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

Ноябрь

NOVEMBER

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THE FIRST DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 1

1 ноября

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

Life and Miracles of the Holy Unmercenaries and Wonderworkers Cosmas and Damian

Житие и чудеса святых бессребреников и чудотворцев Космы и Дамиана

The holy Cosmas and Damian, brothers according to the flesh, were natives of Asia.[7028] Their father was a pagan, but their mother, by name Theodotia, was a Christian. Remaining a widow after the death of her husband, and spending her time in most diligent service to Christ, she devoted her whole life to pleasing God. She was like that widow whom the Apostle praises: "She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day" (1 Tim. 5:5). Living piously herself, she taught the same to her beloved children Cosmas and Damian, for she brought them up in the good instruction of the Christian faith and in the study of the Divine Scriptures, and guided them to every virtue. Having attained mature age and established themselves in a blameless life according to the law of the Lord, Cosmas and Damian were as two lamps on earth, shining with good deeds. They received from God the gift of healing, and bestowed health upon souls and bodies, curing every sickness, healing every infirmity and every wound among men, and casting out evil spirits. They gave help not only to people but also to cattle, and they took nothing from anyone for it: for they did all this not for gain, not to enrich themselves with gold and silver, but for God's sake, desiring through love for their neighbors to express their love for Him. Nor did they seek their own glory by this healing art among men, but the glory of God, and they healed infirmities to glorify the name of the Lord, who had given them such power of healing. They freed from dis-

eases not so much by herbs as by the name of the Lord, without payment and without reward, freely, in fulfillment of Christ's commandment: "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Mt. 10:8).[1] Therefore the faithful gave them the name of unmercenary physicians and unmercenaries. Having thus passed the course of their life in virtue, they reposed peacefully and piously. They became famous for many miracles not only during their life but also after death, and they are warm intercessors and good healers of our infirmities, both of soul and of body.

Concerning their non-acquisitiveness and unmercenary healing there is the following account.

A certain woman named Palladia had lain on a bed of sickness for many years and received no help from various physicians. Hearing of the holy Cosmas and Damian, that they heal every disease, she sent to them with a request that they visit her before her death. The saints, heeding this request, went to her house, and at once this woman, by her faith, received healing through the coming of the holy physicians to her, and rose up well, glorifying God for granting to His servants such grace of healing. In gratitude to her physicians for this kindness, she wished to make them a gift. But they took nothing, never and from no one, for they did not sell the grace which they had from God. The woman resolved to persuade at least one of them to accept from her the smallest gift; taking three eggs, she came secretly to the holy Damian and adjured him by God that he take from her these three eggs in the name of the Holy Trinity. Damian, hearing the name of the Triune God, took from the woman this small gift, for the sake of the great oath with which she had adjured him. The holy Cosmas, learning of this afterward, was very grieved, and before his death he made a testament that Damian not be buried beside him, for he had broken the commandment of the Lord and had accepted a reward from the woman for healing.

The holy Cosmas reposed in the Lord, and in the course of time the hour of death came for Damian also, and he passed from temporal life to eternal.

1. The word “freely” means without charge, without payment.

The people were in difficulty as to where to bury Damian, for they knew of the testament of the holy Cosmas and did not dare to lay his brother beside him.

While they were perplexed, suddenly a camel came, which had formerly been possessed and had received healing from the saints. It spoke with a human voice, bidding them not to hesitate to lay Damian beside Cosmas, since he had taken the three eggs from the woman not for reward but for the sake of the name of God.

Thus their honorable relics were laid together, in the place called Feremana.[2]

Once, in the time of harvest, one of the inhabitants of that region went out to reap his field. Exhausted by the heat of the sun and intending to rest, he went under an oak, lay down, and fell fast asleep. While he slept, a serpent crept into his open mouth. Awakening, the farmer at first felt no pain, so that he again set to work in his field. But when evening came, and the farmer came home and after supper lay down on his bed, he felt a terrible pain, because the serpent had begun to tear at his entrails. The sufferer, unable to bear the agony, began to cry out, thereby waking all the members of the household from sleep. These, approaching the sick man and seeing his terrible torments, could nevertheless give him no help; they could not even understand what sort of illness it was. Then the sick man, receiving no help from those around him, had recourse to the swift helpers Cosmas and Damian, and cried out: "Holy physicians, Cosmas and Damian, help me!" The saints at once hastened with their aid: the sick man fell into a deep sleep, and during his sleep the serpent crept out of his mouth. Those who saw this miracle were astonished and glorified the holy wonderworkers. When the serpent crept out, the man at once awoke and, with the help of the holy unmercenaries, recovered completely.

In that place there was another man, named Malchus. He lived near the church of the holy physicians, Cosmas and Damian, in Feremana.

2. Fereman was in Mesopotamia, two days' journey from Amid (called Diyarbakir in Turkish, in the upper reaches of the Tigris River), and was destroyed by the Turks during their first conquests; at that time the relics of Sts. Cosmas and Damian were translated to Amid, where they rest to this day.

Intending to set out on a distant journey, he led his wife to the church and said to her:

"Behold, I am going on a distant journey, and I entrust you to the protection of Cosmas and Damian. Remain at home until I send you the agreed sign of myself, which you will recognize as mine. And if God wills, I will send you this sign and take you to myself."

Having thus entrusted his wife to the saints, Malchus set out on his way. After a few days had passed, the Devil took the form of a certain acquaintance and came to Malchus's wife and showed her the sign which her husband had designated, saying: "I will send you a sign and take you to myself."

Showing her this sign, the Devil bade her follow him to her husband.

"Your husband," he said, "has sent me for you, to bring you to him."

The woman said:

"I know this sign, but I do not wish to go, for I have been entrusted to the holy unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian. And if you wish me to go with you to my husband, then come with me to the church of the saints, take hold of the edge of the sanctuary, and swear to me that you will do me no harm on the way."

The Devil gave such a promise, and approaching the church with her, took hold of the edge of the sanctuary and swore, saying:

"I swear by the powers of Cosmas and Damian that I will do you no harm on the road, but will bring you to your husband."

The woman, hearing the oath, believed the lying demon, who was in the form of an acquaintance, and went with him on the way. But the seducer, taking her, led her into a deserted and impassable place and wished to dishonor her there and kill her. She, seeing herself in extreme peril, raised her eyes to heaven and cried out from the depth of her heart to God, saying:

"O God, by the prayers of Thy saints, Cosmas and Damian, help me and hasten to deliver me from the hands of this murderer!"

And at once the swift helpers appeared, the holy unmercenaries, Cosmas and Damian. The Devil, seeing them, left the woman and fled;

climbing up a high bank, he threw himself into an abyss and vanished, and the saints, taking the woman, brought her to her house.

The woman, bowing down before them, said:

"I thank you, my lords, that you have delivered me from bitter destruction. I beg you, tell me who you are, that I may know to whom to render thanks all the days of my life."

They said:

"We are the servants of Christ, Cosmas and Damian, to whom your husband entrusted you before setting out on his journey; therefore we hastened to your help and delivered you, by the grace of God, from the Devil."

Hearing this, the woman fell to the ground from fear and joy, while the saints became invisible. And the woman cried out, praising and thanking God and His holy servants, Cosmas and Damian. Coming into the church, she fell with tears before the icon of the saints and told everyone what had happened, how the Lord had shown mercy to her through the prayers of His saints. And she prayed in these words:

"O God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of their righteous seed! Thou didst quench the fiery furnace for the three youths; Thou didst help Thy handmaid Thecla in the arena. I thank Thee that Thou hast delivered me also, a sinner, from the devilish snare through Thy well-pleasing servants Cosmas and Damian. I worship Thee, who workest wondrous and glorious miracles, and I glorify Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, unto ages of ages. Amen."

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Caesarius and Dasius

Память святых мучеников Кесария и Дасия

The holy Caesarius and Dasius were seized in the city of Damascus,[3] and, subjected to various tortures, did not renounce the Christian faith,

3. Damascus is the chief and wealthiest trading city of Syria. It lies northeast of Palestine, on the Barada River, which flows through it, in a beautiful and fertile plain at the eastern foot of Anti-Lebanon. At present Damascus, which forms part of the Turkish Empire, is one of the wealthiest cities of Asia and had up to 150 000 inhabitants.

for which they were beheaded with the sword and received the crowns of martyrdom.[4]

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Hermenegild, Gothic Prince

Страдание святого мученика Ерминингельда, царевича Готского

Hermenegild, son of Leovigild[5], king of the Goths[6], was converted from the Arian heresy[7035] to the Orthodox faith by Leander, Bishop of Spain. Leovigild, being himself an Arian, was grieved that his son had forsaken the impious Arian belief, and strove to turn him away from Orthodoxy and bring him back to his heresy. As a father, he persuaded him with gentle words, entreating and exhorting him to abandon the Catholic faith and to think as he did, as before. But when he saw that his son was unmoved, he began to frighten him with threats of torments and wounds. Yet his son remained steadfast in the faith like a pillar, giving no heed either to his father's kindness or to his threats. Enraged against him, Leovigild first deprived his son of the royal throne and co-rulership, his inheritance, and all his possessions; then, seeing no change in his mind, he bound his neck, hands, and feet with iron fetters and cast him into a narrow, dark dungeon. But blessed Hermenegild, though young in years, was mature in understanding: despising earthly kingship, he sought with all his soul that which is heavenly, and, lying bound in the dungeon, prayed to almighty God to

4. The saints suffered when the Mohammedans took the city of Damascus (7th century). The names of those who suffered with the holy Caesarius and Dasius are Sabbas, Sabinian, Agrippa, Adrian, and Thomas.

5. He reigned in the 2nd half of the 6th century. He made his son, St. Hermenegild, his co-ruler, appointing Seville as his residence, while he himself lived in Toledo (Spanish cities).

6. The Goths lived east of the Danube and were divided by the Dniester River into Ostrogoths and Visigoths. From the 3rd century A.D. they began entering into relations with the Romans, whom they attacked continually, and gradually began to receive Christianity from them. In the 2nd half of the 4th century, pressed by the Huns who had come from Asia, the Visigoths were permitted to settle in Thrace, within the Roman Empire, on condition that they all accept Christianity. Christianity spread among them in the form of Arianism. After leaving the bounds of the Roman Empire, the Visigoths carried Arianism into Spain, where they founded their state in 415. It was here that the events related below in this Life subsequently took place.

strengthen him in this suffering. As the great feast of holy Pascha drew near, King Leovigild summoned an Arian bishop and sent him by night to his son in the dungeon, so that Hermenegild might receive their Arian communion from the bishop's hands. If he would partake of it, the king promised to restore to him his former fatherly love and honor. But the holy Passion-bearer turned away from the Arian bishop in indignation, courageously rebuked his impious belief, and drove him from him, refusing to receive the heretical communion. He received the Most Pure and Life-giving Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ from an Orthodox priest, whom St. Bishop Leander had secretly sent to him; but the Arian bishop returned to the king in shame and told him all that he had heard from his son. Then the king, filled with unspeakable fury and gnashing his teeth, immediately sent distinguished men from among his boyars, ordering them to kill his son Hermenegild in the dungeon. They went and struck off his honorable head with an axe. And the sweetest voices of the holy Angels were heard singing above his holy body, while burning candles were seen at night. The faithful, seeing this, rejoiced and gave thanks to God, who glorified His true-believing servant with such miracles after his martyr's end; but the impious were ashamed and terrified. The father who had slain his own child repented of the murder he had committed against the innocent, and fell ill with grief. He wished to renounce Arianism and embrace Orthodoxy, but feared the Arians, and thus was not granted to be numbered among the true believers. When his end drew near, he respectfully summoned Leander, who was then bishop—the man he had formerly disliked and persecuted—and entreated him to instruct his younger son Reccared, whom he had made heir to his kingdom, in Orthodoxy by his God-inspired teaching, as he had Hermenegild. Leovigild died, and Reccared, upon becoming king, immediately embraced the Orthodox faith under the instruction of St. Bishop Leander, and brought the whole land of the Goths[7] to the true faith, though it had previously been infected with the Arian heresy. He honored the body of his elder brother, St. Hermenegild, with due reverence, as a martyr of Christ, in whom the Gospel

7. St. Hermenegild died a martyr's death in 586, and in 589, at the Council of Toledo, the Goths renounced Arianism and embraced Orthodoxy.

saying was fulfilled: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (Jn. 12:24). For the Passion-bearer of Christ, like a grain of wheat, one of the Goths, died for Christ, but the fruit of his death was the Orthodox life of the whole people of that land: all began to believe rightly in Christ God, of one Essence and equal in honor with the Father and the Holy Spirit, to whom be glory unto the ages. Amen.

* * *

Holy Martyr Women Cyriena and Juliana

Память святых мучениц Кириены и Иулиании

The holy women Cyriena and Juliana suffered during the reign of Emperor Maximian[8]. Cyriena came from the city of Tarsus in the province of Cilicia, while Juliana came from the city of Rosson[9]. For confessing the Christian faith, they were seized by the governor Marcian, who compelled them to renounce Christ. Because of their steadfastness in the true faith, Marcian ordered impious soldiers to shave Cyriena's head, cut off her eyelids, and, after stripping her, lead her around the city of Tarsus[10]. Then they took her together with St. Juliana to the city of Rosson and delivered them to be burned.

* * *

Holy Hieromartyrs John and James

Память святых священномучеников Иоанна и Иакова

Sts. John and James were, respectively, a bishop and a priest under Sapor of Persia[11]. They brought many to piety, for which they were

8. Here Maximian Galerius is meant, who was first co-ruler with Diocletian and then emperor of the eastern part of the Roman Empire from 305 to 311.

9. Tarsus, the ancient capital of Cilicia, a southeastern province of Asia Minor, is now called Tasso or Tersus. This city was the birthplace of the Apostle Paul. Rosson, or Ros, lies somewhat north of Syrian Antioch.

10. According to the Menologion of Basil, St. Cyriena was carried naked on a donkey, and then idle children beat her with sticks. But through her prayers, the saint did not appear naked to the people.

11. Sapor II, known as the Great, was king of Persia and reigned from 310 to 381 A.D.; he was known for his successful wars with the Romans and was a cruel persecutor of Christianity.

seized by the king and subjected to various afflictions and torments. After their torture, they were beheaded with the sword.

* * *

NOTES

7028. Asia, also called Asyia, was a name used in antiquity in more than one sense. At first it meant a small, well-watered, marshy plain in Lydia—that is, the middle of the western part of the present-day Asia Minor peninsula, on the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea. The Romans divided the aforementioned peninsula into two approximately equal parts: one, the northeastern, lying along the Black Sea, they called Pontus; the other, the southwestern, they called Asia proper. Each part was divided into several provinces, not always the same number; after the establishment of Christianity, each province in turn was divided, ecclesiastically, into several bishoprics (even the Apocalypse mentions the 7 churches of Asia—Rev. 1:4–11). In time, the name Asia came to be applied to the whole of the present-day Asia Minor peninsula and, finally, to the entire continent lying east of our Europe, on the same landmass.

7035. The name of the heresy derives from Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria who lived in the 4th century. Seeking to remove from the Christian teaching concerning the Trinity of Persons in God everything incomprehensible to reason, Arius taught that the Son of God is not begotten from the essence of God the Father before all ages, but was created by Him from non-being in time, and is neither of one Essence with Him nor equal in honor. Concealed within this heresy was a decisive denial of the Divinity of Jesus Christ and of our redemption by Him—in short, the overthrow of all Christianity. Arianism spread widely in both the Christian East and West. For a long time it agitated minds and caused disturbances in the Church—even after it was condemned at the 1st Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 325. At the Council and afterward, this heresy met its most powerful and zealous opponent in the person of St. Athanasius of Alexandria.

THE SECOND DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 2

2 ноября

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

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Acindynus, Pegasius, and Anempodistus

Страдание святых мучеников Акиндина, Пигасия и Анемподиста

When the Persian king Sapor[1], darkened by idol-worship[2] and filled with every kind of iniquity, raised up a great persecution of Christians in his land, there were at that time among his courtiers three secret Christians: Acindynus, Pegasius, and Anempodistus. Serving Christ in secret, they led many to the same piety by their hidden teaching. Some slandered these three saints before the king, saying that they not only believed themselves in the Crucified One, but infected others as with poison, with the same faith.

The king said angrily to the slanderers:

– Why, though you have known of such men for a long time, did you not report them to me and bring them before me?

They said:

– Mighty king! If you command it, we shall bring them to you at once.

The king immediately gave this command, and they went to seize them. When they came to the house where the saints were staying,

1. In Holy Scripture the Persians are called Elamites, as descended from Elam, son of Shem. They lived in Asia, near the Persian Gulf (enclosed by the Arabian peninsula and the mainland). The King Sapor mentioned here is probably Sapor II, who lived in the fourth century. He was inclined to see in his Christian subjects secret allies of his enemies, the Romans. The deaths of the martyrs Acindynus, Pigasius, Anempodistus and the others took place, according to some accounts, in 330, and according to others in 345.

they found the doors locked; for the faithful servants of the Lord were at prayer and did not wish to open the doors to anyone, being occupied in converse with God. The men broke down the doors, seized the saints, bound them, and led them before the king.

When the king saw the saints, he began to question them gently:

– Whence are you, my children?

The saints answered:

– Do you ask us, O king, concerning our fatherland? Our fatherland and our life are the Most Holy, Consubstantial, and Undivided Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God.

The king said:

– You are very bold, and dare to confess before me another God, because you have not yet learned what wounds and various kinds of torments are.

The saints answered:

– We are bold through hope in our God, and are ready to endure for His sake every wound and torment. If you do not believe our words, test them in deed: inflict wounds, cause whatever torments you will, and you shall see whether we renounce our God.

While the saints spoke yet further, glorifying the one God and reproving the king for his polytheism, the king grew angry and ordered each of them to be stretched upon the ground and beaten by four men with knotted rods. But amid the blows the saints blessed God, saying with one voice:

– Look upon us, O Lord; be not silent, neither depart from us, that all may understand the might of Thy right hand; and do Thou Thyself, O Lord, help us.

While the saints sang thus amid their torments, the executioners were exhausted, and the king appointed others to continue beating them. The martyrs were beaten for a long time, so that they might even have died from such prolonged blows, had not God Himself sustained

2. The Persians worshipped as supreme god Mithra, or the sun. They also worshipped fire and acknowledged two deities: Ormuzd, the creator of all good, and Ahriman, the author of all evil. The founder of this religion is considered to be Zoroaster; the chief sacred book of the Persians is the Zend-Avesta.

their lives. The king, seeing such steadfastness in their endurance, that they neither cried out nor lost their strength, marvelled; a certain terror seized him, and he fell from the royal throne. The saints called out to him, saying:

– Our Lord, Who gave you life, strengthens you again, that through us you may behold His power.

Those standing around thought that the king had fallen to his death and, running up, raised him. He rose scarcely alive and barely came to himself. After this Sapor became even more furious, thinking that the martyrs had done this to him by some sorcery; for the impious, themselves wholly under the power of demons, were always wont to attribute the wondrous miracles of God performed by the saints to witchcraft and sorcery. The lawless king ordered the holy martyrs to be hung up and a blazing fire kindled beneath them, so that they might perish, yielding up their souls amid the torments of chains and fire.

As they hung there for a long time, the saints sang:

– O Lamp of our souls and our Creator, Who wast betrayed for us, spat upon, and subjected to reproach, the Master Who was hanged upon a tree as an evildoer, yet holdest all things in Thy right hand! Come now and look upon our suffering, and show us Thy salvation; behold our afflictions and have mercy on us. Make it plain to all that we have Thee, the one God in heaven.

And immediately the Lord appeared to them in human form, with a face bright as the sun. At His appearing their chains fell apart, the fire went out, and the saints were made whole. When they saw the Lord, they were filled with unspeakable joy; then the Lord became invisible again. And the saints stood before the king as though they had endured no torment at all. When the king saw them whole, he marvelled and said to them:

– What has happened to you?

They answered:

– You see for yourself: Christ our God has saved us from your torments. Acknowledge His power and be ashamed.

The lawless man began to blaspheme Christ. But the saints cried out:

– May the flattering lips that blaspheme the true God be silenced!

And immediately the king became mute and lost his voice.

The saints said:

– What has happened to you, O king, that you do not speak to us? Shall we indeed depart from your judgment seat without receiving a final sentence?

The king began to signal with his eyes and hands to those around him, that they should seize the saints and confine them in prison; but none of those present understood what he commanded by his signs. Then the king tore off his purple robe[3], struck it upon the ground, and, like a madman, began to trample it underfoot before everyone. The people, seeing this, marvelled and pitied their king, that he had fallen into such madness.

But the saints said to the people:

– O blind in mind! You see, yet do not see; you hear, yet do not hear, for your hearts have grown hard!...

While the saints were saying this, a host of most radiant Angels appeared from heaven, and many among the people saw them. Unable to gaze upon them, they fell in fear and believed in Christ. The saints began to sing: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in troubles; therefore we will not fear, though the earth be shaken and the mountains be moved into the heart of the seas. Arise to help us, and deliver us for Thy mercy's sake" (Ps. 45:2–3, 43:27).

Unable to do anything because of his muteness, the king in his fury began to beat his own face. Acindynus, seeing him in such distress, wept and said:

– In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, speak.

And immediately his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak; but he did not bless God. Rather, with his heart hardened, he blasphemed yet more: although he had seen the mighty hand of God upon himself, he would not acknowledge the truth. Taking all this for sorcery on the

3. A cloak of purple color, otherwise porphyra. The dye for this cloth was the blood of certain shells or snails found in the Mediterranean Sea. It was the garment of kings, a symbol of their power and majesty. Sometimes, however, private persons—luxury-loving rich men—also clothed themselves in such a cloak.

part of the holy martyrs, he burned with even greater anger against them and, instead of giving thanks, as soon as his muteness was loosed, spoke these words:

– I shall destroy Acindynus, Pegasius, and Anempodistus by a cruel death; and you who are present, I shall punish because you did not obey me when I commanded you by signs to seize these impious Christians and torture them for my sake; for they have bound my tongue by their sorcery.

And the king ordered an iron bed to be heated and the martyrs laid upon it. While they were being burned on this bed for many hours, they prayed fervently to God and sang David's psalm befitting that hour:

– "Thou hast tested us, O God; Thou hast refined us as silver is refined[4]. Thou hast brought us into a net; Thou hast laid fetters upon our loins[5]; Thou hast set a man over our heads[6]. We went through fire and water, and Thou broughtest us out into freedom" (Ps. 65:12). Grant us strength to endure the torments that oppress us with steadfast soul and courageous heart; grant that those standing around may know Thy holy name, before whom Thou hast made manifest Thy power and wonders.

While the saints were saying this, a voice was heard from heaven, declaring:

– Since you have borne witness to your faith by your deeds, your petitions shall be fulfilled.

Many of those standing around, being granted to hear this divine voice, cried out:

– One is the true God, Whom these sufferers worship; He alone is mighty, He alone is invincible, and there is no other God besides Him. Blessed are you, O Passion-bearers, who have become witnesses to His coming upon earth and, out of love for Him, have surrendered your

4. Silver, through melting in the fire, is freed from impurities and takes on its purest form. Likewise, the virtue of the martyrs, through the trial of fire, was exalted and received its most perfect form.

5. From the Hebrew: "He laid bonds upon our loins" (otherwise: "upon our thigh"). In the present case this means torment by burns.

6. That is, "He set riders upon us"—an image of the most shameful servitude. This expression indicates here the extreme degree of humiliation to which the holy martyrs were subjected.

souls to death, after which you are granted eternal life! Entreat His goodness for us also, that He may stretch forth from on high the hand of His help to us and draw us out of the depths of destruction.

The holy martyrs lifted their eyes to heaven and prayed for them, saying:

– O God, Who dwellest on high! Look upon Thy servants, who truly call upon Thy name, and send down refreshing rain upon Thy new possession, upon those who have now believed in Thee. May the dew that cometh from Thee and washeth away the sinful infirmities be healing and cure to them[7], and may all know that Thou art the one God, and may all things be subject to Thy authority.

