giving alms to the poor and devoting his means to the prisoners who suffered for Christ.

At that time, in the reign of the impious Nero[2], there was a great persecution of the Christians, and many confessors of Christ were held in chains and tormented; Saint Nazarius, serving them, strengthened

1. St. Linus, Bishop of Rome, was the first bishop of the Roman Church immediately after St. Peter the Apostle; he belonged to the company of the 70 Apostles. His memory is celebrated on November 5 and January 1, together with the other Apostles.
2. Nero (54–68 A.D.) was one of the most cruel, vain, and dissolute Roman emperors. He instituted the first persecution of Christians in Rome, during which the Apostles Peter and Paul suffered.

them in the faith and confirmed them for the martyr's struggle. At this time the governor Anulinus had seized and imprisoned certain holy martyrs, Gervasius and Protasius. Saint Nazarius often came to them and comforted them with his pious conversation; he loved them greatly, for he saw that they were filled with divine love and ardently desired to lay down their souls for the Lord, who laid down His soul for us on the cross. Nazarius bore such love for them that he did not wish to be separated from them, and he preferred to suffer and die together with them. The governor of that region soon learned about Nazarius, that, visiting the prisoners in the dungeon, he brought them everything necessary and strengthened them in the Christian faith. Therefore he commanded that Nazarius be seized and brought before him; at the trial he first asked him who he was and whence he came. Learning that Nazarius was by origin a Roman and by faith a Christian, Anulinus urged him not to renounce the ancestral gods, whom the Romans from antiquity honored with sacrifices and worship. But the saint not only did not wish to hear his counsel, but spoke to him just the opposite, condemning his false gods and confessing the One True God, Jesus Christ. Then the governor commanded that he be struck on the mouth. But the saint did not cease to speak boldly and to denounce his impiety. After that the governor was still more enraged and commanded that the martyr be beaten with rods, and then drove him disgracefully from the city. The blessed Nazarius, being driven out, rejoiced that he had been deemed worthy to receive wounds for Christ, and, as one exiled for righteousness' sake, he recalled the words of Christ: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake" (Mt. 5:11). He grieved only that he was parted from his beloved friends, Gervasius and Protasius, with whom he had desired to die as well. This desire the Lord fulfilled afterwards, but at that time he was still to serve the salvation of men in another land and turn many from error. That very night his blessed mother appeared to him in a vision, commanding him to go to Gaul and labor there in preaching the Gospel of Christ. Rising, he went, at his mother's direction, to that land, and preaching Christ, he enlightened there with the light of faith the people sitting in darkness and the shad-

ow of death[3]. When Saint Nazarius was in the city called Melia[4], he received here from a certain noble and believing woman a three-year-old boy, named Celsus, baptized him and brought him up in piety. The boy grew in years and understanding, being filled with the grace of God; and when he came of age, he followed his teacher, Saint Nazarius, learning from him higher wisdom and laying up in his heart his God-inspired words and paternal instruction. The boy became so wise in Christ that he equaled his teacher, and served equally with him the salvation of men; preaching Christ, he endured persecution and torments together with Nazarius, and afterwards was deemed worthy of the same martyr's crown.

Dinovius, the governor of that land, learning that Nazarius was spreading Christianity through many cities, at once seized him together with Celsus and, after beatings, shut both of them in prison, intending to hand them over in the morning to every kind of torment. When morning came, the governor's wife, seeing Celsus, a beautiful boy, being led to execution, took pity on him, and falling before her husband, implored him to show mercy to the boy and release him, together with his teacher Nazarius; by her unceasing entreaty she did not leave the governor until she had persuaded him to release both to freedom. Dismissing them, the governor said:

"My wife's intercession frees you from every torment."

But the holy martyrs grieved that they had not attained the desired martyr's crown and had not completed their earthly course, to be released from the body and live with Christ[5]. On the road from there they came to the city of Timir[6] and, as was their custom, spreading there the Gospel teaching, won many souls to Christ.

But the devil, unable to bear this, stirred up the wrath of the idolaters; rising against Saint Nazarius and Celsus, the impious seized them and sent them to their savage emperor Nero. The saints, standing before the emperor, confessed Christ God, the Creator; for this Nazarius

3. That is, people who did not know the true God and were perishing spiritually. The image of speech is borrowed from Ex. 9:2; compare Mt. 4:16.
4. Melia or Cimella was one of the Gallic cities, near present-day Nice, in the south of France.
5. The expression is borrowed from Phil. 1:23.
6. Timir, otherwise Trier, was a populous, flourishing city in northern Gaul.

was thrown to the ground and trampled underfoot, and Celsus was beaten with rods. Compelled to offer sacrifice to the gods, they overthrew by their word the idols of the gods to the ground, and for this were given over to be devoured by beasts; but the beasts did them no harm. Afterwards they were cast into the sea, but they walked upon the waters as upon a level plain. Seeing this, the emperor's servants believed in Christ; receiving baptism from Saint Nazarius, they left the imperial court and, withdrawing from worldly turmoil, began to serve Christ.

Saint Nazarius, however, went with his disciple, Saint Celsus, again to Mediolanum, and found the holy martyrs Gervasius and Protasius still alive, but languishing in prison.

When he began to preach the Gospel in Mediolanum, he was again seized by the governor Anulinus. Anulinus asked him where he had been until that time. Learning that he had been in the hands of Nero himself, the governor marveled how he had been freed from his hands alive and well, for he knew that Nero was a cruel and inhuman emperor, who mercilessly put to death not only the guilty but also the innocent. The governor compelled Nazarius to approach and bow to their gods; but he not only refused to do so, but began to revile them. Then Anulinus commanded that he be struck on the mouth, and the saint, having received many blows together with his disciple Celsus, was cast into prison, to Saints Gervasius and Protasius. Nazarius rejoiced greatly that he had been deemed worthy to see his beloved friends and to suffer imprisonment for Christ together with them in one dungeon.

At that time the governor Anulinus informed the emperor Nero by letter about Nazarius. The emperor, hearing that Nazarius was alive, was greatly enraged at those servants who had been ordered to drown him in the depths of the sea. He searched long for them in order to destroy them, thinking that they had released Nazarius, but he did not find them; for they had already fled from the world and of their own accord dedicated themselves to the holy service of Christ. The emperor wrote to the governor Anulinus that he should at once put Nazarius to death. Anulinus, receiving the imperial letter, led Saint Nazarius out of the

prison with his disciple, Saint Celsus, and cut off their honorable heads with the sword.

One of the believers, living in the city suburb, secretly took their holy relics and carried them into his house. At that time his paralyzed daughter lay upon a bed, and when the relics of the holy martyrs were brought into the house, she at once rose from the bed healthy, as though she had never been ill. The master of the house, together with his household, greatly rejoiced at this, and gave the bodies of the martyrs an honorable burial in his garden.

Soon after the beheading of the holy martyrs Nazarius and Celsus, the military commander Astasius came to the city, on his way to war against the Moravians[7]. The idol priests instructed him to put to death the holy martyrs Gervasius and Protasius, who remained in prison; and Gervasius was beaten with tin rods and soon expired; Protasius completed the martyr's struggle by beheading with the sword. The Christian Philip, taking their bodies together with his son, gave them burial in his house.

The relics of all four martyrs, Nazarius and Celsus, Gervasius and Protasius, remained hidden in the earth, beneath a covering[8], and no one knew of this until the time of Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Mediolanum. He discovered the relics of Gervasius and Protasius by divine revelation in the reign of Theodosius the Great, and those of Nazarius and Celsus in the reign of Arcadius and Honorius[9].

Concerning the discovery of the relics of Nazarius and Celsus, the presbyter Paulinus recalls in the Life of Saint Ambrose as follows:

The relics of the holy martyr Nazarius, discovered outside the city in a garden, Ambrose at once carried into the church of the Holy Apostles. We saw in the tomb in which the martyr's relics lay blood as though it had only just flowed; the head, with its hair and beard, was so preserved that it seemed to have been laid in the tomb only now, and the face was so bright that it seemed just washed. And what wonder is

7. The Moravians are a Slavic tribe now living within the borders of Austria-Hungary.
8. That is, under concealment, in a hidden place.
9. Arcadius was the son and successor of Theodosius the Great, ruling the eastern half of the Empire (395–408). Honorius, likewise, was the son and successor of Theodosius the Great, ruling the western half of the Empire (395–422).

this, when the Lord Himself had promised in the Gospel that "not a hair of your head shall perish" (Lk. 21:18)[10]? At that time we also perceived a fragrance surpassing all aromas. Raising the martyr's relics and placing them on a chariot, Ambrose and I at once began to seek the relics of the martyr Celsus. From the owners of that garden we learned that their ancestors had bequeathed to them that they should never leave this place, for great treasures were hidden in it. And indeed there were such treasures as "neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal"[11] (Mt. 6:19).

Thus speaks the presbyter Paulinus concerning the relics of Nazarius and Celsus. Concerning the relics of Gervasius and Protasius there is the following record of St. Ambrose.

"Ambrose, servant of Christ, to the brethren throughout all Italy: wishing you eternal salvation in the Lord.

Divine Scripture calls a debtor one who, having received anything *gratis*[12] from the Lord, does not give it to others; for he as it were steals something from the Church when he conceals what might be profitable to others. Therefore David said: "I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation; I have not concealed Thy mercy and Thy truth from the great congregation." And as if desiring a reward for this deed, he added: "Withhold not Thou, O Lord, Thy tender mercies from me" (Ps. 39:11–12). He as it were said: as I have given others the opportunity to find mercy, so Thou also, do not remove Thy mercy from me.

But why should we make this preface? I will declare to you, who think piously of the Lord and believe, and will call you to rejoice over the discovery of the holy relics.

In the past holy Forty Days, when, by the mercy of God, I was among those fasting and praying, I stood one night in prayer.

And behold, I fell into such a state that, though I was not asleep, I felt nothing. And I saw two youths in white garments, lifting up their

10. Lk. 21:18. In these words Jesus Christ gave the Apostles, and all confessors of the Christian faith generally, a promise of God's special providence over them.
11. These words were spoken by Jesus Christ concerning the eternal and incorruptible heavenly blessings (Mt. 6:19), which a Christian must prepare for himself by a life of virtue.
12. "Freely": without payment, without special merit (compare Mt. 10:8).

hands and praying; overcome by drowsiness, I could not speak with them. When I came to myself, they had become invisible.

And I besought the merciful Lord that, if this were a diabolical delusion, He would remove it from me; but if some truth lay hidden here, that He would show it to me more clearly.

To obtain what I asked of the Lord, I intensified my fasting, and on the second night, at the crowing of the cocks, I saw the same as the first time: the same youths praying with me.

On the third night, when my flesh, weakened by fasting, could no longer yield to sleep, the youths appeared to me again; at this time I was not asleep, and I only marvelled at all this. With them was also a third comely man, resembling the holy Apostle Paul as he is depicted in an icon; he alone spoke with me, while the others were silent.

And he spoke thus:

"These are those who, having heard my words, despised the world and riches and followed our Lord Jesus Christ, seeking nothing earthly or carnal; having spent ten years here in Milan in the service of God, they were granted to become martyrs of Christ. Their bodies you will find lying in a tomb in the earth in the place where you stand and pray; take them out of the earth and build a church in their name."

I asked about their names, and he answered me:

"You will find near their heads a little book, in which is written of their birth and death."

Calling the brethren and the bishops and telling them what I had seen, I began first to dig myself, and the bishops helped me. And we found, as Saint Paul had told, a tomb, in which we saw the bodies of the saints, as if only now buried and giving forth a wondrous fragrance.

At their heads we found a little book, in which everything was written in order thus: "I, Philip, servant of Christ, took the bodies of these saints into my house and gave them burial. Their mother was Valeria, their father Vitalius; they bore these sons as twins, and named one Protasius and the other Gervasius. Vitalius was a soldier and lived in Milan, serving God secretly together with his wife. When he was with the judge Paulinus in the city of Ravenna[13], there it became known that

he was a Christian. Delivered to tortures, he did not renounce Christ; they cast him into a deep pit and struck him from above with stones, and, buried alive, he died."

His wife, learning of her husband's death, went to fetch his body, to give it burial in her house, as a consolation in her widowhood.

But the citizens of Ravenna, who were Christians, prevented her from taking her husband's body: they rejoiced in such a treasure and left the saint's body, that he might be their intercessor.

Not obtaining what she desired, Valeria was returning to Milan, and on the way, in a certain village, she fell in with the abominable festival of impious people who were offering sacrifices to their foul god Silvanus[14]. The idolaters, as was their custom, entertaining travelers with meat sacrificed to idols, invited Valeria also, who was going on her way, to partake of this meat. But she abhorred such defilement, and, not wishing to eat of the demonic sacrifice, confessed herself a Christian. The impious, enraged, beat her mercilessly with sticks, so that her companions brought her to Milan barely alive.

Coming to her house and giving instruction in the true faith to her sons Gervasius and Protasius, she on the third day committed her soul into the hands of God. When Gervasius and Protasius were left orphans after their parents, who had been granted the crowns of martyrdom, they sold their house and property, distributed everything to the poor and freed their slaves; and themselves, shut up in one hut, for ten years diligently devoted themselves to prayer, fasting and the reading of the divine books. In the eleventh year, imprisoned by the governor Anulinus, they suffered for Christ. When the military commander Astasius was going from Milan to war against the Moravians, the idol priests, going on ahead, met him on the way and said:

13. A city with a harbor on the Adriatic Sea, situated on the north-eastern coast of the Apennine Peninsula. The Emperor Augustus fortified it greatly, and it was regarded as the bulwark of Italy. From the time of Honorius, the emperors had their residence here. Ravenna exists to this day and is the principal flourishing city of the Italian region of the same name.

14. Silvanus was venerated by the Romans as the god of forests, from which his very name derives, and of fields and herds. Three statues were dedicated to this god: one at the house, another in the middle of the field, and a third on the estate. For this reason, it may be supposed that Valeria could not have avoided the festive gathering in honor of this god.

"If you wish to return to the emperor with victory, make Gervasius and Protasius offer sacrifice to the gods, for the gods are angered that these two men despise them, and no longer wish to give us answers to our questions."

Hearing this, Astasius brought the saints out of prison, set them before himself and said:

"I command you not to offend our gods, but to offer them sacrifices with honor, that our way may be prosperous."

Gervasius said:

"Victory over enemies you must ask from the Almighty God Himself, and not from those idols which do not see, do not hear, do not speak, and have no breath."

Then Astasius commanded that Gervasius be beaten with tin rods until he died, and the holy Gervasius died from these blows.

Having ordered his body carried out, Astasius said to Protasius:

"Wretched one! Spare your life, do not be mad like your brother."

Protasius answered:

"I do not know which of us is wretched: I, who do not fear you, or you, who fear me."

Astasius said:

"What! I fear you, wretch?"

The saint said:

"You fear that I will offend you by not offering sacrifice to the idols; if you did not fear, you would not compel me to sacrifice. But I do not fear you, and I despise your threats; your idols I count as nothing, and I worship only the One God who reigns in heaven."

Then Astasius commanded that he be beaten with sticks, and the holy martyr was long beaten here; and when he was raised from the ground, Astasius said: "Wretched one! Why are you so proud and unyielding? Do you wish to perish as your brother did?"

Protasius answered:

"I am not angry with you, Astasius, for I see the blindness of your eyes: your unbelief does not allow you to see what is of God. My Lord did not revile His crucifiers, but prayed for them, saying that they themselves did not know what they did. And you do not know what you

are doing, therefore I pity you. Yet, do what you have begun, that I may now behold, together with my beloved brother, my Savior."

Then Astasius commanded that he be beheaded with a sword. When this was done, I, Philip, servant of Christ, together with my son, secretly at night took their bodies into my house, of which only God knew, and gave them burial in this marble tomb. I believe that, through their prayers, I too shall receive mercy from our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever."

When these holy relics were brought out of the earth, the sick began to receive healing, demons were cast out of men, the blind received their sight. The same holy Ambrose mentions that in their city there was a blind man known to all, by name Severus; as soon as he touched the hem of the garments that were upon the relics of the saints, he at once received his sight[15].

By the prayers of Thy saints, O Lord, enlighten the eyes of our souls, that we may walk in the light of Thy countenance and rejoice in Thy name for ever[16]. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having appeared as bright lamps, O divine Martyrs, ye illumine creation with the light of miracles, dispelling ever the deep night of infirmities, and unceasingly pray to Christ, the one God, for us all.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Paraskeva

Житие преподобной Параскевы

St. Paraskeva[17] was born in Serbia, near the city of Kalliokratia, in the village of Epivat[18]. Her parents were pious people: they unfailingly fulfilled all the commandments of God and were renowned everywhere for their charitable works and almsgiving. Besides their daughter Paraskeva, they had a son. They sent him to school, while

15. The uncovering of the relics of the holy martyrs took place in June 395 or 396.
16. Cf. the words of Ps. 88:16.

their daughter was brought up in the home of her pious parents. When Paraskeva's brother had been sufficiently instructed in Holy Scripture, with his parents' consent he received the tonsure, taking the name Euthymius. Euthymius later became bishop in Madytus[19], where he was renowned for his virtuous life and, both during his life and after his death, wrought many most glorious miracles.

After the death of her parents, Paraskeva began to lead a life full of sorrows and privations. Zealously imitating the lives of the saints, she mortified her body with fasting and vigils and brought it into subjection to the spirit. Burning with a divine longing to live for the Lord, Paraskeva did not wish to dwell long in this turbulent world, but, leaving all worldly things behind, withdrew from the world and, having reached the Jordanian desert[20], began to lead there a life equal to the angels'. Imitating the God-seeing Prophet Elijah and John the Baptist, she fed only on wild plants of the desert, and took them in but small quantities, and only after sunset. Gradually wasting away, now from the heat, now from the cold, she turned her gaze only to the One God, Who is able to save the humble of heart "from the whirlwind and storm" (Ps. 54:9). Who can tell how many tears the Venerable one shed? Who can recount her frequent and unceasing lamentations? Who can describe in detail her continual genuflections and her many bodily struggles? The All-seeing God alone beheld the struggles of the Venerable one. There

17. The secular name of St. Paraskeva was Petka. In Petka-Paraskeva there early appeared a fervent desire to live for the Lord. The words of the Gospel, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself" (Mk. 8:34), heard by Paraskeva in the church, pierced her heart like an arrow. On leaving the church, she gave her rich garment to a poor man she met, exchanging it for his rags. Some time later, Paraskeva again gave her clothing to a beggar woman, and afterward repeated the same thing more than once. She was scolded for this, but she answered that she could not live otherwise.

18. Epivat (Pivat, Turkish Bayados) is a place on the seashore, between Selymbria and Constantinople.

19. Madytos is a seaport in the Thracian Chersonese.

20. According to information gathered by the Athonite Nicodemus, Paraskeva, before withdrawing to the Jordan desert in Palestine, visited Constantinople and went around its holy places; here she listened to the instructions of zealous ascetics. On their advice she settled in the Heraclean suburb, at the secluded church of the Protection of the Mother of God, where she spent five years in prayer, fasting and tears. Then, fulfilling her long-standing desire, she set out for Palestine and, after venerating the holy places sanctified by the life of the Savior, remained to live in the Jordan desert.

she had no cares for worldly vanity: she cared only for the cleansing of her soul, for her answer at the Judgment to come, and for meeting the Heavenly Bridegroom. "Thee, my Bridegroom, do I seek," said the Venerable Paraskeva, and she continually kept in mind the words from the Song of Songs: "Tell me, thou whom my soul loveth" (Song 1:6). Above all, she was concerned with adorning her lamp, that she might go forth with the wise virgins to meet the Heavenly Bridegroom, hear His sweet voice, and delight in beholding His beauty. "When shall I come and appear before the face of God?" (Ps. 41:3), the saint said without ceasing.

While the Venerable Paraskeva thus dwelt in the desert, the crafty enemy envied her virtues and sought to frighten her with fantasies and apparitions. Often changing himself into various beasts, he rushed upon the saint in order to hinder her in her spiritual struggles. But the good bride of Christ, Paraskeva, would repeat, "The Most High hast thou made thy refuge" (Ps. 90:9), and with His help—by the sign of His holy Cross—she drove away the enemies and rent all the devil's wiles as though they were a spider's web, utterly overthrowing him. Though a woman by nature, the saint possessed truly manly understanding and conquered the devil as David conquered Goliath. Having adorned her soul with such struggles and virtues, Paraskeva became Christ's beloved bride, so that the prophetic word was fulfilled in her: "And the King shall greatly desire thy beauty" (Ps. 44:12). Thus this King dwelt in her, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and abode in her as in His holy Church; for St. Paraskeva, having kept her soul from sin and defilement, became a church of the Living God.

One night, after she had already spent a long time in the desert, Paraskeva stood at prayer as was her custom, with compunction stretching out her hands toward heaven. Suddenly she saw the Angel of God in the form of a most radiant youth. Coming up to her, he said:

"Leave the desert and return to your homeland, for there it is fitting that you leave your body upon the earth and pass in soul to the Lord."

The Venerable one, discerning the meaning of the vision, understood that it declared a command from God. She rejoiced that the time of her release from the body was near, yet she was sorry to part from

the solitude of the desert, for nothing so cleanses the soul and brings it near to the Archetype as the desert and stillness. Nevertheless, obeying the heavenly will, the Venerable one left the desert and set out for her homeland.

Arriving in the imperial city of Constantinople, she entered the splendid church of the Wisdom of God; she also visited the church at Blachernae and, having venerated before the wonderworking icon of the Mother of God, went to her native Epivat, where she lived for some time, without changing her customary desert struggle of fasting and prayer. When the time came for her departure to God, Paraskeva prayed fervently for herself and for the whole world, and during her prayer surrendered her blessed soul to God. The faithful buried her body according to Christian custom, but not in the common cemetery—for she was a stranger who had told no one where she came from.[21]

God, Who desired to glorify His servant, revealed her relics many years later, under the following circumstances.

Near the place where the Venerable one had been buried, a certain Stylite pursued the struggles of stillness upon a pillar. It happened that the body of a certain sailor, who had fallen gravely ill during a voyage and died, was cast there by the waves. A suffocating stench began to issue from the corpse, so that it was impossible to pass along that road; even the Stylite, who struggled near that place, could not endure the stench and was compelled to come down from his pillar. Therefore he ordered a deep pit to be dug and the foul-smelling corpse to be buried in it. As the laborers were digging the pit, by divine providence they found an incorrupt body lying in the earth and were greatly astonished. But since the laborers were inexperienced and ignorant men, they paid no heed to what had happened, regarding it as a matter of little importance and no account. They reasoned among themselves:

"If this body were holy, God would have revealed it through some miracles."

With these thoughts, they covered the incorrupt body with earth once more, casting the foul-smelling corpse into the same pit, and then

21. This was in the first half of the 11th century.

went home. When night came, one of them, a certain George, a pious man, prayed to God in his house. As he slept toward morning, he saw in a dream a queen seated upon a most radiant throne, with a great multitude of shining warriors standing all around her. Overcome with fear and unable to gaze upon such royal majesty and glory, George fell to the ground. Then one of the shining warriors took George by the hand, raised him up, and said:

"George! Why did you so despise the body of the Venerable Paraskeva and bury the foul-smelling corpse together with it? Take the body of the Venerable one at once and lay it in a worthy place, for God has willed to glorify His servant upon earth."

The radiant queen also said to him:

"Hasten to take up my relics and lay them in a worthy place, for I can no longer endure the stench from that corpse. For I am a human being, and my homeland is Epivat, where you also now dwell."

That same night the same vision appeared also to a pious woman named Euthymia. In the morning they both told everyone what they had seen. Hearing this, the pious people went with lighted candles to the relics of the Venerable Paraskeva and, reverently taking them from the earth, rejoiced as over some priceless treasure. The holy relics were solemnly placed in the church of the holy and all-praised Apostles Peter and Paul, in the village of Epivat, where, through the prayers of St. Paraskeva, many healings were granted to the sick from her relics: the blind received their sight, the lame began to walk, and all who were infirm or possessed by demons received health.

In 1238, during the rule of the Crusaders (Catholics) in Constantinople, the most pious John Asen[22], King of Bulgaria and Serbia, received word of the place where the holy relics of the Venerable Paraskeva reposed. He then charged the blessed Mark—who was at that time Metropolitan of Pereyaslav in Bulgaria—with many bishops and priests to translate those venerable relics to Tarnovo[23], the capital city

22. John Asen or Asen II, son of Asen I (reigned 1221–1241), was the most famous of the sovereigns of the Bulgarian kingdom. He glorified and enlightened the Bulgarian kingdom more than all the kings who were before him; he built many monasteries and adorned them with gold and precious stones; he endowed all the churches with many gifts and rewarded their clergy with great honors. John Asen was beloved not only by his Bulgarians but also by the Greeks.

of the Bulgarian land. There the holy relics were reverently placed in the palace church, where, reposing incorrupt, they bestowed various healings upon all who approached them with faith.

After a considerable time had passed, by God's permission the Muslims gradually conquered the whole Greek Empire, and with it subdued the kingdoms of Bulgaria and Serbia. This conquest took place in the 14th century, in the time of the Turkish Sultan Bayezid[24]. When Sultan Bayezid took the Bulgarian city of Tarnovo, all the treasures of the churches and the royal ornaments were plundered. Then the holy relics of Paraskeva, clothed in a single ragged garment, were translated to Wallachia[25]. After the Turks had conquered Wallachia as well, in 1396 the holy relics, at the petition of the Serbian Empress Militsa before the Sultan, were translated to Serbia, to Belgrade.[26]

In 1521 Sultan Suleiman II,[27] upon taking Belgrade, also carried off from there the honorable relics of the Venerable Paraskeva. Bringing them then to Constantinople, he placed them there in his chambers. But this precious treasure was not lost even here, for the numerous miracles wrought by the relics of the Venerable Paraskeva contributed to her glorification not only among Christians but even among the Muslims. The latter, troubled by this circumstance and fearing lest faith in the miracle-working power of the relics of St. Paraskeva spread yet more widely, and still more through the zeal and solicitude of the Christians, handed these holy relics over to the Christians of Constantinople, and they laid them with honor in the Patriarchal church.

In 1641 the pious Basil Lupul,[28] voivode and hospodar of Moldavia, having received word that the relics of St. Paraskeva were in the Patri-

23. Tarnovo was the principal city of Bulgaria, on the river Yantra (Etra), which flows into the Danube; now Veliko Tarnovo.

24. Bayezid I, Turkish sultan, ascended the throne in 1389. Taking advantage of the discord between the Byzantine emperor John and his son Andronicus, Bayezid placed the Byzantine Empire in complete dependence upon himself; he conquered Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thessaly and many other lands. In 1402 Bayezid was taken captive by the Mongol conqueror Timur (Tamerlane), and died there in 1403.

25. Wallachia is the south-western part of the present-day Kingdom of Romania.

26. Belgrade, the principal city of the Serbian kingdom, at the confluence of the Danube and the Sava rivers.

27. The reign of Suleiman II marks the period of the flourishing of Turkish power. The Turks revere him as the greatest of their sovereigns.

archal church at Constantinople, earnestly desired that they be transferred from there with honor to his glorious hospodar's domain. His desire was aided by the Lord, who is glorified in His saints and who wished to glorify the Venerable Paraskeva also in Moldavia. Then the Patriarch of Constantinople, Parthenius,[29] with the consent of his whole hallowed synod and the approval of the other most honorable patriarchs, sent the honorable relics of the Venerable Paraskeva to the pious sovereign, the voivode Basil, to his first-throne city, Iaşi.[30] Here, in the church of the Three Hierarchs, with great honors, to the great rejoicing and gladness of the inhabitants of all Moldavia, the holy relics were laid, in the year 1641 after the Nativity of Christ, on the 14th day of October.[31]

Troparion, Tone 4:

Having loved the desert and the silent life, and having eagerly followed after Christ thy Bridegroom, and having taken up His sweet yoke in thy youth, and having manfully armed thyself with the sign of the Cross against the mental foes, by ascetic labors, by fasting and prayers and tears, thou didst quench the coals of the passions, O most glorious Paraskeva; and now, standing in the heavenly bridal chamber with the wise virgins before Christ, pray thou for us who honor thy holy memory.

Kontakion, Tone 6:

Let us all piously praise Paraskeva, the all-honorable protectress of those who are in afflictions, for she left behind the corruptible life and received the incorruptible forever. Therefore she obtained glory, and the grace of miracles, by the will of God.

* * *

28. Vasile Lupu, hospodar (that is, sovereign) of Moldavia, from 1634 to 1654.
29. Parthenius I, Patriarch of Constantinople, from 1639 to 1644.
30. Iaşi was the principal city of Moldavia, one of the Danubian principalities which, together with Wallachia, now constitute the Kingdom of Romania.
31. The holy relics remain there to this day.

Life of the Venerable Nicholas Svyatosha

Житие преподобного Николы Святоши

"The fashion of this world passeth away... the kingdom passeth from nation to nation... the Lord casteth down the thrones of rulers and setteth the meek in their place" (1 Cor. 7:31; Sir. 10:8, 17). The Right-believing Prince Nicholas[32] understood from his earliest youth the instability of the fleeting dominion on earth. He clearly saw that only in heaven exists the kingdom that is unfailing and abides forever, filled with those ineffable eternal blessings which the Lord has prepared for those who love Him. Therefore he, like the Indian prince Josaphat of old, left the glory and riches, the honor and power of his temporal, earthly principality for the sake of the eternal, Heavenly Kingdom, and, coming to the Monastery of the Caves, he clothed himself in the holy monastic order.[33] In monasticism the blessed Nicholas shone so brightly with the holiness of his life that all, seeing his good deeds, zealously glorified the Lord on his account. And first of all he excelled in obedience. At first St. Nicholas labored for the brethren in the kitchen; here with his own hands he chopped wood and humbly carried it on his shoulders from the shore, diligently performing also everything else that was necessary for the preparation of food. He had already labored much when his brothers Iziaslav and Vladimir learned of his exploits; they began to restrain him from such work. But this true novice begged them with tears to allow him one more year to labor in the kitchen for the brethren. And so he served the brethren here with full diligence and zeal for three whole years. After this, as a man proven and capable in all things, he was appointed to guard the monastery gates, and in this obedience, never leaving anywhere except the church, he also spent three years. From there he was appointed to serve at the brotherhood's table; and this obedience he fulfilled with such zeal and care that he enjoyed the favor of all the brethren.

32. Sviatoslav the Pious (so called for his piety) was named Pankratius at his baptism, and Nicholas in monasticism. He was the son of the Prince of Chernigov David Sviatoslavich, and the grandson of the Prince of Kiev and Chernigov Sviatoslav Yaroslavich, who founded the holy church of the Kiev Caves, created by God.

33. This was in 1107.

Having thus blamelessly passed through all these degrees of obedience, he, with the permission of the abbot and of the whole brotherhood, took upon himself the ascetic labor of silence, that in quiet he might attend to his salvation. Fulfilling this obedience, he laid out with his own hands a garden beside his cell, and throughout all the years of his monastic life he was never seen idle; he always had some work in his hands, and on his lips unceasingly the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me!" He never ate anything except the common monastery food at the refectory, and that in small quantity. If, against his wish, as a prince, he had to receive anything from those close to him, he would at once distribute it all for the needs of travelers and beggars and for the building of the church, so that with his means many books were acquired for the church.

This blessed prince, even while he still held his principality, had with him a very skillful physician named Peter, a Syrian by birth, who had come with him also to the monastery. This physician, seeing the voluntary poverty of his master, left him and lived in Kiev, healing many there. Nevertheless, he came often to the blessed one and, seeing him in great privations and immeasurable fasting, serving in the kitchen and keeping watch at the monastery gates, so admonished him to give up this manner of life:

"Prince, you should take care of your health, lest by excessive labor and abstinence you utterly weaken your flesh, for if you grow feeble, the yoke which you have desired to take upon yourself for Christ's sake will become unbearable to you. For God does not seek fasting or labor beyond strength, but only a pure and humble heart. You work for the monks like a purchased slave; for you are not accustomed to such need, and it is unworthy of you, since you are a prince. For your noble brothers Vladimir and Iziaslav, your poverty is a grief and a great humiliation, since from such great glory and honor you have come to such privations that you mortify your body and, through insufficient food, fall into sickness. Formerly you were nourished on delicious fruits, but now you have subjected yourself to severe privations, eating raw greens and dry bread. But beware lest you fall completely ill, and then, having no strength left, you lose your life, and I shall be unable to help you;

thus you prepare for your brothers an inconsolable lament. Here are also the boyars who once served you and through you were formerly distinguished; they too, having lost their hopes, grieve for you and remain in great dejection. But they have built themselves great houses and now live in them, while you have nowhere to lay your head, and sit now among the refuse heaps, now in the kitchen, now at the gates. What Russian prince has ever acted thus? Was not your blessed father David, or your ever-memorable grandfather Svyatoslav, one of them? And among the boyars no one would wish for such an inglorious life, except Barlaam, who was once abbot here.

Therefore, if you do not heed my counsel, you will die before your time."

Such words the physician Peter, instructed by the brothers of St. Nicholas, often spoke to him when he sat with him now in the kitchen, now at the gates.

The blessed one always answered him thus:

"Brother Peter! Often thinking of the salvation of my soul, I have resolved that the flesh must not be spared, lest it enter into conflict with the spirit and stir up warfare in my soul. And when it is wearied by the labor of abstinence, it is humbled, but does not fail; and even if it should fail, the Apostle has said: 'my strength is made perfect in weakness' (2 Cor. 12:9). And again: 'the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that shall be revealed in us' (Rom. 8:12). God desires a humble and pure heart, but there can be none without fasting and labor, for fasting is the mother of chastity and purity. And it is said: 'He humbled their hearts with labors' (Ps. 106:12). I thank God that He has freed me from worldly cares and made me a servant to His servants, these blessed black-robed monks; for I, being a prince, under the guise of labor for them, labor for the King of kings. And let my brothers take care of themselves: 'each shall bear his own burden' (Gal. 6:5). My inheritance, which I left together with my earthly principality, is enough for them, in order that I might receive an inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven: 'for His sake I have renounced all things, and count them but dung, that I may gain Christ' (Phil. 3:8). Why then do you threaten me with death, reproach me for my poverty

and for my abstention from superfluous foods? For you too, when you heal a bodily illness, do you not command the sick man to be abstemious, and even to avoid certain foods altogether? And in the same way I must heal the ailments of the soul. If I should die bodily, then for me to die for Christ's sake is gain (Phil. 1:21). And if I sit among the refuse heaps, why do you consider me worse than the boyars? For I am destined to reign with Job, of whom it is said that he was greater than all the men of the east (Job 1:3).

If no Russian prince before me has done this, then I, following the King of Heaven, will make a beginning; perhaps from this time on someone will even imitate me, following my example. Finally, together with those who instruct you, I advise you to take more care of yourself!"

This also happened many times: when the blessed prince, wearied by the struggle of obedience, fell ill, the physician Peter, learning of it, would immediately prepare medicines needed for one ailment or another. But by God's help the prince always recovered before the physician arrived with the medicine, and never allowed himself to be treated.

Once the physician himself happened to fall ill. The blessed man sent word to him:

"If you do not take medicine, you will soon recover; but if you disobey me, you will suffer for a long time."

But the physician did not obey, and took his medicine; and, desiring to be cured of his illness, he came near to losing his life, though afterward he was healed through the saint's prayer. When the same physician fell ill again soon thereafter, the blessed man ordered him to be told the same thing:

"If you do not seek treatment, you will recover on the third day."

Having been chastened for his first disobedience, this time the physician obeyed the blessed man and, according to his word, recovered on the third day. At that time the blessed Nicholas was completing his obedience as monastery gatekeeper. Calling the recovered physician to him, he said:

"Peter! It is fitting that you take the monastic habit and, in my stead, labor for the Lord and His Most Pure Mother in this monastery, for after three months have passed I shall depart from this world."

Hearing this, the physician Peter fell at his feet and cried aloud, streaming with tears:

"Woe is me, my lord, my benefactor, my precious life! Who will receive me when I come here? Who will feed the orphans and the poor, who will defend the wronged, who will show mercy to the many in need of help? Did I not tell you, prince, that you would soon bring inconsolable weeping upon your brothers? Did I not say to you, 'Prince, spare your life, for you can be of use to many, and in your life lies the life of many people'? Was it not you who healed me by God's power and your prayer? Where are you going, good shepherd? If you, my healer, have fallen ill, then tell me, your servant, of your illness; and if I cannot cure you, let my life and my soul be given for your life and your soul. Do not depart from me in silence, my lord, but tell me, whence came this news to you? If it came from men, I shall give my life for you; but if the Lord is revealing this to you, then pray to Him that I may die in your place. If you leave me, where shall I sit and weep over my loss—by this refuse heap, where you so often used to sit? But even there they will not let me stay. And shall I be able to receive anything from your estate as an inheritance, when you yourself are naked? Perhaps these patched rags that you wear? But you will be laid in them when you depart from the world. Grant me, at least, your prayer, as Elijah of old granted Elisha his favor, that through it I may divide the depths of my heart and the waters of my life[34] and pass to the place of distant shelter, into the house of God, whither you now desire to depart. Even a beast knows, when the sun sets, that it must go and lie in its lair, but I do not know where I shall go after your departure. And the bird—'The little bird finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young' (Ps. 83:4)—but you have lived in the monastery for six years and have found no place for yourself: where, then, will you leave me?"

34. That is, to dispel heartfelt sorrow and grief in life. The expression is taken to correspond to the well-known story from the life of the prophet Elisha.

Raising the weeping physician, the blessed man said to him: "Peter! Do not grieve: 'It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes' (Ps. 117:9). The Lord knows how to preserve His creature, which He Himself created. He will care to feed the hungry, defend the poor, and save those in affliction; and He will be a refuge for you. As for my brothers according to the flesh, let them weep not for me, but for themselves and their own deeds in this sorrowful vale of this world, that they may receive comfort and blessedness in the age to come. I have no need of healing for the sake of this temporal life, for I have long since died to all things temporal: 'The dead shall not live' (Is. 26:14)—speaking according to nature—as Isaiah says."

Having said this, the blessed Nicholas Svyatosha went with the physician to the cave and prepared a place there for his grave. Then he said to the physician:

"Which of us loves this place more?"

Peter answered with weeping:

"I know that if you so desire, you will entreat the Lord to let you live longer; but lay me here."

The blessed man said to him:

"Let it be as you wish, if it is pleasing to the Lord. Therefore let us both pray to Him, but only after taking the monastic habit."

Then, at the blessed man's counsel, the physician took the monastic habit and spent three months in prayer, continually, day and night, shedding tears.

One day the blessed Nicholas said to him:

"Brother Peter, do you wish me to take you with me?" As before, he answered him with weeping:

"I wish you to allow me to die for you, while you remain here and pray for me."

The blessed man said to him:

"Brother, take courage and be ready, for according to your wish, on the third day you will depart this life."

When the appointed time came, Peter received the holy and life-giving Mysteries of Christ, lay down upon his bed, and gave up his spirit

into the hands of the Lord. After the physician's death, the blessed Prince Nicholas Svyatosha struggled on for another thirty years, never leaving the monastery; and, having attained, in keeping with his epithet, perfection in the holy life, he departed into eternal life, to the Most Holy King of all the saints, the King of humility, Jesus[35]. On the day of this holy prince's death, almost the whole city of Kiev gathered, giving him their final kiss and asking for his prayers with abundant tears.

The blessed man's brothers, Izyaslav and Vladimir, wept especially. Izyaslav asked the monastery's abbot to give him, as a blessing and consolation, the cross of the departed, the pillow, and the bench upon which he had performed his prostrations. As the abbot gave them to him, he said:

"According to your faith, may you receive from these things help in what you desire."

Izyaslav received these objects with great reverence and sent much gold to the monastery, lest he receive his brother's things for nothing.

This same Izyaslav once fell gravely ill and no longer hoped even to rise from his bed. At that time his wife, children, and all the boyars were with him. Some time passed; then the sick man, having somewhat recovered, got up and asked to drink water from the Kiev Caves' well. But soon he again lost the power of speech and afterward could utter nothing at all. They sent to the Kiev Caves Monastery and brought from there a vessel of water with which the coffin of the Venerable Theodosius had previously been washed. The abbot also sent the hair shirt of the Venerable Nicholas Svyatosha, so that Izyaslav might be clothed in it. The messenger had not yet returned with the water and hair shirt when Prince Izyaslav spoke:

"Go quickly to meet the Venerable Fathers Theodosius and Nicholas outside the city."

When the messenger entered with the hair shirt and water, the prince cried out again:

"Nicholas, Nicholas Svyatosha!"

35. This was on 14 October 1143. The relics of Venerable Nicholas Sviatosha incorruptly rest in the cave of Venerable Antony.

They gave him some of that water to drink and clothed him in the hair shirt, and he soon recovered; and all glorified God and His servants.

From that time onward, whenever Izyaslav fell ill, he would always put on this hair shirt and immediately recover. Moreover, he always wore it when he went to war, and thus remained unharmed. Once, having sinned, he did not dare put it on, and on that occasion he was killed in battle; nevertheless, he had already ordered that he be buried in it.

So may we also, trusting in the prayers of this venerable prince, concerning whose salvation we have clear testimony, be deemed worthy through the power of his prayers to receive healing from every disease and affliction, both temporal and eternal, by the grace of the King of humility and, together with Him, the King of glory, the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory, with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Silvanus

Память святого священномученика Сильвана

The holy Hieromartyr Silvanus was by birth from Gaza, where he was a presbyter. Because of his zeal for the spread of the Christian faith, he was sent to labor in the mines of Phaeno[36]; afterward he was beheaded together with 40 Christian soldiers[37].

* * *

36. A city in Palestine, near which there was a mine.

37. He died in 311. His memory is also celebrated on 4 May. He is also called Bishop of Caesarea.

THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 15

15 октября

New Calendar October 15 · Old Calendar October 28 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Euthymius the New

Житие преподобного отца нашего Евфимия Нового

The Venerable Euthymius, in the world Nicetas, was born in 824 in the village of Opso, near the city of Ancyra, in Galatia.[1] The parents of Nicetas, Epiphanius and Anna, were wealthy and at the same time very pious, so that they were a living example not only to their fellow citizens but to all the inhabitants of the surrounding lands. They were compassionate, meek, hospitable and merciful to the poor, and in general were distinguished by all the Christian virtues. Being born of such pious parents, Nicetas was filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit from his very birth, and therefore even in his earliest years he was meek, honest, obedient and submissive to his parents; he also kept away from the usual games and loved to attend the church services often. When Nicetas was only in his seventh year, his father died. In the care of his mother there remained, besides Nicetas, two more daughters, Maria and Epiphania. Soon Nicetas, who from childhood showed a mind beyond his years, became a zealous helper of his mother in all her cares for the household and the family. Submitting to the regulations on military service, Nicetas's mother was obliged to enter him on the military rolls. However, Nicetas, serving also as a soldier, was a support to his mother in every respect: a son, a helper and a defender in all her family and domestic cares. The aged mother of Nicetas, wishing to lighten the duties which lay upon her in the household, hastened to

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

choose a worthy bride for him. By God's providence she soon found a sensible and modest maiden named Euphrosyne, who was descended from wealthy and distinguished parents; and it was with her that Nicetas was united in marriage. After some time God blessed their marriage union with the birth of a daughter, named in holy baptism Anastasia. After this Nicetas, considering the child that had been born a sufficient consolation both for his mother and for his wife, resolved to leave his family and to dedicate himself wholly to the service of God on the monastic path. A justification for leaving the family for him was also the fact that his married sister, Maria, lived in their own paternal house and thus was to remain a helper to their mother.

The 14th of September, the feast of the Elevation of the Cross, was the last day Nicetas spent in the circle of his family. On the next day, the day of commemoration of the holy Martyr Nicetas, whose name he bore, he left his family forever, saying that he was going to look at his horse grazing in the valley. And for a long time the bereaved family did not know the true reason for Nicetas's departure from the paternal home.

Meanwhile Nicetas, having passed through many places and visited many ascetics, at last reached the inaccessible heights of Olympus,[2] where at that time the Venerable Joannicius the Great was famous for his exploits.

Once a great crowd gathered about this great ascetic, thirsting to hear a word of edification from him. Among this crowd, lost in it, stood the young Nicetas too. The God-bearing Father Joannicius perceived Nicetas's ardent desire for the monastic life, his future glory and his progress in virtue, and he wished to make manifest before all the virtue that had until then been hidden within him.

"Who is this man who in worldly dress behaves so boldly toward others?" Ioannikios asked the monks who had gathered to him, feigning ignorance.

"We do not know," they answered him.

2. Olympus was a mountain in Asia Minor, on the border between Phrygia and Bithynia.

"This youth is a bad man: he is a murderer," Ioannikios cried out with feigned anger. "Take him and bind him."

The monks looked at the youth in amazement and vied with one another in asking whether he was indeed a murderer. And the youth, who even before becoming a monk had acquired obedience and humility, openly declared himself to be a true murderer, deserving a grievous punishment, and was ready to accept with willingness the bonds laid upon him.

"Leave off," the elder stopped the monks; "I accused him before you as a murderer only for trial. If even in his youth and in the world, not yet having tested our manner of life, he, for the sake of obedience, acknowledged himself guilty of such a crime, what virtues will he not accomplish when he becomes a monk!"

Having heard this, the humble Nicetas went away from the holy Ioannikios. He understood that if he remained near Ioannikios, among his monks, he would not escape that glory which he had hated so much even in his childhood, and from which he had fled when he left his native village. Another elder, John, who lived far from Ioannikios, gladly received Nicetas when he came to him, and after instructing him in the exploits of the monastic life, soon clothed him in the angelic habit, naming him Euthymius at his tonsure.

Having stayed with John for a fairly long time and having learned from him the stillness of the hermit life and asceticism, Euthymius, by his teacher's command, went to the cenobium[3] of Pissadinon, to learn from its elders the exploits of cenobitic monasticism. The hegumen of that monastery, Nicholas, who governed his cenobium with great prudence, received the new disciple and at first assigned him the lowest obediences. Euthymius did not murmur at this, although these obediences were attended by great labors; he regarded them as a true remedy for his young body. Thoughts of those he had left behind, his wife, his relatives and his wealth, had more than once disturbed his soul; but

3. Cenobia (from the Greek *koinos*, common, and *bios*, life) are coenobitic monasteries, in which the brethren receive from the monastery, by the disposition of the abbot, not only their table but also their clothing and the like, and on their part give all their labor and its fruits obligatorily for the common use of the monastery.

while bearing these obediences Euthymius could console himself with the words of the Savior: "Every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for My name's sake will receive a hundredfold and inherit eternal life. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Mt. 19:29, 10:37). And when Euthymius happened to suffer insults and reproaches, which were inseparable from performing the lowest obediences, he bore them without murmuring and with joy. Through such obedience, humility and labor, Euthymius at last attained to the point that all the evil passions within him were stilled.

Having grown strong in the virtues of the cenobitic life, Euthymius resolved to go into the wilderness, in order to attain there, in stillness, an even greater nearness to God. The path of strict stillness still remained untrodden. At that time the fame of the Athonite ascetics was spreading far, and it was to them that Euthymius now resolved to go. He disclosed his intention to one of the great ascetics of Olympus, the elder Theodore. The holy elder blessed the zealous monk on his new path and, knowing that the elder John, from whom Euthymius had received his first tonsure, was no longer living, clothed him in the great angelic habit.[4] Eight days after this Euthymius was ready for the road, to leave Olympus after a fifteen-year stay upon it. He also found a companion, the monk Theostericts, who, like himself, thirsted for the higher exploits of monasticism.

The road from Olympus to Athos passed by Nicomedia. Arriving at Nicomedia, Euthymius was comforted by the joyful news that all his kinsfolk, whom he had once left in his father's house, were alive. Wishing to lighten their sorrow at parting from him, he sent them a holy cross and instructed the messenger to tell them that they no longer had a relative named Nicetas, but a monk Euthymius, who advised them too to follow his example. At first the women of the family wept on receiving such news from him; but since their love for him was great, they afterwards, strengthened by help from on high, resolved to follow Euthy-

4. That is, the great schema.

mius's example themselves. Except for the saint's daughter, who at that time had married, they all became nuns.

Having arrived at Athos, Euthymius zealously began to observe the rule of the monastic life there. Since Theostericts, unable to bear the burden and the suffering of the strict life of stillness, had returned to Olympus, the holy Euthymius joined himself, in his ascetic course, to a monk named Joseph, who had already labored on Athos before him. But soon the younger proved to be the teacher of the elder.

"Brother! Since we, being in honor, by David's words[5] have through transgression of the commandments become like senseless beasts and have lost our nobility, let us count ourselves as beasts and for forty days feed on grass alone, bowed to the earth like animals. Perhaps, having been cleansed through this, we shall again receive our beauty, after the image of God and according to His likeness."

This is what Joseph heard from Euthymius.

Joseph agreed with this proposal, and the two of them spent forty days enduring thirst, cold, hunger and heat. No sooner had this new step of the ladder of Christian virtues been traversed than the holy Euthymius again proposed the following to his companion:

"Let us now, good Joseph, leave off the suffering of a life without shelter. Let us shut ourselves into some cave and remain in it, unknown to all the other monks dwelling here. Let us make a rule for ourselves, as if it had come down to us from God, that neither of us shall come out of the cave before three years are over. If one of us dies within these three years, he will truly be blessed, as a man who has kept the thought of death to the end of his life, and this very cave shall be his tomb. And when, by God's will, we both remain alive, our passions and carnal desires will at least die, so far as this is possible, and we shall be changed for the better."

Joseph accepted this proposal too. The ascetics found a cave for themselves, shut themselves up in it, and scarcely sustained their existence on a meagre vegetable diet consisting of the acorns and chestnuts that grew near the cave. All their life was filled with the greatest ascet-

5. "But man being in honor abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish" (Ps. 48:13).

ic labors: all-night standing, unceasing fasting, constant prostrations, sleeping on the bare ground, and passing their time in the cave without kindling a fire. Keeping strict silence among themselves, they broke it only occasionally, and then only with conversations about prayer and other matters profitable to the soul. After a year the ascetics did not even have a tattered garment that could protect them from the multitude of insects of every kind that caused unbearable torment to their bodies. In the full sense of the word, they were martyrs without persecution. Yet after a year it proved beyond the strength of Euthymius' companion to bear any longer the cross of sufferings he had voluntarily taken upon himself. Weakened in strength, he left Euthymius. This was already the second monk for whom it proved beyond his power to vie with the ascetic labors of Euthymius. But Euthymius himself, after this, only intensified his labors. Here he had to endure many temptations from the evil spirit. By its action, first Euthymius was assailed by melancholy and grief over the departed brother, then by fear of solitude, and finally proud thoughts about the height of the monastic path he had traversed were often stirred up in him. But all these, as well as many other temptations, were overcome by Euthymius.

Having completed by vow the three-year term of his stay in the cave, Euthymius left it. And beyond the cave many ascetics had long been awaiting him, having heard of him from Joseph and wishing to imitate him. Having given them instructions, Euthymius set out again for Olympus, whither the elder Theodore, who had clothed him in the Great Schema, was calling him to come so that they might go together to Athos. The elder's request was fulfilled, and on Athos, at the bedside of Theodore, who was weak and powerless from long ascetic labor, Euthymius was destined to perform a new labor, the labor of serving the sick and infirm in accordance with the commandment of the Savior. He himself built a new cell for Theodore and served him in it with great zeal. This continued until the sick elder, suffering unbearably from severe illnesses, departed for Thessalonica to seek medical help there. There he also found eternal repose.

Love for the departed moved Euthymius to go to Thessalonica to venerate his grave. Almost the whole population of Thessalonica, who

had long heard of the virtues of Euthymius and now learned of his arrival, came out to meet him, to greet him and receive his blessing. But Euthymius did not remain long in Thessalonica. Life in the city distracted him from silence. He left Thessalonica and, like Symeon the Stylite, climbed a pillar that stood not far from the city. From this pillar Euthymius taught all who came to him. He remained on the pillar for a fairly long time, instructing them in a virtuous life and healing incurable diseases. But afterwards he again desired to live in silence on Athos as before, since the crowds of pious people flocking to him greatly burdened the humble stylite. Taking leave of Thessalonica, Euthymius, on the advice of the Archbishop of Thessalonica, Theodore, received ordination to the diaconate, so as to be able himself, by means of the "Reserved Gifts", to partake of the Most Pure Mysteries of Christ in the desert[6].

But Euthymius did not remain long on Athos, for he did not find the desired silence here. New ascetics had densely settled the former desert. Learning of the appearance among them of a "sanctified" ascetic, and honoring him as the foremost among them, they began to visit him often. Then Euthymius chose for himself a new refuge, an uninhabited island called "New", whither he withdrew together with two other monks of one mind with him, Symeon and John Kolov. By God's permission, the Saracens attacked this island. Having sailed up in two ships, they took the monks captive and wished to carry them away with them. Taking advantage of a favorable wind, the barbarians joyfully raised the sails of their ships and set out on their further journey. But their joy was short-lived. The ship on which the captives were located suddenly stopped in the middle of the sea and could not by any means move from its place, while the other sailed quite freely. One of the barbarians understood the true cause of the ship's stopping and said to his comrades:

"Can we be so unwise that we are unable to understand that this has befallen us for the violence we have done to the servants of God? If we do not wish to be drowned in the sea, let us quickly set them free!"

6. That is, since the uninitiated were not permitted to take the Mysteries of Christ into their own hands, St. Euthymius received the rite of diaconal ordination, so that in the desert he might himself partake of the Presanctified Gifts.

His comrades immediately agreed: they all fell at the feet of the holy captives and asked their forgiveness, which they at once received. After this the ship, previously immovable, set itself in motion of its own accord, and soon was at the island just now laid waste. Its three inhabitants again received their freedom. And they asked the barbarians to return to them their things, however trifling, but for them, as desert-dwellers, extremely necessary. The cruel barbarians, just before this punished by the finger of God, did not heed their request. And again they were destined for this to experience upon themselves the full force of the chastising right hand of God. When they were already in the middle of the sea, suddenly a contrary wind blew and again drove their ships back to the island they had just left. Now they could no longer refuse the venerable ones their requests. Only one of the barbarians, vexed at the return of what had been taken away, seized John Kolov and beat him mercilessly until he was restrained by his comrades. Euthymius the Saint, who was present at this, only meekly remarked:

"Arabs! If you had freed us without offense, you would have peacefully reached your homeland; but now, having inflicted an injury on a brother, you have thereby caused an offense to God, and you will soon learn how great this evil is."

The barbarians did not have to wait long for the fulfillment of this prophecy. A new misfortune awaited them at sea: Roman warships attacked them and led away captive precisely that ship on which the offender of the venerable ones was located, while the other ship, beyond all expectation, was saved. Thus were glorified, even among the impious barbarians, three great men who all their life glorified God.

These men remembered the commandment of the Lord forbidding one to tempt God and commanding one to avoid dangerous places (Mt. 10:23), and therefore, having once been exposed to danger in their new dwelling place, they resolved to leave it. But Athos, whither they had again moved, now no longer represented a safe place. The barbarians knew of its present population and therefore made frequent attacks upon it. Many of the Athonite monks had already been taken captive by them. For this reason the three new settlers on Athos resolved to disperse each to other, more secure places. The Venerable John settled in

the so-called Sidirokavsia, the Venerable Symeon withdrew to Hellas[7], and the Venerable Euthymius moved to Vrastama. Here it was destined for him to meet again with his former companion, the Venerable Joseph. Besides this, many other brethren in the Lord also gathered, wishing to settle near Euthymius. Euthymius built cells for them, and he himself settled alone in a ravine. The Venerable Euthymius sometimes left his ravine and visited the brotherhood, and sometimes, zealous for silence, he ascended the heights of Athos and there, conversing with God in prayers, so purified his mind and heart that he was granted divine visions and revelations. And once he heard there a voice saying to him:

"Euthymius! Go to Thessalonica: there in the mountains, to the east of the city, you will find a summit called Peristera, with a spring of water, and you will see there the church of the holy Apostle Andrew the First-called, whose former splendor has now been turned into a sheepfold. Cleanse this place and establish a monastery upon it: here many will find salvation. I will help you in everything. You ought not to remain longer in the desert in struggle with the demons, for they have withdrawn from you, long ago overcome by your virtue."

Fulfilling the divine command, the Venerable Father left the heights of Athos and, taking with him two monks, Ignatius and Ephraim, set out with them from Athos to Thessalonica. This time Thessalonica received him "as an Angel come down from heaven." Having inquired about a place called Peristera, Euthymius took guides and went with them to the mountain that had been indicated to him, where he indeed found a sheepfold. The signs revealed to him from above showed that it was here that the ruins of the former church were to be sought, but none of the local inhabitants knew anything of this church. The local Christians had long kept a sheepfold here, not in the least thinking that they were defiling the sanctuary of the place. The Venerable Father wept bitterly on seeing such trampling of a holy place. The excavations he began soon uncovered the entire foundation of the church. Then the local population, struck by the extraordinary gift of foresight of the eld-

7. That is, Greece.

er who had come among them, gladly took upon itself the expense of restoring the forgotten church. In this way it wished, as it were, to atone for its former indifference toward it. Thus was erected the church of the holy Apostle Andrew, with side chapels: on the right, in honor of St. John the Forerunner, and on the left, in the name of Euthymius the Great. But before the work of building the church was finished, the Venerable Father himself had to bear much labor and sorrow. Through the malice of demons, now the scaffolding surrounding the building collapsed, now the left side of it, only just raised, fell down. Amid such misfortunes it was not easy for the Venerable Father to persuade the builders to continue the begun construction. Spending nights in prayer, by day he did not leave the workmen, setting them an example by his own labors. Finally, in 863, the church was finished. Beside it, at the wish of the local population, there soon arose a monastery, which afterward became famous for the multitude of monks who lived in it. The Venerable Father knew that many were drawn here by the rumor, spread far and wide, of the miracle that had occurred here, and therefore he greatly feared that newly tonsured monks, attracted here only by this rumor and not yet having tested their strength, would prove unable to endure the laborious monastic life. For this reason he gave many instructions to these novices, spoke to them of the dangers from the devil, pointed out means of avoiding these dangers, praised the holiness of labor, condemned vices, and called to virtues.

"Brethren!" St. Euthymius instructed the monks, "our enemy the devil, according to Scripture, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour who is careless of his salvation; therefore let us be sober and watchful (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8). If we have renounced the world, let us cut off the desires of the flesh; if we have crucified our flesh and clothed ourselves in the death of the Lord, let us not be carried away by fleshly pleasures, but walk in the Spirit; if for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven we have put on the angelic habit, then we must also live as Angels do; if we truly love the Lord, we must keep His commandments. Let us work with our own hands, for through idleness and sloth we grow weak and feeble for good deeds, and then barrenness and poverty become our necessary portion: 'He who troubles his own house will in-

herit wind' (Prov. 11:29), says the Wise Man; and the Apostle Paul says, 'If anyone will not work, neither let him eat' (2 Thess. 3:10). Keep humility, love, obedience to your superior, have faith in him and hide nothing from him: confess to him your thoughts, and thus cleanse your heart and mind, for this is the path of salvation."

Listening to Euthymius, the monks of his monastery said that the Holy Spirit Himself had breathed Divine grace into him, as He had breathed it into the holy Apostles. Among these novice monks was Basil, afterward Archbishop of Thessalonica, thanks to whose labors the memory of the exploits of the Venerable Euthymius has been preserved to our time. He tells of the Divine zeal with which the monks of the new monastery, encouraged by the holy shepherd, burned. Thus, for example, when a heretical book happened to fall into their monastery, they immediately burned it.

For his pious life Euthymius was granted the gift of foreseeing the future and the gift of working miracles. Thus the aforementioned Basil relates of himself that his episcopal rank was foretold to him by the Venerable Euthymius himself. On the third day after his tonsure, the Venerable Euthymius came to him in the church, where he was to remain for seven days as a newly tonsured monk, and said:

"Basil! Although I am not worthy of radiance or of the gift of foresight, yet since you and the others have come under the guidance of my unworthiness for the good of your souls, the All-good God has been pleased to grant me also some drop of grace, so that, foreseeing what is to befall you, I may speak to you what is useful for salvation. Know, then, that because of your love of learning you will soon depart from the monastery and become a bishop; but even then remember me as your father, and our monastery, and the brethren."

From the life of the Venerable Father, composed by Archbishop Basil, it is clearly seen how he loved and revered the memory of him whose exploits and miracles, which he had seen, he described. Here are some of the miracles, performed by the Venerable Euthymius, that he saw and related. Once, when Basil, together with another brother, John, called the Silent One, was in a desert place, and they were threatened with death from hunger and exhaustion, the Venerable

Father suddenly appeared to them and, with the food he brought, so strengthened their powers that they could continue their journey. On another occasion, the same Basil and the Venerable Father were far from the monastery, and the Venerable Father suddenly announced to him that two brothers, John and Anthony, were at that moment leaving the monastery because of a quarrel that had arisen between them and the rest of the brethren. In Thessalonica, when Euthymius was struggling on a pillar, he cast an evil demon out of a man. The holy Euthymius worked many other miracles as well, some of which the author of his life, Basil, saw himself, and of others he heard from outsiders.

Many monks received tonsure from the Venerable Father. He also drew many lay people by his exploits and miracles onto the path of monasticism. Through his zeal and care many new monasteries arose on Olympus, Athos, and in Thessalonica.

At last, forty-two years after leaving his paternal home, it fell to Euthymius, to his consolation, to tonsure his relatives into monasticism as well, to which he had called them while still in Nicomedia, when he first set out for Athos from Olympus. He was like a second Joseph: as pure in his life, as glorified after the labors and calamities he had endured, and recognized only after forty-two years by his kin, who at last realized the vanity of this world and resolved to take the monastic habit. He took his relatives into his monastery, and for the women he built a new convent on a place he had bought for that purpose. As abbess of this convent was appointed the Venerable Father's sister, who in holy schema was named Euthymia. Having entrusted both these monasteries to the care of the Metropolitan of Thessalonica, Methodius, and having given them instructions, the Venerable Father again ascended for silence to his former pillar near Thessalonica. The Lord brought the Venerable Father to obtain eternal rest from his temporal life near those very heights of Athos where he had performed perhaps the greater part of his exploits.

Foreknowing the day of his repose, St. Euthymius, on May 7, in memory of the translation of the relics of St. Euthymius the Great, summoned to a meal the brethren of the nearest Athonite monasteries, and having celebrated that day with them, took leave of them; the next

day, telling no one anything, he took only one monk, George, to serve him, and withdrew with him from Athos to a solitary place, to the so-called "Holy Island." On this island he dwelt for about four months in a cave that he had found, and at last he fell asleep, almost without suffering, on October 15, 889. The Lord judged that he should leave his mortal homeland without pain, in recompense for all the torments his young heart had had to endure when he left his father's house, where he had lived loving everyone and himself beloved by all.

Two years later the monks of Peristera desired to transfer to their own place the body of the departed servant of God, so that they might have in him their intercessor for the monastery even after death. To this end they sent to the Holy Island the hieromonk Blasius and the monk Paul. Arriving there, those sent found the body of St. Euthymius lying in the very cave where he had fallen asleep. Corruption had not touched his body at all, although it had lain there for a very long time. On January 13 of the following year the holy relics of the Venerable Father were transferred to the city of Thessalonica, or Salonica, where they rest even now.[8]

By the prayers of our Venerable and God-bearing Father Euthymius, may we all be delivered from ailments of soul and body, and may we be granted the Kingdom of Heaven in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom belong all glory, honor and worship, with His Unbeginning Father and the Holy Spirit, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Passing dry-shod through the waves of the multitude, thou didst firmly overwhelm the bodiless foes with the streams of thy tears, O divinely wise Venerable Euthymius; and receiving the gift of miracles, thou healest every passion: intercede unceasingly for us all.