As the saints spoke thus and brought their prayer to an end, suddenly lightning flashed, terrible peals of thunder were heard, and a heavy rain fell. The unbelievers, filled with fear and dread, fled; only those who believed in Christ remained with the martyrs.

The saints said to them:

– Fear not, for this has happened for your sake, that through this rain the mystery of baptism may be accomplished upon you.

As all with one voice gave glory to God, a multitude of Angels descending from heaven could be seen, clothing the newly baptized people in white garments, thereby showing that their souls had been cleansed by holy faith and by the water that had come down upon them from on high. This rain extinguished the fire and cooled the red-hot bed, and the saints rose up alive and whole; only their bodies were black, like trees burned by fire.

The king summoned the saints again and said to them:

– Although you have quenched the fire by your sorcery, you shall not escape my hands until I make you bow down to the gods or deliver you to a cruel death.

They answered as with one voice:

– Deliver us to whatever death you will, but we shall not be torn away from the one God Who dwelleth in heaven and hath prepared eternal life for us.

7. In time, under the influence of neighboring peoples, the Persians began to join to the worship of the sun and fire also the service of foreign gods.

The king laughed and said:

– My children and friends! If you honor the One God, then I, too, compel you to honor not many gods, but only one—the one whom I honor and worship. For I also have one god whom I love and honor above the others: great Zeus, the eldest among all the gods.[8] Join me in worshipping him alone; as for the other gods, do as you wish—it is enough to honor one.

Blessed Anempodistus said to the emperor:

– How, then, do you command us to honor the One God?

Hearing this, the emperor rejoiced, for he thought they wished to worship his vile Zeus, and said to them:

– Come with me, my children, to the temple of great Zeus. Do as I do, and let us worship my god together.

The saints said:

– You, O emperor, pray according to your rite, and we shall pray as we have learned from of old.

The emperor, not understanding what they had said, rejoiced, thinking that they had already inclined toward his idolatry, and said to them:

– Why did you not earlier choose to show yourselves of one mind with us? Then you would not have suffered such torments. But now forgive me for causing you sorrow; I promise to make amends to you with my ardent love.

He ordered his royal chariot to be made ready and, mounting it, invited the holy martyrs to sit with him.

The saints answered:

– No, O emperor, we shall not ride in the chariot, but go on foot.

Thus they came to that loathsome temple. Taking them by the hands, the emperor entered the temple with them and began to cry aloud:

– Great is the god Zeus, and great is his power! Come, my beloved, and pray before me to the great god Zeus.

The saints answered:

8. Zeus was honored by the Greeks as the greatest of the gods (among the Romans, Jupiter), who governed the lightnings, the father of gods and men.

– As you command, so shall we do.

Making the sign of the Cross upon their foreheads, they fell upon their knees and, raising their hands to heaven, began to pray to God, One in Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. At once the place shook, and the temple began to crumble. The Emperor, struck with fear, fled outside with all who were with him; the temple fell with its idols, and everything within it was crushed to dust. The saints, however, remained unharmed when the temple fell. They rejoiced at the sight of Christ's power and laughed at the helplessness of the pagan gods.

The emperor burned with great rage against the saints and said to them:

– Is this how you turn to Zeus and worship him? Is this your prayer, that by your sorcery you have destroyed the temple and crushed the gods?

The saints answered:

– As we have learned from of old, so we prayed to the One God, the Creator of the whole world. We know no sorcery; it was not by any sorcery, but by the almighty name of God, which we called upon in prayer, that the vile temple and your unclean gods were destroyed.

The emperor ordered three cauldrons to be prepared and filled with tin, sulfur, and pitch, and old boats to be cut up for firewood[9] and used to kindle a great fire beneath the cauldrons. When this had been done and the cauldrons, heated fiercely, were boiling and bubbling, the saints were bound with chains and lowered into them from above, first to the waist, then to the chest, and finally to the neck. Amid these torments they gazed up to heaven, and each sang a song from the Psalms of David. Blessed Pegasius cried out: "For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 35:10).

Blessed Anempodistus said: "My foot stands in an even place; in the congregations will I bless the Lord" (Ps. 25:12).

Blessed Acindynus began to cry aloud:

9. This was done with the aim of building a stronger fire, for the bottoms and sides of boats, to prevent water from leaking through, are usually thickly coated with pitch, especially on the outside.

– "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodliness made me afraid" (Ps. 17:5); but since "We went through fire and water, and thou broughtest us out into freedom" (Ps. 65:12), do thou, O Lord, lead us forth into rest.

As the saints prayed thus in the cauldrons, they suffered no harm from the boiling tin, sulfur, or pitch, and the chains came loose of themselves and fell from them. The saints emerged unharmed before everyone's eyes, and many, marveling at this astonishing miracle, recognized the truth and, glorifying Christ, believed in Him. One of the tormentors also, named Aphonius, seeing this miracle, believed in Christ and cried out:

– Great is the God of the Christians!

And he said to the emperor:

– Godless and man-hating emperor! How long will you refuse to leave these innocent people alone? Look, we have grown more weary in tormenting them than they have in enduring their torments, while you remain as though made of iron and stone, and your heart is not moved.

The emperor immediately ordered his head to be cut off.

Hearing the emperor's reply, which condemned him to be beheaded by the sword, Aphonius raised his eyes to heaven and said:

– Glory to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, God in whom the Christians believe! Behold, I too believe in Thee, worship Thee, and die for Thee. Save me, unworthy as I am, according to Thy great mercy.

The executioner came up to him and put a rope around his neck, to lead him outside the city for the execution. Turning to the holy martyrs, he said:

– My lords and fathers, forget the wrong I did you when I tormented you at the command of the impious emperor. Pray to God for me, that He may forgive me my many sins, number me among those who believe in Him, and grant me to see you in His Kingdom.

The holy martyrs said to him:

– Rejoice, brother, for you go to Christ before us; be assured that you will find mercy with Him, and He will reward you according to your faith.

After Aphonius had kissed the saints, he was led outside the city. Calling upon the most holy name of Jesus Christ, he bowed his neck beneath the sword and departed joyfully to the Lord. The Christians took his body, wrapped it in clean linen, and gave it an honorable burial as a martyr of Christ.

After this, the emperor ordered Acindynus, Pegasius, and Anempodistus to be sewn into leather sacks and thrown into the sea. When this had been done, holy Aphonius appeared with three Angels, walking upon the sea; they drew the holy martyrs from the sea, freed them from the sacks, and set them ashore alive and unharmed, as though they had suffered nothing at all. Hearing that the holy martyrs were alive, the emperor grew angry with the soldiers whom he had charged with casting the saints into the depths of the sea. Supposing that they had disobeyed him and set them free, he first had the hands of the soldiers, four in number, cut off, and then ordered them to be drowned in the sea. Before their death, they called upon our Lord Jesus Christ, confessing His holy name, believing in Him and praying to Him; and thus they were drowned in the waters of the sea. The holy martyrs Acindynus, Pegasius, and Anempodistus were again seized, imprisoned, and put in stocks. In distress, the emperor went to his bedchamber, lay down upon his bed, summoned his nobles, and angrily began to tell them that they had left him alone to conduct the trial of the Christians and had helped him in nothing, neither by word nor deed. They answered that it was not a good thing to occupy oneself with such trials and to condemn innocent Christians to death. The emperor then said this to them as well:

– What were you thinking when you stood yesterday and the day before, covering your mouths with your hands?

One of the nobles, named Elpidiphorus, laughed and said:

– In our hearts we were laughing at your madness, and we were foolish until now to obey you.

The emperor ordered one of the servants present to strike Elpidiphorus in the face. Seeing this, all the nobles were indignant and said to the emperor:

– Know, O emperor, that we are not on your side.

Seeing that all the nobles sided with Elpidiphorus, the emperor was afraid and, not wishing to anger them further, said:

– Forgive me, for I have grown angry from great sorrow.

The nobles left the emperor and went away, especially since night was already falling. The emperor's heart was all the more tormented by rage as he considered how to destroy the saints and take vengeance upon the nobles. In the morning he ordered the holy martyrs to be thrown into a pit filled with poisonous serpents; but there, too, they remained unharmed, were comforted by the appearance of Angels, and were brought out whole. Then they were hung up and their bodies scraped down to the bones, but the martyrs again proved to be without wounds. At last, not knowing what else to do, the emperor condemned them to be beheaded by the sword. As the saints were being led outside the city for their execution, many of the people who believed followed them, weeping and saying:

– Servants of the true God, why do you leave us without instruction?

The saints answered:

– The merciful God will provide what is needful for you, as He knows and wills. Only believe in Him without wavering, and He will grant you what will be for your benefit.

Some of the emperor's servants went to him and reported that all the people had joined these three Christians and might prevent their beheading.

The emperor said:

– Send three hundred armed soldiers outside the city, so that they may slaughter the people who follow these deceivers as well.

The servants reported to him that some of the nobles were among the people, and that Elpidiphorus was there too; they asked whether they might slaughter them along with the rest. The emperor ordered Elpidiphorus to be summoned. Elpidiphorus came to the emperor, bringing with him three other dignitaries. The emperor bowed his head and sat in silence for a long while; then, raising his head, he said:

– Elpidiphorus! Why, forsaking the gods of your fathers, have you chosen to turn to the false Christians?[10] Know, then, that I will spare no one who believes in the Crucified One.

Elpidiphorus answered:

– Do as you wish; we are ready to die at once for Christ crucified, for He alone is the true and righteous God, and there is no other besides Him. All your gods are demons, whom we renounce and reject; and we despise you, servant of demons, and your unclean sacrifices to idols.

Then the emperor condemned them to death and pronounced this sentence over them: "Elpidiphorus and all his fellow-believers, who have forsaken the most radiant gods and preferred death to this life: I command that they be beheaded with the sword, so that they may receive what they themselves desired; and whoever wishes to take up and bury their bodies may do so without fear."

The soldiers, seizing them at once, led them outside the city to the holy martyrs and to all the people who had believed in Christ. When the emperor's command had been read aloud there before everyone, they all cried out:

"Glory to Thee, O God, who hast shown us the good way, so that we, delivered from this dark and treacherous world, may come to Thee, our God, bow before Thy throne, and behold Thee, the Light Unapproachable."

They began to kiss one another. The soldiers, surrounding them, struck them down, and about seven thousand who had believed in Christ fell then by the sword, together with St. Elpidiphorus.

Acindynus, Pegasius and Anempodistus were not beheaded, but by the emperor's command were again cast into prison.

In the morning the emperor ordered a fiery furnace to be prepared, to burn the holy martyrs in it. When the saints were brought out of the prison, the emperor said to them:

"Do you see this furnace? Here it has been prepared for you."

The blessed Acindynus said:

10. Probably the king, hearing of the three Persons of the Godhead, supposed that Christians also worshipped several gods and among them one principal god.

"For you a still greater furnace has been prepared in the fiery Gehenna, in which you will burn forever together with the demons who share your name."

The emperor said angrily:

"Am I a demon?"

The Saint answered:

"Both your deeds and your name show a demon in you, for you do what is proper to demons, and your name means 'king of demons'; and well did your mother name you Sapor, for you are of one mind with the demons."

The emperor said to those standing about:

"Ask my mother to come here to me."

When his mother came, he rose from his throne; having shown her honor, he seated her beside himself and said:

"Tell me, Mother, what is my name?"

The mother answered:

"You bear the name of your grandfather: your grandfather was called Sapor, and your name is Sapor."

The emperor, pointing with his finger at the saints, said:

"But these lawbreakers say that my name is a demonic name."

His mother laughed at this, for she already believed in Christ but was concealing it from her wicked son. The emperor, seeing that his mother had laughed, flew into a rage, rushed at her and began to strike her on the face. She fell at the feet of the holy martyrs and, weeping, said:

"Save my old age, servants of Christ, for I see that I have borne not only a son of that name but in truth a demon and a wretched satan."

The emperor, seeing that his mother too had come to believe in Christ, condemned her also to be cast into the fiery furnace together with the holy martyrs. Besides this, some of the soldiers present also believed, twenty-eight in number, and all were cast into the furnace, together with Acindynus, Pegasius and Anempodistus and with the blessed mother of the emperor; praying in the fire, they gave up their holy souls to God. Worthy people saw a host of holy Angels singing around the furnace and receiving the souls of the saints, and an indes-

cribable fragrance rose from the martyrs' bodies. When the furnace went out, the emperor withdrew into the palace, and everyone dispersed; then some of the faithful came to the furnace and found the bodies of the saints whole and undamaged by the fire; they took them and gave them an honorable burial, glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God, to Whom be glory forever, Amen.

Troparion, Tone 2:

O Passion-bearers of the Lord, blessed is the land that drank of your blood, and holy the dwellings that received your bodies; for in the arena ye vanquished the enemy and boldly preached Christ. Beseech Him, Who is Good, that our souls may be saved, we pray.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

O pious and God-bearing martyrs, who on earth forsook all things, Thou didst receive into the delight of Thy good things and into rest Acindynus, Pegasius, Anempodistus, with them Aphonius, and Elpidiphorus, O Thou who alone art most good.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Marcian

Память преподобного Маркиана

Our Venerable Father Marcian was a native of Cyrrhus. Leaving his homeland and property, he withdrew into a remote desert. Here he built for himself so small a cell that it could hold only one man, and, clothed in coarse hair-cloth, he enclosed himself in it. His food was three ongiae[11] of bread and a little water, and that only after sunset. After some time had passed, Marcian received two newcomers, who built a tent. He, however, continued as before in seclusion, never lighting a candle, having a divine light that shone for him at night, by the help of which he occupied himself with reading books, having with him a "little Psalter." Once a great serpent, bending over their hut from outside, so terrified the ascetics that they were greatly frightened. The

11. An ongia was the twelfth part of a pound, or 8 zolotniks.

Saint, making the sign of the Cross with his finger, breathed upon it, and as a dried reed is consumed by fire, so the serpent was at once destroyed.

At another time Flavian, Patriarch of Antioch[12], and the bishop of Cyrrhus and some other bishops, distinguished and eloquent men, came to him and urged him, citing certain passages of the Divine Scriptures, that for the benefit of many he should leave his solitude; but he would not even hear of it. This wondrous man brought many back to the true Orthodox faith from various heresies.

Once the Venerable One's sister came with her son, having taken various delicacies, and set out to visit him. He did not wish to see his sister, accepted nothing of what she had brought, and only admitted his nephew to his presence. To his sister's entreaties that he take what she had brought, St. Marcian asked:

"Did you offer this at some other monastery among those you met when you came here?"

"No, we did not offer it at any of them," the sister replied.

"Go," answered the Saint, "with what you came with, since you did this out of natural kinship."

This great and wondrous saint was loved both by those near and those far. Learning that many were quarreling among themselves as to who should possess his body after his repose—for which purpose they were preparing shrines and building churches—the Saint made his disciple Eusebius swear an oath that he would bury his body secretly, far from the cell. Having bequeathed this, he departed to the Lord[13].

* * *



12. St. Flavian was Patriarch 381–404. His memory is 18 February.

13. The repose of St. Marcian is dated to the year 388. His memory is still celebrated on 18 January.

THE THIRD DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 3

3 ноября

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

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Acepsimas the Bishop, Joseph the Presbyter, and Aithalas the Deacon

Страдание святых мучеников Акепсима епископа, Иосифа пресвитера и Аифала диакона

In the land of Persia, in a city called Naesson[1], there lived a pious bishop named Acepsimas. From the days of his youth he had exercised himself in every virtue, preserving the blamelessness of his life until the very end of his old age. Though already eighty years old, he still retained strength amid his labors to perform the strenuous ascetic struggles of fasting and prayer, and zealously cared for the flock entrusted to him. Yet a still greater struggle did he reveal at his end, when he stood steadfastly, even unto blood, for his Lord, for Whom he zealously laid down his life after long and grievous torments. Several years before his martyrdom, he received this prophecy concerning his suffering:

Once, as he reclined in his house, his servant boy, filled with a prophetic spirit, kissed him upon the head and said:

"Blessed is this head, for it shall suffer martyrdom for Christ."

He rejoiced at this prophecy and said:

"May it be unto me, child, according to thy word."

At that time, one of his beloved friends, the bishop of a neighboring city, was sitting with Acepsimas. Hearing the words spoken by the boy, he smiled and said to him:

"Tell me, child, do you know anything about us also?"

1. One of the little-known cities; ecclesiastically, it was probably subject to the metropolitan see of Mosul (Mosul is on the Tigris River) or of Nineveh.

The God-inspired boy answered:

"You shall see your city no more, but shall repose on the way to it, in the village of Etradan[2]."

This boy's prophecy was fulfilled concerning both bishops. One died on the way, in the village mentioned; and the head of Bishop Acepsimas was indeed vouchsafed the crown of martyrdom. This came to pass as follows.

The impious Persian king Sapor raised up a great persecution against the Christians in his land. On the very day of Christ's saving Passion, he sent a decree throughout all the lands subject to him, ordering that all who confessed Christ throughout Persia be put to death. At that time an innumerable multitude of Christians were mercilessly slain by the impious in cities and villages.

The priests and magi[7056] burned with greater fury than all the rest against the Christians; diligently they sought out those in hiding, dragged them from their houses and secret places, and delivered them to cruel death. Some of the faithful gave themselves into their hands and bravely shed their blood. Many of the court officials were put to death for Christ. The eunuch[3] Azadis, whom the king greatly loved, was put to death with them, as a true servant of Jesus Christ and a confessor of His Most Holy Name.

When the king learned of the death of his beloved eunuch Azadis, he greatly grieved for him and halted the wholesale extermination of the Christians, ordering only that the leaders and teachers of the Christian faith be sought out and put to death.

When the king's decree had been proclaimed everywhere, the chiefs of the magi and priests diligently went throughout all Persia, searching for Christian bishops and priests and putting them to death in various ways.

2. A village not far from Naesson.

3. The word "eunuch" properly means a castrated man. In the East, such men were guardians of royal harems; in antiquity, they often advanced from this position to high offices of state. Later, "eunuch" was sometimes used generally to mean a person holding a high office of state, a courtier, or a dignitary, even if he was not castrated.

At that time the holy Bishop Acepsimas was also seized. As those who had taken him were leading him from his house, one of his household came up to the saint and whispered in his ear:

"Make some provision concerning your house."

Pointing to the house with his hand, he said:

"This house is mine no longer, for without delay I shall go to the house on high.[4]"

When he arrived in the city of Arbela[5] and was brought before the prince of the magi, whose name was Adrach, the prince asked Saint Acepsimas:

"Who are you?"

Acepsimas boldly confessed himself a Christian.

The prince said to him:

"Is it true what they say of you—that you do not obey the king's decree and preach one God?"

The saint answered fearlessly:

"All that you have heard concerning us is true: I preach one God and persuade those who come to me to know Him and believe in Him together with me."

The prince said:

"We have heard that you are wiser than others, but now we see that you are no better than senseless children. For what wisdom is there in resisting the king's decree and refusing to worship the bright sun and the fire, which the king himself worships?"

The saint answered:

"Both your king and you with him are utterly mad, for you have forsaken the Creator and worship the creation."

The prince said in anger:

"You call us mad, though we honor such an element and worship the sun, which gives life and light to all? Lying old man! You yourself are

4. This means the heavenly dwelling to which the true followers of Christ enter, according to His own commandment (Jn. 14:2–3). The word "heavenly" means on high, upper, celestial (cf. Ezek. 41:7; Col. 3:2).

truly mad; and if you do not submit to the king's decree, your old age will not spare you grievous torments, nor will your crucified God[6] deliver you from our hands."

The saint said:

"May your foul mouth be stopped, impious man, for it blasphemes my God! You would frighten me with your threats, that I might turn away from the traditions of my fathers, which I learned in my youth and in which I have lived until these gray hairs. Though you exalt yourself in your pride before me, saying that neither old age nor my God will deliver me from your hands, yet I shall not exchange what is better for what is worse. For what profit would it be to me to escape your hands for these few days? For soon, even without you, the common debt of mortal nature will be required of me.[7] I shall not worship the sun, nor give honor to the fire, lest anyone mock my old age or think that life is dearer to me than my God; I shall not sell such great heavenly blessings for a life that is brief."

The magus immediately ordered that the saint be stretched out naked on the ground and beaten soundly with knotted clubs. They struck him over his whole body, until the earth was stained with his blood.

After the prolonged beating, the torturer set him before him again and said:

"Acepsimas! Where is your God? Let Him come now and deliver you from my hands."

The saint answered:

"O most lawless man! My God is everywhere present. He fills heaven and earth and has power to deliver me from your hands. But I beseech His goodness not to deliver me from the torments you inflict, but to send me endurance amid them, so that, having endured to the end, I may inherit the crown of life. And what torment and death do you de-

5. Arbela is a city on one of the tributaries of the River Zapata (otherwise Zabata), itself a left-hand tributary of the Tigris. The city lies not far from Nineveh and is notable because, 12 miles to its west, near Gaugamela, a battle took place in which Alexander the Great defeated Darius Codomannus for the 2nd time, thereafter becoming master of the entire Persian Empire.

6. These words contain a blasphemous mockery, for execution by **crucifixion** was considered shameful and was inflicted upon the most criminal and contemptible people.

7. This means death, or, in other words, that all people are mortal by nature.

serve, you who rise up against the Living God—you, who are earth and ashes? Truly you deserve to be consumed in the fire that you now worship as a god, so that your god may burn you forever."

Hearing this, the prince of the magi burned with anger and ordered the saint to be fettered with heavy iron chains and cast into prison.

The following morning, the presbyter Joseph[8], seventy years of age, and the deacon Aithalas[9] were also seized. Both were righteous and holy men, whose zeal for God was like a two-edged sword, cutting down godlessness. They were brought before the impious magus, who looked proudly upon them and said:

"O lost men! Why do you go about among simple people and deceive them with your unrighteous teaching?"

The presbyter answered:

"We do not deceive people, but turn them from deception to the true God, Who is Lord and Creator of the sun and fire and of all visible and invisible creatures. Our teaching is righteous because it teaches of the one righteous God."

The magus said:

"Which teaching is more righteous: that followed by the king and all his commanders, or that followed by wicked, outcast, poor, and insignificant people such as you?"

The presbyter answered:

"Indeed, we are lowly and outcast people in this world, for our Lord shows favor to those who do not abide in riches that destroy the soul and in worldly pride, but in poverty and humility. For this reason many among us voluntarily become poor and humble, giving their possessions into the hands of the needy, for which we hope to receive a hundredfold reward from our Lord. And if we were to devote ourselves to gathering riches, we would grow richer by the labor of our own hands than you, who do nothing but consume the fruits of others' toil and oppressively take away the possessions of other, needy people. For us, our own labor is enough to feed ourselves according to our needs, and to feed our weaker brethren as well.

8. Joseph was a presbyter from Beth-Ketuba in Adiabene.
9. Aithalas was a deacon from the region by the Euphrates in Babylonia.

"We know that the way into the Kingdom of Heaven is difficult for the rich, and that those who strive to become rich fall into temptation."

"Leave off your long, lying speeches and worship the fire and the sun," said the magus, interrupting him.

The presbyter answered:

"Do not hope that you will ever see me obey your lawless will, for I shall not forsake Him Who created the fire and the sun, nor worship the creation."

Hearing this, the magus ordered that the holy presbyter Joseph be stripped, stretched out, and beaten with rods of rosewood, whose branches were thorny like a bramble, until all his skin had been stripped away and his flesh began to fall from his bones.

The magus immediately ordered that the saint be stretched out naked on the ground and beaten soundly with knotted clubs. They struck him over his whole body, until the earth was stained with his blood.

The saint, all covered with blood, cried out:

"I thank Thee, O Lord my God, that Thou hast been pleased to wash me from my sins in my own blood."

After many blows, the saint was bound with two iron chains and sent to the prison where Saint Acepsimas was, and there amid their sufferings they found comfort in one another, encouraging one another with hope in God's mercy.

When the presbyter had been led away to prison, the deacon Aithalas remained before the prince of the magi, standing bound.

The magus looked at him and said:

"And what do you say? Will you obey the king's decree? Will you worship the great sun? Will you taste the blood of sacrifice, that you may escape the calamities awaiting you? Or will you remain stubborn and disobedient, like the others?"

The holy deacon answered:

"To drink blood is the work of your defiled gray hairs; you count as God what was created by God. I will not be as blind in the eyes of the soul as you are, nor will I honor the creature above the Creator."

Then the tormentor ordered that his hands be bound beneath his knees and a large stake thrust through the bound hands, and six execu-

tioners, three on each side, to stand upon the ends of the wood and so press down on the saint, while beating him without mercy with thorned rods. The soldiers, leaping upon the stake, beat the martyr's joints, lashed him with rods, and tore his body to pieces.

The saint, enduring valiantly, said to the magus:

"You take your pleasure, tormentor, in seeing a human body torn to pieces, as a dog or a raven takes pleasure in seeing a corpse and desires to glut itself upon it. Yet know, impious man, that I count these torments as nothing."

The magus, kindled to still greater fury, ordered that the saint be beaten harder, until his bones were broken and the flesh began to fall away from the bones. Then, ceasing to beat him, they carried him to the prison, for because of the cruel wounds he was wholly unable to walk on his feet; and bringing him, they threw him down like some burden beside the first two sufferers.

After five days, the saints were brought out of the prison to a place called Rai, where there was a temple of the fire-god whom the impious Persians worshipped.

The chief of the magi, seated there in judgment, said to the saints:

"Tell me without delay whether you will still remain in your madness, or whether, changing for the better, you will be with us."

The saints answered:

"Let it be known to you, judge, that in the conviction which we have held from the beginning we remain to this day, and will abide in it to the end. Neither by threats, nor by torments, nor by gifts, nor by any other means will you change our good confession. The one God, the Lord of all, we know and confess; in Him alone we believe, and Him alone we worship."

The magus, hearing this, at once devised a new torment. He ordered the martyrs to be bound with ropes under the arms, and likewise at the thighs and shins, and, inserting sticks into the ropes, to twist them, drawing the ropes tight in this way. As this was done, the saints endured cruel torments and sufferings, for their bones were broken, so that the cracking of the breaking bones could be heard even by those standing at a distance.

The tormentors said to them:

"Do not resist the king's will."

They answered:

"Whoever carries out the will of your lawless king sets himself against God."

Thus they tortured the saints from the third hour until the sixth [10]. Then the tormentor ordered that they be led back again to the prison, but the saints could not walk by themselves, so they were carried like burdens and thrown back into the same place where they had been before. The tormentor gave orders to the guards that they should not allow anyone to come to them, and that whoever wished to give them food, or drink, or clothing should at once be seized and put to death. And the sufferers for Christ remained in this prison for three years in great want, weakened by hunger and thirst and enduring extreme pain from their festering wounds, so that even the guards, seeing their wretched condition, were moved to pity and wept many times. But, having a strict prohibition from the prince, they feared to grant them any relief; only secretly did one of them, or of the other prisoners there, sometimes give them a piece of bread or a little water. Thus they endured for the love of Christ.

After three years, when Sapor, king of Persia, arrived there, there came with him the chief prince over all the Persian magi, named Ardasabor. Learning of the holy martyrs Acepsimas, Joseph and Aithalas, who were in the prison, he ordered that they be brought before him.

When the saints came out of the prison, they were like a reed shaken by the wind, so weakened were they. Worn out by hunger and thirst, they had dried up like hay and were blown down by the wind, and they could not walk on their own. When they were brought before the prince Ardasabor, they presented a wondrous sight, for their appearance was like that of the dead lying in a tomb: their eyes were deeply sunken, and their bones were covered only with skin.

10. In the East, the beginning of the day was reckoned, according to our way of telling time, from 6 o'clock in the morning. Hence the 3rd hour of the day was, by our reckoning, 9 o'clock in the morning, and the 6th hour was 12 noon.

The prince, seeing them, said:

"Are you Christians?" They answered:

"Yes, we are Christians; we believe in the one living God and worship Him."

The prince said:

"Do you see what calamity your faith has brought upon you, what misfortunes and sorrows? For through many tortures and long imprisonment you have lost the form of living men and have become like the dead lying in a tomb. I advise you to worship the radiant sun. If you do not obey me, you will die a cruel death."

The saints with one voice refused such impiety and confessed the true God, who created not only the sun but every creature, and they showed their full readiness to die for the Creator of all.

After a long dispute, when the prince found himself unable to bend them to his will, he ordered that first the holy Acepsimas be beaten on the back and the belly with a rough strap; and thirty soldiers beat him, while the herald cried out:

"Submit to the king's command and you will live."

The saint, as long as he had strength, answered:

"I strive to fulfil the will of my Lord with all the strength I have received from Him."

Then, growing weak, he fell silent. After this his holy head was cut off; and the prophecy of that God-inspired youth was fulfilled, who once, kissing his head, had said:

"Blessed is this head, for it shall receive torment for Christ."

The body of the holy martyr was dragged out into the street and thrown to be eaten by dogs, and the guards, standing at a distance, kept watch lest the Christians steal it. After three days, when the guards had withdrawn somewhere, the Christians took this precious treasure and gave it an honorable burial.

After the slaying of the holy Acepsimas, by the tormentor's command they began to beat the holy presbyter Joseph, and the herald cried out:

"You will live if you submit to the king's will."

The holy man cried out:

"God is One, and there is none other beside Him, by whom we live, move and have our being [11]; in Him we believe, Him we worship, but the king's command we disregard."

After prolonged beatings he grew faint and became as if dead. The tormentors, thinking he had died, dragged him out and threw him down in the marketplace; then, learning that he was still breathing, they took him and shut him up in the prison.

After the holy Joseph had been removed, the prince began to speak to the holy Aithalas:

"Before your eyes lie life and death, honor and dishonor; do not choose for yourself the worse, leaving the better. Do not go the way that the madmen went, and received a punishment fitting their deeds. But heed my counsel, that you may be granted great honors and receive gifts from the royal hand; if you do not heed me, you yourself will be to blame for your destruction."

The holy deacon answered:

"It would be a great shame for me, before heaven and earth, if I did not go the same way that my fathers went before me. If they, being old in years and feeble in flesh, suffered so manfully, why should I, younger in years and stronger in body, fear these temporal torments? I do not fear death for Christ, who died for me; I do not wish to lose eternal life for temporal life; I will not sell my piety for your gifts and honors."

Then the prince said in anger to those around him:

"Take him and beat him harder than the first ones."

The saint said:

"Stinking and unclean dog! These torments terrify only the faint-hearted, not strong men, whose souls burn with desire to be united with Christ."

And they began to beat the holy Aithalas severely. The prince, with amazement, said to his men:

"Why is it that Christians disregard this life, and desire death as if it were worldly good fortune?"

Those around him said to him:

11. The expression is taken from Acts 17:28.

"They have a teaching handed down from their fathers, which says that there is another world, better than this one; believing this teaching, they disregard this world in hope of the better, and therefore they willingly choose death for themselves."

Meanwhile, while the prince for many hours engaged in such conversation with his attendants, the saint in the meantime received countless wounds.

Then the prince, feigning mercy, ordered the beating to stop, and said to the saint:

"Submit to the king's will and you will be well, for we have physicians who can heal all your wounds."

The saint answered:

"Even if you could heal me of my wounds with a single word, I would still not submit to your lawlessness."

The prince said:

"I said this to test you; for even if you had submitted, it would already be impossible for you to be healed of such and so many wounds, which only death can heal. Be, then, an example [12] for all Christians, that they may not dare to resist the king or dishonor his princes."

The saint answered:

"Lawless judge! Although you always speak falsehood, now, against your will, you have spoken the truth: I shall be an example of courage and magnanimity for all Christians; for many of the faithful, looking upon me as a living example and seeing my steadfast suffering for Christ, will be filled with zeal for the Lord their God and will go to the same torments for Him."

The prince, marveling at his courage and endurance, glanced at his favorite friend standing nearby, named Adesha, who was from the city of Arbela, and said to him:

"Take these two Christians, Joseph and Aithalas, to your city, and see that they are stoned to death by their own fellow Christians."

He did not wish to execute them himself by the sword, so that the Christian teachers might meet their end at Christian hands.

12. That is, as a warning example of how those who disobey the royal will are punished.

Adesh laid them upon animals,[13] like sheaves or lifeless wood, for they could neither walk nor sit, since all their limbs had been paralyzed by their countless torments. Therefore he bound them to the animals and went with them to his city. On the way, whenever it was necessary to stop for rest or for the night, they were taken down from the animals and laid upon the ground like dead bodies, for they could not move either hands or feet, being utterly benumbed by the beatings. If anyone, out of compassion, wished to give them food or a little water, he had to put it into their mouths with his own hands. Then they were lifted from the ground again, laid upon the animals, and carried off, bound like the dead. When they arrived in the city of Arbela, they were shut up in a foul dungeon, and no Christian was permitted to visit them or care for them in any way. Their wounds had festered badly; pus and blood flowed from their sores, and there was no one to bind their wounds, turn them onto their other side, or give them a cup of cold water. Thus the saints suffered for God.

There was in that city a believing and holy woman named Snandulia, who secretly nourished those suffering in prison for Christ. When she learned that Joseph and Aithalas were in prison, she came there by night with her servants. Having given the guards much gold, she entered the prison and found them barely alive: they could no longer speak at all and scarcely breathed. Snandulia entreated the guards to allow her to take the saints to her house for a short time, promising to bring them back to the prison before daybreak, and the guards permitted her. Taking the martyrs, she carried them to her house, which stood not far from the prison. Laying them upon a bed, she washed their sores, wiped their blood with clean towels, smeared it upon her own body, anointed them with precious myrrh, bound their scabs, kissed their broken hands and feet, and wept bitterly over them. When their suffering had eased somewhat, Joseph came to himself and, looking up, saw this pious woman weeping bitterly over him. He began to speak to her little by little:

13. This refers to mules and donkeys, which were ridden and used for carrying loads. Camels were used to transport heavier loads over greater distances.

"Such kindness from you, O holy woman, is pleasing to God and to us who suffer for Him; but it is not fitting to weep so bitterly over us, and such lamentation is foreign to our Christian hope and faith."

The woman answered:

"I rejoice that Christ has given you such courage that you steadfastly endure cruel torments; I would rejoice yet more if I saw you endure martyrdom to the end. But to weep is natural to human nature."

St. Joseph said to her:

"Nevertheless, you ought not to weep for us, for you know that all the sorrows endured for Christ bring eternal joy in their train."

When day began to dawn, the saints were at once carried back to the prison. Six months later, when the saints had somewhat recovered from their wounds and were able to stand and walk a little, though Aithalas's hands still hung motionless, Adesh, to whom they had been handed over for execution by Ardasabor, was removed from his office, and another judge came in his place, more cruel than the first, named Zerov. When he came to the city and began offering sacrifices in the temple of their god, fire, the priests informed him of the holy martyrs Joseph and Aithalas, saying:

"There are two Christian teachers in prison who were earlier tortured by Ardasabor and then brought here, so that the Christians themselves might stone them. Since they could not walk because of their wounds, we did not bring them out for execution, but waited until they recovered, so that we might compel them to conform to our beliefs."

Hearing this, the judge at once ordered them to be brought before him, and argued with them at length, seeking by kindness and threats to compel them to worship fire and partake of their sacrifices. When he gained nothing by this, he first ordered St. Joseph to be hung upside down, naked, and beaten with ox sinews. As he was beaten fiercely, his wounds, which had begun to heal, opened again, and blood flowed in streams, as though from springs. Some of the magi standing there approached the saint and whispered:

"Man! If you are ashamed to enter the temple of our god before everyone and offer sacrifice with us, then promise to do so secretly, and you will be freed from torment."

But the saint cried aloud: *Ps. 6:9* "Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity, for the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping."

They beat him for three hours; then the torturer ordered them to take him down and carry him to the prison, for once again he could not walk because his wounds had opened.

When St. Joseph had been taken down and carried to the prison, St. Aithalas was hung in his place and likewise beaten without mercy for a long time. He continually cried out:

"I am a Christian!"

When St. Aithalas too had been taken down, they hung in his place a man of the wicked Manichaean heresy,[7068] who likewise confessed his wicked faith before everyone and reproached the Persians for their impiety. After hanging him, they began to beat him. At first he endured the wounds inflicted upon him; but when they began to beat him more cruelly, he cried out in a loud voice, cursing his teacher, renouncing his faith, and promising to worship the Persian gods. St. Aithalas, who was present, heard this, rejoiced greatly, and mocked him, saying:

"You have only tasted torment, and already you have denied your Manichaeus. Blessed is Christ our God, who strengthens us in all the most cruel torments and grants us the power to be invincible and steadfast in our pious faith!"

Hearing this, the judge grew angry with the saint and ordered him to be beaten again with thorny rose branches. They beat him until they thought he was dead, then dragged him away and cast him aside like a corpse. One of the magi, seeing his naked body lying there, took pity on him, obeying the natural feeling of compassion, and covered him with a sheet. Some of his companions saw what he had done and told the judge; they seized him and beat him mercilessly. Thus the merciless repaid him for his kindness. Seeing that St. Aithalas was still breathing, they took him by the feet and dragged him to the prison.

After some time, the holy martyrs were again brought out of the prison before the judge, and he said to them:

"Have pity on yourselves, men; partake of the sacrificial blood and be freed from your torments."

They answered with one voice:

"It is fitting for blood to be drunk not by men, but only by flesh-eating dogs. But although you are human by nature, you are a dog by disposition, barking at God, your Creator; so drink the blood yourself and be sated with it."

The judge grew angry and again ordered them to be beaten. Those present, pitying them, began to say:

"At least partake of the boiled sacrificial meat instead of the blood, and be freed from your torments."

The saints answered:

"We will in no way defile our undefiled faith."

After this, the judge and his counselors confirmed the following sentence against the holy martyrs: that the Christians should stone them.

Then St. Joseph said:

"I wish to tell the judge a certain secret."

The judge immediately approached him, thinking that he wished to offer sacrifice to the idols. But the saint spat in the judge's face and said:

"Are you not ashamed, inhuman judge, to contend so cruelly against human nature and turn your fury against men who are dying?"

The judge returned to his place in shame. At once a multitude of servants were sent to the Christians' homes, and they forcibly brought the Christians from their houses to the tribunal, so that they might stone St. Joseph. They dragged him to an open place a little distance from the tribunal, dug a pit up to his thighs, and set the saint in it, since otherwise he could not stand. They bound his hands behind his back and placed the Christians around him. The servants put stones into the Christians' hands and compelled them to throw them at the saint, which they did, though against their will. Blessed Snandulia was also brought there, and they tried to make her throw a stone at the saint.

But she cried out:

"Never has it been heard from of old that anyone compelled a woman to raise her hand against holy men, as you are doing, warring not against your enemies but against us, and filling with blood and murder your fatherland, which is at peace."

The impious fastened an iron horn to a long pole and placed it in Snandulia's hands, so that she might pierce the saint with it from afar. But she said:

"It would be better for me if this were thrust into my own heart than that I should touch the holy and innocent body."

A great heap of stones was cast around the saint, so that only his head could be seen. One of the impious men lifted a large stone, raised it above the saint's head, and struck him on the head with it, crushing it. Thus the good sufferer surrendered his spirit into the hands of the Lord. A guard was set to watch the martyr's body as though it were some treasure, lest the faithful steal it. After three days, a great earthquake took place. Fire fell from heaven, burned the guards, and scattered the stones like dust. When the earthquake, thunder, and lightning had ceased, people came to the place where the saint's body had been covered with stones, and saw that the stones had been scattered; but they did not find the saint's body, for the Lord, by judgments known to Him alone, had carried it away to places unknown.

The holy Deacon Aithalas was taken to a village called Patrias[14], where Christians too, under compulsion, stoned him. The monks living nearby came by night, secretly took his holy body, and committed it to honorable burial. At the place where St. Aithalas was slain, a myrtle tree[15] grew, from which every kind of illness was healed through the prayers of the holy Martyr. The tree stood for five years, healing the in-

14. This village was in the region of Beth-Nugard. Nugards was a city with a bishopric subject to the metropolitan see of Mosul.

15. Mersina – the myrtle, the myrtle tree. It grows in Asia, in the tropical countries of America, in Africa – in Egypt and in southern Europe, along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. This tree reaches a height of 3 sazhens, has reddish bark and long, strong branches with small evergreen leaves, and with fragrant white flowers that open in May. The myrtle tree was the most beloved of the ancients; it was cultivated in gardens, dwellings were adorned with it on festive days, and myrtle wreaths were placed upon the head during banquets, especially wedding feasts. Among the ancients the myrtle was regarded in general as a symbol of love and quiet happiness, an image of joyful circumstances in the present and of bright hopes for the future.

firmities of all who came. Seeing this, the impious, out of envy, cut it down to its roots. Many of the worthy saw heavenly light shining at that place, and Angels singing and glorifying God, who glorifies His saints; through whose prayers may we too be made worthy to sing with the Angels the glory of God in the highest unto the ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

O wise in divine things, thou didst blamelessly initiate into the mysteries; thou wast an acceptable sacrifice, O blessed one; for gloriously didst thou drink the cup of Christ, holy Akepsimas, together with thy fellow sufferers, continually praying for us all.

* * *

Consecration of the Church of the Great Martyr George in Lydda

Освящение храма святого великомученика Георгия в Лидде

On November 3, the Russian Church commemorates the consecration of the Church of the Great Martyr George in Lydda.

The Great Martyr George suffered during the fierce persecution of the Church under the Roman Emperor Diocletian. During his sufferings, while imprisoned, St. George asked the prison guard to allow his servant to visit him in the prison; when the servant was admitted, he persuaded him to take his body to Palestine after his death. The servant faithfully fulfilled his master's request. Taking the beheaded body of the Great Martyr from the prison, he buried it honorably in the city of Ramla[16].

During the reign of the pious Emperor Constantine, those who venerated the Great Martyr built a beautiful church in his name in Lydda. By the time of its consecration, the incorrupt relics of the Great Martyr had been translated from Ramla to this church. This event took place on November 3. It is unknown whether an annual celebration of this day had already been established then; in any case, in the calendar of

16. Ramla – a city in Palestine, not far from Joppa.

the Syrian Church dating from 1030, November 3 is marked as a feast day.

Later, the magnificent church of the Great Martyr, which was one of the chief adornments of the city of Lydda, fell into great disrepair. Only the sanctuary and the Great Martyr's tomb itself remained unharmed, and there Christians continued to celebrate their divine services. The Orthodox Russian Church's concern for this church awoke in the second half of the 19th century. Donations from benefactors and the abundant funds granted by the Russian government made it possible for Lydda once again to see the church restored and adorned. The consecration of the renovated church took place in 1872, on November 3, the anniversary of the day on which it had first been consecrated. To this day, the Russian Church commemorates this remarkable event on this day; many monasteries and churches have been built in Russia in honor of this feast.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having recourse to thy invincible and speedy intercession, we, the faithful, beseech thee, O Passion-bearer of Christ: deliver those who sing to thee from the snares of the enemy, and from every affliction and distress, that we may cry: Rejoice, O Martyr George.

* * *

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Akepsimas

Память преподобного Акепсима

St. Akepsimas lived during the reign of Theodosius the Great[17]. Having shut himself in a small cell, he lived there for 60 years, enduring intense heat and cold, seeing no one and speaking with no one, but praying only to God. His cell was dug into the ground and was very uncomfortable to dwell in; his food was lentils mixed with water, and even that he ate only once a week. He drew water for drinking from a nearby spring at night, so that no one would see him. After re-

17. Theodosius the Great – Roman emperor from 379 to 395. In his reign the Christian faith was finally established in the Roman Empire.

peated entreaties, he accepted the rank of bishop and, having wrought many miracles, peacefully gave up his spirit to the Lord.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Atticus, Agapia, Eudoxius, Catherius, Istucarius, Pactovius, and Nictopolion

Память святых мучеников Аттика, Агапии, Евдоксия, Катерия, Истукария, Пактовия и Никтополиона

The holy Martyrs Atticus and Eudoxius served as soldiers in the city of Sebastia[18] during the reign of Decius[19], together with Catherius and Istucarius. For spreading the faith in Christ, the saints were seized by the general Marcellus, who subjected them to many tortures. Afterward they were cast into prison, where they were beaten on their shoulders and bellies with ox sinews, and then their teeth were broken. During the torture, the general turned to St. Catherius and asked:

"Did you teach the people not to obey the royal commands?"

"I did not teach the people," he replied, "to oppose the king, but I taught them to believe in the immortal King Christ."

After this, the saints Istucarius, Pactovius, and Nictopolion were brought forward. They confessed Christ God, for which they were condemned and beaten with clubs; they also endured many other tortures and were at last condemned to be burned together with the others, and so they finished their lives in the Lord.

* * *

NOTES

7056. In antiquity, the name "Magi," or "wise men," denoted learned men endowed with great and extensive knowledge, especially of the secret powers of nature, the heavenly bodies, sacred writings, hieroglyphs, and the like. They observed natural phenomena, interpreted dreams, and foretold the future; for the most part, they were also priests and enjoyed great importance and respect both at royal courts and among the

18. Several cities are known by this name. Here Sebastia in Armenia is meant.

19. Decius – Roman emperor, a cruel persecutor of Christians; he reigned from 249 to 251.

people. The Magi of Persia are mentioned in the Book of the Prophet Daniel (Dan. 2:1–49 and following); from Persia, too, the Magi probably came to worship the Savior who had been born (Mt. 2:1–23). There were Magi in other countries as well, for example, in Babylon, Assyria, and Media (see the Book of the Prophet Daniel; cf. Num. 22:1–41, 23:1–30), and in Egypt (Gen. 41:8; Ex. 7:11). The word "Magus," originally synonymous with "wise man," later came to be applied to sorcerers, enchanters, ventriloquists, conjurers of the dead, and the like.

7068. Manichaeism is a heresy that arose in Persia under the influence of an attempt to unite Christianity with the principles of the Persian religion of Zoroaster, which taught dualism—that is, the existence from eternity of two independent principles or kingdoms, good and evil. The founder of Manichaeism, Manes (who lived in the 3rd century), was first a Magus, then embraced Christianity and even became a presbyter, but was soon excommunicated from the Church because of his inclination toward the pagan Persian religion; later, under the Persian King Varanes I, he was executed. According to his teaching, Christ is merely a luminous aeon (spirit), proceeding from the Father of light by emanation. One half of Him was swallowed up by matter and became the soul of the visible world, the so-called Suffering Jesus; the other, with the help of another aeon, the Life-giving Spirit, was freed from matter and placed in the sun: this is the so-called Passionless Jesus. Christ's Incarnation is the descent of the Passionless Jesus from the sun to free the Suffering Jesus, whose luminous particles Satan supposedly gathered and confined in a human being for the greater convenience of possessing them. According to this teaching, Christ's Incarnation was merely an appearance (Docetism). In moral terms, it preached a struggle against matter, in order to free the light from it through the gradual mortification of the flesh within oneself. The heresy of the Manichaeans was especially widespread in the 4th and 5th centuries.



THE FOURTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 4

4 ноября

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

Life of our Venerable Father Ioannicius the Great

Житие преподобного отца нашего Иоанникия Великого

The Venerable Ioannicius was born in the region of Bithynia[1], in a village called Maricati[2]. His father was named Myritricius, and his mother, Anastasia. When Ioannicius began to grow up, his parents entrusted him with the care of their livestock. Though he had no schooling, he surpassed many learned men in understanding, for he had learned the commandments of the Lord. Following the promptings of the Holy Spirit, who instructed him, he was exceedingly virtuous, meek, humble, patient, and obedient. He was so fervent in prayer that he would often leave his flock and spend whole days standing in some solitary place, praying earnestly to God. Whenever he withdrew to pray, he would make the sign of the Cross over his flock, and the animals would not stray anywhere; neither beasts nor thieves would carry them off. And the blessed youth, returning from his solitude in the evening, would drive the flock home.