* * *

8. For this reason St. Euthymius the New is also called of Thessalonica, although his homeland was the village of Opso, which was at a great distance from Thessalonica; the city of Thessalonica enjoyed the patronage and intercession of St. Euthymius both during his life and after his repose, and many miracles were wrought there through the holy relics of the Venerable Euthymius.

Life and Passion of the Venerable Martyr Lucian, Presbyter of Antioch

Житие и страдание преподобномученика Лукиана, пресвитера антиохийского

Saint Lucian was born of pious parents in the city of Samosata[9], in Syria. In the twelfth year of his age Lucian was left an orphan, and he distributed all the property that remained to him from his parents to the poor; he himself went to the city of Edessa, to the Confessor Macarius, and under his guidance applied himself with zeal to the study of Holy Scripture. Lucian lived a strictly ascetic life. He never drank wine, only water, and his food consisted of dry bread with water, which he took once a day; and sometimes for a whole week he tasted nothing[10]. For his strictly pious life, and also for his zealous spreading of the word of God among Jews and pagans, Lucian was ordained to the rank of presbyter of Antioch. Here Lucian established a school, gathered a multitude of disciples, and became a teacher of book-learning and spiritual wisdom: he taught the understanding of Divine Scripture and at the same time instructed them to a life of virtue[11]. At this time Lucian joined to his labors the correction of the text of Holy Scripture, which had been greatly corrupted by heretics with an evil purpose. For the sake of this useful labor, Lucian first studied the Hebrew language[6706].

When the fame of Lucian's virtues spread everywhere, the impious emperor Maximian Galerius heard of him. Desiring to root out and destroy the holy faith in the eastern lands, Maximian tormented and killed a multitude of Christians, and especially the wise and renowned Christian teachers. The lawless one thought that if he overthrew these pillars of the Church, the Church of Christ itself would quickly collapse. At that time he had already put to death Saint Anthimus of Nicomedia and Saint Peter of Alexandria[12]. Hearing of Saint Lucian, he com-

9. Samosata was the principal city of the Syrian province of Commagene, on the western bank of the river Euphrates; at the present time it is called Samsat.

10. For his pious life, Lucian, as his Life relates, was granted a special gift of divine grace, so that when he walked through the city some saw him, while to others he was invisible (Prologue, October 15).

11. Here he also occupied himself with the copying of books of Holy Scripture, in which he attained great skill; by this labor Lucian supported both himself and the poor.

manded that he be sought out and brought to torment. Then a priest living in Antioch, named Pancratius, a follower of the heresy of Sabellius, told the emissaries of the emperor where Lucian dwelt. Pancratius had long envied Lucian's good repute and, like Judas, betrayed the innocent to death. After this, Saint Lucian was seized by the impious and led to torment in Nicomedia[13].

At that time the savage tormentor was so enraged against the Christians that, like a second Herod, he killed even small Christian children. Desiring to defile the children with food sacrificed to idols, he commanded that these dainties be forced into their mouths; but they, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, did not wish to take them, and for this were slain.

It happened that there were two noble youths there, full brothers; having been taught by their parents, and still more by God, they greatly abhorred idolatry. The tormentor, calling the youths to himself, began to entice them with flattering words and to tempt them with sweet foods of idol offerings, desiring by this to make them partakers of demonic defilements. But the youths, pushing away the foods, said:

"Our parents enjoined us not to eat these foods, for if anyone eats them, he angers Christ."

For this the tormentor commanded that they be beaten without mercy with rods; and the youths, like mature men, endured the torments with great patience. Then one of those close to the emperor said:

"It would be a great shame if small children, only lately out of swaddling clothes, should overcome the Roman emperor by their endurance. Give me these children, great emperor, and I will teach them to honor the gods."

The emperor gave him these children. He immediately shaved their heads and, smearing them with strong mustard, shut them up in a

12. The memory of St. Anthimus is observed on September 3, and that of St. Peter of Alexandria on November 26.

13. In 308, under the emperor Diocletian, Lucian was among the confessors of the faith at Nicomedia, where a severe persecution of Christians was then raging. From there he informed the Church of Antioch of the martyrdom of St. Anthimus of Nicomedia. Contrary to all expectation, however, he was released at this time and returned to Antioch, where he continued his former Christian labors.

heated bath; from this the heads of the children flamed as though struck by lightning; both brothers died in this torment. First the younger fell dead, and the elder, seeing his dead brother, cried out:

"You have conquered, my brother, you have conquered; God is your helper!" After this, kissing the body of his dead brother, he too yielded up his spirit. This took place in Nicomedia, whither Saint Lucian was being led to torment.

In Cappadocia, which lay on the way to Nicomedia, Lucian saw soldiers who, from fear of torments, had renounced Christ. Lucian began to exhort them to patient endurance of torments, and said:

"What shame and disgrace to you! You, as soldiers, always sacrifice your health in war for an earthly and temporal emperor, and lay down your souls for him, and yet you do not wish to rise up manfully for the Heavenly Eternal King, Christ, and not only spare yourselves but renounce Him! Consider: what profit is it to you to obey an earthly king? And consider at the same time what you are refusing, having disobeyed the command of the King of Heaven? For vain honor and glory you give yourselves to such perdition; but for the sake of your Lord, who shed His blood for us and prepared for His servants ineffable blessings, you do not wish to endure temporal torments, that you might reign with Him forever. Be ashamed before small children and weak women, who have proved more manly than you: for, boldly standing for their Lord, they have become as it were strong men, while you, fearing torments, have become like women and small children. What will become of you when Christ calls you to His judgment?"

Hearing this, the soldiers again turned to Christ with repentance and went to torment, confessing with heart and lips the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And about forty soldiers were then martyred for Christ. Thus Saint Lucian, with his sweet-speaking tongue, filled with Divine grace, again turned to Christ those who had fallen away from Him and strengthened them for the martyr's struggle.

When Lucian was brought to Nicomedia, he found there many Christians known to him and his disciples, who, fearing persecution, were in great dread. Some of them were hiding, and others wished to renounce Christianity, fearing cruel torments and death. Saint Lucian,

by the power of his word, aroused their courage and made them firm in the faith, so that they should not fear those who kill the body but not the soul (Mt. 10:28).

It is related that a maiden named Pelagia, a disciple of Lucian, was sought out for torment for her faith in Christ; fearing that her virginity would be destroyed, the maiden threw herself from a high window, and falling, she was dashed to pieces and died; the faithful honored her as a martyr[14].

Since Maximian heard that Lucian had such a pleasing face and spoke so winningly that everyone who looked upon him and listened to him inevitably became a Christian, the emperor feared that he too might become a Christian if he himself should converse personally with Lucian. Therefore, when Lucian was brought before the emperor, he spoke with him from some distance, through a curtain[6710]. At first he promised Lucian many gifts and honors; but when the saint laughed at his flattering and deceitful words, Maximian began to threaten him with new torments. Lucian was in no way terrified by his threats; he was cast into prison, where he endured many and various sufferings. There he was bound with ropes, beaten with sharp stones, and long tormented with hunger and thirst. Among the many torments was this one: all the members of his body were dislocated from their joints, and he was laid on his back upon sharp potsherds, on which he lay for 14 days. When the feast of the Theophany of the Lord came, the saint desired that he and all the Christians with him be permitted to partake of the holy Mysteries of Christ. He prayed to God that he might obtain what he desired, and God so arranged that, through the negligence of the guards, some of the faithful gathered to Lucian in the prison and brought bread and wine. Then Saint Lucian said to his disciples and to all the Christians who were in the prison:

"Stand around me and be a church, for I believe that a living church is better and more acceptable to God than one built of wood or stone."

When then they all gathered around Lucian, he said:

14. Her memory is observed on October 8.

"Let us celebrate the Liturgy and partake of the Divine Mysteries." Then the disciples asked him:

"Where, Father, shall we place the bread for the celebration of the holy Mysteries? We have no table here."

He, lying bound, face upward, said:

"Place it upon my breast, and it will be a living Holy Table for the Living God."

So, in the prison, upon the breast of the saint, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated with all the appropriate prayers, according to the order, as is fitting, and all were granted to partake of the holy Divine Mysteries.

In the morning the emperor sent servants to learn whether Lucian was still alive. When the servants entered the prison doors, Saint Lucian, seeing them, cried out three times:

"I am a Christian!"

And with these words he yielded up his spirit into the hands of Christ, his God[15].

The servants, coming to Maximian, reported that Lucian was already dead. Then the emperor commanded that the body of the martyr be cast into the sea; the servants did so: tying a stone to the much-suffering body of Saint Lucian, they threw it into the depths of the sea, and it remained in the sea for thirty days.

After this the martyr appeared to one of his disciples, named Glycerius, commanding him to go to the seashore and, taking his body, to give it burial. Glycerius went with other Christians to the shore to seek the body of the saint; and behold, they saw in the sea dolphins bearing on their backs the incorrupt body of the martyr; swimming up to the shore, they laid it on dry land. Then the faithful with joy took the body of the holy martyr and buried it with honor.

Many years later, the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, built a church over the tomb of the

15. St. Lucian reposed in 312 A.D., on January 7, as is evident from the word of St. John Chrysostom on the day of his memory: "Thus yesterday our Lord was baptized with water, and today His servant is baptized with blood." In the Greek Church the day of St. Lucian's memory was later transferred to October 15, the January 7 date being set apart for the celebration of the Synaxis of St. John the Forerunner.

holy martyr Lucian[16], to the glory of God, One in Trinity, to Whom be glory, honor and worship from us now and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Shining first in fasting, and shining second in suffering, let us all, as a most bright luminary, glorify Lucian with hymns, who ceaselessly intercedes for us all.

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Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Sarvilus and Vevea

Память святых мучеников Сарвила и Вевеи

St. Sarvil, who lived during the reign of Emperor Trajan[17], was at first an idolatrous priest in Edessa[18], but afterward, instructed by a pious Christian bishop, he was baptized together with his sister Vevia. Accused before the prince of Edessa of confessing the Christian faith, he was brought to trial and beaten with rods. Because the saint boldly reproved the prince and proved the vanity of the pagan gods, the enraged prince ordered him to be stretched on the rack as many as seven times, and each time he was beaten with ox sinews, scraped with iron combs, and scorched with candles. But the saint turned to God and prayed, and the Lord of Hosts eased his sufferings. Seeing the saint's valiant endurance, the torturer ordered nails to be driven into his head, bringing everyone to horror. Then Vevia, the saint's sister, confessed that she too was a Christian, and she was tortured and cast into prison. The skin was flayed from St. Sarvil, yet he still breathed. Then both of them were beheaded[19]. The faithful took their bodies and committed them to the earth.

* * *

16. This magnificent church was built by St. Helena, equal-to-the-Apostles empress, in 326 (in Bithynia, in the city of Drepana, which was named after St. Empress Helena as Helenopolis). Under the Roman emperor Charlemagne, the holy relics of Lucian were transferred from Helenopolis to the city of Arles, in France.
17. The Roman emperor Trajan reigned from 98 to 117.
18. Edessa – a city in Cilicia, the southeastern region of Asia Minor.
19. He reposed at the beginning of the second century.

Commemoration of St. Savin, Bishop of Catana

Память святого Савина епископа Катанского

Blessed Savin, on account of his great virtues and prudence, was chosen for the episcopal ministry in Catana[20]; but afterward he left the vanity of the world for the virtue of stillness and so zealously pursued the path to perfection, devoting himself to vigil and fasting, that even during his lifetime he was vouchsafed the gift of working miracles and foretelling the future. He persuaded many to leave the world and serve Christ alone. He reposed in peace[21], yielding his spirit to the Lord and his honorable body to his native earth.

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Life of St. John, Bishop of Suzdal[22]

Житие святого Иоанна, епископа Суздальского

For this our Venerable Father, the most glorious and steadfast teacher, Bishop John, the Jerusalem on high was as his homeland and native land, for by his life the saint might be called an earthly Angel and a heavenly man.

No account has been preserved of the saint's birthplace—whether it was a city or a village—or of his parents, his learning to read and write, or the time when he embraced monastic life. It is known only that St. John dwelt in a certain monastery, where, in fulfilling the duties entrusted to him, he distinguished himself by obedience to the abbot and the brethren, mortifying his body with great abstinence and overcoming the passions and the wiles of the demons. He was beloved and honored by the monks of the monastery and by the abbot, for he was an image of every virtue, in accordance with the words of the Apostle Paul: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuf-

20. Catania is an ancient city on the eastern coast of Sicily; at the present time it is a flourishing city, prosperous in its learning and commerce, populous, with a population of more than 100 thousand.

21. He reposed about the year 760.

22. Set forth on the basis of a Life composed in the second quarter of the seventeenth century by Gregory, a monk of the Savior-Euthymius Monastery, who made use of local traditions and written sources.

fering, kindness, mercy, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22–23); and according to the Psalmist: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, that seek Him with their whole heart. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that greatly delighteth in His commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth" (Ps. 118:1–2, 111:1–2).

The abbot of that monastery, a man experienced in the monastic life, guided blessed John and taught him the monastic rule, instructing him to keep the fear of God before his eyes, not to despise the poor, not to be lifted up by appearances, but always to abide in humility and not to grow faint in afflictions, but to bear them courageously and not complain of the trials that befell him. For by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the abbot foresaw that blessed John was destined to receive the episcopal throne and faithfully shepherd Christ's flock.

Receiving the abbot's spiritual instruction, the blessed one fulfilled it with still greater diligence, like fertile soil yielding a hundredfold increase from the seeds sown. He fasted so that he took food only on the third day, after two days, and sometimes ate nothing for a whole week and drank nothing but water. He diligently studied the holy books, read them without any doubt, and with compunction interpreted to himself what was said in them, soaking his haircloth sticharion with tears. The Lord granted him such tears that without them he could neither taste bread nor utter a word, ever keeping humility in mind, according to the Apostle's saying: "The Lord resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (Jas. 4:6; cf. 1 Pet. 5:5).

At that time Boris Konstantinovich was Grand Prince of Suzdal[23]. By God's providence, blessed John, on account of his great virtue, humility, and successful pursuit of the monastic life, was appointed by the Patriarch of Constantinople as bishop of the cities of Suzdal, Nizhny Novgorod, and Gorodets. Having entrusted the flock to blessed John, the Patriarch sent him in peace to the city of Suzdal.

When the bishop drew near the city, Right-believing Grand Prince Boris Konstantinovich came out to meet him, accompanied by his dig-

nitaries. The sacred council, the monks, all the clergy with crosses, and a great multitude of people—men and women, elders, youths, and children—also came out to greet the bishop. When the bishop was near the city gates, all the people surrounded him; bowing before him, the faithful received the saint's blessing and kissed his feet, singing supplicatory hymns with joyful tears. St. John commanded the people to cry out often, "Lord, have mercy," and, raising his hands to heaven, began to pray:

"O Master Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, King of kings and Lord of lords, Creator of all things visible and invisible, Son coeternal and cobeginningless with the Father without beginning! Poor and needy, I dare to call upon Thy wondrous, awesome, and holy name. Thee, the ineffable Light, do I call upon, clothed in frail flesh which Thou didst assume for our salvation. Reject not my poor prayer; save this city, in which Thy grace has appointed my humility to dwell. Save every city and every land from deadly famine, earthquake, flood, fire, and sword, from the invasion of foreign peoples and civil strife, for Thou art merciful, and to Thee do we send up glory unto ages of ages."

Having finished the prayer, the Hierarch said:

"Peace be unto all."

The people answered, "Amen."

Then all went into the city, glorifying God. When the supplicatory hymns were ended, Bishop John entered the church of the Most Holy and Most Blessed Lady, our Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, of her honorable and glorious Nativity[24]. Some of the people entered the church with the bishop for the Divine Liturgy, while the others, unable to find room within, stood around it, giving thanks to God for granting them so wondrous and holy a bishop. When the Divine Liturgy had

23. Boris was the great-great-grandson of Andrew, son of St. Alexander Nevsky.

24. This church was built in Suzdal in the earliest times of Christianity and was rebuilt several times. The stone church was founded in 1221 by the Grand Prince George Vsevolodovich and renovated in 1528. In the church are shrines containing the incorrupt relics of the hierarchs and wonderworkers John and Theodore, bishops of Suzdal. In the sanctuary of the church, behind the table of oblation, stands a cross, at whose base, in a silver reliquary, is a part of the Life-giving Wood of the Cross of the Lord. In the church is the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Theotokos Hodegetria, called Smolensk. This icon was brought here from Gorodets during the episcopacy of St. John.

been celebrated, Right-believing Prince Boris Konstantinovich and those who were with him were vouchsafed a wondrous vision. They saw divine grace descend upon the Hierarch in the form of a great light and overshadow him. Having received the prosphora from the bishop's hands, Right-believing Prince Boris Konstantinovich and the townspeople sent up glory to Christ God, kissed blessed John, and departed, each to his own home.

The next morning, on Sunday, blessed John, having celebrated the divine services, was seated upon the episcopal seat. He bestowed peace upon his faithful flock and filled the hearts of all with spiritual joy. The bishop received all who had gathered with words of consolation; and his speech was, according to the Apostle, "seasoned with salt" (Col. 4:6), and watered their hearts like a honey-flowing river. On one of the Sundays, having gathered all the townspeople together, the bishop addressed them with the following spiritual instruction:

"I am afraid, brethren, for the episcopal rank exceeds my strength; I tremble as I think of my end and reflect upon the greatness of the work entrusted to me, for I see myself unworthy of the episcopal rank. But the Lord has appointed me shepherd of His rational flock and brought me to this ministry by counsels known to Him alone, which are 'a great deep' (Ps. 35:7). Therefore it would be a sin for me to remain silent, and I must consider myself not a hireling, but a shepherd. I beseech you, brethren, stand firm and hold fast to the right faith; turn away from all impurity, fornication, falsehood, theft, envy, slander, and idolatry; withdraw from every heresy and every evil, often visit the holy churches of God, and uphold justice. For the Apostle has said: 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. 3:11). This foundation was laid through the holy Apostles and the holy God-bearing Fathers; it is the Orthodox faith, proclaimed, established, and expounded by the holy Ecumenical Councils. Upon this foundation of faith we must, according to the Apostle, lay gold, silver, and precious stones[25]—to speak plainly, build good works upon this foundation. For a life apart from the right faith in God is an unen-

25. 1 Cor. 3:12.

lightened life, and faith without good works cannot bring us to God. We must observe both, that we may be wholly a man of God and that our life may lack nothing, for the Apostle said that only 'faith which worketh by love' (Gal. 5:6) saves."

Soon after his installation, John, at the command of Right-believing Grand Prince Boris, set out to survey the city and go about within it and around it with the sacred council and the clergy, carrying crosses and icons and singing supplicatory hymns to the Lord. Right-believing Grand Prince Boris Konstantinovich approached him with the other nobles, princes, and boyars, asking his blessing. The bishop blessed them. Then the Grand Prince gave him five hundred gold pieces and said:

"My lord, as one newly appointed and newly arrived, you will now have many impoverished children of the Church to provide for. Accept this gift of ours for that purpose."

But John would not accept it. Then the Grand Prince said to him again:

"Accept, most honorable Father, this small gift from your son."

Seeing his zeal, the Venerable Father accepted the gift and gave the gold to his servants for distribution. To the right-believing prince he spoke in the words of the Psalmist:

"May He grant thee according to thy heart, and fulfil all thy purposes. May He remember all thy sacrifices, and make thy whole burnt offering rich" (Ps. 19:5, 4).

Having gone around the city, the bishop entered the holy church of the Most Pure Theotokos with the sacred assembly, the clergy, the princes, the nobles, and the people, and celebrated there the Divine Liturgy and a moleben. When the service was ended, the prince dined in the bishop's refectory and ordered bread to be offered to all the people. When all had eaten their fill, they dispersed, each to his own home.

Bishop John devoted himself zealously to spiritual matters, teaching and admonishing, strengthening and comforting; he generously aided the poor, and in deed showed all the pattern and rule of a pious life. Finding the revenues of the episcopate exceedingly abundant, John

ordered that a portion be allotted to a hospital, which he put in good order, entrusting its oversight to two reverent priests, that they might provide it with everything necessary. The bishop often visited the sick and supplied them with all they needed, caring for their recovery. Instructing them with spiritual words, he strengthened them, for as they listened to his words profitable to the soul, they forgot their sufferings. While serving in the episcopate, according to the Gospel word, he laid down his life for the sheep of his flock (Jn. 10:11), and lovingly cared for the salvation of all. It is impossible worthily to recount the labors accomplished by this faithful servant of God. He offered up prayers to God; and when he stood at prayer, he was steadfast, like an image cast in bronze. He was silent and meek, never grew angry, and bore immeasurable love equally toward people of high and low estate; he shunned vainglory and deceit. Besides these virtues, he possessed the gift of teaching and eloquence, so that many came to him for instruction, not only from Suzdal but also from other neighboring cities[26]. The Hierarch did not speak in ornate fashion, but for edification, turning all toward repentance. He taught the rich not to be proud of their wealth or to put their trust in wealth that soon passes away; and widows to devote themselves to fasting and abstinence, and to avoid adornment in their clothing.

Having received from the saint spiritual gifts and benefit for their souls, those whom he had instructed returned to their homes, thanking God for such a shepherd. Many of them renounced the world and took the monastic habit.

Once, blessed John, according to his customary rule, was praying before an icon of the Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ. Gazing often upon the icon, he prayed thus:

"O Most Holy Lady Theotokos, mighty protectress and helper of the human race, be our intercessor before thy Son, that He may look down from on high upon this city and this monastery."

Having chanted the thanksgiving canon to the Most Holy Theotokos and completed his rule, blessed John sat down to rest. At that moment

26. There are reports that St. John diligently sowed the seed of the Word of God among the Mordvins, who had in part been subdued by Constantine, the father of Grand Prince Boris.

the pious Prince Boris Konstantinovich came to him. Having received the saint's blessing and prayed, he began to speak with him alone about what was profitable to the soul. Filled with pious thoughts, the prince confessed to him this good intention of his:

"Bless me, holy father, and pray earnestly to the Lord God, that for the sake of your holy prayers He may deem me worthy to obtain what I desire. In our realm, in the city of Suzdal, there is no cenobitic monastery. If the Lord would help me, through your prayers, to build a stone church in the name of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, in honor of His glorious Transfiguration, and to found a monastery beside it—this is the desire of my heart. Bless me, father, and beseech God concerning this. And I, through your prayers, shall set out for Nizhny Novgorod, to the Pechersky Monastery of the great Venerable Father Dionysius[27]. There I shall ask him to give me one of his disciples, skilled in building a house of God and establishing a monastery." St. John said:

"O great prince, you desire a good work. May the Lord God be your helper and guide of this undertaking, profitable to your soul, and may He preserve your journey."

Having prayed for the prince, the bishop blessed him, gave him the spiritual kiss in Christ, and sent him away in peace. The pious Prince Boris rejoiced with great joy and set out for Nizhny Novgorod, to the venerable Monastery of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Venerable Father Dionysius, whom he had visited before for his prayers and blessing. Loving this Pechersky Monastery, the prince supplied it with everything necessary. At that time its brotherhood numbered 780.

On arriving at the monastery, Prince Boris withdrew with the Venerable Dionysius to a cell, spoke with him for a long while about what was profitable to the soul, and told him of holy Bishop John and his life: how he cared for the poor, visited the sick, and helped widows, and

27. St. Dionysius of Suzdal was the founder of the Pechersky Monastery, five versts from Nizhny Novgorod. St. Alexis, the metropolitan, appointed him bishop of Suzdal (the first or second bishop after St. John). From the Patriarch of Constantinople, St. Dionysius was consecrated archbishop, and two years later metropolitan of Kiev. He reposed in 1384; his memory is celebrated on June 26.

how he had blessed him to build a common monastery for the gathering of monastics. Having bowed to the ground before the Venerable Dionysius, the prince said:

"Bless me, father, and give me from your monastery one of your disciples skilled in building a monastery, that I may not return to Suzdal without fulfilling my desire."

The Venerable Dionysius gave thanks to God for all things, praising Him for His ineffable mercy, and said:

"O prince, you are undertaking a good work. May our Lord Jesus Christ help your undertaking, profitable to your soul, and guide you in your striving toward piety, for 'every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights' (Jas. 1:17)."

Having prayed, the Venerable Dionysius blessed the prince and, promising him all that he had asked, sent him away in peace. The pious Prince Boris Konstantinovich was filled with joy and gladness, for the Lord had deemed him worthy to obtain what he desired, and he set out on his return journey to the city of Suzdal. At the same time, he ordered stone and lime to be brought for the construction of the monastery.

At the prince's request, the Venerable Dionysius chose from the brotherhood of his monastery a disciple who was obedient in all things, named Euthymius.

"O child," the Venerable Father said to Euthymius, "do not lose heart in afflictions; the Lord is your helper and guide in every good work. Go to the God-protected city of Suzdal. There, in the most glorious church of the Most Holy Theotokos, you will see the sacred Bishop John."

At that time blessed Euthymius was still young in years, but in spiritual wisdom he surpassed elders adorned with the gray hairs of many years. He was only 36 years old. Having received from the Venerable Dionysius his prayer, like a sharp spear against visible and invisible enemies, Euthymius went westward from the monastery.

The Lord gave him strength to make his journey easily and without delay, and he soon reached the city of Suzdal. Seeing the wondrous and beautiful church dedicated to the Mother of God, Euthymius entered

and bowed before the holy icons of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Most Pure Mother, and all the saints. Making a prostration before Bishop John, he asked for his blessing and prayers. John blessed Euthymius, gave him the kiss in Christ, and led him into the bishop's chambers.

There he spoke at length with Euthymius about what was profitable to the soul; after their conversation they offered an all-night prayer to the Lord, that He might send them an Angel to help them, a faithful guide. When dawn broke, St. John performed the customary morning hymns, gave the peace, kissed Euthymius, and sent him away.

The next day, on Sunday, after Matins and the Divine Liturgy, Bishop John again summoned Euthymius for spiritual conversation.

Hearing that the Grand Prince Boris Konstantinovich had arrived in Suzdal, Euthymius went to him. The prince was exceedingly glad to see him, received him with great honor, and told him that he had longed for his coming "as the hart longs for the springs of water" (Ps. 41:2).

After a long conversation, they went to the most reverend Bishop John and ate bread at his table. Prince Boris Konstantinovich told blessed John in full about the Venerable Dionysius of the Kiev Caves, his life, and his great labors and ascetic struggles.

John replied:

"O prince, carry out without hesitation or doubt what you have begun, according to the Apostle's word: 'If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?' (1 Tim. 3:5). A good beginning should look to God for a fitting and good end. You have already received blessing and prayer from the venerable and holy elder, the Venerable Dionysius, and now he has sent you his obedient disciple, a fellow laborer and faster, this Euthymius, who, by God's grace, can begin and complete your work, and be a pattern to others in these struggles in Christ."

Then the prince rose from his place and bowed to the ground before the bishop, asking him to go with him and Euthymius to the site of the future monastery, wherever the Lord should direct them. And they went to seek out the place, accompanied by the entire sacred assembly and clergy, with crosses and icons, singing hymns of supplication. With them went dignitaries, princes, and boyars, and a great multitude of

people—men, women, and children. Along the way, the infirm were laid before John, asking him for healing. The saint offered a secret prayer to God for their healing, laid the cross and his hands upon them, and sprinkled them with holy water; and from that hour their sickness ceased, and they kissed the saint's feet, giving thanks to God. All the people were filled with great joy; they marvelled and said that the Hierarch was like St. Gregory, Bishop of the Church of Agrigento[28].

So they went, surrounded by the people: the Grand Prince, St. John, and the Blessed Euthymius, singing the supplicatory hymns. Guided by God, they went out of the city and looked around it on all four sides, and then went to the north, up the river called Kamenka, on which their city had been built. Here, near the city, on the bank of the river, on a high hill, they found a place beautiful in its view and suitable for the building of a monastery, and they chose it for this purpose. St. John, together with the whole assembly, blessed and sanctified this place, and offered a prayer to the Lord:

"O Lord our God, Thou didst shed Thy blood for the renewal of Thy holy Church; we humbly pray to Thee now: lay the grace of the Holy Spirit as the foundation of the church that shall be built for Thee in this place. Let it be a dwelling of Thy glory, let Thy majesty be glorified in it by psalms and hymns, and let those who pray in it receive from Thee the blessings with which heaven and earth are filled. Save them, keep them from misfortune in the future, and make them worthy of Thy glory."

After the prayer, St. John set up the precious Cross for the laying of the Holy Table. The pious Grand Prince took a spade in his own hands and began to dig a trench for the foundation of the church. This was in 1352.

With God's help a beautiful stone church was erected in the name of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, for His honorable and God-befitting Transfiguration. The right-believing Grand Prince adorned it in every way, and St. John appointed the Blessed Euthymius archiman-

28. St. Gregory, bishop of the city of Agrigento in Sicily, became renowned for such an abundance of spiritual gifts that he healed diseases by the mere touch of his hand. His memory is celebrated on November 23.

drite and commanded him to serve in a mitre, with the palitsa and the ripidia. Prince Boris Konstantinovich gave the Blessed Euthymius everything that was required for the building of the monastery. Thus a cenobitic monastery began to be established. In a short time the number of brethren in it reached 300.

On the day of the honorable feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Archimandrite Euthymius, with the other ascetics and experienced monks, came from the monastery to the episcopal house, to the Hierarch John. They asked the saint to celebrate the Divine Liturgy for them in the monastery. Having received his consent, Archimandrite Euthymius immediately returned to the monastery and went out with all the brethren to meet the bishop. Having kissed the Blessed Euthymius, the great John entered the church with him and with the other monks, branches of the vine of Christ and spiritual sheep, singing the supplicatory hymns. During the Liturgy the right-believing Grand Prince Boris Konstantinovich came into the church of the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ and saw a wondrous vision there. It seemed to him that a man clothed in bright vestments served with the bishop, whose radiant image was awesome and ineffable. At the end of the Liturgy, seizing the moment, the prince approached St. John and, bowing down to the ground before him, asked the bishop to explain what he had seen. The bishop, not wishing to reveal this mystery, said to the prince:

"O prince, what is there wondrous in my celebrating the Divine Liturgy with the good shepherd of this spiritual flock of rational sheep? Only the hieromonks whom your Highness knows were with us here; there was no other priest with us."

But the prince continued to beg St. John to explain the vision to him. Then the saint said to him:

"If God has revealed a vision to you, can I conceal it? It was an Angel of the Lord, who not only now but always, by the visitation of God, concelebrated with me, unworthy as I am. But do not tell anyone what you have seen while I am alive."

So the saint spoke, for he, being humble, did not love that his good deeds and the reward he received from God should be known to other

people. And when he was asked which virtue is the highest, he answered: "that which is done in secret."

The Blessed Euthymius with the brethren besought the right-believing prince and the holy bishop John to honor their table with their participation. When the meal was prepared, they all gave thanks to the Lord and, having eaten, began a spiritual conversation. Then, at the wish of the Grand Prince and at the request of Archimandrite Euthymius and the monks with him, the Blessed John delivered an instructive word: "Fathers and brethren, it would not be fitting for me, unworthy and feeble, to teach you about the benefit of the soul. It is known to all that everyone who desires to be saved must first of all keep the faith and live a life in accordance with it. For a life of abstinence without the right faith will bring no benefit; likewise faith without good works cannot bring us near to the Lord. But for perfection both are needed. Faith must be 'working through love' (Gal. 5:6). Love is the beginning of all virtues, all of them have come from it. We should turn away from evil deeds and hold fast to good ones, thinking only of what is worthy of heaven. We should, according to the Gospel of Christ, live in humility, obedience, purity, abstinence from bodily pleasures, in love, mercy, and kindness, and in the fear of God, according to the word: 'My flesh trembles for fear of Thee, and I am afraid of Thy judgments' (Ps. 118:120). We should not let time pass for our correction; we do not know what tomorrow will bring us, for having planned much, often on the next day we achieve nothing of what we planned. So, if we turn away from evil and are zealous for the virtues indicated, we shall be saved, and, walking the narrow and sorrowful way, we shall attain the Kingdom of Heaven."

When this conversation was finished, St. John withdrew to his episcopal house. Seeing his pure life, the devil, who from the beginning has done harm to the human race, raised a war against the righteous man. A deacon of the Venerable John, named Eleutherius, together with some churchmen, persuaded a certain harlot, promising her much silver, and they began to seek a convenient occasion to slander the bishop before the prince. They stirred up the people, and, coming to the episcopal house, they drove the Hierarch John out of the city with dishonor

and insult. He, however, mindful of the guilelessness of his Master Jesus Christ, said nothing against their embittered attack, but, going out of the city, turned his face toward the east, and, lifting his hands to heaven, prayed to God for those who hated him, saying:

"O Lord! Do not count this sin against them."

And at once, while the prayer was still on his lips, the wrath of the Lord struck the churchmen; fear and trembling seized them, darkness covered them; they were completely blinded and needed a guide. Seeing this, the people fell at the feet of the saint and with weeping and tears begged forgiveness. The saint forgave them and blessed them. Repenting of his sin, Eleutherius with tears fell at the feet of John, saying:

"Have mercy on me, servant of God, and forgive me, humble as I am, my lawless and criminal design against you. As the Lord my God lives, I shall not depart from your holy feet until you promise forgiveness for my lawless design. Do not remember the evil I have done, venerable father."

For a long time Eleutherius repeated this to the venerable one. But the Blessed John answered:

"O man, it is not we who must promise forgiveness, as you think, but only the One Merciful God can forgive. He who suffered for our sake heals the wounds of our souls. He grants us forgiveness of our transgressions and will cleanse us, for He has taken upon Himself the sins of the world."

Raising Eleutherius from the ground, John said to him:

"The Lord, child, will forgive you."

The saint prayed before all the people for the sinning Eleutherius and for the churchmen led astray by him, and made the sign of the cross over them. They at once regained their sight. All the people were astonished and glorified God, who works wondrous miracles through His saints.

On the site of the miracle wrought by St. John, the citizens of Suzdal resolved to build a church in the name of the miracle of the holy Archangel Michael at Chonae, for the miracle had been performed by the bishop on the day of the celebration of the miracle of the Archangel Michael. By the blessing of the Hierarch John this church was soon

built, and the citizens set aside part of their lands for the church and named them, after the Hierarch, the village of Ivanovskoye.[29]

Once the right-believing Prince Andrew, brother of the Grand Prince Boris Konstantinovich, came to St. John. After the customary blessing and prayer, the prince said to the bishop:

"O holy servant of God, I wish to ask you for one kindness."

The good shepherd answered:

"Nothing is forbidden to you."

"I desire that you give me your blessing to found a monastery for nuns, for a miracle happened to me. Once we were sailing on the Volga from Nizhny Novgorod, and suddenly on the river such a strong wind arose that from the multitude of great waves the boats began to be wrecked, and death threatened everyone. Then the sailors began to pray to God; I prayed with them too, that the Lord would deliver us from the impending misfortune. And I vowed to God to build a church in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos, in honor and glory of Her Protection, and to establish a monastery as a dwelling and rest for nuns. At once the agitation on the river ceased and there was calm. Now the time has come to fulfill my vow."

The bishop answered:

"I do not hinder your desire."

The right-believing prince said:

"Let us send for the venerable father, Archimandrite Euthymius, and ask him for a place on the bank of the river where it would be convenient to build a monastery."

Having consulted together, they sent for the archimandrite. He came, bowed to them, and asked:

"Why have you called me, my lords? For what purpose was I needed to come to you?"

They said:

29. On the pall placed upon the tomb of St. John, in 1578, by Princess Evpraksia, wife of the appanage prince Vladimir Andreyevich, is embroidered a troparion in which it is said: "He quickly commanded the malicious churchman by prayer to regain his sight, and taught him, as formerly St. Leontius, who bound and again blessed."

"Give us a place seven sazhens in length and in breadth; for, with God's help, we wish to build a monastery on that river where you dwell, good shepherd and laborer of Christ's vineyard."

The prince told him what had befallen him on the Volga, and of his vow, that he had promised to establish a monastery for the dwelling of nuns. Then the Blessed Euthymius said:

"O prince! The earth is the Lord's, and the ends thereof. If it is pleasing to God, let the place you ask for the founding of a monastery be blessed."

The prince bowed before the Blessed Euthymius and gave him a generous alms for the monastery. Then he chose a place on the river Kamenka, opposite the monastery of the Venerable Euthymius. Here, with God's help, a wooden church was built in the name of the Most Pure Theotokos, in memory of her glorious Protection, and a monastery was established.[30] This was in the year 1364. Bishop John entrusted the leadership of the monastery to the niece of the Blessed Euthymius, whom he had transferred here from the Lavra of the holy Great Martyr Alexander, which stood on the hill in the same city of Suzdal.[31] Some time later, Bishop John visited the monastery, praised and blessed it, and, after instructing them concerning the benefit of the soul, withdrew to his house.

Thus did St. John care for his spiritual flock, leading it to spiritual pasture. And this hierarch shone like a star not only in Suzdal but also in distant lands. Ruling his flock in a manner pleasing to God and in Christ, he attained a saintly old age.

30. The Venerable Euthymius foretold the glory of this monastery. Here afterward the wife of the Grand Prince of all Russia, Basil Ivanovich, Solomonia, who was named Sophia in monastic life, received the tonsure. Having remained in the monastery for 17 years, she reposed on December 16, 1542. Her relics lie in a shrine beneath the floor, under the porch of the Church of the Protection.

31. The women's monastery of the holy Martyr Alexander, according to tradition founded by St. Alexander Nevsky in honor of the saint who shares his name.

Leaving the episcopal throne,[32] he withdrew to the Bogolyubsky Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos,[33] where he was tonsured into the schema and lived in unceasing stillness.

When the time of his blessed end drew near, St. John fell ill, but not for long. At the hour of his parting from the body, he partook of the holy and most pure Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and he fell asleep in the Lord in the year 1373, on the 15th day of October. His holy relics were carried with hymns into the city of Suzdal.

When the people in Suzdal learned of the repose of St. John, Bishop Dionysius and the other people of both clerical and lay rank went out of the city with candles and censers to meet the holy relics. Meeting them with reverence, they honorably laid them in the cathedral church of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, on the right side, where they rest under the cover, incorrupt, even to this day, helping and healing those who come with faith, to the glory of Christ our God, to Whom be glory forever.

In the year 1743, on October 27, on the day of the memory of the holy martyr Nestor, a miracle took place at the tomb of St. John.

After the customary ringing for Matins, three hours before dawn, just at the end of the Midnight Office, when the church sexton had gone out of the cathedral church of the Nativity of the Theotokos to give the signal for the bell, a man entered the church barefoot and in a single open caftan. At once he rushed behind the right pillar, to the reliquaries of the holy wonderworkers John and Theodore, bishops of Suzdal, and cried out:

"Hierarch, Father John, servant of Christ, have mercy on me!" Then, weeping, he fell prostrate.

Hearing the unusual cry of the newcomer, the clergy who were in the church approached him, raised him from the ground, and began to

32. After the death of Prince Andrew Konstantinovich in 1365, strong disputes arose among his brothers, Princes Boris and Dmitry. At that time Suzdal, Nizhny Novgorod, and Gorodets were attached to the metropolitan see.
33. Near the city of Vladimir.

ask who he was and what was the cause of his cry. He, with tears, related the following:

"My name is Ivan Vasilyev Zhinkin; I am from the posad of this city. Since March I have been stricken with a grievous illness: my right hand and left leg have been paralyzed, and my tongue has ceased to move; at that time I could say nothing clearly; uttering dull and indistinct sounds, I made signs with my left hand. This evening, lying on my bed, I began to weep, recalling my sins, by which I had angered the Lord God. And in my mind I began to call upon the Mother of God for help, whose holy icon was near my bed, and together with her the servants of God, the hierarchs and wonderworkers John and Theodore, bishops of Suzdal, and the Venerable Wonderworker Sergius, abbot of Radonezh. All my household were sleeping at that time, for it was already deep night. During my weeping I saw that a light shone forth in the room where I lay. And behold, a man appeared, clothed in bright raiment. Standing near my bed, he raised his hands to heaven and prayed:

"Merciful Lord, have mercy on Thy creature."

Hearing this, I ceased to feel the illness in me, and I dared to ask the one who had appeared:

"Who are you, holy one of God?"

He answered:

"I am John, Bishop of Suzdal. Go to the cathedral church, where my relics lie, and there you will receive full healing of your illness."

I wished to fall at his honorable and holy feet, but he at once became invisible and vanished, and the light that shone in the dwelling disappeared as well. Rising from the bed on which I had lain for eight months, I felt myself healthy and at once went to the cathedral church, giving thanks to God's servant."

Having heard the words of the healed man, the astonished clergy sent the church sexton to his house, which stood near the Vasilyev monastery, to inform his household of what had happened. His household was greatly astonished, not finding him at home. Soon his mother and wife came to the cathedral church, brought him his usual clothing, and declared to those present that this Ivan had indeed been stricken

with a grievous illness, and that they did not know how he had been healed. Falling prostrate before the holy relics of God's servant, they offered great thanksgiving with warm tears to the hierarch and wonderworker John, and, after serving a moleben, they withdrew to their house.

The healed man, however, did not go with them, but remained for three days at the cathedral church, listening with tears to the church chanting. After three days he cleansed himself by the sacrament of repentance before his spiritual father, the priest of the Vasilyev monastery, and, having received the Body and Blood of Christ in the monastery, he withdrew to his house, rejoicing, glorifying and thanking God, and extolling the intercession and help of the great hierarch and wonderworker John, Bishop of Suzdal. Ivan attested the written account of this miracle with the signature of his healed right hand; the clergy who were present in the church at that time also attested the miracle with him.

Troparion to John, Bishop of Suzdal:

Thou didst govern the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of God, keeping the commandments of God, and well didst thou tend the flock of rational sheep; by thy prayer thou didst command the malicious churchman to regain his sight, and didst teach, as did formerly holy Leontius, the helper of the salvation of the Russian land, teacher of Rostov, who first bound and then again blessed; so, O holy Bishop of Suzdal, deliverer and wonderworker John, pray Christ God that our souls be saved, for to thee come those assailed by afflictions.

Troparion to John and Theodore, Bishops of Suzdal:

Coming to the reliquaries of your honorable relics, we magnify you, God-blessed hierarchs Theodore and John, as teachers of the land of Suzdal, of one mind with the Apostles, wise healers of souls and bodies, and servants well-pleasing to God; and rejoicing in hymns and songs, we praise Christ, Who has granted you the

grace of healings and made you a great support for our city of Suzdal.

* * *

NOTES

6706. The most famous scholarly work of Lucian was the revision and correction of the Greek text of the Bible. The Blessed Jerome, presbyter of the Church of Antioch, labored so much over Holy Scripture that to this day some copies are called "Lucianic." St. Lucian found errors in the sacred text, introduced not only by time but also by malicious men, and therefore resolved to employ his labors and learning to hand down to the Church a most accurate text. St. Athanasius speaks thus of the labors of St. Lucian: "Lucian examined the earlier translations and the Hebrew books, and paid careful attention to what was lacking or what was superfluous, and corrected everything in its place." The work of St. Lucian, preserved from the enemies of the faith during his confessor's struggle in a wall, where the chest with the manuscript had been sealed with lime, was found in the time of the emperor Constantine the Great, revised by St. Lucian, and began to come into general use.

6710. The church historian Eusebius wrote that St. Lucian, brought before the emperor Maximian for his faith, proclaimed the Heavenly Kingdom of Christ, first by word through his Apology, and then by deeds. Speaking in his Apology of the Resurrection of Christ, Lucian writes: "I shall call upon the witness of the place where this took place: the place itself agrees with me. The mountain of Golgotha, split apart under the glory of the Cross, and the cave which, with the opening of the gates of hell, again gave back the living Body, so that It might ascend to heaven in greater radiance... I bring as witnesses the very heavens, which, seeing what the impious were doing on earth, hid their light at midday. Search your annals, and you will find that in the time of Pilate, when Christ suffered, the day was interrupted by an eclipse of the sun." Besides these labors, St. Lucian left behind a Symbol of Faith concerning the Holy Trinity.

THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 16

16 октября

New Calendar October 16 · Old Calendar October 29 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of the Holy Martyr Longinus the Centurion

Житие и страдание святого мученика Лонгина сотника

When our Lord Jesus Christ, in His ineffable mercy, was pleased to save us from destruction by His voluntary Passion, Cross, death, and Resurrection, a centurion named Longinus, a native of Cappadocia, who was under Pilate's authority, was assigned with his soldiers to attend upon the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Seeing the miracles that took place at the Cross of Christ—the earthquake, the darkening of the sun, the opened tombs and the dead who rose from them, and the splitting of the rocks—the centurion Longinus confessed that Christ is the Son of God. The divine Evangelist Matthew speaks thus of this event: "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God" (Mt. 27:54; cf. Mk. 15 and Lk. 23:47). Thus the Divine Gospel bears witness concerning the centurion Longinus, who believed in Christ. Church tradition adds to what is attested in the Gospel that Longinus was the soldier who pierced the ribs of the crucified Lord Jesus Christ, and that the blood and water which flowed forth healed his diseased eyes. This same Longinus was also among the guards whom Pilate appointed to watch over the life-giving Body of Jesus Christ, which lay in the tomb. When the Lord rose most gloriously from the tomb and by His wondrous rising filled the guards with terror,[1] Longinus and two soldiers came finally to believe in Christ and became preachers of

Christ's Resurrection, for they reported to Pilate and the chief priests all that had happened. The chief priests and elders held counsel and gave the soldiers a great sum of money to conceal Christ's Resurrection and say that His disciples had come by night and stolen Him while they slept (Mt. 28:11–13). Longinus, however, took no money and would not conceal the miracle; rather, he bore witness to it with still greater zeal, and his testimony was true. Therefore Pilate and the whole Jewish council hated Longinus, and turned against him all the wrath they had formerly held against Christ. Longinus openly preached concerning Christ that He is the true God, and that he, Longinus, had himself witnessed His life-giving death and Resurrection. For this testimony Longinus incurred the hatred and persecution of the enemies of Jesus Christ, who sought a reason to destroy him; but finding no fault in him, they dared not act, since Longinus was the senior among the soldiers, an honorable man, and known to Caesar himself. When Longinus learned of their evil intent, he chose rather to be rejected by them and remain with Christ than to live in the villages of Judea. He laid aside his military rank, clothing, and belt, and, taking with him two friends who shared his zeal for Christ, withdrew from the company of men and devoted himself to the service of the one God. Having received Baptism from the holy Apostles, Longinus soon left Jerusalem and went with his friends to Cappadocia. There he became a preacher and Apostle of Christ, and turned many from error to God. Then, leaving the city, Longinus went to live in his father's village, leading a life of stillness in fasting and prayer.

Before long, it became known throughout the Jewish council in Jerusalem that Longinus was spreading his teaching throughout Cappadocia and preaching Christ's Resurrection. Then the Jewish chief priests and elders, filled with envy and wrath, went to Pilate with many gifts and asked him to send a letter to Caesar in Rome, informing him that Longinus had renounced his military rank, refused submission to Roman authority, and was stirring up the people in Cappadocia by preach-

1. The evangelist speaks of this event thus: "The Angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door of the tomb, and sat upon it... and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men" (Mt. 28:2, 4).

ing to them about another king. Pilate accepted the gifts, consented to the Jews' request, and sent Caesar Tiberius[2] a letter containing grave slanders against Longinus. Along with Pilate's letter, the Jews sent Caesar much gold, and thus bought the death of St. Longinus; for soon an order came from Caesar Tiberius that Longinus be put to death as an enemy of Caesar. Pilate immediately sent soldiers to Cappadocia to cut off Longinus's head and bring it to Jerusalem as proof to the Jewish council that Longinus was dead. At the Jews' request, Pilate also ordered the killing of the two soldiers who had renounced their military rank together with Longinus and were preaching Christ with him there in Cappadocia.

When the men sent reached the land of Cappadocia, they made diligent inquiries as to where Longinus lived. Learning that he was staying in his father's village, they hurried there, seeking to give the impression that they were looking for Longinus not to kill him, but as though to pay him some honor. They feared that Longinus might escape their hands and that they might return to those who had sent them empty-handed; therefore they wished to seize him by stealth.

Meanwhile, by divine revelation, St. Longinus learned of the martyr's crown being prepared for him. He went out himself to meet the men sent by Pilate and greeted them warmly. Not recognizing him, they asked:

"Where is Longinus, who was once a centurion?"

"Why do you need him?" Longinus asked them in turn.

"We have heard," the soldiers replied, "that he is a good man, and we wish to visit him. We are soldiers, and he was a centurion over soldiers; therefore we wish to see him."

Then Longinus said:

"I beg you, my lords, come into my house and rest a little from your journey, and I will inform Longinus of your arrival, for I know where he lives; then he will come to you himself, since he lives not far from here."

The soldiers went in to Longinus, and he offered them a rich feast. When evening came and the soldiers had grown merry with wine, they

told Longinus why they had been sent. First, however, they asked him and obtained his oath that he would reveal their secret to no one. The soldiers feared that someone might tell Longinus and that he would flee from them; and they said to him:

"We have been sent to cut off the heads of Longinus and his two friends, for such an order has come to Pilate from Caesar."

Hearing that his friends, too, were sought for execution, Longinus sent for them at once, inviting them to come to him. He did not wish to tell the soldiers that he himself was Longinus until his friends arrived. When the soldiers had fallen asleep, Longinus rose to pray, and all that night prayed fervently to God, preparing himself for death. At daybreak the soldiers, eager to set out, asked Longinus to point out the man they sought. Then Longinus said to them:

"Wait a little, my lords: I have sent for him, and he will come to you at once. Believe me, the man you seek will surrender himself into your hands; only wait a little."

Then Longinus learned that his friends were on their way. He immediately went out to meet them, and, kissing and embracing them, said:

"Rejoice, servants of Christ, my fellow soldiers; rejoice with me, for our gladness draws near, and the time has come for us to be loosed from the bonds of the flesh. Behold, now we shall stand together before our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw Him suffering, crucified, buried, and risen in glory; now we shall see Him sitting at the right hand of God, and shall be satisfied by beholding His glory."

Having said this to his friends, Longinus told them that soldiers had come from Pilate and the Jewish Sanhedrin to put them to death for their testimony to Christ's Resurrection. Hearing this, they rejoiced that they would be deemed worthy to share in the martyr's crown and soon to stand before their Lord, Whom they had loved with all their soul. Then Longinus brought his friends to the soldiers and said:

"Here are Longinus and his two friends! I am Longinus, whom you seek; and these are my two friends, who together with me saw Christ's

2. Tiberius reigned from A.D. 14 to 37. In his time the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified.

Resurrection and believed. Do with us what those who sent you have commanded."

Hearing this, the soldiers were astonished, and at first did not believe that Longinus himself stood before them. Then, being assured of the truth, they were ashamed and unwilling to kill their benefactor. But Longinus urged them to carry out their orders, saying:

"You can repay my love for you in no better way than by sending me to my Lord, Whom I have long desired to see."

Then, having put on white burial garments and pointed with his hand to a nearby hill, Longinus commanded his household to bury his body and those of his two friends there. After this, having prayed and given everyone a last kiss, Longinus and his two friends[3] bowed their heads beneath the sword. The soldiers beheaded them, took the head of St. Longinus with them, and departed; the bodies of the saints were buried with honor in the place St. Longinus himself had indicated.

When the soldiers arrived in Jerusalem, they brought with them the precious head of St. Longinus and gave it to Pilate, as proof to him and the whole Jewish council that Longinus had been slain. Pilate and the Jews, seeing the saint's head, ordered it to be cast outside the city. It lay there for a long time among the refuse, until it was covered with dust.

But the Lord "keepeth all their bones" (Ps. 33:21) who serve Him; He likewise preserved unharmed the head of St. Longinus that lay among the refuse.

When the Lord willed to glorify His servant upon earth before men, whom He had already glorified in heaven before the Angels, He revealed the saint's head in the following manner. A certain Christian woman, a widow from Cappadocia, had gone blind in both eyes, and for a long time she sought help from physicians but received none. After this she resolved to go to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places and to seek there the help of God for her blinded eyes. Taking her only son, she set out with him on the journey. But on reaching the holy places, her son fell ill and after a few days died. The widow was bitterly

3. According to ancient reports, these were Isaurus and Aphrodisius; their memory is on April 19.

grieved at the death of her son: she wept over a double loss, for she had lost both her sight and her son, who had been as it were the light of her eyes and her guide. And as the widow wept bitterly and inconsolably, St. Longinus appeared to her in a vision and comforted her, promising that she would see her son in heavenly glory and would receive light for her eyes. He told her all about himself: how he had been present at the sufferings, the crucifixion, the burial and the resurrection of Christ, how afterwards he had preached Christ in Cappadocia and had suffered for Him together with his companions. He then commanded her to go outside the city and find there his head, lying in the refuse and covered with dust.

"It is appointed for you," said St. Longinus at this, "to find it for your healing."

Comforted in her sorrow, the widow rose and asked to be taken outside the city; and when they were leading her there, she said to those who accompanied her:

"Where you see a large heap of swept-together refuse, there set me down."

They did so. Finding a great quantity of swept-together refuse, they brought her there, and she began with her own hands to clear away the rubbish and dig up the dust. Although she saw nothing with her eyes, she had great faith in the words said to her in the vision by St. Longinus. And at once, by the providence of God, she obtained what she sought, and suddenly she saw the light of the sun; for her eyes were opened and she saw the saint's head lying in the dust. The widow rejoiced not so much that she had seen the light of the sun, as that she had found the head of the saint, through which she had received her sight. And she glorified God and magnified His servant, St. Longinus.

Taking the saint's head and kissing it, the woman carried it with joy to her house; she washed it, anointed it with fragrant ointments, and rejoiced so greatly at finding this spiritual treasure that she forgot her sorrow for her dead son. On the following night St. Longinus appeared to her again in great light, brought her son to her in shining wedding garments, and, embracing him lovingly and paternally, said to the widow:

"Look, woman, upon your son, over whom you grieve and weep: behold what honor and glory is his. Look upon him and be comforted. God has numbered him among the heavenly orders that are in His Kingdom. I have now taken him from the Savior, and he will never be removed from me. Here, take my head and your son's body, and bury them in one reliquary, and do not weep for your only son, and let not your heart be troubled, for great glory, joy and unending gladness have been given him by God[4]."

When the woman heard this, she quickly rose and placed the martyr's head in one reliquary with the body of her dead son, and then returned to her home, glorifying and praising God. On reaching her homeland, she buried the body of her son and the martyr's head in an honorable place, reflecting as she did so:

"Now I know that 'to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose, all things work together for good' (Rom. 8:28). I sought healing for my bodily eyes, and I have found at the same time healing for my spiritual eyes. I was overcome with sorrow at the death of my son; now I have him in heaven, standing before God in glory, with the prophets and martyrs; with them he always rejoices, and with Longinus in the Kingdom of Christ he bears the cross, the sign of victory, in the midst of the Angels, and as a disciple of Longinus joyfully sings: 'Truly this was the Son of God.' He is and will be. His Kingdom is the Kingdom of all ages, and His dominion endures throughout all generations. Glory to Him forever. Amen[5]."

Kontakion, Tone 4:

The Church rejoiced joyfully today in remembrance of the ever-memorable sufferer Longinus, crying out: "Thou art my power, O Christ, and my steadfastness."

4. Venerable Theophanes speaks of the miracles from the relics of St. Longinus in the service to the martyr (see the Menaion for October, the 16th). – The precious hand of St. Longinus the Centurion is in Rome, in the Vatican Cathedral of the Apostle Peter.

5. The writer of the life of St. Longinus was St. Hesychius, presbyter of Jerusalem (†434), who found the acts of the martyr in the library of the Holy Resurrection and composed from them his account, from which it is seen that the martyr was beheaded on October 16.

* * *



THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 17

17 октября

New Calendar October 17 · Old Calendar October 30 (civil dates)

Passion of the Venerable Martyr Andrew of Crete

Страдание святого преподобномученика Андрея Критского

Much time had passed since the many cruel persecutions raised against the Church of Christ by impious kings and princes had ceased. After this, the Church of God, as though planted in fertile soil and watered with the precious blood of the servants of God, spread throughout all the ends of the earth. Peace and unity of faith dwelt in the house of the Lord; piety flourished, good morals were established among men, the commandments of the Lord were observed, and the faithful prospered in every virtue. Then the devil, envying this, began to turn the faithful away from Christ. Yet he acted not openly, as before, but secretly, with the cunning peculiar to him. To this end, he stirred up iconoclasm among the Christians themselves. At the devil's instigation there appeared among the Christians men who, under the guise of zeal for God, began to reject the veneration of holy icons. The devil suggested this to men so that, having rejected the icon of Christ, they might also reject Christ Himself, for whatever is depicted on an icon pertains to the one whose image is depicted upon it. And so the hater of mankind's salvation, the devil, stirred up to this purpose the emperor Constantine—not the Equal-to-the-Apostles, who enlightened the world with the faith of Christ, but another of the same name, surnamed Copronymus, that is, "Dung-named"[1], since he first defiled the font of his baptism with dung, and afterward defiled the Church of Christ with his godless heresy. The foolish emperor began to say that it

1. The name Constantine Copronymus derives from the Greek word "kopros," meaning dung or filth.

was not fitting for Christians to worship and venerate icons, for this was pagan idolatry. He did not understand that if an object is in itself harmful to the soul, then its image is likewise harmful to the soul and must not be permitted. But if an object is good in its essence and beneficial to the soul, then its image too is a good work and profitable to the soul. The gods of the pagans are evil and destructive to the soul, and therefore their worship is forbidden. Likewise, their images are an evil and destructive to the soul, and the Law of God forbade their veneration. Holy is the Lord our God Jesus Christ; holy are His servants, and they greatly benefit our souls, as David also said: "To me, Thy friends are exceedingly honorable, O God" (Ps. 138:17). Therefore the images of the Lord and of His honorable friends—of whom the Lord said, "You are My friends" (Jn. 15:14)—are holy and profitable to the soul, and we ought to venerate them, knowing that the honor rendered to icons passes to the person depicted upon them. The lawless emperor Copronymus, not understanding this, sent throughout all the lands of his realm an order that all icons be cast out of the houses of the Lord and that no one dare keep them in his home. With this he threatened terrible torments and death for all who refused to obey his command; and at that time there was great distress, sorrow, and lamentation in the Church of God.[6736] Many of the faithful, fearing the emperor's terrible threat, fled and hid themselves: the cities were emptied, and the people scattered through the wilderness. Of those who remained, some obeyed the emperor's command and ceased to venerate icons, while others, holding firmly to the tradition of the holy Fathers, fearlessly resisted the iconoclasts and were subjected on that account to various torments. At that time all the places of confinement, prisons, and deep dungeons were filled not with robbers, thieves, or any kind of criminals, but with bishops, priests, monks, and other pious people.

At that time there was on the island of Crete a pious and God-fearing man named Andrew. He had renounced the world and its glory and despised all worldly pleasures: taking up his cross, he walked the narrow path leading to heaven and brought many with him to the same God-pleasing life. When he heard that in Constantinople the lawless Copronymus, on account of his new heretical, blasphemous, iconoclastic

teaching, was holding many saints in chains, Andrew was inflamed with zeal for the faith and love of Christ and went to Constantinople. There, without any fear, but with great boldness, he openly instructed the people not to be deceived by the emperor's words and heretical teaching; and he strengthened those who were firm in the faith, stirring them up to true confession and endurance amid torments.

When Andrew saw that the iconoclasts, by the emperor's command, were cruelly beating some with sinews for venerating the holy icons, scorching others with fire, putting out the eyes of some, cutting out the tongues of others, and cutting off the hands and feet of still others, he could not endure it. At once Andrew went to the church of the holy Martyr Mamas, where the emperor was then staying with many of his dignitaries. Pressing through the crowd gathered there, he boldly stood before the emperor and cried aloud:

"Why, O emperor, do you call yourself a Christian and a servant of Christ, yet trample upon the icons of Christ and do so much evil to His servants?"

Andrew would have continued his speech further, but the emperor ordered that he be seized. At once the servants rushed upon Andrew; some seized him by the head, others by the arms, and some by the shoulders and clothing. Having thrown Andrew to the ground, they began to beat him, drag him along the ground, and trample upon him. Wishing outwardly to show mercy, the emperor ordered them to stop beating Andrew; then, coming out of the church, he summoned him and began to speak with him himself:

"Whence," he said, "came such boldness upon you, that you came here and revile me to my face? Is it from madness, or from some purpose? Or is it so that I might know you?"

Andrew answered:

"I do this neither from madness, nor with any purpose, nor because I seek vain glory from you, for I despise everything you possess in the world as a dream and regard it as smoke. But I heard of your evil teaching, by which you dishonor the holy icons and persecute the holy Church of God. Therefore 'zeal for Thy house consumes me' (Ps. 68:10), and I came here from afar, either to persuade you or to die my-

self for my Christ. If He, my Lord, died for me, then must I not, as His image, die for His image?"

The emperor said to Andrew:

"What madness and folly it is to give the glory of the incorruptible God to wood, paints, and stone, and to pay no heed to what God commanded Moses—not to make any likeness! Whence has this madness grown in you, that you resist such evident truth and deliver yourselves to destruction? Believe me: I shall torment you not for the sake of truth, nor for Christ, but for your shameless boldness and resistance."

Andrew could not bear such blasphemy and said:

"Impious man! Does not he who suffers for Christ's icons suffer for Christ? Does not the dishonor you inflict upon an icon pass to Him who is depicted upon it? Why, then, do you cruelly put to death those who dishonor and overthrow your images and statues? You exist today as dust, and tomorrow you will vanish; yet you desire to be held in honor through your images. How much greater, then, is the sin of assailing the Image of Christ! For the dishonor done to the icon of Christ is dishonor to Christ Himself, whose countenance is depicted upon the icon."

Then St. Andrew would have explained which images God commanded through Moses to be made in place of gods, but the emperor would not let him continue, and said:

"If kings are angered when only their images are insulted, they are much more angered when they are reviled to their face."

And at once he ordered that the saint be stripped and beaten without mercy. But the saint endured all the tortures manfully; then the emperor began to persuade Andrew with flattery to obey his impious command. But St. Andrew, lifting his eyes to heaven, said:

"God forbid that I should deny my Christ in His holy icon. It would be better for you, O emperor, to concern yourself with military affairs and govern the people than to persecute Christ and oppress His servants."