The saint lived thus until he reached manhood. At that time the impious Leo, son of Constantine Copronymus, who was infected with the heresy of iconoclasm[3], reigned in Greece. This emperor began to gather throughout the empire young men distinguished for their beauty and

1. Bithynia was the north-western province of Asia Minor. Today it occupies the northern part of Anatolia. Christianity appeared in Bithynia already in the time of the Apostles. At present the Bithynian eparchy contains 12 episcopal sees, subject to the Archbishop of Nicomedia.
2. The village of *Marikati* lay to the north of Apollonia, a well-known colony on the shore of the Pontus, in Thrace.
3. Leo IV, reigned from 775 to 780 A.D. The Iconoclasts were heretics who rose up against the veneration of holy icons. The persecution of the icons began under the emperor Leo the Isaurian in 626 A.D.

courage, to serve in his army. Those whom he sent to carry out this levy came also to the region of Bithynia. When they visited the village where Ioannicius lived, they saw that the young man was handsome, tall, strong of body, and fit for military service. Therefore they took him with them and enrolled him among the excubitors[4]. From then on Ioannicius served in the army. His courage made him terrible to his enemies, while his meekness and humility endeared him to his comrades. Most pleasing of all, however, was he to God, for he carefully kept His holy commandments. But the devil, envious of Ioannicius's virtuous life, led him into the heresy of iconoclasm. At that time this heresy caused great turmoil in the Church of God: holy icons were cast out of the churches of the Lord, and those who venerated them were persecuted. Ioannicius was so beguiled by this heresy that he would not even hear anything said about the holy icons. But God, who desires the salvation of all, saved him also from this delusion in the following manner.

By God's design, Ioannicius was sent with his regiment to the east. On his return from there, he passed over Mount Olympus[5], where there then lived a monk distinguished for his particular gift of clairvoyance. Learning from the Spirit of God that Ioannicius was passing by with his regiment, the monk came out of his solitary cell and said to him:

"Child Ioannicius! If you call yourself a Christian, why do you despise the icon of Christ? All your ascetic labors in the virtuous life are in vain if you do not have the true faith."

Hearing this, Ioannicius was amazed that the man who did not know him had called him by name, and that a person who had never seen him knew of his deeds. Yet, understanding that the one who spoke to him was filled with the Spirit of God, and that through his gift of clairvoyance he had learned all his deeds, Ioannicius fell to the ground before him, bowing and asking his forgiveness. He said that he had sinned through ignorance, and promised to render fitting honor and veneration to the icon of Christ and to the images of all the saints. From that time the blessed Ioannicius began to venerate the holy icons fervently, and deeply repented that in his ignorance he had despised

4. Guardsmen who guarded the imperial palace.
5. Olympus – a mountain in Bithynia, which attracted many hermits by its solitude and wildness.

them. Desiring to atone for his sin, he began to afflict himself with fasting and to mortify his flesh in various ways. While staying in the vestibule of the imperial palace, he lay upon the bare earth and prayed through whole nights, taking very little food; yet when he had to sit at table with the other soldiers, he tried to conceal his fasting from them.

After he had spent six whole years in such ascetic labors, the Bulgarians took the field against the Greeks with great forces and began to lay waste Thrace[6]. The Greek emperor marched against them with all his army, in which the blessed Ioannicius was then serving. When the two armies met and battle began, and the Bulgarians started to overcome the Greeks, Ioannicius displayed extraordinary courage, striking down the foreigners like a new David. In the very presence of the emperor, he saved his regiment from the enemy's swords, bravely repelling their attacks and cutting them down like reeds. He also rescued a distinguished Greek nobleman who had engaged the Bulgarians in battle and whom they had already taken captive: Ioannicius rushed upon them, slew some with his sword, put others to flight, and thus freed the captive nobleman. The emperor, noticing his courage, asked about his homeland, lineage, and name, and ordered all this to be entered in the book of remembrance[7], so that when the battle was over he might honor so brave a warrior with high rank and other gifts. Meanwhile, Ioannicius saw a Bulgarian, terrible in appearance like Goliath, who blocked the Greeks' way and was killing them. He rushed at him and at once cut off his head. Such was the courage of the blessed Ioannicius in his struggle against visible enemies; it foreshadowed his future struggle against invisible enemies and his victory over them.

On his way back from the war, as he passed Mount Olympus, Ioannicius remembered the monk who had come out to him from the wilderness and reproved him for the heresy of iconoclasm. Recalling this, he

6. Thrace – (in the broad sense) in antiquity embraced today's eastern part of Hungary, Transylvania, Bessarabia, Moldavia, Wallachia, Bulgaria, Serbia and the eastern part of Rumelia. But in the proper sense Thrace was called only the eastern part of present-day Rumelia. – The Bulgarians, who lived to the north of Greece, in those times made frequent attacks on the Greek Empire.

7. The imperial officials kept special diaries in which were recorded all the most important events that took place in the empire.

resolved in his heart to leave everything, settle on that mountain, and live in stillness as a monk, communing with God alone. He soon carried out his resolve. For when he came to the imperial capital and was to receive an honorable rank and gifts from the emperor for his courage in battle, he despised them all, considering them refuse[8]. Withdrawing from his fellow soldiers, he went to the monks in the twenty-fifth year of his military service, to begin a new battle against "the spirits of wickedness in the heavenly places"[9]. Arriving at the monastery of Avgarus, where the monks received him kindly, Ioannicius revealed to the abbot Gregory his intention to go into the wilderness and live there alone in stillness. The abbot at first approved his decision, but then said:

"Though you have conceived a good purpose, beloved, I do not advise you to choose the solitary life at once and withdraw from people before you have grown accustomed to the monastic rules and customs. Therefore, first live among virtuous and experienced monks; learn from them at what hours and how prayer should be offered, and be instructed in humility, obedience, and meekness. Then you may go into the wilderness. Take care, child, lest, beginning to live such a life without instruction, you yourself be wounded and overcome by the enemy, instead of wounding and overcoming him."

Ioannicius heeded this profitable counsel, set aside his intention for a time, and began to live among devout men, so that he might accustom himself to their virtuous way of life. He observed the monastic rules and life in three monasteries. First he was instructed at the monastery of Avgarus; afterward he went to another monastery called Utotelas, where, though unlettered, he began to learn to read and write. Seeing that the monastery was often visited by laypeople, and that the monastic stillness was disturbed on their account, he left there and came to a

8. That is, reckoning it as simple refuse which is swept out of the house. Phil. 3 – "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

9. Eph. 6 – "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

third monastery, that of Antidius, where he lived for two years. There he learned thirty of David's psalms and gained much benefit for the monastic life from the monks who lived there.

After two years had passed, Ioannicius again burned with the desire to live in the stillness of the wilderness, and resolved to ascend a nearby mountain and, settling there in solitude, begin the life of a hermit. But before doing so, he spent seven days in fasting and fervently prayed to God to be his guide on the path he had chosen. On the seventh day, this new Moses heard a voice from on high commanding him to go to that mountain. Ioannicius left the Antidiev Monastery and hastened to the mountain, which lay not far from there. Having ascended it, he began to seek a place to dwell. And behold, he saw two monks who dwelt in the wilderness, clothed in garments of hair and eating the herbs that grew there. The blessed man approached and bowed down to them; they arose, offered a prayer, and then began to converse with him. Ioannicius told them everything about himself and revealed his intentions, and the monks, for their part, did not leave him without instruction. They foretold that after fifty years of his ascetic labors, at the very end of his life, he would suffer temptation at the hands of envious men; "but," the saints said, "the bitter consequences of this temptation will fall upon their own heads, and you will suffer no harm"—and so it came to pass, as will be seen from what follows. In foretelling this to Ioannicius, those blessed hermits gave him a garment of hair, which in the local language is called a "levitonar." This garment was for Ioannicius as an impenetrable shield against all the arrows of the enemy, as he himself later related. When their soul-profiting conversation had ended, the hermits parted and withdrew into the distant wilderness, while Ioannicius went to a mountain called Trichalix and dwelt there without a cell, beneath the open sky. When Gregory, the abbot of the aforementioned Avgar Monastery, heard of him, he built him a small hut on that mountain, where the blessed man could take shelter from storms, rain, and snow; and Ioannicius shut himself in and dwelt in that hut. Then the monastery brethren began to visit him, wishing to enjoy his soul-profiting conversation. This displeased him, for in this way his stillness was disturbed; so he left that

mountain and went to seek another place for a life of stillness. As he passed a settlement in the Hellespont[10], he saw nearby another lofty mountain, with impassable thickets and crags. He settled there and, digging himself a narrow, deep cave in the earth, began to live in it, never leaving it. He received food from a shepherd who pastured goats on that mountain. Once a month the shepherd brought the saint a little bread and water, receiving in return the greatest gift of all—his blessing and prayer. The saint labored there for three years, praying day and night and glorifying God. As he sang the psalms of David, he added these words to each verse:

"My hope is the Father, my refuge is Christ, my protector is the Holy Spirit."

The saint thus took comfort in repeating these words; following his example, many even now have the custom of often saying them.[11]

After living for three years in the narrow cave, the saint once set out for a church not far from him. By chance, several soldiers also came to that church; they had once served alongside Ioannicius and had been his friends. One of them saw Ioannicius, recognized him, and, embracing him, wept for joy. He recalled to him their former life and the courage they had shown in battle, as well as the honors Ioannicius had received from the emperor. The soldier wondered why Ioannicius, having left all this behind, had chosen instead to live in poverty. When the soldier turned to the others, wishing to tell them about Ioannicius, the saint left them and, seeking to hide himself still further from everyone, withdrew into the mountains of Kontouria[12], where there were many wild beasts and serpents. There the saint settled, shunning human fame; he lived among beasts and serpents, and spoke with David: "Far would I flee, and lodge in the wilderness; I would hasten to escape from the tempest and the storm" (Ps. 54:8–9).

After a considerable time, Ioannikios resolved to go to Ephesus, to the church of St. John the Theologian, in order to pray there. On the

10. The Hellespont – today's Dardanelles Strait. The Hellespont was also the name of the district on the eastern shore of this strait.

11. This prayer of the Venerable Ioannikios is used even now in the church services, namely at the end of Compline.

12. In the west of Asia Minor.

road to Ephesus, as he passed a certain prayer-house[13], at sunset he met a married couple who were going to that house to pray for their departed parents. When they saw him, the couple were frightened, for he was a fearsome sight: tall in stature, clothed in rags, barefoot, and covered all over with hair. Seeing them tremble with fear, the saint gently said to them:

"Do not be afraid, children, but tell me, where does this road lead?"

They told him that the road led to a river which was then in full flood, so that it could not be crossed without a boat. Ioannicius went to the river and, reaching it, rested a little; at midnight he arose and crossed to the other bank over the water as though on dry land, without wetting his feet. When he came to Ephesus and approached the church of St. John the Theologian, the church doors opened of their own accord before him. Entering, he prayed as was fitting, bowing and kissing the holy icon of Christ's beloved disciple. When he came out of the church, the doors at once closed of themselves, and he set out again, returning to his dwelling in the mountains of Kontouria. It happened that he passed by a certain women's monastery, where there was a nun who had with her a young daughter. Overcome by carnal passion, the girl wished to abandon the monastic life and her mother and, returning to the world, to marry. Her mother entreated her with tears to endure the warfare of the flesh for love of Christ, not to abandon the monastic life, and not to give herself over to the devil for shame and destruction. But she could not persuade the girl, who burned with the fire of passion and had already resolved to flee the monastery. Learning all this, the blessed Ioannicius felt pity for the maiden and, calling her to him, said:

"Lay your hand, child, upon my neck."

When the maiden had done so, the saint prayed to God with tears that she might be delivered from her passion and the devil's temptation, and that the whole burden of her sufferings and carnal passions might pass to him. And so it came to pass. The maiden was freed from all impure thoughts and carnal desires, and remained in her monastery, liv-

13. Probably this is a chapel. Chapels or prayer houses were built either by hermits who lived too far from a church to go there, or by private persons, especially in the places where their parents had died and been buried.

ing in dispassion and pleasing God; while Ioannicius went on his way to Kontouria. On the road he felt within himself the flame of carnal desire, and foul thoughts assailed him like a terrible storm. Impure passions surged within him, his blood boiled as in a cauldron, and all the torments that the maiden had endured became the lot of the blessed Ioannicius. He bore them manfully, exhausting his flesh through great ascetic labors. Once, in a great cleft in the mountain, he came upon an enormous serpent that had made its nest there. Ioannicius resolved to give himself to it to be devoured, choosing rather to die than to give free rein to impure thoughts and defile his pure body. He rushed toward the serpent, supposing it would devour him, but the serpent would not touch him. When Ioannicius began to provoke it, wishing to be eaten, the serpent was suddenly found dead. From that hour foul thoughts no longer arose in Ioannicius; his passion was quenched, his desire subsided, and peace returned to his body. At the same time, he was given power to tread upon visible and invisible serpents and crush their heads. Once the saint was standing and singing the psalms of David when suddenly a heap of stones nearby began to shake. Looking that way, the saint saw a fearsome serpent emerging from among the stones, its eyes aflame. He touched the serpent with his staff, and it immediately died. Another time, in winter, the saint entered a deep cave and found a serpent nesting there, its eyes glowing like flames. Not realizing that it was a serpent before him, and thinking it was truly fire, the saint gathered wood and began laying it upon the serpent, wishing to warm himself by the fire in such bitter cold. The serpent shook itself and cast the wood off; then the saint saw that it was a serpent. Yet he was not afraid, but settled on the right side of the cave and remained there with the serpent until the winter was over.

As the twelfth year of Ioannicius's dwelling in the wilderness was drawing to a close, a voice from on high commanded him to go to a monastery called Eriste and there receive the monastic habit. He immediately went to the monastery, and, arriving during the harvest, made himself known to Stephen, its abbot. The latter, after saying the customary prayers in the morning, clothed the Venerable Ioannicius in the monastic habit, although he was already a perfect monk, surpassing

many in his ascetic labors. Having received the monastic garments, the Venerable One strove yet more, ascending from one labor to another. He settled in a place called Kritama and bound himself with iron chains[14], six cubits in length[15], and remained in seclusion and bonds for three years, a voluntary prisoner and martyr of Christ.

Three years later Ioannicius desired to go to Chelidon, to see there the great George, foremost among the ascetics. Taking off his fetters, he set out on his way, and when he came to a river called Goram, he met a serpent which was stirring up the water of the river and stopping its flow; by prayer and the sign of the Cross he slew that serpent. Coming then to the great George, he remained with him three years, learned from him the whole Psalter, and afterwards withdrew again to the monastery of Antioch with his disciple Pachomius.

Some events from the life of the Venerable Ioannicius are very instructive. During his stay in the Avgar monastery, Ioannicius once went with other monks to see the new monastery that was being built on a mountain not far from there. As he was approaching that mountain, there appeared out of the wilderness an unusually large goat. The monks who were with Ioannicius began to think how they might catch this goat, from whose skin a good fur could be obtained. The Venerable Father, perceiving their thought, commanded one monk, named Sabbas, to go and bring that goat to him. Sabbas said:

"And if the goat runs away, how am I to catch it?"

The Saint said to him:

"You need only do what you are commanded, and the goat will itself come up to you and follow you."

Then, turning to the other monks, he asked them:

"Is goatskin suitable for making a fur from it?"

They said:

"It is very suitable; we were thinking of this even before you spoke."

When the goat had been brought, the Venerable Father stroked it with his hand, and at the same time he taught the brethren to spare the

14. Heavy fetters, which the ascetics put upon themselves for the mortification of the flesh.
15. Cubit – 10.5 vershoks.

life of animals and to restrain their desires; and after this he again released the goat to pasture in the wilderness.

The Venerable also had the gift of foresight; he foretold the speedy death of Emperor Nicephorus, and his prediction was fulfilled, for he died, having been wounded in battle with the Bulgarians. He also foretold the speedy death of Staurakios, the son of Nicephorus, who began to reign after him.[16] When he lived on Mount Prusentius, which stood near the high mountain Olympus, there was a monk there named Gurias, a hypocrite who sought glory from men and who was in fact glorified by all as a great ascetic. This monk, seeing that he was still far from being the truly virtuous ascetic, the Saint Ioannicius, was stung with envy. Wishing to destroy Ioannicius, he came to him like Judas, with flattering words, and put poison into his drink. The Venerable, being a man without malice, thinking that Gurias cherished sincere friendly love for him, and suspecting nothing, drank the deadly poison; immediately afterwards he felt terrible torments and even began to fear for his life. God, however, did not allow His servant to die prematurely by such a death, but sent to his aid His holy martyr Eustathius,[17] who, appearing to him in a vision, healed him of his sickness and restored his health. In gratitude for this, the Venerable built there a church in the name of the holy Great Martyr Eustathius and established a monastery beside it.

Once at night Ioannicius, standing in prayer, saw such a vision: on the eastern side of the mountain a spring opened, pouring forth abundant water, and near that spring stood a multitude of sheep drinking the water flowing from the spring. The Saint marveled at this vision, for he knew that there had never been any spring or sheep in that wilderness. In the morning he went to that place, but found nothing—neither sheep nor spring; yet the place proved to be very good and suitable for habitation. The Venerable learned from the elders that on that spot there had

16. Nicephorus I reigned from 802 to 811. His son Staurakios reigned only two months, and died three months after his deposition.

17. The name of Eustathius is associated with the memory of several martyrs (namely on 7 July, 20 August, 27 September, 24 October, and others). Which martyr is meant here is unknown. Most probably it is Eustathius, Bishop of Kios or Prusias, who suffered for the holy icons. At that time Ioannikios lived on the mountains standing not far from Prusias.

once stood a church of the Most Holy Theotokos, and therefore he interpreted his vision thus: the spring, abundantly pouring forth water, is the grace of the Most Holy Theotokos, which is to be poured out in that place, and the sheep are men receiving grace from the Most Holy Theotokos. And the Venerable applied all his efforts to restore on that spot a church in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos, which he soon succeeded in doing. He built a beautiful church, established a monastery there, and gathered there a multitude of brethren, with the help and assistance of the Most Blessed Theotokos.

While the church was being built, the Venerable Ioannicius labored himself, carrying stones and helping the builders. Once, when he stretched out his hand to take a stone from the ground, a viper crawled out from under the stone and, stinging him in the hand, hung upon it. He, like a new Paul, shook it off, suffering no harm. "But he, shaking off the serpent into the fire, suffered no harm" (Acts 28:5).

In his prayer the Venerable Ioannicius raised himself up not only in spirit but also in body, and rose considerably above the earth. Once his disciple and imitator in holy life, the blessed Eustratius, while the Venerable was going alone to pray in the church, secretly followed him, and, hiding in a corner of the church, watched closely how he performed his prayer. He saw that the Venerable raised his hands on high and, rising far above the earth, stood in the air and prayed, and this filled Eustratius with terror. When the prayer was finished, the Venerable again came down to the ground, and noticing Eustratius, he was offended and said: "It is written: 'For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee' (Ps. 5:5); that is, a wicked man will not approach one who is guarded by God—and yet you have dared to spy upon my sinful prayer."

The Venerable forbade Eustratius to tell anyone about this.

The wondrous Ioannicius worked many miracles. With a single word he cast demons out of people, healed all kinds of diseases by the sign of the Cross and prayer, and delivered many from the bites of serpents. For this reason a multitude of people flocked to him—one asking for healing from sickness, another for deliverance from unclean spirits, another only for a blessing and prayer. This disturbed the silence to

which Ioannicius had devoted himself, and, burdened by this, he again withdrew to Mount Trichalikos and dwelt there without any shelter. Eustratius, a monk of the Avgar monastery, who cherished a fervent love for the blessed Father and desired to see him, eagerly sought him out and found him on Mount Trichalikos. After the customary prayer, Eustratius asked the blessed Ioannicius about Leo the Armenian,[18] who at that time reigned in Greece—how long he would trouble the Church of God with the iconoclastic heresy. The Saint immediately said that Leo would soon die. This indeed came to pass, for Michael, called Balbus or Travlos, killed Leo the Armenian and ascended the throne after him.[19]

In his old age Ioannicius was accustomed to walk with a staff. Once, when he was walking through the mountains along a narrow passage, the staff accidentally fell from his hands and was lost, for it fell from the mountain into an abyss, so that it could not even be found. The Saint, grieving over the loss of his staff, bent his knees, performing the customary prayer to the Lord; and at that moment the staff, carried through the air by an invisible power, appeared in the hand of the Saint.

Passing another time through the wilderness, the blessed one found an empty cave in which demons dwelt. This cave pleased the Venerable, and he remained to live in it. The demons, however, unable to endure his presence, rose up against him openly and caused him various disturbances, hoping to frighten him and drive him from there. They shouted at him, gnashed their teeth, mocked him, terrified him, ran back and forth, attacked him, and seemed to shake the whole cave. But the Saint, according to the word of Paul, stood as on a day of battle, clad in the breastplate of righteousness and with the shield of faith, and in no way feared the enemy's assaults. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all,

18. Leo V the Armenian reigned from 813 to 820.
19. Michael II the Stammerer reigned from 820 to 829.

taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:13–16). The demons shouted:

"And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Mt. 8:29), and being unable to overcome the invincible one, they fled from him, themselves conquered by him.

At that time the daughter of a boyar, a truly believing woman, lay without strength upon her bed and suffered greatly. When she was carried to the Saint, he immediately came out to meet her, and, moved to compassion for her for the sake of her piety, since she venerated the holy icons although she lived among a multitude of iconoclasts, he healed her of her sickness by prayer and the sign of the Cross. It happened that the Saint's brother-in-law, who had married his sister, was there; he was darkened by the iconoclastic heresy, and the Saint for a long time persuaded him to know the right path of the true faith and to render the fitting honor to the holy icons. When, however, he could have no effect upon him by his admonitions (for the man, like Pharaoh, remained obstinate), then the blessed one, forgetting his close fleshly kinship with him, prayed to God that the bodily eyes of that iconoclast also be blinded, if he did not have spiritual eyes. So it came to pass: his brother-in-law became blind and suffered punishment corresponding to his impiety.

It was the custom of this great father to descend from the mountain to meet anyone who, as he had heard, was intending to visit him. He did this so as not to trouble his visitors, for the ascent of the mountain was difficult and inconvenient. Once two bishops, those of Chalcedon and Nicaea[20], came to him, together with Peter and Theodore the Studites[21], and Joseph and Clement. The blessed one descended from the mountain, met them, and greeted them with love. After the custom-

20. Chalcedon is a city in Bithynia. There was the Fourth Ecumenical Council. Nicaea is a city in the same region. There was the First Ecumenical Council.

21. The Studites were monks of the Monastery of Stoudios in Constantinople, built in the middle of the fifth century by the consul Stoudios in honor of John the Baptist. They were called “the Sleepless,” because, being divided into three groups, they maintained continual divine services in the church.

ary prayer, when they had begun a soul-profiting conversation, the blessed one said to one of the visitors, namely, Joseph:

"Do not be troubled, brother Joseph, but you must prepare yourself for your departure."

At the time, they did not understand these words of the Venerable One. But when eighteen days had passed and Joseph departed to another life, they remembered the words of the blessed Ioannicius and understood that with his prophetic eyes he had foreseen Joseph's death and had foretold it to him, bidding him prepare for his departure.

In the fifth year of Michael's reign, at the end of the fourteenth year after the death of Emperor Nicephorus, when many renowned boyars and warriors had been bound and imprisoned by the Bulgarians, who had defeated the Greeks, the Venerable One remembered those captives and felt a particular compassion for them in his heart. For he had heard that they were in a most wretched state, sitting in a foul and gloomy dungeon, shackled with chains, and that they would even rather have accepted death than remain alive in such torments. Out of compassion for them, Ioannicius left his solitary and quiet life and went to the Bulgarian land to loose the bonds of the fettered and free the prisoners. When he came to the city where the Greeks were held in chains, he approached the dungeon unnoticed, so that the guards at its doors could not see him. He made the sign of the Cross upon the doors, and the dungeon immediately opened. Entering it, the Venerable One loosed them all from their bonds by the sign of the Cross and bade them follow him. All the prisoners came out of the dungeon, and the guards who were there did not notice it. The saint, having freed the Greeks from their bonds and the dungeon, even as Christ freed the souls of the righteous from Hades, led them throughout the night, like a new Moses, by the light of a wondrous radiance, and brought them to the borders of the Greek Empire. Along the way he taught them not to be, like their fathers, a stubborn and God-provoking generation[22], but to hope in Him and not forget His benefactions and wonders. When he

22. Ezek. 3:9; Jer. 7:18–19.

was about to take leave of them, they all fell at his feet, entreating him to tell them his name, and said:

"Tell us, man of God, who are you?"