Then the emperor ordered that Andrew be cruelly beaten again, so that even the earth was stained with his blood. Some of those standing nearby, to please the emperor, began to throw stones at Andrew; they smashed his mouth and crushed his ribs. At last, after many torments,

the saint was cast into prison, where, after remaining for some time, he strengthened in piety the faithful who came to him. After this, the emperor ordered Andrew to be brought out of prison again and tortured anew, reopening his former wounds; during these tortures the saint's body was torn apart and broken. Finally, they bound the saint's feet and dragged him along the ground through the city to the place where criminals are executed, and there the tormentor ordered that St. Andrew be put to death. As they dragged him through the marketplace, one of the heretics—a fishmonger—learned the reason for the saint's suffering and, instructed by a demon, seized a knife and cut the martyr's leg. Thus he brought Andrew's long-suffering journey to an end, for the martyr died at once from the wound inflicted upon him.[2]

The body of St. Andrew was cast into an abyss with the corpses of criminals and lay there for more than 12 weeks. By God's command, people possessed by unclean spirits began coming there from various lands. They took the body of St. Andrew from the abyss and from among the corpses and laid it in a holy place; and at once, as a worthy recompense for this, they received healing. Through the saint's prayers, many sick people received healing at his tomb, for St. Andrew has boldness before God and prays for us all, standing together with the saints before the throne of the Lord for ever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Having prepared thyself for ascetic struggle upon the mountain[3]*, thou didst destroy the spiritual hosts of enemies with the full armor of the Cross, O all-blessed one. Then, manfully arraying thyself for martyrdom, thou didst slay Copronymus with the sword of faith; and for both thou wast crowned by God, O ever-memorable Venerable Martyr Andrew.*

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Let us once more cry out in love, O blessed of God, with thanksgiving to him whose name is akin to courage[4]*, and with*

2. St. Andrew reposed in the year 767; 100 years later, St. Joseph the Hymnographer composed a canon for him (see the October Menaion, day 17).

praises to the mystic herald of piety; and since thou hast boldness before the Lord, deliver us from every grievous affliction, that we may sing: Rejoice, ever-memorable Father.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Hosea

Память святого пророка Осии

The holy Prophet Hosea, son of Beeri, was of the tribe of Issachar[5]. At that time, many of the people of Israel had turned away from the true God and, forgetting His benefactions and miracles, worshipped idols. But Hosea, being a God-fearing man, served the one true God, Who created heaven and earth and brought the Hebrews out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Hosea instructed the people who had fallen away from the truth, and by his wise admonitions turned them again to the piety of their fathers.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Hosea prophesied much concerning the people of Israel. Rebuking the lawless inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel, he foretold great calamities from their enemies, their removal into captivity in Assyria, and thereafter their return to God[6]. He foretold the spread of true knowledge of God throughout the earth (Hos. 2:20; cf. Jer. 31:34), the cessation of the Aaronic priesthood and of the Old Testament sacrifices (Hos. 3:5), as well as the return of the Infant Jesus from Egypt[6742], His Resurrection on the third day[7], and victory over death[8]. All these prophecies were recorded by Hosea in his book,

3. Here the island of Crete is meant, abounding in mountains and distinguished by steep shores, impassable in some places.

5. The Prophet Hosea lived in the kingdom of Israel and prophesied in the days of Hosea, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam II, king of Israel (Hos. 1:1). Among the so-called Minor Prophets, his contemporaries were Micah and Amos; among the Major Prophets, Isaiah. According to the accounts of Sts. Ephraim the Syrian, Dorotheus, and Epiphanius, the Prophet Hosea was from Beelmoth, a city in the tribe of Issachar.

6. The prophecies of Hosea contain: 1) a rebuke of the contemporary impiety, idolatry and moral corruption, also a rebuke of the alliances of the Jews with pagan nations in hope of their strength, and a call to repentance and amendment; 2) threats of the Assyrian captivity; 3) consolation through the prediction of deliverance from captivity and of the coming of the Kingdom of the Messiah, which, in keeping with the infant state of the people, is depicted under the image of earthly greatness.

which consists of 14 chapters. Since they were spoken through the Holy Spirit, all these prophecies are numbered among the other God-inspired books of Holy Scripture.

The Prophet Hosea lived many years[9] and reposed in extreme old age, 820 years before the Nativity of Christ, and was buried peacefully in his own land.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian

Страдание святых бессребреников Космы и Дамиана

Three pairs of holy physician Unmercenaries named Cosmas and Damian are known. One pair was born of a pagan father and a mother, Theodota, a pious Christian; they reposed peacefully[10] and were laid to rest in a place called Pheremane[11]. Another pair lived in Rome and met their death at the hands of their envious teacher, who deceitfully led them up a mountain as though to gather medicinal herbs, and there stoned them[12]. The third pair, whose commemoration is celebrated today, were natives of Arabia. Having believed in Christ, they began to heal countless sick people without payment—not with any herb or other skillfully compounded remedies, as physicians skilled in their art do, but by the power of Christ; for, as they went through cities

7. The prophecy of the Messiah's resurrection on the third day is contained in Hos. 6:2. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians the Apostle Paul refers this prophecy to the risen Christ, when he says that Christ "rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:4).

8. In verse 14 of the thirteenth chapter of the Prophet Hosea, the thought of the powerlessness of hell before God is set forth (in the form of a question): "I will ransom them from the power of hell; I will deliver them from death. O death! Where is thy sting? O hell! Where is thy victory?" The Apostle Paul says: "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O hell, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:54–55). Thus the Apostle refers the fulfillment of the prophecy to the final triumph over death on the day of the general resurrection of the dead.

9. The prophetic ministry of Hosea continued for more than 60 years.

10. Their memory is celebrated on 1 November.

11. Pheremane was situated in Asia, two days' journey from Amida (in Turkish, Diyarbakır), and was destroyed by the Turks at their first conquests.

12. They suffered under the emperor Carinus in the year 284; their memory is celebrated on 1 July.

and villages, they preached Christ and in His name bestowed healing upon all who were ill.

When they had become famous everywhere for their teaching and miracles, they were seized by the hegemon. This took place during the reign of the impious emperors Diocletian and Maximian, persecutors and tormentors of Christians. Brought to the city of Cilicia, these holy physicians Cosmas and Damian stood before the hegemon Lysias. He began to ask them their names, country, and faith; after this, he sought to compel them to sacrifice to idols. But since the saints would not do so and boldly preached Christ, the hegemon first ordered them to be beaten mercilessly and inhumanly, and then, bound, cast into the depths of the sea. By the power of God, however, the saints were saved from drowning, for an Angel of the Lord loosed their bonds and brought them safely ashore. When the hegemon saw this, he ordered them brought before him and asked:

"Tell me, by what sorcery were you saved from the sea? For I too wish to follow your teaching."

They answered:

"We Christians know no sorcery, nor have need of it: we have the power of Christ, which delivers us from every peril and saves every person who calls upon the Most Holy Name of Christ."

After this, the saints were taken to prison. The next day they were brought out, and the torturer ordered them cast into the fire; but even in the fire they remained unharmed, for the fire lost its natural force, did not touch them, and did them no harm. Greatly astonished at this, the hegemon ordered the holy physicians to be hung up and tortured mercilessly. Then, at the torturer's command, the servants began to hurl stones at the saints in order to kill them, but the stones rebounded from their bodies as from a wall, struck those who cast them, and killed them instead.

After this, they began to shoot arrows at the saints, but the arrows, like the stones, did not harm their bodies and instead wounded those who shot them. At last, seeing that the sufferers were invincible, the hegemon condemned them to be beheaded with the sword. Thus the holy Unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian were beheaded for Christ, to-

gether with their three brothers, Leontius, Anthimus, and Eutropius[13]; they were all buried together. They received the gift of working many miracles not only during their lifetime but also after their death, appearing to the sick and granting them healing. By their prayers, may we too receive from Christ healing for the illnesses of our souls and bodies. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of St. Lazarus the Righteous, the Four-Days-Dead

Память святого праведного Лазаря Четверодневного

St. Lazarus the Righteous, brother of Martha and Mary, lived with his sisters not far from Jerusalem, in the village of Bethany. Lazarus and his sisters were granted special favor by the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 11:3). During His earthly life, the Lord often visited their home in Bethany, called Lazarus His friend (Jn. 11:11), and shortly before His Passion raised Lazarus from the dead, after he had already lain four days in the tomb[14]. After this event, Lazarus is mentioned only once more in Holy Scripture: when, six days before Pascha, the Lord came again to Bethany, Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead, was there (Jn. 12:1–2). While the Lord was in Bethany, many of the Jews learned that He was there and came not only for the sake of Jesus Christ, but also to see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. Many of them were convinced of the truth of the miracle performed by the Lord, turned to faith in Him, and became His followers. Seeing this, the chief priests then resolved to kill Lazarus as well (Jn. 12:9–11). We know nothing more about Lazarus from the Gospel.

Tradition says that Lazarus remained alive for another 30 years after his resurrection, was bishop on the island of Cyprus[15], where, like

13. Their memory is celebrated on the same day, 17 October.

14. Jn. 11:17–44. The raising of Lazarus is commemorated by the Church on the Saturday of the sixth week (Lazarus Saturday) of the Great Lent. This miracle was one of the greatest miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ: it bore the clearest witness to His divine omnipotence and His lordship over death, and at the same time served as a living sign of our general resurrection and as a type of the Lord's own resurrection.

the Apostles, he labored greatly in spreading Christianity, and there also reposed peacefully. In the IX century after the Nativity of Christ, the holy relics of Lazarus the Righteous were uncovered in the city of Kition[16], where they lay in the earth, in a marble coffin bearing the inscription: "Lazarus, the Four-Days-Dead, the friend of Christ." This precious treasure was taken from the earth and placed in a silver reliquary; in the reign of the Byzantine emperor Leo the Wise, it was translated to Constantinople and placed in a church dedicated to St. Lazarus the Righteous, built earlier by the emperor Basil the Macedonian.

Troparion to Lazarus the Four-Days-Dead, Bishop of Kition:

As a great treasure and wealth that cannot be stolen, thou camest to us from Cyprus, O Lazarus, by the Providence of God, the God of all, and by the command of the pious emperor, granting the gift of healing to those who honor thee and delivering from afflictions and every harm those who call upon thee in faith: Save all by thy prayers, O Lazarus our father.

* * *

NOTES

6736. The long reign of the emperor Constantine Copronymus (741–775) was a time when iconoclasm reached its fullest development and strength in the Greek Church. The emperor Constantine Copronymus himself was the most zealous of iconoclasts. The example of his father, Leo the Isaurian (716–741), and his upbringing in strict iconoclastic principles made him an implacable enemy of the veneration of icons. Zealous venerationists were forced to flee abroad—especially to Rome—or to hide in secluded places. The boldest, most resolute, and most courageous opponents of the emperor's measures and decrees were the monks, who showed themselves to be fearless champions of Orthodoxy. The monks' zeal exerted a strong influence at that time upon the minds of Christian society. The extent of the cruelty in the persecution of monks is evident from the

15. According to tradition, Lazarus, while a bishop, was granted a visitation of the Mother of God and received from Her an omophorion made by Her most pure hands.

16. Kition was a city on the southern coast of the island of Cyprus, near the present-day town of Larnaca. It was one of the nine ancient Phoenician cities. After it the whole island was called Chittim by the Jews. Later, like the other cities of Cyprus, it was occupied by the Greeks.

punishments inflicted upon them. It happened, according to the words of the church historian of that time, Nicephorus, that monks' heads were smashed upon the very icons they had come forward to defend. Among the laity, too, those who were more courageous in confessing Orthodoxy suffered no small persecution during the reign of Copronymus. In general, the persecution of the Orthodox under Copronymus was so severe that it recalled the most cruel of the pagan emperors' persecutions of Christians—that of Diocletian.

6742. The prophecy of the return of the Messiah from Egypt is found in chapter 11 of the book of the Prophet Hosea. Enumerating the mercies He showed to the Jews, the Lord says: "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Hos. 11:1). It is precisely this passage that the Evangelist Matthew indicates when he says: "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Mt. 2:16). Just as the Jewish people in general were a type of the Messiah, so also particular events in the life of the people had a typological "Messianic" significance. The Jews settled in Egypt, saving themselves from famine under Jacob. But when this danger had passed, the Jews were led out from there by God so as to fulfill their destiny in Palestine. So too the Messiah-Christ withdrew, by the providence of God, into Egypt, saving Himself from the malice of Herod. And when the danger had passed, after the death of Herod, the Messiah was called by God out of Egypt into Palestine, to fulfill here His mission.



THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 18

18 октября

New Calendar October 18 · Old Calendar October 31 (civil dates)

Life of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke

Житие святого Апостола и Евангелиста Луки

The holy Evangelist Luke was born in the Syrian city of Antioch. His parents did not belong to the Jewish people; this is attested in part by the very name Luke, shortened from the Latin word "Lucan"[1], and especially by a passage from the Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, where St. Paul clearly distinguishes Luke from "those of the circumcision," that is, the Jews (Col. 4:10–15). In his writings, however, Luke shows a thorough acquaintance with the Law of Moses and Jewish customs; therefore, it may be thought that Luke had already embraced the Jewish faith before his conversion to Christ.[2] Moreover, in his homeland, which was renowned for the flourishing state of its sciences and arts, Luke enriched his mind with various kinds of learning. From the Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Colossians we see that Luke studied the art of medicine;[3] and tradition assures us that he was also a painter. It is likewise beyond doubt that he received a good education in general, for the Greek of his writings is much purer and more correct than that of the other New Testament writers.

1. This name, "Lucan," is found in some ancient manuscripts of the Latin translation of the Gospel of Luke. An example of such an abbreviation of a name may be seen in the name Silas, which is shortened from Silvanus. (Acts 15:22; 2 Cor. 1, etc.)

2. Pagans who accepted the Jewish faith were called proselytes of the gate, and those of them who, together with the Jewish faith, also accepted circumcision, were called proselytes of righteousness. Such were, in the primitive Church: the courtier of the Ethiopian queen Candace, baptized by the Apostle Philip (Acts 8:27–40); such was the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:1–3); such was one of the seven deacons, Nicholas, who, like Luke, was an Antiochene by birth (Acts 6:6); and many others (Mt. 23:15; Acts 2:10).

3. The Apostle Paul calls Luke directly "the beloved physician": "Luke, the beloved physician, greets you," he says (Col. 4:14).

When news of the miracles and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ spread from Galilee throughout Syria and all the surrounding regions, Luke too came from Antioch to Galilee, where the Lord Jesus Christ had begun to sow the seeds of His saving teaching (Mt. 4:24–26; Lk. 4:37). These seeds found good soil in Luke's heart and there bore fruit a hundredfold. Soon the holy Luke was deemed worthy to be received into the company of Christ's seventy apostles, and, having received from the Lord parting instructions and the power to work miracles, he began to go "before the face" of the Lord Jesus Christ, proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom of God and preparing the way for Christ the Savior.[4]

In the last days of the Savior's earthly life, when the sheep of His flock were scattered at the smiting of the Shepherd, the holy Luke was in Jerusalem, grieving and weeping for his Lord, Who had accepted voluntary suffering. At the time of His crucifixion, Luke probably stood "afar off" among those who knew Jesus, and gazed sorrowfully upon the Crucified One (Lk. 23:49). But soon his grief was turned to joy, for on the very day of His Resurrection the risen Lord comforted Luke, deeming him worthy of His appearance and conversation; Luke himself recounts this with particular detail and vividness in his Gospel.[5] Grieving over the death of his Teacher and perplexed about His Resurrection, of which the myrrh-bearing women had told him, Luke was walking with another disciple of the Lord, Cleopas, from Jerusalem to Emmaus,[6] and on the road to that village he was deemed worthy to become a companion of Him Who is "the way, the truth, and the life."[7] The two disciples were walking and talking together when Jesus Himself drew

4. Lk. 10:1–24. – The words of Luke himself do not contradict this tradition; in them he seems to exclude himself from the number of the Apostles, eyewitnesses of the Word (Lk. 1:2). By these words St. Luke means only that he did not belong to the college of the twelve apostles, who, of course, saw many more of the Gospel events than the seventy disciples of the Lord, who went before Him during Christ's preaching.

5. Lk. 24:13–32. Although Luke himself in his Gospel does not name himself here, the very detail of his narrative shows that he was himself that other disciple whose name he did not mention. The Church tradition also says so. And in the Church prayer for those gathering to set out on a journey we read: "O Savior, who didst journey with Luke and Cleopas to Emmaus, go with Thy servants who now desire to travel."

6. Emmaus was a village about 60 stadia (about 12 versts) west of Jerusalem.

7. The words of Christ the Savior Himself, Jn. 14.

near and went with them. The Lord appeared to them, according to the account of the Evangelist Mark, "in another form" (Mk. 16:12), not in the appearance in which they had known Him before. Moreover, by God's special providence, "their eyes were holden" (Lk. 24:16), so that they could not recognize the Lord Who had appeared. They supposed that one of the pilgrims who had gone to Jerusalem for the Paschal feast was walking with them.

"What is this that you are discussing with one another as you walk, and why are you sad?" the Lord asked them.

Cleopas answered Him:

"Are You the only one who has come to Jerusalem and does not know what has happened there in these days?"

"What things?" Jesus asked again.

"The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth," they answered, "Who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; how our chief priests and rulers delivered Him up to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we had hoped," the disciples continued, "that He was the One Who was to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us: they were early at the tomb and did not find His body; and they came back saying that they had seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it as the women had said, but Him they did not see." Then the Lord said to them:

"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?"

And beginning with Moses, Christ the Lord explained to them from all the prophets the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

As they conversed thus with the Lord, the disciples drew near to Emmaus without noticing it; and because the conversation was pleasing to them, while their Companion seemed to be intending to go farther, they began to ask Him to stay with them.

"Stay with us, for the day is already drawing toward evening," they said to Him.

And He went into the village and stayed with them in one house. As He reclined[8] with them at supper, He took bread from the table, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them. As soon as the Lord had done this, the disciples recognized Him at once. In all likelihood, the Lord had performed this action before the disciples previously; moreover, they may have recognized Him by the nail wounds they noticed on His hands. But at that moment the Lord became invisible to them, and they said to one another:

"Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" (Lk. 24:17–32)

Wishing to share their joy with the other disciples of the Lord, Luke and Cleopas rose at once from supper and set out for Jerusalem. There they found the apostles and other disciples gathered in one house and, of course, immediately told them that Christ had risen, and that they had seen Him and spoken with Him. The apostles, in turn, comforted them, saying that the Lord had indeed risen and had appeared to Simon. Then Luke and Cleopas told the apostles in detail all that had happened to them on the way, and how they had recognized Christ the Lord in the breaking of bread. During this conversation, the risen Lord Himself suddenly appeared among the apostles, gave them peace, and calmed their troubled hearts. To convince those who thought that they saw before them only the apparition of their dead Teacher, the Lord showed them the nail wounds in His hands and feet and ate food. Here the Evangelist Luke was again deemed worthy to hear from the Lord an explanation of all that had been said of Him in the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, and received the gift of understanding the Scriptures (Lk. 24:18–49).

After the Lord's Ascension, the holy Luke remained for a time with the other apostles in Jerusalem, but later, according to the testimony of tradition, he departed for his homeland, Antioch, where there were already many Christians. On the way he preached in the city of Sebaste,[9] where the incorrupt relics of St. John the Forerunner were kept. As he was leaving Sebaste, the holy Luke wished to take them with

8. The ancient Jews did not sit, but reclined at table.
9. Sebaste was the principal city of Samaria.

him to his homeland, but the Christians there, who fervently venerated the Lord's Baptist, would not allow Luke to take his holy relics. Then the holy Luke took from them the right hand beneath which Christ had once bowed His head when He received baptism from John. With this priceless treasure the holy Luke arrived in his homeland, to the great joy of the Christians of Antioch. He departed from there only when he became the companion and fellow laborer of the holy Apostle Paul, who, according to the account of certain ancient writers, was even his kinsman. This happened, however, only during the holy Apostle Paul's second missionary journey.[10] At that time the holy Luke went with the Apostle Paul to preach in Greece, and Paul left him to strengthen and order the Church in the Macedonian city of Philippi. From that time, for several years, the holy Luke labored in the work of spreading Christianity in Macedonia.[11]

When the Apostle Paul visited Philippi again, at the end of his third missionary journey, Luke, at Paul's commission and by the choice of all the faithful, went to Corinth to collect alms for the poor Christians of Palestine.[12] Having collected the alms, the holy Luke set out with the Apostle Paul for Palestine, visiting on the way the churches situated on the islands of the Archipelago, along the coasts of Asia Minor, in Phoenicia, and in Judea. When the Apostle Paul was held in custody in the Palestinian city of Caesarea, the holy Luke remained with him. Nor did he leave the Apostle Paul when he was sent to Rome to stand trial before Caesar. Together with the Apostle Paul, Luke endured all the hardships of the sea voyage and faced the danger of losing even his life.[13]

10. This apostolic journey continued from the year 52 to the year 55 A.D.

11. Acts 20:6. – Macedonia lay north of Greece, between Illyria, Thrace, the Aegean Sea and the Getae or Balkan. For some time it formed an independent state, which rose to particular height and fame under King Alexander the Great; yet it fell as quickly as it had risen. In the time of the Apostles Macedonia was part of the Roman Empire. Now it is under the Turks. – Philippi was a Macedonian border city, named after the Macedonian king Philip, who renewed and fortified it.

12. "With him we have sent also the brother (by the Apostle Titus), praised in all the churches for the Gospel, and moreover chosen by the churches to accompany us in this act of grace, which we serve to the glory of the Lord Himself and in accordance with your zeal" (2 Cor. 8:18–19). The ancient commentators understand by "the brother" the Apostle Luke. St. John Chrysostom sees here an indication of St. Luke's consecration as bishop ("was consecrated," in Greek *cheirotonēthis*).

After arriving in Rome, the holy Luke also remained with the Apostle Paul and, together with Mark, Aristarchus, and some other companions of the apostle, preached Christ in this capital of the ancient world.[14] It was also in Rome that the holy Luke wrote his Gospel and the book of the Acts of the holy Apostles.[15] In the Gospel he portrayed the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ not only on the basis of what he himself had seen and heard, but also taking into account all that had been delivered by "those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word."[16] The holy Apostle Paul guided him in this work and afterward approved the Gospel written by the holy Luke. Likewise, the book of the Acts of the Apostles was written, as Church tradition tells us, at the command of the Apostle Paul.[17]

After two years' imprisonment in Roman chains, the Apostle Paul received his freedom and, leaving Rome, visited some of the churches he had founded earlier. St. Luke accompanied him at this time also. Before long, the Emperor Nero raised a fierce persecution against the

13. The hardships of this long journey the holy Apostle Luke described in chapters 27 and 28 of the Book of Acts.

14. This is clearly seen from the epistles of the Apostle Paul written at that time to the Colossians and to Philemon.

15. Judging by the close connection between this Gospel and the Book of the Acts of the Apostles (Lk. 1:1–4; Acts 1:1), written after the Gospel and appearing in Rome about the year 63, one must acknowledge that between the writing of the one book and the other very little time elapsed, and that the Gospel also appeared in Rome about the year 61 or 62. This is also confirmed by the subscriptions found in some manuscripts. – St. Luke wrote both his Gospel and the Book of the Acts of the Apostles for a certain "most excellent" Theophilus (Lk. 1:3; Acts 1:1). Ancient tradition speaks of a certain distinguished Christian, Theophilus of Antioch, whom they understand to be the one for whom St. Luke wrote the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

16. Lk. 1:2. – "In comparison with the other writers of the Gospels," says St. John Chrysostom, "St. Luke is distinguished by the fullness with which he embraces the events of the New Testament, beginning with the nativity of St. John the Forerunner, of whom he alone speaks. Likewise the last Gospel event, the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, which is not mentioned at all by Matthew and John, and is mentioned briefly by Mark, St. Luke alone related in detail." – The Holy Gospel according to Luke, by the rule of the Orthodox Church, apart from special cases, is read at the Liturgy on all days from the 17th to the 29th week after Pentecost; and from the 29th week until Meatfare Sunday only on Saturdays and Sundays, and on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday of Meatfare week.

17. In the Book of the Acts of the Holy Apostles, St. Luke described in detail the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and their labors, performed after the Lord's ascension, for the spread and establishment of the Christian faith in Judea and other lands of the world. "But above all," says St. John Chrysostom, "St. Luke here described the deeds of the holy Apostle Paul, whose beloved disciple and closest fellow-worker he was."

Christians in Rome. At this time the Apostle Paul came to Rome a second time, that he might encourage and strengthen the persecuted Church by his word and example, and, if it should please God, share with the faithful the crown of martyrdom. He was seized by the pagans and put in chains. Even now St. Luke did not forsake his teacher, and of all the Apostle's companions he alone was with him at this time, so grievous that the Apostle compared himself to a victim destined for slaughter.

"I am already becoming a sacrifice," the Apostle Paul wrote to his disciple Timothy, "and the time of my departure is at hand. Make every effort to come to me quickly. For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present age, and has departed to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me."[18]

It is very likely that Luke witnessed the martyrdom of the Apostle Paul in Rome. After the Apostle Paul's death, St. Luke, as Church tradition relates, preached Christ in Italy, Dalmatia, and Gaul, and especially in Macedonia, where he had labored for several years before, as well as in Achaia, which borders Macedonia.[19]

Already in deep old age, the Apostle Luke undertook a journey to distant Egypt, and there endured many labors and hardships for the glory of the holy name of Jesus. He came to Egypt after first passing through all Libya,[20] and in Egypt, in Thebaid, he converted many to Christ. In the city of Alexandria he ordained a certain Avilius bishop in place of Annianus, who had been ordained by the Evangelist Mark and had served for 22 years. Returning to Greece, he again established churches there, chiefly in the region of Boeotia,[21] ordained priests and deacons, and healed those who were sick in body and soul. Like his

18. 2 Tim. 4:6, 10. – Perhaps St. Luke, both before and at this time, eased the illnesses of the Apostle in prison, who, as Church tradition says, suffered from headaches and other bodily ailments, and for this earned from the Apostle the name "beloved physician."

19. Dalmatia was the southern part of the Illyrian province, which bordered on Pannonia to the north, on Italy to the west and on the Adriatic Sea. – Gaul comprised the lands lying between the ocean, the Pyrenees, the Mediterranean Sea, the Alps and the Rhine. Achaia was a region in southern Greece, occupying the northern part of the Peloponnese peninsula.

20. Libya was a province in northern Africa. There were many Greek colonies there (among the Greeks, however, all of Africa was sometimes called Libya).

21. Boeotia was a region of central Greece.

friend and guide, the Apostle Paul, St. Luke "fought the good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith." He died at the age of 84 in Achaia, a martyr's death, being hanged upon an olive tree, since no cross was at hand.[22] His precious body was buried in Thebes, the chief city of Boeotia, where his holy relics, which bestowed many healings, remained until the second half of the fourth century; they were then translated to the capital of the Eastern Empire, Constantinople.

The place where the relics of the holy Apostle Luke lay became known in the fourth century through the healings that took place there. Especially many healings occurred among those suffering from diseases of the eyes.[23] The Emperor Constantius, son of Constantine the Great, who was Equal-to-the-Apostles, learning from a bishop of Achaia that the body of St. Luke rested in Thebes, sent Artemius, the governor of Egypt, to translate the relics of St. Luke to the capital; and he accomplished this translation with great solemnity.[24]

During the translation of Luke's holy relics from the seashore to the church, the following miracle took place. A certain Anatolius, a eunuch (one of the royal chamberlains), was suffering from an incurable disease. He had spent much money on physicians, but could obtain no healing; and now, having faith in the wonderworking power of the precious relics of the Apostle Luke, he began to beseech the saint for healing. He then approached the saint's precious reliquary and, with all the strength he had, helped carry it. And what happened? His illness left him after he had walked only a few steps. After this, he joyfully carried the precious reliquary as far as the church of the holy Apostles, where the relics of St. Luke were placed beneath the Holy Table, together with the relics of the holy Apostles Andrew and Timothy. Here the holy relics were a source of miracles and were venerated with especial love by Orthodox Christians.

Ancient Church writers relate that St. Luke, fulfilling the pious desire of the foremost Christians, was the first to paint an icon of the

22. As St. Gregory the Theologian testifies in his first oration against the Emperor Julian.
23. As if in token of the medical skill of the Apostle Luke, the Lord sent down rain upon the place of the holy Apostle's burial, a healing "kollyrion," that is, a medicinal eye-lotion for eye disease.
24. The translation of the relics of St. Luke is commemorated by the Church on April 22.

Most Holy Theotokos, holding in her arms the Pre-eternal Child, our Lord Jesus Christ; afterward he painted two other icons of the Most Holy Theotokos and brought them for the Mother of God to behold. Having examined these icons, she said:

"May the grace of Him who was born of me, and my mercy, be with these icons."[25]

St. Luke also painted on boards images of the holy chief Apostles Peter and Paul, and thus made a beginning of the good and honorable work of painting holy icons to the glory of God, the Mother of God, and all the Saints; for the adornment of holy churches and the salvation of the faithful who piously venerate these holy icons. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 5:

Let us praise in sacred hymns the all-lauded Apostle Luke, the narrator of the Acts of the Apostles and the radiant writer of Christ's Gospel, glorious in Christ's Church: for he is a physician, healing the infirmities of mankind, the diseases of the body, and the wounds of souls, and praying unceasingly for our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Let us praise Luke the divine star of the Church, the preacher of true piety and orator of ineffable mysteries: for the Word chose him, with wise Paul, as a teacher of the nations, He who alone knoweth the hearts.

* * *

25. The Orthodox Church, honoring the holy icons of the Mother of God, calls upon Her thus in her hymns: "Thy icon, first painted by the herald of the mysteries of the Gospel and brought to thee, O Queen, that thou mightest make it thine own and make it mighty to save those who honor thee; and thou didst rejoice, being once more merciful, as the cause of our salvation." (Stichera from the service to the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God, October 22). – In Moscow, in the Dormition Cathedral, there is kept the (Vladimir) icon of the Mother of God, which, according to church tradition, was also painted by St. Luke.

Life of Venerable Julian

Житие преподобного Иулиана

Venerable Julian was born of parents who were neither noble nor wealthy. In his youth he received no secular education, but acquired true knowledge of the Christian faith not merely in word, but in deed.

When he had reached the age of majority, Julian withdrew from the world and settled in a cave in the Parthian desert.[26] Here he strove, as far as he could, to subdue all his worldly desires and to rise above all that is fleeting and corruptible; to this end, he partook of bread with salt and water only once a week. The psalms of the holy Prophet and King David, and his continual meditation and prayerful converse with God, served him as comfort and spiritual nourishment.

As a lamp set upon a mountain's summit cannot be hidden, so the righteous life of the saint could not remain concealed from men. News of the holy ascetic soon reached the ears of the people, and before long many came to Julian, desiring to live under his guidance and according to the example of his life. Having obtained the holy father's permission, they settled near his cave in tents they had made, and began to struggle under the guidance of their wise instructor.

St. Julian did not live long with those who had come to him. Desiring to lead a life of complete solitude and prayer, he left the brotherhood and withdrew 50 versts farther into the desert, where he lived in complete seclusion; only rarely did he come to the brotherhood he had left, in order to instruct them.

Once, when the saint had given instruction to the brotherhood and was preparing to set out for the desert, a young man named Asterius earnestly begged him to take him along. He had been brought up in luxury, yet possessed such zeal for piety that it exceeded his strength. Julian at first tried to dissuade the young man from the difficult journey into the desert, where there was not even any water; but, persuaded by his determination, he yielded to his request and took him along. Asterius gladly followed the elder; but after three days he grew weak and began to faint. At last, utterly exhausted, he begged the holy elder to

26. This desert extended from the land of the Parthians to the banks of the river Euphrates.

have mercy on him and ease his distress. The saint gave him leave to turn back, but Asterius was so exhausted that he could no longer walk; moreover, he did not know how to return to the cave. Then the man of God, moved by his companion's suffering and yielding to his weakness, fell to his knees and prayed so fervently to God for the young man's deliverance that he even wet the ground with his tears. The saint's prayer was heard: the drops of his tears, falling to the earth, brought forth a spring of water.

In speaking of the great dignity of Julian's prayer, one must also mention his meekness, of which the following incident bears witness. Once Asterius, the disciple of St. Julian mentioned above, who had himself become an ascetic and guide of others and often visited his beloved teacher, brought him a large sack of figs as a gift, carrying it on his shoulders as a token of his devotion. He bore this burden for seven days on the road. Troubled and grieved that another man had so labored on his account, Julian would not benefit from his toil and refused to accept the gift. But when Asterius assured the elder that he would not take the burden from his shoulders until Julian consented to accept the offering, the Venerable Father, though reluctant to accept food obtained through another's labor, saw his sincere desire to serve him and accepted this kindness.

"I will fulfill your request," the saint then said, "but quickly set this burden down from your shoulders."

During the war of the Emperor Julian the Apostate against the Persians, many of the faithful, knowing the Venerable Father to be a faithful servant of God, asked him to pray for the overthrow of this enemy of the Christians. For ten days the Venerable Father prayed for deliverance from the evil persecutor, and at last he heard a voice:

"The unclean and abominable beast has perished."

Having finished his prayer, the Venerable Father returned joyfully to the brotherhood. When they asked him the reason for his joy, Julian answered:

Brethren, the present time is a time of good cheer and rejoicing: the impious one is no more; he who rose up against the Lord has received a worthy defeat from the hand that pursued him. Therefore I rejoice, see-

ing that the churches he persecuted are triumphant, and that the apostate received no help from the demons he honored.[27]

St. Julian labored much in the struggle against the Arian heresy, which had spread at that time. To this end he, a lover of the silent desert, left it, so as not to keep silent about the truth.

The Arians, to spread their false teaching, circulated a rumor in Antioch that the Venerable Julian held to the dogmas they preached. Then Acacius and Asterius, disciples of the saint, urged on by the pious men Flavian and Diodore, went to Julian, that he might come to the aid of the Orthodox who were perishing through seduction. Coming to the saint, they told him what the Christians were suffering at the hands of the Arians.[28] Hearing this, the elder at once set out for Antioch. Reaching a village at nightfall, he stopped to rest in the house of a pious woman who had a seven-year-old son. While the saint was at supper, her son, slipping unnoticed from the table, fell into a well. The pious woman, learning of this, showed no agitation; she ordered the well to be covered and continued to serve the saint. So great was her faith that in the presence of a man of prayer, already known for the gift of wonderworking, no misfortune could befall her house. And the Lord did according to her faith.

When, before partaking of food, the saint asked about the boy, the mistress of the house answered:

"Some sickness has fallen upon him, and he is lying down." The saint insisted that the boy come out to him and receive a blessing. Then the hostess was compelled to tell of the misfortune that had occurred. The saint at once went out, and, removing the cover from the well, saw the boy borne up by the water, completely well; extending his hand to him, he drew him out of the well. When the boy was asked what had happened to him, he said:

"I experienced nothing bad, for the holy elder carried me over the water, not allowing me to drown."

27. The death of Julian followed in 363.

28. The position of the Orthodox was burdensome chiefly because at that time the imperial throne was occupied by the Arian Valens (364–378), who sought by various oppressive measures to spread Arianism.

From there the Venerable went to Antioch and settled in the cave in which the holy Apostle Paul had once hidden. A great crowd gathered around the cave to receive consolation and blessing from the saint; but he, seized by a cruel "fever" (a burning sickness), lay in a state of unconsciousness. At last he came to himself, prayed for himself, and at once the sickness left him. Then, going out to those who were waiting, he humbly said:

"If my blessing is profitable to you, may God grant it."

Here the holy ascetic worked not only bodily but also spiritual healings by his word; soon the slanderers were exposed and put to shame, and the adherents of the truth were comforted and gladdened.

Once there met him on the road a sick man lying beside the way, who, touching the hem of his garment, at once rose and followed him, like the lame man following Peter and John (Acts 3:1–11). The Venerable restored to the sufferer not only bodily health but also confirmed him in the Orthodox faith.

Then he returned to his desert, and, remaining there to deep old age, peacefully departed to the Lord.[29]

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the suffering of the Martyr Marinus the Elder, who suffered under Diocletian in the city of Tarsus.

29. Venerable Julian reposed at the end of the fourth century.

THE NINETEENTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 19

19 октября

New Calendar October 19 · Old Calendar November 1 (civil dates)

Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Joel

Память святого пророка Иоиля

The Prophet Joel—one of the twelve Minor Prophets—was the son of Pethuel[1]. According to an ancient tradition recorded by St. Ephraim the Syrian, as well as by Epiphanius and Dorotheus, the Prophet Joel came from the region beyond the Jordan[2] and lived in the city of Bethoron or Bethara[3].

The occasion for Joel's prophetic utterances was a great calamity that befell the kingdom of Judah[4]. A prolonged drought and swarms of locusts, arriving in immense numbers, utterly devastated the land of Judah. In such a calamity even those strong in faith lost heart, to say nothing of the faint-hearted. And so the Prophet Joel calls the people to turn to Jehovah[5] with a prayer for help, for "the day of the Lord is near" (Joel 2:1). That day will be a day of terrible calamities. The misfortunes that befell Judah—the locusts and drought—are its image and portent. Before that day comes, heaven and earth will be shaken, all the heavenly luminaries will grow dark, and then Jehovah will appear with His great army. Yet even now, Joel admonished, there is a means of escaping such great calamities, both those already present—the locusts

1. Thus the prophet Joel himself names himself (Joel 1:1).
2. Of the tribe of Gad or Reuben.
3. Bethoron (Beth-horon) — a city on the border of the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin.
4. Joel exercised his prophetic ministry in the kingdom of Judah, and all his activity relates to the first twenty-five years of the reign of Joash, that is, to the years 868–843 before the Nativity of Christ.
5. Jehovah (in Slavonic, "the Existing One") — one of the names of God. It signifies the self-existence, eternity and immutability of the Being of God, and is constantly used in Holy Scripture of the one true God.

and drought—and those threatening in the future—the day of the Lord. They must turn to Jehovah with all their heart, and then the Lord will deliver His people from great calamities. "Let a universal fast be appointed," says the prophet, "and let all, without exception, gather in the temple. Then let the priests cry out to the Lord on behalf of all the people: 'Spare, O Lord, Thy people, and give not Thine inheritance to reproach, that the nations should mock them. Why should they say among the nations, Where is their God?'" (Joel 2:17)

The Jewish people heeded the prophet's voice and turned to Jehovah with a prayer for help, and the Lord spared His people. Through the mouth of His prophet Joel, the Lord promises the people prosperity and an abundance of earthly blessings in return for their repentance. The Lord will send rain in due season; grass will grow in the pastures, the trees will bear abundant fruit, the threshing floors will be filled with grain, and the winepresses with grape juice. Then the children of Israel will know that Jehovah will not forsake His people or allow His own to be put to shame (Joel 2:19–27).

According to Joel's prophecy, the Lord's mercy toward the Jewish people who have turned to Him will not be limited to the granting of earthly blessings: a spiritual promise also is given to God's people. The prophet foresees the distant, grace-filled times of the Messiah. A time will come when the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh, without distinction of sex, age, or station. "'I will pour out,' says the Lord through the mouth of the prophet, 'of My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days I will pour out of My Spirit'"[6787] (Joel 2:28–29).

The Prophet Joel also foretold the coming of the universal Judgment—the "day of the Lord"—which will be preceded by terrible signs in heaven and on earth, and on which only those who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved[6]. When the day of the Lord comes, Jehovah will judge the pagans in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and a terrible punishment will befall them (Joel 3:19). Yet the day of the Lord, ter-

rible for the pagans, will not be so for Israel. For Israel it will be a day of salvation, since Jehovah will be its protection and defense. Then blessedness will come to Israel, while all Israel's enemies will perish: "Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. I will cleanse their blood which I have not cleansed, and the Lord shall dwell in Sion" (Joel 3:20–21). Thus the Prophet Joel's utterance comes to a consoling end. Amid all the calamities that befell his homeland, Israel was to find comfort and consolation in this promise. It could hope that Jehovah, rich in mercy and long-suffering, would not forget His people and would deliver them, whatever calamity might befall them.

Troparion of Joel:

Foreknowing the coming of God in the flesh and the descent of the Holy Spirit, and foretelling the Judgment to come, O Prophet Joel, by thy prayers save those who honor thee from all tribulations.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Uar and with him the Seven Christian Teachers, and the Commemoration of Blessed Cleopatra and her son John

Страдание святого мученика Уара и с ним семи учителей христианских и память блаженной Клеопатры и сына ее Иоанна

During the reign of the impious Roman Emperor Maximian, there lived in Alexandria, the chief city of Egypt, a soldier named Uar, who secretly served the King of Heaven. Fearing the lawless idolaters, he concealed his faith in the true God for a time, but afterward revealed it before the whole universe, when for Christ he "became a spectacle to angels and to men" (1 Cor. 4:9)[7].

6. "Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Joel 2:32). The Apostle Paul applies these words of the Prophet Joel to the Gentiles. "Here (that is, in Christianity)," he says, "there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing His riches upon all who call upon Him; for whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:12–13).

7. It was a disgrace — when he became the object of attention.

At that time Maximian raised a persecution against the Christians and sent an edict to all the lands subject to him, commanding that all Christians who refused to offer sacrifice to the gods be put to death. This command reached the lands of Egypt also, and there Christian blood began to be shed without mercy, for all who worshipped the Creator and not the creature were subjected to various torments.

At that time Uar would go by night to the prisons where the faithful were held for confessing Christ. Paying the guards in gold for admittance, he would kiss the bonds of the holy martyrs, wash their blood, bind up their wounds, bring them food, and beseech them to intercede with the Lord for mercy on his behalf.

Once, seven Christian teachers[8] who had been hiding in the deserts were seized and brought before the governor of Egypt. The governor questioned them and, learning that they were steadfast in the faith, tortured them severely and then, binding them, cast them into prison. When Uar heard of this, he hastened, as was his custom, by night to the prison where the saints had been cast. Giving the guards gold, he entered and went to the saints. He loosed the bonds on their hands and freed their feet from the stocks[9], offered them food, and entreated them to eat, for they had eaten nothing for eight whole days. At the same time, falling at their feet, he kissed them and praised their sufferings, saying:

"Blessed are you, good and faithful servants of the Lord, who are to enter into the joy of your Lord, for you have stood for Him even unto blood (Heb. 12:4)[10]. Blessed are you, good athletes, for crowns are being woven for you in heaven by the hand of the Most High, because you 'run with patience the race that is set before us' (Heb. 12:1), and tomorrow, as I firmly know, you will bring your sufferings to an end. Blessed are you, passion-bearers of Christ, to whom the Kingdom of Heaven is opened, for you suffer with Christ, who suffered for us; 'if we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together with Him'

8. That is, hermits, to whom Christians from among the laity came to seek instruction.
9. A wooden board in which holes were made for the hands, feet and even the head, and which was put on prisoners in the dungeon to prevent their escape.
10. That is, they shed their blood for Christ.

(Rom. 8:17). I beseech you, holy servants of God: pray for me to the Master Christ, that He may show me mercy; for I too would like to suffer for Him, but I do not have such steadfastness for it. I fear the torments which I see you enduring."

The saints answered:

"Beloved, no one can attain perfection while fear remains in his heart; no one reaps unless he has sown; no one is crowned unless he has suffered. Remember the Gospel saying: 'Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven' (Mt. 10:33). If you fear temporary torment, you will not escape eternal torment; if you are afraid to confess Christ on earth, you will not be satisfied with the sight of His face in heaven. Come, then, brother, and walk with us along the path of martyrdom to the Master, who looks upon our struggles. Suffer together with us, for you will not soon find another company such as ours."

Hearing these words, Uar was inflamed with love for God and felt within himself the strength to endure every suffering for the name of Christ. He spent that whole night in the prison with the holy martyrs, delighting in their instruction.

When morning came, the governor's servants entered the prison to take the holy martyrs to judgment; there they found Uar sitting with the prisoners and listening with compunction to their words. In astonishment they said to him:

"What are you doing here, Uar? Have you lost your senses, to let yourself be deceived by the fables of these cunning men? Are you not afraid that, if anyone tells the governor and the nobles about this, you will lose not only your military rank but even your life?"

Uar answered:

"Who among you will inform the governor against me? You are my friends. And even if you do inform against me, I am ready to die for Christ together with the Christians."

Then the servants fell silent and took away six of the martyrs. The seventh, weakened by his wounds, remained in the prison and, when he had reposed, departed to Christ, yielding his place to Uar, so that Uar, taking his place, might bring his sufferings to an end.

When the bound saints were brought before the governor, who sat in state on the judgment seat, they were urged to offer sacrifice to the idols. Since they would not obey, they were stripped and mercilessly beaten on those parts of their bodies that had already been wounded before. The infliction of new wounds upon the old increased their sufferings, but they endured, saying only:

"We are Christians."

After this, the governor looked at them and said:

"Were there not seven of them? And now there are only six. Where is the seventh?"

No sooner had the governor said this than St. Uar, who had come there, was filled with divine zeal, stepped into the midst, and said:

"I am the seventh; for one has already finished his course and appeared before Christ, leaving me as heir to his sufferings. Therefore, what he owed you, I am ready to pay on his behalf. I wish to suffer in his place with these good men who suffer for Christ, for I am a Christian."

Hearing these words, the governor asked those standing before him:

"Who is this?" They said:

"The soldier Huar, commander of the Chian cohort[11]."

The governor was astonished and said to Uar:

"What demon taught you to go to certain destruction? For you will lose your military honors, be deprived of the privileges that are yours, and expose your life to great dangers."

Blessed Uar replied:

"The Bread that came down from heaven and the Divine Cup of the most precious Blood of my Lord I prefer to your honors and revenues; nothing is dearer to me than my Christ. Without Him, I value neither your honor, nor my rank, nor great revenues, nor even life itself. For I see my honor in suffering for Christ; my gain in losing everything for Christ; my life in dying for Christ."

Then the governor cast a furious glance at the six martyrs and said:

11. More precisely (from the Greek): of the Tyanean cohort (a part of a regiment). Tyana — a city in Egypt (Tyanis). Roman cohorts bore the names of the cities from whose inhabitants they were recruited.

"This is your doing, impious deceivers. You have beguiled this soldier of the emperor; you have driven him mad with your sorcery. Therefore, I swear by my great gods, I shall destroy you before him, and repay you for the dishonor you have done to our gods. You are unworthy to remain alive, for you blaspheme the immortal gods and, by some deception, make others do this evil deed."

The saints replied:

"We did not beguile Uar, but delivered him from deception; we did not drive him mad, but, on the contrary, brought him to his senses. God has sent him strength and courage to accomplish this feat, so that together with us he may overcome the feeble power of you and your gods. Wait a little, and you shall see his courage in serving Christ, for we have enrolled him in the angelic host. Do you boast that you can destroy us? We desire precisely this: to lay down our heads for the Lord of all people."

Then the governor said:

"I shall at once tear your bodies limb from limb if you do not worship the gods of Egypt!"

The saints replied:

"We renounce the gods who did not create heaven and earth (Jer. 10:11)."

But blessed Uar, wishing to anger the governor still more, said to him:

"'The fool speaks folly,' says the Prophet Isaiah (Is. 32:6)[12]. Behold, their bodies lie stretched out before you—do with them as you will!"

The governor, in his anger, ordered Uar to be stripped and hung upon a tree, to begin his torture; and he said to the saints:

"Let us see who shall overcome whom—you, by enduring torments, or we, by inflicting them upon you. I swear that if you overcome us by your endurance, I shall renounce my gods and believe in your Christ."

The saints replied:

12. That is, from a foolish man one can hear only foolish speech.

"Test your strength on one of us: if you overcome one, you may have the same hope concerning the others."

Uar, who was already being tortured, said to the holy martyrs:

"Holy Passion-bearers! Bless me, your servant, that I may be deemed worthy of your lot. Pray to the Master Christ for me, that He may grant me endurance, for He knows our nature, that our spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak (Mt. 26:41)."

The saints lifted their eyes to heaven and fervently prayed for him, while the servants began to beat Uar's whole body with rods. As Uar endured these blows, the governor said:

"Tell me now, Uar, what profit do you gain from your Christ?"

Uar answered bravely:

"Infinitely greater than you gain from your demons." Meanwhile the saints encouraged Uar, calling to him: "Be brave, Uar, and stand firm, for Christ stands before you, strengthening you invisibly." Uar replied:

"Truly I have felt the help of my Master, for I count these torments as nothing."

Then the torturers began to scrape his body with iron knives and scrapers; afterwards, nailing him upside down to the tree, they flayed the skin from his back, and beat his belly with a knotted stick until it burst open and all his entrails fell to the ground. When the holy martyrs saw his entrails fall out, they wept; and the torturer, seeing the martyrs weeping, cried out loudly:

"Behold, you are defeated; behold, you have grown faint; you weep because you fear the torments. What more do you need in order to understand that Christ cannot deliver you from our hands? All that remains for you now is to worship our gods."

But the saints replied:

"You are a beast, not a man! We are not defeated; on the contrary, we ourselves are victorious through the help of Jesus, Who strengthens us. And if we wept, it was not because we fear the torments, but out of natural love for our brother, whom you torment without pity; in our souls, however, we rejoice, seeing that a crown is already prepared for this good Passion-bearer."

Then the governor ordered them to be taken to prison. When Uar, hanging on the tree and enduring torments, saw the saints being dragged away in chains, he cried out:

"My teachers! Pray to Christ for me one last time, for I am already departing from the body; and I thank you for leading me to eternal life."

After enduring torments for about five hours, St. Uar gave his honorable and holy soul into the hands of the Lord.[13] The torturers, supposing him still alive, beat and tortured his cold body; then, seeing that he had died, they took him down from the tree and, at the torturer's command, dragged him outside the city and threw him to be devoured by dogs, in the place where the carcasses of animals were cast.

A pious widow named Cleopatra, a native of Palestine, whose husband had been a military commander in Egypt and who had a young son named John, watched Uar's sufferings from afar with sorrow. When the saint's body was cast outside the city, she took several of her servants with her by night and secretly carried away the much-suffering body of St. Uar. Bringing it to her home, she dug a grave for him in her bedroom, before her bed, and laid him there.

The next morning the governor brought the other sufferers out of prison and, after torturing them for a long time, beheaded them with the sword and cast them outside the city without burial. Their bodies, too, were buried by night by some secret confessors of the Christian faith. Cleopatra continually burned candles and offered incense over the tomb of St. Uar, honoring him as her great protector and intercessor before God.

After several years had passed and the persecution had abated, Cleopatra wished to return to her homeland, and pondered for a long time how she might take the relics of St. Uar with her. At last, having prepared a valuable gift, she made this request to the governor through an intermediary:

"My husband was a military commander and died here in the service of the emperor; he has not yet received his final burial, for in a foreign

13. The death of St. Varus followed in the year 307.

land he cannot be buried as befits an important military commander. I, left a widow in a foreign country, wish to return to my homeland and my relatives. Therefore, my lord, allow me to take with me the remains of my beloved husband and bury them with honor in my homeland, in the tomb of my ancestors, for I do not wish to be separated from him even after death."

This woman acted thus because Christians, learning that she was taking the relics of the holy martyr out of their city, might have hindered her and taken this precious treasure from her. The governor accepted the gift and permitted her to take away her husband's body. Instead, she took the relics of St. Uar and brought them as a precious treasure from Egypt to Palestine; in her village, called Edra, which lay near Tabor, she laid them with her ancestors. Every day she went to the saint's tomb, offered incense there, and set out candles; and, following her example, other Christians who lived there began to go with her to the saint's tomb and bring their sick, who, through the prayers of St. Uar, received healing at his tomb. The fame of St. Uar spread throughout all the surrounding places, and all hastened in faith to his tomb.

Seeing that the Christians gathered to pray at the saint's tomb, Cleopatra decided to build a church in his name and began carrying out her resolve. By this time her son John had reached the age of 17, and Cleopatra was trying to secure him a place in the emperor's army.[14] With the help of certain intermediaries, she obtained from the emperor an honorable position in the army for her son. He was enrolled in the military service and received the insignia of his rank just as construction of the church in the name of St. Uar was begun. Then Cleopatra said:

"My son shall not serve in the emperor's army until the house of God is completed, for I wish him to carry the bier of the holy martyr with me, and only then fulfill the emperor's command."

When the church's construction was complete, Cleopatra summoned bishops, priests, and monks and, taking the honorable relics of the holy martyr from the tomb, laid them upon a precious bier. Above the relics

14. At this age young men were usually enrolled in military service.

she placed a belt and military garments in which her son was to be clothed, so that they might be sanctified by contact with the saint's relics. At the same time she fervently entreated the saint to be a helper to her son, whom all the assembled hierarchs and priests blessed. An innumerable multitude of Christians also gathered there, and the bier bearing the relics was carried to the church—Cleopatra and her son carried the relics as well. After the church had been consecrated, the saint's relics were placed beneath the Holy Table, upon which the Divine Liturgy began to be celebrated.[15] Cleopatra fell down before the relics of St. Uar and prayed in these words:

"I pray to you, Passion-bearer of Christ: entreat God for me to grant what is pleasing to Him and beneficial to me, and also to my only son. I do not ask for anything beyond what the Lord Himself wills; He knows what is beneficial for us, and may His good and perfect will be accomplished in us!"

When the holy service was over, Cleopatra prepared a rich feast for all who had gathered, and she herself, together with her son, served her guests. At that time her son, while serving the guests, was suddenly taken ill and went to lie down on his bed. When all the guests rose from the table, Cleopatra began to call her son, that he might partake of what remained of the meal; but John could not say a word, burning with the fever. Seeing that her son had fallen ill, the mother said:

"I swear by the Lord that I will not put a morsel of bread into my mouth until I see how my son's sickness ends!"

She sat beside him, cooling as best she could the heat of the sickness that consumed him, and grieving over her only son. At midnight the youth died, leaving his mother in inconsolable sorrow. Weeping, she then hastened to the church of St. Uar, and, falling before his tomb, cried out:

"Is this how you repay me, servant of God, for all that I have labored for you? Is this the help you gave me, when I forsook my husband for your sake and placed all my hope in you? You allowed my only

15. Even at the present time, when Orthodox churches are built, this most ancient custom is observed—setting up the Holy Tables over the bones of martyrs.

son to die, you destroyed my hope, you took from me the light of my eyes. Who will sustain me in my old age? Who will close my eyes after death? Who will bury my body? It would be better for me to die myself than to see my son dead, like a flower withered before its time. Give me back my son, as Elisha once did for the Shunammite woman (4 Kgdms. 4), or else take me too away from here at once, for my bitter grief has made my life a burden to me."

As she lay weeping at the holy tomb, overcome by extreme weariness and great sorrow, she fell briefly into sleep. In a dream St. Uar appeared before her, holding her son by the hand; both were bright as the sun, their garments were whiter than snow, and they wore golden girdles and crowns upon their heads, of indescribable beauty. Seeing them, the blessed Cleopatra threw herself at their feet, but St. Uar raised her up, saying:

"O woman, why do you complain of me? Have I forgotten the services you rendered me in Egypt and during the journey? Or do you think I felt nothing when you took my body from the heap of the slain cattle and laid me in your chamber? Do I not always hear your prayers and pray to God for you? And above all, I besought God concerning your kinsfolk, with whom you laid me in the tomb, that their sins might be forgiven. Then I took your son into the service of the Heavenly King. Did you not yourself ask me here to beg God on your behalf for what is pleasing to Him and profitable to you and to your son? Thus I asked the All-good God, and He in His ineffable goodness was pleased that your son should be received into His heavenly host; and behold, your son, as you see, has now become one of those who stand before the throne of God. If, however, you wish, take him back and send him into the service of an earthly and temporal king; I see that you do not wish him to serve the Heavenly and Eternal King."

The youth, who was sitting in Uar's arms, embraced him and said:

"No, my lord! Do not heed my mother; do not give me back to the world, which is full of unrighteousness and every lawlessness, from which I have been saved through your intercession; do not deprive me, Father, of communion with you and with the saints."

Then, turning to his mother, he said:

"Why do you weep so, mother? I have been numbered among the host of the King, Christ, and I have been granted the right to stand before Him in heaven together with the Angels; yet you now ask that I be taken from the kingdom back into humiliation."

The blessed Cleopatra, seeing that her son was clothed in the angelic rank, said:

"Then take me with you too, that I may be with you."

But St. Uar answered:

"Even remaining here on earth, you are still with us; go in peace, and later, when the Lord commands, we will come and take you."

After these words, both became invisible. And she, coming to herself, felt in her heart an indescribable joy and gladness, and related her vision to the priests; together with them she honorably buried her son at the tomb of St. Uar, no longer weeping, but rejoicing in the Lord. After this she distributed her property to the needy, and she herself, renouncing the world, lived at the church of St. Uar, serving God day and night in fasting and prayer. Every week on Sundays St. Uar appeared to her during her prayer, together with her son, in radiant brightness. Having spent seven years in such labors, the blessed Cleopatra reposed, well-pleasing to God. Her body was laid in the church of St. Uar, near the body of her son John; and her holy soul, together with St. Uar and John, stands before God in heaven in joy, to Whom be glory unto ages of ages, amen.

Troparion to Uar and with him the seven Christian teachers:

O Passion-bearer, seeing the host of holy ones who suffer lawfully, thou didst show thy manly strength; and willingly rushing to the passion, desiring to die for Christ, from Him thou hast received the honor of the victory of thy suffering, O Uar; intercede that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Following Christ, O Martyr Uar, having drunk of His cup and been crowned with a crown of torments, thou rejoicest with the Angels; pray ceaselessly for our souls.

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Father John of Rila

Память преподобного отца нашего Иоанна Рыльского

Our Venerable Father John of Rila, a great faster, was a native of the Bulgarian village of Skrin, near the famous city of Sredets.[16]

He lived in the reign of Peter, Christ-loving Tsar of Bulgaria, and under the Greek emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus.[17] After the repose of his pious parents, John distributed all the property that remained to him to the poor, for from his youth he had loved God above all; and he himself took the monastic habit and left his native village, having nothing upon him but a single leather garment. Ascending a high and desolate mountain, he began to lead an ascetic life there, feeding only on wild plants. After some time, at the instigation of the devil, robbers attacked John at night, beat him, and drove him from there. Then John departed from that mountain to the Rila desert,[18] where he continued his strict ascetic life; there he settled in a large hollow of a tree, passing his time in fasting and tears, and offering unceasing prayers before God. He lived sixty years in the desert; he fed there only on plants, never saw a human face, and was surrounded only by wild beasts. For such patience of John, God commanded peas to grow in that place, and the blessed one fed on these peas for many years.

Once shepherds discovered John's refuge and told of him everywhere.[19] Many began to come to John and bring to him the sick, who,

16. Sredets — in antiquity Serdica. Now this city is called Sofia and is the capital of the Bulgarian principality.

17. Peter ruled Bulgaria from 927 to 968. — Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus ruled Byzantium from 912 to 959.

18. It received its name from the river Rilo, in the district of the city of Raslog.

19. It happened thus: the sheep suddenly, from some fright, ran along the precipices until they reached the place where the hermit lived. The shepherds, running after them, saw the hermit with amazement. "You have come here hungry: pluck my peas and eat," said the hermit. They ate and were satisfied; only one hid away many pods for himself as a provision, without the hermit's blessing, and when on the road he gave some to his companions, there was not a single grain in the stolen pods. They returned to the good elder in repentance. The elder forgave them and said with a smile: "You see, children, these fruits were appointed by God for the sustenance of the desert-dweller."

through his prayers, received healing. The fame of the Venerable One spread throughout that whole land, and many, zealous for the ascetic life of St. John, desired to live near him. In a neighboring cave they erected a church and established a monastery, in which the Venerable John was the leader and shepherd. Being a good shepherd to his flock, John led many unbelievers to the Lord and performed great and glorious miracles in His name.[20]

Attaining deep old age, John ended his life in peace,[21] having been granted eternal blessedness in heaven, and was buried by his disciples.

After a considerable time, John appeared to his disciples, commanding that his relics be transferred to the city of Sredets. Opening the grave, they saw the body of John whole and incorrupt, emitting fragrance, and they glorified God for this. They honorably carried him to the city of Sredets and laid him in the church of the holy Evangelist Luke. Afterwards a beautiful church was built on that spot in the name of the Venerable John, and in it his honorable relics were laid, from which wondrous and glorious healings flowed.

Many years later the Hungarian king advanced with a numerous army upon Greek land and seized it under his power. Arriving at the city of Sredets, he took the reliquary with the relics of the Venerable One—for he had heard much of the saint's miracles—and ordered it to be carried with honor into his own country and laid in the city of Ostrihom.[22] The archbishop of Ostrihom, hearing that the Venerable John of

20. Many came to the Venerable John and brought their sick, who received health through the prayers of the Saint. A man who for several years had been possessed by an unclean spirit, seeing those going to the desert of John, followed them. He had not yet covered a verst before reaching the Rila desert when he fell to the ground and began to cry out: "I cannot go further: fire is burning me." His companions, binding the demoniac, carried him to the Venerable and asked him to heal him. "My children," he said, "this is not within my power; I am a weak man, as you are; God alone can heal him." They pressed him insistently, and the hermit prayed over him: suddenly the sick man became well, and all glorified God.

21. St. John died on August 18, 946, in the seventieth year of his life.

22. Ostrogon — a city in Hungary, on the right bank of the Danube, opposite the mouth of the river Gran. The city is very ancient and was the cradle of Christianity in Hungary. Its inhabitants are of the Roman Catholic confession. The Archbishop of Ostrogon is at the same time Prince-Primate of all Hungary. (Primate — a title of a Catholic archbishop, equated in the West with the rank of patriarch in the East.) The Venerable was again laid in his holy church in the year 1097 A.D.

Rila was great before God and glorious for his miracle-working in all lands, did not wish to believe it.

"Ancient books do not mention such a wonderworker," he said, and would not go to venerate the saint. Then his tongue suddenly became mute. Understanding that the cause of his dumbness was that he had reviled the Venerable One, the archbishop hastened to the reliquary of the saint, and, falling before it, kissed the honorable relics, asking forgiveness for his fault. The servant of God, St. John, quickly heard the archbishop's prayer: he immediately loosed his tongue and again gave him the ability to speak clearly. Having received healing, the archbishop with tears confessed his transgression before the saint to all, and glorified God and magnified His servant, St. John.

Many other glorious miracles did the Saint work in the land of Hungary. Astonished by these miracles of St. John, the king of Hungary adorned the reliquary of the Saint with silver and gold, and, after kissing his relics, sent them back with great honor to the city of Sredets. Thus, after some time, it pleased God to restore the independence of the Bulgarian state, which had been exhausted by the violence of the Greeks, and this revival of the Bulgarian kingdom was accomplished under the Christ-loving Tsar John Asen. This Tsar, at the very beginning of his reign, restored and fortified the ruined Bulgarian cities and waged war against the surrounding lands, annexing new cities to his realm. Arriving at the city of Sredets and conquering it, he found there the relics of the Venerable John of Rila, and, having heard of the miracles taking place at his relics, he venerated the Saint's reliquary. Kissing the most honorable relics, he commanded Patriarch Basil and his clergy to take the all-glorious shrine of the Saint and with great honor to carry it to the Bulgarian capital of Tarnovo, and in this procession, by the Tsar's order, took part three hundred chosen warriors.

Patriarch Basil placed the most honorable shrine upon a chariot, and all set out on the way with joy, glorifying God and guarded by the prayers of the Saint; among the others walked also the monks of the monastery founded by the Venerable, with their abbot Joannicius. The pious Tsar John Asen himself went ahead of the procession, and, hav-

ing hastily arrived in the capital, ordered a church and a place for the Saint's shrine to be prepared there.

When the Tsar learned that the procession bearing the relics of the Venerable was drawing near, he himself went out to meet it on the "okop"[23] together with his nobles, authorities and a multitude of people, and all rejoiced and were glad[24]. At the sight of the holy relics, all bowed down before them. On the okop the shrine of the Venerable remained for seven days, until the church was built. And when it was built, the holy relics were then transferred there and placed in it with great honor, and the church itself was consecrated. There to this day lie the wonderworking relics of the Venerable, pouring forth a constant spring of healings: those who come with faith—the blind receive their sight, the mute begin to speak, the sick receive health, the demoniacs are delivered.

Troparion to John of Rila, Tone 1:

Thy life became a foundation of repentance, a pattern of compunction, an image of consolation, and equal to the angels in spiritual perfection, O Venerable Father. Abiding in prayers, fastings, and tears, O Father John, entreat Christ God for our souls.

Troparion on the return of the relics from Tarnovo to the Rila Monastery:

By the return of thy relics thy monastery was enriched, and thy church, receiving them, was illumined; and adorned, it calls the faithful with joy to celebrate thy radiant day, saying: Come, and receive the gift of grace.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Emulating the angelic life, O Venerable, thou didst forsake all earthly things and hast hastened to Christ; and guarded by His

23. Okop — a city rampart.
24. The translation of the relics of the Venerable John took place in the year 1238. This translation is commemorated by the Church on October 19.

commandments, thou didst appear as an unshakable pillar against the assaults of the enemies.

On the same day the suffering of the holy Hieromartyr Sadoc, Bishop of Persia, and with him 128 martyrs. Their memory is also celebrated on February 20.

* * *

NOTES

6787. As the essential and principal fulfillment of this prophecy, the Apostle Peter points to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14). When the people, on the day of the descent of the Holy Spirit, hearing the Apostles speaking in other tongues, asked in perplexity, "What does this mean?"—the holy Apostle Peter addressed those around him with a speech in which he said that this miraculous phenomenon had been foretold already by Joel, and quoted the whole prophecy of the latter literally. Then, having pointed to the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, the Apostle Peter continued (after the people who heard him addressed the Apostles with the question, "What shall we do, men and brethren?"): "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit; for the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, whom the Lord our God shall call" (that is, also the Gentiles) (Acts 2:37–39). Thus, the fulfillment of the prediction concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that is, concerning the abundant bestowal of His gifts, began from the day of the first Christian Pentecost and will continue throughout all the time until the full number of the Gentiles enters the Kingdom of Christ ("the fullness of the Gentiles"—Rom. 11:25). The second chapter of the Book of the Prophet Joel is read in church as a reading at Vespers on the day of Pentecost.

THE TWENTIETH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 20

20 октября

New Calendar October 20 · Old Calendar November 2 (civil dates)

Saint Artemius the Martyr

Святого мученика Артемия

Ancient accounts tell of the holy martyr Artemius that he was born of a noble Roman family, held the rank of senator, and under the emperor Constantius was in charge of all the imperial property.

Artemius began his service under Constantine the Great, in the armies of that pious emperor. When, together with Constantine, he saw the wondrous sign of the holy Cross in the heavens, he was confirmed in the Christian faith and became a faithful servant of the emperor Constantine and of his house[1]. After Constantine's death he remained continually with his son Constantius[2] as his closest friend, and the emperor entrusted him with the most honorable commissions. Thus, when Constantius learned from a certain bishop that the relics of the holy Apostles of Christ, Andrew and Luke, lay buried in Achaia[3], he commissioned Artemius to bring these precious treasures to Constantinople. Artemius, fulfilling the imperial command, transferred the relics of the holy Apostles to the royal city with great honor, and for this he received from the emperor a promotion that he fully deserved: the emperor made him dux and augustalis[4] of Egypt, and Artemius

1. Constantine marched against his powerful rival Maxentius. He did not know whom to implore for help, and then, when the sun was sinking toward the west, Constantine saw in the sky a shining cross with the inscription beneath it: "By this conquer"; his troops also saw this sign. In a dream at night Christ Himself appeared to Constantine and commanded him to make a standard in the form of a cross and to depict the cross on the shields and helmets of his soldiers. Constantine did this, and soon completely routed the forces of Maxentius. After this he openly declared his sympathy for Christianity.
2. He reigned from 337 to 361.
3. A province in Greece.

lived there, pleasing God. Spreading the honor and glory of the name of Jesus Christ, he overthrew and destroyed many idols in Egypt.

When the emperor Constantius, son of Constantine the Great, died, power over the whole Roman Empire was taken by the impious apostate Julian[5], who had earlier secretly, and now openly, renounced our Lord Jesus Christ and openly began to worship idols. He sent out throughout all the countries of his realm, eastern and western, a decree that those temples which in the reign of Constantine the Great had been taken from the pagans by the Christians should now be returned to the pagans; at the same time he commanded that in these temples idols be set up again and sacrifices be offered to the gods.

Thus this impious emperor restored polytheism everywhere, which had fallen under the holy emperor Constantine, and subjected the Christians to severe oppression, torturing and killing them, plundering their property, and pouring out blasphemies against the holy name of Jesus Christ.

To humiliate Christianity, the impious Julian took from the reliquary the bones of the holy prophet Elisha and the relics of St. John the Baptist — except his honorable head and right hand, which lay at Sebaste — and mixing them with the bones of animals and of impious men, burned them and scattered the ashes into the air; the Christians gathered those ashes and the bones remaining after the burning and preserved them in an honorable place.

Then he learned that in the city of Paneas[6] there stood an image of Christ the Savior, made by the woman with an issue of blood who was healed by touching the hem of Christ's garments (Mt. 9:20). This image the emperor overthrew, and commanded that it be dragged through the square until it was entirely broken; only the head of this image was seized and preserved by one Christian. On the place where this image had stood, the emperor commanded that his own statue be erected, which, however, was shattered by a stroke of lightning.

4. Dux: a military commander. Augustalis: a title equivalent to the modern title "Highness."
5. Julian, nephew of Constantine the Great, while Constantius was still alive, was co-ruler of this emperor, governing the western provinces of the Roman Empire.
6. A city in the north of Palestine (otherwise, Caesarea Philippi).

Gathering a large army, the impious Julian resolved to march against the Persians, and during this campaign, on arriving at Antioch, he raised here, according to his custom, a persecution against the Church of Christ, putting the faithful to death.

At that time two presbyters of Antioch, Eugenius and Macarius, learned men, were brought before him. With them Julian argued at length about the gods, adducing in support of his impious opinions various sayings of the pagan Greek writers, but he could not silence the God-speaking lips of the wise elders; on the contrary, he himself was confounded by them, put to shame, and convicted of impiety. Unable to endure his shame, Julian commanded that the saints be beaten without mercy, after first being stripped; Eugenius was given five hundred blows, and Macarius was beaten without number.

When these saints were subjected to grievous torments, the great Artemius happened to be present at the place of execution. Hearing that Julian had come to the throne and was marching against the Persians — in view of which an order had also been sent to him to come to Antioch with all his troops — Artemius came here with his forces, paid Julian the respect due to a sovereign, presenting him with gifts, and stood beside the emperor at the time when the holy confessors Eugenius and Macarius were being tormented. Hearing how the impious Julian blasphemed the Lord Jesus Christ with his foul lips, Artemius was filled with zeal, and approaching the emperor said:

"Why, sovereign, do you torment so inhumanly innocent men dedicated to God, and compel them to renounce the Orthodox faith? Know that you too are a weak man; even if God has set you as emperor, you may still be subjected to temptation by the devil; I think the first author of evil is the crafty devil. As once he asked God's permission to tempt Job and received it, so he has raised you up against us and set you on us, that by your hands he might destroy Christ's wheat and sow his own tares. But his efforts are vain and his power is nothing; for since the Lord came and the Cross was set up, on which Christ was lifted up, demonic pride has fallen and demonic power has been crushed. Therefore do not deceive yourself, emperor, and do not, to please the demons,

persecute the Christian people kept by God. Know that the strength and power of Christ are invincible and unconquerable."

Hearing this, Julian flared up in anger and cried out in a loud voice:

"Who and whence is this impious man, who addresses us so boldly and dares to insult us to our face?"

Those standing before the emperor answered:

"Emperor! This is the dux and augustalis of Alexandria."

"What?" said the emperor. "Is this the loathsome Artemius who took part in the killing of my brother Gallus[7]?"

"Yes, sovereign emperor, it is he," answered those standing by.

The emperor then said:

"I must thank the immortal gods, and most of all Daphnean Apollo[8], that they have delivered into my hands this enemy, who has himself come here. Let this wretch therefore be stripped of his rank; let his belt[9] be taken from him and let him be punished today, and tomorrow, if it pleases the gods, I shall pronounce sentence upon him for the murder of my brother. I shall avenge on him the innocent blood, and destroy him not by one execution but by many, for he has shed the blood not of a common man but of an imperial one."

When the emperor had said this, his attendants at once seized Artemius and, taking from him the military belt and the other insignia of rank, left him standing naked. The saint was given into the hands of the executioners, who bound his hands and feet, stretched him out in four directions[10], and beat his back and belly with ox sinews for so long that four pairs of executioners were relieved in turn from exhaustion. But the saint showed truly superhuman endurance, and seemed to all as if completely insensible: he uttered not a single sound, did not groan,

7. Gallus, brother of Julian, was made heir to the throne by the Emperor Constantius, who had no children, but afterward he aroused Constantius's wrath by openly seeking to overthrow Constantius from the throne. The latter sent trusted men to deprive Gallus of power over the eastern provinces, and these emissaries, from a desire to please their sovereign, put Gallus to death.

8. Daphne was a suburb of Antioch. It was an extremely beautiful place, where grew a multitude of all kinds of trees, where clear streams flowed everywhere, and where stood an image of the sun-god Apollo, whom Julian honored above all the other gods.

9. The belt was a special mark of a military commander.

10. The hands and feet of those being tortured were tied to four stakes driven into the ground, so that those being punished could not hinder the punishment.

made not a single movement, and showed no sign of suffering, as people in torment commonly do. The earth was soaked with his blood, yet he remained unshaken, so that all marveled at him, even the impious Julian himself. Then the emperor commanded that the beating be stopped, and the saint was led away to prison with the holy martyrs Eugenius and Macarius. The passion-bearers at this time sang: "Thou hast tried us, O God, Thou hast refined us as silver is refined. Thou hast brought us into the net, Thou hast laid chains upon our loins, Thou hast set a man over our head. We have passed through fire and water, and Thou hast brought us out into a place of freedom" (Ps. 65:10–12)[11].

When the singing was finished, Artemius said to himself:

"Artemius, the wounds of Christ are inscribed upon your body; it remains for you to give your very soul for Christ with the blood that is still in you." And he recalled the prophetic word: "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to those who plucked them" (Is. 50:6)[12]. "But have I, unworthy as I am, suffered more," he said, "than my Lord? He was covered with wounds over the whole body: from feet to head there was no sound place in Him, His head was pierced with thorns, His hands and feet were nailed to the cross for my sins, though He knew no sin and did not speak a single unrighteous word. O how great, compared with mine, are the sufferings of my Lord, and how far am I, a miserable man, from His patience and meekness! I rejoice and am glad, for I am adorned with the sufferings of my Lord, and this lightens my torments. I thank Thee, O Lord, for crowning me with Thy sufferings! I beg Thee, bring me to the end of the path of confession; do not let me prove unworthy of this contest appointed for me; for I have placed my hope in Thy mercies, most good Lord who lovest mankind!"

Having thus prayed within himself, the saint reached the prison and remained there through the whole night together with the holy Eugenius and Macarius, glorifying God.

When morning came, Julian the Apostate again commanded the martyrs to appear at the tribunal, and here, without interrogating

11. This passage speaks of the Jews, for whom the stay in Babylonian captivity was what the presence of silver in a red-hot furnace or of a bird in a net is. "Afflictions on the back" means blows on the back. "Men over our heads" means tormentors who hold our life in their power.

them, he separated them: Artemius he kept with himself, while Eugenius and Macarius he sent into exile at Oasis in Arabia[13]. That land is extremely unhealthy: deadly winds blow there, and no one who comes there can survive more than a year, for he inevitably falls into a fierce sickness that ends in death. Thus the holy Eugenius and Macarius, being sent there, after a short time attained a blessed end[14], while the holy Artemius endured many sufferings. But first Julian, like a wolf clothed in a sheep's skin, began to speak gently, as though sympathizing with Artemius and pitying him, as follows:

"By your senseless boldness, Artemius, you have compelled me to dishonor your old age and injure your health, for which I am sorry. Now I ask you: come forward and sacrifice to the gods, and above all to the god of Daphne, Apollo, whom I especially revere. If you do this, I will pardon you for your offense against my brother and reward you with an even more glorious and honorable rank: I will make you high priest[15] of the great gods and ruler over the priests of the whole world; I will call you my father, and you shall be second to me in my kingdom. You yourself know, Artemius, that my brother Gallus was put to death by Constantius without cause, out of sheer envy. Our family had a greater right to the throne than the family of Constantine, for my father Constantius was born to my grandfather Constantius by a daughter of Maximian, whereas Constantine was born of Helena, a woman of low birth[16]. Besides, my grandfather was not yet Caesar when he had a son by Helena, while my father was born to him after he had already ascended the throne. But Constantine audaciously seized the imperial power.

12. The prophet properly speaks of the future sufferings of the Savior, but his words may also be applied to the faithful, who take upon themselves the yoke of Christ's sufferings.

13. Oasim is one of the oases in Arabia. Oases in the Arabian desert are places supplied with vegetation and water.

14. Their memory is February 19.

15. How important the office of high priest was is seen from the fact that the title "high priest" was one of the titles of the Roman emperor. This priest had the right to condemn disobedient lower priests to death. He lived in the ancient royal palace of Numa.

16. The emperor of the Western Empire, Maximian Herculius, reigned from 284 to 305 A.D. Constantius, surnamed Chlorus, his successor, was first married to Helena (St. Helen, Equal-to-the-Apostles), but afterwards, at the demand of the Emperor Diocletian, he divorced her and married Theodora, the daughter of Maximian Herculius. Constantine the Great nevertheless, as the eldest of his sons, was made heir to the throne.

His son Constantius put my father and his brothers to death, and recently killed my brother Gallus as well. He wanted to kill me too, but the gods saved me from his hands. Trusting in them, I renounced Christianity and turned to the religion of the Greeks. I know well that the Greek and Roman faith is the more ancient faith, while Christianity appeared only recently; and Constantine embraced it, rejecting the ancient and good Roman way of life, only through his ignorance and folly. The gods hated him as impious and unworthy of their trust. The gods hated him and cast him away from themselves, and they destroyed his impious offspring from among the living[17]. Am I not speaking the truth, Artemius? You are an old and wise man—judge, then, whether I speak the truth. Therefore acknowledge the truth and join us, for I wish you to be my friend and helper in governing the kingdom."

Having heard this and paused for a little, St. Artemius began to speak thus:

"First of all, concerning your brother, O Emperor, I will tell you that I am innocent of his death; indeed, I have never harmed him in deed or word. Investigate as much as you will, and you will prove nothing to show that I was guilty of his death. I knew that he was a true Christian, pious and obedient to the law of Christ. Let heaven and earth, the whole host of the holy Angels, and my Lord Jesus Christ, whom I serve, bear witness that I am innocent of the murder of your brother and had no part in helping his murderers. I was not with the Emperor Constantius when the matter of your brother was considered; all the time until this year I remained in Egypt. And as for your proposal that I renounce Christ, my Savior, I will answer you with the words of the three youths who were before Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3:18): 'Be it known to you, O king, that I will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image of your beloved Apollo.' You have disparaged the blessed Constantine and his family, calling him an enemy of the gods and a foolish man. But he was turned from your gods to Christ through

17. Constantine the Great had three sons: Constantine, Constantius and Constans. The eldest took for himself Upper Gaul, Britain, Germany and Spain; the youngest, Lower Gaul, Italy, Illyricum and Africa; and the middle son, the lands of the East and Egypt. Soon Constantine was killed in war, and Constans was murdered during a hunt by his attendant Magnentius.

a special calling from on high. Hear me, as a witness to this event. When we were marching to war against the fierce tyrant and bloodthirsty Maxentius[18], about midday a cross appeared in the sky, shining brighter than the sun, and upon that cross the words promising Constantine victory were depicted in stars, in Latin. We all saw that cross appearing in the sky and read what was written upon it. Even now there are many old soldiers in the army who remember well what they clearly saw with their own eyes. Make inquiries, if you wish, and you will see that I speak the truth. But why do I speak of this? Long before His coming, the prophets foretold Christ, as you yourself know well. There are many testimonies that He truly came to earth, and even your own gods often prophesied of Christ's coming; the Sibylline books and Virgil spoke of it as well[19]."

The saint went on to tell how the demons dwelling in idols had often, when compelled by the power of God, confessed Christ against their will to be the true God. Julian, unable to bear Artemius's truthful words, ordered the martyr to be stripped and his sides pierced with heated awls, and sharp tridents driven into his back. But Artemius, as before, seemed to feel no pain; he did not cry out or utter any groan, showing wondrous endurance in his suffering. After these tortures, Julian again sent him to prison, commanding that the saint be tormented with hunger and thirst. He himself went to a place called Daphne to sacrifice to his god Apollo and to inquire of him concerning the outcome of his war against the Persians[20]. He remained there for a long time, sacrificing a great number of animals every day to the unclean Apollo,

18. This military campaign against the Roman emperor Maxentius was undertaken by Constantine in 312.

19. Among the Romans of antiquity, prophetesses were called Sibyls. Their prophecies were gathered into three books, which were kept in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and afterwards in the temple of Apollo on the Palatine Hill. Christian writers also paid attention to their prophecies, finding in them certain allusions to the coming of the Kingdom of Christ. – Virgil Maro, the famous Roman poet (born 70 B.C.). – Artemius here evidently means his poems, the *Bucolics*.

20. The pagans thought that the gods, out of their care for men, desired to reveal their will to them. For this reason they believed in dreams which, they supposed, were sent to them by the gods. In addition, the pagans had special oracles – places and temples where priests, or persons capable of entering a special state of frenzy, spoke on behalf of the gods and then uttered various words, from which the priests composed more or less coherent pronouncements. The god Apollo was regarded above all as the ruler of these oracles.

yet he received no answer as he desired. For the demon who dwelt in the idol of Apollo and gave answers to men had fallen silent from the time when the relics of St. Babylas, Bishop and Martyr of Antioch, together with the remains of the three children who suffered with Babylas, were brought to that place[21]. Thus Apollo gave Julian no answer. When, after a long inquiry, the emperor learned that Apollo had become mute because the relics of Babylas had been placed nearby, he immediately ordered the Christians to remove the relics from there. But as soon as the holy relics had been taken from their place, fire fell from heaven upon Apollo's temple and burned it together with the idol within.

While Artemius was in prison, the Lord Himself and His holy Angels visited him. As Artemius was praying, Christ appeared to him and said:

"Take courage, Artemius! I am with you, and I will deliver you from every pain your torturers have inflicted upon you, and I am already preparing for you a crown of glory. For as you have confessed Me before men on earth, so will I confess you before My Father in heaven. Therefore be courageous and rejoice: you shall be with Me in My Kingdom."

Having heard this from the Lord, the martyr immediately glorified Him; not a single wound or sore remained on his holy body, his soul was filled with divine consolation, and he sang and blessed God. Meanwhile, from the time he had been thrown into prison, he had eaten nothing and drunk nothing, and so it continued until his very death. Artemius was nourished from on high, by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Returning in shame from his sacrifices, Julian laid the blame for the burning of Apollo's temple upon the Christians, saying that they themselves had set it alight at night. He took the holy churches from the Christians, turned them into temples of idols, and began to oppress the Christians greatly. Then, ordering Artemius to be brought to him from prison, he said:

"You have surely heard what happened at Daphne—how the impious Christians set fire to the temple of the great god Apollo and des-

21. The memory of the Hieromartyr Babylas is celebrated on 4 September.

troyed his beautiful image. But let not the lawless rejoice at this, nor mock us, for I will repay them seventy times seven, as you say[22]."

But St. Artemius answered:

"I have heard that, by the permission of the angered God, fire came down from heaven and destroyed your god and burned his temple. But if your Apollo was a god, how did he fail to deliver himself from the fire?"

The emperor said:

"And you, wretched man, dare to mock and rejoice at Apollo's burning?"

"I mock your folly," Artemius replied, "in that you serve such a god, who could not save himself from fire. How, then, can he deliver you from the eternal fire? I take comfort in his fall and rejoice in all that my Christ works wondrously. And if you boast that you will repay the Christians, who are innocent and have done you no evil, seventy times seven, you will receive your recompense when you are cast into the unquenchable fire and eternal torments, which will soon come upon you. For your destruction is near, and soon your memory shall perish with a crash[23]."

The torturer, enraged, ordered the stonemasons to split a great stone and then roll it down upon Artemius, who was bound and laid beneath it on a stone slab. When this had been done, the stone that fell upon him covered his whole body and crushed him so severely that all his bones were broken; his entrails came out, his joints were fractured, and his eyeballs were dislodged from their sockets. And what a great wonder! Though crushed between the stones, the saint remained alive, called upon God, his Helper, and spoke the words of David:

"Thou hast set me upon a rock that is too high for me; for Thou hast been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy" (Ps. 60:3–4)[24]. "He set my feet upon a rock and established my steps" (Ps.

22. Julian distorts the meaning of the text from Mt. 18:22. Here the subject is not retribution or punishment, but the forgiveness of an erring brother up to seventy times seven.

23. That is, your perdition will be extraordinary and will cause great talk among people.

24. That is: "Thou, O Lord, hast set me upon a rock, as upon a secure place; Thou hast become for me a firm pillar or tower, where I could find salvation."

39:3)[25]. Receive now, O Only-begotten One, my spirit, for Thou knowest my grievous plight; do not leave me in the hands of my enemies.

Thus the saint spent a whole day crushed beneath the stone. Then Julian ordered the stone to be removed, supposing the saint already dead; but, to the astonishment of all, the saint was alive, and, rising, walked about. It was a fearful sight for all to behold: before them stood a naked man, crushed as flat as a board, with shattered bones and entrails protruding; his face was crushed, his eyes had come out of their sockets, yet life still remained in him, his legs could move, and his tongue was still able to speak clearly. The torturer himself, seeing such a wonder, was horrified and said to those near him:

Is this a man or a ghost? Has this sorcerer not bewitched our eyes? For before us is a terrible sight, beyond the bounds of nature. Who would have expected him still to be alive? Yet now, when his entrails have fallen out and all his joints are broken and loosened, he still moves, walks, and speaks. But it seems our gods have preserved him alive to instruct others, so that he who would not acknowledge their power may remain a dreadful spectacle to those who look upon him.

And Julian said to the martyr:

"Look, wretched man: you have already lost your eyes, and all the members of your body are utterly ruined. How can you still place your hope in Him in whom you have hitherto hoped in vain? Rather, beg mercy of the merciful gods, that they may have compassion on you and not deliver you to the torments of hell."

But Christ's martyr, hearing of torments, smiled and said to the emperor:

"Will your gods deliver me to torments? They themselves cannot escape the torments prepared for them, and you also, cast with them into the eternal fire, will be tormented forever, because you have denied the Son of God, trampled underfoot His holy blood, shed for us, and scorned the grace of the Holy Spirit, obeying the destructive demons. But for the insignificant pain you have inflicted upon me, I hope to have eternal rest in the heavenly palace of my Lord, for whom I suffer."

25. To set one's feet aright means to place them on the true, straight road.

When Julian heard this, he pronounced this sentence upon the martyr:

"Artemius, who has blasphemed the gods, trampled upon the Roman and our laws, declared himself not a Roman but a Christian, and called himself a Galilean instead of a dux and augustalis, we condemn to death, and command that his vile head be severed with the sword."

After this sentence, the saint was led to the place of execution, and went there with unspeakable joy, desiring "to depart and be with Christ"[26]. When he came to the place where he was to be executed, he asked for time to pray and, turning toward the east, knelt three times and prayed for a long while. After this he heard a voice from heaven, saying:

"Enter with the saints to receive the reward prepared for you."

At once the blessed man bowed his head and was beheaded by one soldier, on the twentieth day of October; the day on which he completed his contest of martyrdom was a Friday. A certain woman named Arista, a deaconess of the Church of Antioch, obtained his precious and holy body from the torturer and, anointing it with costly spices, placed it in a reliquary and sent it to Constantinople, where it was buried with honor. Many wondrous miracles were wrought through his relics, and various healings were granted to the sick; these the holy Artemius grants even now to all who approach him with faith.

Soon after the death of Artemius, the prophecy he had spoken to Julian face to face concerning his death came to pass: "Swift destruction awaits you, and it will not be long before the memory of you perishes with a crash." For after putting the holy Artemius to death, Julian set out with his armies from Antioch and marched against the Persians. When he reached the city of Ctesiphon[27], he encountered a Persian, an old man, respected and very prudent. He promised Julian that he would betray the Persian kingdom and offered to guide the lawless emperor and all his army into Persia. But this did not profit the wicked blood-drinker, for the Persian deceived him: pretending to lead him

26. Phil. 1:23. To depart means to pass out of earthly life.

27. A Persian city on the left bank of the River Tigris; in the times of Roman rule it was a strong fortress, which, however, several times fell under Roman power.

along the straight and proper road, he led the evildoer into the Carmanian desert[28], into impassable places where there were constant chasms, and no water or food at all, so that all the soldiers were worn out with hunger and thirst, while all the horses and camels perished. After this, the guide confessed that he had purposely led the Romans into such desolate and dreadful places in order to weaken their strength. "I did this," he said, "so that I might not see my homeland taken captive by enemies; and it is better that I alone perish here than that my whole homeland perish at your hands." Immediately after this confession, the Persian was cut to pieces by the soldiers. Wandering through the desert, the Greeks and Romans, against their will, encountered the Persian army, and in the battle that ensued many of Julian's soldiers fell. Divine retribution also overtook Julian himself there, for he was pierced in the side by an unseen hand from above, with an unseen weapon that passed down through his belly. He groaned bitterly, seized a handful of blood, flung it into the air, and cried out:

"Thou hast conquered, O Christ! Be satisfied, Galilean!"

And there, dying in torment, he cast forth his wicked and vile soul and perished with a crash, according to the prophecy of St. Artemius[29]. After Julian's death, the Roman army set up Jovian as emperor; he was a Christian, and having made peace with the Persians, he returned. Thus Julian is tormented in hell with Judas[30], while Artemius rejoices in heaven with the saints[31], standing before God, One in Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

28. Carmania is the present Persian province of Kerman. Its northern part (steppe Carmania) was almost entirely a barren desert, and its southern part was very sandy, although several rivers flowed through the latter.

29. Julian died in 363 A.D.

30. After his death, Julian was buried in a pagan shrine; afterwards his body was transferred to Constantinople and laid in the church of the Holy Apostles beside the body of his wife, but without a funeral service, as the body of an apostate.

31. The repose of St. Artemius took place on 20 October 363. His relics were afterwards placed in the church of St. John the Forerunner, built by the Emperor Anastasius, which came to be called the church of St. Artemius.

Let us assemble and worthily hymn Artemius, the pious and crown-bearing martyr, who took up victory over his enemies; he is exceedingly great among the martyrs and most rich in the gift of miracles, for he prayeth unto the Lord for us all.

* * *

Commemoration of the Righteous Artemius, Wonderworker of Verkol[32]

Память праведного Артемия, Веркольского чудотворца

The holy Righteous Artemius, Wonderworker of Verkol, was born in 1532 in the village of Verkol, in the Dvina region, on the Pinega River, about two versts upstream from Kevrola[33]. His parents —his father Cosmas, nicknamed Maly, and his mother Apollinaria— were peasants of that village. They brought up their son in the fear of God and in Christian piety. From the age of five he began to shun the habits characteristic of children; he did not love children's games, but was quiet, meek, God-fearing, obedient to his parents, and diligent in helping his father with his peasant labors as much as his age allowed.

Once, when he was 12 years old, he was working with his father in the field, harrowing the ground. Suddenly a threatening cloud gathered; it grew dark as night, a storm rose with a downpour, and a terrible clap of thunder burst above the frightened Artemius. The blessed boy fell dead.[34]

Thus did the merciful and all-wise Lord God deign to receive into His heavenly dwellings the soul of His righteous servant.

Through their folly, Artemius's fellow villagers did not understand this visitation from God. In their superstition, they considered the blessed boy's sudden death to be God's righteous judgment, punishing

32. Compiled from various copies of the ancient life.

33. The Pinega is a river in the Vologda and Arkhangelsk provinces, in the Solvychegodsk and Pinega districts, a right (navigable) tributary of the Northern Dvina. Kevrola or Kevrol was the main village of the volost which received its name from it; now it is the village of Voskresenskoye, from where the district administration was later transferred to the churchyard of Volok-Pinezhsky, afterwards renamed the town of Pinega.

34. The repose of the Righteous Artemius took place on 23 June 1545.

Artemius for some secret sins. Since the blessed Artemius had died a sudden death, his body was left without a funeral service and unburied; they laid it in an empty place in a pine forest, upon the ground, covered it with brushwood and birch bark, and fenced it in with a wooden enclosure. It lay there for 32 years, forgotten by all.

One summer day Agathonicus, the sacristan of the church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker in the village of Verkol, was walking in that forest, gathering mushrooms. He saw a light above the place where the blessed boy lay, approached, and found his incorrupt body. He immediately told the peasants of Verkol. But in their folly they simply took Artemius's body, brought it to their parish church without any ceremony, and laid it on the porch, covering the coffin with the birch bark that had covered the righteous boy in the forest.[35]

But the Lord deigned to glorify His servant in the land of Kevrola: unfailing healings of the sick began to flow from his relics. In that year, by God's permission, a malignant fever spread through the Dvina region. Many died of this grievous illness, especially women and children. The son of Callinicus, a peasant of Verkol, also fell ill with this disease. In great sorrow Callinicus prayed for his son's healing, then went to the church, venerated the coffin of the righteous Artemius, and, taking some of the birch bark that covered his incorrupt relics, devoutly hung it on the cross upon his dying son's breast. The sick boy recovered. Joyful, Callinicus told all his fellow villagers, who gladly gathered in the church of St. Nicholas and began to sing molebens and commemorate the righteous boy Artemius. And the Lord had mercy on His servants: the fever soon ceased in that region.

From that time the miracles of St. Artemius multiplied. A certain man named Paul was so afflicted by a severe illness that his neck became twisted, his head turned backward, and his eyes closed. In this distress Paul fervently prayed to God and the righteous Artemius—and the sick man's head straightened and his eyes opened. The healed man hastened to tell everyone in his village what had happened. Thereafter the people of Verkol built a special chapel beside the church of St. Nich-

35. The relics of the Righteous Artemius were uncovered in 1577.

olas, where they transferred Artemius's relics from the porch and placed them in a new coffin. This took place in 1584.

When the relics of the blessed boy were brought into the chapel, a woman came there with her paralyzed infant, asked for a moleben to be served, and laid her child against Artemius's coffin; the child's sick arm was healed. About the same time, a peasant named Andrew and a peasant woman named Irene, who suffered from eye diseases, received health and clear sight through touching the sacred reliquary of the newly revealed wonderworker. A woman named Mary, who had suffered from a stomach disease for forty years, so severe that from excessive pain she often fainted for two or three hours, heard of the miracles flowing from Artemius's relics, prayed to him, and received speedy healing.

Seeing that healings were multiplying from the relics, the two priests, John and Thomas, ordered that several icons of the Righteous Artemius be painted on the boards of the old tomb. Shavings remained from those boards. Priest John carefully gathered these shavings and placed them for safekeeping in the church. Pious venerators of the Righteous Artemius who took those shavings in faith received healing from their infirmities.

A man from the Pinega region named Pankratius, who was passing through Verkola, brought one of these icons of Artemius to Great Ustyug in 1601, and many received healing at that time from this image.

In 1619 Macarius, Metropolitan of Novgorod, examined the relics of the righteous one and blessed their translation into the church itself on the day of the memory of the Hierarch and Wonderworker Nicholas, December 6.[36] Some time later, Hilarion Artemiev, a resident of the city of Kholmogory, came to Verkola and told how he had long been ill with his eyes, could see nothing, and suffered grievously, so that in despair he tried to hang himself, and only neighbors who came up in time prevented it. Having heard of the miracles flowing from the relics

36. Macarius was Metropolitan of Novgorod from 1619 to 1626. By his blessing and direction, a life of Artemius was composed together with an account of his posthumous miracles, which had been recorded from 1605 onwards on the testimony of the healed themselves.

of the Righteous Artemius, he turned to him with fervent prayer for his healing.

"In that very hour," the healed man related, "I regained my sight, and I saw in a vision St. Artemius in white vestments, with a small staff in his left hand and a cross in his right. He made the sign of the cross over me and said:

'Man! Why do you suffer? Arise: Christ, through me, His servant, heals you. Go to Verkola, venerate my tomb, and tell of this to the priest and to all the peasants.'

At these words the righteous youth, taking me by the hand, as it were urged me to do so, and afterward became invisible. I, awakening, felt myself completely well, as though I had never been ill. And so I have come here to bow down before his holy relics."

Especially remarkable was the miracle with a peasant from the village of Kivokurye, Ustyug district, Patricius Ignatiev. From childhood he had suffered grievously from a hernia. Having heard of the miracles of the Righteous Artemius, he prayed to him in faith, made a vow to venerate his tomb, and recovered, but afterward he forgot the vow he had made. After some years he again felt the attacks of the hernia, which tormented him even more than before. Patricius turned again in prayer to the Righteous Artemius and remembered his unfulfilled vow. The sick man's prayer was heard, but Patricius again forgot the vow he had made. Then anguish seized him, and impenetrable darkness covered his eyes. The unfortunate man again recalled his unfulfilled vow, bitterly repented, and promised to fulfill his duty without delay. The Righteous Artemius again delivered Patricius from his ailment, and the healed man hastened with joy to Verkola to the tomb of Artemius, ordered a moleben to be served to him, kissed the all-healing tomb with tears, and confessed before everyone about the miracle that had occurred and about his sinful forgetfulness.

In March 1636 Athanasius Pashkov, who had been appointed voivode to Kevrola and Mezen, was traveling there. On the way he stopped at Verkola, but did not go to the reliquary of the relics of the Righteous Artemius and did not serve a moleben of thanksgiving to him. In Kevrola his son, the youth Jeremiah, fell gravely ill with a fever

and was already preparing for death. Then the father remembered that he had not served a moleben to the Righteous Artemius, and vowed to make a pilgrimage to Verkola. And suddenly the son of Pashkov, who lay in a grave stupor, rose from his bed himself and, holding to the window, began to ask his father by what road they should travel to the Righteous Artemius. Marveling at this, the father brought his son to Verkola. Here they served the moleben according to the vow, took birch bark from the tomb of the Wonderworker so that the sick youth might wear it on his breast together with a cross, and the youth recovered. The grateful father built in Verkola, on the site where the relics of Artemius had been uncovered, a church in honor of the martyr Artemius, the namesake of the righteous youth.

Some time later the church in Verkola burned down, and the relics of the Righteous Artemius were scorched. The local priest Laurentius and the parishioners of the Verkola village, to protect the relics of Artemius from such misfortunes, built a special chapel over them, placed them in a new reliquary, and covered them with a new pall.

After this, new miracles began to flow from the tomb of the Wonderworker. Thus the Righteous Artemius saved from drowning a certain Simeon Kazarinov. After the feast of Elijah he was sailing on a vessel with his companions across the Northern Arctic Ocean from Mangazeya[37] to Arkhangelsk. Suddenly a fierce storm arose, and the vessel was threatened with imminent wreck. Those sailing were struck with terror and despair. Seeing no hope of salvation from any quarter, they began to prepare for death and, awaiting it, took leave of one another. Then they came to themselves and began to pray with tears to the Lord God and to the Righteous Artemius for their salvation, promising to serve a thanksgiving moleben to the servant of God. And by their prayer the sea grew calm, and those who were drowning escaped inevitable perdition.

The fame of the healings from the relics of the Righteous Artemius spread far. Cyprian, Metropolitan of Novgorod, sent again to examine

his incorrupt relics, confirmed with his own signature the register of healings delivered to him, and sent to the church of the village of Verkola a newly composed service to the Wonderworker.

In 1648 a charter of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich was sent to Kevrola, addressed to the local voivode Anichkov: it was commanded to place the relics of the Righteous Artemius in a new reliquary, and permission was given to build a monastery on the site where his relics had been uncovered; according to the Tsar's charter, the relics were transferred there the following year and placed in the church of St. Martyr Artemius, which Voivode Pashkov had built earlier. At this, manifold healings flowed from the holy relics to all who came to them in faith. The gathered multitude of people offered warm prayers to Christ God and to His holy servant the Righteous Artemius, the Wonderworker of Verkola, glorifying the grace of God manifested in him for the consolation of all Orthodox Christians. Afterward the relics of the Righteous Artemius, because of fires, were carried out of the monastery church three times, until at last a stone church was built in the monastery in 1793, consecrated in honor of the Righteous Artemius, in which his relics were placed.[38]

Troparion, Tone 2:

By the command of the Most High, the sky was darkened by clouds bearing rain, and lightnings flashed, and thunder roared with threatening; thou didst yield up thy soul into the hands of the Lord, O wise Artemius, and now thou standest before the Throne of the Sovereign of all, granting healing without delay to all who

37. Mangazea is a locality in the Yenisei province, in the Turukhansk region, on the right bank of the River Taz, where there now stands a chapel of St. Basil the Martyr of Mangazea. Mangazea was the first Russian town in eastern Siberia, founded in 1601, but after 60 years it became completely deserted; now only traces of it remain.

38. The memory of the Righteous Artemius, Wonderworker of Verkola, is celebrated on 23 June and 20 October. In the *Iconographers' Original* under 20 October it is written: "who, together with his father Cosmas the farmer, went out into the field, and was struck dead by a great thunderbolt, a young lad of 12 years, in a shirt, with a willow switch in his hand, knees bare." – At the present time the relics of St. Artemius rest beneath the floor in the abolished Verkola monastery.

come to thee in faith and love, and praying to Christ God that our souls be saved.

Magnification:

We magnify thee, O Passion-bearer of Christ, Artemius, and honor thy holy memory, for thou dost intercede for us before Christ our God.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

The bright memory of the wise Artemius has shone forth today: the God-given grace pours forth like rivers from the all-healing reliquary of his relics—wondrous healings, by which we are delivered from manifold infirmities, receiving them with faith and crying out: Rejoice, Artemius, God-wise.

* * *

THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF OCTOBER

October 21

21 октября

New Calendar October 21 · Old Calendar November 3 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Hilarion the Great,

Житие преподобного отца нашего Илариона Великого,

The Venerable Hilarion was born in the year 291 in the village of Thavatha in Palestine, near the city of Gaza. His parents were pagans.[1] As the rose appears among thorns, so from them was born the Venerable One, and in him the fragrance of Christ was made known to the world. Sent to Alexandria to be instructed in the sciences, he not only soon mastered all the learning to which the pagans aspired, but also became well acquainted with spiritual wisdom. Believing in our Lord Jesus Christ, he received holy Baptism,[2] and during his frequent visits to the church he listened attentively to the words of the Divine Service. Growing accustomed to good morals, and with his heart burning with love for God, he began to consider how he might please Him. Hearing of St. Anthony the Great, whose fame for a virtuous life was then spreading everywhere, Hilarion hastened to go to the saint, filled with an ardent desire to see him. Arriving at the place of his dwelling in the desert, Hilarion beheld his radiant countenance and heard his sweet words, which pointed him toward perfection. He remained for some time with St. Anthony, observing his angelic life, his fervent and frequent prayers, his handiwork and unceasing labor, his fasting and abstinence, his love for his neighbor, his freedom from avarice, and his other ascetic labors of the monastic life.[3]

1. The designation of the parents of Venerable Hilarion the Great as Hellenes should here be understood chiefly in the sense of educated pagans devoted to the Greco-Roman religion. Hence the comparison of them with thorns which follows.
2. Venerable Hilarion was baptized by St. Peter, Bishop of Alexandria (who reposed in 311).

Many people flocked to the Venerable Anthony: some to be healed of their infirmities, others to receive his blessing, and still others to hear his God-inspired and soul-profiting discourses. Finding no complete solitude and silence there, Hilarion did not wish to remain, but resolved to seek out a place where he might dwell alone with God, apart from all noise and bustle. Having received the blessing of the Venerable Anthony, he returned to his homeland, and, finding his parents no longer living, divided his property into two parts: one he gave to his relatives, the other to the poor, keeping nothing for himself, "counting all things but dung" (Phil. 3:8), renouncing the world and himself, that he might be able to become a disciple of Christ and an imitator of His poverty.

Having thus freed himself from worldly cares, Hilarion went into the desert, which lay seven versts from Maiuma of Gaza, and settled there between the sea and a lake. Robbers lived in that desert, and some acquaintances advised him to leave there, lest he fall into the hands of the robbers and be killed. But the Venerable One did not fear bodily death, desiring to be delivered only from spiritual death.

"One must avoid the robbers who kill the soul," he said, "but those who kill the body I do not fear. 'The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?' (Ps. 26:1)."

And the Venerable One began to live there in unceasing prayer and fasting. For food he took no more than fifteen figs[4] a day, and that only after sunset; his clothing consisted of a hair shirt[5] and a short leather mantle given to him by the Venerable Anthony.

The enemy of all good, the devil, seeing that the young monk was prevailing, raised war against him.[6] Wishing to overcome the spiritual

3. Venerable Hilarion came to Antony the Great in 306, being 15 years of age, and became one of his earliest disciples, both in time and in spirit, although he remained with him for only about two months.

4. The fig is known among us as the wine-berry; it grows on fig trees, which belong to the mulberry family and are native to tropical climates. Figs are a customary food in the East, especially among Christian ascetics.

5. A hair shirt is a coarse garment made of horsehair, worn by ascetics directly against the body.

6. “Warfare” is a monastic ascetic expression meaning the stubborn and prolonged temptation to which the devil subjects monks who resist him. Because of this struggle with the devil, monks are often called spiritual warriors in the language of the ascetics.

warrior with carnal lust, he began to inflame his young body and trouble his mind with impure thoughts. Perceiving the unclean serpent seeking to wound him with the sting of sin, Hilarion shamed him by still greater mortification of the flesh, and defeated the enemy, arming himself with diligent prayer to God. He added fast to fast and labor to labors, taking no food for three, and sometimes four, days, wearing out his body with work, now digging the earth, now weaving baskets, and repeating to himself the words of the Apostle: "If any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. 3:10). Impure thoughts he drove out of his heart, striking his breast like the publican and sighing from the depths of his heart. Hilarion called his flesh an ass and spoke to it thus:

"I will tame you, ass: I will feed you not with barley but with chaff, I will starve you with hunger and thirst, I will burden you with a heavy load, so that you may think more of food than of impurity."

He carried out these words addressed to his body, and wasted his body to such a degree that nothing remained of him but bones covered with skin.

The devil, seeing that by that struggle he had gained nothing, and had not only failed to conquer the saint but had himself suffered defeat, resolved to terrify him with phantoms and apparitions. One night, as St. Hilarion stood in prayer, he heard the crying of children, the weeping of women, the roaring of lions and the voices of other wild beasts and animals, noise and confusion as if from a great battle. The demon had deliberately brought a host of his companions, who shouted in various voices, so that Hilarion would be terrified by their roar alone and flee, abandoning the desert. But, understanding that all this was only terrors produced by the demons, the saint made the sign of the cross over himself, armed himself with the shield of faith, and, falling on his knees, raised to God a fervent prayer that He would send him help from on high. Thus, bowing to the earth in prayer,[7] Hilarion weakened the enemy who attacked him. But as soon as he rose a little, wishing to see with his eyes what he heard with his ears (and the night was moonlit,

7. The ancient Christians fell to the ground in prayer, stretching out their hands and forming the shape of a cross with their bodies.

very bright), a huge chariot with terrible and fierce horses rushed upon him with great noise.

"O Lord Jesus Christ, help me!" cried the saint, and immediately the earth opened and swallowed the whole demonic power. Hilarion then sang, as if triumphing in victory over Pharaoh:[8]

"The horse and his rider hath he cast into the sea. Thou hast stretched forth Thy right hand: the earth swallowed them... Some in chariots, and some in horses, but we boast in the name of the Lord our God: they are brought down and fallen, but we have risen and stand upright" (Ps. 19:8–9).

But the defeated enemy did not cease to rise up and array himself against the saint, tempting him in various other ways: when Hilarion slept, naked women who shamelessly mocked him seemed to lie down beside him; when he was hungry or thirsty, the demons showed him various sweet foods and drinks; when he prayed, sometimes a wolf appeared and howled before him, and sometimes a fox leaped about, or warriors fought, and one of them, mortally wounded, fell at the saint's feet and begged him to bury him.

Once, as Hilarion stood in prayer, he lost himself, and his mind, overcome by natural weakness, thought of something extraneous. The demon at once leaped upon his shoulders like a warrior, and, striking him with his feet in the ribs and with a whip on the shoulders and neck, said:

"Run, run! Why are you sleeping?" and, laughing, asked: "Would you not like some barley?"[9]

The saint, however, paid no attention to all these diabolical snares, and drove them away from himself, arming himself with the sign of the cross.

He built himself a small cell, like a grave, so that it barely held him, and lived in it, struggling in combat with unseen spirits. One night rob-

8. Ex. 16:1–2. Moses and the Israelites sang this song after crossing the Red Sea, when the Lord delivered them from Pharaoh's pursuit: "He cast horse and rider into the sea. Thou didst stretch forth Thy right hand: the earth swallowed them." Among the ancient Fathers of the Church and Christian writers, Pharaoh was used figuratively as a name for the devil, who pursues the faithful in earthly life, which in the language of those same writers is often called a wilderness.

bers resolved to attack him, hoping to find something with him, and all night they searched for him in vain. Finding him the next morning and seeing that he had nothing, they asked the saint:

"What would you do if robbers attacked you?"

"The naked man does not fear robbery," he answered them.

"But they could kill you," they said again.

"I do not fear robbers, because I am always ready for death," answered Hilarion.

Astonished at such courage and faith, the robbers confessed to him that they had sought him all night but could not find him. Then they went away, vowing to amend their lives.

When the Venerable Hilarion had lived many years in that desert, the report of the holiness of his life spread throughout all Palestine, and people began to flock to him, seeking help through his holy prayers.[10] The first to come was a certain woman from Eleutheropolis,[11] who had spent fifteen years in marriage and remained childless. Suffering constant reproaches and insults from her husband for her barrenness, she dared to take refuge with the saint and fall at his feet. Hilarion, seeing her, turned away. Then she began to beseech him with tears:

"Why do you turn away from me, servant of God, when I am in sorrow? Why do you flee from me when I implore you with weeping? Look not upon a woman, but upon the pain of my heart and my tears! Have mercy upon me, servant of Christ! Remember that the Savior honored our sex by clothing Himself in human flesh from it, and that you yourself were born of a woman. Therefore do not reject me without help, who have come to you and await from your prayers release from my barrenness, for which my husband constantly reproaches and insults me."

These words moved St. Hilarion to mercy: he raised his eyes to heaven and prayed for her. Then he bade her return home, and said:

"Go with an unashamed hope, and the Lord will fulfill your petition."

9. The demon was evidently alluding to the nickname St. Hilarion had given his body. See above.
10. This took place after 22 years of his ascetic struggles in the wilderness, beginning in 328.
11. Eleutheropolis is a city in southern Palestine, on the road between Jerusalem and Gaza. A village now stands here, near which lie the ruins of the ancient city.

The woman returned home with joy and with faith in the saint's words. God heard the prayer of His servant, and in a short time the woman, according to Hilarion's prophecy, conceived and bore a son. The following year she came to him with the infant in her arms and said:

"Here are the fruits of your holy prayers, servant of God; bless the son whom you obtained for me from God."

The saint blessed the infant and the mother and sent them away in peace. The woman departed, praising the Lord and glorifying His servant throughout that whole land.

After this another woman came to him, named Aristeneta, a Christian and the wife of a certain nobleman, Elpidius. Her three sons, infected by a deadly pestilence, fell gravely ill on the same day, and no physicians could cure them; they were near death. Having heard of St. Hilarion the hermit, the woman came to him with her maidservants and eunuchs, and fell at his feet weeping.

"I adjure you by our Lord Jesus Christ and His precious Cross," she said, "come to Gaza and heal my three dying sons of their illness, that the name of the Lord may be glorified even in this pagan city, and the false god of Gaza, Marnas[12], whom the unbelievers worship, be put to shame."

The saint refused, saying that he never left the desert and approached not only no city, but even no villages. But the woman importuned him with tearful entreaties until he promised to come to her after sunset. Late in the evening the saint came to Gaza. As soon as he touched the sick boys, invoking over them the name of Jesus Christ, a copious sweat broke out upon them, like a stream from a spring. They rose at once, restored to health, and, having eaten, began to give thanks to God and kiss the holy hands of their physician. The report spread throughout Gaza, and from that time the sick, afflicted with various ailments, began coming to the desert to Venerable Hilarion and, through his prayers, received healing. As a result, many pagans turned to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Many desired to emulate his virtuous

12. Marnas was revered by the pagans as the god of the city of Gaza and lord of the rains; in times of drought, solemn religious processions were held to appease him. The temple of Marnas in Gaza was not destroyed until 401 A.D.

life and, leaving the world, settled near him in the desert. Soon the number of Venerable Hilarion's disciples increased, and the saint became the first instructor of monks in Gaza and Palestine, just as Venerable Antony was in Egypt.

Once a woman was brought to the Venerable, who had lost her sight at the age of ten and had spent all her possessions on physicians to no avail. The saint healed her with spittle, imitating the Lord in this (Jn. 9:6): he spat upon her face, and she immediately recovered her sight, and all glorified God.

A slave and charioteer of a certain nobleman of Gaza was smitten by a demon while driving a chariot, and became so stiff that he could not move a single joint; only his tongue remained free. The slave was brought to the desert to Venerable Hilarion. Seeing him, the saint said:

"You cannot be healed of your affliction until you believe in Christ the Lord, Who is able to heal you."

"I believe in Him; only let Him heal me," the sick man answered earnestly.

Having offered a prayer, the saint healed him by the power of Christ and, instructing him in the holy faith, commanded him to be baptized. Thus the slave returned home, freed from enslavement to the demon, and whole in body and soul.

Another young man from the vicinity of Jerusalem, named Marsit, possessed great strength, so that he could lift and carry fifteen measures of wheat, and had no need of a donkey to transport heavy loads. Yet a demon entered him and began tormenting him, driving him through deserts and fields. The people of the surrounding region caught him, bound his hands and feet with iron fetters and chains, and kept him securely locked up, watching him closely. But he would escape, easily breaking his fetters and the bolts on the doors, because his strength was doubled, being both his own and the demon's; and he beat everyone he encountered on his way. Some he bit on the nose, ears, and lips; others he broke arms and legs; others he put out their eyes; and still others he killed by biting through their throats. He committed many other atrocities in those places, and no one could tame him. At last a large crowd gathered, caught him, bound his whole body with

iron chains, and dragged him to the Venerable like a wild ox. When Hilarion saw the demoniac, he commanded them to unbind him, and the man became as gentle as a lamb. Having prayed fervently for him, the saint spoke to the demon within him:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I command you, unclean spirit: come out of this man and depart into waterless places."

The demon came out, shaking the sick man and casting him to the ground; and he was immediately healed by the grace of the Lord and the prayers of the saint, and began earnestly to praise Venerable Hilarion. But the Venerable rebuked him and all the others who were present, saying:

"This was accomplished not by our power, but through the love for mankind and grace of the Savior, Who bore our sufferings in His ineffable mercy toward us, His servants. Him we must continually glorify, thank, and magnify."

While he was saying this, another man was brought to him, named Orion, one of the wealthy and eminent citizens of the city of Aila[13]. He was possessed by a legion of demons and was brought in bound with iron chains. As he approached the saint, he broke free from the hands of those who had brought him; coming up behind the Venerable, he seized him and lifted him into the air, higher than his own height. Everyone cried out in fear, lest he dash him to the ground and crush his bones, wasted by long fasting. But the saint smiled and said:

"Let my adversary wrestle with me." Reaching his hand behind him, he took the demoniac by the hair, set him before his feet, bound his hands, and, stepping on his feet, said:

"Suffer, legion of demons, suffer!"

The demons within the man cried out in different voices, making a din as though from a great multitude. Then the saint began to pray:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Deliver this wretched man from the legion of demons, for as easily as Thou canst overcome one of them, so easily canst Thou overcome many."

With a loud cry the demons immediately came out of the man, and he recovered, was freed from his torments, and gave thanks to God and

His servant, St. Hilarion, for his healing. Some time later he returned to St. Hilarion with his wife and friends, bringing rich gifts in gratitude for his healing. But the saint did not accept them, and said:

"Have you not heard how Gehazi[14] suffered for accepting payment from a man healed of leprosy? The grace of the Lord is not for sale. Go, distribute these things to the poor of your city; but for us, who live in the desert, possessions are of no use."

Thus he sent him back with his gifts.

After this a paralysed stonemason from the city of Maiuma, named Zanana, was brought to the saint, and was immediately healed through the prayers of the Venerable.

Then a demon-possessed maiden was brought from the region of Gaza. The demon had entered her for the following reason. A young man had fallen in love with her and desired to live with her in carnal union; but she resisted him and would not yield to his impure desires. Seeing that he would gain nothing through either flattering words or costly gifts, the young man went to the Egyptian city of Memphis[15], to the magicians of Asclepius[16], and told them of the sickness that had afflicted his heart with love for this maiden. Having received from them certain magical words, written on a copper tablet, he returned home and buried the tablet beneath the threshold of the house where the maiden lived, as the magicians had instructed him. At once a demon entered the maiden and inflamed her with such a degree of lustful desire that she began shamelessly to cry out, calling the young man by name to satisfy her passion, casting off her clothes, baring herself, and tossing about in every way, burning with the fire of fornication. Seeing

13. Aila is the southernmost city of Palestine, situated at the head of the Gulf of the Red Sea.

14. 4 Kgdms. 5:20–27. Gehazi, the disciple of the Prophet Elisha, took payment from Naaman the Syrian, whom the prophet had healed of leprosy; for this the prophet struck him and his descendants with Naaman's leprosy.

15. Memphis, the ancient and powerful capital of Egypt, stood in Middle Egypt on the Nile, between the main river and its tributary, which washed the western side of the city. Of the splendid capital of ancient Egypt, only the most insignificant remains are now preserved near the villages of Metrasani and Mogannan.

16. Asclepius, or Aesculapius, was the Greco-Roman god of the medical art and of healing every kind of illness. His worship later spread to Egypt as well. Christians understood this name to refer to one of the demons.

this, her parents understood that the devil had caused her illness and took her to the monastery of the Venerable (for by that time the Venerable had gathered many brethren and established a large monastery). As she was being brought to him, the demon within her howled and wailed.

"It was better for me," he said, "when I was in Memphis, deceiving people with visions seen in sleep, than now that I have been sent here."

When she was brought to the saint, the demon cried out:

"I entered this maiden unwillingly, and was sent into her by force by my ruler. Now I am cruelly tormented and cannot come out, for I am bound to a copper tablet that is buried beneath the threshold. I will not come out until the young man who bound me releases me!"

The saint smiled slightly and said:

"So great is your power, devil, that you have been bound with a thread and forcibly held by a copper plate? Why, then, did you not enter the young man who bound you?"

"My friend, the lascivious demon, is already in him," the demon replied.

Having prayed, the saint cast him out of the maiden and instructed her to beware the snares of the enemy and avoid conversation with shameless young men.

A certain prince, possessed by an unclean spirit, came to the saint and was healed. In gratitude, he brought ten pounds of gold to his physician, St. Hilarion, who healed him without payment, and begged him to accept the gift. Then the saint showed him his barley bread.

"Those who feed on such bread count gold as marsh mud," he said; and, refusing the gold, he sent the prince away in good health.

Venerable Antony, having heard of Hilarion and his miracles, rejoiced in spirit and often wrote to him. To those who came to him from Syria to be healed, he would say:

"Why do you weary yourselves by making a long journey to me, when you have near at hand my son in Christ, Hilarion, who has received from God the gift of healing every disease?"

Throughout Palestine monasteries began to arise with the blessing of St. Hilarion, and all the monks came to him to hear his instructive word. And he guided them all in the way of salvation.

One day the brethren entreated him to go and visit the monasteries that had multiplied through his prayers and blessing, to strengthen them and give them a rule of monastic life. When he set out on his journey, a great multitude of brethren gathered around him, about three thousand, who followed him, delighting in his most sweet instructions. As he went about the monasteries and visited the brethren, the saint performed many miracles. One brother, distinguished for his hospitality, had a vineyard of his own, from which each year he gathered about a hundred measures of grapes. He lovingly welcomed St. Hilarion and entreated the brethren to come into his vineyard and cut as many clusters for themselves as each desired, for the grapes were already ripe. Each cut as many as he wished; and the brethren, as has been said above, numbered about three thousand. Seeing this brother's great love, the Venerable One blessed his vineyard, and that year the brother gathered more than three hundred measures of grapes from it. Thus the Venerable One's blessing increased the vineyard's fruitfulness because of the brother's hospitality. Another brother, being miserly and cruel, saw the saint passing by with his spiritual flock and stationed a watchman by his vineyard, lest anyone pluck even a single cluster for himself. The watchman threw stones at the brethren, saying that no one should come near the vineyard, for it belonged to another. This brother was deprived of the saint's blessing and gathered very few grapes, and those were sour.

One day the Venerable One set out for the wilderness of Cadis[17] to visit one of his disciples. On the way, Hilarion happened to pass through the pagan city of Eleusa[18]. There he came upon a demonic festival, to which a multitude of pagans from the neighboring villages had gathered, rejoicing and offering impious sacrifices to their goddess Aphrodite[19] in the temple. Hearing that St. Hilarion was approaching,

17. Kadesh, otherwise called Kades, is a desert in the far south of Palestine.
18. Elusa, now El-Kulasa, is a city in southern Palestine, north of the Kadesh desert, near the Arabian border, southwest of the Dead Sea.

they came out to meet him with their wives and children, for they had long since heard that he was a great wonderworker. When they saw him, they bowed their heads and cried out in the Syrian tongue, "Barakh! Barakh!"—which means, "Bless, bless!" Then they brought to him many sick and demoniacs, and the Venerable One healed them by the power of Christ. Having taught the pagans to know the one true God, he brought them all to faith in Christ, and did not leave the city until they had torn down the idol temple, shattered the idols, built a holy church, and been baptized in the name of the Lord. Having established them in the faith and bestowed his blessing upon them, the saint continued on his way.

The Venerable Hilarion received such grace from God that by the sense of smell and by touch he could discern what passion possessed each person. Once, a miserly and avaricious brother sent the saint fruits from his garden. When evening came and the saint sat down to table, his disciples offered him the fruits sent by the miserly brother. Seeing them, Hilarion turned away.

"Take them away from here," he said. "I cannot endure the stench coming from these fruits."

His disciple, the blessed Hesychius, began to insist that he taste them and bless the brother's love.

"Do not disdain them, Father," he said; "the brother has brought you the first fruits of his vineyard in faith."

"Do you not sense," the saint answered, "that the stench of avarice comes from these fruits?"

"How can fruits give off, besides their natural fragrance, the stench of some passion?" Hesychius asked.

"If you do not believe me, give these fruits to the oxen and see whether they will eat them."

Hesychius carried them away and laid the fruits in the manger before the oxen; but the oxen, after sniffing them, began to bellow wildly and, unable to endure the stench coming from those fruits, tore themselves away from the manger and ran off.

19. Aphrodite was the Greek goddess of love and beauty. The celebrations in her honor were accompanied by displays of extreme licentiousness and debauchery.

At that time the saint was already 63 years old. A great many brethren had gathered around him, so that the monastery had to be enlarged. Numerous cares hindered the Venerable One's silence. Moreover, a multitude of people came to him, some seeking healing, others a blessing. Bishops and priests came, along with the other servants of the Church; princes and nobles from many cities and regions came to hear the word of God from Hilarion and receive his blessing. The saint was greatly grieved that those who came would not let him keep silence, and he wept, remembering the solitude of the first days, when he was alone in the wilderness. Seeing him continually sorrowful and weeping, the brethren asked him:

"Why are you so sorrowful and weeping, Father?"

He answered them:

"I am so sorrowful and weep because I have returned to the world and received my reward here on earth: all the cities of Palestine and the neighboring regions glorify me, and you too honor me as a lord and call me master of all who dwell in the monastery."

Hearing these words from the Venerable One, the brethren understood that he wished to depart from them secretly, and began to watch him carefully, lest he leave them. For two years the elder grieved in this manner.

One day Aristeneta, the wife of the eparch[20] Elpidius, came to him; the saint had once healed her three sons when they were dying. She asked him for his blessing and prayers for her journey, for she intended to go to Egypt to venerate the Venerable Anthony. Hearing of Anthony, the saint sighed and said:

"Would that I too might go there and see in the flesh my holy and beloved father Anthony. But the brethren hold me here against my will, and I cannot go to him."

After a brief silence, he wept bitterly.

"For two months now," he said, "the whole world has mourned the loss of a great beacon, for the Venerable Anthony has already left his body."

20. An eparch is the governor of a city or province.

Hearing this, the woman and all who were present understood that a revelation from God had been granted him concerning the repose of the Venerable Anthony. Aristena returned home, and a few days later news came of Anthony's death.

Unable to endure the rumors and the honor paid him by men, and knowing through a revelation from God that He willed his departure from there, St. Hilarion summoned some of his disciples and told them to go with him. They brought an ass, set the Venerable Father upon it, since age had made him unable to walk, and went with him, supporting him. When the rest of the brethren, as well as the inhabitants of the surrounding villages and cities, learned that the Venerable One had left them, they gathered in a company of ten thousand and pursued him until they overtook him. Weeping, they fell at the saint's feet and entreated him not to leave them.

"After God, we had you in Palestine as a father, strengthening and helping us. Do not leave us alone, like sheep without a shepherd."

"Why, my children, do you break my heart?" the saint exhorted them. "Know that I have not departed without the Lord's will: I prayed to the Lord, and He commanded me to leave this place, that I might not see the sorrow that is to befall the Church of God, nor behold the destruction of the holy churches, the profanation of the sanctuaries, and the shedding of the blood of my children. Do not hold me back, my children."

Hearing that the impending calamity had been revealed to him, they entreated him all the more earnestly not to leave them, but to help them in their sorrow with his prayers. The saint, grieved, struck the ground with his staff and said, "I will neither eat nor drink until you let me go; but if you wish to see me dead, then hold me back."

For seven days they held the Venerable One back with their entreaties, but at last, convinced that his resolve could not be changed, they let him depart in peace. The great multitude of people followed him far off, weeping. When he came near the city of Bethylia[21], the saint knelt down, prayed with them all, and, commending them to the Lord, sent

21. Bethulia, otherwise Vetulia, is a city in Palestine lying south of Gaza.

them home. Choosing 40 brethren, whom he knew to be able to endure the hardships of the journey, and fasting and taking a little food only after sunset, he took them with him. After five days' journey, the saint arrived at Pelusium[22]. Having visited the brethren who lived in the nearby wilderness, in a place known as Lichnos, he departed from there and, after three days, came to the city of Phavast. There he met Bishop Dracontius the Confessor, who was in exile, and both were comforted by their God-inspired conversation[23]. After another journey of several days, the elder reached Babylon with great difficulty, to visit Bishop Philo[24] the Confessor. These two men had been banished to those places by Emperor Constantius, who supported the wicked Arians. After meeting the blessed Philo and conversing with him, the Venerable One continued on his way and came to the city of Aphroditopolis; then, after a three-day journey through a fearful and harsh wilderness, he reached the high mountain where the Venerable Anthony had dwelt.