The Venerable One did not conceal his name from them, but bade them give thanks to God alone; then he returned once more to his quiet solitude.

Once the Venerable One boarded a ship and sailed to the monastery of St. Theophanes, which was in Sigriane[23], in order to pray there. On his return, when he put in at the island of Thasos[24], the inhabitants of the island, both monks and laymen, hearing that Ioannicius had come to them, came to him and entreated the blessed one to drive the snakes from their island, for at that time they had multiplied there exceedingly. The saint heeded their requests, lifted up his fervent prayers to God, and at once all the snakes on that island gathered together and plunged into the depths of the sea; from that time on, no snakes ever appeared on the island. The Venerable One then withdrew to another solitary place. At that time the abbot of the monastery on the island of Thasos, Daniel, was with him. To Daniel's brother, the monk Euthymius, the saint foretold his speedy end, saying:

"Prepare yourself, brother Euthymius, for soon you shall make your journey to the things on high."[25]

After this, the Venerable One entered a small cave, intending to rest there, and found a demon dwelling within, fiercer than the former ones. Yet Ioannicius and Daniel remained to live in that cave. The demon, displeased with their presence, appeared to them black and terrifying, and attacked them furiously, seeking to drive them from the cave; but trusting in the Lord, they remained there without fear. At last this ancient man-slayer[26] rushed upon them, bound Daniel's feet, and caused

23. Theophanes the Confessor, imprisoned by Leo the Armenian for confessing the true faith. He was abbot in the region of Sigriane, near Cyzicus, in Asia Minor. His memory is celebrated on 11 October.

24. The island of Thasos or Thasus is an island in the Aegean Sea. The fertility of this island became proverbial among the ancients.

25. That is, he will pass over into the heavenly mansions,

26. So the Lord Jesus Christ called the devil (Jn. 8:44), because he was the first author of the spiritual and bodily death of men, having seduced them in paradise.

Ioannicius such pain in his side that for seven days he could not utter a word. The demon himself fled from the cave, unable to dwell in one place with the servants of God. After this, the Venerable Ioannicius returned once more to Mount Trichalicus and foretold the speedy death of a monk named Isaac, who was negligent concerning his salvation. Moreover, by prayer and the sign of the holy Cross, Ioannicius drove from the vineyards the worms that were causing great devastation.

Once an elderly woman, the abbess of the monastery of Klouvia[27], came to him for prayer with her daughter. He took the staff that was in the mother's hand and placed it in her daughter's hand.[28] The mother, troubled, said:

"Father, I need the staff to support my frail body, because of my great age."

He made no reply, but by his action foretold what was to come; for a short time later the elderly woman died, and her daughter was chosen to succeed her as superior. After this the blessed one went from there with his disciple Eustratius to another mountain, very wild and impassable, called Raven Mountain. Having lived there for some time, he went up into the mountains of the Antidion monastery and, having built a small cell there, lived in communion with God. There he wrought many miracles: he healed the sick, restored speech to one whose tongue was impeded, made a furious and irascible man meek, turned heretics from error to Orthodoxy, and foretold the end of many; for he was filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit who dwelt within him.

This Venerable One attained such a height of spiritual life that not everyone was even granted to see him, and many who wished to see him, though they came to his cell, nevertheless did not see him. When they had departed, the humble father would say to his disciple:

"Brother Eustratius! It is through your prayers that I remained invisible to those who came."

Once, while a church of St. John the Forerunner was being built on that mountain, its design having been drawn by the Venerable Ioanni-

27. "Kluvian" is from the Greek word kluvos, a cell. In some cenobitic monasteries there were also separate rooms, or cells, for those who wished to lead a solitary life.

cius, some brother monks came from afar, wishing to see the radiant face of this servant of God. Arriving at the church under construction, they sat there, waiting for the arrival of the Venerable Father whom they wished to see. The Venerable Ioannicius also came there to see whether the church was being built according to the plan. He stood before the eyes of the brothers who had come to see him, looking at the building, but they could not see him. After remaining among them for a long while, he returned to his cell without revealing himself to those who had come and were eagerly awaiting his arrival. One of the monks who lived near him, named John, learning what had happened, said to him:

"Father! You should not have let the brothers, who undertook so long a journey for your sake, depart in sorrow without allowing them to see your face; this grieves and troubles my heart."

The saint praised the labor and zeal of those brothers and began to pray for them; after the prayer, turning to John, he said:

"Brother! We have no will of our own, but God does with us what is pleasing to Him. If it had been pleasing to God that the brothers who came should see me, they would have seen me even had I hidden myself from them; yet I stood before their eyes for a long time without hiding, and if they did not see me, then it was pleasing to God that it should be so."

Another time, when some brothers came to the Venerable One and sat before his cell, conversing with one another, a great and fearsome she-bear suddenly appeared, coming toward them from a nearby field. When they saw her, they were exceedingly afraid.

The saint said to them:

"The Lord has given us, His servants, authority to trample upon the lion and the serpent, which are more fearsome than all the beasts, and are you afraid of a she-bear?"

He bade them throw her a piece of bread; she took it and went off into the wilderness.

The Venerable Ioannicius was so spiritual and possessed such clear spiritual eyes that he could see both the heavenly spirits and the souls

of the righteous. Thus, once while standing in prayer, he saw the soul of an archimandrite Peter being borne with glory to heaven by the Angels, surrounded by the radiance of an extraordinary light, and he told his disciples of it for their edification.

At the time when Theophilus the iconoclast ruled over the Greeks[29], this emperor sent two noblemen to the Venerable Ioannicius to ask him whether the image of Christ should be venerated. When the messengers came to the saint, he opened his God-inspired lips, and when he began to speak with the strength of the wisdom granted him from on high, the men were put to shame, unable to make any reply. God Himself spoke through him, He who says to His disciples in the Gospel:

"Do not meditate beforehand what you shall speak, neither do you premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit"[30] (Mk. 13:11). Clearly showing that due honor should be rendered to the holy icons, he turned them to the true path, and they, renouncing the heresy of iconoclasm, venerated the image of Christ.

Once Eustratius, abbot of the monastery of Avgar, asked the Venerable Ioannicius:

"Father, how long will the holy icons be trampled underfoot, how long will they remain unrestored to the Church, while their persecutors grow stronger and wild beasts ravage Christ's flock?"

The Venerable Ioannicius answered:

"Wait a little, brother, and you shall see the working of God's power, for one named Methodius shall take the governance of the Church into his hands. Through the influence of the Divine Spirit, he shall set it in order, destroy heresies, establish the Church in Orthodoxy by its definitions of the faith, restore peace and concord, and the right hand of the Most High shall humble his adversaries."

This prophecy of Ioannikios was soon fulfilled, for some time afterward the iconoclast emperor Theophilus died, and his son Michael[31] as-

28. The superiors of monastic communities, both men and women, had a staff as the sign of their dignity.

29. From 829 to 842.

30. That is: do not be especially afraid when you have to speak before powerful and distinguished people, for I will give you the ability to speak wisely. Mk. 13 and Lk. 21:15.

cended the throne. Because of his youth, his mother Theodora took the governance of the empire into her hands, and Methodius was appointed patriarch. The latter brought the holy icons into the churches, established Orthodoxy, quieted all disputes and disturbances, and put an end to the turmoil. When, after some time, the devil again stirred up men who troubled and rent the Church of Christ, Venerable Ioannikios came to the aid of blessed Methodius, who contended against the heretics by the power of the Word of God. Sometimes in person, sometimes by his letters, Ioannikios defended Orthodoxy and brought back to the Church those who had fallen away from it; and when Bishop Methodius, in his struggle with the heretics, was many times utterly exhausted, the Venerable Father strengthened and upheld him by his letters. Once, as Ioannikios's letter was being read at a council, the heretics began in every way to mock and revile the blessed man. The Venerable Father, learning of this through the Spirit of God, suddenly appeared at the council and began to speak of God and divine things with such wisdom and understanding that all marveled. Nor were the words of his God-speaking lips without effect; for just as at the assembly in Jerusalem, when the Apostle Peter spoke, so here too, those who listened to Venerable Ioannikios were moved in heart, received his words with love, and turned to the true faith. Thus did the Venerable Father care for the peace of the Church and the salvation of human souls; and soon, through his care and prayers, heresy was suppressed and peace restored to the Church. The devil, who had troubled the Church, fled in shame, for he feared Ioannikios and vanished at his prayers as wax before fire.

Once, the consecration of a house of prayer built by the Venerable Father was being celebrated at his monastery. The whole brotherhood had assembled, but the saint had not yet arrived, when suddenly a whole host of demons appeared, descending from a hill as though they were real men. All were terribly afraid, not knowing what to do. Though the saint was not with them, he saw in spirit what was taking place, and at once turned to prayer, raised his hands on high, and began

31. The Byzantine Emperor Michael III, from 842 to 867.

to offer his supplications to God. Like arrows, they struck the host of demons and put them to flight. When the brethren saw the demons fleeing as though pursued by blows and covered with wounds, they ceased to fear and joyfully celebrated their feast.

At that time the Ishmaelites[32] were warring against the Greeks, and, having defeated the Greek forces, took many captive and held them in chains. One of the Greek nobles, whose kinsman, a young man, had also been taken captive, besought Venerable Ioannikios to rescue this kinsman from captivity, just as he had once delivered the Greeks who were held captive by the Bulgarians. The Venerable Father, being merciful, went to the land of the Ishmaelites and, reaching the prison, set free not only that young man but also the other Greeks who were imprisoned with him. The guards saw nothing, for before the Venerable Father the doors opened of themselves and the chains fell away by themselves. As they were making their way to the Greek land, a great multitude of savage dogs[33] attacked them. The saint struck them with blindness, so that the captives passed through their midst unharmed.

On that mountain where the Venerable Father kept his fast, there lived nearby a monk named Epiphanius, renowned for his ascetic labors. The devil stirred up in him a feeling of envy toward Ioannikios, and he began to bear enmity against the blessed man, envying the glory with which God glorified Ioannikios, saying: "For the Lord will not leave the rod of the wicked over the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous stretch forth their hands to iniquity" (Ps. 124:3). That is, God will not permit sinners to overcome the righteous.

Out of envy, Epiphanius plotted to destroy Ioannikios, who was innocent and pure of heart. To this end, he set fire to the brushwood that lay in abundance on the mountain where the Venerable Father pursued his ascetic life, so that Ioannikios might burn in the fire together with his cell. But God, who saved the youths from the fire in Babylon (Dan. 3:1–100), also preserved His servant, blessed Ioannikios, unharmed.

32. The Ishmaelites, otherwise the Arabs, descendants of Ishmael, son of Abraham. At that time the Arabs formed a powerful state.

33. In the East there are an extraordinarily large number of wild dogs, which are distinguished by their extreme ferocity.

The blessed man saw the malice of his enemy, yet was not angered by him, nor even grieved; rather, wishing to overcome evil with good and to destroy enmity by guilelessness, he came humbly to Epiphanius, asked him the cause of his anger, and begged his forgiveness. But the latter, in fury, struck the saint in the belly with a staff tipped with sharp iron, seeking to pierce him. Then the Lord, "For the Lord will not leave the rod of the wicked over the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous stretch forth their hands to iniquity" (Ps. 124:3), kept the saint unharmed by the blow. This was the temptation foretold for the blessed man by the two hermits mentioned earlier, who had given him a levitonar and had said:

"Toward the end of your life, envious men will bring temptation upon you; but its bitter consequences shall fall upon the head of your enemy, while you shall suffer no harm."

Having attained a great age, our Venerable Father Ioannikios, now weakened in body by his many labors and ascetic struggles, came to the Antidiev Monastery, built a small cell there, and enclosed himself within it. If it happened that he ever went out of his cell, he would take the usual path and remain unseen by those whom he did not wish to meet.

In the fifth year of Michael's reign, Patriarch Methodius, who was afterward numbered among the saints, foresaw that Ioannikios's departure to the Lord was approaching. He came to him with his clergy, asking for his final blessing and prayers. After conversing at length with St. Methodius and instructing those who had come with him in the Orthodox faith, Venerable Ioannikios foretold to Methodius that he too would soon pass from this temporal life to the eternal one after Ioannikios's repose. Then, having prayed and exchanged a final kiss, they parted: the patriarch returned home, while the Venerable Father remained in his cell, preparing himself for death through prayer. On the third day after the patriarch's departure, our Venerable and God-bearing Father Ioannikios departed to the Lord, on the fourth day of November, having lived ninety-four years from birth. In the eighth month after his repose, the most holy Patriarch Methodius also reposed in the Lord, on the fourteenth day of June. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy that Venerable Ioannikios had spoken to the patriarch, that

he too would soon pass from temporal life to eternal life after him. As our Venerable Father Ioannikios was dying, the monks dwelling at that time on Mount Olympus saw a pillar of fire rising from earth to heaven. Angels went before it, opening the gates of Paradise before it and leading him up to the blessedness on high. From this the monks knew that Venerable Ioannikios, having completed the contest of his life, was passing to heavenly rest. The Venerable Father worked many miracles not only during his life but also after his repose: many sick people received health by touching his holy relics; others were delivered from demons; the paralyzed rose from their beds; and whoever was afflicted with any illness, if only he touched the saint's coffin, recovered at once. Thus God glorified His servant by miracles both in life and after death. Through his prayers, may the Lord show us His mercy and heal us of our illnesses, both of soul and body, to the glory of His holy name. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Thou didst appear as a most radiant star, enlightening the world and shining upon those in the darkness of the passions; thou didst also appear as a mighty healer. Since thou hast received the grace of healings, grant healing to those who ask thee, that we may cry: Rejoice, Father Ioannikios.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Nicander the Bishop and Hermias the Presbyter

Страдание святых мучеников Никандра епископа и Ермея пресвитера

The holy Nicander and Hermias were enlightened by the light of Christ's teaching and ordained to the sacred ministry by the holy Apostle Titus. They turned many Greeks[34] from pagan delusion and brought them to Christ. For this they were seized and brought before the count[35] Libanius for interrogation. After long efforts to turn

34. "Hellenes" properly means the Greeks; but in the lives of the saints this name sometimes designates pagans in general.

them away from Christ had availed him nothing, Libanius ordered them to be bound to swift horses and, driving the horses onward, to have Christ's servants dragged along. Dragged in this manner for a long time, they reddened the earth with their blood. Their bodies, striking against stones and stumps on the ground, were covered with wounds; according to the laws of human nature, they ought to have died, had not the Lord Himself strengthened them amid their torments. Then, scarcely alive, they were thrown into prison and made to suffer hunger and thirst; but the Lord fed them with bread from heaven[36] and healed their wounds. After some time they were again brought for interrogation, and when they refused to obey their tormentor, they were hung upon a tree, scraped with iron, and burned with candles. Then they were cast into a heated furnace, but remained unharmed, for the Angel of the Lord descended to them, cooled the furnace, and preserved them from the fire. Finally, the tormentor ordered iron nails to be driven into their heads, hearts, and bellies. A pit was then dug for them, and while they still breathed, they were cast into it and covered with earth. Having died such a cruel and grievous death, the holy Nicander and Hermias attained eternal and joyful life with the Lord, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

* * *

Repose of the Blessed Simon of Yuryevets

Преставление блаженного Симона Юрьевецкого

This Blessed Father of ours was born in the volost of Plyos,[37] in the village of Odelev, to pious parents, Irodion and Maria. From his early years he took upon himself the ascetic labor of holy foolishness, and secretly left his parents' house for the dense and impassable forests. Once, peasants from the village of Yalnat in the district of the

35. Komes – the city governor.

36. By the heavenly bread may be understood either actual food, which was miraculously sent to the holy martyrs in prison, or in general their sustenance from above, by which they had no need even of food.

37. Plyos – now a town without the status of a city in the Nerekhta district of Kostroma Province, on the bank of the Volga River.

town of Yuryevets on the Volga, while felling trees and gathering honey, found this Blessed Simon in the thickets. They began to ask him who he was and where he came from. But the Saint said nothing to them except his name. Seeing that St. Simon wore very worn-out clothing, the peasants took pity on him and brought him to their village, to a priest named Joseph. In the house of this priest St. Simon began to work, and he especially loved to undertake heavy labors, through which he mortified his flesh: he often ground flour on hand millstones, chopped firewood for all the inhabitants of the village, and took no payment from anyone. Also, he often and zealously visited the house of God, where he offered up his prayers to the Lord and glorified His holy Name. More than once the Saint was subjected to mockery and reproach, but he bore all this meekly, harboring no malice toward his reproachers. Winter and summer alike he went about in a single shirt and never wore footwear; the earth was his bed and the sky his roof. Having lived many years in the village of Yalnat, Simon moved to the town of Yuryevets and here too continued his ascetic labor of holy foolishness for Christ. Good people often gave him clothing or boots, but he left all this and clothed himself in poor sackcloth. The Saint had a custom of coming often to a hostelry. In the winter season he often spent the nights there. Then he prayed and kept vigil; often the innkeepers and those who lodged there drove him out into the cold. Frequently he walked along the bank of the Volga River, and in winter one could often see the trace of his bare feet. From his harsh life his skin had become wholly blackened and clung to his bones. Often he would reproach and revile himself before many people; thus he humbled his flesh and spirit. For his pious life he was granted, even during his lifetime, the gift of clairvoyance, so that he could see what was hidden from others.

Once, playing the fool, he entered the house of the voevoda Tretyak Tregub. The voevoda was angered at the Blessed One and ordered that he be forcibly removed from the house. As he was leaving, the Saint said that a misfortune would happen the next day. And so it came to pass. On the following day the voevoda's wife fell as she was coming out of the vestibule and badly injured herself. From that time the voevoda began to respect the Blessed Simon.

Some time later the Blessed Simon came again to the same voevoda and foretold that a great fire would break out in the town. Soon it so happened. More than seventy households had already been engulfed by the flames. Then the voevoda ordered that the Blessed Simon be brought to him. He was found standing on his knees before one of the town churches. He was praying with tears before an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. The Blessed One was brought to the voevoda. The voevoda, together with the other citizens, began to beseech the Saint to deliver them from the terrible calamity. Simon, stretching out his hand, pointed to the flames and, playing the fool, struck the voevoda on the cheek – and the fire at once ceased.

Even during his lifetime the Saint received such grace from the Lord that through his prayers various miracles were performed and healing was granted to the sick. A certain inhabitant of Yuryevets, Joseph Zubarev, was crossing the Volga River. Suddenly a strong wind arose, and the waves began to pour into the small boat. Frightened, Joseph suddenly saw the Blessed Simon on the bank; he began to beseech the Saint in his mind that the Blessed One, by his prayer, would save him from inevitable death. At that same moment Joseph promised to give the Saint new clothing and footwear. The storm immediately ceased, and Joseph safely crossed the river. But afterward, as often happens, he forgot his promise. Many days later he met the Blessed One.

"Joseph," said the Saint to him, "you have not fulfilled your promise. Do you remember what you promised when you were drowning in the Volga?"

Then Joseph remembered his promise and felt shame. Falling at the Saint's feet, he asked forgiveness.

"Go," said the Blessed One, "and give to the poor what you promised me, and never forget them, for almsgiving delivers us from calamities and misfortunes."

The priest of the cathedral church of the holy and glorious Great Martyr George in Yuryevets, named Alimpy, once, while eating fish, swallowed a bone. It lodged in his throat. For a long time he suffered, his condition grew worse, and he had already begun to despair of recovery. Once he met the Blessed Simon and began to ask him for help.

The Saint touched the priest's throat with several fingers, and at once he spat out the bone together with blood and was completely healed.

Once in the autumn season a strong agitation arose on the Volga. One of the inhabitants of Yuryevets, Peter, who lived not far from the river bank, suddenly noticed that someone was walking on the waves. He was terrified. But thinking he had been mistaken, he went to the very edge of the bank and began to look intently. Then he clearly saw that it was the Blessed Simon walking on the water with a staff in his hand. From astonishment Peter could not stir from his place. Approaching him, the Blessed One said:

"Tell no one what you have seen as long as I am alive."

After the Saint's death, Peter told everyone of this great miracle. All marveled and glorified the Lord, who sends into the world His glorious servants.

Sensing his imminent departure from temporal life, the Saint came to the house of the new voevoda, Theodore Petelin. The voevoda, angered by something and not knowing the Blessed One, ordered that he be beaten. Simon fell gravely ill. Left in the voevoda's courtyard, the Saint summoned a certain priest. Having confessed, the Saint with great reverence was granted to partake of the Divine Mysteries of Christ and gave up his holy soul to the Lord. Theodore, learning of the Blessed One's death, wept bitterly and repented of his sin. Meanwhile the whole town gathered for the burial of the Saint. With psalmody and spiritual songs the body of the holy ascetic was buried in the Epiphany Monastery of Yuryevets. This took place on November 4, 1584. At the burial the voevoda Theodore Petelin distributed much alms. When he returned home, he found that the money he had was in no way diminished. He understood that this had come about by the wondrous providence of God, and he gave thanks to the Lord and to our glorious father Simon. In 1619 a church was built over the grave of the Blessed One in honor of the Most Holy Theotokos Hodegetria, with side-chapels in the names of the Prophet Elijah and St. Macarius of Zheltovodsk. The place over the grave of the Blessed Simon was marked with a wooden tomb so that no one might unknowingly tread upon that spot. At that

time a woman named Salomia came to the tomb and asked a priest to perform a panikhida over the Saint's grave.

"For more than eighteen months I lay in grievous illness. Once there appeared to me a certain man, in a single shirt, with bare feet, with long and dark hair, of middle height. Standing before me he said: 'Go to the Epiphany Monastery and ask that a panikhida be served over the grave of Simon the Fool.' I felt myself completely healthy and came to pray over the grave of this righteous one."

All who were there were greatly astonished at her account, for they had never seen the Blessed Simon. Some elderly people said that Simon himself had appeared to her, for his appearance was exactly as she described it.

Many other miracles were accomplished at the Blessed One's grave. In 1635 Patriarch Joseph ordered that a reliquary be made and an icon of the holy servant of God be painted. He continues even now unceasingly to pray to the Lord for the salvation of our souls. Amen.

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THE FIFTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 5

5 ноября

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

Life and Suffering of the Venerable Martyrs Galaction and Episteme

Житие и страдание святых преподобномучеников Галактиона и Епистимы

In Phoenicia[1], in the city of Emesa, there lived a certain Clitophon, a man of noble birth, renowned and wealthy. His wife, named Leucippia, daughter of the eparch[2] Memnon, was barren and greatly grieved over this, for her barrenness often brought her reproaches from her husband, and at times she had to endure abuse and even blows. They were both pagans, adhered to the false Hellenic faith[3], and especially venerated the goddess Artemis[4].

At that time the city was governed by a certain Secundus the Syrian, who treated those who believed in Christ with extreme cruelty and mercilessness. He devised many different instruments of torture and displayed them in the middle of the city, to terrify the Christians. As a result, many of the faithful, fearing grievous torments, went into hiding, while others, boldly confessing Christ, gave themselves into the

1. Phoenicia is a narrow strip of land extending along the eastern (Asian) shore of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Palestine. The country was known from the most ancient times and was originally inhabited by a people related to the Hebrews, and also the first seafaring and trading people of the ancient world, who founded colonies and trading posts in various parts of the earth. In remote antiquity the principal cities of Phoenicia formed separate, independent communities; later they formed a league headed by the city of Tyre. In the 8th century B.C., Phoenicia was conquered by the Assyrians and thereafter passed successively under the rule of various peoples: the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Seljuk Turks, and Ottoman Turks, to whom it belongs to this day. Christianity began in Phoenicia in apostolic times.