There the Venerable Hilarion found two of his disciples, Isaac and Pelusian, who rejoiced greatly to see the saint. The place was very beautiful, and the saint went about it with great zeal. Isaac and Pelusian showed Hilarion all the places sanctified by the labors of the Venerable Anthony.

"In this place our holy father Anthony sang," they told him, "and in this one he kept silence; here he prayed, and there he sat and wove baskets; here he used to rest from his labors, and there he slept. He planted this vine and these trees himself, and he built this threshing floor with his own hands. He dug this pool for watering the garden himself, with great toil and sweating; here is the little shovel which the saint used for a long time to dig the earth."

They showed St. Hilarion this and much more. Coming to the place where Anthony was accustomed to rest, he kissed his bed with fear and joy, then lay down upon it. At the top of the mountain were two stone

22. Pelusium, or Peluza, and those mentioned below—Lychnos, Phavast, Babylon (Egyptian; now part of Cairo), Aphroditopolis, and Bruchia—are cities and towns of Lower (northern) Egypt.

23. Dracontius was Bishop of Hermopolis (in Egypt), a disciple of Venerable Pambo.

24. Philo was Bishop of Cyrene (Cyrene is a region of Upper Libya, on the northern coast of Africa, west of Egypt).

cells, to which St. Anthony withdrew for silence, hiding from the importunity of visitors who came to him. Leading Hilarion up the steps, the disciples showed him the vines and various fruit trees, laden with fruit, and told him that St. Anthony had planted them only three years before.

Having rested there with his brotherhood, Venerable Hilarion returned to Aphroditopolis and dismissed the brethren, telling them to return to Palestine, to their monastery, while he kept only two with him. With them he went to a desert not far from that city, where he settled, abiding in silence, fasting, prayer, and labors so great—as though only then beginning his monastic life in Christ.

After the death of Venerable Anthony, there was no rain in that region for three years, and famine raged throughout the whole country, for the soil was scorched by the heat as by fire. The people said that not only men mourned the death of the Venerable One, but the earth as well, while heaven gave no rain. People and domestic animals died of hunger and thirst. Hearing that St. Hilarion, Anthony's disciple, lived in those parts, a great multitude of people, with their wives and children, gathered and went to him in the desert. When they arrived, they began earnestly to beseech him:

"God has sent you to us in place of Anthony. Have mercy on us and pray to the Lord, that in His great mercy He may send rain upon our land, parched by the drought."

Seeing these people's misfortune as they perished from hunger and thirst, St. Hilarion raised his eyes and hands to heaven and began to pray with tears. At once a great rain fell and thoroughly watered all the land.[25] From that time, people began coming to the Venerable One, bringing their sick. Seeing that here too they troubled him and would not let him keep silence, the saint wished to withdraw to the desert of Oasim[26], and, making ready, set out with his two disciples. Passing through Alexandria, he came to Bruchium, where he found brothers he knew, who received him joyfully. After staying with them for a short

25. This was in 359.

26. Oasimus, or the Great Libyan Oasis, lies west of the Thebaid desert. It was an ancient Greek colony and also served as a place of exile: thus the heretic Nestorius was exiled there.

while, he resolved to leave, but the brethren would not let him go and entreated him to remain with them. Then he decided to leave them secretly by night; but when the disciples were preparing a donkey for him, the brethren learned of it and came and lay down at the door.

"It is better for us to die lying at your feet," they said, "than to lose you so soon!"

"Rise, then, my children," the Venerable One entreated them. "It is more profitable both for you and for me that you let me go quickly, for I have received a revelation from God commanding me to leave this place. This is why I am hastening to depart from you, lest sorrow befall you on my account. Truly, you will understand later that I am not hastening and avoiding a stay with you in vain."

Hearing these words, the brethren rose, and the saint offered a prayer, embraced them, and departed. The grace of God guarded him on his journey through the trackless desert.

The day after he left Bruchium, pagans from Gaza came there with executioners and asked where Hilarion was. Learning that he had gone, they said to one another:

"Look at this sorcerer! He knew what awaited him at our hands and fled."

From the beginning, the impious inhabitants of Gaza had envied the saint because people flocked to him and ceased worshipping their god Marnas. The priests of Marnas were especially embittered against the Venerable One on this account; they did all they could to destroy him, but could not, since all the neighboring cities and villages held the saint in great honor. But when Emperor Constantius died and the impious servant of demons, Julian the Apostate, ascended the throne, the lawless men considered the time opportune for carrying out their long-conceived evil design. The pagans of Gaza approached the impious emperor, slandered Venerable Hilarion and his disciples before him, and obtained a written decree commanding them to destroy his monasteries near Gaza, drive his disciples from the bounds of that region after first beating them, and kill Hilarion himself, as well as his assistant Hesychius. The impious men did as they were commanded: they destroyed the monasteries and scattered Christ's flock. Hesychius, whom

Hilarion loved most for his zealous obedience, by which he surpassed the other disciples, hid in the deserts, fleeing from the hands of the unbelievers.

Meanwhile, Venerable Hilarion, guarded by God, lived in the desert of Oasim. After he had been there about a year, his disciple Adrian came to him with news that Emperor Julian had been killed, and invited him to return to Palestine, to his former place, since peace had once more been established in the Church. Loving silence, the saint did not wish to return to Palestine; but seeing that he could not hide from people even in the desert of Oasim, he went through the desert to the regions of Libya with one disciple, Zeno. Adrian, with another disciple, returned to Palestine.

Coming to the coastal city of Paretonium,[27] Hilarion boarded a ship and sailed to Sicily, in order to escape human glory. The ship's owner had a son tormented by an unclean spirit, which cried out within him:

"Hilarion, servant of God! Why do you give us no rest even at sea? Wait until we put in at the shore, so that I need not plunge from here into the abyss."

The saint replied:

"If God commands you to remain in His creation, remain; but if He drives you out, what have we to do with it? I am a sinful man."

Hearing this, the father of the sick boy, together with all who were aboard, fell at the saint's feet, begging him to have mercy on his son and drive the demon out of him. But the saint would not consent, calling himself a sinner.

"If you promise me," he said at last, "not to speak of me to anyone in the land to which we are sailing, I will pray to my Master, that He may drive out the wicked spirit."

They promised on oath. Then the Venerable One offered a prayer and drove the demon out of the boy, and all glorified God.

When the ship put in at Mount Pichon in Sicily,[28] the saint offered the ship's owner, as payment for his passage, a Gospel book he had copied with his own hand in his youth. He had nothing else to give, for

27. Pareton is a coastal city of Lower Egypt.
28. Pichon is a cape in the south of the island of Sicily.

he was as poor in possessions as he was in spirit. But the ship's owner would not accept payment from him, though the saint insisted earnestly that he take it.

"It shall not be that I take anything from you, since you yourselves are poor and have nothing," the ship's owner replied.

The saint rejoiced in spirit, seeing that he was utterly poor and possessed nothing of this world's vanity. Going about twenty stadia inland from the shore, he settled there with his disciple. Every day the disciple gathered a bundle of firewood, carried it to a nearby village, and with the money he earned bought a loaf of bread, which they both ate, giving thanks to God.

But "a city set on a hill cannot be hid" (Mt. 5:14). A demoniac in the church of St. Peter in Rome cried out:

"Christ's servant Hilarion has recently arrived in Sicily. No one knows him, and he thinks he can remain hidden; but I shall go there and point him out."

And so it came to pass. This man was brought to Sicily; at Pichon he found St. Hilarion, fell down before his cell, and through the Venerable One's prayers received healing. From that time the inhabitants of that region learned of him. Many people began coming to him, seeking healing for their illnesses, and none ever returned without receiving what they sought. The man mentioned above, who had come from Rome and been healed of demonic possession, offered the saint rich gifts in gratitude for his healing; but the saint did not accept them, saying:

"It is written: 'Freely you have received, freely give'[29] (Mt. 10:8)."

While the Venerable One remained in Sicily, his beloved disciple, Blessed Hesychius, spent three years searching throughout the world for his beloved spiritual father, Venerable Hilarion. He diligently traversed many lands, mountains, and deserts, but nowhere did he find him. Later, while in the Peloponnese,[30] in the coastal city of Methone,

29. Mt. 10:8. "Freely you have received, freely give." With these words the Savior forbade the selling of the grace received from the Holy Spirit.
30. The Peloponnese is the southern part of Greece on the Balkan Peninsula.

he heard from a Jewish merchant that a certain Christian prophet had appeared in Sicily, working many miracles.

"What is his name, and what does he look like?" Hesychius asked.

"I have not seen him and do not know his name," the Jew replied. "I have only heard of him."

Understanding that this prophet was the very one he sought, Hesychius boarded a ship and sailed to Sicily. With difficulty, he learned something of the saint from his companions, who unanimously affirmed that he had worked many miracles and had taken not even a piece of bread from any of them in return. Finding the saint at Pichon, Hesychius fell at his feet, kissing them and bathing them with his tears. The elder could scarcely raise his disciple from the ground, as he wept for joy, and comforted him with a soul-saving discourse.

After a time, seeing the many people who came to him and glorified him, the elder said to his disciples, Zeno and Hesychius:

"It is impossible for us to remain here, my children. Let us go to another land, where no one will know us."

Having gathered together, he secretly departed with them for the Dalmatian city of Epidaurus[31], whither God had sent him to do good to many. He had not spent more than a few days in a secluded place near Epidaurus before the inhabitants of the country learned of the coming among them of the servant of God, who had formerly been in Sicily. God revealed His servant to the people and glorified him. Hearing of him from one another, the inhabitants gathered and came to him; and, bowing down, they began to beseech him to help them in their great distress: in those parts there dwelt a terrible serpent, so enormous that it devoured great oxen and swallowed people. Thus it had destroyed countless people and domestic animals. Hearing of it, the saint ordered that much wood be gathered and a great fire kindled; then, bending his knees, he prayed to God to have mercy on His people and, for the glory of His holy Name, to deliver them from the destructive serpent. Then he began to summon the serpent. And behold, the serpent appeared, as though drawn by some force to its slaughter. All looked on and were

31. Epidaurus is a city on the shore of the Adriatic Sea, destroyed in the 6th century. Today it is Ragusa.

filled with terror. But the saint commanded it to enter the flames, and at once, obeying his words, the serpent entered the fire and was burned. Then the people glorified God and gave thanks to St. Hilarion.

From that day many began to come to him for help. The elder, however, grieved and pondered where he might find a place in which to hide from the people and dwell in stillness. At that time a great earthquake occurred, and the sea was greatly stirred and rose beyond its shores. The waves rose so high that they covered great mountains, and ships, carried by the waters, were left in high places. The inhabitants of Epidaurus, which lay by the sea, seeing these calamities, thought that a second Flood was beginning, and, in terror, expecting the destruction of the whole earth and their own imminent death, wept aloud. Remembering St. Hilarion, all hastened to him, great and small, wives and children, and with weeping entreated him to pray to God for them, that He might turn away His righteous wrath from them. The saint arose and went with them toward the city. When he arrived, he stood between the city and the sea; but the sea had risen high above Epidaurus into the air, so that it seemed to touch the clouds, and was already ready to engulf the city. The saint traced three crosses in the sand and, raising his hands to heaven, earnestly entreated the God Who loves mankind to have mercy on His creation. As he prayed thus, God showed His love for mankind: at the Lord's command, the sea gradually grew calm and returned within its shores, the earthquake ceased, and the winds abated. Of this great power of the Lord and the prayerful intercession of the Venerable Hilarion in the city of Epidaurus, fathers afterward told their children from generation to generation.

Meanwhile, St. Hilarion, fleeing human praise, left that place by night and, finding a ship bound for Cyprus, boarded it with his disciples. During the voyage, pirates attacked them, and all who were on the ship were greatly afraid; but Hilarion comforted them.

"Are there more pirates than there were soldiers in Pharaoh's host?" he said. "Yet God drowned them in the sea."

When the sea pirates had come as near to the ship as a stone could be thrown, the saint, from the ship, threatening them with his hand, said:

"It is enough for you that you have come as far as this."

The pirates' ships at once stopped, unable to sail farther or approach the ship on which the saint was. The pirates labored greatly, rowing in vain, and returned in shame, driven away from the ship by God's power.

Having arrived at the island of Cyprus[32], St. Hilarion settled in a desolate place two versts from the city of Paphos.[33] But here, too, he could not remain hidden: the demons themselves, dwelling in people, announced his coming to the people. By God's command, those possessed gathered from all the country, numbering as many as 200, men and women; they came to the saint and, through his prayers, were all freed from possession. After remaining here for two years, the Venerable one resolved to depart, seeking a desolate place where he might end his life in stillness. Having gone twelve versts from the sea, he found a lonely, wild place among high mountains. Many fruit trees grew around it (though he never once tasted their fruit); water fit for drinking flowed down from the mountain; there was also a flourishing garden and an abandoned idol temple in which many demons dwelt. The saint liked this place because of its extreme solitude, and he lived there for five years. Day and night the demons cried out loudly, wishing to frighten the saint and drive him away; but he struggled against them by unceasing prayer and rested in stillness, for, because access to him was difficult and the place was inhabited by many demons, no one dared come to him.

One day, coming out of his hut, the elder saw a paralytic lying before it and asked Hesychius:

"Who is this man, and who brought him?"

"He is the owner of the place where we live," Hesychius replied.

The saint wept, stretched out his hand over him, and said:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, rise and walk!"

And the paralytic at once arose, completely healed, and began to walk, praising God. After this miracle, all the inhabitants of the sur-

32. Around September 365.

33. Paphos is a coastal city of Cyprus, made famous by the preaching of the Apostle Paul. There he struck blind Elymas the sorcerer, who opposed him. Acts of the Apostles, ch. 13.

rounding country began to come to the saint, no longer fearing either hostile spirits or the difficult and dangerous journey.

Remembering the brethren in Palestine, the Venerable one sent blessed Hesychius to visit them and greet them in his name. He himself began to contemplate departing, seeing that here, too, he was honored and wearied by the people who came to him; but he awaited Hesychius's return. At this time his disciple, blessed Zeno, died, and the time had also come for him to end his most toilsome earthly journey (he was already 80 years old).

Foreknowing his departure to God, the Venerable one wrote a testament to the brethren with his own hand, leaving Hesychius the Holy Gospel, written by his own hand, a hair shirt, and a cowl.[34] After this, his body began to grow weak.

When news of St. Hilarion's illness reached the inhabitants of Paphos, all the pious men at once came to visit him, and with them came a certain God-pleasing woman named Constantia, whose sick daughter the Venerable one had healed by anointing her with oil.

Seeing that the Lord was calling him to Himself, the saint began to ask his visitors, after his death, to bury his body without delay in the garden where he lived. As he was dying, Hilarion spoke, contemplating with a purified mind the separation of the soul from the body:

"Come forth, my soul, why are you afraid? Come forth, why are you troubled? For eighty years you have served Christ—and are you afraid of death?"

With these words he gave up his spirit to God.[35] Weeping for him as for a father and teacher, those present buried him in the place he had commanded.

Returning from Palestine and not finding his instructor, blessed Hesychius wept over his tomb for many days. He intended to take the body to Palestine, to the brethren, but could not, for all the inhabitants of the surrounding country guarded the body, lest anyone carry such a treasure away from their land.

34. A koukoul is a monastic hood that served as a symbol of purity and guilelessness. Sometimes a cross was sewn onto the hood.
35. He reposed in 371 or 372, on October 21.

Then Hesychius pretended that he wished to settle in that place and said:

"Let me die and be buried here with my father."

Believing him, the people allowed him to live in the place where St. Hilarion was buried. After 10 months had passed, Hesychius opened the Venerable one's tomb and saw his holy body as though he had only just died, bright of face and fragrant. He took it and secretly departed for Palestine. The monks and laypeople of Palestine heard that Hesychius had brought the relics of St. Hilarion, and they gathered from all the monasteries and cities with candles and censers; escorting them with honor, they laid them in Maiuma, in his first monastery.

Nor should we pass over in silence what the aforementioned Constantia did. Being virtuous and having great devotion to the Venerable Hilarion, after his death she often went to his tomb, prayed throughout the nights, and conversed with him as with a living man, asking him to pray for her. When she learned that the saint's body had been stolen, she fell down from grief and died, showing by her death what faith and love she had for the saint.

The inhabitants of Cyprus and Palestine disputed with one another, each boasting of St. Hilarion. The inhabitants of Palestine said:

"We have the body of St. Hilarion."

"And we have his spirit," the Cypriots replied.

In both places, in Cyprus, where he was buried, and in Palestine, whither he was translated, many miracles were wrought through his holy prayers, and countless healings were granted, to the glory of God, One in Trinity, to Whom be honor and thanksgiving and worship from us also unto the ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

By the streams of thy tears thou didst make the barren wilderness fruitful, and by sighs from the depths thou didst bring forth fruit a hundredfold through thy labors; thou wast a lamp for the universe, shining with miracles, O our Father Hilarion. Pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

As an unfading, noetic lamp of the Sun, we gather today to praise thee in song; for thou didst shine upon those in the darkness of ignorance, leading all to the divine heights, O Hilarion. Therefore we cry aloud: Rejoice, O Father, foundation of all ascetics.

* * *

Commemoration of St. Hilarion of Meglin

Память святого Илариона Меглинского

The Bulgarian Tsar Kaloyan[36], brother of Tsar Asen, took possession of the Greek lands—Thrace, Macedonia, Neada, and Hellas—and captured the city of Meglin[37]. Here he found the shrine of the Venerable Hilarion[6882], Bishop of Meglin, and, moved by pious zeal, desired to translate the saint's relics to his capital, Ternov[38], and took them with him. When the Bulgarian Patriarch learned of the saint's approach, he went out to meet the holy relics with candles and fragrant incense, together with the bishops and all his clergy, the dignitaries, and all the people. The saint's relics were brought in and laid to rest in the God-protected city of Ternov on October 21.

When John Asen II came to the throne, having greatly enlarged the bounds of his kingdom, a church was built at Ternov at the Tsar's wish, in the name of the Forty Martyrs, and the relics of St. Hilarion were laid therein.

Troparion, Tone 3:

Having appeared as a wonder of enlightenment, thou didst shine forth through the works of God's virtues; thou didst shepherd the monastic flocks and purify the episcopal sees. Fearing not the assault of heresy, thou didst raise up the Churches of Christ, O Venerable Hilarion. Thou didst die as one who sleepeth, yet thy

36. Kaloyan was the second successor of John Asen (1186–1196). He was killed in 1207 by his nephew Boril, after whom Asen's son, John II (1218–1241), became Tsar; at the time of Boril's crime, John II was in Russia.
37. In the opinion of some, this is the same as ancient Edessa; others identify Edessa with the Slavic Voden, from which Meglin lies 30 versts to the northeast. This city no longer exists.
38. Ternov is one of the significant cities of Bulgaria, and in ancient times was even its capital.

body was preserved whole and incorrupt, and giveth healing to those sick with divers ailments and driveth away demons. Wherefore we beseech thee: pray that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Thy memory appeared as light-bearing, O bishop, dispelling the darkness of despondency; and the light of heavenly gifts shone forth, calling all to another joy. For thou didst find grace from God, O Hilarion, and wast a step for monks.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Dasius, Gaius, and Zoticus

Память святых мучеников Дасия, Гаия и Зотика

The holy Martyrs Dasius, Gaius, and Zoticus, while in Nicomedia, once entered an idol temple and destroyed its altars. For this they were subjected to every kind of torture and torment. They were hung upon a tree, where they were scraped with a horse currycomb and their bodies rubbed with haircloths. Seeing that they despised every torment and, moreover, denounced the vanity of idols and proclaimed aloud Christ God, consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit, their torturers hung stones around their necks and cast them into the sea, where the saints found their rest.[39]

* * *

NOTES

6882. Venerable Hilarion was descended from wealthy and noble parents. Brought up as a Christian, in his 18th year he forsook the world and withdrew to a monastery, where he was soon made its abbot on account of his strict life. Concerned for the salvation of the souls entrusted to him, he urged them not to waste the precious time appointed for salvation. Above all, he could not endure drunkenness. In 1134 he was consecrated Bishop of Meglin by Eustathius, Archbishop of Bulgaria. At that time the Bogomil heresy, which upheld a dualist teaching that evil and good are two independent principles engaged in conflict, was widespread in Bulgaria. St. Hilarion armed himself with

39. The saints suffered a martyr's death during the reign of Diocletian, in the year 303.

apostolic zeal and fervent prayer in order to turn the inhabitants away from this false teaching. He tirelessly denounced the impiety of the Bogomils, stripping away the mask of hypocritical goodness with which they deceived others. The leaders of the heresy dared to engage St. Hilarion in open debate. Having refuted the Bogomils' objections, the hierarch concluded his speech with these words: "Why, O Bogomils, do you deceive yourselves and others, calling yourselves Christians when you are not Christians at all? You make war against the Cross of Christ our Savior, do not acknowledge the one God as Christians believe in Him, and revile the ancient revelation, which Christians honor according to the word of the Lord. You deceive simple people with hypocritical meekness, while you breathe pride. True piety cannot exist in those who do not recognize the corruption of their own hearts and do not ask for God's grace through prayer and humility! What purpose do your fasts serve? Examine yourselves sincerely, and you will see that evil thoughts, envy, vainglory, vanity, deceit, and lies are not the work of evil matter within us and are not overcome by fasting; rather, they are the fruit of corrupt self-love, and therefore call for spiritual struggles." Heeding this pastoral exhortation, many of the Bogomils were touched in heart, renounced their former impiety, and united themselves with the Church of Christ. In the same spirit St. Hilarion contended also with the Armenians, who adhered to Monophysitism, which acknowledges only one nature in Christ—the divine. Blessed Hilarion reposed in peace in 1164.



THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF OCTOBER

October 22

22 октября

New Calendar October 22 · Old Calendar November 4 (civil dates)

Memory of St. Abercius, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Bishop of Hierapolis,

Память святого равноапостольного Аверкия, епископа Иерапольского,

In the reign of Marcus Aurelius[1], the son of Antoninus, in the city of Hierapolis[2], whose population was predominantly pagan, there was a bishop, St. Abercius. Once there was celebrated a solemn festival in honor of the idols, and all the unbelievers, gathering in their temple, rejoiced and worshipped their lifeless gods, the idols, offering them sacrifices. St. Abercius, at the sight of such a spectacle, shed tears, grieving that people, blinded by madness, had forsaken God, worshipped demons, and, forgetting the Creator, honored the work of human hands. Shutting himself up in his house, the bishop prayed, saying:

"O God of ages and Lord of mercy, Thou hast created the whole universe and governest it, Thou didst send Thy Only-begotten Son to earth that He might become incarnate for the sake of man: with merciful eye look now from heaven upon the whole world; do not forsake this city, where Thou hast set me as shepherd over Thy rational sheep; behold these darkened people: the honor due to Thee they render not to Thee, but to vile demons, idols which they themselves have made for themselves; deliver, O Lord, these erring people from perdition, lead them out of darkness into Thy true light, number them among Thy chosen flock!"

1. He reigned from 161 to 180 A.D.
2. Hierapolis: a rich city in Phrygia, a region of Asia Minor.

After this fervent prayer the saint fell asleep, for night had already come, and behold, in a dream-vision there appeared to him a youth of extraordinary beauty; placing a staff in Abercius's hands, he said:

"Go, Abercius, in My name, and with this staff shatter the leaders of error!"

Awaking from sleep, Abercius understood that the Lord Himself had appeared to him in the vision, and he felt in his heart an unspeakable joy. Filled with zeal, he at once rose, took up a stake that happened to be at hand, and that same night, at the ninth hour[3], went to the temple of Apollo, where on the previous day a pagan festival had taken place and many sacrifices had been offered. In this temple were many precious, beautifully adorned idols. Approaching the temple, Abercius found its doors locked; he struck them, and they at once flew open before him. Entering the temple, the holy bishop first struck the chief idol of Apollo, and then the others. He shattered them all and broke them into small pieces. The deaf and mute idols, being lifeless and possessing no power, could not defend themselves when the saint smashed them. Only the sound of their falling was heard.

The idol-priests, who lived not far from the temple, woke, and hearing a great noise in the temple, could not understand what it might mean. Running to the temple, they saw that the idols of their gods lay on the ground in the dust, while St. Abercius trod the fragments of the idols underfoot and smashed them with his staff. At this sight fear fell upon the priests; the saint, turning to them, said with anger:

“Go to the rulers of the city and to all the people, and say that your gods, having got drunk at yesterday’s feast which you arranged for them, quarrelled among themselves and, falling to the ground, were broken.”

Having said this, the saint went to his house like a strong man who has vanquished his enemies; and indeed such were the idols, which had led many human souls to perdition.

The idol-priests went to the city authorities and told them everything that Abercius had done. With the coming of day, the news

3. The hours were counted from sunrise, so that the ninth hour corresponded to our 3 o'clock after midnight.

of what had happened quickly spread throughout the whole city, and so all, from small to great, common folk and officials alike, gathered at the temple. Seeing their idols broken into small pieces and scattered on the ground, all at first were astonished. Then, filled with fury, all began to shout:

"Death to Abercius!"

Others added to this:

"Send him to the emperor; there let him suffer torments equal to his crime!"

"No, rather let us go at once and burn him together with his whole house," proposed others.

The rulers restrained the people:

“Do not dare to set fire to Abercius’s house; we fear that the whole city might suffer from the fire if you set alight Abercius’s house. Better let us seize him and bring him to judgment ourselves, or send him to be judged by the supreme governor.”

When the people were in such agitation and already wished to attack the house of Abercius, the bishop's neighbors, hearing of this, went to his house; they found him teaching the faithful who had gathered to him, and told him everything they had heard among the people, who wished to go to his house and seize him as a criminal.

Hearing this, the faithful were afraid and begged their shepherd to leave the house and hide somewhere for a time, until the popular agitation subsided. The saint, however, without fear, answered them:

"The Lord commanded His Apostles to preach the word of salvation to all nations boldly and fearlessly: so why should I fear men who have risen up against me and seek my soul because of my zeal for my God? If I can hide myself from human hands, how can I escape the hand of God? What place can conceal me from Him? Truly I tell you, brethren, we ought not to fear and hide ourselves when the Lord Himself, the Keeper of our life, helps us; to suffer for Him is a blessing, and death for Him is sweeter than any prosperous life."

Having said this, the saint went out of his house and proceeded into the very midst of the city, and the faithful followed him. Coming to the place where the people usually gathered, and seating himself on an el-

evation, Abercius began to instruct the people present, that they should come to know the true God, understand the deception of the demons and the falsity of their gods, and renounce idol-worship; he entreated them to serve faithfully the One God, who dwells on high, the Creator of the whole world. Then some of the pagans went to the city rulers and to the people gathered at the temple of Apollo, who were indignant at the overthrow of the idols, and reported that Abercius in the middle of the city was teaching people the Christian faith. Hearing of this, all were still more enraged against Abercius, who had not only smashed their idols but had even dared openly to preach his Christian faith before everyone. Coming out of the temple, they went in terrible wrath to the place where the saint was, to kill him at once. Among the people were three youths who had long been possessed by demons. When the crowd began to approach the saint, the youths, by the action of the demons, suddenly fell into frenzy and, uttering a dreadful cry, filled everyone with terror.

Tearing their clothing, they began to tear their own bodies with their teeth and to gnaw their hands. Falling to the ground, they rolled about, foaming at the mouth, and unceasingly cried out in a terrible voice:

"Abercius, we adjure you by the one true God whom you preach, do not torment us before the time."

At the sight of such a dreadful manifestation the people trembled, looking at the cruel suffering of those youths and hearing their dreadful cry. Forgetting why they had come, they waited in bewilderment to see what would happen next and what Abercius would do to the youths, whom the demons beseeched him to leave in peace. The saint, however, began to pray:

"Father of Thy beloved Son Jesus, Thou forgivest us our sins, though they be innumerable, Thou givest us all things that we ask of Thee for our good: Thee now I beseech and entreat: shield these youths from the demonic assault, that they may afterwards walk in the way of Thy commandments, following Thy holy will. When they behold the wondrous sign which Thou wilt perform over them, many will believe

in Thee, the One almighty God, and will know that there is no other besides Thee."

Having prayed thus, the saint turned to the youths tormented by the demons, and, lightly striking them on the head with the staff which he held in his hands, said:

"In the name of my Christ I command you, demons: come out of these youths, without doing them the least harm."

Crying out in a terrible voice, the demons came out of the youths, who lay on the ground like corpses.

Taking each of them by the hand, St. Abercius raised them from the ground. They at once became perfectly healthy, and, falling down before the saint, kissed his honorable feet.

When the people saw this, they forgot their fury and cried out:

"There is one true God, whom Abercius preaches!" Then they began to question the saint himself:

"Tell us, man of God, will your God receive us if we turn to Him? Will He forgive our countless sins? Teach us how to believe in Him!"

Opening his mouth, St. Abercius began to teach the people the knowledge of God, and continued his instruction even until the ninth hour of the day; he also commanded that all the sick be brought to him, and healed them, invoking the name of Jesus Christ and laying his hands upon them. Hearing his teaching and seeing the miracles, all the people believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and asked Abercius to grant them holy baptism. Since it was already evening, the saint postponed their baptism until morning, commanding all to prepare themselves to receive the holy mystery. When the people gathered the next morning, he led them all to the church and again instructed them; then, having performed the customary prayers, he baptized 500 men that day. And within a few days he brought not only Hierapolis but also the other neighboring cities and villages to the faith of Christ, and united them with God through baptism. And his fame spread everywhere. Many sick people from various and distant lands came to him, and received a twofold healing, of body and soul.

A noble woman named Friella, the mother of Euxenian Poplion, proconsul of the East, being blind and hearing that Abercius healed many

different diseases, ordered herself to be taken to the holy man. She found Abercius instructing the people and, falling at his feet, begged the saint to open the eyes that had lost their sight. Caring first of all for the enlightenment of Friella's spiritual eyes, the saint asked her whether she believed in Christ, Who opened the eyes of the man born blind. When Friella vowed to believe and shed abundant tears upon Abercius' feet, the saint prayed to God, touched her eyes, and said:

"O true Light, Jesus Christ, come and open the eyes of Thy handmaid!"

At once Friella's sight was restored, and she received baptism from the saint.

After her baptism, she gave the saint half of her estate to distribute among the poor and, having received instruction from him, returned home. Her son, the proconsul Euxenian Poplion, seeing that his mother could see again and learning that St. Abercius had opened her eyes by his prayers, desired to see him and thank him for his mother's healing. The saint instructed Euxenian in the faith and converted him to Christ.

After this, three other women, likewise afflicted with blindness, came to the saint and, bowing before him, said:

"We too believe in Jesus Christ, Whom you preach; therefore we beseech you to open our eyes as well, just as you opened Friella's."

The saint answered them:

"If you truly believe in the true God, as you say, then you shall see His light."

Having said this, the saint raised his eyes to heaven and began to pray. During the saint's prayer, a ray of ineffable light, brighter than the radiance of the sun, descended from heaven and illumined the place where St. Abercius stood at prayer. All who were there could not endure this ineffable light; they fell to the ground, while only the three blind women stood motionless. When the ray touched the eyes of the blind women, they received their sight, and the flashing of the heavenly light ceased.

The saint asked those who had received their sight:

"What did you see first when your sight was restored?"

Then the first said:

"I saw the Ancient of Days[4], Who touched my eyes."

The other said:

"I saw a most beautiful Youth, Who touched my eyes."

"And I saw," cried the third, "that a most radiant Child touched my eyes."

Hearing this, the saint and all who were with him glorified God, One in the Trinity, Who works wondrous and most glorious miracles.

Then Abercius, learning that many people in the neighboring towns and villages also suffered from various infirmities, set out there with his disciples and, following the example of his Lord, went about the towns and villages, teaching the people concerning the kingdom of God and healing the sick. Coming to a place beside a river, called Selishche, he knelt down and prayed thus:

"O merciful Lord, hear me, Thy servant; send down grace upon this place, that a spring of warm waters may gush forth here, so that those who bathe in it may receive healing from every infirmity and sore."

When he had ended his prayer, suddenly, beneath a clear sky, thunder rumbled. All who were there were terrified when, after the thunderclap, a spring of warm waters burst forth at the very spot where Abercius stood praying on his knees. Then the saint commanded those who were with him to dig deep trenches where the warm waters could collect, and ordered all the sick to bathe in them; everyone who immersed himself in those waters received healing through the saint's prayers.

Once the devil, desiring to tempt Abercius, assumed the appearance of a woman and approached the saint, asking his blessing. Looking upon the demon's face, the saint wished to turn away from him, but at that moment he struck his right foot against a stone and injured it so badly that a sore formed on his shin. Enduring severe pain, the saint stood without uttering a single groan, merely holding his hand to the place where the sore was. The devil laughed and, resuming his usual appearance, said to the saint:

4. "Ancient of days" is the name given to the First Person of the Holy Trinity. The name is used by the Prophet Daniel in describing one of his mysterious visions in Babylon: "I beheld," says the Holy Prophet, "till thrones were placed, and the Ancient of days did sit."

"Do not think me one of those contemptible and insignificant demons whom you have cast out; I am their chief. And now you have received a sore from me: you heal others of sickness, yet today you yourself are ill."

Having said this, the devil entered a young man who was standing near the saint and began to torment him. But St. Abercius prayed to God, rebuked the demon, and cast him out of the young man. As he came out, the demon cried:

"You do me much harm, Abercius, and will not let me live here in peace. I shall take revenge on you and make you go to Rome in your old age."

Returning to his house, the saint took neither food nor drink for seven days, but remained in fasting and all-night prayer. Abercius besought God not to allow the enemy to make him go wherever the demon wished. On the seventh night the Lord appeared to the saint in a vision and said:

"By My providence, Abercius, you shall be in Rome, that My name may be known there also. Therefore fear not, for My grace shall be with you."

This vision strengthened Abercius, and he told the brethren what he had heard from the Lord Who had appeared to him. Soon afterward, the demon who had boasted that he would make Abercius come to Rome began cunningly to carry out his purpose.

At that time the Roman ruler Marcus Aurelius made Lucius Verus his co-ruler and betrothed his daughter Lucilla to him. But before the wedding festivities could take place, a demon entered the maiden and began to torment her. Grieved by the maiden's illness, her father and her betrothed summoned experienced physicians, sorcerers, and priests from throughout their land, striving by every means to heal Lucilla. Their efforts not only failed, but the maiden grew worse day by day. And the demon began to cry out within her:

"No one can cast me out of here except Abercius, Bishop of Hierapolis."

As soon as the maiden's father, Emperor Marcus Aurelius, heard of this, he immediately sent a letter to Euxenian Poplion, his proconsul of the East[5], which read as follows:

"It has come to Our knowledge that in the province under your authority there is a certain Abercius, Bishop of Hierapolis, a man so powerful in the Christian faith that he is able both to cast out demons and to heal various diseases. Since he is needed by Us, We are sending two of Our dignitaries, Valerius and Bassianus, to bring him to Us with due honor. We command you to persuade him to come to Us, for which you shall receive a great reward from Us."

Having received such a letter from the emperor, the proconsul went to Abercius and began urging him to go to Rome with the emperor's envoys. Abercius remembered that the demon had boasted of making him undertake the arduous journey to Rome in his old age, and thought to himself:

"Though you, enemy of mankind, have indeed sought to carry out what in your pride you promised to do to me, yet you shall not rejoice. I firmly hope in God and trust that my labor in old age will not be in vain, but that there I shall destroy your pride by the power of my Christ, Who promised me His grace in a vision."

Having prepared everything needed for the journey, the saint set out, calling upon Almighty God for help. His preparations for the journey were as follows: he took a little bread and poured wine, oil, vinegar, and water into a single leather flask, arranging it so that the liquids would not mix. When, on the road, he needed wine, only wine flowed from the flask; when he needed vinegar, only vinegar poured out; when he needed water, only water flowed. Thus each liquid came out separately, although all were together in the same flask. Once the saint's disciple wished, without his blessing, to draw himself a cup of wine, and at once all the liquids flowed together: wine, oil, vinegar, and water, so that he could not taste the mixture. In terror he confessed his sin to the saint and asked his forgiveness; then, by the blessing of the blessed one, each liquid again began to flow separately.

5. Proconsuls: persons who governed the provinces of the Roman state.

When St. Abercius arrived in Rome, the emperor and his wife Faustina received him with honor and took him to their daughter, whom a demon was tormenting. When the latter saw that St. Abercius had come, he laughed and said:

"Did I not tell you, Abercius, that I would avenge myself on you for the affront you dealt me and make you come to Rome in your old age?"

"Yes, it is indeed so," said the saint, "but this shall not bring you joy, accursed devil."

The saint ordered the maiden to be brought out of the chamber. As they led her, the demon resisted, unwilling to go, but they nevertheless brought the maiden out by force. Then the devil began throwing her to the ground and beating her, while St. Abercius, fixing his gaze upon heaven, fervently prayed to the Lord for the healing of the suffering maiden. Then the demon began to cry:

"I adjure you by your Christ: send me neither into the abyss nor to any other place, but let me return to where I was until now."

The saint answered him:

"You shall go to your father, Satan, spirit of wickedness; but since you have troubled me, an old man, and made me come here, you too shall not escape labor or return from here empty-handed. Behold, there lies a stone"—there was before the palace a stone of such enormous size that a great multitude could move it only a short distance and with much difficulty; it was this stone to which the saint pointed—"I command you in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ: carry this stone to my native land, to Hierapolis, and lay it beside the southern gate."

And behold, the devil, like a slave and captive bound by an oath, came out of the emperor's daughter, took up the stone, and with a heavy groan carried it through the air across the hippodrome[6]. All the people who were there saw with amazement the stone moving through the air and heard the devil's great groan, but could not see him himself. Having carried the stone to Hierapolis, the devil laid it in the place where St. Abercius had commanded him. The inhabitants of Hierapolis, seeing the enormous stone suddenly fall from the air, were greatly as-

6. Hippodrome: a place for horse races and chariot contests.

tonished, and understood this mystery only when St. Abercius returned to them.

Though freed from the evil tormentor, the emperor's daughter could not rise from the ground, but lay at Abercius's feet without uttering a sound. Seeing this, her mother, Empress Faustina, thought that her daughter had died and began to weep; but the saint stretched out his hand and raised the maiden, alive, healthy, and in full possession of her reason. Then the maiden's parents gave themselves over to great joy, and the imperial household rejoiced at the healing of the princess. Her parents sent the joyful tidings also to their son-in-law, Lucius Verus, who was at that time on campaign against the Parthians[7], informing him of his bride's recovery. They offered the saint rich gifts and promised to give him whatever he might ask. But Abercius accepted neither gold nor silver nor any possession, saying:

"Wealth is not needed by one for whom bread and water are the same as a royal feast and a great banquet."

He asked only two things: first, that three thousand measures of wheat from the taxes collected for the emperor be distributed each year to the poor of Hierapolis; and second, that the emperor command a bathhouse to be built at the expense of his treasury by the warm-water spring which the saint had brought forth from the depths of the earth by prayer for the healing of the sick. The emperor gladly promised to fulfill these requests of the saint and gave him a written testimony to this effect.

When the saint remained in Rome for some time after this, strengthening the Church of Christ in the faith, Christ appeared to him in a vision and said:

"It is fitting for you, Abercius, to be in Syria and there to preach My name, establish My churches, and heal many who are sick."

After this vision, Abercius asked the emperor to release him, but he would not grant his request, fearing that in the saint's absence the de-

7. Parthians: they occupied the regions of Asia lying between the Euphrates and the mountainous countries on the Indus. The Parthians were nomads, and in later times did not lose this character, distinguishing themselves in all wars as excellent and brave horsemen, perfectly skilled with the arrow and the spear. The war with the Parthians was successfully concluded in 165 A.D. by Lucius Verus.

mon might again enter his daughter. The saint urged him to lay aside his fear, assuring him that the demon could not return. Only then, and with reluctance, did the emperor release the saint.

Embarking on a ship, Abercius sailed to the region of Syria. First he visited Antioch, then went to Apamea[8] and other neighboring cities, restoring peace in the churches shaken by the heresy of the Marcionites.[9] Having crossed the Euphrates, the saint visited the churches in Nisibis[10] and throughout Mesopotamia; from there he went to Cilicia[11] and Pisidia,[12] and also visited Synnada,[13] the metropolis of Phrygia. In all those regions and cities he brought great benefit to the Church, converted many unbelievers to faith in Christ, put the heretics to shame and drove them away, strengthened the faithful in the faith, guided those who had strayed onto the path of truth, cast unclean spirits out of many people, and healed very many who suffered from various illnesses. Everyone called him Equal-to-the-Apostles, for none but the Apostles had traveled through so many lands and cities. Thus the Hierarch spread the glory of Christ God and served mankind greatly for their salvation and enlightenment. After this he returned to Hierapolis.

The inhabitants of Hierapolis, hearing that their Hierarch was returning to them and was already near the city, all of them, young and old, with their wives and children, hastened to meet him. With the greatest joy, they fell before him like children before their father and received from him the blessing which they had long desired.

Entering the city, Abercius went to the church and, taking his seat upon his throne, bestowed peace upon all and began to instruct the people.

And all rejoiced at the return of the holy man, but the indigent and the poor were especially comforted, for Abercius had brought with him

8. Apamea: one of the cities of Syria.
9. Marcionites: heretics of the second century, who acknowledged two principles: the good God and matter, which is under the dominion of the devil, or of an evil being, eternal and wicked.
10. Nisibis, or Nisibida: a large and populous city of the province of Migdonia, in Mesopotamia.
11. Cilicia: the south-eastern coastal country of Asia Minor.
12. Pisidia: a region of Asia Minor.
13. Synnada, or Synnades: a city in the north of Phrygia, near a mountain range, where the famous Synnadic marble quarries were located. Today its ruins lie near Eskikarye, Gassaf.

the emperor's decree commanding that three thousand measures of wheat be given to them each year from the emperor's taxes. This wheat was distributed until the time of Julian the Apostate, who revoked the decree and took back the written instrument. Through the saint's care, by the emperor's command, a bathhouse was also built by the warm-water spring.

St. Abercius spent the remaining years of his life in holiness and righteousness, wisely governing his flock. He was forewarned of his end: the Lord appeared to him in a vision and said:

"Abercius, the time is already near for you to rest from your labors."

After this, Abercius gathered all his flock and, announcing that his life would soon come to an end, began, as was his custom, to instruct them all, beseeching his hearers always to remain steadfast in the faith, not to despair of hope, and to love one another without hypocrisy. Then, having prepared a tomb for himself and given all his final pastoral blessing, he committed his holy soul to the Lord. Thus the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Abercius completed his earthly course in the 73rd year of his life.[14] The inhabitants of Hierapolis mourned him, reverently buried his honored body, and with great labor laid upon the saint's tomb the stone which had once been brought from Rome at his command. And through the saint's prayers many healings were granted, both at his tomb and at the warm-water spring brought forth by his prayers; through these prayers may the Lord also grant us His mercy unto the ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As a most great priest and companion of the Apostles, the Church of all the faithful honors thee, Abercius. By thy prayers, O blessed one, preserve her invincible, untroubled by every heresy, and undefiled, for thou art ever-memorable.

* * *

14. He died about 167.

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Alexander the Bishop, Heraclius the Soldier, and four women: Anna, Elizabeth, Theodotia, and Glyceria

Память святых мучеников Александра епископа, Ираклия воина и четырех жен: Анны, Елисаветы, Феодотии и Гликерии

St. Alexander converted many and baptized them into the faith of Christ. He was seized by the hegemon and, being compelled to offer sacrifice to idols, endured many torments but would not obey. Seeing his endurance, the soldier Heraclius believed in Christ and, after cruel torments, was beheaded with the sword. But St. Alexander was suddenly healed of his wounds by the grace of God. Thereafter he converted to Christ four women: Anna, Elizabeth, Theodotia, and Glyceria, who also appeared before the hegemon and, for denouncing the vanity of idols, were beheaded with the sword. Last of all, St. Alexander too died by the sword and committed his holy and blessed soul to the Lord.[15]

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Memory of the Venerable Theodore and Paul of Rostov, 6900, Founders of the Borisoglebsky Monastery

Память преподобных Феодора и Павла Ростовских 6900, основателей Борисоглебского монастыря

In the reign of Grand Prince Demetrius Donskoy, under Prince Konstantin Vasilyevich of Rostov,[16] the monk Theodore came from the Novgorod region into the lands of the ancient city of Rostov the Great. It is unknown where he was born or where he received the tonsure.

On the road leading from Kargopol and Belozero to Rostov and Moscow, he stopped in a dark forest by the Ustye River, about eighteen versts from Rostov. Having built himself a hut of tree branches in the forest, he settled there. He hung from a tree beside the

15. The holy ones suffered at Adrianople in the third century.

16. Demetrius Ivanovich Donskoi reigned from 1363 to 1389. The Rostov prince Constantine III Vasilievich reigned in Rostov after the death of his brother Theodore Vasilievich, from 1331 to 1365.

road a basket made of tree bark, and passersby on foot and horseback, guessing that a hermit lived there, began to place in it bread, vegetables, and other alms. Unseen by anyone, the hermit secretly took out the alms and shared them with his poor brethren; when word of this spread, people from many villages began coming to the hermit for alms, and he shared with them all that he found in the hanging basket.

Some time later, a brother in the monastic life named Paul came to him and, welcomed with joy by Theodore, settled with him in the hermitage.

In the early years of the reign of Grand Prince Demetrius Ioannovich, under Alexis, Metropolitan of all Russia, under that same Prince Constantine of Rostov, and under Ignatius, Bishop of Rostov,[17] the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh came to Rostov to venerate the Most Holy Theotokos in the cathedral church and the Wonderworkers of Rostov.[18] Learning of this, the hermits Theodore and Paul went to Rostov and asked the prince and the bishop for permission to build a church and establish a monastery in their hermitage. They also entreated the Venerable Sergius to inspect the place where they might build their church and to bless it.

The Venerable Sergius granted their request and went with them to their hermitage. They walked about the wilderness for a long time. Theodore and Paul pointed out one place, then another; the Venerable Sergius examined everything carefully, and at last stopped at the place where the monastery now stands. He blessed them to build a church there in the name of the Great Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb, and said to the hermits:

"May the Lord God and the Most Pure Theotokos look upon this place, and may the great Passion-bearers of Christ be your helpers. This place shall be built up greatly, and in times to come shall be exalted alongside the great Lavras."

Having bestowed peace and blessing upon the hermits, the Venerable Sergius set out on his return journey.

The venerable hermits set about cutting down the forest and clearing the place which the Venerable Sergius had blessed for the building

of a church. One day, as they rested from their labors, in a light sleep two radiant warriors appeared to Theodore and Paul, armed and clad in royal purple robes, and said:

"Labor in this place: God and the Most Pure Theotokos will not forsake this place, and we shall remain here without fail to help you and those who after you shall build up this place."

The venerable fathers fell at their feet and said:

"Who are you, our lords?"

But suddenly the warriors became invisible; only a voice was heard, calling one Roman and the other David.[19]

Recovering from their great fear and terror, the two hermits began to encourage one another and to tell, in the same words, what they had seen and heard in their sleep.

After this they began to labor and strive with renewed zeal at preparing the place.

And brethren began to gather to them, as did laymen—carpenters, to help with the work.

Before long the brotherhood increased, and all began to entreat Theodore to be their abbot. And so it came to pass.

With God's help, the monastery continued to be built, and many lovers of Christ, leaving behind all worldly goods, sought the monastic life there. Venerable Theodore received them gladly and enrolled them among the brethren.

Many nobles of the Rostov region began to bequeath that they be buried in the Borisoglebsky Monastery, and to grant it, for the remembrance of their souls, their estates, villages, hamlets, and meadows.

By this means the monastery's resources increased, and Venerable Theodore labored still more at its establishment and the gathering of the brotherhood. He built a warm church of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos for the common, conciliar prayer.

For many years, by God's mercy, through the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos and the help of Christ's Passion-bearers Boris

17. Bishop Ignatius II occupied the Rostov see from 1356 to 1364.
18. This was in 1363. The parents of the Venerable Sergius were from the city of Rostov.
19. Roman and David: the names of Boris and Gleb, given to them at holy baptism.

and Gleb, Venerable Theodore labored at establishing the monastery: he built churches, set up cells, arranged everything according to the monastic rule, acquired fields and arable land for the monastery, provided many people for its service, and acquired a good number of livestock.

Despite his old age, he continued to labor and care for the monastery's welfare. Allowing himself no rest, he resolved to set out in search of a place suitable for fishing, for the monastery's needs.

Entrusting the monastery to the Lord God and the Most Pure Theotokos, having as protectors the great Passion-bearers of Christ, Boris and Gleb, and committing the governance of the monastery and the brotherhood to his fellow-striver and brother in Christ, Paul, Theodore set out for the Vologda region, taking with him two monks from among his disciples.

There he found a place called Holy Luka. Having traversed the place and convinced himself that it was suitable for the building of a monastery, he wished to take possession of a plot of land and built a small church.

The local inhabitants learned of this—people of the Chud tribe, who had not yet been enlightened—and drove the venerable laborer away.

The banished ascetic went on his way, praying for those who did him harm and consoling his disciples: "Do not grieve, brethren: 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in troubles' (Ps. 45:2). The Lord said to His disciples: 'When they persecute you in one city, flee to another' (Mt. 10:23)."

Having passed through many desert places, like a skillful hunter seeking what he needs, Venerable Theodore went to the Belozersk region and, traversing the wilderness all around the whole of White Lake, found a beautiful place suitable for the building of a monastery, on the far side of White Lake: newly cleared fields and small settlements at the mouth of the Kovzha River.[20]

White Lake then belonged to the appanage prince Andrei Dmitrievich, son of Dmitry Ivanovich Donskoy. Having found such a

20. The mouth of the river Kovzha is located 40 versts from Beloozerok.

suitable place, Venerable Theodore placed his hope in Almighty God, and, with the Most Pure Theotokos as his helper, set out for the reigning city of Moscow. He made a petition and besought the appanage prince Andrei Dmitrievich of Mozhaisk and Belozersk to grant him the place he had chosen, for the building of a church in the name of Nicholas the Wonderworker and a monastery. And, by God's mercy, his petition was granted: Prince Andrei Dmitrievich gave the venerable one a grant for the small settlements, meadows, and fishing grounds.

Having received the grants, Venerable Theodore returned to his Borisoglebsky Monastery.

There he laid the duties of the abbacy upon his fellow-striver Paul. Entrusting the monastery, its abbot, and the brotherhood to the protection of the Most Holy Theotokos and the intercession of the Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb, Venerable Theodore set out once more for White Lake, to build a new monastery there.

Having come to the place he had chosen earlier, the venerable one labored tirelessly, first at building a church in the name of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, and then at raising the monastery buildings.

Hearing of the venerable one's labors, the Orthodox inhabitants of the surrounding regions began to flock to the elder for his blessing, while others came also to receive the monastic tonsure. Elder Theodore received everyone gladly.

The venerable one lived there many years, built a church, established a monastery, gathered a brotherhood, and appointed an abbot for it. When he had reached a very advanced age and discerned that his end was drawing near, he set out for his first monastery, Borisoglebsky.

There Elder Theodore was received with great joy by Abbot Paul and the brethren, and all rejoiced both spiritually and bodily, giving thanks to God and the Most Holy Theotokos for the success of the elder's labors.

Venerable Theodore arranged for the Nikolsky Monastery to be joined to Borisoglebsky, and for his beloved brother, Paul, abbot of Borisoglebsky, to guide the abbot, brotherhood, and building of the newly founded monastery.[21]

After all these ascetic struggles and arrangements, a short time later the venerable founder of Borisoglebsky Monastery reposed in peace on 22 October 1409. Venerable Abbot Paul and the brethren mourned the departed and buried his body with honor.

After Theodore's death, his fellow laborer Paul, who survived him, labored and cared still more for both monasteries; and, having likewise lived to a very advanced age, he departed to the Lord in a good confession.

The prophetic words of Venerable Sergius, who blessed the founding of Borisoglebsky Monastery and foretold its enlargement, were fulfilled exactly. After the death of its founders, the venerable Theodore and Paul, their successors, the abbots of Borisoglebsky, continued zealously to care for the monastery's welfare, and it gradually became widely renowned. During the time of the third successor of Venerable Paul, Abbot Jonah, and the fourth, Pitirim, special zeal for the monastery was shown by the right-believing and Christ-loving Grand Prince Vasily Vasilyevich the Blind[22] and his pious mother, Princess Sophia. Several grants in the monastery's favor were issued by them,[23] and Grand Prince Vasily Vasilyevich began to call this monastery his own. This Abbot Pitirim baptized the son of Grand Prince Vasily Vasilyevich, Ivan.[24]

The tenth successor of Paul, Abbot Theophilus, who governed the monastery as abbot and builder for thirty years, became especially

21. The Nikolsky Kovzhensky Monastery, a dependency of the Borisoglebsk Monastery, had wooden buildings; because of their dilapidation and its poverty it was abolished before the introduction of the monastic establishments of 1764.
22. Basil Vasilievich the Dark was grand prince from 1425 to 1462, with interruptions.
23. From the monastery's donation and memorial books, it is seen that Basil Vasilievich granted to the monastery the village of Shulets (six versts from the monastery), with hamlets, for the commemoration of his parents and forefathers, the grand princes.
24. The grand prince Ivan Vasilievich III, who was afterwards famous.

renowned for his ascetic struggles and labors for the monastery's welfare.

By command of Grand Prince Vasily Ivanovich[25] and with the blessing of Archbishop John of Rostov,[26] he began to build stone churches and other monastery buildings in place of the wooden ones. On 18 June 1522, the stone church of Sts. Boris and Gleb was laid, and it was consecrated on 22 September 1524 by the same Archbishop John, who on 8 June of that same year blessed the laying of the foundations of a warm church in the name of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos. This church was consecrated by Cyril, Archbishop of Rostov and Yaroslavl,[27] on 7 October 1527.

During these costly and arduous building works, the zealous builder Theophilus experienced many difficulties; yet, with God's help and through the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos and the protection of the monastery's patrons, the holy Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb, he overcame all these obstacles in safety. The ancient account of the founding and subsequent history of Borisoglebsky Monastery relates the following miracle.

As he raised the stone buildings, Abbot Theophilus began to feel an extreme shortage of lime. It had to be brought from far away by a difficult route: specifically, boats had to be sent for lime along the Ustye, Kotorost, and Volga rivers to Pleso (near the city of Kostroma), from which it was very difficult and not a short journey to travel upstream along these rivers. In this need, Theophilus petitioned Grand Prince Basil Ivanovich for permission to search freely for lime deposits on nearby lands, both monastic and princely and boyar, without paying duties. The Grand Prince issued a grant permitting the free extraction of lime throughout the districts of Rostov and Pereyaslavl. Abbot Theophilus sent prospectors everywhere, but without success. In grief, he offered fervent prayers to the Lord God, to the intercessor the Most Holy Theotokos, and to the holy helpers Boris and Gleb.

And so it happened once, when Theophilus was standing in his cell at his customary evening rule and had fallen into a momentary drowsi-

25. He ruled from 1505 to 1533.
26. He occupied the see from 1520 to 1526.

ness, that two radiant warriors of Christ appeared to him, the Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb, and said:

"Do not grieve about the lime: the Most Pure One will provide you with lime on our estate near the monastery, and the construction of stone buildings in the monastery of the Most Pure Theotokos and ours will not cease, either during your lifetime or after you, and we shall help with the building of the monastery."

And with these words they became invisible.

Three days later, a peasant from the monastery village of Kocharki brought the abbot a small basket of stones[28] and told him that he had found them lying on the surface of a field. The abbot sent the stones to the oven in the bakehouse. When they had been fired and brought to show the abbot, they proved to be lime, white as snow.

The abbot sent out prospectors, and at the place indicated they found a sufficient quantity of lime for the buildings of that time and for those to come, as had been foretold.[29]

Besides these churches, under Theophilus and his immediate successors there were erected around the monastery strong stone walls, high and with many towers, and with two gates, on the side of Rostov and on the side of Uglich, above which were built stone churches in the name of the Venerable Sergius and of the Meeting of the Lord. All these majestic and beautiful structures exist to this present time.

In the cathedral church in the name of the Right-believing Princes Boris and Gleb, in the north-western corner, lie beneath the floor the

27. Cyril III occupied the see from 1526 to 1529.

28. The place where this village stood is still called Kocharka, seven versts from the monastery; and the pits where lime was dug are still visible. Zobenka: an old measure of dry goods. There is a tradition that the lime lost its strength if anyone took it secretly for his own needs. When, under the successors of Theophilus, the stone buildings of the monastery were completed, the supply of lime was exhausted.

29. The miracle of the finding of the lime was related to the compiler of the ancient tale of the Borisoglebsk Monastery by the architect of the Borisoglebsk churches, "a Rostovite, a church master, stone builder," Gregory Borisov, to whom the abbot Theophilus himself, who had ordered that this not be revealed to anyone until his death, related the vision of the Holy Boris and Gleb. This famous Rostov architect Gregory Borisov completed in 1543 the building of the Dormition Church in the Spasokamenny Monastery (on Lake Kubenskoye, Vologda Province), which had been begun by the architect Pachomius Goryainov, also a Rostovite.

relics of the founders of the monastery, the Venerable Theodore and Paul.

Following the example of his father, the Grand Prince Basil Ivanovich, his son, Tsar John Vasilievich, also showed great zeal for this monastery; he himself visited it and made rich donations of villages, hamlets, money and costly objects for commemoration[30].

At the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Venerable Irinarch became renowned, and made this monastery renowned by his ascetic labors, especially in the time of troubles, when this monastery, like the other neighboring ones, was threatened with destruction by the rapacious detachments of the Polish-Lithuanian forces. The relics of this wonderworker lie beneath the floor in the south-western side-chapel of the cathedral church[31].

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this day is the commemoration of the Holy Seven Youths of Ephesus: Maximilian, Jamblichus, Martinian, Dionysius, Antoninus, Constantine (Exacustodianus) and John. Their commemoration is also celebrated on 4 August. (In the Menaion of 1870 it is stated that the holy youths reposed on 4 August and were awakened under the emperor Theodosius the Younger on 22 October.)

30. The donations of Tsar John Vasilievich are spoken of in detail in the ancient donation and memorial books of the Borisoglebsk Monastery.

31. The commemoration of the Venerable Irinarchus is celebrated on 13 January.

THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF OCTOBER

October 23

23 октября

New Calendar October 23 · Old Calendar November 5 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of the Holy Apostle James, the Brother of the Lord according to the flesh

Житие и страдание святого Апостола Иакова, брата Господня по плоти

St. James was the son of the Righteous Joseph, to whom the Most Pure Virgin had been betrothed.[1] From his youth he loved a strict life: he never partook of various foods, nor used oil, but bread alone served him for food; he also never drank wine or any other intoxicating drink, but quenched his thirst with water. He did not visit the baths either—in a word, he rejected all that gave pleasure to the body. He constantly wore a coarse hair shirt upon his body; he devoted all the nights to prayer, falling asleep only briefly; and from making frequent prostrations to the earth, the skin on his knees had grown hard like a camel's. James preserved the purity of his virginity to the end of his life.[2]

The following tradition has come down to us concerning why he is called the Brother of God. When his father Joseph was dividing the

1. The memory of St. Joseph the Righteous, betrothed of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, is celebrated on December 26 (Mt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3; Gal. 1:17). The Church, contrary to the opinion of some interpreters, clearly distinguishes the holy Apostle James, the brother of the Lord according to the flesh, from James the son of Zebedee, who belongs to the number of the Twelve Apostles and whose memory is celebrated on April 30, and from James the son of Alphaeus, whose memory is celebrated on October 9. James, the brother of the Lord according to the flesh, is so named as the son of Joseph by his first wife. He was the full brother of the Apostle Jude, who was called the son of James, and of Joses from the number of the Seventy Apostles, and is also known by the name James "the Less" or "the Younger" (Mk. 15:40).

land among his children by his first wife, he wished to give a portion also to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who had been born of the Most Pure Virgin, betrothed to Joseph. All Joseph's sons opposed their father's wish; James alone accepted Jesus Christ, then still a little child, as joint possessor of his portion, and for this reason he came to be called the Brother of the Lord. James was given this name on another account as well. When our Lord Jesus Christ was incarnate, and the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos fled with Him to Egypt, James fled with them, accompanying the Most Pure Theotokos and his father, St. Joseph.

When Jesus Christ had reached the age of maturity and was teaching the people concerning the Kingdom of God, revealing Himself to be the true Messiah, St. James believed in Him; and, heeding His divine teaching, he was kindled with an even greater love for God and began to lead a still stricter and more pious life. The Lord especially loved St. James. Thus, after His voluntary Passion and Resurrection from the dead, Christ appeared to James separately from the other apostles, to His brother according to the flesh, as the Apostle Paul mentions, saying:

"After that, He was seen of James; then of all the apostles" (1 Cor. 15:7).[3]

Seeing the righteous and God-pleasing life of James, all called him the Righteous, and he was numbered among the seventy apostles. The newly enlightened Church of Jerusalem was entrusted to him.[4] Guided

2. The holy Apostle James was a Nazirite from his very birth, that is, a person consecrated to God, who voluntarily gave vows of strict abstinence from all wine and strong drink in general, from cutting the hair, and so forth. The vows of the Nazirite served as an expression of the purity and holiness of life that ought to belong to the whole people of Israel, as the chosen people of God and therefore holy.

3. Tradition adds that during the sufferings of Christ the holy Apostle James hid himself in a cave in the valley of Jehoshaphat, having vowed not to partake of food until the Lord should rise from the dead, and that the Lord, after His resurrection, granted him a special appearance in this very cave. Therefore, later, in the first centuries of Christianity, this cave was turned into a church, and it is still shown to pious pilgrims today.

4. According to the words of ancient writers nearest to the apostolic age (Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius of Caesarea, and others), after the Ascension of the Saviour, the Apostles Peter, James the son of Zebedee, and John, although preferred by the Lord, did not contend for honor but chose St. James as bishop and primate of the Church of Jerusalem, the mother of Christian churches, when he was 34 years old by birth, in accordance with his preelection and appointment to this service by Christ Himself.

by the Holy Spirit, James was the first to compose and write the order of the Divine Liturgy, which was afterwards shortened, on account of human weakness, first by Basil the Great, and then by John Chrysostom.[5] As he tended Christ's flock in Jerusalem, the saint converted many Jews and Greeks to God through his teaching and set them on the right path. He also left behind a catholic epistle to the twelve tribes of Israel, a source of truly God-inspired and soul-profiting teaching, with which the whole Church of Christ is adorned, learning faith and good works.[6] Not only the faithful,[6923] but even the unbelievers, regarded St. James with great respect and reverence for his virtuous life: the high priests, who themselves entered the Holy of Holies only once a year[7] to perform the service, did not forbid the righteous man to enter there and pray. Seeing the purity of his blameless life, they even changed his name, calling him Oblias or Ophlias,[8] which means "a rampart, a support for the people," or else they called him the most righteous of all. Often, not only by day but even by night, James entered the Holy of Holies, and there, falling prostrate, he offered prayers to the Lord with tears for the whole world. The people all loved James for his holiness; many of the Jewish elders believed the teaching he preached, and all delighted in hearing him. A great multitude gathered to him:

5. The Divine Liturgy composed by the holy Apostle James, the brother of the Lord, is to this day celebrated in Jerusalem on the day of this apostle's memory.

6. The Catholic Epistle was written by St. James about the year 59 A.D. to the Christians from among the Jews who lived in dispersion, during the persecution of Christians that compelled them to withdraw from Jerusalem. This epistle is filled with lofty teaching and the spirit of the Gospel. It consists of various kinds of moral exhortations and, in its general content, may be called an exhortation to patient endurance of sufferings. In the services of the Orthodox Church the entire Catholic Epistle of the Apostle James is read, not only as the ordinary apostolic reading at the Liturgy, but also at other prayer services (for example during the Anointing of the Sick, at a moleben during drought, and even at the All-night Vigil, as a parimia).

7. The "Holy of Holies" was the innermost and most sacred part of the Temple at Jerusalem, into which only the high priest entered, and that only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, to set down his censer with incense and to sprinkle the blood of sacrifice upon the mercy seat for the purification of the people's sins. But the ark of the covenant with its holy objects (the flowering rod of Aaron, the golden vessel with the manna, and the tablets of the Law given by God through Moses) was no longer in the Temple at this time. There was only one stone, from the first Temple of Solomon. The veil which separated the Holy of Holies from the next compartment of the Temple, the sanctuary, was torn in two from top to bottom at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

8. In Greek: *ovlias* — the defense or bulwark of the people, and righteousness.

some wishing to hear his instruction, others to touch the hem of his garment. At that time Ananias became high priest of the Jews.[9] Seeing that all the people listened attentively to James's teaching and that many were turning to Christ, Ananias and the scribes and Pharisees were angered by the saint out of envy; harboring malice in their hearts, they began to devise how they might kill him. They agreed to ask the saint to turn the people away from Christ by his teaching, and resolved to kill him if he refused.

Meanwhile, the feast of Pascha was drawing near, and crowds of people were streaming into Jerusalem from every quarter to celebrate the feast there.

Festus, the proconsul who had rescued the Apostle Paul from the hands of the Jews[10] and sent him to Rome, had by then died, and no successor had yet been sent from Rome. Taking advantage of this, the scribes and Pharisees approached James in the temple with this request:

"We beseech you, righteous man, to give an instruction on the feast of Pascha, when a great multitude has gathered here from every quarter. Convince them that they are mistaken in believing Jesus to be the Son of God, and persuade them to abandon their false opinion. We all honor you and heed you, as does the whole people; we are all firmly persuaded that you speak nothing but the truth and show no partiality. Therefore persuade the people not to be deceived by Jesus the Crucified. We beseech you to stand upon the high roof of the temple, so that all may see and hear you, for you yourself see that many people have gathered for the feast, both Jews and those of other nations."

9. Ananias was the Jewish high priest, son of Nedebaeus, who received the high-priestly dignity from Herod Agrippa II. He was a stubborn enemy of the Christians and in general a bold, cruel and unjust man. He belonged to the sect of the Sadducees, who rejected tradition, Divine Providence, the spirituality and immortality of the soul, and the existence of angels, and who were given over to sensual pleasures, vices and earthly interests. Being the instigator of the death of the Apostle James, Ananias later also unjustly judged the Apostle Paul and sought to destroy him (Acts 23:2, 14–15; 24:1–9). But for his wrongdoings he himself suffered the most bitter fate: he was deprived of the high priesthood by the same king, Agrippa, and at last was killed during the uprising of the Jews against the Romans.

10. Festus, surnamed Porcius, was the Roman governor of Judea. He governed it for no more than three years and died around the year 62 A.D. He was concerned to restore order in Palestine, employing for this purpose both severity and justice.

After these words, they led him up onto the roof of the temple and cried aloud:

"O righteous man! We must all believe you. This people is mistaken in following Jesus the Crucified; therefore tell us truly what you yourself think about Christ."

The saint answered them in a loud voice:

"Why do you ask me about the Son of Man, Who willingly suffered, was crucified, buried, and rose from the dead on the third day? He now sits in heaven at the right hand of the Most High, and shall come again upon the clouds of heaven to judge the living and the dead."

Hearing James's testimony concerning Jesus Christ, the people rejoiced greatly, and all cried out with one voice:

"Glory to God! Hosanna to the Son of David!"

But the Pharisees and scribes said:

"We acted unwisely in allowing James to speak about Jesus, for the people have been thrown into even greater confusion."

Then, in malice and fury, they hurled James from the roof of the temple, to the terror of all, so that the people would not believe the saint's words.

"The righteous man himself has been deceived!" they cried.

Having fallen from the roof of the temple, James was badly injured. Though barely alive, the righteous man fell to his knees, lifted his hands to heaven, and prayed:

"Lord, forgive them this sin, for they know not what they do."

But the Pharisees began to throw stones at the saint, wounding him. A man of the house of Rechab cried out:

"Stop! What are you doing? The righteous man is praying for you, and you are stoning him!"

At that moment a man rushed upon the saint with a fuller's club in his hands, and struck him on the head with such force that all his brains spilled upon the ground; and in this torment James gave up his spirit to the Lord.

His holy body was buried there, near the temple, while the faithful mourned the righteous man bitterly. The saint had been bishop of the Church of Jerusalem for 30 years, and suffered for Christ in the 66th

year of his life. To Christ, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory unto the ages of ages.[6928] Amen.

Troparion, Tone 2:

As the Lord's disciple, thou didst receive the Gospel, O righteous one; as a martyr, thou hast that which cannot be described; as the Brother of God, thou hast boldness; and as a hierarch, thou dost pray. Pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

The only-begotten God the Word of the Father, Who came unto us in the latter days, showed thee, O divine James, to be the first shepherd and teacher of the people of Jerusalem, and a faithful steward of the spiritual Mysteries. Wherefore we all honor thee, O Apostle.

* * *

Commemoration of St. James of Borovichi

Память святого Иакова Боровицкого

We know nothing at all of the birthplace of this blessed and righteous James, nor of the names of his parents[11]—all this is hidden from us by God's will, so that we may know that God's saints seek not an earthly but a heavenly fatherland; they do not boast of their earthly lineage, but are exalted by their fellowship with the heavenly ranks; they glory not in a bodily father, but in their spiritual Father, God, Who is everywhere present. We know that this most wondrous Wonderworker, though born according to the flesh, led a spiritual life, his heart aflame with love for God and earnestly serving the Lord; though he, too, dwelt in a material body, yet with his immaterial mind he conversed and dwelt together with the holy Angels. In body he abode upon the earth, but with his mind, illumined by the knowledge of God, he stood before God, Who dwells in heaven. In all things he con-

11. There are reports only that the Blessed James was a simple boatman, but diligent in his work, and that he took upon himself a severe foolishness for Christ's sake. He died, struck by lightning, around 1540.

tinually showed himself to be God's faithful servant, setting an example of patience, humbly enduring hardship and toil, and constantly striving in vigil and fasting. When the blessed one's pilgrimage in this temporal life, filled with sorrows, came to an end, his righteous soul, adorned with virtues like a bride, was led by God's Angels into the Bridechamber of the Savior, while his honorable body was laid in a reliquary according to Christian rite.

In the region of Great Novgorod flows the river Msta[12], on which at that time there stood the village of Borovichi[13]. When the time came for the saint to be glorified, the reliquary in which the relics of this wonderworker rested, floating by the will of God on an ice floe against the current of the aforementioned river (this was on the Tuesday of Bright Week), came ashore near the turbulent and noisy Borovichi rapids[14], close to the village of Borovichi. The inhabitants of that village, in their doubt, did not receive the holy relics of the great servant of God; with hooks fastened to ropes they hauled the reliquary out into the middle of the river. But the wonderworking relics did not forsake the men who had cast them off: once more they returned to them, and once more they came ashore at the very place from which they had been pushed away. Even then the people living there could not perceive the marvelous wonder that the reliquary with the relics was floating against the current; they pushed it away a second time, and again deprived themselves of the God-given treasure, drawing the relics back. They did this not out of malice but out of ignorance, for they were rough and unenlightened by teaching, and therefore this act was forgiven them. The holy relics drew to the shore a third time in the same place. Then the blessed wonderworker himself appeared in a dream to honest and devout men and said:

"Why, faithful servants of Christ, do you not receive me? For I am a Christian just as you are; like you, I piously believed in Christ during my earthly life. If you do this only because you do not know my name, I

12. The Msta is a river which flows out of Lake Mstino, in Tver Province, and flows into Lake Ilmen, in Novgorod Province. Its length is 412 versts.

13. In 1770 the village of Borovichi was renamed a town.

14. "Rapids" is the name given to a group of rocks which obstruct the course of a river and form a series of low waterfalls or whirlpools.

will reveal it to you: I am James, a name I received in honor of James, the brother of the Lord."

These men, awakening from sleep, felt in their hearts an extraordinary joy at the words of the saint, and told everyone about the vision. And so all the inhabitants of that village hastened to the place from which they had boldly pushed away the holy relics of the righteous James, and sought to see them; having found them, they rejoiced, reverently lifted them out of the water, laid them with honor on the shore in the same coffin, and enclosed them round about with a wooden frame.

The most merciful God, glorifying His servant, granted the holy relics the power to work wondrous miracles and to heal various infirmities; seeing this, the people gave great thanks to the All-merciful God, who had sent them such a physician without reward; they also glorified the Venerable wonderworker, who heals every sickness. Desiring to lay his relics in a better place, they went to the Archbishop of Great Novgorod, the Most Reverend Theodosius, and with tender emotion told him of all the miracles that had occurred from the reliquary of the Venerable. Theodosius, in a letter to the primate of all Russia, Metropolitan Macarius, described all the miracles he had heard of; having soon received from him good instruction, Theodosius diligently began to inquire about the saint's miracles from persons who had received healing of their infirmities. Convinced that everything reported to him was truly genuine and not false, Archbishop Theodosius sent Constantine, abbot of the monastery in honor of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, together with priests and deacons, to the village of Borovichi. From there the honorable and wonderworking relics of the holy righteous James were transferred with honor to the new church of the Descent of the Holy and Life-giving Spirit; here they were laid by the southern doors of the church on the 23rd day of the month of October, 1545. On this day it was ordained to celebrate annually the memory of this blessed wonderworker, to the glory of Christ God, who is glorified among the saints, forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

Illumined by divine grace, and after thy death granting healing to those who come to thee, O wise James: wherefore we now honor the translation of thy honorable relics, rejoicing together in soul and body. Therefore we all cry: Glory to Him who gave thee strength! Glory to Him who crowned thee! Glory to Him who works healing through thee for all!

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Those who celebrate thy honorable translation with faith and love, O blessed one, keep and preserve from all malice and the serpent's snare; for thou hast boldness before the Lord of all, Christ God. Entreat Him to save the Orthodox Emperor and the people who pray to thee, that we all may cry to thee: Rejoice, Father James, the adornment of the whole Russian land.

* * *

Memory of St. Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople

Память святого Игнатия, патриарха Константинопольского

St. Ignatius was the son of Emperor Michael Rhangabe[15] and Empress Procopia, brother of Theophilus[16] and grandson of Emperor Nicephorus. At the age of fifteen he was confined in a monastery[17], and afterward became abbot of the monastery of the Archangel, which was first called the Eastern and later Satyrus. He was then appointed Patriarch of Constantinople[18] and remained on the patriarchal throne for 11 years and 5 months, until he was driven out by Emperor Michael[19]. In his place Photius[20] was appointed, protospatharius and protosynkritos[21] of the Church of Constantinople, who

15. Michael Rhangabe reigned from 811 to 813.
16. Theophilus reigned from 829 to 842.
17. This was done by order of the Emperor Leo the Armenian (813–820), who deposed Ignatius's father, Michael, from the throne.
18. This was in 846.
19. Ignatius was deposed from the throne in 867 for refusing to carry out the wish of Bardas, who governed the empire during the minority of Michael, that Theodora, Michael's mother, who considerably restricted Bardas's actions, be tonsured a nun. Ignatius not only refused to do this, but even excommunicated Bardas himself from Holy Communion.
20. His memory is celebrated on February 6.

had previously been a simple monk. After Photius was expelled by Emperor Basil[22], Ignatius again served as patriarch, this time for 10 years, and was again expelled by Emperor Nicephorus[23], who was later killed by the Bulgarians. His place was taken by St. Stephen[24], son of Emperor Basil, and St. Ignatius retired to the monastery of Satyrus, where he reposed peacefully at the age of eighty-nine.

* * *

NOTES

6923. The universal reverent esteem of the faithful for the Apostle James, led by the Apostles themselves, was expressed with particular force at the Apostolic Council held in Jerusalem around the year 60 A.D., to decide the question whether those turning to the Church from among the Gentiles were to be compelled to undergo circumcision and to keep the ceremonial law of the Old Testament. The Apostle James presided over this Council, and after long debate and deliberation, following the speech of the Apostle Peter and the account given by the Apostles Paul and Barnabas of the success of their preaching among the Gentiles, he concluded the Council's discussion with his own address, in which he set forth his judgment on the question raised in definite terms: that the Gentiles who turn to God should not be troubled, but should be written to, that they abstain from things polluted by idols, from fornication, from what is strangled, and from blood, and that they not do to others what they would not wish done to themselves (Acts 15:13–20). This judgment of James, the Righteous, who was esteemed by all, was accepted by the whole Council and confirmed by the manifest will of the Holy Spirit, as all could see (v. 28). About the same time the Apostle Paul, wishing to test the purity of his teaching, submitted it to the Apostles Peter, John and James, whom he regarded as the pillars of the Church of Christ, placing James first among them (Gal. 2:10), and they recognized in him the great dignity of a teacher of the nations. The Apostle Paul continued to regard St. James with the same profound respect afterward. When, before his first imprisonment, he arrived in Jerusalem, he considered it his first duty to go to St. James and to tell him, as the pillar of the Church of Christ and the head of the most ancient Church of Jerusalem, what God had accomplished among the Gentiles through his ministry (Acts 21:18–19).

6928. The martyric death of the Apostle James took place around the year 63 A.D. He died in advanced old age. He was buried at the place of his death, and over his grave, be-

21. *Protospatharius* was a distinguished and high rank which existed at the court of the Greek emperor. *Protosynkritos* was the chief of the court officials, who had the right to enter the imperial bedchamber.

22. The exile of Photius was in 867.

23. The second deposition of Ignatius belongs to 877; in this year Ignatius also died.

24. His memory is celebrated on May 17.

side the Temple, a monument stands to this day. According to the testimony of Origen, a church writer of the third century, the death of James the Righteous, which occurred shortly before the Jewish War, made such an impression on the Jews that the calamities of the war that followed and the destruction of Jerusalem were regarded by them as the punishment of God for the murder of this righteous man. In the eleventh century St. Theophanes the Hymnographer, Archbishop of Nicaea, the Blessed George of Nicomedia, and later Byzantius, wrote many hymns in honor of St. Apostle James, which are sung today on his feast day. The relics of St. Apostle James were in Constantinople at the time of the Russian pilgrim Antony in 1200, in a side chapel of the Church of Chalkoprateia, and his head was in the Church of the Holy Apostles. At present, according to some, his relics are in Rome, in the Church of the Twelve Apostles. In Moscow, at the Old Jerusalem Metochion, a part of his relics is preserved, sent by Patriarch Hierotheus of Alexandria in 1853.



THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 24

24 октября

New Calendar October 24 · Old Calendar November 6 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Arethas

Страдание святого мученика Арефы

When Justin[1] reigned in the Greek land, and Elesboas[2] in Ethiopia, both righteous and pious kings, a lawless king named Duna'an came to the throne in the land of the Homerites[3]. A Jew by birth and faith, he blasphemed the name of Christ and was a great persecutor of Christians. All his counselors, servants, and soldiers were either Jews or pagans who worshipped the sun, the moon, and idols. He strove to drive all Christians out of his dominion and to eradicate from the land of the Homerites even the memory of the great name of Christ. Zealously persecuting the Church of God, he tortured and killed the faithful who would not submit to his commands and refused to live according to the Jewish law.

Hearing that Duna'an had raised persecution against the Christians in his land, Elesboas, king of Ethiopia, was greatly distressed. Gather-

1. Justin was the uncle of Justinian; he reigned from 518 to 537.

2. Ethiopia: in Africa, corresponding to modern Abyssinia. It lay in the upper reaches of the Nile and bordered on the Thebaid region of Egypt to the north, on Libya to the west, on southern Ethiopia to the south, and on the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea to the east. Its capital city was Axum. In the first centuries of Christianity Ethiopia was a powerful empire; part of Arabia also belonged to it. It was enlightened with the Christian faith in the sixth century by Edesius and Frumentius. In the seventh century the Ethiopians were subdued by the Arabs. From 727 the Coptic hierarchy begins here.

3. Homerites: inhabitants of southern Arabia, dwelling near the Arabian Gulf. In the first centuries of Christianity eleven tribes inhabited Arabia. Of these, only the Homerites and the Sabaeans were Christians; the remaining tribes, being in frequent contact with the Jews, mostly held the Jewish religion. The Homerites were enlightened with Christianity by Theophilus the Indian, the second bishop of the Ethiopian capital Axum. In the sixth century they had three famous bishops: Paul, slain by King Dunaan; John, ordained under Justinian; and St. Gregory, a zealot of orthodoxy.

ing his army, he went to war against him[4]; after many battles, Elesboas defeated him, made him his tributary, and returned to his own land. A short time later, Duna'an again rebelled against Elesboas, broke his treaty with him, and, gathering his army, destroyed all the detachments Elesboas had left to guard the cities. After this he armed himself yet more fiercely against the Christians. Everywhere he commanded that Christians either accept the Jewish faith or be slain without mercy. No one in his kingdom now dared confess Christ, and only in the great and populous city of Nagrana[5] was the name of Christ glorified. The holy faith had shone there from the time when Constantius, son of Constantine the Great, sent his envoys to the Sabaeans, now called Homerites[6], who trace their descent from Keturah, Abraham's handmaid. When they arrived there, the God-wise and pious envoys won the king of that land over to Constantius, taught its inhabitants faith in Jesus Christ, and built churches. From that time piety flourished in Nagrana, Christian teaching grew, the number of those embracing the monastic life increased, and monasteries were established. Chastity was preserved among all estates, and the faithful advanced and were perfected in virtue. They permitted no one of another faith to live among them—not a pagan[7], a Jew, or a heretic[8]—but, as children of one mother, the Catholic and Apostolic Church, they themselves abode in all piety and purity.

Envious of this city's great piety, the devil stirred up against it Duna'an, who practised Judaism. Hearing that the inhabitants of Na-

4. The Ethiopian king came out in defense of the Christian Homerites because they had received Christianity itself from Ethiopia and, in all likelihood, stood in ecclesiastical dependence upon the metropolis of Axum.

5. Nagran, or Anagran, a city by the Arabian Gulf, bordering on the possessions of Dunaan. This city, subdued by Aelius Gallus, military commander of the Emperor Augustus, in 25 A.D., was under the protection of the Roman emperors. This is perhaps why it was more independent in religious respects than the cities of the Homerites.

6. The Sabaeans and the Homerites, who lived in close neighborhood along the Arabian coast and were related to one another by origin, language and religion, merged in the sixth century into one tribe, and were often called indifferently by one or the other name.

7. Before Christ, the Greeks were called Hellenes; but in Holy Scripture this name is applied to pagans in general, both Greeks and other peoples, since many of them spoke Greek (cf. Acts 11:20, 16:1–3).

8. A heretic is one who errs in the dogmas of the Church, arbitrarily distorting the Christian truth (2 Pet. 2:1; Tit. 3:10).

grana did not obey his command and would not live according to the Jewish law, Duna'an marched against them with all his forces, intending to destroy the Christians in his dominion and thereby vex Elesboas, king of Ethiopia. Having approached the city, he besieged it with a great army, surrounded it with entrenchments, and boasted that he would soon take it and mercilessly destroy its inhabitants. He said to the citizens:

"If you wish to find favor with me and remain alive, cast down the accursed signs"—so the wretch called the holy crosses—"which you have raised upon the roofs of your lofty churches, and renounce the Crucified One[9] depicted upon these signs."

At the same time, the king's armor-bearers went around the city, crying out:

"Obey the king: then you shall remain alive and receive gifts from him; but if not, you shall perish by fire and sword."

Duna'an himself blasphemed Christ and the Christians with his blasphemous tongue:

"How many Christians have I destroyed! How many of their priests and monks have I slain with the sword! How many have I burned with fire! And Christ has delivered not one of them from my hands. Nor could He Himself escape the hands of those who crucified Him[10]. And now I have come to you, inhabitants of Nagrana, either to separate you from Christ or utterly to destroy you."

The citizens answered him:

"O king! You speak with great insolence of the almighty God. You have become like Rabshakeh, the commander of Sennacherib, who proudly said to Hezekiah, 'Let not the Lord your God, in whom you trust, exalt you!' But such blasphemy did not go unpunished. Do you know how many thousands of soldiers perished in a single hour for such blasphemy[11]? Take heed, then, lest the same befall you, blas-

9. So the persecutors of the Christians called the Lord Jesus Christ, with the aim of humiliating Him, all the more so since death by crucifixion was regarded among the Romans as the most shameful form of execution.

10. Dunaan repeats the blasphemies against the Lord uttered by the Jewish chief priests, scribes, Pharisees and elders, and likewise by one of the thieves crucified on the cross (Mt. 27:41–43; Lk. 23:39).

phemer of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, all-powerful and almighty, terrible and the remover of courage from princes! The Lord can crush you also and bring your arrogant, blasphemous pride to naught. You boast that you will either turn us away from Christ or utterly destroy us. In truth, you may destroy us sooner than turn us from Christ, our Savior, for whom we are all ready to die."

Unable to bear such words, the king burned with even greater anger and pressed the city with all his might, intending, if he could not take it by assault, to wear it down with hunger through a lengthy siege. In the countryside around the city, in villages and wildernesses, he found many Christians; capturing them, he put them to death by various means and sold others into slavery. His attempts to storm the city were unsuccessful: the citizens defended themselves bravely from the walls and defeated the impious. The king and his troops labored greatly, but he could neither take the city nor wear it down by famine, for its citizens had laid in provisions for many years. Despairing of his hopes, the lawless king devised a cunning deceit, sharp as a razor, and sent envoys into the city with these words, confirmed by an oath:

"I do not wish either to harm you or to turn you away from your faith; I seek only the customary tribute that you owe me as your king. Open the gates of the city to me, then, that I may enter and inspect it. I will take the customary tribute from you, and I swear by God and by the law that I will do you no great or small harm, but will leave you to live in peace in your faith."

The citizens answered him:

"We Christians have learned from Holy Scripture to obey the king and submit to the authorities (Rom. 13:1–2). If you do as you have promised us under oath—not to turn us away from our Lord Jesus Christ—we will open the city gates to you. Enter it as king and take from us the customary tribute. But if you do us any harm, God, who hears your oaths, will soon punish you. As for us, we will not depart

11. Rabshakeh, commander of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, was sent with a numerous army to subdue Judea in the time of King Hezekiah. But in one night the Assyrian forces were struck down by an Angel (185,000), and the remnant of them had to return to their own land in shame (4 Kgdms. 18:13–37; Is. 36–37).

from Christ our Savior, even if we lose not only our possessions but our very lives."

The king again swore earnestly that he would do them not the slightest harm. Trusting him, they opened the city and bowed before the impious man, offering him gifts. The king entered the city with all his army, like a wolf in sheep's clothing entering a flock; he seized the city walls and gates and occupied them with his detachments. Seeing the beauty of the city and the multitude of its people, he treated them kindly, for a time concealing the poison hidden in his heart. After resting a little in the city, he again placed himself at the head of his troops and, wishing to begin the godless deed he had devised, commanded the venerable men and the city's commanders to appear before him. At his command, all the venerable elders and leaders who were in the city came out to him, men held in honor and wealthy. Among them was blessed Arethas, senior in years and wisdom, rank and honor. Ninety-five years of age, he was prince and commander, entrusted with the entire administration of the city. By his wise counsel and prudent governance, the citizens had long resisted their enemies bravely. With Arethas at their head, the citizens came before the lawless king, paid him the honor due, and thanked him for his intentions, since he had sworn that he would do them no harm. They did not yet know his deceit. But he could not long conceal the poison within him, and at once revealed the malice he had craftily kept hidden: he called the oath he had given the citizens a childish jest and commanded that all the citizens, together with St. Arethas, be chained and imprisoned. After this he sent men to their houses and plundered their property. He also asked where Paul, their bishop, was.[12] When he learned that the bishop had reposed two years earlier, he commanded that his tomb be dug up; then, taking out the dead man's body, he burned it and scattered the ashes in the air. Then, having kindled a huge pyre, he gathered a multitude of priests, clergy,[13] monks, nuns, and maidens consecrated to God,

12. According to some, Bishop Paul was killed on Dunaan's orders. In asking about him, the king shows uncertainty: was his order truly carried out?
13. Clerics are the members of the church clergy.

four hundred and twenty-seven in number, and cast them into the fire, burning them as he said:

"They are responsible for the destruction of the others, for they advised them to honor the Crucified One as God."

Moreover, he commanded heralds to go through the city and proclaim that all should renounce Christ and live according to the Jewish law, as the king did.

After this he summoned the foremost citizens, who were held in prison, and began to speak to them, especially to Arethas:

"What folly is yours—to believe in the Crucified One as God! Can God, who has no body, suffer? Or can the immortal die? Are there not among you some who, after the example of Nestorius,[14] honor Christ not as God but as a prophet? I do not urge you to bow down to the sun, or the moon, or any creature; I compel you to offer sacrifices not to pagan gods, but only to God, the Creator of every creature."

To these words St. Arethas replied on behalf of all:

"We know that the Godhead cannot suffer, but that the humanity assumed by Jesus Christ from the Most Pure Virgin suffered for us, as the prophets testify, whom you also know. Christ the Lord, however, manifested His Godhead through ineffable miracles. But what need is there for lengthy disputes? We confess that He is God and the Son of God, and in the name of all the citizens of the city we say that there is no torment we would not be ready to endure for the sake of Jesus Christ, our God. We have no concern with Nestorius, who was condemned by the holy Fathers: we do not divide Christ into persons[15], but believe that His humanity was united with the Godhead in one Divine Person. But you, who speak blasphemous words against our Lord, shall

14. Nestorius, from 429, was Bishop of Constantinople. Following the teaching of Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia, he maintained that Jesus Christ is not the true God but a man, the son of Joseph and Mary, who, for the holiness of his life, was granted a special grace of God, and who saves us not by His redemptive death but by His teaching and the example of His life. For this heresy Nestorius was excommunicated from the Church at the 3rd Ecumenical Council and died in the Thebaid in the year 436.

15. By the decision of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451), the two natures are united in Jesus Christ "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation."

soon suffer God's punishment for this blasphemy and for your violation of the oath."

The tormentor heard these words with indulgence (for he was ashamed of the wisdom of Arethas and the nobility of the other citizens), and began with soothing words to win their hearts, promising them gifts and honors. By this means he sought to turn their piety and zeal for Christ toward his own lawlessness. But they, lifting their eyes to heaven, cried out as with one voice:

"We do not deny Thee, O Only-begotten Word of God, Jesus Christ; we are not scandalized by Thy most holy birth from the Most Pure Virgin, nor do we mock Thy precious Cross."

Seeing that the holy men were steadfast in the faith, the king put off their torture for a time and turned upon the people, mercilessly slaughtering many. He ordered the wives and children of those holy martyrs who were held in chains together with Arethas to be brought before him. With these honorable wives came a great multitude of other women, widows, maidens, and nuns. The king first tried to entice them all with kind words, then threatened them with torments, urging them to renounce Christ. They not only refused, but answered with words that angered the king. The nuns especially rebuked him, reproaching him for his godlessness. Unable to endure their steadfastness, the king ordered his soldiers to put them all to the sword. They went to their deaths as to a triumph. Then a dispute arose among them: the nuns, wishing to die first, said to the other women:

"You know that in the Church of Christ we are set above the others. Remember that everywhere we have held the first place: we entered the Lord's church first, approached the Most Pure Mysteries first, and held the first place both standing and sitting in the church. Therefore, it is fitting that here, too, we should be the first to receive the honor of martyrdom. We desire to die first and go before you and your husbands to our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ."

The other women hurried, each outstripping the others, to bow their heads beneath the sword. The little children likewise pressed among their mothers, eager to die, and each child cried aloud:

"Cut off my head; put me to death!"

Their eagerness to die for Christ was so great that it astonished the impious Jew Duna'an and all his nobles. And the lawless king said:

"Oh, how could the Galilean[16] so deceive people that they count death as nothing, and for His sake destroy their souls and bodies!"

In that same city of Najran there lived a widow named Syncletica, noble and virtuous, beautiful of face but yet more beautiful in soul, rich in estates but richer still in virtues. Left a widow in her youth, she spent her time at home with her two daughters in fasting and prayer. She had no wish to marry again, but, having become the bride of Christ, served Him day and night. Though young in years, she was old in understanding—even wiser than the elders—in her observance of the Lord's commandments. Having heard of her, the impious Jew Duna'an ordered Syncletica and her daughters to be brought before him with honor. When she came, the king looked kindly upon her and began to speak to her in a wheedling voice:

"We have heard of you, most honorable woman, that you are noble, chaste, and wise. Your face and your whole appearance bear witness that all that has been said of you is true. Do not try to imitate those foolish women whom I destroyed for their folly; do not call God Him who was crucified on the Cross, for He was a glutton, a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Mt. 11:19), and an opponent of the laws of the fathers. Act as befits your noble birth, renounce the Nazarene[17], and be of one mind with us. Then you will be with the queen in the royal chambers, honored by all and living in comfort, free from all the afflictions associated with widowhood. A good report of you has reached us, and your circumstances confirm it. Indeed, you possess great wealth and many goods, male and female servants; you are honored by all, young and beautiful, yet despite all your good fortune you have not

16. The Lord preached the Gospel in Galilee more often than in other regions of Palestine. From Galilee He undertook journeys to Jerusalem; from the Galileans He chose His Apostles; and in Galilee He appeared also after His resurrection from the dead. The other Jews did not love the Galileans, and the very name "Galilean" was contemptuous (Mt. 13:64–67; Jn. 7:41–62). In this case Dunaan follows the example of the Jews and of Julian the Apostate, who called the Lord Jesus Christ "the Galilean."

17. The Jews called the Lord Jesus Christ thus because He spent most of His earthly life in this small and poor town (Mt. 2:23).

wished to marry a second time. They also say that you are virtuous and prudent. Act fittingly now as well: be prudent to the end, heed my sound counsel, and do not think of placing such beauty and youth of yours, or the innocence of your children, in the hands of tormentors, who will bring you more shame and dishonor than suffering. Cease to glorify the Crucified One and, submitting to our laws, choose what is good for yourself and your children."

The blessed and most honorable woman answered the king in these words:

"It would be fitting for you, O king, to honor Him who gave you power, this purple robe, and this diadem[18]—indeed, more than this: He gave you being itself and life. He is the Son of God and God. Yet you have shown ingratitude for so great a benefaction of His, and with your brazen tongue have reviled your Benefactor. Do you not fear that thunder from on high will strike you? You would grant me great honors, but I count your honors as dishonor to myself, and I do not wish to be praised by the tongue that blasphemes my God. Nor am I so foolish as to live with the enemies of God in the houses of sinners."

Hearing this, the king was filled with rage and, turning to his nobles, said:

"You see how shamelessly this vile woman reviles us!"

Then he ordered the veils to be removed from the heads of Synclet-ica and her daughters, and had her paraded through the city with uncovered head and disheveled hair, exposed to mockery and derision. As she was led in dishonor through the city streets, she saw many women weeping over the mockery and disgrace inflicted upon her. Turning to them, she said:

"I know, my friends, how you grieve for me, that I and my daughters are being put to shame! But do not grieve when I rejoice, nor weep when I am glad. This day is more joyful for me than my wedding day, for I suffer for my Bridegroom[19], for whom I have kept my widowhood

18. The porphyra is a costly purple garment in the form of a long mantle, which sovereigns wear on solemn occasions. The diadem is the royal crown.

19. By this word is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom of His Church and of every Christian soul (Song 4:9; Jn. 3:29; Mt. 25:13).

blamelessly. For Him I have also preserved the spotless virginity of my beloved daughters. I rejoice now that my Lord sees my humiliation, hears my confession, and knows my zeal; I have desired neither honors nor riches, nor even this temporal life. My only desire is to find Christ, to appear before Him in the company of the holy women martyrs, and to bring to Him the fruit of my womb—these daughters of mine. Therefore I entreat you, my sisters, do not weep for me, but rather rejoice with me that I am going to be united with my incorruptible Heavenly Bridegroom."

After this she was brought again before the king. The king said to her:

"Renounce your confession of Christ, and you shall remain alive."

The saint answered:

"If I renounce Christ for the sake of this temporal life, who will deliver me from eternal death and the unquenchable fire?"

Then, raising her eyes to heaven, she said:

"Far be it from me, O immortal King, that I should renounce Thee, the Only-begotten Son of God, and obey this blasphemer and oath-breaker, who by deceit seized the city and persecutes Thy holy Church."

The king was filled with fierce fury and cried out:

"O vile woman! I shall this very moment crush your body, tear open your belly, cast you to the dogs to be devoured, and see whether the Nazarene in whom you hope will deliver you from my hands!"

Unable to endure the tormentor's words, Syncletica's elder daughter, who was twelve years old, spat in his face. At once the servants standing there cut off her head, and slew her younger sister with the sword as well.

Thus both daughters fell dead before the eyes of their most praiseworthy mother. Then the king ordered their blood to be collected and brought to their mother's lips, that she might drink it. Having tasted the blood, she said:

"I glorify Thee, O Lord my God, for Thou hast deemed me worthy to taste the pure sacrifice of my poor daughters. To Thee, O Lord Christ, I offer this sacrifice of mine. To Thee I present these martyrs,

pure virgins who came forth from my womb. Unite me also with them, bring me into Thy bridal chamber, and, as St. David says, show me 'a mother rejoicing in her children' (Ps. 112:9)."

Then the tormentor ordered her head to be cut off with the sword. Thus the mother passed with her daughters into the dwellings of eternal blessedness. The tormentor, however, swore an oath, saying:

"Never in my life have I seen so beautiful a woman, nor such lovely maidens as these, who spared neither their beauty nor their lives."

On the following day, taking his seat in an elevated place, the king summoned Arethas and his companions, three hundred and forty men in number. When they appeared, the king addressed Arethas, as the eldest among them, and said:

"You vile man, you have risen up against our authority, stirred the whole city against us, and ordered resistance to us. You have compelled the citizens to obey your words as law, while rejecting our laws and commands. You have taught the people to honor the Crucified as God and to regard as their helper Him Who could not help Himself when He was being crucified. Why did you not follow your father, who, while ruling Nagrana, obeyed the kings who preceded us? Truly, you and all your followers deserve torments, like the men and women whom we have already put to death, and to whom the Son of Mary and the carpenter[20] could give no help."

The elder stood in thought at this, greatly distressed by the arrogant words of the God-hating king. Then he sighed from the depths of his heart and said:

"It is not you, O king, who are to blame for all that has happened, but our citizens, who did not heed my counsel. I advised them not to open the city gates to you, a crafty and deceitful man, but to fight bravely against you. Yet they did not listen to my words. I wished to go out with a small company against all your armies, as Gideon once went against the Midianites,[21] for I put my hope in my Christ, whom you now blaspheme. He would have helped me to overcome, defeat, and

20. Dunaan considered the Lord Jesus Christ a simple man, the son of Mary and Joseph.

humble you, godless perjurer, who have forgotten the treaty we made, by which you swore to spare the city and its citizens."

One of those sitting with the king said to the saint:

"Is this what the law of Moses teaches you? It commands: 'Thou shalt not revile the ruler of thy people' (Ex. 22:28). And besides, your Scripture also teaches you to honor the king, not only when he is good and gentle, but also when he is harsh (1 Pet. 2:17–18)."

The saint answered him:

"Have you not heard what the Prophet Elijah said to Ahab? When Ahab addressed Elijah with the words, 'Art thou he that troubleth Israel?' Elijah said to him then, 'I do not trouble Israel, but rather you and your father's house.'[22] See: he rebuked and reproved not Ahab alone, but his whole house, and yet did not break the law. Indeed, whoever reverently honors God does not break the law when he reproves an ungodly king for his ungodliness—a king who has not feared to blaspheme God and revile the Creator. Yet I see that you despise the long-suffering of God and seek to make us act as you have done. O unjust, godless, and inhuman king! Is this how you have dealt with us, as you promised? Is such injustice fitting for a king? Were the kings who ruled before you like this? Truly, they were not; they were good and gentle, merciful and just, keeping their word and showing mercy to their people. But you, perjurer, cannot be sated with human blood! Know then that the all-knowing God will soon cast you down from the royal throne and give it to a believing and good man; He will likewise establish and exalt the Christian race and rebuild the church which you burned with fire and razed to the ground. As for me, I count myself blessed, for in deep old age, being ninety-five years old and having seen

21. Gideon was judge of Israel (1245 B.C.). Called by God to deliver Israel from the Midianites, he with 300 unarmed warriors surrounded the enemy camp at night and threw them into such confusion that, striking one another, they fled and were then destroyed (Judg. 7:1–25). The Midianites lived in Arabia. Descended from Midian, son of Abraham by Keturah, they were related to the Homerites. Therefore St. Arethas mentions them.

22. (3 Kgdms. 18:17–18). Ahab, son of Omri, king of Israel (924–903 B.C.). He introduced into Israel the worship of Baal and Astarte. The prophet Elijah the Tishbite sternly rebuked the impious king (3 Kgdms. 17–19).

the sons of my sons and of my daughters, I meet a martyr's end and bring my native city with me as an offering to God."

Then, turning to the people and to his companions in martyrdom, he began to speak thus:

"Citizens, friends, and those dear to me! We were deceived when we trusted the oath and cunning words of this godless king; now we see his injustice and hear his blasphemous words. We would have done well to resist him in war and stand firm to the end! God would have helped us to defeat him. But since things have happened otherwise, and we must now either obey the enemy and live wretchedly in this temporal life, or refuse obedience and meet a blessed end, let us strive through suffering to inherit immortal glory. What can be more glorious than martyrdom, and what more honorable than suffering for Christ? For a long time I have cherished the thought and desire to endure torments for Christ. Now, having received what I desired and found what I sought, I rejoice and am ready to die this very moment. And you, brethren, do not fear or lose heart; do not show attachment to this temporal life, lest for its sake you lose eternal life. Our tormentor, too, will boast if, by frightening us with threats, he tears any of us away from the holy faith; he will exalt himself in his pride, as though he had conquered all, and will increase his blasphemies against the Son of God still more. If there be anyone among us who fears death and thinks of renouncing Christ, the Eternal Life, let him leave our company at once, let him separate himself from our united and like-minded assembly, and no longer bear the name of Christian in vain. Whoever renounces Thee, O Christ, Word of God, for the sake of this temporal life, let him lose it! And if any of my kinsmen or those dear to me, overcome by the desire for temporal goods, forsake Thee, O Creator, and follow after the vile king, then, O King Christ, grant him not to enjoy what seems to him good and comforting, but let every kind of adversity and affliction befall him!"

When the saint had said this, all the Christians, without exception, shedding warm tears, cried out:

"Be at peace, our leader and teacher! No one will forsake you, no one will separate himself from our company. We are all ready to die for Christ before you and to meet a blessed end."

The saint answered them:

"I shall go before you; I shall die first and be your leader. As you gave me the leadership in the city, so grant me also to be the first to appear before Christ here."

Then the saint added:

"If any of my sons survives in the holy faith, let him inherit my estates. Of these, I give three villages to the holy Church, which will soon be restored. For this lawless tormentor will soon perish, and the Church of Christ in this city will be established and flourish like a crimson flower, washed in the blood of so many servants of Christ."

Having said this, the saint blessed the people, and, raising his hands and lifting his eyes to heaven, cried out:

"Glory to Thee, O Lord, for all that has come to pass!" Then he turned to the king and said:

"I thank you, O king, for your patience and for not interrupting my words, but giving me time to speak with my friends. Now delay no longer, but do as you will, for you see our resolve; you have learned our mind and see that we cannot renounce Christ and follow your godlessness."

Seeing that they were unyielding, the king condemned them all to death. The saints were led to a stream called Odias, to be executed there by beheading. When they came to the appointed place, the saints gave themselves to fervent prayer. They prayed: "O Lord, O Lord! Hope of our salvation! Thou didst shelter our heads on the day of battle. Now bring us forth into eternal life, for we have loved nothing more than Thee: neither our homeland, nor our kinsmen, nor our riches, but have left all these for Thy sake. We have even despised our very lives and become like sheep led to the slaughter. We humbly beseech Thee: avenge the blood of Thy servants; stretch forth Thy hand against the pride of the ungodly king; take under Thy protection the children of those who died for Thee; establish the city which boasts in Thy precious blood, Cross, and suffering. Thou seest what Thine enemies have done to it: they have laid waste its beauty, defiled Thy sanctuary, and burned Thy holy church. Raise it up again, and give the scepter[23] to Christian kings!"

During this prayer of the saints, the soldiers began to execute them. First they struck off the head of the holy and great Aretas, as leader of the Christians, and then those of all the other holy Martyrs. Thus three hundred and forty men met a blessed end.

There was present there a believing woman, a citizen of this city. She had with her a son, a little child, no more than five years old. Seeing the holy Martyrs beheaded by the sword, she ran up to them, took some of their blood, and anointed herself and her son with it. Then, filled with zeal, she cursed the king and cried aloud:

"May this Jew suffer the same as Pharaoh!"[24]

The soldiers seized her and, bringing her before the king, repeated her words. Without allowing her to say anything or asking her a single question, the king ordered her to be burned at once upon a pyre.

When a great fire had been kindled and the tormentors began to bind this blessed woman so as to cast her upon the pyre, her little son

23. The sceptre is a short staff, the sign of supreme power. At coronation, sovereigns held it in the right hand.

began to weep. Seeing the king seated there, the boy ran up to him, embraced his legs, and, with eyes full of tears, pleaded as best he could for his mother's deliverance.

The king took the handsome and eloquent boy upon his knees and asked:

"Whom do you love more, me or your mother?"

The boy answered:

"I love my mother, and that is why I came to you. I beg you, order them to untie her, so that she may take me with her to the torment of which she often taught me."

The king asked him:

"What is this torment of which you speak?" The boy, filled with the grace of God working within him, answered:

"The torment is to die for Christ, in order to live with Him again."

The king asked:

"And who is this Christ?"

The boy answered:

"Come with me to the church, and I will show Him to you." Then, looking again at his mother, the child said through his tears:

"Let me go; I will go to my mother."

"Why, then, did you come to me and leave your mother?" the king objected. "Do not go to her, but stay with us. I will give you apples, nuts, and all kinds of beautiful fruits."

Thus the king spoke with him as with an ordinary child, supposing that he had a child's understanding. But the child was wiser than his years and answered him seriously:

"I will not stay with you, but wish to go to my mother. I thought you were a Christian, and came to implore you for my mother's sake. But you are a Jew; therefore I do not wish to stay with you, nor will I take anything from your hands. I ask only that you let me go to my mother."

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24. Pharaoh is the general name of the ancient kings of Egypt. In Holy Scripture the name Pharaoh occurs mostly alone, without a personal name. Here is meant the Pharaoh named Thutmose, or Amenophis, who reigned at the time of the Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt (Ex. 5–14). He perished with all his army in the Red Sea (Ex. 14, 15:1–21).

The emperor marvelled at such understanding in a little child. When the child saw his mother cast into the fire, he bit the emperor hard. Feeling the pain, the emperor pushed him away from himself, and then ordered one of the noblemen standing there to take him and bring him up according to the Jewish law, in hatred of Christianity. The nobleman took the child and, marvelling at his understanding, led him to his tent. On the way he met a friend, stopped, and began telling him about the child. They were standing not far from the pyre upon which the holy mother of the infant had been cast. While they were talking, the boy broke free from the hands of the man leading him, ran swiftly, and leapt into the fire; there, embracing his mother, he burned together with her. Thus mother and son became a fragrant whole-burnt offering before God.

Glory to God, who so endowed the little infant with wisdom that the prophetic words were fulfilled in him: "Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babes Thou hast perfected praise, because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest silence the enemy and the avenger" [25].

While all this was taking place, the princes and voivodes of the lawless emperor grieved over the great shedding of Christian blood. They went to the emperor and begged him to put an end to the bloodshed and not to destroy the city from which much tribute was brought each year. The lawless man granted their request and ceased shedding innocent blood. However, he selected many thousands of infants and maidens, both from this city and from the whole region of Nagran, taking some into slavery for himself and distributing the others as he pleased among his nobles and soldiers. He subjected the whole city, which had formerly worshipped the Most Holy Trinity freely, to grievous bondage, and then departed for his capital.

As this God-hating Jew was returning home, fire appeared in the sky and illuminated the air throughout the night. At the sight of this fire, Dunaan and all his troops were greatly afraid. The fire began to fall to earth like rain and caused much harm. This was a sign of God's wrath and the beginning of vengeance for the blood that had been shed.

25. (Ps. 8:3). The psalm prefigures the praise from the mouths of infants at the entry of the Lord into Jerusalem (Mt. 21:16).

Yet the new Pharaoh would not amend his ways, nor humble himself before the mighty hand of God. He burned with such frenzied rage against the Christians that he resolved to destroy them not only in his own land, but also in other regions and kingdoms. Accordingly, he sent envoys to the Persian king [26], urging him to do likewise and slay all the Christians in his realm, if he wished "the sun and the father of the sun, the God of the Jews, to look upon him with favor." The Persians worshipped the sun as a god. Therefore Dunaan, wishing to incite the Persian king against the Christians, called the God of the Jews "the father of the sun." He also wrote to the Saracen [27] king Alamundar, promising him much gold if he would destroy the Christians under his rule.

Hearing all this, the pious Greek Emperor Justin was greatly grieved and, sorrowing in heart over the persecution of the Christians, sent a letter to Asterius, Archbishop of Alexandria, asking him to stir up the Ethiopian king Elesbaas to wage war against the impious Jew, in vengeance for the blood of the Christians. He himself also wrote to King Elesbaas about all that Dunaan had done to the Christians in the Homerite land, especially in the city of Nagran, and likewise about how he had sent envoys to the Persian king and to the prince of the Saracens, inciting them against the Christians by entreaties and bribes. Justin asked Elesbaas, whose borders lay next to Dunaan's, to wage war against this blasphemer, who thirsted for Christian blood. Archbishop Asterius urged Elesbaas to war, while he himself prayed fervently to God for help for the Christians and for the scattering of their enemies. He also sent word to all the monks dwelling in Nitria and in the sketes [28], asking them to pray. The Ethiopian king Elesbaas learned

26. Persia borders Arabia on the northeast. The king here meant is Khosrow Anushirvan, a contemporary of Justin the Greek.

27. The Saracens were an Arabian tribe dwelling south of the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus, extending as far as Syria and Palestine. Their name is derived either from Sarah, the wife of Abraham, or from the Turkish word *Sharakyun*, that is, "eastern."

28. South of Alexandria lay the Nitrian Desert, where the ascetics of Egypt, the therapeutae, lived the life of monastic struggle. Monasticism here was founded by St. Ammon, a contemporary of St. Anthony (3rd century). In Nitria itself St. Ammon founded a monastery, and St. Anthony initiated the organization of skete communities. At the end of the 4th century there were up to 60 monasteries here, organized according to the rule of St. Pachomius. South of Nitria was the Desert of Scete, where many monks dwelt.

of all that had happened in the Homerite land not only from Emperor Justin and Archbishop Asterius; he already knew of it himself, since his troops, left to guard the neighboring cities, had been slain. Burning with zeal for God and grieving in heart for the Christians, he wished to march immediately against Dunaan, but could not, because it was winter; so he waited for summer, making all preparations for war. When winter had passed, he gathered an army of one hundred and twenty thousand men from his own troops and from the soldiers of other nations who had come to his aid. During the winter he equipped seventy Indian ships, and also took sixty ships from Persian and Ethiopian merchants who had arrived to trade; he repaired many old ships as well. When spring came, Elesbaas set out with his forces for war. From Lower Ethiopia [29] he sent part of his army by land into the Homerite regions, while he himself embarked with the remaining troops and sailed by sea. He intended to enter the Homerite land by land and by sea, so as to surround the Jewish king from every side. But God, who orders all things wisely and acts not according to the will of man, but according to His inscrutable judgments, knowing what would serve for good, thwarted the plans of the blessed king Elesbaas. His troops, sent by land against the Homerites, lost their way in deserts and mountains, in impassable and waterless places, and could neither reach the Homerite region nor return. Wandering for many days, they fainted from thirst and fell dead. Only a few survived, and as they returned to their homeland, they brought disheartening news. Nor did the king who sailed by sea fare better. Having put in at a city named Dakelu [30], the king disembarked and went to a church standing on the seashore. There he removed his crown and purple, his royal garments and insignia of rank, and, leaving them at the church door, entered dressed as a beggar and prayed for a long time with compunction before the sanctuary.

29. By "Lower" Ethiopia is meant the low-lying northern region. The land forces were directed by Elesboas through the Thebaid and Egypt to the north of the Sinai and Arabian peninsulas. In the northern part of one or the other (the exact location is unknown) the troops lost their way in the deserts and mountains, and most of them perished.

30. Here is meant the city of Scillis at the entrance to the Arabian Gulf, which served as a port for trade with India.

In his prayer, recalling the wonders God had wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness for the ungrateful Jews, the king said:

"The Jews were ungrateful to Thee, their Benefactor—not only those whom Thou didst lead out of Egypt, but their children also, and all their race, even unto this day. Thou knowest, O Lord, what evil they have done to Thy city of Nagran, where they treacherously seized Thy people. They have formed a lawless plot against Thy saints and seek to destroy from the face of the earth the Christians who yet remain. If all this is happening because of our sins, we beseech Thy goodness: do not deliver us into their hands, but punish us Thyself as Thou wilt, for greatness and mercy belong to Thee! Do not deliver us to our enemies, lest they say:

"'Where is their Christ, in whom they hope, and where is their Cross, in which they glory?'"

Having thus prayed with tears, the king left the church and departed from the city. There he heard that a certain holy monk named Zeno had dwelt without ever leaving a solitary cell not far from the city for forty-five years, and that, because of his virtuous life, he had received from God the gift of prophecy and knowledge of the future. The king went to this monk in the guise of an ordinary soldier. He took with him a vessel of incense [31], and hid gold beneath it, hoping that the elder, unaware, would accept the gold along with the incense. Entering the elder's presence, the king bowed before him and, offering the gift he had brought, asked him to pray for him; then he asked whether God would help them in their war against the Jew Dunaan, against whom they were marching to avenge the blood of the Christians.

Being clairvoyant, the elder recognized him as the king, and also knew that gold was hidden beneath the incense. He refused the gift and said:

"Have you not heard what the Lord says: 'Vengeance is Mine; I will repay' [32]? You have undertaken this war to your own destruction. Your

31. Frankincense was a natural product of coastal Ethiopia, which, together with myrrh and cinnamon, the inhabitants of the country traded extensively.

32. (Rom. 12:19). The sense of the text: to the Lord alone belongs the right to punish men for their deeds.

kingdom shall be taken from you, and many with you shall lose their lives."

Hearing this, the king was greatly afraid, and left the saint with weeping and lamentation. In great grief and sorrow, he pondered throughout the night, not knowing what to do. At last he resolved to flee. But when morning came, he went again to the monk. The elder said to him:

"There is no city on earth where you can escape death. But if you wish to remain alive and conquer the impious king, promise thereafter to embrace the monastic life."

Elesbaas promised with an oath, saying:

"If God grants me victory over Dunaan, I shall immediately renounce the kingdom and become a monk."

Hearing these words of the king and seeing his tears, the elder prayed to God for him and blessed him, as Saul once blessed David against Goliath (1 Kgdms. 17:37), saying:

"May God be with you! Go, aided by the sacrifices of the martyrs, the prayers of Archbishop Asterius and of the holy desert fathers who pray for you, and likewise by the tears of the blessed emperor Justin. You shall conquer Dunaan and avenge the blood of the innocent."

The king was comforted in his grief, received the blessing, and went to his troops, rejoicing and glorifying God.

At this time, Dunaan, king of the Himyarites, hearing that Elesboas, king of Ethiopia, was advancing against him by sea and by land, also gathered a great army and, heavily armed, took his stand on the borders of his land, awaiting the invasion of Elesboas. But when he heard that the forces of Elesboas which had marched by land had perished in the deserts, he rejoiced and no longer feared an attack from the land, but guarded only against danger from the sea. Yet there was no danger even there. Between Ethiopia and the land of the Himyarites lay a shallow place in the sea and a narrow passage, less than two stadia wide.[33] Many great, sharp rocks were scattered there, barely covered by water. Therefore this place was exceedingly difficult for ships to

33. A stadion equals 87½ sazhens. The narrow passage in question is therefore much less than half a verst.

pass through. Dunaan added yet another great obstacle: he stretched out a thick and enormous iron chain and barred the shallow sea with it, so that not only the many rocks, but also the iron chain, might block Elesboas' way and prevent his ships from passing to the other side.

But God, "whose understanding is unsearchable" (Ps. 146:5), brought to nought the wisdom of the crafty Jew. By His wondrous power He made an easy passage for the Christians through that impassable place.

When Elesboas sailed from the city of Dakela in good hope, a favorable wind arose. They set their sails and sailed very swiftly, reaching the borders of the land of the Himyarites after several days. When they came to the narrow passage in the sea, knowing nothing of what lay before them, the king ordered ten ships to cross first, and then appointed another twenty ships to follow; he himself was aboard these, watching the crossing from a height. The remaining great number of ships stayed far behind, waiting for the foremost ships to cross. But no sooner had the first ten ships set out than the Lord God, to Whom the paths of the sea belong, came swiftly to the aid of His faithful; and where the ships should have perished, there the Lord, beyond all expectation, made a way of salvation. Suddenly a great storm arose upon the sea, and the waves towered high as mountains. Catching up the ships, they carried them over that perilous place. Only one ship was stopped by the iron barrier and seemed to be standing upon a rock; but by God's power the water rose high and carried it over. Thus was fulfilled what the Prophet David said: "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep" (Ps. 106:23–24).[34]

Such a miracle did the mighty hand of God work. It not only carried the foremost ships on the waves over that difficult place, obstructed by rocks and an iron chain, but also broke apart the iron barrier itself by the storm and the surging sea, making an easy passage for the other ships.

Having carried the first ten ships over the perilous place, the waves set them by the shore, two hundred stadia from the place where King

Dunaan stood with all the Himyarite forces. The other twenty ships, aboard which King Elesboas also was, although they had passed through the narrow strait, were driven by the wind and could not catch up with the first ships, but were scattered across the sea by the waves. When Dunaan learned that ships had put in to shore, he immediately sent thirty thousand armed horsemen to prevent the Christians from disembarking. The ships scattered across the sea reached the ten foremost ships only after the storm had ceased; but they stopped, and the men could not go ashore, because Dunaan's soldiers were fiercely assailing them from the shore. The rest of the numerous ships did not cross the perilous place until the third day, and stopped not far from the shore. But they could not join the foremost ships, and, lying far apart from one another, knew nothing of each other.

Thinking that the king of Ethiopia was there, where the many scattered ships lay, Dunaan went there with his forces and encamped near the shore, preventing the enemy from disembarking. They remained thus for a long time, and both sides began to suffer great hardship. The Ethiopians aboard the ships lacked bread and water, while the Homerites on the shore were overcome by the heat of the sun. Then Dunaan sent one of his kinsmen, a prince, with twenty thousand horsemen to aid the thirty thousand soldiers who were guarding the foremost ships and preventing the Christians from going ashore. With that prince went a royal eunuch who carried five golden spears.[35] For many days they fought against the Christians, who landed in detachments and set up camp on the shore. One day, the prince sent by Dunaan went out from his camp to hunt, taking with him the eunuch who carried the golden spears and several servants, and spent the night there. That same night, some of Elesbaas' soldiers who were on shore, suffering from hunger, agreed to flee. They stole horses, mounted them, and escaped from the camp. By chance—or rather, by God's providence—they came upon the Homerite prince and the royal eunuch, who were lying in wait for game, and fought with them. Overcoming them, they cap-

34. (Ps. 106:23–24). These words have the following sense: God, in all the circumstances of life, guides the destinies of men and directs their paths, removing obstacles and dangers.
35. Golden lances were the mark of dignity of the first armor-bearer of the king.

tured the prince, the king's kinsman, and the eunuch with the spears, slew the rest with their swords, and then returned to their ships, bringing the prisoners alive to their king and bearing the golden spears. The king rejoiced greatly and gave thanks to God, Who had begun to deliver into his hands the enemies of the Holy Cross; and he promised to give the golden spears to the house of God, to adorn the sanctuary. Early in the morning, having prepared his soldiers for battle, the king put them aboard small vessels. Going ashore, they called upon the Lord for help and began a fierce battle with the Homerites. The latter, having lost their leader, began to fall into confusion and, turning their backs, fled. The Christians pursued and cut them down like stalks. God helped them, and not one of their opponents escaped; all fell by the Christian sword, so that none remained who could inform the Judaizing king of the destruction of his army. For the victory granted to them, the Christians offered prayers of thanksgiving to God.

But the time had not yet come for the Christians' complete triumph. The greater part of Elesboas' army, which was aboard the ships farther behind, was in great distress for two reasons: their supplies of food and drink were running low, and they did not know where their king was with the foremost ships. Elesboas, meanwhile, having the king's kinsman and the eunuch in his power, went to the chief city of the land of the Himyarites, called Farum, where King Dunaan's palace stood. Finding no guards at the city, Elesboas took it without difficulty. Then he entered the royal chambers and sat upon Dunaan's throne; he seized all his treasures and took the queen and her household captive. Some who had fled the city came to their king Dunaan, who was continuing the war against Elesboas' ships, and told him all: how Elesboas had defeated the army and captured the chief city and the queen.

Hearing this, Dunaan was greatly afraid. Courage left him under the influence of fear, and he knew not what to do. The Lord took away his reason and began to avenge the innocent blood of the Christians. The lawless Dunaan began to fear not only Elesboas, but also his own nobles and kinsmen. Distrusting them and fearing that they might betray him and go over to Elesboas, he bound them all, and himself as well, with golden chains, and shut himself up in his camp, awaiting his

final punishment. Thus did the wretched king lose his senses, for fear fell upon him, as once it did upon the rulers of Edom, Moab, and Canaan, of whom it is said in Holy Scripture: "Then were the princes of Edom troubled; trembling took hold upon the mighty men of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan melted away."[36]

At this time the Christians who remained aboard the many ships lying behind knew nothing of what had happened, and, in great confusion and sorrow, far from their king, they turned to fervent prayer. Having celebrated the Divine Liturgy aboard the ships and received the Divine Mysteries, they cried out with one accord to God, beseeching His help. And immediately a voice was heard from heaven, calling:

"Gabriel, Gabriel, Gabriel!"

Hearing this voice, the faithful were strengthened in spirit and, arming themselves for battle, set out in small vessels for the shore. And behold, among them appeared a certain warrior, holding in his hands an iron staff, with a cross at its top; the other end of the staff was sharp as a spear. With this weapon the warrior rushed ashore before all the rest, immediately fought a mounted soldier in arms, and pierced him together with his horse. When horse and rider fell, all the enemies were at once struck with fear and fled from the shore. The Christians, having taken the shore, advanced in ordered ranks against the impious. A great slaughter ensued. The Lord confounded the Jews and the pagans, and they could not withstand the Christians. And the entire army of the God-hating King Dunaan fell then, like grass cut down with a scythe.

When the Christians then reached the royal tent, they found there the king, bound with golden chains, together with the princes and kinsmen, sitting in a state of frenzy. All of them marveled at this strange sight. Doing nothing against them, the Christian warriors kept guard over their captives until they learned that their king, the blessed Elesboas, had taken the enemy capital. Then they sent him word of the victory God had granted over the abominable Jew. Leaving part of the

36. (Ex. 15:15). The passage of the Hebrews through the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh with his army struck fear into all the Canaanite peoples, who saw in this event the help and protection of God toward the chosen people.

army in the city as a guard, King Elesboas himself hastened to his Christians. Finding Dunaan and his retinue sitting in golden chains, Elesboas with his own hand put him to death, together with all who were with him. Great was the rejoicing of the Christians and unspeakable their joy, according to the word: "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance" (Ps. 57:11).

Returning to the city, Elesboas put to death all the unbelievers who were in the royal palaces with the queen, and utterly destroyed all the enemies of Christ. He then sent word to Emperor Justin and to the Archbishop of Alexandria, reporting that the Lord had magnified His mercy upon them, had placed their enemies under their feet, and had avenged the blood of the Christians. All gave thanks to God. The archbishop at once sent bishops and priests to the Homerites, to teach the faith and to baptize the remaining people. Elesboas, for his part, began to build churches in the cities and to spread the glory of the name of Jesus Christ. Coming to the martyr city of Nagran, he restored the church which the impious Dunaan had burned; he adorned the tombs of the holy martyrs in a seemly manner, encouraged all the Christians and declared them free. He appointed the surviving son of St. Arethas as voivode in the city, and in a short time he cleansed the whole Homerite land of godless impiety and enlightened it with the holy faith. He then set over it as king a pious and virtuous man named Abraamius, established the Christian ecclesiastical and civil laws, and, having secured good order, returned with his armies to his own land, glorifying God. He returned with great riches, for his troops had taken much booty.

On arriving in his own land, Elesboas gave thanks to God for all things and sent his royal crown to Jerusalem; and, a few days later, having committed the Ethiopian kingdom and himself to the will of God, he left everything. By night he went out secretly from the royal palaces and from the city, in plain clothing, not as a king but as some beggar, and enclosed himself near a monastery there, in a cell, from which he did not come out until his death, laboring for God day and night. His food was one loaf of bread for three days; at times he ate figs and dates. In his cell he had nothing else but a felt mat, a wooden bucket and a basket. He never tasted wine or oil. Thus he renounced the

whole world and its glory, turned all his thoughts to God and served Him alone, having lived fifteen years in the monastic life. He was granted a blessed end and reposed in peace. For all this, glory be to our God always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Today the light-bearing feast of the Passion-bearer, the intercessor of joy, hath come upon us; celebrating it, let us praise the Lord who is on high.

* * *

Life of Venerable Arethas of the Kiev Caves

Житие преподобного Арефы Печерского

Truly it is meet and right to give thanks to God always, not only for the blessings sent down but also for misfortunes; for the latter increase grace not only for the righteous alone, as in the case of Job, but also transform a great sinner into a perfect saint. An example of this is the Venerable Arethas, of whom the eyewitness of the Venerable, the blessed Bishop Simon, bears the following testimony.

There was in the Kiev Caves Monastery a certain monk named Arethas, a native of the city of Polotsk[37]. In his cell he kept great riches secretly, yet he was so possessed by avarice that he never gave a single coin in alms to a beggar, and did not spend anything even on his own needs. One night thieves came and stole all his riches. Then, from great sorrow and grief, he nearly lost his life. In searching for what had been stolen he began to attack the innocent and unjustly oppressed many. The whole brotherhood begged him to cease such searches and comforted him with words:

"Brother, 'cast thy care upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee'" (Ps. 54:23).

But he did not heed them, and with harsh words he vexed everyone.