2. Eparch: the governor of a province.

3. That is, pagan.

4. Artemis was the Greek pagan goddess of the moon and the hunt. Her magnificent temple at Ephesus in Asia Minor is mentioned in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 19:24–29).

hands of their tormentors and died for the name of their Lord. Among them was a certain monk named Onuphrius, who, so that no one would know he was a Christian, concealed his monastic life beneath a beggar's rags. Going from place to place and from house to house, he begged for a piece of bread as a poor man, while meanwhile, wherever he could, he taught the true faith and turned human souls to God. Thus he came also to the house of Clitophon and, standing at the gate, began to ask for bread. Leucippia, seeing a man clothed in rags and asking for bread, ordered one of the maidservants to shut the door in his face: that day she was angry, because her husband had beaten her on account of her barrenness. But the monk continued, as is the custom of beggars, to stand at the gate and ask alms. Soon Leucippia took pity on him, ordered that the elder be admitted into the courtyard, and supplied him with everything he needed. As the elder received the alms, he heard Leucippia heave a heavy sigh and asked her:

"What sorrow is yours, my lady, that you sigh so heavily?"

She answered him:

"I have no children, elder, because I am barren, and for this my husband oppresses and persecutes me. I have given much gold to physicians and sorcerers, that they might help me and release me from my barrenness, but they have given me no help at all; instead, I fall ever deeper into despondency."

The elder asked:

"What god do you serve?"

"I serve the great goddess Artemis," she answered.

"That is why you are barren: you have no hope in God, who is able to give fruit to your womb," the elder replied.

"But in what god should I hope, who could grant me such a blessing that I might be called a mother?" Leucippia asked.

"Hope in the true God, Jesus Christ," the elder replied, "and believe in Him, in His Father without beginning, and in the Holy, Consubstantial, and Life-giving Spirit."

Leucippia asked:

"Are you speaking to me of that God whom the Galileans serve?[5]"

"Of Him indeed," the elder answered, "for He created the heavens, founded the earth, and made man and every living creature."

"I am afraid," Leucippia replied, "that the governor of the province, Secundus, may learn of such a faith of mine and put me to death, as he has done with many others; for he mercilessly kills all who believe in that God of whom you speak."

"If you fear the governor of the province," said the elder, "then you may serve the Holy Trinity in secret. I too, fearing the threats of the tormentor, secretly serve my God, and by His grace hope to obtain salvation; for, as you see, I am a Christian, a monk, and a presbyter, but I have altered my appearance so as not to be recognized. In outward appearance I am to all a beggar, but in truth I am a servant of Christ. So you too, by serving Christ in secret, will not thereby be deprived of salvation."

"If I embrace this faith, father," Leucippia asked, "and my husband remains a pagan, will my faith be in vain because of my unbelieving husband?"

"Only receive the sign of Christ, that is, holy Baptism, and believe without doubt in the true God; and if you remain steadfast in the true faith, you yourself will be saved, and you will save your husband as well, for our Scriptures say: 'For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy' (1 Cor. 7:14)."

When Onuphrius had strengthened Leucippia with his words, she said:

"Father! Can you perform holy Baptism upon me?"

He answered:

"Is there water? For the time for it has already come."

Having ordered the maidservants to tell no one what had happened, Leucippia commanded that a tub be filled with water, and then blessed Onuphrius baptized her in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and instructed her in the mysteries of Christian teach-

5. The followers of Christ were called Galileans, since He was called "Jesus of Galilee" (Mt. 26:69), because He spent His childhood and youth in Nazareth, an insignificant town in Galilee.

ing and in all the commandments. As he was leaving, the newly baptized woman asked him not to forget her, to visit as often as he could, and to teach her piety and prayer.

When the monk had departed, Leucippia pretended to be ill, so that her husband would not touch her for eight days. Thus she preserved in purity the grace of the Holy Spirit which she had received in Baptism. After eight days had passed, she saw in a vision our Lord Jesus Christ, crucified upon the Cross. She seemed to fall at His feet and heard from His most pure lips the comforting promise that He would release her from barrenness and grant her such a son as would imitate the Savior's sufferings on the Cross and become a partaker of His Kingdom. As a result of this vision, Leucippia was filled with great spiritual joy and conceived a fervent love for God. From that time onward, the memory of the Lord's sufferings never left her; she always contemplated Christ crucified in her mind and seemed to see Him standing before her.

Soon afterward she conceived. Her husband was exceedingly glad and said to her:

"Now I know that you are pleasing to the gods: they have granted fruit to your womb; so let us go and offer them a sacrifice."

Then Leucippia sighed and said:

"It was not those gods to whom you summon me who gave me this gift, but another God, who appeared to me in a dream before I conceived and whom I saw nailed to the Cross. And if you will, my lord, let us offer a thanksgiving sacrifice to Him."

"That God whom you saw," her husband remarked, "is the God of the Galileans, of whom I have heard many say that He was indeed crucified upon the Cross and works wondrous miracles."

"Why, then," she said, "do we not believe in Him, since He is almighty and so merciful to us both that He has fulfilled our heart's desire and released me from barrenness?"

"Have you not heard," her husband replied, "that the governor of the province tortures and kills without mercy those who believe in the Crucified One?"

"But if we cannot believe in Him openly," Leucippia said, "we shall believe in secret and direct our lives toward goodness in accordance with this faith."

"There is no one," said Clitophon, "to teach us this new faith and instruct us how we ought to serve that good God whom you saw in a dream, and who granted you the power to conceive."

Seeing that her husband was inclined to her way of thinking, Leucippia told him all that had happened to her and revealed that she was already a Christian, having been instructed in the mysteries of the faith of Christ by a certain monk. Clitophon heard this with joy and wished to be baptized. As soon as blessed Onuphrius came to their house to visit the newly baptized woman, she introduced him to her husband, and Clitophon was baptized by the holy elder. The spouses lived in all piety and purity, secretly serving the true Lord.

When a male child was born to them, they summoned their spiritual father and teacher, Onuphrius, who baptized the infant and gave him the name Galaction. At that time the holy elder spoke this prophecy concerning him: "This child will love the heavenly life more than the earthly."

When Galaction had grown up, his parents took care to educate him, and, with God's help, he quickly excelled in every branch of learning that he studied. When he had reached the age of 24, and his mother had already died, his father desired him to marry. He found a maiden, fair of face, named Episteme, and betrothed his son to her. Since the marriage was postponed for a time, Galaction often visited his betrothed, so that he might see her; but he never greeted her with a kiss, as was customary, because she had not been baptized. Episteme was greatly saddened by this. Her father, seeing her sorrow and learning its cause, said to Galaction:

"Why, young man, do you not greet my daughter, your betrothed, with the customary kiss? If you do not love her, why did you become betrothed to her?"

Galaction made no reply to him, but went to the maiden and said to her in private:

"Episteme! Do you know why I do not greet you with a kiss?"

She answered:

"I do not know, my lord, and I am greatly grieved by it."

Galaction said:

"Because you are not a Christian, but are defiled by the impure pagan faith, I do not wish to touch your impurity, lest I offend the Spirit of God. But if you wish to gain my love, renounce the idols, believe in the God in whom I believe, and receive holy Baptism. Then I shall give you a kiss, love you as myself, call you my wife, and we shall live in love and inseparably until the end."

Episteme answered:

"I shall do everything you command, my lord: I believe in your God and desire to be baptized."

He said:

"Very well, wise maiden, now I truly begin to love you. But since there is no one who could baptize you, for Christian piety is undergoing fierce persecution, and the presbyters and clergy have been slain or have fled into the wilderness, I must baptize you myself. So take white garments with you and go out to the river Kiphos, as though to bathe; meanwhile I too shall leave my house for the fields under the guise of a walk, and, finding you at the river, I shall baptize you."

Episteme went out to the river, and Galaction also went out and baptized his betrothed in the Kiphos in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and taught her the prayer. Then they parted, and no one knew of their secret. About the same time Galaction converted to the true faith one of the slaves of his father-in-law and baptized him, as he had his betrothed. This slave, named Eutolmius, afterward became a monk and wrote the present Life.

After her baptism Episteme remained in her parents' house, practicing contemplation of God and prayers, which she performed in secret, for she concealed from her father her acceptance of the Christian faith.

When, on the eighth day after her baptism, Galaction came to her, she said to him:

"A marvelous thing I wish to tell you, my lord. Since I received holy baptism I often see beautiful chambers, and in them three choirs[6]

singing: one choir of black-robed monks, another of beautiful virgins, and a third of certain winged and fiery, comely men; and from this wondrous vision and from the sweet-sounding song of the choirs my heart feels extraordinary joy."

Galaction, pondering what Episteme had seen, said to her the following:

"The black-robed monks are those who have left their riches, wives, and friends and have followed Christ, passing the narrow and sorrowful path of life in poverty, purity, and patience. The beautiful virgins are those who have left their bridegrooms and parents and all worldly allurement — sumptuous garments, property, and other vanities — and have followed Christ. And the winged men are the Angels of God, together with whom those virgins rejoice and exult in heaven and glorify God with songs of praise."

"Oh, if only God would grant us to rejoice together with them," said Episteme.

"If we preserve our virginity," said Galaction, "and, like them, renounce the world, then the All-good God will also deem us worthy of the same reward."

"If you agree," answered Episteme, "I am ready to keep my virginity, but I do not wish to be parted from you, for if we are parted, how shall we be able to share our joy with one another?"

"Give me your word now," said Galaction, "that you will keep your virginity and together with me take the monastic habit, and I shall not be parted from you either in this age or in the age to come."

Episteme gave the promise he required, saying:

"As I unwaveringly believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, so I promise to fulfill your desire, and I shall follow you wherever you go."

Galaction said:

"Let us give thanks to our God that He is merciful to us and has heard our prayers! May He confirm and keep our covenant unbroken to the end! Now I go to my house and prepare for the journey; do you likewise: give away to the poor all that you have, as I shall give away

6. A company: a multitude, an assembly.

mine, and on the third day we shall leave our homes together and go wherever God leads us. Take with you also the slave Eutolmius; he is a pious man and will be a monk with us."

After this consultation the holy Galaction and Episteme parted, and having secretly given away to the poor all that they had and made ready for the road, they went out of their homes at night, as they had agreed, and went together, and with them the slave Eutolmius.

After ten days they came to a mountain called Pouplion[7], where there was a monastery in which ten monks were working out their salvation. At some distance from it was a small women's monastery, in which four aged ascetic women lived; their superior was a deaconess of pure and holy life. Galaktion and Episteme, with Eutolmius, entered the men's monastery and, bowing to the abbot, told him of their intention to become monastics in that place. The abbot, discerning in them the call of God, received them and tonsured them as monastics: he sent Episteme to the women's monastery to the four holy ascetic women, while he kept Galaktion and Eutolmius in his own monastery and bade them perform all the customary monastic obediences. And the Venerable Galaktion was in complete obedience to the abbot and the brotherhood and zealously served God. And who can describe his exploits and labors? He was never seen idle, but was always either doing something needful for the monastery or praying; his fasting was extraordinary: sometimes he tasted no food for a whole week. He so guarded his chastity and purity that he avoided in every way even looking upon a woman's face, and indeed for a long time did not see one. Many times some of the brethren invited him to go with them to see the aforementioned holy deaconess, who had lived the monastic life for ninety years and brought great benefit to all who heard her instruction on the salvation of the soul, for she excelled in wisdom, edifying speech, and virtuous life—and, moreover, to visit his sister Episteme. But Galaktion would not consent, saying:

"It is enough for me, holy fathers, to profit also from your instruction, but I do not wish to see my sister until the time comes when the

7. Mount Puplion, or Publion, according to the testimony of Symeon Metaphrastes, was situated near Mount Sinai.

Lord Himself commands me to see her." And the holy Episteme, his sister in Christ, lived in her monastery under the holy deaconess, like an Angel of God, spending her time, like Galaktion, in exploits and labors and in nothing falling behind her brother in the life of asceticism. Both of them were like two lamps burning with love for God, and the monks who labored together with them were instructed by the example of their virtuous lives and glorified the Heavenly Father.

Meanwhile the persecution of the Christians did not cease: all of them were compelled to offer sacrifice to idols, and those who refused to do so were subjected to tortures. Some of the pagans, who knew of the monks dwelling on the mountain, denounced them to the governor of the province, Ursus. The latter at once sent his soldiers with orders to seize all the monks and bring them before him for judgment. Even before these soldiers arrived, the holy Episteme saw the following dream one night: she dreamed that she stood in the royal palace together with her bridegroom and spiritual brother Galaktion, and some radiant King crowned them with beautiful crowns. Awakening, she marveled at what she had seen, and with the coming of day she sent the abbot a letter asking him to come and hear something important (since the nuns ordinarily did not go to the men's monastery, but instead the abbot, who was spiritual father to both monasteries, himself came to the ascetic women and attended to their spiritual needs: he heard their confession, celebrated the Divine Liturgy for them, gave them the Holy Mysteries to communicate, and then returned to his own monastery). The abbot, having received Episteme's letter, went to the monastery of the holy ascetic women, where the holy Episteme related to him her dream of the previous night. The abbot said:

"The palace is the Kingdom of Heaven, the King is Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, and the crowns signify the rewards which you, my child, and your spiritual brother Galaktion are to receive in the near future for your sufferings and exploits; but first it is destined for you to suffer much and to die a martyr's death. I beseech you, my child, do not fear cruel tortures and do not lose heart amid the torments: know that for the suffering that awaits you there are eternal and ineffable blessings

which you will receive together with your brother from the hands of the Awarder of the contest[8]."

Episteme, shedding tears, answered:

"May the will of the Lord be done: may He arrange all things concerning us as is pleasing to Him in His goodness!"

No sooner had the abbot returned to his cell than the soldiers sent by Ursus fell upon the men's monastery; all the monks fled and hid themselves in the deserts and mountains, and only the Venerable Galaktion remained in the monastery, whom the soldiers seized, finding him in his cell reading the Word of God. In the same way the holy ascetic women fled from their cells and hid themselves together with Episteme. Only the holy Galaktion, like a sheep led to the slaughter[9], was dragged before Ursus for judgment and torment. But the Venerable Episteme, who was hiding with the other virgins in a cave, learning that her bridegroom and brother had been seized by the pagans and led away to torment, fell weeping at the feet of the holy deaconess, saying:

"I beseech you, my lady, release me, that I may go after my lord Galaktion, for I have heard that the soldiers have taken him and led him to the governor for torment, and I cannot be far from him; my heart aches for him, and I wish to die together with him for Christ our Lord."

The deaconess answered:

"No, my child Episteme, do not go after him and do not surrender yourself into the hands of the pagans, lest you fall into the snares of the enemy. You are young, and I fear for you, lest out of fear of torments you renounce Christ and thereby lose your virginal exploit; then all your monastic labors will be of no avail, and you will lose hope of salvation."

"I cannot live without Galaktion," Episteme said in reply. "Through him I came to know Christ, my true and loving God; by his hands I was

8. Podvigopolozhnik is a translation of a Greek word that among the ancient Greeks denoted a highly honored office: that of the *organizers of contests* (in running, chariot driving, wrestling, and so forth). Here, of course, it refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, who by His death on the Cross laid the foundation and beginning of the ascetic struggle to mortify the flesh and attain spiritual perfection, in which Christians are *crucified with* Christ, that is, as it were, share in His sufferings; and who is at the same time the Judge of these struggles and the giver of their rewards.

washed in the water of baptism from pagan defilement. He guided me onto the path of salvation and brought me into this monastic way of life and to your holy monastery. His prayers helped me in all my needs. He is my betrothed, my brother, my teacher, my father in God, and the guardian of my virginity. I cannot be parted from him either in this age or in the age to come; rather I will go and die together with him. If he lays down his soul for the True God, I will lay down mine as well. Let his blood be shed together with mine for the Creator of all. I will go with him and stand before the throne of the King of Glory, whom I saw in a dream and who has crowned us both together... Let me go, my lady, let me go, and pray for me!"

The deaconess, seeing her tears and her burning love for God and for her betrothed, said:

"Blessed be you by the Lord, my daughter, and may all your way be blessed! May you accomplish your martyr's struggle, like the blessed Thekla. Go forth on this blessed path, and may the hand of the Lord, which strengthens, be with you!"

After this, the blessed Episteme, having kissed the holy deaconess, her spiritual mother, and all the sisters, hastened off after her beloved brother.

Overtaking the soldiers and seeing St. Galaktion, who was being led bound, she cried out:

"My beloved lord and brother! My teacher, who instructed me unto salvation, through whom I came to know Christ, the True God, wait for me! Do not leave your poor sister and handmaid alone! Take me with you to the torment, me whom you led out of idolatrous error and all worldly vanity. Lead me, whom you introduced into the monastic struggle, to the crown of martyrdom! Remember how you promised me that you would not leave me either in this age or in the age to come!"

The soldiers accompanying Galaktion rushed at Episteme and seized her. Galaktion, seeing Episteme and so overjoyed at her firm resolve to suffer for Christ, wept for joy. He gave heartfelt thanks to God, who

9. *As a sheep to the slaughter.* These words are taken from Is. 53 and contain a prophecy specifically concerning the Savior's sufferings on the Cross, namely, His patient endurance of those sufferings.

had given his sister such steadfastness and such burning love for God, and secretly prayed for her, that the Lord would strengthen her to the end in the struggle of suffering, and that she would not be dismayed by the cruel tortures.

The soldiers, having bound her together with Galaktion, with whom she had long been bound by the bond of spiritual love, led them to the governor of the province. On the way, Galaktion instructed Episteme, saying:

"Look, sister, do not be enticed by any allurements of the deceitful world, and do not fear the torments. We shall endure here only a little while, and for this we shall receive eternal crowns from our Lord in the heavenly chamber."

St. Episteme answered him:

"I will follow after you, my lord, and will do as you do. I believe that our Lord will not forsake us, but will strengthen you, and will help me, weak as I am, to bear the same torments as you, to suffer equally and to die, so that 'in righteousness I shall behold Thy face; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with Thy likeness'" (Ps. 16:15).

Conversing thus, they reached the courtyard of Ursus. A servant came out to meet the soldiers and said that the governor had ordered the Christians to be guarded until morning. Therefore the soldiers kept the saints bound throughout the night.

In the morning Ursus appeared for the trial, and when Galaktion and Episteme were brought before him, he looked at them and said:

"Who are you, black-robed ones?"

St. Galaktion answered:

"We are Christians and black-robed monks."

Ursus asked:

"And who is Christ?"

"Christ is the true God, who created heaven and earth and all that is in them," the saint replied.

"If your Christ created everything," Ursus continued, "then what are our gods, and what have they created?"

"Your gods," Galaktion answered, "are stone and wood; they are corruptible things and have created nothing. Rather, they themselves

are made by the hand of man. You worship the work of human hands and honor as gods those whom you yourselves have made out of various materials."

Enraged, Ursus ordered those present at the interrogation to strip Galaktion and to beat him cruelly with sinew-whips for reviling the gods.

While Galaktion was being beaten, St. Episteme wept and reproached the governor.

"Merciless tormentor!" she said. "Are you not ashamed to torment a servant of God who is guiltless, and to cover with wounds a body already withered by fasting?"

But Ursus said:

"Strip her too, and beat her harder."

When the shameless servants tore away her monastic garments and exposed her down to her hair-shirt, the saint said to the tormentor:

"Accursed be you, shameless tormentor! From my childhood no one has seen my nakedness, and you command that I be stripped before everyone. Then let your sinful eyes be blinded, so that you may not see my maidenly nakedness!"

No sooner had the saint said this than the prince and all who stood around him were blinded, and each one groped with his hands for the walls and for a guide, and there was no one who could see the light. All were struck with terror and cried out:

"Save us, servant of Christ, from this darkness, and we will believe in your God!"

Then the saint prayed to God, and all began to see again, and fifty-three of those present truly believed in Christ. But Ursus, though he regained the sight of his bodily eyes, became even more blinded in his spiritual eyes, for, incited by the devil, he ascribed this miracle not to the Lord Jesus Christ but to his false gods. "We have blasphemed," he thought, "our great gods in our minds, and they, angered by this, have punished us so that we may be more careful and not dare to think anything evil of them... Let us not spare these open blasphemers, then, and let us avenge the dishonor done to our gods."

And Ursus ordered sharpened spikes to be driven under the nails of the martyrs' hands and feet. The saints bore this torment bravely and cried out:

"We serve Christ, the Only True God, and we reject the false gods!"

After this Ursus ordered their hands to be cut off. They cried out:

"Blessed be our Lord, who teaches our hands to war and our fingers to fight, our mercy and our fortress, our refuge and our Deliverer" (Ps. 143:1–2), who delivers us from the hands of our enemies!

Then Ursus ordered their feet to be cut off as well, whereupon they cried out:

"Rise up to help us and deliver us for Thy mercy's sake" (Ps. 43:27). Thou knowest, O Lord, that burning with love for Thee, we followed Thee and walked the path of suffering; now lead us into eternal rest, and may our feet stand in Thy heavenly mansions, where all who have pleased Thee stand before Thee!

And they raised their voices again, saying:

"Let the pagan gods and all who serve them be accursed!"

Then Ursus said:

"These impious ones still do not cease reviling our gods! Cut out their tongues, so that they may no longer utter blasphemy!"

Then the saints' tongues were cut out. But although the lips of Christ's confessors fell silent, their hearts did not cease to cry out to God. At last the tormentor ordered their heads to be cut off. They were carried outside the courtyard wall, beheaded with a sword, and their bodies were cast out unburied. But Eutolmius, the servant of Galaktion's father-in-law and a companion of both saints, had followed them from afar when they were seized and led to trial; he had changed his monastic garb for secular clothing so as not to be recognized. He saw their suffering and their death, and secretly taking their holy relics, he mourned over them and gave them honorable burial. He also wrote down the life and the valiant suffering of the saints for the benefit of those who read and hear, and to the glory of God, glorified in the Holy Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Martyrs of Christ, numbered with the company of the valiant who bravely strove in radiance, Galaktion, glorious with your honorable spouse, and Episteme who suffered with you, pray unceasingly to the One God for us all.

* * *

Life of St. Jonah, Archbishop of Novgorod

Житие святого Ионы, архиепископа Новгородского

St. Jonah, in the world John, was born at the end of the 14th century. When he was three years old, his mother, by the will of God, yielded her soul to the Lord, and four years after this the seven-year-old lad was left a complete orphan. But the Lord did not leave him without His care. He put into the mind of one virtuous widow, Natalia Medovartseva, the thought of taking the poor orphan into her home to raise him. With a mother's care she looked after the boy John, who from birth was weak in health and required good and watchful attention. Natalia Medovartseva fed and clothed the lad. Nor did she leave him without spiritual nourishment: she sent him to be taught by a certain teacher, with whom many other children studied. Weak from birth, timid because of his poverty, the holy boy from the very beginning of his schooling was strikingly distinguished from his companions. He took no part in the noisy games of children, loved quiet and solitude, and with all diligence and care he began to study; by his swift progress and the goodness of his disposition he increasingly won the love of his adoptive mother.

After Vespers one day, the companions of St. John went out into the street to play. The pious youth was there as well. He did not take part in his peers' games, but only watched them. At that time there appeared in the street a man no one in Novgorod had seen before, who looked like a Fool-for-Christ. This was St. Michael of Klops. He had come from a distant region, unknown to anyone in Novgorod and knowing none of its inhabitants; this was his first visit to Novgorod, even before he entered the Klops Monastery. Seeing a man walking in strange attire, the children ran in a crowd toward him and began to look him

over. The most boisterous among them began to laugh at the holy man, and some even threw stones and rubbish at his feet. St. John stood at a distance in the street; the day was drawing toward evening. Twilight had already fallen upon the earth, and everything around was beginning to vanish into darkness. But St. Michael saw clearly and brightly into the future of the blessed youth. Paying no attention to the noise and mischief of the children, he went up to John, took him by the hair, lifted him above himself and said:

"Ivan, study the books diligently: you shall be Archbishop in Great Novgorod!"

Having said this, he embraced the child, kissed him and departed. Thus St. Michael, not knowing the child's name beforehand, foretold what was indeed fulfilled fifty years later, four years after the blessed repose of St. Michael himself.