A few days later he fell into a grievous illness; yet even then he did not cease his murmuring and reviling. The merciful Lord, "Who willeth

all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), showed upon him His wondrous mercy. Once, lying in bed as one dead, Arethas, after many days of silence, unexpectedly began to cry out loudly, to the astonishment of all:

"Lord, have mercy! Lord, forgive! Lord, I have sinned. All is Thine, and I do not grieve for what is lost."

Then, rising at once from his sickbed, he explained to the brethren the cause of his outcries and related the vision that had appeared to him.

"I saw," he said, "that Angels had come to me, and likewise a host of demons, and they began to contend over the riches stolen from me. The demons said: 'He did not glorify God for this, but reviled Him; therefore he is ours and must be given over to us.' But the Angels said to me: 'O unhappy man, if you had given thanks to God for the property taken from you, this would have been reckoned to you as alms, as with Job, for whoever gives alms has great merit before God, since he acts by his own good will. But if anyone bears forcible seizure with thanksgiving, which takes the place of good will, he has a trial from the devil. For the devil causes man to suffer loss, desiring to rouse reviling in him. But a grateful man commits everything to the will of God, and the loss in such a case is equal to alms.' When the Angels said this to me, I cried out: 'Lord, forgive! Lord, I have sinned! All is Thine, and I do not grieve for what was taken.' Then the demons suddenly vanished. The Angels rejoiced, and reckoning the lost silver to me as alms, they departed."

Hearing this, the brethren glorified God, who guides sinners on the path of repentance and who revealed to them the great power of thanksgiving. The blessed Arethas, enlightened by God, from that time was completely changed for the better, both in mind and in disposition, so that all marveled and said of him the words of the Apostle: "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20).

He whom no one before could turn from reviling now himself ceased not to praise, all his days glorifying and thanking God with the words

37. Polotsk, now a district town of Vitebsk Province, was the capital of the Principality of Polotsk.

of Job: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" (Job 1:21). Likewise, for his other transgressions he repented diligently, showing zeal in unfeigned poverty, in obedience not only before the eyes of men, in outward and inward purity. He labored in constant prayer, in strict fasting and in many other virtues, bodily and spiritual, to which the virtue of thanksgiving had moved him. Growing rich in virtues and in devotion to God more than formerly in gold and silver, after many labors he reposed in eternal rest[38]. He was laid with honor in a cave, and by the incorruption of his relics wondrously bears witness to his blessedness, equal to the blessedness of the merciful, who, according to the Lord's word, shall obtain mercy (Mt. 5:7). By his holy prayers may we too, who live in thanksgiving, be shown mercy, and may we together with him be granted in the Kingdom of Heaven to give thanks to God in the Holy Trinity, unto ages without end. Amen.

* * *

38. St. Arethas died not later than the year 1190.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 25

25 октября

New Calendar October 25 · Old Calendar November 7 (civil dates)

Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs Marcian and Martyrius

Страдание святых мучеников Маркиана и Мартирия

When the godless heresy of Arius, spreading abroad, caused great discord in the Church of Christ, there began cruel persecutions of the faithful Christians, both on the part of the Arians and on the part of the idol-worshippers. At that time all who confessed Christ to be the Creator and not a creature, God incarnate and not a mere man, were pursued, tormented, driven out, and slain. The Arians grew especially strong from the time when Emperor Constantius, son of Constantine the Great, himself fell into the same heresy and drew near to his court two great dignitaries, Eusebius and Philip, both Arians, who zealously persecuted the Orthodox and did evil to the Church of Christ. Thus they were the instigators of the exile and death of our holy father Paul the Confessor; they taught their like-minded followers to strangle him, which they did. In his place they set up Macedonius on the patriarchal throne.[1] Many other confessors and teachers of piety they also destroyed by various means. Among these zealots of the Christian faith were two, Marcian and Martyrius, who by their teaching and writings adorned the Church of God, and, "like two breasts of the Church, pouring forth the milk of teaching, nourished their spiritual children."[2] Previously they had been in the service of the

1. Macedonius was the founder of a new heresy. He did not acknowledge the Holy Spirit as God, but considered Him a created being, having no share in the Divinity and glory of the Father and the Son. The heresy of Macedonius was condemned at the 2nd Ecumenical Council under Theodosius the Great, in 381.
2. Service Menaion, October, day 25, ode 4.

aforementioned holy confessor Paul: Marcian as a reader, and Martyrius as a subdeacon. They were notaries,[3] writing down the teachings of the patriarch and recording the deeds by which piety was confirmed. At the same time they themselves were great preachers of the word of God and champions of the Church, which they defended, like two shields, against the arrows of the heretics. The Lord gave them, as His faithful disciples, a mouth and a wisdom which none of their opponents, the Arians, could contradict or withstand (cf. Lk. 21:15). After the exile and death of St. Paul, the heresiarchs turned their poison against his disciples, Marcian and Martyrius. First, hiding their malice in cunning, like a spark of fire in ashes, they tried by crafty flattery to turn them from Orthodoxy to their impiety. They offered the servants of God much gold, promised to obtain for them great favors from the Emperor, to raise them to episcopal sees, and to make them possessors of large estates, if only they would agree with the heresy they were introducing. But the servants of God scorned all this: they did not accept the gold, they rejected the honors promised them, and they laughed at the deceit of the impious, preferring, for the sake of piety, to endure reproach, dishonor, torments, and even death, rather than live in heresy and enjoy wealth, glory, and honor. Then the heretics, seeing that they could by no means incline the holy confessors to their false belief, condemned them to death, which the saints desired, for Christ's sake, more than life itself. When they were seized and brought to the place of execution, they asked for a little time for prayer. Lifting their eyes to heaven and raising their hands, they prayed:

"O Lord God, who hast invisibly created our hearts, who orderest all our works, receive in peace the souls of Thy servants, for we are put to death for Thee and are accounted as sheep for the slaughter (Ps. 32:15; 43:23). We rejoice that by such a death we depart from this life for the sake of Thy name. Grant that we may be made partakers of eternal life with Thee, the Fountain of life."

3. *Notarius* literally means a stenographer. In the first centuries A.D. this was the name for imperial secretaries who authenticated acts. Under Constantine the Great a secret chancery of notaries was established, who kept the minutes of the most important state deliberations. At the same time the secretaries of the Patriarch of Constantinople were also called notaries.

Having so prayed, they bowed their holy heads beneath the sword and were executed by the wicked Arians for confessing the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Some of the faithful took their honorable relics and buried them at the Melandian Gates, in the same city of Constantinople. Afterward our holy father John Chrysostom built a church in their memory, in which various healings were granted to the sick through the prayers of the holy martyrs, to the glory of God, who is glorified in the Trinity forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having well exerted yourselves from childhood, O Marcian with the wise Martyrius, you overthrew the apostate Arius, preserving the Orthodox faith unharmed, following Paul, your wise teacher. Therefore with him you obtained life, as most excellent champions of the Trinity.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Anastasius

Память святого мученика Анастасия

St. Anastasius[4] voluntarily presented himself to the tormentors and boldly confessed Christ as the True God and Creator of all. For such steadfastness in the true faith he was beheaded with the sword, and his body was cast into the sea. A pious woman, after great exertion, succeeded in retrieving the holy relics from the sea, and, anointing them with fragrant oils and clothing them in burial garments, placed them in her domestic church.[5] Many healings were accomplished at the saint's tomb.

4. St. Anastasius was a cloth-fuller. Coming from Aquileia (a city in northern Italy) to Salona, a seaport in Dalmatia, he confessed Christ, for which he suffered martyrdom during the reign of Diocletian (284–305).

5. This pious woman, the wealthy matron Asclepsia, promised a reward to whoever would extract the holy relics. When the holy relics were found by Africans, the servants of the lady forced them to give them up only by threatening to denounce them to the authorities. The Africans, however, took a part of the relics, supposedly the head, and sent it to Africa.

* * *



THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 26

26 октября

New Calendar October 26 · Old Calendar November 8 (civil dates)

Passion and Miracles of the Holy Glorious Great Martyr Demetrius

Страдание и чудеса святого славного великомученика Димитрия

The Holy Great Martyr Demetrius, son of noble and pious parents, was from the city of Thessalonica, where his father was a voivode. At that time the impious emperors had raised up a fierce persecution against the Christians; therefore Demetrius's father, who secretly believed in our Lord Jesus Christ and kept His commandments, dared not openly confess His most holy name, fearing the terrible threats of the pagans. Within his palace, in a hidden chamber, he had two holy icons adorned with gold and precious stones; on one was the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, and on the other, that of the Most Holy Mother of God. Before these icons he lit candles and burned incense. In this secluded chapel he and his wife often offered prayers to the True God, Who dwells on high, to His Only-begotten Son, and to the Most Immaculate Lady. These pious spouses generously gave alms to the poor and never refused those in need. Only one thing greatly grieved them: they had no children. They earnestly entreated the Lord to grant them an heir, and after some time their desire was fulfilled.

The Most High hearkened to their prayers and granted them a son, the holy Demetrius. Great was his parents' rejoicing, and fervently did they give thanks to the Lord. All Thessalonica shared the joy of its voivode, who prepared a feast for the whole city, especially for the poor.

When the child had grown and was able to understand the truth, his parents brought him into the chapel where the holy icons were and, pointing to them, said:

"Behold the image of the One True God, Who created heaven and earth, and this is the image of the Most Holy Theotokos."

They taught him the holy commandments of Christ, explained to him all by which a man may come to know our Lord Jesus Christ, and showed him how vain and pernicious was faith in the defiled gods of the pagans.

From that time Demetrius, instructed by the words of his parents and especially taught from on high by the Holy Spirit, came to know the truth: the grace of God already rested upon him. With all his soul he believed in the Lord and, bowing down before the holy icons, reverently kissed them.

Then Demetrius's parents summoned a priest and some Christians known to them, and in their hidden chapel baptized the child in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Having received holy Baptism, Demetrius was instructed in the true faith; he grew both in years and in understanding, ascending ever higher upon the ladder of virtues, and the grace of God enlightened and instructed him yet more.

When Demetrius came of age, his parents departed from this temporal life, having given their son an example of a God-pleasing life and leaving him heir to all their possessions.

Meanwhile the emperor Maximian, learning of the death of the voivode of Thessalonica, summoned his son, the holy Demetrius, to him. Seeing that he was wise and courageous in battle, the emperor appointed him ruler of the whole region of Thessalonica; entrusting him with this office, he said:

"Protect your native city and cleanse it of the impious Christians; put to death everyone who invokes the name of the Crucified One."

Having accepted the emperor's appointment, Demetrius returned home and was received with honor by the inhabitants of the city. He had long desired to establish the light of the true faith in his native city, and grieved when he saw the people of Thessalonica worshipping life-

less idols. Now, upon arriving in the city, he immediately began to confess and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ before all; he taught everyone the commandments of Christ, turned the pagans to the holy faith, and rooted out defiled polytheism; in a word, he was a second Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians. News of this soon reached Maximian himself. The emperor learned that Demetrius, the ruler he had appointed, was a Christian and had already converted many to his faith, and he was greatly angered. At that very time, returning from the Sarmatian[1] war, the emperor halted in Thessalonica. Before Maximian arrived in the city, Demetrius entrusted all the possessions he had inherited from his parents—gold, silver, precious stones, and garments—to his faithful servant named Luppus, and commanded him to distribute them all among the poor and needy.

"Divide this earthly wealth among them," the saint added; "let us seek for ourselves the riches of heaven."

And he himself began to pray and fast, thus preparing for the crown of martyrdom. The emperor at once began to inquire whether what he had heard about Demetrius was true. Fearlessly appearing before the emperor, Demetrius confessed that he was a Christian and began to denounce pagan polytheism. The wicked persecutor immediately ordered the confessor of the true faith to be cast into prison. Entering there, the saint prayed in the words of the Prophet David: "Make haste, O God, to deliver me; [make haste], O Lord, to help me" (Ps. 69:2). "For Thou art my hope, O Lord God; Thou art my trust from my youth. On Thee have I been established from the womb; Thou art He that took me out of my mother's womb; my praise shall be continually of Thee. My lips rejoice when I sing unto Thee, and my soul, which Thou hast delivered; and my tongue shall proclaim Thy righteousness every day" (Ps. 70:5, 6, 23, 24).

As though in a bright chamber, Demetrius sat in the prison, praising and glorifying God. The devil, wishing to frighten him, took the form of a scorpion and sought to sting the saint's foot. Signing himself with the sign of the Cross, the saint fearlessly trampled upon the scor-

1. Under the name of Sarmatians are known various tribes that inhabited the south of present-day Russia, and in part Germany and Austria.

pion, saying the words of David: "Thou shalt tread upon the asp and basilisk; the lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot" (Ps. 90:13).

While thus passing his time in prison, the saint was granted a visit from an Angel of God. In a bright light the heavenly messenger appeared before him with a beautiful crown of Paradise and said:

"Peace be unto thee, O sufferer for Christ; be courageous and steadfast!" The saint replied:

"I rejoice in the Lord and exult in God my Savior!" The Angel's appearing comforted and strengthened the holy sufferer; he desired yet more fervently to seal with his blood his confession of the true faith of Christ.

Meanwhile the emperor held games and amused himself with spectacles. He had an outstanding fighter, a Vandal[2] by birth, named Lyaeus. Having ordered high platforms to be built for him, Maximian watched with great pleasure as Lyaeus wrestled with his opponents and, hurling them from the height onto spears, delivered them to a painful death. Among the spectators was a young Christian named Nestor, whom bonds of spiritual friendship united to the holy Demetrius, his instructor in the faith. Seeing that Lyaeus killed many and slaughtered Christians in particular—for the latter were forced to contend with Lyaeus—the young man, taking courage, wished to fight the emperor's champion. But before entering the contest, he went to the holy Demetrius in prison. There Nestor told him all that Lyaeus was doing, said that he wished to contend with this merciless slayer of Christians, and asked the saint for his blessing and prayers. Signing him with the sign of the Cross, Demetrius foretold:

"You shall prevail over Lyaeus and suffer torments for Christ!"

Coming to the place of the spectacle, Nestor cried aloud for all to hear:

"O God of Demetrius, help me in my struggle with my adversary!"

Then, entering into combat with Lyaeus, he overcame the emperor's champion and hurled him down from the platform onto the sharp

2. The Vandals were a people of Germanic origin who lived chiefly along the shores of the Baltic Sea.

spears. Lyaeus's death deeply grieved the emperor, who immediately ordered the blessed Nestor to be put to death. Yet this could not console Maximian; all day and all night he mourned Lyaeus's death. Learning that Nestor had entered single combat with Lyaeus at Demetrius's counsel and with his blessing, the emperor ordered that the holy Great Martyr also be pierced with spears.

"Lyaeus," thought the lawless persecutor, "was cast down by Nestor's hand upon the points of the spears; the holy Demetrius must suffer the same death as he. Let him perish by the same death by which he destroyed our beloved champion Lyaeus."

But the mad persecutor deluded himself, supposing that the death of the righteous and that of the sinner are alike; in this he was mistaken, for the death of sinners is grievous, but the end of the saints is precious in the sight of the Lord.

As soon as dawn broke on 26 October, soldiers entered the prison where Demetrius was held. They found the holy man standing at prayer, and at once rushed upon him and pierced him with spears. Thus did this confessor of Christ deliver his precious and holy soul into the hands of the Creator.[3]

By night the Christians secretly took the saint's body, which had been shamefully cast upon the ground, and reverently buried it.

At the place of the holy Great Martyr's blessed death was his faithful servant, the above-mentioned Luppus. Reverently he took his master's robe, drenched with his precious blood, and dipped his ring in it. With this robe and ring he wrought many miracles, healing every kind of illness and driving out evil spirits.

News of these miracles spread throughout all Thessalonica, so that every sick person began to flock to Luppus. Learning of this, Maximian ordered the blessed Luppus to be seized and beheaded. And thus the good servant followed his master, the holy Demetrius, to the heavenly dwellings.

When much time had passed and the persecution of the Christians had ceased, a small church was erected over the tomb of St. Demetrius.

3. The saint's repose took place about the year 306.

Many miracles were wrought there, and many who were sick received healing from their ailments. A certain eminent Illyrian nobleman named Leontius[4] fell into a grievous and incurable illness. Hearing of the miracles of the holy Passion-bearer, he turned with faith to the holy Great Martyr Demetrius. When he was carried into the church and laid in the place where the relics of the holy Great Martyr had been buried, he was immediately healed and rose up completely well, giving thanks to God and glorifying His servant, St. Demetrius.

Out of gratitude to the saint, Leontius desired to build a great and beautiful church in honor of this glorious Great Martyr. The former small church was taken down, and when they began to dig a trench for the foundations, the relics of St. Demetrius the Great Martyr were uncovered, wholly intact and without any corruption; fragrant myrrh flowed from them, so that the whole city was filled with its fragrance.

Many people gathered for this spiritual celebration. With great reverence the holy relics were taken from the earth, and countless sick people received healing through anointing with the myrrh that flowed from them.[6990] Leontius rejoiced not so much over his own healing as over the discovery of the holy relics. He soon completed the work he had begun and built a beautiful church on that spot in the name of St. Demetrius. There the precious relics of the Great Martyr were laid in a reliquary bound with gold and silver and adorned with precious stones. But Leontius's care extended still further: he bought villages and vineyards and gave them for the support of those who served at this church. When the time came for him to return to his homeland, he resolved to take with him a portion of the saint's relics, in order to build a church in the name of Demetrius in his own city. But the saint appeared and forbade him to separate any portion whatsoever from the relics. Then Leontius took only a shroud stained with the saint's blood and, placing it in a golden reliquary, set out for his home in Illyria. During the journey many miracles were wrought by that shroud through the saint's prayers. Once, on his return journey, Leontius had to cross a river that

4. Leontius held a prominent office in Illyricum, to which the region of Thessalonica then also belonged.

had risen greatly and was raging fiercely[5]; fear and terror seized him, but suddenly St. Demetrius appeared before him and said:

"Take the reliquary with the shroud in your hands, and cease to fear."

Leontius followed the saint's counsel, and he and all who were with him crossed over safely. When he returned to his homeland, the first thing he did was build a beautiful church in the name of St. Great Martyr Demetrius. Calling with faith upon the name of this great ascetic of Christ, Leontius wrought miracles through the saint's prayers. The ruler of Illyria was gravely ill, so that pus and scabs covered his whole body from head to foot. But Leontius delivered the sick man from his grievous illness by praying to St. Demetrius; he also wondrously healed a man suffering from an issue of blood and cured another who was possessed. Many other miracles took place there through the saint's prayers. But miracles were especially numerous in Thessalonica, where the relics of this Great Martyr rested.

Once a fire broke out in the church dedicated to the holy Great Martyr. The silver canopy over the relics of God's servant was especially badly damaged: it melted in the fire. The archbishop Eusebius, who was then serving, took great care to have a new canopy made. But he had too little silver. In this church there was a silver throne that had remained wholly unharmed during the fire. The archbishop conceived the plan of melting down this throne to make a canopy over the saint's tomb, but as yet he told no one of his intention. At that very time there was at this church a pious presbyter named Demetrius. The holy Great Martyr appeared to him and said:

"Go and tell the bishop of the city: Do not dare to melt down the throne that is in my church."

Demetrius went at once to Eusebius and told him to abandon his intention. At first the archbishop was greatly astonished by the presbyter's words, but afterward, supposing that Demetrius might somehow have learned of his intention, he ceased to marvel and even rebuked the presbyter. Several days later the archbishop had already ordered the

5. This was the river Danube.

craftsmen to come to him. At that very moment the presbyter Demetrius came to Eusebius a second time and said:

"The holy Great Martyr appeared to me, a sinner, again in a dream-vision and commanded me to tell you: For love of me, do not melt down the throne."

The archbishop dismissed the presbyter just as sternly, but nevertheless did not yet order the throne to be melted down. After some time he was again about to give the throne over for melting, but St. Demetrius appeared to the same presbyter and said:

"Do not lose heart; I myself care for my church and city. Leave their care to me."

Then the archbishop could no longer restrain his tears, and said to all those around him:

"Let us wait a little, brethren, for Christ's servant himself has promised us his aid."

The archbishop had scarcely finished speaking when a citizen of Thessalonica named Mina came, bringing with him 75 pounds of silver.

"St. Demetrius," said Mina, "has often delivered me from dangers and even saved me from death. For a long time I have desired to make an offering in the church of my gracious patron and wondrous defender. Today, from early morning, a certain voice has been urging me:

" 'Go and do what you have long intended to do.' " As he gave the silver, Mina wished that it should be spent on a canopy over the tomb of the Great Martyr. After this other citizens of Thessalonica came and also brought silver. From their offerings a beautiful canopy was made for the tomb of St. Demetrius the Great Martyr.

In the reign of Emperor Maurice,[6] the Avars[7] demanded a large tribute from the inhabitants of Byzantium, but Maurice refused to meet their demand. Then they assembled a vast army, consisting chiefly of Slavs, and resolved to take Thessalonica, a city distinguished for its extensive trade and great wealth. Although Emperor Maurice sent an army to this city, the plague that had raged shortly before had greatly

6. Maurice reigned from 582 to 603.

7. The Avars, whose tributaries were the Slavs, who at that time had not yet been enlightened by the light of the Christian faith, lived on the Don, near the Caspian Sea.

reduced the number of Thessalonians, while the enemy's army was enormous, numbering as many as 100000. About 10 days before the enemy arrived, St. Demetrius appeared to Archbishop Eusebius and told him that the city was in terrible danger. But the Thessalonians thought that the enemy army would not approach the city for some time. Suddenly, contrary to expectation, the enemy appeared not far from the city walls. They could even have entered the city unopposed by night, but the mighty right hand of the Most High, through the prayers of St. Demetrius, wondrously stopped the terrible foes not far from the city. The enemy mistook one of the fortified monasteries outside the city for Thessalonica itself and remained before it for an entire night; in the morning they realized their mistake and rushed toward the city itself. The enemy detachments went straight to the assault, but then, before everyone's eyes, St. Demetrius appeared on the city wall in the form of an armed warrior. He struck with his spear and hurled down from the wall the first of the enemy to climb it. As he fell, he dragged others who were advancing down with him—terror suddenly seized the foes, and they immediately retreated. But the siege was not over; it was only beginning. At the sight of the multitude of enemies, even the bravest were overcome by despair. At first everyone thought the city's destruction was inevitable. But then, seeing the enemy's flight and the protection of their wondrous defender, the inhabitants took heart and began to trust that the protector of Thessalonica, St. Demetrius, would not abandon his native city or allow it to fall into enemy hands. Meanwhile the enemies began to besiege the city, brought up their engines, and set about shaking the foundations of the city walls. Clouds of arrows and stones hurled from their engines obscured the light of day; all hope rested in aid from on high, and crowds of people filled the church dedicated to St. Demetrius. At that time there lived in the city a God-fearing and most virtuous man named Illustrius. Coming by night to the church of St. Demetrius the Great Martyr, he prayed fervently to God and His glorious servant in the church porch, beseeching them to deliver the city from its enemies. Suddenly he was vouchsafed to behold a wondrous vision: two radiant youths appeared before him, resembling the emperor's bodyguards; they were Angels of

God. The church doors opened of themselves before them, and they entered the church. Illustrius followed them, wishing to see what would happen next. When they entered, they cried aloud:

"Where is the lord who dwells here?"

Then another youth appeared, looking like a servant, and asked them:

"Why do you need him?"

"The Lord has sent us to him," they replied, "to tell him something."

Pointing to the saint's tomb, the servant-youth said:

"There he is!"

"Announce us to him," they said.

Then the youth lifted the curtain, and St. Demetrius came out to meet those who had arrived. He looked as he is depicted on the icons; from him shone a bright light, like the sun. From fear and the dazzling brilliance, Illustrius could not look at the saint. The youths who had come greeted Demetrius.

"Grace be with you," the saint answered. "What has moved you to visit me?"

And they answered him:

"The Master has sent us, commanding you to leave the city and come to Him, for He wishes to deliver it into the hands of its enemies."

Hearing this, the Saint bowed his head and was silent, shedding bitter tears. And the young servant said to those who had come:

"If I had known that your coming would bring no joy to my lord, I would not have told him about you."

Then the Saint began to speak:

"Is this what my Lord willed? Is it the will of the Master of all that a city redeemed by honorable blood should be handed over into the hands of enemies who do not know Him, do not believe in Him, and do not honor His holy name?"

To this those who had come replied:

"If our Master had not willed it so, He would not have sent us to you!"

Then Demetrius said:

"Go, brethren, and tell my Master that His servant Demetrius speaks thus:"

"I know Thy mercies, O Lord my Master, who lovest mankind; even the lawlessness of the whole world cannot surpass Thy compassion. For the sake of sinners Thou didst shed Thy holy blood; Thou didst lay down Thy soul for us. Show, then, now Thy mercy upon this city, and do not command me to leave it. Thou Thyself didst appoint me guardian of this city; allow me to imitate Thee, my Master: grant me to lay down my soul for the inhabitants of this city, and if it is their fate to perish, let me perish with them. Do not destroy, O Lord, a city where all call upon Thy holy name; though these people have sinned, they have nevertheless not turned away from Thee, for Thou art the God of those who repent."

The young men who had come asked Demetrius:

"Shall we answer thus to the Master who sent us?"

"Yes, answer thus," he said, "for I know that the Lord 'will not keep His anger forever, nor remain wrathful unto the end' (Ps. 102:9)."

Having said this, the Saint entered the tomb, and the holy shrine was closed; and the Angels who had been speaking with him became invisible. This is what Illustrius was vouchsafed to behold in the wondrous and dreadful vision. At last, coming to himself, he fell to the ground, gave thanks to the Saint for his care of the city, and praised him for having implored the Master not to deliver the inhabitants of Thessalonica into the hands of their enemies. In the morning Illustrius told the citizens everything he had seen and encouraged them to fight bravely against their enemies. Hearing Illustrius's account, all with tears besought the Lord to send them mercy and called upon St. Demetrius for help. Through the intercession of the Saint, the city remained unharmed: soon the enemies withdrew from the walls in great shame, unable to take the city guarded by the glorious servant of God. On the seventh day of the siege the enemies, for no visible reason, turned to disorderly flight, abandoning their tents and siege engines. On the following day some of the enemies returned and related the following:

"From the very first day of the siege we saw among you such a multitude of defenders that they far exceeded our army. We thought your host was hidden behind your walls. Yesterday it suddenly rushed upon us, and we fled."

Then the astonished citizens asked: "Who led the army?"

“We saw,” answered the returning enemies, “a fiery, radiant man on a white horse, in snow-white garments.”

The citizens of Thessalonica, hearing this, understood who had put the enemies to flight. Thus St. Demetrius defended his city.

Soon after the enemies withdrew from Thessalonica, another calamity fell upon this city. The enemies, in great numbers, had during the siege destroyed all the stores of grain, so that in the city itself a great famine arose: people in large numbers began to die for lack of food. Seeing that his native city was perishing from hunger, the Saint several times appeared on ships sailing on the sea, visited the harbors and many islands, and commanded ships laden with wheat everywhere to sail to Thessalonica, and thus delivered his city from famine[8].

When the pious Emperor Justinian[9] built a beautiful and magnificent church in Constantinople in the name of the Wisdom of God, he sent honorable men to Thessalonica to bring from there some portion of the Saint's relics for the adornment and consecration of the newly erected church. Arriving at Thessalonica, the envoys approached the honorable shrine where the relics of the Great Martyr rested, to carry out the imperial command; suddenly a pillar of flame burst forth from the shrine, showering all present with a whole sheaf of sparks, and from the fire a voice was heard:

"Stand and do not dare."

Seized with fear, those present fell to the ground; then the envoys, taking only some earth from that place, returned to the Emperor and told him everything that had happened to them. All who heard their account were struck with amazement. The envoys gave one half of the earth they had taken to the Emperor, and placed the other half in the church sacristy.

8. This miracle took place in 547.
9. Justinian reigned from 527 to 566.

It was the duty of a certain young man named Onisiphorus to light the candles and tend the lamps in the church of St. Demetrius. Prompted by the devil, this young man began to steal candles and secretly sell them, appropriating to himself the money obtained from such sales. St. Demetrius did not endure such wickedness committed in the church dedicated to him: he appeared in a dream to Onisiphorus and, with the greatest forbearance, began to rebuke him:

"Brother Onisiphorus, it displeases me that you steal the candles; through this you cause loss to those who offer them; no less do you harm yourself. Remember that people who act as you do await condemnation. Leave this evil deed and repent."

Onisiphorus, awaking, felt shame and fear; but after some time he forgot the Saint's admonition and again began to steal candles, as he had done before, and punishment soon overtook him. One day a certain pious man, rising early in the morning, came to the church of St. Demetrius and brought several large candles. He lit them, set them by the tomb of the Great Martyr, and, having prayed, left the church. Approaching the candles, Onisiphorus stretched out his hand to take them, when suddenly a voice came from the Saint's tomb:

"Again you do the same!"

Struck by this voice as by thunder, Onisiphorus at once fell to the ground and lay like a dead man until one of the clergy entered. The newcomer raised the young man, who was seized with terror. As soon as Onisiphorus came to himself, he told everything: both his sinful passion, and the first appearance of the Saint to him in a dream, and the second rebuke from Demetrius. Then all, hearing this account, were filled with great fear.

Many captives were delivered from the yoke of the unbelievers by the Great Martyr Demetrius. Thus a certain bishop was taken by barbarians and bound in chains, but the Saint appeared to him, freed him from his fetters, and, kept by the Saint, the bishop arrived safely at Thessalonica. On another occasion the barbarians, pouring into the borders of this city, carried off many of its inhabitants. Among the captives were two beautiful maidens; they were skilled at embroidering on frames and depicting on cloth various flowers, trees, birds, beasts, and

human faces. The barbarians led them to their own land and gave them as a gift to their prince. Learning of their skill, the prince said to them:

"I am aware that in your land there is a great god Demetrius, who works wondrous miracles; embroider his image on linen, and I will worship him."

The maidens answered:

"No, prince, Demetrius is not God, but only a great servant of God and helper of Christians. We will not fulfill your demand, for we know that you wish not to worship him, but to mock his image."

"It is in my power," the prince answered them, "to decide your life and death; choose what you want: either do what I require of you, and then you will live; but if you do not fulfill my command, you will be put to death at once."

Fearing to perish, the captives began to embroider the image of St. Demetrius. On the very eve of the day when the memory of the Saint is celebrated, the maidens finished their work, and on the night of 26 October, sitting at their frames, they, bending over the image they had embroidered, began to weep:

"Be not angry with us, Martyr of Christ," they said, "we know that the lawless prince wishes to mock your image; we call you to witness that we did not wish to embroider your image, but were forced to do this under threat of a cruel death."

Weeping thus over the image of the Saint, they fell asleep.

During their sleep St. Demetrius, by a wondrous means, as once the Angel carried Habakkuk, transported those maidens together with their work, in that same night, to Thessalonica for his feast, and set them in the church beside his relics during the All-night Vigil. Seeing such a miracle, all marveled, and the maidens, awakening, cried out:

"Glory to God. Where are we?"

From astonishment they could not come to themselves and thought that all this was happening in a dream.

At last they became fully convinced that they were indeed in Thessalonica, that they saw before them the tomb of the Saint and stood in his church, where a multitude of people were praying. Then, in the hearing of all, they began to give thanks to their intercessor, St. De-

metrius, and told everything that had befallen them. The inhabitants of Thessalonica, rejoicing at such a wondrous miracle, then celebrated the day of the memory of St. Demetrius with great jubilation, and they placed the embroidered image above the sanctuary; many miracles were wrought through it to the glory of God, One in Trinity. Glory, honor, and worship from all creation be to Him forever, Amen.

Troparion, Tone 3:

The universe found thee a great champion in its afflictions, O Passion-bearer, who overcomest the nations. As thou didst overthrow the pride of Lyaeus, and didst make Nestor bold for the contest, so, O holy Demetrius, pray to Christ God to grant us great mercy.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

With the streams of thy blood, O Demetrius, thou didst empurple the Church of God, Who gave thee invincible strength and preserves thy city unharmed; for thou art its stronghold.

On the same day is commemorated the Venerable Athanasius, who labored ascetically in the Midikion Monastery in Bithynia; he reposed about the year 814. His life is recounted in the Life of the Venerable Nicetas of Midikion (April 3).

* * *

NOTES

6990. Among the most wondrous miracles by which God was pleased to glorify His great servant was the outflowing of myrrh from his honorable relics. This outflowing is a wondrous sign of the grace of God. The outflowing of myrrh began in the seventh century. A whole series of writers and historians bear witness to this incomprehensible phenomenon. Let us cite the testimony of one of the writers, namely Demetrius Chrysologus, who lived in the second half of the fourteenth century: "By its nature it [that is, the myrrh] is not water, but thicker than water, and it resembles none of the bodies on earth, whether liquid or solid, nor any of those prepared artificially... it is more marvelous than all fragrances, not only those prepared by art, but also those created by God by nature." Many healings occurred through anointing with this myrrh; even peoples who did not believe in Christ prized this wondrous stream. Thus, at the sack of Thessalonica by the Turks in 1429, the prudent among the enemies intended to take with

them some quantity of this myrrh, of whose healing power they had heard so much. The Holy Church, calling St. Demetrius myrrh-streaming, thus praises the ascetic of Christ: "O Demetrius, opened fountain of fragrant and precious myrrh" (Canon, Ode 1). "Ever-flowing springs of thy myrrh are poured forth."



THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 27

27 октября

New Calendar October 27 · Old Calendar November 9 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Nestor

Страдание святого мученика Нестора

The impious emperor Maximian, surnamed Hercules, a friend of Diocletian, came to the city of Thessalonica, where he cast St. Demetrius into prison for confessing Christ, and himself gave himself over to spectacles and was present at the games.

On this occasion he boasted of one of his wrestlers, named Lyeus, who was of the Vandal tribe, saying that no one could overcome him.

This Lyeus was a second Goliath[1]: in stature he surpassed all men, in appearance and character he was like a beast, and his voice resembled the roar of a roaring lion. From his very gaze and voice all who looked upon him trembled; the strength of his body was marvelous and his power invincible, for unclean spirits dwelt in him, and because of this no one could stand against him. He had already killed countless brave and strong men, and was greatly loved by the emperor for such strength. Since the emperor himself could never be satisfied with human blood, he loved the one who had turned all his bodily strength to the shedding of human blood.

For this impious Lyeus the emperor had erected in the middle of the city a high and spacious platform on pillars, where Lyeus might hold contests of strength in the sight of all. Beneath that platform a multitude of spears and other weapons had been set up, points upward, so that Lyeus might cast down those he had defeated onto these sharp weapons, and they, falling and pierced by them, would die. And indeed

1. Goliath—the Philistine giant—was of extraordinary stature; David slew him with a sling (1 Kgdms. 17).

Lyeus, entering into combat with men, cast them beneath the platform onto the spears and delivered them to death. The emperor, with all the multitude of his soldiers, watched this with pleasure and admired his wrestler. The people of Thessalonica also watched this spectacle, among whom there were many believers. Seeing the human blood shed by this inhuman beast, they sighed heavily, for Lyeus had already killed many Christians, whom the impious had forcibly dragged onto the platform and compelled to wrestle with Lyeus.

In that city there lived a youth named Nestor, strong of body, handsome of face, with a beard just beginning to grow. He was close to the Great Martyr Demetrius, from whom he had learned the holy faith. Seeing Christians being killed without guilt, he burned with zeal and resolved to enter into combat with the strongman Lyeus. Coming to St. Demetrius, who was in prison, he told him how many Christians Lyeus had killed that day.

"Pray for me, servant of God," he said, "that by thy holy prayers God may help me. I will go and wrestle with that adversary, overcome him, and remove the reproach from the Christians."

St. Demetrius made the sign of the Cross upon his brow and breast, blessed him, and foretold:

"Thou shalt overcome Lyeus and shalt be tormented for Christ." Having received the blessing, St. Nestor at once went to the place of the contest, took off his outer garments in the sight of all, and cried out loudly:

"I wish to wrestle with Lyeus!"

Seeing such boldness in the youth, the emperor was astonished, and, regretting his beauty and youth, said to him:

"Hast thou not seen how many braver and stronger men than thou Lyeus has overcome? And thou, small of stature and young in years, dost dare to go against one to whom there is no equal under the sun."

Nestor answered:

"If I am small and weak, yet great and invincible is the power of my Christ, in whom I trust and in whose name I wish to wrestle with this giant."

Hearing the name of Christ and understanding that Nestor was a Christian, the emperor was angered and ordered him to go at once onto the platform, thinking that Nestor would suffer the same as the others. St. Nestor carefully mounted to the place of combat; Lyeus, jesting and laughing, began to advance upon the saint. Seeing Lyeus approach, Nestor shielded himself with the sign of the Cross and cried out in a loud voice:

"God of Demetrius, help me!"

Then he grappled with the adversary and began to wrestle. God, who once strengthened David in his combat with Goliath, strengthened His servant Nestor against the impious Lyeus, to the shame of the impious emperor and to the joy of the faithful. And indeed Nestor, small in stature, proved in his courage stronger than the great Lyeus. Seizing him as a bird, he threw the giant from the high platform onto the sharp spears. Falling upon them like a sturdy oak, Lyeus with shame cast out his accursed soul, and thus his memory perished with a crash, his proud strength vanished, and Maximian's vain boasting of his wrestler came to an end. The whole people of Thessalonica, especially the Christians, seeing this unexpected and glorious victory, cried out with a loud voice:

"Great is the God of Demetrius!"

The emperor, rising in shame, went to his palace, grieving and mourning for his favorite Lyeus. He was greatly angered against St. Nestor and commanded that he be seized. But learning that Demetrius too was responsible for Lyeus's death, since he had strengthened Nestor to the exploit, foretelling him victory, the emperor commanded that both be put to death. St. Demetrius was pierced with spears, and St. Nestor was beheaded with a sword. Now both of them receive from Christ, the Author of their exploits, the crowns of victory in the Kingdom of Heaven, in which may we also be made worthy through the prayers of the holy passion-bearers.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having suffered well, thou hast now inherited immortal glory, for thou wast an excellent warrior of the Lord, through the prayers of

the Martyr Demetrius: wherefore, O wise Nestor, with him cease not to intercede for us all.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Nestor the Chronicler

Житие преподобного Нестора летописца

Every event, if it were not fixed in writing, would be forgotten and lost to knowledge. Thus, if Moses, taught by God, had not left us in his books accounts of the very beginning and first construction of the world, and also of our forefather Adam, all this the length of time would have covered as with darkness and brought to oblivion. But God, who preserves in men the memory of His wonders, raises up writers at whatever time He wills, that subsequent generations, reading what they have written, may profit thereby. In a similar way the Lord has manifested in our Russian land, in the holy Kiev Caves Monastery, the ever-memorable writer, our Venerable Father Nestor, who enlightened our eyes by setting forth what is profitable for us, and thereby called forth our thanksgiving to God[2]. He wrote to us of the beginning and first ordering of our Russian world, not only the outward but especially the inward, spiritual, that is, of the founding and well-ordering of the monastic life in Rus', planted as in paradise in the holy Pechersk Monastery, and likewise of our spiritual forefather, the Venerable Anthony, and of the other Pechersk saints who followed him and were begotten of his spirit. Among them was this most praiseworthy writer, who recorded the most perfect lives of them not only with a reed on paper, but also with similar ascetic deeds upon his own undefiled soul. By this labor he also inscribed himself in the books of eternal life, so that he too is worthy to hear of himself: "rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Lk. 10:20).

2. At the age of 17, the Venerable Nestor was tonsured at the Monastery of the Kiev Caves. In 1091 he took part in the uncovering of the relics of the Venerable Theodosius of the Kiev Caves, and labored at the composition of the Russian chronicle and the lives of the saints of Kiev and the Caves. Besides the chronicle, the following works of his have come down to us: the Life of the Venerable Theodosius of the Kiev Caves and the Life of Saints Boris and Gleb. He reposed around 1114, on October 27.

At the time when the Venerable Anthony had dedicated himself to silence in the cave, and the Blessed Theodosius was building the monastery, there came to them, desiring to receive the holy monastic habit, this our blessed father Nestor, who was then only seventeen years old. Though not yet a monk, he showed a practice in all monastic virtues: in care for bodily and spiritual purity, in voluntary poverty, deep humility, unquestioning obedience, strict fasting, unceasing prayer, watchful vigilance, and other angelic ascetic labors, in which he was a zealous imitator of the life of the first Pechersk saints, Anthony and Theodosius. From this holy pair he received in the flowering beauty of his youth every commandment with the same love as an infant receives milk from the breasts, and as a thirsting hart receives water from two springs flowing among the mountains, in caves. And indeed, by his writings he reveals what great love he bore toward these venerable founders of the monastery—a love shown "not in word or tongue, but in deed and truth" (1 Jn. 3:18). Seeing the radiant good works of these two great luminaries of the Russian heaven, he zealously glorified God "in his body and in his spirit" (cf. 1 Cor. 6:20). After the honorable death of the Venerable Fathers Anthony and Theodosius before the Lord, our blessed father Nestor also died to the world, not only by worldly deeds —which he had already done earlier, without having been put to the test—but also in outward manner, receiving the holy angelic habit of a monk from the Venerable Stephen, Hegumen of the Pechersk Monastery. Afterward by him he was also raised to the rank of deacon. Then, seeing upon himself the twofold angelic rank, monastic and diaconal, he daily increased his virtues, mortifying all fleshly passions and keeping every truth, that he might be wholly freed from the power of the flesh and become entirely spiritual, and likewise a true servant and worshipper of God. For he well knew what the Lord Himself has said: "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn. 4:24). And truly, how Nestor overcame the spirit of evil, alien to all truth, he shows sufficiently clearly in his writing: everywhere he displays the greatest humility and constantly abases himself, calling himself "unworthy, coarse, ignorant, and full of many sins."

When, at God's prompting, the brethren resolved in council to dig up the venerable relics of the Venerable Theodosius and transfer them from the cave to the holy, God-created Church of the Caves, the blessed Nestor first undertook this obedience. Digging the earth with great faith and prayer, he labored all night and unearthed a priceless pearl for the holy Monastery of the Caves—the relics of the Venerable Theodosius. He carried them out of the cave and was an eyewitness to the great miracles that took place at that time, as he himself testified.

He lived many years, laboring at the composition of the chronicle. Mindful of the years of eternity, he pleased the Creator of the ages, to Whom he passed into eternity after his temporal life. He was laid in the cave, where to this day his incorrupt and venerable body reposes, pouring forth wonders and thereby bearing witness that this Venerable writer of the lives of the saints and of the chronicle acquired for himself an incorrupt dwelling in heaven and was deemed worthy of an incorrupt crown in the Kingdom of God. Through the prayers of this Venerable writer, may we also be deemed worthy to be inscribed in the books of the life of the Lamb of God, whose years shall not fail. To Him, with God the Father and the Life-giving Spirit, is due from us all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Capitolina and Erotiida

Память святых мучениц Капетолины и Еротииды

These holy women lived under Emperor Diocletian and Zelikintius, governor of Cappadocia.[3] St. Capitolina, who came from a wealthy and noble family,[4] gave all her property to the poor and set her slaves free. As a Christian, she was seized and imprisoned; then, because she refused to offer sacrifice to the idols, she was be-

3. Cappadocia was the eastern part of Asia Minor.

4. During interrogations concerning her family, St. Capitolina claimed descent from the same family as Firmilian, Archbishop of Cappadocia (who lived in the middle of the 3rd century). According to other accounts, she considered herself only his spiritual daughter. Her blessed repose is dated to the year 304.

headed with a sword. Her handmaid Erotiida was beaten with rods for throwing a stone at the governor in defense of her mistress. Having remained unharmed after the beating, she too was beheaded with a sword.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the commemoration of the Martyr Mark and those who were killed with him, after various tortures, for preaching Christ in Asia.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 28

28 октября

New Calendar October 28 · Old Calendar November 10 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Great Martyr Paraskeva

Страдание святой великомученицы Параскевы

At the time when the impious emperor Diocletian raised persecution against the Christians, there lived in the city of Iconium a certain noble and beautiful maiden named Paraskeva. Her parents were Christians; having brought up their daughter and taught her to keep the holy faith and the commandments of the Lord, they departed to the Lord. They left their blessed daughter heiress to a great estate.

When the maiden Paraskeva attained the age of maturity, she began to imitate the faith and deeds of her parents. She began to spend her property not on adorning her youthful beauty and vigor, nor on a life of luxury, but on clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, and entertaining strangers. Paraskeva paid no attention to her suitors, who sought to live with her in marriage; she soon became the bride of the One immortal Bridegroom, the Only-begotten Son of God, for Whom she lived in holiness and righteousness. She confessed His most holy Name before men unceasingly, every day, and thereby led them to the knowledge of the truth.

Some of the people believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, while others, unbelieving, reviled the saint. But Paraskeva boldly preached the word of God before them and exposed the vanity of the lifeless idols. The unbelieving citizens, unwilling to hear such rebukes from her, seized her, subjected her to beatings, and then cast her into prison.

At that time a certain military commander came to Iconium, sent into that land by the emperor Diocletian with the purpose of destroying all the Christians there. The citizens approached him and said:

"Most illustrious commander, in this city there is a maiden who believes in the Crucified Christ and preaches Him; she practices sorcery and has already turned many people away from offering sacrifice to our gods by her enchantments. She does not cease to utter blasphemies against the images of our gods and against the sovereign. Having heard the imperial command that all who do not worship the gods are to be put to death, we seized this maiden and are holding her in prison."

Having heard this, the commander ordered that the holy maiden be brought before him for judgment; as the holy martyr was going to the tribunal, the Holy Spirit overshadowed her, and her face became radiant, so that all who looked upon her marveled and said:

"Look! She is not in the least downcast with sorrow; her face even seems to shine."

When she stood before the judges, the commander looked at her and, marveling at the beauty and nobility of her face, said to those standing by:

"You have slandered this most beautiful maiden in vain: for it is impossible to destroy such sun-like beauty."

And he said to her:

"Maiden, tell us your name!"

Saint Paraskeva answered:

"I am a Christian, a servant of Christ."

The commander said:

"The contemplation of the beauty of your face inclines me to gentleness, but the words issuing from your lips stir me to the depths of my soul: I do not wish to hear such speeches!"

The saint answered:

"Every ruler who administers just judgment rejoices when he hears the truth, but you, having heard the truth I have spoken, have grown angry."

The tormentor said to this:

"I am angry because I have received no answer from you; for I asked you your name, and you have not told it to me."

The saint answered:

"First of all it was fitting for me to state my name in the life eternal, and afterward to declare the name in temporal life. So I have stated my name in eternal life: that I am a Christian, a servant of Christ; and in temporal life my parents named me Paraskeva, since I was born on the day of Paraskeva (Paraskeva in Greek means Friday)."

"My parents," the saint continued, "always observed the sixth day, which is the day of the voluntary and life-giving Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, as a day of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. They did so in honor of Christ, believing that out of love for the human race He shed His blood on this day and laid down His life for us on the cross. God granted them, as the fruit of their honorable marriage, me, His unworthy servant, on that very day which they devoutly observed, recalling the sufferings of their Lord. It pleased them to give me the name by which this day is called, and thus from the day of Paraskeva I am named Paraskeva, I who am a partaker of the sufferings of Christ."

The commander said:

"Cease speaking these mad words and offer sacrifice to our gods; then I will take you as my wife, and you will become possessed of great wealth, and many will extol you on earth."

To this Saint Paraskeva replied:

"I have a Bridegroom in heaven, Jesus Christ, and I have no need of another husband."

Then the commander said:

"I will spare your beauty and pity your youth."

"Do not spare temporal beauty," said the saint; "today it blooms, and by morning it withers. Rather, have pity on yourself, for an eternal torment awaits you."

After this the commander grew angry and ordered her garments torn from her and her beaten with rough sinews. While the saint was being beaten, she uttered not a single sound, but, silent with her lips, called upon Christ in her heart, asking Him for help in her sufferings. The commander, still sparing her beauty (for he was amazed and enticed by her beauty), ordered the beating stopped and began to speak to her gently:

"Maiden! Spare your youth, do not destroy your most beautiful prime! Offer sacrifice to the gods and you will live and be granted still greater honor from us."

She made him no answer to this. Then the commander, enraged, said:

"Do you not answer me, you evil offspring of Christianity?" In reply the saint spat in his face. After that the tormentor, raging terribly, ordered her hung on a tree and her ribs mercilessly torn with iron claws, and her wounds rubbed with a hair shirt; thus her flesh was torn to the bones. The governor, thinking the martyr would soon die, since she was barely breathing, took her down from the tree and cast her into prison. As she lay there barely alive and already speechless from her cruel wounds, at midnight an Angel appeared to her; his shoulders and breast were girded crosswise with a golden belt, and in his hands he held the instruments of Christ's sufferings: the cross, the crown of thorns, the spear, the reed, and the sponge. The Angel said to her:

"Maiden, partaker of Christ's sufferings, arise! I have been sent to visit you; and for your consolation in your sufferings, I have brought the instruments of the passion of our Lord. Look upon the honorable instruments: the cross and the crown of thorns of the incorruptible Bridegroom; look at the spear that pierced the life-giving side, at the reed that wrote the forgiveness of the sins of the whole world, and at the sponge that wiped away Adam's sin. Therefore, arise! Christ the Lord heals you!"

And the martyr arose as if from sleep, and the Angel who had appeared, approaching, wiped all the wounds of the holy martyr with the sponge; her whole body became strong and healthy, and the beauty of her face became even more striking. She reverently kissed the instruments of Christ's sufferings and glorified God. After this the heavenly one became invisible.

With the coming of morning the prison guards came and found Paraskeva healthy and standing in prayer; there was not a single wound on her body. Frightened, they reported this to the commander. He ordered her brought before him, and seeing her healthy, he

marveled: he had not expected her to remain alive after the terrible wounds. Again marveling at her extraordinary beauty, he said to her:

"Paraskeva, you see how our gods spared your beauty and preserved you, granting you life."

The saint answered him:

"O commander, show me those who granted me life!" The commander sent her to the temple of his gods so that she might look at their idols. With her went the idol priests and a multitude of people; they all thought that Paraskeva wished to worship their gods. When they entered the temple, in which there were many idols, Paraskeva prayed in her mind to the One True God, who dwells in the heights, and, seizing the leg of the idol of Apollo, said:

"To you, lifeless one, and to all the corruptible idols present with you, I say: thus my Lord Jesus Christ commands you all: fall to the earth and turn to dust."

And at the word of the saint, all the idols fell and crumbled. Then all ran out of the idol temple and began to cry out:

"Great is the God of the Christians!"

The impious priests, seeing the destruction and ruin of their idols, came to the commander and, weeping, said to him:

"Commander! We told you: put this sorceress to death, for she is beguiling our city; but you did not listen to us, and now by her sorcery she has overthrown all our gods."

Filled with fury, the commander questioned Saint Paraskeva angrily:

"By what sorceries have you done this?"

The saint answered:

"With the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ on my lips I entered the temple of your gods and prayed to my Lord thus: 'Appear to me, my Savior, You who granted me life.' And behold, my Lord and my God Himself appeared to me, and your gods, as soon as they saw Him, trembled with fear and, falling to the earth, were broken, showing thereby that if they cannot help themselves, how will they help others!"

Then the commander ordered Paraskeva hung on the tree again and her ribs burned with candles. Hanging and burning with fire, the saint sighed to God and said:

"Lord and my God, Creator and Governor of all creation! You cooled the burning furnace for the three youths; You delivered the first martyr Thecla from the fire; save me also, unworthy as I am, from the hands of these tormentors."

And suddenly an Angel appeared, touched the candles, and a very strong fire flared up, destroying a multitude of lawless men. And the people cried out:

"Great is the God of the Christians!"

Many people then came to believe in Christ. The commander, noticing the agitation among the people and fearing that the people might rise against him, hastily ordered that the saint be beheaded with the sword. While her head was being cut off, some heard a voice from heaven saying:

"Rejoice, ye righteous, for the martyr Paraskeva is being crowned!"

The Christians reverently buried the saint's body in her house. Thus, having completed the course of her martyrdom, the most fair maiden went forth to her Bridegroom, offering blood in place of oil. She now dwells with the wise virgins in the bridal chamber of Christ.

On the following morning the lawless commander set out hunting, but his horse suddenly went wild and threw him into a ravine. Falling, the commander was dashed to pieces, and so, in his wretchedness, gave up his accursed soul.

The holy and pure soul of the Great Martyr Paraskeva went to the Lord, and from her honorable relics many healings were granted to the sick, to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and worship forever, amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Wise and all-praised Martyr of Christ Paraskeva, who didst take on manly strength and reject womanly weakness, thou didst vanquish the devil and put the tormentor to shame, crying out and saying: "Come, cut my body with the sword and burn it with fire,

for I go rejoicing to Christ my Bridegroom." By her prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Having offered the all-holy and undefiled martyrdom as a most honorable dowry to the immortal Bridegroom Christ, thou didst rejoice the angelic choirs and didst vanquish the snares of the demons. Therefore we honor thee with faith, O much-suffering Martyr Paraskeva.

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Cyriacus, Patriarch of Jerusalem

Память святого священномученика Кириака, патриарха Иерусалимского

St. Cyriacus, who believed in Christ and was baptized after the finding of the honorable and Life-giving Cross, was Bishop of Jerusalem. He lived until the reign of Julian the Apostate. The latter, during his campaign against the Persians, came to Jerusalem, summoned St. Cyriacus here for judgment, and compelled him to offer sacrifice to the idols; but the saint resolutely refused to do so. Then the emperor ordered that his right hand be cut off:

"With this hand you have written many epistles," he said, "and have turned many away from the worship of the gods."

Afterwards he commanded that molten tin be poured into the saint's mouth and that he be laid upon a red-hot bronze bed. The saint's mother, Anna, who came to the place of torments, was seized, hanged by her hair, and scraped with iron. After her martyr's death, St. Cyriacus also expired, being thrown into a boiling cauldron and pierced with a spear.[1]

* * *

1. St. Cyriacus, before his baptism Judas, pointed out to St. Empress Helena. The holy Empress Helena, desiring to find the holy and life-giving Cross, summoned the Jews and begged them to show her the place where the holy Cross had been hidden by them. Only after threats did they point out a certain old Jew named Judas, who could indicate the place of the holy Cross; but Judas also refused to fulfill the empress's desire, for which he was thrown into a pit. Having remained in it for some time, he consented to tell. Then, following Judas's indication, they went to the place where Hadrian, Emperor of Rome, had planned to build a temple to the goddess Venus; here the honorable Cross was found. (For more detail see September 14.)

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Terentius and Neonilla

Память святых мучеников Терентия и Неониллы

The blessed Terentius, a pious Christian, was lawfully wed to Neonilla, who shared his faith, and from this marriage seven children were born to them: Sarvilus, Photus, Theodulus, Hierax, Nitus, Vilus, and Eunicia, whom they raised in piety. When the children together with their parents were seized by the impious and brought before the lawless tribunal, they openly confessed Christ and reviled the idols. For this they were hanged and tormented with scraping, and their wounds were doused with strong vinegar and cauterized with fire. The saints, however, prayed with fervor and comforted one another. God did not disregard their prayers, and sent His holy Angels, who freed them from their fetters and gave healing to their wounds. Seeing the saints suddenly released from their fetters and healed of their wounds, the impious were struck with terror. After this the saints were cast to the wild beasts to be devoured, but they suffered no harm, for the beasts, by God's command, were meek as sheep. Then they were thrown into a cauldron of boiling pitch, but at once the fire went out and the cauldron cooled, and the pitch became like cold water. Seeing that the torments did not harm the saints at all, the evil-minded tormentors struck off their heads with the sword.[2]

Kontakion, Tone 4:

The honorable memory of the martyrs has come today, gladdening all creation: of wise Terentius and his companions. Let us therefore gather warmly, that we may receive healing; for having received grace from the Holy Spirit, they heal the infirmities and diseases of our souls.

* * *

2. The saints suffered martyrdom during the reign of Decius (249–251 A.D.).

THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 29

29 октября

New Calendar October 29 · Old Calendar November 11 (civil dates)

Memory of the Holy Great Martyr Anastasia the Roman

Память святой великомученицы Анастасии Римляныни

In the days of Emperor Decius and his co-ruler Valerian, under the military commander Provus, not far from the city of Rome, in a secluded and little-known place, there was a small convent of women. In it dwelt several virtuous ascetics, among whom was the Abbess Sophia, advanced in years and perfect in virtue. In that convent there lived the blessed maiden Anastasia, a native of Rome, who had been left orphaned at the age of three by the death of her parents. Sophia reared her in her convent and taught her all the virtues, so that in fasting, in ascetic labors, and in every kind of toil she surpassed all the others. When Anastasia reached the age of twenty she became exceedingly beautiful, so that some of the noble citizens of Rome, having heard of her beauty, ardently desired to take her as their wife. But the holy maiden, counting all things as nothing, became the Bride of Christ, and for His sake kept her virginity, spending day and night in prayer. The devil more than once sought to draw the Bride of Christ away from her angelic manner of life and to incline her toward life in the world, desiring to trouble her with impious thoughts, with the enticements of deceitful lips, and with various other stratagems. But he made no progress in his war against her, in whose weak nature the power of Christ had taken up residence, trampling the accursed head of the serpent beneath a maiden's feet. Unable by this means to prevail over the invincible Bride of Christ, the devil openly rose up against her, raising up savage tormentors. At that time there was a severe persecution of

Christians, and the devil prompted some unbelievers hostile to the Christians to slander Anastasia before the military commander Provus. Coming to this impious man, the pagans told him that in a secluded place, among the poor and unmarried women, there lived a certain maiden named Anastasia, whose equal in beauty was not to be found in all of Rome.

"This maiden," they said, "not only does not wish to have a husband, but she mocks our manner of life, scorns our gods, and believes in the Crucified One."

Hearing of Anastasia's beauty, the military commander at once sent his servants to bring her. Arriving, the servants for a long time could not open the gates of the monastery, so that they were forced to take axes and break down the doors. The ascetics, seeing this, were greatly frightened, and, opening other doors on the opposite side, fled from the monastery. But the Abbess Sophia did not let Anastasia go, saying:

"My child Anastasia! Do not be afraid, for the time of struggle has come, for which your Bridegroom Jesus Christ wishes to crown you. I do not desire that you flee from the monastery; I do not desire to deprive you, my pearl, whom I took at the age of three, reared, and until now guarded as the apple of my eye, of the crown of martyrdom."

When the soldiers burst into the monastery, Sophia came out to them with the words:

"Whom do you seek, and what do you demand?"

They answered:

"Old woman! Give us the maiden Anastasia whom you keep with you, for the military commander Probus demands her."

"Yes, I will gladly give her to you," answered Sophia. "Only I beg you, sirs, wait about two hours until I have adorned her, that she may become pleasing in the eyes of your master."

The servants, supposing that Sophia wished to dress her in the customary worldly garments and ornaments, agreed to wait. But the spiritual mother Sophia, desiring to adorn her daughter with the beauties of the soul, so that she might become pleasing to the Heavenly Bridegroom, took her and led her into the church. Placing her before the sanctuary, Sophia began to say to her with tears:

"My child Anastasia, now it is for you to show by deed your zealous love for the Lord. At this time you must stand for your beloved Bridegroom, Christ, even unto blood, and prove that you are His true bride. My beloved daughter! I beg you: do not allow yourself to be seduced by a tongue sharpened like a razor; do not be lured by the glory and gifts of the vain world, and do not fear the temporary torments which will obtain for you eternal life. Behold, the bridal chamber of the Bridegroom is opened before you; behold the bed of eternal rest prepared for you; behold the crown already woven for you; behold the Bridegroom already calls you to the wedding feast. Go to Him with joy, go stained with blood, as if clothed in a wedding garment. I beg you, my child, heed my words and remember my labors and cares for you, how I reared you from childhood and applied all my efforts to presenting you as a pure bride to the King of glory. For this I cared, for this I prayed, this I taught you day and night, namely, that you might be joined to the Lord forever with all your heart and soul. Therefore, my daughter, do not shame me, your mother, before the Lord today, and do not bring my old age prematurely to the grave. If I hear anything of you that is contrary to love for Christ, I shall die suddenly. But if I hear that you stand firmly for love of Christ and do not spare your life for Him, then I shall be a mother rejoicing over her daughter[1]: 'Thou hast exalted my horn like the horn of the unicorn, and I am anointed with fresh oil' (Ps. 91:11). Therefore, my daughter, do not spare your bodily beauty and do not love temporal life. When they seek to seduce you with deceitful words, 'incline not thy heart to evil words' (Ps. 140:4). When they threaten you with torments, say: 'Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, for the Lord my God is with me' (cf. Is. 8:12). When they beat you without mercy, 'fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul' (Mt. 10:28). If they tear and flay your flesh, rejoice in your sufferings, for in your flesh you fill up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ (Col. 1:24). If they cut you into pieces, remember that the very hairs of your head are numbered by the Lord (Mt. 10:30), who will keep all your bones, so that not one of them is broken (Ps.

1. The expression is borrowed from Ps. 112:9.

33:21). If they desire to cut off your head, look to the Head of the whole Church, Christ, who is your glory and lifts up your head (Ps. 3:4). Do not fear, my child, cruel suffering. Your Bridegroom will invisibly stand before you, lighten your afflictions, and deliver you from grievous torments. And when you groan, He will give you comfort; when you grow weary, He will strengthen you; when you fall from your wounds, He will raise you up; when you are filled with sorrows because of the fierce sores, He will sweeten your heart, refresh your soul, and will not depart from you until, having snatched you from the hands of the tormentors, He leads you into His heavenly chamber, and, calling together all the angelic powers and the choirs of all the saints, grants you blessedness and crowns you, as His bride, with an incorruptible crown, and you shall reign with Him in eternal glory."

Anastasia answered:

"My heart is ready to suffer for Christ, my soul is ready to die for Jesus, most sweet to me, since all my desires and longings have been directed toward being able, as a witness to my love for my dear Lord, to lay down my soul for Him. Now, since the time has come for the fulfillment of my desire, I shall with joy stand before my tormentor and confess the all-holy name of my God. Do not fear for me, mother and mistress, do not doubt concerning my youth: I believe in my Lord Jesus Christ, and He will strengthen me, His servant. My beloved mother, pray also to Him that He not forsake me nor depart from me until I complete the struggle of torment for His name and put to shame the enemy who rises up against us."

Their conversation continued for more than two hours, so that the servants sent by the military commander, not waiting for them, went themselves to the church after them. Here they found the holy women, who were occupied not with bodily adornment but were tenderly conversing and mutually comforting and strengthening one another in the Lord. Enraged, they seized Anastasia as wolves seize a sheep, placed iron chains upon her neck, and dragged her into the city, where they brought her before the military commander. She, standing before him, turned her spiritual eyes toward her Bridegroom, Christ. All who saw

Anastasia marveled at her beauty, her humble gaze, and her gentle face. The military commander addressed her:

"Of what family are you, what is your faith, and what is your name?"

Lowering her gaze, the saint answered in a quiet voice:

"I am the daughter of one of the citizens of the city of Rome, I was brought up in Christian piety, and my name is Anastasia."

The military commander said:

"This name is unusual among the Romans, and I do not know what Anastasia means?"

"Anastasia," answered the saint, "means 'resurrection,' since God has raised me up to speak against you, until I overcome your father, Satan."

The military commander continued:

"Maiden, answer me meekly, lest you stir up anger in me, for I spare your youth and do not wish to destroy your beauty. Listen to me as a father who desires to counsel you wisely. Why have you been seduced by the harmful teaching of the Christians, and why do you vainly waste your years, forfeiting a good life and the pleasures which the gods have given men for their gladness? What consolation is there in avoiding the company of men and passing your life in solitude? What profit is there in willingly giving yourself over to torment and death for the sake of the Crucified? Would it not be better to bow down to our immortal gods, take an honorable, noble husband, make merry amid pleasures, rejoice in children, live among good people in glory and honor, possess much property, gold and silver, and not waste your life, granted by the gods for a happy existence, in extreme poverty and want? I therefore advise you: come, bow down to the gods, and at once you will have a husband of high birth, honored, renowned and rich, close to the imperial throne and possessing great power. Together with him you too will enjoy great honor, and all the days of your life you will delight in every good thing."

Saint Anastasia, lifting up her lowered eyes and looking upon the military commander, answered these words:

"My husband, my wealth, my life and my joy is my Lord Jesus Christ. From Him you will not turn me aside with your seductive words; you will not beguile me as the serpent beguiled Eve; you will not make sweet to me your bitter perdition, nor by fear of torments will you cut me off from my Lord, for whom, if it were possible, I am ready to endure torment a hundred times."

The military commander ordered those standing by to strike her in the face, saying: "Is this how you ought to answer the most illustrious ruler?" Then, wishing to shame her, he ordered her clothing to be torn from her, and her to be set forth naked before all, and he asked her:

"Is it pleasing to you, maiden, to stand naked before the eyes of all?"

"Madman, shameless one, and full of every uncleanness!" the saint answered. "This is not my shame but yours, for my Lord knows that the sun has never seen my nakedness, and you have set me naked before the eyes of so many people. Know that you have shamed yourself more than me. For on account of this shame my Bridegroom will clothe me with the garment of glory, but you will be covered for ever with the shame of your face, and every reasonable person will now say: 'If the military commander were not shameless and full of unclean lust, he would not have exposed a maiden's body for the spectacle of all.'"

And turning to those who had stripped her, she said:

"If you have uncovered my body, if you have prepared for me instruments of various tortures, then why do you delay? Strike, cut, tear, cover the naked body with wounds, cover with blood the exposed shame. Behold, you see me prepared for torments, and do not expect to hear from me anything other than that I desire to die for my Christ."

Then, by the command of the military commander, she was stretched out and bound face downward to four pillars; beneath her was laid a fire of brimstone and pitch, and they tormented her from below with fire and foul smoke, while on her back they beat her without mercy with rods. Saint Anastasia, suffering from the blows, choking in the smoke and scorched by the fire, endured, and instead of a groan she recited to the end the psalm of David: "Have mercy upon me, O God..." She was beaten until the executioners grew weary. After this, untying her from the pillars and taking her down from the pyre, they bound her

to wheels, and by turning the wheel they broke all her bones and tore her sinews. She prayed to the Lord:

"My refuge and my Defender, do not depart from me, for my soul faints in sickness and my bones are crushed."

After this prayer the wheel suddenly stopped, and the holy martyr, unbound by an unseen power, was found entirely unharmed and whole. All who were there were struck with great amazement at such a miracle. The military commander, however, not only did not come to his senses, for malice blinded him, but with still greater fury he tormented the saint anew with other tortures: he ordered her to be hung up and her ribs to be scraped and her body torn. She endured all this bravely, and lifted her eyes to God alone, saying:

"My Bridegroom, look upon my affliction, which I endure for Thee, and be gracious to me, Thy unworthy servant, that the shedding of my blood may be pleasing to Thee, and that I may not be cast out from the choir of the holy martyrs."

After this she was taken down from the tree, and the military commander asked her:

"Anastasia! Are you well now?"

"Very well," the saint answered, "for what torment endured for Him whom I love more than all my life could be otherwise than good and pleasant to me?"

The military commander went on:

"If torments for the Crucified give you pleasure, I will increase them." He ordered her breasts to be cut off with a razor. Bleeding, the saint began to grow very weak and asked for a drink of water. One of those standing close by, named Cyril, brought and gave her water. She, having drunk a little, said to the one who had given it:

"May you not be deprived of recompense from the Lord, for He has said: 'Whoever gives you a cup of water in My name, because you are Christ's, truly I say to you, shall not lose his reward' (Mk. 9:41)."

The military commander said to her:

"Is the torment enough for you, or do you wish to undergo still more torments?"

"Do what you will," the saint answered, "my God is strong and will strengthen my failing strength for greater torments, and will bring down your pride."

The tormentor ordered her fingernails to be torn from her fingers, then her hands and feet to be cut off, and also all her teeth to be knocked out.

The saint began to grow faint again and asked for water, and from her mouth a river of blood poured forth. Cyril again gave her a little to drink. The tormentor, noticing Cyril, who had given the martyr water to drink, and thinking that he was a Christian (which in fact he was), ordered him to be put to death at once with the sword. Beheaded, the blessed Cyril went to the Lord to receive his reward for the cup of cold water which, in the name of Christ, he had given to Christ's martyr. Refreshed with water, the saint rested a little and prayed, saying:

"O God, my Savior, do not forsake me!"

When the military commander ordered her tongue to be cut out, the saint said:

"Lawless blood-drinker! Even if you cut out my tongue, my heart will not cease to cry out to the Lord. The Lord will hear those who pray to Him even in silence."

A servant, taking pincers, put them into the saint's mouth, drew out her tongue with force, and cut it off. The people began to grow indignant, reproaching and reviling the military commander for so savage and inhuman a torment. The military commander, however, enraged at the people, ordered the saint to be led outside the city and her honorable head to be cut off with the sword. Thus the holy and praiseworthy Great Martyr of Christ Anastasia accomplished her ascetic feat of martyrdom. Her holy body was cast out unburied to be eaten by birds and beasts, but by divine protection it was preserved inviolate. At nightfall an Angel appeared to the blessed elder Sophia and bade her take the body of Saint Anastasia lying in the field outside the city. Sophia, taking clean linen, went out from the monastery and did not know where to go. Having prayed fervently to God, she went, and guided by God Himself, arrived at the place where the holy body of her spiritual

daughter lay. She began to kiss it and wash it, as it were with water, with abundant tears, saying these words:

"My beloved daughter, whom I raised in labors and silence, in fasting and prayer, whom I kept in virginity and chastity, whom I taught the fear of God and His holy love, my sweetest daughter, for whom I always grieved, until at the end you remained faithful to Christ! I thank you that you listened to me, your humble mother, and fulfilled my desire. I did not labor for you in vain, for you have stood before your Bridegroom in the wedding garment of your undefiled virginity, adorned with your blood. Therefore I beseech you now not as a daughter but as my mother and mistress: be, by your prayers to God, a support of my old age, and, rejoicing with the Lord, remember me. When He commands me to depart from my perishable body, entreat His goodness that He be merciful to my sins."

Weeping thus, she considered what she should do. She was alone and, moreover, very feeble: she could scarcely walk with a staff, and had no means either to take up and carry that holy body or to bury it there on the spot; and so she grieved, not knowing what to do. And behold, by God's providence, two men unknown to her, respectable in appearance, good in speech, Christians in faith, found the old woman weeping over the body. They helped her, and gathering the severed parts of the body, the hands and feet (for they too had been thrown out there from the city), and the holy head, they laid all this to the body, each member in its place, and, wrapping it in linen, carried it to a certain honorable place, where, with the singing of funeral hymns and glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, they buried this most precious treasure.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Purified by the waters of virginity, O Venerable Anastasia, crowned with the blood of martyrdom, thou grantest healing of ailments and salvation to those in need who draw near to thee from the heart, for Christ, who pours forth ever-flowing grace, gives thee strength.

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Life of Abraham the Recluse and of the Blessed Mary

Житие Аврамия Затворника и блаженной Марии

The blessed Abraham was the son of pious parents; from his early youth he loved to visit the holy churches, to listen there with compunction to the word of God, and to be instructed in it.

His parents, loving their son ardently, urged him to enter into marriage. At first he refused, but afterwards, after many and insistent entreaties, he obeyed his parents against his own will.

On the seventh day after the marriage, when Abraham was once sitting in the bedchamber with his wife, the grace of God suddenly shone forth in his heart like a light, and, without telling anyone anything, he secretly withdrew from the house. By divine prompting, he went out of the city[2], and at a distance of two thousand paces from it he found an uninhabited hut; in it he settled, with a joyful heart, glorifying God. His parents and relatives, grieving at his disappearance, began to search for the blessed one everywhere. After seventy days had passed, they found him in his cell, praying to God, and were greatly astonished. The blessed one said to them:

"Do not be astonished, but glorify God, the Lover of mankind, who has delivered me from the vain world, and pray to the Lord for me, that He may grant me to bear to the end the good yoke with which He has deemed me worthy; and leave me to live here, for the love of God, in stillness, that I may fulfil His holy will."

The parents of the blessed one, seeing his unyielding resolve, said: "Amen."

St. Abramius begged them not to trouble him with their visits, and, closing the doors, left only a small window through which he received his food. After this, the blessed one's mind was still more enlightened by grace, and he advanced in a virtuous life, in great abstinence, humility, love and chastity. The report of him went out everywhere, and all who heard of him came to see and hear him, for the word of wisdom, understanding and consolation had been given to him. – After ten years had passed since the blessed one's departure from his parents' house,

2. Tenei, near Lampsacus, a considerable city of Mysia (a northwestern region of Asia Minor).

his parents died and left him a great fortune. Abramius, not wishing to give up his prayer and stillness, asked a close friend to distribute to the poor all the property that had come to him; having done so, he remained free from care, for the chief concern of the blessed one was that his mind should not cleave to earthly things, and therefore he had nothing on earth except one outer garment, a hair shirt, a jug from which he ate and drank, and a mat on which he slept. In all the years of his monastic life he did not change his rule, and in the monastic state, with great love and zeal for God, he spent fifty years.

Among the villages surrounding the city there was one very large village[3], in which everyone, from small to great, was a pagan, and there was no one who could turn them to God. Many presbyters and deacons, being sent there by the bishop of that country, did not turn them away from idolatrous delusion, because they could not endure all the hardships and insults that befell them. Many monks also repeatedly tried to convert the pagans, but, achieving nothing, they left them. Once the bishop, conversing with his clergy, recalled the blessed Abraham and said:

"In my life I have never seen a man such as Abraham, this man who has attained perfection in every good and God-pleasing work."

The clergy answered him:

"Yes, Vladyka, he is a servant of God and a most perfect monk."

To this the bishop said to them:

"I wish to make him a priest for this village: by his patience and love he will be able to win their hearts and turn them to God."

And at once, together with the clergy, he went to the blessed one. When they came and greeted him, the bishop began to speak to Abramius about that village and to beg him to go there. Hearing this, Abramius was greatly grieved and said to the bishop:

"Holy father! Forgive me: allow me only to weep for my sins; I am weak and unfit for this work."

"By the power of the grace of God," the bishop replied, "you will be able to accomplish this: do not be slothful in the good obedience."

3. This village was situated on the shore of the Hellespont (the Dardanelles strait between the Sea of Marmara and the Archipelago).

Then the blessed one said:

"I beg your holiness, leave my insignificance, that I may lament my transgressions."

The bishop answered him:

"Here you have left the world and all that is in the world, you have hated all that is in it, you have been crucified with Christ and have fulfilled all His commandments, but you have no obedience."

Hearing this, Abramius wept bitterly and said:

"Who am I? A stinking dog. And what is my life, if you think of me thus?"

"Remaining here," the bishop replied, "you will save only yourself; but there, by the help of God's grace, you will save and turn to the Lord many."

Then the blessed one, weeping, said:

"Let the will of God be done! I will go for the sake of obedience."

The bishop, leading him out of the cell, brought him into the city, and, ordaining him, with great joy sent him with the clergy to that village.

On the way the blessed one prayed to God thus:

"Good Lover of mankind! Thou seest my weakness. Send me Thy grace for help, that Thy most holy name may be glorified."

Coming to the village and seeing people given over to demonic delusions and serving idols, Abramius wept bitterly. Raising his eyes to heaven, he said:

"O God, Only Sinless One! Do not despise the works of Thy hands."

After this he sent word to the city to that close friend of his, to whom he had entrusted the distribution to the poor of the property left after his parents, asking him to send him part of his money for the building of a church. The friend did not delay to send him as much as was needed for his purpose. Then the blessed one began to build a house of God, and in a short time he erected a stately church and adorned it like a most beautiful bride. While the church was being built, the blessed one came and prayed to God in the midst of the idols, speaking a word to no one. When the church was finished, he offered there, with hot tears, such a prayer to the Lord:

"Lord! Gather these scattered people and bring them into this church, enlighten their mental eyes, that they may know Thee, the One Good and Lover-of-mankind God."

Finishing the prayer, he went out of the church, and, having shattered the pagan altar, he overthrew all the idols. Seeing what had happened, the pagans rushed upon the saint like wild beasts, and with blows drove him out of the village. At night he returned, entered the village again, and, going into the church, began to pray to God with cries and weeping, that He would save the perishing people. At the coming of morning, the pagans found him praying in the church and were struck with fear. (They came every day to the church – not to pray, but to see the splendour and beauty of the building.) The blessed one began to beseech them that they should know God, but they beat him, as though he were an inanimate stone, with stakes, and, knocking him down to the ground, put a noose about his neck and dragged him out of the village. Thinking that he was already dead, they laid a stone upon him and, leaving him, went away. He, being barely alive, came to himself at midnight, and, rising, began to weep bitterly and to pray to the Lord thus:

"Master! Why hast Thou disregarded my tears and my humility? Why hast Thou turned Thy face from me and despised the work of my hands? Look now, Master, upon Thy servant, hear my prayer, strengthen me, and free Thy servants from the bonds of the devil, and grant them to know Thee, the One True God, for there is no other Lord but Thee."

Then Abramius came to the village and, entering the church, stood there, singing and offering prayer. For the second time, at the coming of morning, the pagans came, and seeing him alive, at first they were astonished, but afterwards they again tormented the blessed one: throwing him to the ground, they put a rope about his neck and dragged him through the village. So the blessed one suffered for up to three years, enduring all tortures, like a firm rock of faith, being both beaten and persecuted. For all these sufferings he did not become angry with them, did not murmur, was not faint-hearted, and, enduring, did not despair, but was kindled all the more with love for God and compas-

sion for those who were going astray; he entreated and taught – the elders as fathers, the young as brothers, the children as his own offspring, himself undergoing insults and reproaches.

Once, all who lived in that village, from small to great, gathered together, and, astonished at the life of Abramius, began to say among themselves:

"Do you see the great patience of this man? Do you see his inexpressible love for us? Though we have greatly maltreated him, he has not departed from here, has said no insulting word to anyone, and has not even turned away from us, but endures all this with great joy. Truly he has been sent to us by God for our salvation, of whom he always speaks; he says that the Kingdom of Heaven will come, paradise, eternal life, and his words are true; for if it were not so as he says, he would not suffer so much evil from us. The impotence of our gods has also been revealed, since they could not punish him when he shattered them. Truly he is a servant of the Living God, and all that he has said is truth. Come, then, let us believe in the God whom he preaches."

Thus all, rushing forward, came with one accord into the church, crying out:

"Glory to the Heavenly God, who has sent His servant, who has saved us from the devil's delusion!"

Seeing the pagans who had come, the blessed one rejoiced with great joy, and his face was like the light of morning. Opening his lips, he said to them:

Fathers, brethren and children! Come, let us give glory to God, who has enlightened the eyes of your hearts, that you may know Him and be cleansed from the uncleanness of idolatry. Therefore believe with all your soul in the Living God, for He is the Creator of heaven and earth and of all that is in them, the Lord who is without beginning, ineffable, incomprehensible, the Giver of light, the lover of mankind, awesome and just. Believe also in His Only-begotten Son, who is His wisdom, power and will, and in His Most Holy Spirit, who gives life to all; and having believed, you shall receive heavenly life.

All answered this:

Our father and teacher of our life! We believe as you speak and teach us, and we are ready to do whatever you command us.

After this the Blessed One gathered them all together and baptized them, from the least to the greatest, about a thousand souls, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Every day he read to them the Divine Scripture, instructing them and imparting to them what pertains to the Kingdom of Heaven, Paradise, Gehenna of fire, righteousness, faith and love. They became as it were a fruitful earth, receiving good seed and bearing fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold (Mt. 13:23). Thus they listened to his teaching with great zeal, diligence and delight, and obeyed his words. Having before their eyes the Blessed One, as it were an Angel of God, and being bound to him by the bond of love, they heeded his holy teaching.

After they had come to faith, the Blessed One lived among them for one year, day and night teaching them the word of God. Then, having assured himself of their love for God and their steadfast faith, he wished to leave them, for he saw that they had come to love and greatly honor him, and he feared that his thoughts might become attached to some earthly affections, and that he might be shaken amid his monastic labors. Therefore, rising one night, he prayed to God thus:

O Only Sinless One, O Only Holy One, who restest among the saints, O Only Lover of mankind and merciful Master, who hast enlightened the eyes of these people and freed them from the seduction of idols, who hast granted them to know Thee: preserve and keep them, O Master, unto the end, and protect this good flock of Thine which Thou hast acquired by Thy great love for mankind. Fence them with the bulwark of Thy grace, and constantly enlighten their hearts, that, pleasing Thee, they may be counted worthy of Thy Heavenly Kingdom. Protect me also, weak and unworthy, and lay not this to my charge as sin, for Thou, the All-knowing, knowest that I love Thee and strive toward Thee.

When the prayer was ended, the saint signed himself with the sign of the Cross, and secretly departed from there to another place, and hid himself from them. When morning came, the newly enlightened, as was their custom, came to the church, and seeking the saint and not finding

him, they wandered in amazement like lost sheep, and calling their shepherd by name with tears, they searched for him. After they had sought him everywhere and not found him, they were greatly grieved and at once went to the bishop and told him what had happened. He, hearing this, was grieved, and with haste he sent many servants to search for the Blessed One, especially in view of the tears and entreaties of his flock; and those sent searched for him as for a precious stone, but did not find him. The bishop, coming with the clergy to the village and seeing all of them established in the faith and love of Christ, chose from among them the worthy, ordained them presbyters and deacons, and, blessing them, departed.

Hearing all this, the Blessed One rejoiced with all his heart, glorified God and said:

What shall I render to Thee, O my good Master, for all that Thou hast rendered to me? I worship and glorify Thy providence!

Having prayed thus, he withdrew to his cell, in which he had been before. He made for himself another small cell separate from the first, and, rejoicing in God his Savior, he shut himself up within it. The devil, watching all these labors of Avramy, was kindled still more with hatred, and sought in every way to overthrow the good soldier of Christ. Trying to instill in him the thought of pride, he came to him once with words of praise. One time, when the Blessed One was standing in prayer at midnight, suddenly a light shone in his cell, and words were heard as if from God:

Abramius! Blessed art thou, blessed, for no one among men has fulfilled My will as thou hast.

But the Blessed One at once perceived the hostile seduction, and raising his voice, said:

O you who are full of flattery and destruction! May your malice be upon you to your own destruction! I am a sinful man, but I have hope in the grace and help of my God, and I do not fear you, nor do your apparitions terrify me. For me the invincible wall is the name of my Savior Jesus Christ, whom I have loved, and in His name I forbid you, unclean dog, to do this.

And suddenly the devil vanished like smoke.

Another time, after a few days had passed, when the Blessed One was praying at night, Satan came, holding an axe, and hacking at everything, began to lay waste his cell as well. And when the destruction of the cell was already imminent, the demon cried out to the other demons in a loud voice:

My friends, hurry, hurry quickly, that we may enter and strangle him.

But the Blessed One said:

"All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the Lord I overthrew them" (Ps. 117:10).

And Satan immediately vanished, and the cell remained unharmed. And after several more days, while praying at midnight, he saw that the mat on which he was standing was burning with a hot flame. Stepping upon the flame, he said:

"Upon the asp and the basilisk I shall tread, and I shall trample the lion and the serpent" (Ps. 90:13), and all the power of the enemy, in the name of my Lord, Jesus Christ, who helps me.

Satan fled and cried out in a loud voice:

I shall overcome you, hideous one, for I have devised against you a new cunning.

Once, when the Blessed One was taking food, the devil again entered his cell in the form of a youth, and drawing near, wished to overturn to the ground the vessel from which he was eating. Noticing this, the Blessed One continued to hold the vessel and to eat, not at all afraid, while the devil stood before him. Then the devil set down a lamp, and on it a candle, and began to sing in a loud voice:

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord" (Ps. 118:1), and he sang that psalm through to the end.

The saint did not answer him until he had finished his meal. After this he crossed himself and said, addressing the devil:

Unclean dog, thrice-accursed, powerless and cowardly! If you know that the undefiled are blessed, why then do you trouble them? For all who hope in God and love Him with all their heart are blessed and thrice-blessed.

The devil answered:

I vex them in order to overcome them: I shall tempt them and turn them away from every good deed.

The Blessed One said to him:

Accursed one! May you have no success whatever, so that you cannot overcome or tempt any of those who fear God. You gain victory over those like yourself who have of their own will fallen away from God; those you beguile and overcome, because God is not in them; but from those who love God you vanish, as smoke vanishes before the wind: a single prayer of theirs drives you away, as the wind drives away dust. The Lord my God lives, blessed forever, my glory and my praise, and I do not fear you, even if you stand here for a whole year or even longer, and I shall do nothing, wicked dog, according to your will. I hold you in contempt, as one holds in contempt some dead dog.

When the Blessed One had spoken thus, the devil at once vanished. After five days had passed, when the Blessed One was finishing the chanting at the midnight office, the enemy came to him again, accompanied by what appeared to be a large crowd; throwing a rope over his cell and dragging it, they cried out to one another:

Let us throw it into the ditch.

The Blessed One, seeing them, said:

"They surrounded me like bees [a honeycomb], and they were quenched like fire among thorns: in the name of the Lord I overthrew them" (Ps. 117:12).

Satan, at this, cried out:

I do not know at last what to do. Behold, you have already overcome me in every way, and by disregarding me you have overthrown my strength; but I will not leave you until I have overcome and humbled you.

The Blessed One answered him:

Be accursed, you wicked one, and all your works! To our Lord, the One Holy God, who brings it about that you are trampled and mocked by us who love Him, be glory and worship. Wretched and shameless one! Know now that we fear neither you nor your snares.

For a rather long time in this manner the devil waged battle with the saint, desiring to frighten him with various apparitions, but he

could not overcome this steadfast servant of God, and he was himself still more overcome by the saint. The Blessed One, however, advanced in labors and in love for God, for he loved God with all his soul and led such a manner of life that he was counted worthy of God's grace, and therefore the devil could not overcome him. Throughout all the years of his monastic life, not a single day passed without tears, and he never opened his lips for laughter; oil never touched his mouth, and he never once washed his face, but lived as though dying every day.

This blessed man had a brother who had an only daughter. When her father died, the maiden was left an orphan. Acquaintances took the orphan and brought her to her uncle when she was seven years old. The blessed one ordered her to remain in the outer cell, while he himself lived enclosed in the inner one. Between the two cells were small doors, through which he instructed his niece in the Psalter and other books. The maiden, like him, labored in fasting and prayer and in all the virtues of the monastic life. The blessed one many times prayed to God for her with tears, that she might love the Lord and not attach her heart to worldly vanity. Her father had left her a sufficient estate, which the saint ordered to be distributed to the poor in the very hour she was brought to him. – The maiden, however, pleaded thus with her uncle:

– Father, pray to God for me, that I may be delivered from all the manifold snares of the devil.

In the monastic life she in everything imitated her uncle, and the elder, seeing her good labors, her tears, her humility, her silence, her meekness and her love for God, rejoiced at this. For twenty years she lived as a monastic with him, as a pure lamb, as an undefiled dove. But at the end of the twentieth year, the devil, in order to ensnare her and thereby wound the blessed Abramius and turn his mind from God, laid snares in the way of her salvation. At that time there lived a monk who had only the name of a monk, not the labors. He came to the saint under the pretext of receiving instruction from him. Seeing the blessed Mary through the doors, he was inflamed toward her with impure passion, and his heart burned like a flame with mad desire for her. Thus he was kindled with lust for about a whole year, until at last, by the help

of Satan, one day he opened the door of her cell, and entering to her, beguiled and defiled her. After the sin was committed, the maiden was horror-stricken, and, tearing her garments, began to beat her face, and from grief even intended to take her own life. She reasoned with herself thus:

– I have sinned and died in my soul, and have ruined my life; my monastic labor, and my abstinence, and my tears have served for nothing, since I have angered God, have destroyed myself, and have cast my venerable uncle into bitter grief. I have been defiled by the devil; why, then, should I, wretched one, live any longer? Woe is me! What have I done? Woe is me! To what have I come? I did not notice how my reason was darkened, and how I perished! Some dark gloom has covered my heart, and I do not know what I shall do or where I shall hide myself! Where shall I go, into what ditch shall I cast myself! Where is the teaching of my venerable uncle, and where is the instruction of his friend Ephraim[4]? They used to say to me:

– Take heed to yourself, and keep your soul undefiled for the immortal Bridegroom, for He is holy and contends justly. Henceforth I shall no longer dare to lift my eyes to heaven, for I am dead to God and to men. Nor can I remain here, for how, being a sinner full of impurity, shall I again begin to converse with that holy father? And if I dare, the fire that came forth from those doors will burn me. It is better that I withdraw to another land, where there will be no one who knows me, for since I am dead, no hope of salvation remains for me.

Immediately gathering herself together, she departed to another city, and, altering her outward appearance, stopped at an inn. – While this was happening to her, the blessed Abramius had a vision. He saw a terrible and dreadfully huge serpent, loathsome in appearance, breathing fury, which crept up to his cell, and, finding a dove, swallowed her, and then returned again to its place. Awakening from sleep, the blessed one was greatly saddened and wept bitterly, speaking thus to himself:

4. Most likely one of the disciples of the Venerable one.

– Will Satan indeed raise persecution against the holy Church and turn many away from the faith, and will discord indeed arise in the Church?

Having prayed to the Lord, he said:

– Lord, Lover of mankind and All-knowing, Thou alone understandest this vision.

After two days had passed, the same serpent appeared to him a second time in a vision; the venerable one saw how it came out of its lair, crept into his cell, and, placing its head under his feet, burst; and when that dove was found in the serpent's belly, the blessed one stretched out his hand and took her alive and unharmed. Awakening again, the blessed one several times called through the doors to the maiden who lived with him in monastic life:

– Why, for the second day already, are you being slothful and not offering praise to the Lord?

But no answer followed. Opening the doors of the cell, he did not find his niece, and understanding that the vision he had had concerned her, he wept and said:

– Woe is me: for the wolf has snatched away my lamb, and my child is taken captive. And with tears in his eyes he cried out:

– Savior of the whole world! Return to the fold of Thy flock Thy lamb Mary, that my old age may not descend with sorrow into hell. Lord! Do not despise my supplication, but send Thy grace, that she may be snatched from the mouth of the serpent.

Two days passed after the departure of the blessed one, during which Abramius saw the aforementioned vision. Mary, however, lived without her uncle for two years, and he prayed day and night to God for her. After two years had passed[5], someone told him where she was and how she lived. The saint asked one of his acquaintances to go to that place to learn more about her. The messenger went, and, having learned about Mary, returned and related everything to the blessed one. Hearing what was told, the blessed one dressed himself as a soldier, put on his head a large and very tall cap, so that it covered his face,

5. She withdrew to the city of Assos, near Lampsacus.

took with him one gold coin, and, mounting a horse, set out. He came to the inn where Mary lived, and smiling, said to the innkeeper:

– Friend, I have heard that there lives with you a beautiful maiden; show her to me, that I may have the sweetness of gazing upon her.

The innkeeper, seeing his gray hair of old age, mocked it in his heart, for he understood that he was inquiring about her for the sake of fornication, and answered:

– Indeed, there lives with me such a girl, and she is very beautiful.

The blessed one was indeed very beautiful. After this the elder, with a cheerful look, said to him:

– Invite her to me, that I may make merry today.

And when Mary was invited, she came to the elder. As soon as the saint saw her in harlot's finery, he wished to burst into weeping. But, so that he would not be recognized by her, and so that, recognizing him, she would not flee from him, he, though with difficulty, restrained his tears. When they sat and drank, this wondrous man began himself to flirt with her, and she, rising, embraced him and began to kiss his neck. While she was kissing him, she perceived the fragrance emanating from his pure body, mortified by many labors. Then, recalling the first days of her abstinence, she sighed, wept, and said:

– Woe is me!

The innkeeper, however, asked her:

– Mary, you have already lived here with us for the second year, and I have never heard such a word and sigh from you. What has happened to you just now?

She answered:

– If only I had died earlier, I would have been happy.

The blessed Abramius, so that Mary would not recognize him, said to her in a gruff voice:

– Only now, when you have come to me, have you remembered your sins.

Taking out the coin, he handed it to the innkeeper and said:

– Friend, arrange for us a good feast, that we may make merry with this maiden. I have come from afar for her sake.

Oh, how much wisdom was in him, how much spiritual understanding!

A man who during the fifty years of his monastic life had not eaten bread to satiety, nor drunk water to his fill, now, in order to save a lost soul, eats meat and drinks wine. In heaven the ranks of the holy Angels marveled at such a labor of the blessed father, at his magnanimity and his prudent design. He ate meat and drank wine in order to save a lost soul from the defilement of sin.

O wisdom of the wise! O understanding of the understanding!

At the end of the feast, the maiden said to him:

– Sir, let us rise and go to bed, that we may sleep there.

He answered:

– Let us go.

When they entered the bedchamber, Abramius saw a large bed, made up high, sat down upon it, and said to Mary:

– Close the doors, come here and unshoe me.

She, having closed the doors, came to him, and he said to her:

– Maiden Mary, come near to me here.

When she drew near, he seized her, held her tightly, lest she flee, and again kissed her. Then, removing the soldier's cap from his head, he burst into tears and said to her:

– My child, Mary, do you not recognize me? Was it not I who raised you? What has happened to you, my child? Who has ruined you? Where is the angelic image which you had, my child? Where is your abstinence and your tearful weeping? Where is your constant vigil and your prayerful lying on the ground? You have as it were fallen from heavenly height into a ditch, my child! When you sinned, why did you not tell me, that I might take upon myself the labor of repentance together with my beloved Ephraim? Why did you do this, and why did you wound me and cast me into such dreadful grief? Who is without sin, save God alone?

Hearing this, Mary lay in his hands as though a lifeless stone, fearing and at the same time ashamed. And the blessed one continued:

– You do not answer, my child Mary? Do you not answer me, my life? Was it not for your sake that I came here? I shall answer to God

for you on the day of judgment. I shall take upon myself the repentance for your sins.

So he, weeping, entreated and instructed her until midnight. She, having calmed herself a little, said to him with tears:

– I am ashamed, and I cannot look at you – and how can I pray to God, when I am defiled by impure deeds?

He said to her in reply:

"Child, let your sin be upon me. Let God require your sin at my hands. Only listen to me: go, and shut yourself up again in your cell. Ephraim also prays to God for you. My child, spare my old age; I beg you, my life, come with me."

"If you are sure," she answered, "that I have the power to repent, and that God will accept my prayer, then I will go and fall at your reverence's feet and kiss the holy soles of your feet, for you have had such mercy upon me and have come here with the aim of leading me out of this unclean life."

And laying her head upon his feet, she wept all night and said:

"What shall I render to you for all this?"

At the coming of morning he said to her:

"Child, arise and depart."

"I have here some gold and garments," said Mary. "What will you do with all this?"

"Leave it all here," said the blessed one, "for it is dishonest property."

And at once they rose and departed. Having seated Mary upon a horse, Abramius led it, walking before her. He went rejoicing; as a shepherd, when he finds a straying sheep, takes it with joy upon his shoulder (Lk. 15:4–5), so the blessed one walked with joy in his heart. When he came to his place, he again shut Mary up in the inner cell, where he himself had formerly labored, and he himself remained in the outer cell. Mary, in a hair shirt, meekly calling upon God for help, repented with great zeal. Her repentance and prayer were such that our repentance and our prayer, in comparison with them, are as a shadow and count for nothing. And the merciful God, who does not wish any to perish but all to come to repentance, had mercy on His truly repentant

servant and forgave her sins. As a sign of her forgiveness, He granted her the grace to heal the sicknesses of those who came to her. The blessed Abramius lived yet ten years; seeing the great contrition of Mary, her tears, fasts, labors and diligent prayers to God, he was consoled and glorified God. After this he fell asleep in the Lord. He died at the age of seventy.[6] Almost the entire city gathered at the hour of his repose, and each approached his honorable body with zeal, and the sick received healing. The Lamb of Christ, Mary, after the repose of her uncle, lived in great abstinence, day and night entreating God, for yet five years; those who dwelt there, passing by at night, many times heard weeping and immeasurable sobbing, and stopping, they marveled and glorified God. Thus, having truly repented and pleased God, the blessed Mary reposed in peace, and now, after tender weeping, joyfully rejoices with the saints in the Lord, to Whom be glory unto ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Thou didst appear on earth in the flesh as an Angel, and by fasting wast as a tree planted, having flourished well through the water of abstinence, and having washed away defilement by the streams of thy tears. Wherefore thou didst appear as a divine vessel, O Abramius, of the Spirit.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Abramius of Rostov

Житие преподобного отца нашего Аврамия Ростовского

Venerable Father Abramius was the son of pious parents.[7] From his early years he left his parental home and worldly vanity, took the monastic habit and dedicated himself to God.[8]

6. This was about the year 360.

7. The life of the Venerable Abramius of Rostov is set forth here according to the most ancient "Life," which was retold in abridged form in the Prologue and, with certain later additions, in the Great Menaion-Chetii of Metropolitan Macarius. The ancient Life of the Venerable Abramius was afterward twice supplemented, chiefly in its opening part, where the life of Abramius before his coming to Rostov is related.

Subduing the flesh to the spirit, he wore himself down with labors, cleansed his soul with tears, and was granted the grace of working wonders.

In his time, in Rostov,[9] not all had yet received holy baptism, and many remained pagans: the Chud quarter of the city worshipped the stone idol Veles.[10] An unclean spirit dwelling in the idol struck fear into all, and Christians were afraid to pass near the idol. Venerable Abramius burned with zeal to uproot the remnants of paganism in Rostov. He entreated the Lord God to grant him strength and the grace of the Holy Spirit to shatter the idol, but his prayer was long unheard.

Once, in sorrow and perplexity, Venerable Abramius sat near the idol. And behold, he saw a comely old man coming toward him. Abramius rose and hastened to meet him. After mutual greeting and blessing, the venerable one asked:

"From where do you come, father, from what country are you?"

"I am from Constantinople by birth, father; I am a stranger and a sojourner in your land. Tell me, father, why do you sit in sorrow near this idol Veles?"

"I am praying to the Lord God that I may be given strength to shatter the idol," Abramius answered, "but the Lord has disregarded my prayers, and so I sit in sorrow."

"If you wish, father, to obtain what you desire," the old man said to Abramius, "go to Constantinople, seek out the house of John the Theo-

8. The first supplement reports that Abramius was born within the bounds of Galich, in the town of Chukhloma (now in Kostroma Province), set out for the Novgorod lands to become acquainted with monastic asceticism in the monasteries there, and received tonsure in the Valaam Monastery on Lake Ladoga. The second supplement says that Abramius's parents, in Chukhloma, were still pagans. Abramius was at first called Iberik and until the age of seventeen lay on a sickbed, paralyzed, unable to walk. Traveling merchants from Novgorod told him the first rudiments of the Christian teaching. Iberik, after deep reflection, believed in Christ, was suddenly healed of his illness, set out for the Novgorod lands, and on Valaam received baptism with the name Abercius, and afterward tonsure as a monk with the name Abramius.

9. This refers to ancient Rostov, called Rostov the Great. Today it is a district town of Yaroslavl Province, on the highway and railway from Yaroslavl to Moscow. Rostov stands by a lake called Rostovskoe or Nero.

10. By the Chud End one should understand the part of the town on the left side of the road from Yaroslavl. The pagan god of the ancient Russian Slavs, Veles, is also called Volos, who, according to the chronicles, was regarded as the patron of livestock.

logian, enter it, pray before the icon of Saint John the Theologian, and you will not go forth in vain, but will obtain what you desire."

Venerable Abramius was saddened by the length of the road, but the old man said: "The Lord God will shorten your way!"

The blessed Abramius, filled with the Holy Spirit, took the old man's blessing and set out on the journey, forgetting its length.

When Venerable Abramius, going out of the city, crossed the river Ishna,[11] there met him an unknown man, whose appearance inspired fear; almost entirely without hair on his head, he had a large round beard, and his face expressed reverence; he was beautiful. In his hand was a staff.

The blessed Abramius bowed to him.

The unknown man said:

"Where are you going, old man?"

"I am going to seek the house of John the Theologian," Abramius answered.

The unknown man said:

"Come near, old man, take this staff of mine, return back, approach the idol Veles, strike him with the staff in the name of John the Theologian, and the wretched one will turn to dust."

And with these words the unknown man became invisible.

The blessed Abramius understood that it had been John the Theologian.

Seized with fear and joy, Abramius returned, approached the idol without hindrance, struck it with the staff in the name of John the Theologian, and the idol immediately turned to dust.

On the place where Abramius had met the holy old man he set up a church in the name of John the Theologian, and where the idol of Veles had stood, the venerable one, with the blessing of the bishop, built a small church in the name of the Theophany of the Lord, set cells beside it, gathered monks and established a common life.[12]

11. The river Ishna crosses the road from Rostov to Moscow at its confluence with Lake Nero, close to the city of Rostov itself, four versts from the place where the idol of Veles stood.

12. The Epiphany Monastery founded by the Venerable Avramy still exists today on the same site, one verst from the Rostov kremlin, at the entrance to Rostov from Yaroslavl, on the left side of the road.

Venerable Abramius suffered much evil from the pagans who did not believe in Christ. Once they even wished to lay waste and burn the sanctuary he had built, but God did not permit this, for the sake of the prayers and patience of the venerable one.

Yet by his teaching and patience Venerable Abramius, in a short time, brought all the unbelievers to Christ: all, from small to great, were baptized, and they began to attend the praise of God and the All-night Vigil, even women and children. Venerable Abramius strengthened their hearts in faith by reading of books and spiritual instruction. Many of the children left their parents' homes, came secretly to the venerable one and received the monastic habit. Thus the brotherhood increased, which the venerable one instructed in the word of God.

Then Venerable Abramius built a large church, adorned it, as a bride of Christ, with wondrous icons and holy books, and established a comely chanting.

The princes of Rostov, regarding Father Abramius with great respect, granted special privileges to the monastery he had founded: they gave much property for the monastery's buildings and villages for the support of the monks.

Seeing the growth and flourishing of the monastery, the Bishop of Rostov, having consulted with the princes, raised the Abramius monastery to the rank of an archimandritate, and appointed Venerable Abramius as archimandrite.

From that time Abramius began to labor even more zealously, adding labors to labors, giving himself to fasting and prayer; he was a model for all, distinguished by humility, and he showed unfeigned love to every visitor, alike to the great and the small.

The inveterate enemy of good, the devil, did not leave the venerable one in peace; he armed himself against him and caused him sorrows both by day and by night. But protected by Christ's grace and the sign of the Cross, Abramius did not fear.

Once, when Venerable Abramius was in his cell before the Divine Liturgy, having read the customary prayers before holy Communion, he wished to wash his hands before going to the church, and the devil entered the washbasin, desiring to cause the venerable one unpleasant-

ness. Perceiving the presence of the unclean spirit in the vessel, the venerable one took the honorable Cross, laid it over the vessel, sealed the vessel with the sign of the Cross, and left it so, for a long time not touching it. The demon, scorched by the power of the Cross, suffered torment and could not come out of the vessel.

The princes of Rostov then had the custom of riding outside the city for hunting, and on the return journey stopping at the monastery to pray in the church and receive a blessing from Venerable Abramius. So it happened now. As usual, the princes entered the venerable one's cell, but he was not there, for he had the custom of laboring daily for the brotherhood: now he chopped wood for the monastery bakehouse, now he washed hair shirts for the brethren, now he carried water to the kitchen. Hearing of the princes' arrival, he hastened to the cell to bless them.

Meanwhile the princes, while waiting for the venerable one in the cell, noticed the vessel covered with the honorable Cross and wondered what this could mean. One of the princes dared to remove the Cross from the vessel, in order to be blessed by it, and at once the demon came out of the vessel like black and foul-smelling smoke, so that it terrified all present.

When the venerable one approached the cell, the unclean spirit met him at the entrance and began to revile Abramius and threaten him:

"Just as you have compelled me, by the power of the invisible God, to suffer torment and be burned by the power of the Cross, so I shall do you an injury: I shall soon overcome you. I shall bring a slander against you and deliver you to torment and shame. You will be seated on a piebald she-ass without a saddle and shod in women's red slippers. And you will suffer many other things, just as I have suffered at your hands."

The Venerable one crossed himself, and the demon immediately disappeared.

When Abramius entered the cell, the princes began to ask about what had happened, about the foul-smelling smoke that had come out of the vessel covered with the Cross. But the venerable one said nothing

about this. He only blessed the princes with profitable admonition and dismissed them in peace.

Some time later, wishing to take revenge on the venerable one, the demon took the form of a certain warrior, appeared before the Grand Prince in Vladimir, and began to bring grave accusations against Abramius.

"Sovereign, I wish to disclose to you a great secret," said the demon. "There is in your realm, in the city of Rostov, a certain monk named Abramius, a sorcerer who, however, outwardly appears humble and holy and beguiles the people. He has found in the earth a great hoard, a copper vessel filled with gold, which by right ought to belong to your realm. The golden vessels found in this hoard, the golden belts and chains, cannot be valued, and the silver and other precious things cannot be counted. With these treasures he has built a great church, and he has not told you of it."

The Grand Prince was inflamed with wrath against the venerable one and sent for him a fierce warrior, commanding him to seize Abramius without speaking a word to him and to bring him in whatever state he found him.

All this happened at the prompting of the evil spirit.

When the warrior sent by the prince arrived, the Venerable one, after the common prayer, was standing at prayer in his cell, wearing only a hair shirt and without footwear. The warrior, without any mercy, not allowing the Venerable one to utter a word, nor to dress or put on his shoes, took him up on his horse and drove him toward the city of Vladimir.

On the other side of Lake Rostov they encountered a man who was ploughing with a piebald she-ass and holding in his hand a pair of red women's slippers. The warrior seated the Venerable one on the she-ass, shod him in the women's slippers, and quickly brought him in this shameful state before the Grand Prince.

The Grand Prince commanded that the warrior-accuser also be set before him.

The supposed warrior repeated the same words against the Venerable one concerning the hoard of treasures as he had said before.

The Venerable one, hearing this, raised his hands to heaven and rebuked the evil spirit, saying:

"I command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: tell me, who are you, who have slandered me with such words?"

The demon trembled and said:

"I am the demon who from the beginning has hated the good in the human race, and especially among the monks who fear God. You see, elder, that what I told you before, that I have done, because you tormented me in your wretched vessel."

Having said this, the demon instantly disappeared.

The Grand Prince, seeing the diabolical delusion and the mockery of the Venerable one who stood before him, was seized with great fear, as were all who surrounded the prince. And the prince began to beg the Venerable one for forgiveness and said with tears:

"Father, I am the cause of your involuntary coming here; I have cruelly offended you. Forgive me, Father, for everything with which I have angered you. The enemy, Father, darkened my heart and roused in me fury against you and cast me into sin."

The elder said:

"The Lord will forgive you, sovereign, for this is the work of the ancient enemy, the devil. Therefore, sovereign, do not marvel at it: from the beginning, warring against men, he has been especially accustomed to hindering those who fear God."

The prince, seeing the humility of the Venerable one and his quiet and gentle words, as though the elder had experienced no evil at all, began all the more to extol him and bestowed upon him great honor.

For the establishment of the monastery, the prince granted many houses, villages and slaves. He made the monastery of Abramius his own monastery and set it above all the other monasteries of Rostov, and all this he confirmed by charters of grant.

After all this, the prince dismissed the Venerable one with great honor.

The Venerable Abramius lived in his monastery in great humility, adding labors to labors, and departed in peace to the Lord, whom he had loved from his youth.[13]

Troparion, Tone 1:

Enlightened by the divine grace, thou didst guide the unbelieving people to the light of divine knowledge. And after thy repose, shining with the brightness of thy life, thou dost pour forth healings upon those who come to thee in faith, O our Father Abraham. Entreat Christ God to grant us great mercy.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Abramius, taking up the yoke of Christ, and bearing His Cross upon thy shoulder, thou didst follow Him, planted in the house of the Lord, and thou didst flourish like the palm tree and like the cedar that is in Lebanon. Thou didst multiply thy children, O man of spiritual desires. Having received grace from the beloved Apostle John the Theologian, thou didst shatter the idol with a staff and scatter it like dust. Thus thou didst appear as a great wonderworker, O venerable one. Wherefore entreat Christ God unceasingly for us all.

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13. The Venerable Abramius was buried in the monastery he founded. His holy relics now rest openly in a silver reliquary in the chapel bearing his name, attached to the main monastery stone church in honor of the Epiphany of the Lord, built by the command and at the expense of Tsar Ivan Vasilyevich the Terrible and consecrated in his presence on 2 October 1553. Tsar Ivan Vasilyevich visited Rostov more than once and venerated its holy objects there. During one visit to the Monastery of Abramius, even before the taking of Kazan, he took the staff that had been kept beside Abramius's tomb, the staff with which the venerable one shattered the idol. The copper cross that served as the handle of the staff is kept to this day in a separate shrine in the arch at the entrance to the chapel of the Venerable Abramius.

THE THIRTIETH DAY OF OCTOBER

October 30

30 октября

New Calendar October 30 · Old Calendar November 12 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Zenobius, Bishop of Aegae, and of His Sister Zenobia

Страдание святого священномученика Зиновия епископа Эгейского, и сестры его Зиновии

These holy martyrs, Zenobius and his own sister Zenobia, were born in the city of Aegae, in the land of Cilicia,[1] to pious parents. There too they were brought up in the fear of God and in piety. While they were still children, their parents yielded up their souls to the Lord, leaving their children a great estate. Although they were young, Zenobius and Zenobia were wise in mind and steadfast in virtue; having become convinced of the vanity of this world, they resolved to forsake everything and follow Christ. Zenobia gave to her brother her share of the property she had received from their parents, that he might distribute it to the poor, while she herself lived in voluntary poverty, keeping silence and preserving her virginity in purity for the Heavenly Bridegroom. Zenobius, taking both portions of the estate, his own and his sister's, began to distribute it to the poor, and soon he had spent it all, so that he himself became as one of the poor. But God, who cares for orphans and does not forsake those who hope in Him, enriched the holy brother and sister with His heavenly blessings in return for the wealth they had given to the poor: His mighty right hand protected Zenobia all her life from every misfortune and drove away from her the snares of the demons; and Zenobius received from the Lord the gift of healing diseases by the touch of his hands. Thus the hands

1. Aegae – a city in Cilicia (a south-eastern region of Asia Minor), a naval station during the Roman dominion.

which had generously distributed alms to the poor were blessed by God with the power of working miracles. Whatever malady a person was afflicted with, whatever sickness he suffered, he received healing as soon as the holy Zenobius touched him with his hand. This servant of God gave great alms throughout his whole life, now distributing his estate to the needy, now, by the grace of God, bestowing healing upon the sick; he drove out multitudes of unclean spirits from people, comforted those who were in sorrow, and helped those who were in distress. Shining with virtues and glorified by miracles, he was chosen as bishop in his native city. This good shepherd zealously tended the Church of God, constantly aiding and benefiting the people and healing the infirm. Once there came to the saint from Antioch a certain woman who had an incurable ulcer on her breast. This woman spent much on her treatment, seeking healing for her illness from physicians, but they gave her no help; on the contrary, her grievous disease grew stronger and stronger, so that death already threatened her. Seeing her, the holy Zenobius took pity on her: he touched her ulcer with his hand and marked the afflicted place with the sign of the Cross. Immediately the ulcer disappeared, and the woman, who after that became completely well, returned with great joy to her home in Antioch.

Another woman, who did not believe in Christ, the wife of a certain official named Indis, suffered from the same disease; but through the healing of the holy Zenobius she too was freed from her infirmity. Struck by the miracle that had taken place, she herself, together with her husband and children, turned to Christ. All of them were enlightened by holy Baptism. Thus this woman received bodily health and profit for her soul.

Meanwhile the impious emperor Diocletian raised a terrible persecution against the Christians. Then the prince Lysias came to the land of Cilicia to torment all who confessed the name of Christ. Before all others, three Christian youths in Aegae suffered: Claudius, Asterius and Neon. Seizing them, Lysias subjected them to various tortures and finally nailed them to a cross outside the city. Hearing of the holy Zenobius, he sent his soldiers to seize him. When the ascetic was brought before Lysias, the prince said to him:

"I do not wish to enter into a long discourse with you, for I know that you Christians love many words; I will speak with you briefly: I offer you life or death, life if you bow down to our gods, death if you do not bow down. Choose for yourself what you wish: either offer sacrifice, and then you will remain alive and will even receive honor from us, or you may remain in your error, but then you will endure terrible torments and perish a dreadful death."

The holy Zenobius, not in the least frightened by the words of the prince, answered with firmness:

"This temporal life without Christ is not life but death; no, I prefer to endure temporal torments for my Creator, and then to live with Him forever, rather than to deny Him for the sake of this temporal life and afterwards to be tormented eternally in hell."

Hearing these words, the impious prince ordered the saint to be stripped, hung upon a cross, and mercilessly beaten.

"Let us see," he said, "whether Christ will come to save him!"

The blessed Zenobia, learning that her brother, the holy Zenobius, was suffering for Christ, hastened to the place where the saint was being tortured. Seeing that her brother, bloodied and covered with wounds, hung upon the cross, she was inflamed in spirit and, standing before the tormentor, said to him:

"I am a Christian, as is my brother: I confess the same One God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore command that I too be tortured, as you torture my beloved brother. I wish to drink the same cup of sufferings and be crowned with the same crown."

The tormentor was astonished at such courage and resolve of the holy Zenobia, and said:

"Do not try, woman, to destroy yourself; do not seek for yourself such a shameful torment, where you will endure shame and bear sufferings. For you will feel great shame when you are made to be stripped; you will have to undergo grievous pains when you are subjected to tortures. Therefore I give you this counsel: offer sacrifice to the gods, and then you will be delivered from all evils."

To this the saint answered:

"The nakedness of the soul can shame me far more than that of the body; eternal torments are incomparably more grievous than temporal ones; I disregard being stripped, for I have been clothed in Christ; I do not fear the hands of the tormentors, for I am crucified with Christ. Do, tormentor, what you wish; by nothing can you compel me to renounce my Lord Christ."

Then Lysias ordered her to be stripped and beaten, as her brother, the holy Zenobius, had been beaten. Not satisfied with this, the tormentor commanded that a red-hot iron bed be prepared, that both saints be laid upon it, and that a fire be kindled beneath them:

"Let Christ," he said, "appear here and help you."

But the saints answered:

"Our Christ is with us; you cannot see Him. He sprinkles us from heaven with the dew of His grace, so that we do not feel these torments."

Afterwards the saints were thrown into a boiling cauldron, but there too they suffered no harm: they stood as if in cool water, singing the psalm of David: "But Thou shalt save us from our enemies and shalt put to shame those who hate us." Seeing this, the tormentor ordered them to be led outside the city and their heads cut off there. The saints went to their death with inexpressible joy; having reached the place of execution, they prayed thus:

"We thank Thee, Lord our God, that Thou hast given us to struggle in a good contest, to finish the course, to keep the faith. Make us partakers of Thy glory, number us with the choir of saints who have pleased Thee. Blessed art Thou forever."

When the saints had finished their prayer, a voice from heaven sounded, promising them crowns and calling them to eternal rest. Meanwhile the soldiers drew near and cut off their heads. After such torments they left the earth and passed over into heaven.[2] Their bodies lay on the ground the whole day without burial; when night came, the presbyter Hermogenes secretly took them and laid them in one coffin. Thus these saints now ceaselessly glorify the Father and the Son and

2. Their holy repose took place on October 30, 285.

the Holy Spirit, the One God, magnified by all creation, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

True witnesses and preachers of piety, having worthily fallen asleep together in pleasing hymns, Zenobius together with the wise Zenobia, who lived and walked together, and having received the incorruptible crown of martyrdom.

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Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Eutropia

Память святой мученицы Евтропии

The holy Eutropia was accused before the governor Apellianus of visiting and strengthening in the faith Christians imprisoned in dungeons. For this she was hung up, and her body was burned with candles; but she endured the torment as though it were not fire but water. And to all who stood around her, including the soldiers who tortured her, there was clearly seen a man who terrified them all, who cooled the fire and brought down dew upon the holy martyr. Amid such tortures she gave up her spirit to the Lord.[3]

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Apostles Tertius, Mark, Justus and Artemas

Память святых Апостолов Тертия, Марка, Иуста и Артемы

The holy Tertius wrote the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans, in which he speaks of himself thus: "I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord" (Rom. 16:22). He was, after Sosipater,[4] the second bishop in Iconium, where he suffered a martyr's death.

The holy Mark, nephew of the Apostle Barnabas, was bishop in Apollonia,[5] of whom the holy Apostle Paul makes mention in the Epistle to the Colossians: "Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sa-

3. She reposed in Alexandria about 260.
4. His memory is celebrated on November 10 and January 4.

lutes you, and Mark, the nephew of Barnabas (concerning whom you received commandments: if he comes to you, receive him)" (Col. 4:10).

The holy Justus was bishop in Eleutheropolis; the holy Artemas was bishop in Lystra.[6] Of the latter the holy Apostle Paul makes mention in the Epistle to Titus: "When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, do your best to come to me" (Tit. 3:12).

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Marcian, Bishop of Syracuse

Память святого Маркиана, епископа Сиракузского

The holy bishop Marcian, a disciple of the holy Apostle Peter, having come from Antioch to Syracuse, a city on the island of Sicily,[7] by a single prayer destroyed the idol temples, brought many people to Christ, made them sons of light, and performed many miracles. He was slain for Christ by the Jews.[8]

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5. This name was borne in antiquity by several cities: a city in Sicily; one in Illyria, whose inhabitants were called Apolloniates; one in Thrace; one at Chalcedon; and others.

6. Lystra – one of the cities of Lycaonia. Here the Apostle Paul healed a lame man, and the pagans, seeing this miracle, took him and Barnabas for gods.

7. Sicily – one of the largest islands of the Mediterranean Sea, near the Apennine Peninsula. Syracuse – one of the first Greek colonies on the eastern shore of the island, founded, according to tradition, by the Corinthians about 746 B.C., and later the largest and richest city of the island.

8. St. Marcian, having arrived on the island of Sicily, settled in a cave near the city of Syracuse and successfully spread the Faith of Christ. His relics now rest in Gaeta (a harbor and fortress in Italy).

THE THIRTY-FIRST DAY OF OCTOBER

October 31

31 октября

New Calendar October 31 · Old Calendar November 13 (civil dates)

Memory of Holy Martyr Epimachus

Память святого мученика Епимаха

Holy Martyr Epimachus, son of pious Christians, was from Egypt. From his earliest youth he loved God with all his soul, and he resolved to serve Him alone. Imitating St. John the Baptist, he went out into the wilderness and for a long time dwelt on Mount Pelusium.[1]

He had no guide among the holy fathers, but the Holy Spirit Himself was his teacher in this stern, desert life. The love of God sustained and strengthened him in this difficult ascetic labor. For only the love of God can teach a man virtue more than anything else. It moved the holy Apostles to leave everything and follow the Lord, who had no earthly riches. It inspired the venerable fathers who "wandered in deserts and mountains, in caves and clefts of the earth" (Heb. 11:38). Moved by this same love, martyrs and martyresses bore suffering bravely for Christ, crying out: "I love Thee, my Bridegroom, and seeking Thee, I suffer." This love taught the holy Epimachus to endure the hardships and labors of the desert, to bear every affliction from invisible enemies, to live holily in God, and to be ready to die for Him. Having lived many years in his desert solitude, St. Epimachus learned that Christians in Alexandria were suffering severe persecution, and that some followers of Christ, fearing cruel torments, were hiding in the mountains and deserts, while others were falling away from the faith. Kindled with zeal for God, the holy hermit left his desert and went to Alexandria, desiring to seal the confession of Christ with his blood, to suffer for the Lord, and thereby to strengthen the weak. Ar-

1. In Lower Egypt, not far from the river Nile.

riving in Alexandria, he saw the cruel tortures to which the impious idolaters subjected the faithful. With grief of heart he noted that demonic impiety had greatly increased, that many Christians were wavering, and that the pagans had even defiled the Lord's temple. Seeing this, the saint boldly entered the idol temple. There, because of a pagan festival, there were many people. The Blessed Epimachus, in the presence of all, boldly cast the idols to the ground and shattered them. The pagans immediately seized him and led him to the hegemon Apellianus. Seeing that the hegemon was sitting in judgment and condemning Christians to torment, the saint bravely rushed at him to strike down the godless man, and Apellianus would not have escaped the hand of St. Epimachus had not those standing around restrained the saint. Such was the ardor for the Lord God that the ascetic displayed. The hegemon was astonished at such boldness in a man poorly dressed in rags. He ordered that he be taken to prison and held there until he decided what torment to subject him to.

In the prison at that time there were many faithful, imprisoned for confessing the great name of Christ. Epimachus strengthened them all for the martyr's struggle. His exhortation encouraged and inspired the believers, so that not one of them was frightened or fell away from the faith, but all with joy shed their blood for the true God, and all of them, after various cruel tortures, gave up their souls to the Lord. Finally, the holy Epimachus was also delivered to cruel torments, for not only believing in Christ and violating their festival, but even raising his hand against the hegemon himself, intending to kill him. First the saint was hanged and flayed with iron claws, then they began to hurl stones at him, breaking his bones. And in his agony he cried out:

"If my Lord Jesus Christ was crucified for my sake, pierced with a spear, and given vinegar to drink, should I not then be a partaker of His sufferings? I want you to subject me to even greater torments than these. Strike me, spit upon me, place a crown of thorns upon my head, give me a reed in my hands, saturate my whole body with gall, cover me with wounds, crucify me on the cross, and pierce me with a spear. What my Lord suffered, that I too want to suffer."

Many people stood around and watched the sufferings of St. Epimachus. Among the crowd was a woman who could see only with one eye, for the other had a cataract. Seeing the saint's sufferings, she wept. At that moment a drop of the holy martyr's blood splashed and fell upon her diseased eye. Immediately her eye was healed, so that she could see with it as well as with the other. At this wondrous healing the woman cried out:

"Great is God, whom this sufferer confesses."

Then the tormentors beheaded the martyr of Christ. Thus St. Epimachus gave up his soul to the Lord, for whom he had suffered so bravely.[2]

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Memory of the Holy Apostles Stachys, Amplias, Urban, Narcissus, Apelles, and Aristobulus

Память святых апостолов Стахия, Амплия, Урвана, Наркисса, Апеллия и Аристовула

Holy Stachys was ordained bishop in Byzantium by the holy Apostle Andrew. Together with him, St. Stachys built a church in Argyropolis.[3] Gathering many faithful here, he taught them the commandments of Christ. He labored thus for a full sixteen years, and after such labors gave up his soul to the Lord. The same Apostle Andrew ordained Amplias and Urban to the episcopal rank: Amplias in Diospolis,[4] and Urban in Macedonia.

They zealously preached the teaching of Christ and destroyed many idol temples. By this they armed the pagans and Jews against themselves.

These enemies of the Christian faith subjected the holy martyrs to torments, and the martyrs were found worthy to receive unfading crowns.

Narcissus, Apelles, and Aristobulus also preached the Gospel of Christ: Narcissus in Athens, Apelles in Heraclea, and Aristobulus in

2. The martyr's death of the saint took place about 250 A.D.
3. Argyropolis, now Fundukli, a suburb of Constantinople near Pera and Galata.
4. Diospolis was located in Palestine to the northwest of Jerusalem.

Britain. These holy men, after many labors and struggles, gave up their souls to the Lord.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As sacred treasuries of the All-Holy Spirit and rays of the Sun of Glory, let us duly praise the wise Apostles: Apelles, Urban, and Aristobulus, Amplias, Narcissus, and Stachys, whom the grace of our God gathered together.

* * *

Life of Venerable Spyridon and Nicodemus

Житие преподобных Спиридона и Никодима

Every soul enlightened from above by grace is simple (Prov. 11:26); in it there is neither guile nor flattery; it is a vessel and dwelling of God Himself. Therefore the Apostle says: "God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the strong" (1 Cor. 1:27).

Among such chosen ones was our Venerable Father Spyridon. This blessed man came from a certain village. He had not been taught the art of letters, nor was he strong in speech, but he was great in spiritual understanding and in God-pleasing deeds. Having the fear of the Lord in his heart, which is the beginning of all wisdom, he came to the Monastery of the Kiev Caves and began to lead a stern monastic life. Not knowing letters, he began to learn the art of reading, although he was no longer young. He firmly studied and knew by heart all the God-inspired Psalms of David. The holy ascetic labored with unflagging zeal and cared for the salvation of his soul. He had a pious custom: every day he chanted the Psalter of David and did not stop until he had finished it entirely on that same day. Pimen the Faster, who was then abbot, seeing that St. Spyridon was distinguished by humility and diligence, constantly remained in fasting and prayer and was blameless in all things, assigned him an obedience pleasing to God: to bake the bread brought to the Divine Liturgy for the mystical Body of Christ, that is, the prosphora. The Blessed Spyridon, settled in the bakery, did not abandon his former spiritual exercises. He began to fulfill the assigned

obedience with all reverence and the fear of God. Knowing that the work of his hands was destined for the pure and blameless offering brought by the priest, he performed it while offering praise to God with his lips. Whether he chopped wood or kneaded dough, he always chanted the Psalms of David with his mouth, so that daily, as was his custom, he would finish the whole Psalter.

Once, while performing his usual work, this blessed ascetic lit the oven for baking the prosphora. Suddenly fire burst from the mouth of the oven and caught the roof of the building where the saint was. The Blessed Spyridon took his mantle, covered the oven's mouth with it, drew up the sleeves of his hair-shirt, and hurried with it to the well. Filling it with water, he quickly returned, gathered the brethren, and asked the monks to help him put out the fire. Gathering together, the brethren saw a wondrous sign: the mantle with which the blessed man had covered the oven's mouth was untouched by the fire, and the water from the hair-shirt did not run out. The monks quickly extinguished the burning building with the water they had brought and joyfully glorified God. This Blessed Spyridon had one companion in his labors, a brother named Nicodemus, who was in full agreement with St. Spyridon in everything. Like this blessed man, St. Nicodemus also prayed with zeal and shared with him the bodily labors.

These ascetics labored holily and pleasingly to God for thirty years, faithfully and blamelessly performing their obedience of baking the prosphora. Therefore, having reposed in good confession,[5] they are satisfied with the glory of God, which they behold not in the form of bread offered, but face to face. By their holy prayers may we too be worthily satisfied with the living bread: the grace and glory of Jesus Christ, to whom with God the Father and the Holy Spirit belong honor, glory, and worship, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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5. Their blessed repose took place about the middle of the 12th century. Their relics rest in the Cave of St. Anthony.

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