Meanwhile the youth John, having attained the age of majority, resolved to dedicate himself to the service of the Lord. From his earliest childhood he had strictly observed all the commandments of Christ and loved solitude. Now he resolved to receive the monastic tonsure. Fifty versts from Novgorod, amid great forests and far from human habitation, stood the Otnya Hermitage. It was to this place that St. John went. The archimandrite of that monastery, Hariton, received the newcomer with love and tonsured him a monk, giving him the name Jonah. St. Jonah began to lead a strict and austere life, filled with great monastic labors. His ascetic feats astonished the brethren, so that after Hariton's death the monks unanimously elected St. Jonah as hegumen of their monastery. In his new office the blessed one showed himself a wise ruler, a true shepherd, a gentle guide and an experienced instructor. The fame of his labors and ascetic feats spread quickly; soon he became known in Great Novgorod as well. Many inhabitants of Novgorod and of other places began to come to the saint; they were edified by his wise instructions and asked for his prayers and blessing. Many made donations to the monastery, so that under the wise governance of St. Jonah the Otnya monastery, until then poor and scantily provided for, began to flourish; the number of its monks increased, and all of them, to the best of their strength, imitated St. Jonah.

In the year 1458 St. Euthymius, Hierarch of Novgorod, reposed. Mourned by the whole people, this shepherd, who enjoyed love and esteem, was buried with honor.[10]

The citizens of Novgorod unanimously desired to see St. Jonah upon the archpastoral throne. It was grievous for him to leave the quiet Otnya Hermitage, but he did not dare to resist the wish of the people. In 1458 he arrived in Novgorod, and in 1459 he was raised to the rank of Archbishop of Novgorod by St. Jonah, Metropolitan of All Rus'. The new archbishop was adorned with all the virtues, so that the Novgorodians saw in him a thoroughly worthy successor of the departed Hierarch Euthymius. The holy man was distinguished by his love for his flock; he especially defended the poor and the orphaned, remembering his own orphanhood. In him the words of Job were fully realized: "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame" (Job 29:13–15).

There was no one who could speak ill of the Hierarch; everyone loved him and desired to see him, and everyone who heard him received delight. Though he occupied so high a throne, he was gentle and simple with all. He sought to do some good for everyone and to give wise counsel. Not only the Novgorodians respected their lord; even the Moscow princes loved St. Jonah, revered him and often sent him letters and received counsel from him. For the Hierarch often foretold the future prophetically, and his word was always fulfilled exactly. At that time the Moscow princes Basil the Dark and his son John III[11] were especially distrustful of the Novgorodians, who could not forget their former independence from Moscow and therefore more than once incurred the tsar's wrath. Hierarch Jonah, who enjoyed such esteem with the grand princes of Moscow, defended his fellow citizens and softened the tsar's anger. The Novgorodians themselves asked him to intercede

10. His commemoration is on March 11.

11. Vasily the Blind was Grand Prince from 1425 to 1462, and his son John III from 1462 to 1505.

before the Moscow princes; often, too, he ended their constant disorders and mutual dissensions by his authoritative word.

The Hierarch often had to take part in civil affairs. Soon after his accession to the throne, disorders also arose in the Church. From Rome a disciple of the pseudo-metropolitan Isidore came to Lithuania and assumed the governance of the West Russian Church. In Moscow a council was convened, which decreed that he should not be recognized as metropolitan. The Novgorod shepherd himself was not present at this council in Moscow. But the Metropolitan of Moscow sent him the conciliar decision and exhorted him to stand firmly for Orthodoxy, to strengthen his flock in the true faith, and to persuade the wayward and turn them to the truth.

The Hierarch often had to admonish his fellow citizens. In 1460 the Grand Prince of Moscow, Basil, arrived in Novgorod with his two sons, Yuri and Andrew. On this occasion he came to Novgorod in peace, for he wished to venerate the Novgorodian wonderworkers and to collect tribute from the inhabitants. Some years earlier he had come against Novgorod with a strong army and had punished the Novgorodians for their friendship with his enemies. Some of the inhabitants, remembering this, devised a bold plan to kill the prince. When the Hierarch learned of this mad intention, he at once came to the gathering of the conspirators.

"Madmen," said the Hierarch to them, "what have you planned? Even if you kill the Grand Prince, what will you gain? You will only bring one misfortune and calamity upon Novgorod. His eldest son John, learning of your wickedness, will at once come with a strong army and lay the country waste."

This admonition greatly affected the conspirators; they themselves clearly understood their position.

The Novgorodians received the Grand Prince with honor. The Hierarch also showed him respect. The Grand Prince often conversed with the blessed archpastor and carried out all his counsel. He came to love him as his own father and heeded him in everything. He especially esteemed the Hierarch for his virtuous life. During the Grand Prince's stay in Novgorod, a wondrous healing of the prince's chamberlain took

place at the shrine containing the relics of St. Barlaam of Khutyn. This young man, of a family of Ryazan boyars, suddenly fell gravely ill. His strength quickly ebbed away. At last he seemed to have died altogether. When he was brought to the shrine of St. Barlaam's relics, he suddenly revived and became completely well. This wondrous miracle took place before the very eyes of the Grand Prince, his boyars and other persons. Those who had come to Novgorod acknowledged that this city enjoyed a special protection from on high. Hierarch Jonah at once ordered this miracle to be recorded for the memory of posterity, and entrusted the task to Pachomius the Logothete, who had come from the Holy Mountain. After some time, the prince returned to Moscow. Taking leave of the holy shepherd, the Grand Prince invited him to a conference in Moscow.

Before long the holy hierarch had to set out for that city. The Prince was angry again with the people of Novgorod, and some of the nobles strove to increase the Prince's ill-will toward the Novgorodians. St. Jonah, wishing to appease his anger, went to Moscow despite his years, disregarding all the hardships of the long journey. Drawing near that city, he remembered the great defender of the Russian land, the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh, and vowed that upon his return he would build a church in the name of this glorious ascetic and wondrous servant well-pleasing to God. Five versts from Moscow the hierarch was met by boyars and several abbots. When the hierarch arrived in the city, the Metropolitan of Moscow received him with love. At the princely court the holy archbishop had long been awaited, and here the boyars met him. On the staircase to the great prince's tower he was taken by the arms by the sons of Basil Vasilyevich. The Prince himself was very glad to see the wise hierarch before him. He received the tribute and the gifts which the hierarch had brought with him from his city. Throughout the hierarch's stay in Moscow, the Grand Prince showed him complete respect. He often summoned him and conversed with him about various civil and ecclesiastical affairs. Once he summoned the Hierarch of Novgorod and the Metropolitan of Moscow together and expressed his displeasure with the Novgorodians. He complained of them to St. Jonah, because they were ready to take the side

of the enemies of the Russian land, the Lithuanians, showing little respect to him, the Grand Prince, and he even said that he intended to march with an army against the rebellious Novgorodians, so as once and for all to put an end to their disorders and willfulness. The hierarch Jonah, as a true shepherd, began warmly to intercede for his spiritual children; he told the Prince that much was being reported to him incorrectly, in an effort to arouse his anger. He asked Basil not to heed the words of envious slanderers, not to give way to anger, but to show mercy to the Novgorodians.

"Great sovereign, do not allow anger to take possession of your heart, do not heed slanderers and envious men, do not punish many innocent people for the sake of a handful of guilty ones, but admonish the inhabitants of our city as a father and show them your love and mercy. If, however, not heeding our entreaties, you sternly exact punishment from the people of Novgorod, beware lest division arise even among your own children. No, Prince, do not be moved by slander against your patrimony, but look upon your people with mercy. Do not lay new tributes and burdens upon them. Know that your days are drawing near their end. Your son John will sit upon the grand princely throne after you. Together with my flock I shall offer prayers to the Lord on his behalf, that the almighty right hand of God may deliver him from the violence of the godless Tatars, exalt him above all his enemies, and strengthen his realm, if he keeps the commandments of the Lord and governs his land in meekness."

These words greatly gladdened the Grand Prince, whose cherished dream was deliverance from the Tatar yoke. Knowing that the predictions of the holy archbishop were fulfilled exactly, Basil promised St. Jonah to lay aside all anger against the Novgorodians and to grant them peace. He gave his word on this to the archbishop in the presence of the metropolitan. At the conclusion of this conversation the Archpastor of Novgorod shed tears. Wondering at this, the Grand Prince and the metropolitan asked the hierarch the reason for his tears.

"Who," the saint replied, "can humble and bring low so strong and populous a city as ours? Only its own citizens, through their internal

strife. Only this do I pray the Lord, that it may not come to pass in my days."

Thus St. Jonah clearly foresaw the future fall of Novgorod. Knowing this, he obtained from Basil and his son John the right of judgment for his beloved Otnya monastery. The princes gladly granted the hierarch's request, and they gave him a charter bearing the grand princely seal.

The Grand Prince so firmly believed the words of the Novgorodian hierarch that he then and there wrote his testament. Assigning appanages in it to his sons and his consort, the Grand Prince stipulated that tribute be collected for the Tatars only for as long as they still held power over the Russian land. "But the time will come," Basil said here, "when their power will collapse and the Lord will deliver the Russian princes from their yoke. Then the princes shall no longer have to pay tribute to the grand prince for the payment of the Khan of the Horde."

After this the Hierarch of Novgorod set out for his flock. The Prince and the boyars escorted the venerable archpastor with honor. The Novgorodian citizens welcomed their bishop, who had so warmly interceded for them before the Grand Prince, with no less love. Upon arriving in his diocese, the hierarch promptly fulfilled his promise: he built the first church in Novgorod in honor of our Venerable Father Sergius of Radonezh. He adorned the new church with every splendor, provided it with service books and icons, and often visited it. St. Jonah took great care for the spiritual enlightenment of his flock; himself distinguished by great learning and profound knowledge of Holy Scripture, he wished that his spiritual children, too, might be instructed and have for edifying reading accounts of the famous ascetics of the Novgorod region. For this purpose, in agreement with the all-Russian metropolitan, St. Jonah, the Novgorodian archpastor commissioned the learned monk Pachomius the Logothete, who had come from the Holy Mountain, to revise and write out certain lives of saints. Besides this, several service books written by the blessing of Archbishop Jonah have come down to us.

Soon after his return from Moscow, the all-Russian metropolitan Jonah sent an epistle to the blessed Hierarch of Novgorod. Feeling the

approach of his end, Metropolitan Jonah wished once more to see the Novgorodian bishop and to enjoy his spiritual conversation. At the same time the metropolitan asked St. Jonah to take personal part in the election of a worthy successor and to bury him himself. On reading this epistle, St. Jonah wept and exclaimed:

"Now Moscow is deprived of a great grace, and with her the whole Russian land."

However, weighed down by his years and by an ailment of the legs, St. Jonah himself could not set out for Moscow. He sent the Hierarch of Moscow a letter, in which, consoling him, he wrote:

"Do not grieve that we cannot see each other now, for we shall meet in that life, after departure from the mortal body. Our meeting will then be joyful, for we shall then receive our reward from the Chief Shepherd Himself."

St. Jonah left the choice of a successor to the Lord and to the assembled council:

"Whomever the Holy Spirit chooses and blesses, him I too shall be ready to accept!"

The holy Metropolitan of Moscow Jonah reposed on March 31, 1461. Knowing the sanctity of his life, the Hierarch of Novgorod commissioned the aforementioned Pachomius the Logothete to compose a canon. Soon after this the Hierarch of Moscow was numbered among the saints.

In 1462, after the death of Basil, his son John III ascended the grand princely throne. St. Jonah set out on business to Moscow to the new prince. He reminded him of what he had foretold to his father, adding:

"The Lord will not despise the prayers of so many oppressed; He will scatter the Horde. But let the sovereign abide in piety and firmly keep the commandments of God."

At the same time the hierarch asked the Grand Prince to confirm the former charter for the Otnya hermitage, so that this monastery might have the right of judgment. John, who deeply respected the hierarch, gladly granted his request. He confirmed the charter given by his father and affixed to it a seal bearing his own likeness.

At that time a sorrowful division occurred in the Russian Church. Gregory, consecrated bishop at Rome, declared himself Metropolitan of Russia and, received favorably by the King of Poland, began to administer church affairs in south-western Russia, then subject to the Polish King. Concerning this matter, many Orthodox and the Grand Prince himself wrote to the hierarch, asking for his assistance and support. St. Jonah, himself firm in Orthodoxy, opposed such division in every way and instructed his flock much, persuading them not to abandon the old Orthodox faith and to remain faithful to the throne of the Metropolitan of Moscow; as a true shepherd, he boldly and fearlessly thwarted all the schemes of the enemies of Orthodoxy and guarded his rational flock.

St. Jonah bore many labors. By his wise word and his love he more than once quenched discord between the Novgorodians and the Pskovians. The inhabitants of Pskov, wearying of their dependence on the Novgorodian bishop, began to ask the Grand Prince to appoint for them in Pskov a separate bishop. They even seized part of the lands and holdings which belonged to the Archbishop of Novgorod. But the Grand Prince did not grant their request, commanding them to obey the blessed Hierarch of Novgorod in everything and to return what they had unjustly seized. The Pskovians did so. St. Jonah himself contributed much to this by his own example: he did not demand from the Pskovians any compensation for the losses they had caused the episcopal see. Seeing his love and disinterestedness, the greater part of the Pskovians began to respect him even more and to render him due honor.

St. Jonah took great care for the building and adornment of the churches of God. Besides building a church in honor of Venerable Sergius of Radonezh, the hierarch was concerned for his beloved Otnya monastery, where his monastic labors and ascetic feats had begun. Here he built a stone church in the name of the Three Hierarchs and magnificently adorned it. To this end he summoned the finest iconographers, and he lavishly spent his own means to furnish the new church abundantly with sacred objects and books. To this church he added yet another, in honor of the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John, whose name he had borne even in the world. In this church, with

his own hands, he dug his grave and gave instructions that his body be laid to rest here. In the Otnya monastery the holy archpastor also built a church in the name of St. Nicholas. In Novgorod itself he restored and adorned the Church of St. Demetrius on the Trade Side, which, according to tradition, had originally been built in memory of Demetrius Donskoy's victory over Mamai.

For the pious life of the wise hierarch, he was held in honor not only by the Grand Princes of Moscow, but even by those of Tver, Smolensk, Polotsk and Lithuania. The Novgorod region, governed by St. Jonah, enjoyed peace throughout the entire time of this blessed hierarch's episcopate, together with a special protection from on high. The citizens, heeding his teachings, had love for one another; even the land itself was then distinguished by especial fertility. All this was through the prayers of the saint. Only once did the lands of Novgorod and Pskov suffer a dreadful calamity. From the end of 1466 there broke out a pestilence known under the name of the Simonov plague. The sick had their glands swell, and on the third or fourth day they died. In the following year, 1467, the disease flared up with new force. Throughout the whole Novgorod land 220,652 persons died. Great grief and confusion seized the inhabitants. Yet the archpastor himself grieved still more in his soul for his spiritual children. He consoled them and unceasingly prayed to the Lord for the cessation of this dreadful calamity. And his prayer was heard. In the Nerevsky end, at the Zverin monastery, a large charnel house was established for the burial of the dead. Once, during prayer, the hierarch heard a voice:

"Go with the crosses, accompanied by the entire sanctified sobor, to the Nerevsky end, to the Zverin monastery, to the church of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos, to the charnel house. Go to the place where there appeared the icon of the holy righteous Simeon the God-receiver. Set up there a church in his honor, and the pestilence will cease."

The hierarch announced this to the citizens, and in the morning, on 1 October, the day of the memory of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos, the Novgorodians were witnesses of a new and wondrous miracle. On this day the hierarch, with all his clergy and the citizens,

proceeded to the indicated place, and, kneeling before the icon of Simeon the God-receiver, with tears prayed to the Lord for the appeasing of heaven's wrath. At this time the people began carrying logs, and in a single day a church was built. St. Jonah that same day consecrated it and celebrated the Divine Liturgy in it. From that day the pestilence ceased. In the following year, 1468, Hierarch Jonah, on the site of this wooden church, erected a stone church in honor of the righteous Simeon, which is preserved to this day, bearing witness to the ineffable mercy of God.

At that time the Solovetsky monastery was beginning to be founded. St. Jonah rendered great help and assistance to the new monastery. Together with the secular authorities of Novgorod he gave St. Zosimas a paper by which he granted to the new monastery the entire Solovetsky island with all its lands.

The Novgorod hierarch did much good for all, and he had to bear many labors. Sensing the approach of his death, he wrote a spiritual testament, in which he bequeathed that his body be buried in the Otnya monastery. Having received the Holy Mysteries, he peacefully reposed in the Lord on 5 November 1470. With fitting honor the Novgorod flock committed to burial the body of their beloved pastor, teacher and protector. His honorable body was laid in the Otnya monastery, in the grave prepared by himself at the church of St. John the Forerunner. For forty days the brethren did not cover the grave with earth. The Lord was pleased to glorify with incorruption the remains of His glorious saint. The brethren of the Otnya monastery and others greatly marveled when they saw that the body of the hierarch gave off not the slightest odor of corruption. Already forty days had passed since the death of the righteous one, yet no one perceived the smell of decay. Then the brethren, firmly believing that it would please the Lord to reveal the relics of His saint, did not cover the tomb with earth, but only made of wood a raised structure over the grave. This miracle was all the more remarkable because the place where the church stood was low, and the earth there was damp and wet.

Indeed, the hopes of the faithful were not in vain. About a hundred years had already passed when the Lord was pleased to glorify miracu-

lously His faithful servant and ascetic. This was the most difficult time for the inhabitants of Novgorod. In the reign of Tsar John Vasilyevich the Terrible and during the episcopate of Archbishop Leonid of Novgorod, on the morning of 13 September a bakehouse suddenly caught fire in the Otnya monastery. A strong wind greatly aided the fire. The flames, seizing all the monastery churches with irresistible force, spread farther and farther. The fire even reached the Church of the Forerunner, where the tomb with the relics of St. Jonah was. Seeing such danger, two simple men, who venerated the memory of the holy archbishop, rushed into the Forerunner church, dismantled the wooden covering over the tomb and carried it out onto the monastery square. The heavy oak coffin seemed to them extraordinarily light. Meanwhile the fire seized the whole building and the structures around the monastery courtyard, so that it threatened the relics themselves. But a wondrous sight then appeared to all: the fire nearly surrounded the tomb, yet did not harm it in the least. Some tried to carry the tomb away, but could not lift it. Then all understood that the Lord Himself, by His invisible power, was preserving the relics of the saint from fiery destruction.

The merciful Lord was pleased to glorify the hierarch also after his death: from his tomb there flows a river of miracles. Everyone who approached the reliquary of his relics or with faith invoked his holy name in prayer received healing, whatever the ailment with which he was afflicted. Let us here mention the most important miracles of St. Jonah.

A monk of the Otnya monastery, Sylvester, with a novice, Clement, was once sent to Moscow to confirm previous royal papers, which he was carrying with him. From Vyshny Volochok the travelers went farther by boat. With them rode a wealthy merchant. The steersman, prompted by the devil, resolved to take the money that the merchant had with him. In a turbulent place of the river he steered the boat onto a rock. The boat capsized, and all who were in it fell into the water. The steersman, for his evil intent, was punished by the righteous judgment of God: he drowned, while all the rest began one by one to swim to shore. Novice Clement was also saved. At last all gathered on the bank, and only one monk, Sylvester, could not be seen. He did not

know how to swim. All were already certain that he had perished, when suddenly they saw their boat, driven by the waves to the shore, and in it the elder Sylvester. This miracle astonished everyone. The monks rejoiced at their deliverance; one thing grieved them: the royal papers, together with other things, had been lost in the wreck. They grieved much over this and cried out to St. Jonah, asking him to help them, and their prayers were heard: at evening twilight they noticed on the surface of the river some object floating toward the shore. Making the sign of the cross, Clement threw himself into the waves, and, swimming up, to his great joy saw a leather bag in which they had been carrying the royal papers. The water had wondrously not spoiled the papers; even the royal signatures were fully preserved. Giving thanks to the Lord and His saint, St. Jonah, they went on their way, and, arriving in Moscow, soon successfully accomplished the task entrusted to them.

Once, in the Time of Troubles, Cossacks were sailing along the river Volkhov, laying waste to villages and robbing the inhabitants, sparing no one. They drew near the monastery settlement and were already intending to attack it. The ataman asked whom this settlement belonged to. One peasant, named George, answered:

"This settlement belongs to the Otnya monastery, to the holy father and great wonderworker Jonah, Archbishop of Novgorod."

Hearing the name of the hierarch, the ataman sternly ordered his companions to touch no one and nothing in this settlement. When they asked him why he forbade this, he said:

"Once the sovereign was wrathful with me and ordered me put to death, and I, wretched one, remembering the great and merciful wonderworker Jonah, with all the zeal I could, raised to him my unworthy prayer, that he might shield me from the royal wrath. At that very time the order was received from the Tsar revoking my execution. From that time I have constantly given thanks to my swift intercessor, St. Jonah."

Many other miracles have also occurred through the relics of St. Jonah. Let us also always invoke this glorious hierarch in prayer, glorifying the Triune God. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Thou didst shine forth as a correction of the faith and a pattern of meekness, and, like a garden in the midst of Paradise, thou dost enlighten the world with thy venerable works. Wherefore we touch thy precious shrine with love and faithfully cry out: Stand by us in help, who sing thy luminous memory, O Father Jonah, and intercede that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

From on high thou didst receive Divine grace to intercede with God for men, as a hierarch offering oblation and bringing peace to thy people, together with an abundance of fruits, O blessed Jonah. For thou art the praise of great Novgorod, and the joy of those who dwell therein.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Apostles Patrobas, Hermes, Linus, Gaius, and Philologus

Память святых Апостолов Патрова, Ерма, Лина, Гаия и Филолога

The Holy Apostle Patrobas was bishop in Naples and Puteoli[12], where he baptized many and brought them to Christ. The Holy Apostle Hermes was bishop in Philippopolis[13]. The Apostle Paul mentions St. Patrobas and Hermes in his Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 16:14).

The Holy Apostle Linus, whom the Apostle Paul mentions in his second Epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:21), was bishop in Rome after the Holy Apostle Peter.

The Holy Apostle Gaius, whom the Apostle Paul recalls in his Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 16:23), saying, "Gaius, mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you," was bishop in Ephesus[14], after St. Timothy.

The Holy Apostle Philologus, whom the Apostle Paul mentions in the same Epistle (Rom. 16:15), saying, "Salute Philologus," was ap-

12. Naples, the principal city of the province of the Italian kingdom of the same name, lies on the northern shore of the Bay of Naples. Puteoli is a coastal city in central Italy.

pointed bishop in Sinope[15] by the Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called.

As the Holy Apostles fulfilled their episcopal ministry in the cities named above, they endured many trials and sorrows for the sake of the Gospel; and, having instructed many and brought them to Christ, they departed in peace to the Lord.

* * *

Commemoration of St. Gregory, Bishop of Alexandria

Память святого Григория, епископа Александрийского

Our holy father Gregory loved Christ from his youth and adorned himself with every virtue. After the death of the Pope of Alexandria, the bishops and people who had gathered for this purpose appointed him Archbishop of Alexandria. He was an exemplary teacher of Orthodoxy: meek, humble, merciful, a father to orphans, a defender of widows, a guide to those who had gone astray, a physician to the sick, and a consolation to the sorrowful. But the devil, the deceiver, put it into the heart of Leo the Iconoclast,[16] who then reigned, to send Gregory in chains to Constantinople. When St. Gregory learned of this, he appeared before the emperor and rebuked him in the presence of the entire senate,[17] calling him a heretic and an impious man. The emperor, unable to endure the rebuke, ordered him to be beaten with ox-hide

14. Ephesus, on the Aegean Sea, was an important trading city in Asia Minor. The first foundations of the Christian faith were laid there by the disciples of John the Baptist; the Apostle Peter had already found Christians there, but the Gospel was preached chiefly by the Apostle Paul. His disciple Timothy was later bishop there; finally, Ephesus became the residence of the Apostle and Evangelist John, who also died there. Today, the site of the ancient city of Ephesus is occupied by a poor Turkish village called Ayasoluğ.

13. Philippopolis is an ancient fortified city in Thrace, now in Eastern Rumelia, on the Maritsa River.

15. Sinope, a city on the southern shore of the Black Sea.

16. Leo the Armenian reigned from 813 to 820. Theodore the Studite thus describes the misfortunes suffered by the Church during this reign: "O, it is terrible to hear! The most venerable icon of the Savior, before which even the demons tremble, is subjected to insult and humiliation, not only in the imperial city but in every place and city; altars are destroyed, and holy things profaned. All pious mouths have fallen silent through fear of death, while the hostile and blasphemous tongue has been loosed."

17. Senate: the military and civil government, composed of the most important royal counselors and dignitaries.

thongs and starved in prison. The saint endured all this with thanksgiving, saying, "For Christ my God and for the holy icon, I am ready even to be cut in pieces." When the tyrant and impious emperor heard of this, he ordered him sent into exile. Having lived in exile for three years, the blessed man gave up his spirit into the hands of the Lord.

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THE SIXTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 6

6 ноября

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

Life of St. Paul the Confessor, Archbishop of Constantinople

Житие святого Павла исповедника, архиепископа Цареградского

In the reign of the emperor Constantius[1], son of Constantine the Great, the Christians suffered persecution at the hands of the heretics, the Arians*,* whose party was upheld by the emperor himself, who was also carried away by the Arian heresy. Great turmoil and disorder then prevailed in the Church, for few remained of the great champions of Orthodoxy who had been its pillars: St. Athanasius, Archbishop of Alexandria, that greatest defender of Orthodoxy, had been removed from his throne, and St. Alexander, Patriarch of Constantinople, had by then already died.

When St. Alexander was dying, those gathered around his deathbed asked him:

"To whom do you leave us, your spiritual children, Father? Whom do you leave us as shepherd in your place? Who would govern the Church of Christ as valiantly as you?"

He named for them two worthy men, namely the presbyter Paul, a native of Thessalonica[2], and the deacon Macedonius; but he added that if they wished to have a shepherd who taught and lived a virtuous life,

1. The Emperor Constantius reigned from 337 to 361.

2. Solun is the Russian adaptation of the Greek name of the city of Thessalonica, in modern pronunciation *Salonika*. This city, originally called Feria, is located in European Turkey at the northern end of the Gulf of Salonika (Mediterranean Sea). The Christian faith was first preached here by the Holy Apostle Paul (cf. 1 Thess. 1:1). The Holy Apostle Paul wrote two epistles to the inhabitants of Solun, which interpreters recognize as the earliest in time of this Apostle's writings.

they should choose Paul; if, however, they wished to have a shepherd of dignified presence, distinguished by outward comeliness, then let them choose Macedonius. After this the patriarch of blessed memory died. At the council held after his death, during deliberation over which of the two, Paul or Macedonius, should be raised to the patriarchal throne, a dispute arose between the Orthodox and the Arians, of whom there were a great many at the council. The Orthodox desired Paul, the Arians inclined more toward Macedonius; yet the Orthodox prevailed, and St. Paul was chosen for the patriarchate in the church of St. Irene. Having ascended the patriarchal throne, he began to shepherd the flock entrusted to him with honor.

At the time of St. Paul's election and ordination, the emperor Constantius was not in Constantinople; he was in Antioch[3]. For this reason he was not well disposed toward the new patriarch. On returning from Antioch to Constantinople, the emperor openly showed his displeasure with the patriarch for having ascended the patriarchal throne against the royal will. Stirred up by the Arians, the emperor convened a council, which quite unlawfully deposed St. Paul from the throne, although he was blameless, pure in heart, and most useful to the Church of Christ; for by his wisdom and life he was a true light to the world[4], and he shone in the Church like the morning star among the clouds. In place of the deposed Paul, the emperor installed Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, and again withdrew to Antioch. Eusebius, infected with the heresy of Arianism, began to disturb the Church with his heretical teaching, and by every means sought to remove from the Creed the words "begotten," "not made," and "consubstantial," since he did not confess that the Son of God is God and in all things equal to God the Father. Meanwhile the deposed Paul went to Rome, where he found St. Athanasius and many other bishops exiled by Eusebius, and he lived together with them. But Eusebius, not wishing that Athanasius and Paul should find rest from persecution in Rome, sent to Julius, Pope of Rome[5], a letter full of calumnies against them. The pope gave no cre-

3. Antioch of Syria is meant here, once the magnificent capital of the Syrian state, and now a poor little town in Asiatic Turkey.
4. Cf. Mt. 5:14.

dence to the letter and advised Athanasius, Paul, and the other bishops to return to their ministry; and, wishing to help them, he wrote to the eastern bishops that they should receive the returning men with love and not hinder them from resuming their former sees.

Thus the bishops who had been cast down from their sees returned, each to his own church, and sent to those who had deposed them the letters of Pope Julius which they had brought with them from Rome.

But the enemies of Orthodoxy, having received the letter, again strove by every means to cover the truth with lies, and resolved to convene a council at Antioch; to Pope Julius they attempted to reply with a special letter. Eusebius himself, however, died without waiting for the council. Then the Orthodox inhabitants of Constantinople joyfully received Paul and established him on the archiepiscopal throne, while the Arians gathered in another church and chose as their bishop Macedonius, who had gone over to their side. From this arose great confusion in Constantinople, and many were wounded and slain in the clashes between the two parties. Word of this reached the emperor Constantius, who was in Antioch, and he dispatched to Constantinople the commander Hermogenes with an army, ordering him to expel Paul from the Church of Constantinople. On arriving, Hermogenes began to compel the people to drive out the blameless St. Paul, and thereby provoked a very grave uprising in the city, for the people firmly refused to carry out the emperor's wish. Hermogenes wished to employ military force, but the crowd furiously rushed upon his house and set it on fire, and Hermogenes himself was dragged out and killed.

The emperor Constantius, learning of the slaying of Hermogenes, hastily came from Antioch to Constantinople, deposed and exiled Paul, and was greatly angered against the inhabitants for having received Paul against his will, and for the uprising and the murder of Hermogenes. For all this the emperor deprived the city of half of the favors bestowed upon it by Constantine the Great, namely he halved the quantity of bread distributed daily to the poor inhabitants from the imperial granaries. Then, having established Macedonius as Patriarch of

5. Pope St. Julius governed the Roman Church from 337 to 352.

Constantinople, Constantius returned to Antioch. St. Paul again withdrew to the west, and, coming to Pope Julius, related to him, as also to the Roman emperor Constans[6], all that had occurred. Constans, brother of Constantius, and the pope wrote a letter to Constantius, urging him to receive Paul as an Orthodox believer, and they entrusted this letter to Paul himself, who a second time journeyed from Rome to Constantinople, where the Orthodox again met and received him with great joy; the letter of Constans and Pope Julius he sent through a distinguished nobleman to the emperor Constantius at Antioch. But Constantius understood these letters as a reproach to himself and did not receive Paul. On the contrary, the emperor became still more angered with him for returning a second time to the episcopal see without the emperor's consent, and soon sent to Philip, the governor of the province, an order again to depose and exile Paul and to install Macedonius. Philip, fearing a popular uprising and that he would suffer the fate of Hermogenes, resolved to remove Paul from the episcopal throne secretly. To this end, announcing the imperial order to no one, he once came to a special court situated on the seashore, where taxes were collected, called "Zeuxippus." Here Philip said that he had come to receive the taxes, but meanwhile he sent Paul an honorable invitation to come for a private consultation, supposedly about a public matter. Paul, out of his trusting nature, went without any hesitation. Philip, fearing the large crowd of people that had come with the saint, did nothing to him in full view of all; but, taking him by the hand and conversing with him, he led him into the inner courtyard. There he ordered the back gate, facing the sea, to be opened, and, leading the saint out through it, announced to him the emperor's will, set him on a ship prepared in advance, and thus the saint was sent into exile with every precaution. He was ordered to live in his native city of Thessalonica, with permission to visit all the surrounding cities, but with a prohibition against entering the eastern provinces.

After the exile of St. Paul, the governor of the province solemnly went with Macedonius in a chariot, accompanied by a numerous army,

6. Constans reigned from 337 to 350.

to the church. On learning of this, the inhabitants of Constantinople were thrown into great agitation, and both the Orthodox and the Arians hastened to the church, each striving to outrun the other and to take a place there sooner. When Philip arrived at the church, owing to the extraordinary gathering of people, he could not enter inside. Then he had Macedonius brought down from the chariot, and the soldiers forcibly drove back the people; but because of the crush, the front ranks of the crowd could not move back; the soldiers grew furious and began to use their weapons, clearing a path to the church for the governor and Macedonius, and 3,150 people perished, some from the soldiers' weapons, some from excessive crowding; and all this on account of Macedonius, who ascended the patriarchal throne in accordance with the emperor's desire and by means of military force, but contrary to the ecclesiastical canons. In commemoration of the supposed peace of the Church, the emperor Constantius built a church in the name of St. Sophia (the Wisdom of God, the second Hypostasis of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God), and enclosed it with one common fence together with the church of Irene built by Constantine the Great (not of the martyr, but of the peace of Christ)[7].

Having spent some time in Thessalonica, St. Paul set out from there for Corinth[8], and from there for Rome. There he again found St. Athanasius, told him of all his misfortunes, and the two of them together laid their case before the Emperor Constans. The Emperor was greatly angered with his brother and wrote to him to send three bishops from the East who were to give an account concerning the deposition of Athanasius and Paul, and at the same time to bring a written statement of the confession of faith. Upon receiving this message, Constantius, who was still at Antioch, took fright at his brother's anger and sent to him four bishops: Narcissus of Cilicia, Theodore of Thrace, Maris of

7. The word *irini* in Greek means "peace," "quietness."

8. Corinth is one of the most famous cities of ancient Greece; it is located on the Peloponnesian peninsula (the southern tip of the Balkan peninsula) on the Gulf of Corinth. In antiquity it was renowned for its enlightenment and extensive trade, but at the same time for the looseness of its inhabitants' morals. Christianity was first planted here by the Holy Apostle Paul and Apollos. The Apostle Paul wrote two extensive epistles to the Corinthian Christians. At present this ancient city belongs to the Greek Kingdom and is called Kuronto.

Chalcedon, and Mark of Syria[9]. These bishops, having come to Rome before the Emperor, did not dare to enter into discussion and dispute with Athanasius and Paul; they concealed their real heretical faith, which they had set forth at Antioch, and, having composed another statement, presented it to the Emperor. The statement was as follows:

"We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker and Creator of all, from whom all things received their being in heaven and on earth; and in His Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, begotten of the Father before all ages, God of God, Light of Light, through whom all things were made in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, the true Word and Wisdom, and Power, and Life, and true Light, who in the last days for our sake became man and was born of the Holy Virgin, was crucified and died and was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and shall come at the end of the age to judge the living and the dead and to render to each according to his deeds; and His Kingdom shall not come to an end but abideth unto endless ages. We believe in the Holy Spirit, who is the Comforter, whom the Lord promised to the Apostles and sent to them after His ascension into heaven, by whom are sanctified the souls of those who truly and piously believe in Him. But those who say that the Son is of another essence and not from God the Father, and that there was a time when He was not, such the holy catholic and Apostolic Church does not receive."

Having delivered this statement of faith to the Emperor and to many other persons, the bishops departed from Rome. After three years had passed, the Eastern bishops again assembled in council, composed yet another statement of faith, and sent it to the bishops of Italy. But the latter, on account of the prolixity and lengthiness of the new statement, did not accept it, being fully satisfied with the confession of faith which the holy Fathers of the Council of Nicaea had set forth. From this there arose disagreements and considerable misunderstand-

9. Cilicia is the south-eastern region of Asia Minor. Thrace was a Byzantine province in the south-eastern corner of the Balkan peninsula; now the Turkish province *Rumelia*. Chalcedon is a city on the Asia Minor shore of the Bosphorus gulf opposite Constantinople, known in church history for the Fourth Ecumenical Council held there. Syria is a province north-east of Palestine.

ings between the Eastern and Western Churches, as a result of which both emperors called the bishops to a council at Sardica to examine the confession of faith and to reach a final decision in the matter of Athanasius and Paul. More than three hundred Western bishops and only seventy-six Eastern bishops gathered at Sardica[10]. Infected with Arianism, and at the same time fearing to enter into contest with such champions of Orthodoxy as Athanasius and Paul, and therefore wishing to remove them from the council, the Eastern bishops refused to enter into conciliar discussion with the Western bishops until they expelled Athanasius and Paul from their midst. Then Protogenes, bishop of Serdica[11], the Venerable Kudrovius, and others said to the Eastern bishops:

"We have assembled here precisely for deliberation not only concerning the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, but also concerning the matter of Athanasius and Paul."

Hearing this, the Eastern bishops separated from the Western bishops, left Sardica, and, on the return journey, having reached the city of Philippopolis in Macedonia[12], they there composed their own separate impious council, at which they decreed that the Son should not be confessed as consubstantial with the Father, and openly anathematized the teaching of consubstantiality. They announced this heretical decree throughout their eparchies by special letters.

When news of this reached the Fathers of the Council of Sardica, they first condemned those who had fallen into heresy through the false teaching concerning the Son of God, and then deposed from their rank the accusers of Athanasius and Paul; next they affirmed the full correctness of the symbol of faith composed at Nicaea, and anathematized in general all who do not confess that the Son is consubstantial with the Father. The Emperor Constans, for his part, wrote to his brother

10. Sardica is a city of the province of Moesia (in the middle of the Balkan peninsula).
11. Sredets is present-day Sofia, the chief city of Bulgaria.
12. Philippopolis of Macedonia, or Philippi, is a city named after Philip, King of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great (in the middle of the 4th century B.C.). Macedonia was once a mighty state, and later a province of the Byzantine Empire. The Holy Apostle Paul (accompanied by Luke, Timothy and Silas) preached Christianity here, laid the foundation of the Philippian church, famous in antiquity, and visited this city many times (Acts 16:12–40).

Constantius, urging him to restore to Athanasius and Paul their episcopal thrones, and immediately sent Paul to Constantinople, giving him two bishops as companions and sending with him a letter to Constantius, in which, among other things, he wrote:

"Athanasius is still with me, and I am sending Paul to you, so that your majesty may command that he be restored to his throne; I ask the same for Athanasius, for I have learned that both of them were expelled for their piety and were slandered..." Constans added to this something sharper still, namely, that in case of his brother's disagreement, he, Constans, would himself go against him in person with military force, and would restore the churches to Athanasius and Paul even against Constans' will.[13]

Arriving before the Emperor Constantius, St. Paul handed him the letter of Constans. Frightened by his brother's threat, Constantius expelled Macedonius and set Paul upon the patriarchal throne; likewise he summoned Athanasius to himself by letter and sent him to Alexandria to the patriarchate. Great was the joy of the Orthodox for their pastors, and for a fairly long time they lived in deep peace, consoled by the teaching of the great God-inspired universal teachers. Athanasius in Alexandria and Paul in Constantinople were lamps of piety for the whole world, dispelling far and wide the darkness of Arianism. But then Magnentius, a military commander of Constantius, and his fellow conspirators killed the Emperor while he was on a hunt. As soon as the defender of Orthodoxy, the pious Roman Emperor Constans, was gone, the Arians immediately raised their heads and stirred up persecution against the Orthodox. First of all they rose against the universal champions of Orthodoxy: Athanasius himself withdrew from his throne, escaping from the Arians who sought his death, and the blessed Paul was sent into exile and imprisonment in the city of Cucusus, in Armenia[14], and there confined in a separate hut. Here, when he was once serving

13. The Russian edition reads "against the desire of Constans"; Constantius is evidently meant. —Trans.

14. Armenia was a province of the Roman-Byzantine Empire, located in the north-eastern part of Asia Minor. Until 70 B.C. Armenia formed part of the Kingdom of Pontus, and was then conquered by the Romans.

the Divine Liturgy, the Arians attacked him and strangled him with his omophorion.

Thus Macedonius again became Patriarch of Constantinople and caused much more evil to the Church of God, persecuting and destroying the Orthodox. Having a strong support in the person of the eparch Philip, he overthrew many Orthodox bishops and replaced them with Arians, and, subjecting to various tortures, he destroyed a multitude of persons who did not wish to have ecclesial communion with him, sparing not even women. By his command, some had their nipples torn from their breasts, others, having their mouths forcibly opened with iron, were compelled to swallow the Arian communion, others had their noses and ears cut off, and some were branded with fire—in a word, the blood of the Orthodox flowed without mercy. At this very time the Arians beheaded with the sword two clerics, Marcian and Martyrius, who had been notaries of the blessed Paul and champions of Orthodoxy. The cruelties of Macedonius extended even to Paphlagonia[15]. Learning that a multitude of Orthodox were there, he sent three armed detachments of soldiers there, so that they might by the sword compel the Orthodox to union with the Arians. The inhabitants of the city of Mantina[16], hearing of the approach of the army, took with them—some an axe, some a scythe, and some simply stakes—gathered together and went out against those approaching; a civil conflict arose, in which a multitude of people fell on both sides. In this bloodshed, once again, none other than Macedonius was guilty.

Finally, Macedonius, without any command from the Emperor, ventured to dig up from the earth and transfer to another place the relics of St. Constantine the Great. Then the whole Church, one may say, was drenched in blood as a result of the civil strife between the Orthodox and the Arians which arose from this. The Emperor was greatly displeased with Macedonius and the eparch Philip for this, and both of them, at the insistence of Constantius, were deprived—the first of the

15. Paphlagonia was an ancient region of Asia Minor, on the middle part of the southern shore of the Black Sea. Until 64 B.C. it belonged to the Kingdom of Cappadocia, and from that time passed to the Roman province of Bithynia-Pontus and then entered the Byzantine Empire.
16. Mantina is a small town in Paphlagonia.

patriarchal throne, and the second of his office as eparch. Nevertheless, the heresies of Arius and Macedonius continued to exist and tore the Church for yet forty years, until the reign of the Emperor Theodosius[17], who at last convened a council at Constantinople which finally condemned these heresies[18]. Following this, the pious Emperor with great honors transferred from Cucusus to Constantinople the relics of the holy confessor of Christ, Paul, giving glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Troparion, Tone 3:

By the confession of divine faith, the Church hath shown thee to be another Paul, a zealot among the priests; Abel and Zacharias' righteous blood crieth out to the Lord with thee: O Venerable Father, entreat Christ God that great mercy be granted unto us.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Shining upon the earth as a star luminous in the heavens, thou now enlightenest the catholic Church, for which thou didst also suffer, offering up thy soul, O Paul; and as the blood of Zacharias and Abel, thy blood crieth clearly unto the Lord.

* * *

Life of our Venerable Father Barlaam, Wonderworker of Novgorod

Житие преподобного отца нашего Варлаама, Новгородского чудотворца

Our Venerable Father Barlaam was born in Novgorod to pious and right-believing parents. He was brought up in the fear of God and was taught to read. The holy youth often and gladly read the Divine books, and especially the God-inspired Psalms of King and Prophet David. From an early age he avoided childish games, renounced all worldly pleasures, and was a chosen vessel of the Holy Spirit. Often he

17. The Emperor Theodosius the Great is meant here, who reigned from 379 to 395 A.D.
18. The Second Ecumenical Council (381) in Constantinople, which took place under the Emperor Theodosius the Great, is meant here; it condemned Arianism and all the heresies arising from it, chiefly the heresy of Macedonius, who impiously taught about the Holy Spirit.

reflected thus: "Truly, our life is short and inconstant. In it everything changes, everything turns like a wheel. It is like a sleeping vision."

The saint renounced the world and all that is in the world, and withdrew to a desert place. Following him were Prokopy Malyshevich, who was afterwards tonsured under the name Porphyry, his brother Theodore, and other inhabitants of Novgorod who desired to labor in quietness and stillness. St. Barlaam received monastic tonsure from a certain hieromonk. He built for himself a small cell, where he unceasingly offered prayers to the Lord, day and night. The saint zealously labored in fasting and toil, himself chopping wood, sawing timber, and tilling the earth, fulfilling the words of Holy Scripture: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thess. 3:10).

Every night he kept vigil and drove away demons by prayer. The unclean spirits sometimes themselves tried to disturb the holy man, and sometimes they incited certain people to molest the blessed one. The saint patiently bore all afflictions, preserved and strengthened by the right hand of God. The fame of his exploits began to spread everywhere. Many began to flock to him: princes, boyars, the rich and the poor. Venerable Barlaam untiringly instructed all who came to him:

"Children, guard yourselves from all unrighteousness; do not envy, do not slander. Refrain from anger; do not lend money at interest. Take care not to judge unjustly. Do not swear falsely; **having given an oath**, fulfill it. Do not give yourselves over to bodily passions."

"Be always meek, and treat all with love. This virtue is the beginning and root of every good."

Thus each day the blessed one instructed all who came to him, while himself redoubling his prayers and mortifying his flesh more and more. After some time he built a small church in honor of the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ. From this time a monastery arose. The number of the brethren continually grew. The saint himself, as before, led a strict life. His food was gruel or the fruits of the earth, and that in the smallest quantity. The other monks likewise lived a strict life.

Once a prince came to the saint's cell and asked him for a blessing. The saint, greeting him, congratulated him on the birth of a son. The

prince was astonished at this. And indeed, in the prince's absence a son had been born to him, whose godfather at holy baptism was St. Barlaam himself.

A certain man, who had great faith in the holy man, went to the Venerable with his only sick son. He wished that the saint would pray for the healing of his son. But on the road the sick boy died. St. Barlaam prayed, and the youth rose up completely healthy.

Once the great feast of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was approaching. The saint sent fishermen to catch fish for the feast. The catch was unusually successful. The fishermen caught a sturgeon of large size, but, incited by the devil, they hid it, and brought to the monastery only the rest of the fish. St. Barlaam, with his staff in his hands, began to examine the fish that had been brought and said:

"Children, you have brought small fish. Where is the large one?"

The fishermen, astonished at such foresight in the saint, fell on their knees before him, confessed their transgression, and returned the fish they had concealed.

By God's providence, Antony, his contemporary, came to the Venerable Barlaam from Constantinople. The blessed one was greatly gladdened by the return of his friend. He handed over to Antony the governance of the monastery, saying:

"My beloved brother! God's good pleasure rests upon this monastery. Now I hand this monastery into your hands. Guard it and care for it. I am already departing to the Heavenly King. But do not be troubled by this: in body I leave you, but in spirit I shall always be with you."

And having given instruction to his brethren, commanding them to keep the Orthodox faith and to abide constantly in humility, St. Barlaam committed his soul to the Lord. The Bishop of Novgorod, with fitting solemnity, with candles and spiritual chanting, committed his honorable body to burial. The blessed repose of Venerable Barlaam followed on 6 November 1192. And now he, together with the choirs of the righteous, glorifies the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 3:

Thou who by lying on the ground, by fasting and vigil, didst weaken thy body, O Venerable Father, and didst put to death all fleshly thoughts, thou didst appear as an inexhaustible fountain of healings to those who with faith draw near to the shrine of thy relics, O Barlaam our Father. Entreat Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As another Elijah thou didst bring down and astonish the emperor; and thou didst gladden thy people and cause them to rejoice. For great Novgorod boasts greatly in thee, having thy relics within it. Keep it unshaken from enemies, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, Venerable Barlaam, our Father.

Life of St. German, Archbishop of Kazan

Житие святого Германа, архиепископа Казанского

Among the boyar families of the Muscovite state in the 15th and 16th centuries, the family of the Polevs, descendants of the princes of Smolensk, was distinguished by especial piety and zeal in service. Several persons from this family took up the monastic life and were distinguished by their pious lives and Christian virtues. At the very beginning of the 17th century, in the city of Staritsa,[19] a son was born to Theodore Afanasyevich Polev, who was named in holy baptism Gregory, in honor of St. Gregory the Decapolite. This was the future great luminary and zealous shepherd of Christ's flock, St. German. The piety of his parents, and their strict life according to the commandments of Christ, greatly influenced the young youth. Even from his youth he was accustomed to observe the fast strictly and often gave himself to prayer. The saint's parents strove to implant the fear of God in their son's heart. From his early years the grace of God rested upon the youth. Among his peers he was distinguished by modesty, meekness, and talent. He did not love children's games and noisy frivolity, but preferred to delight his soul with useful reflections and conversa-

19. Staritsa is a district town of the Tver province on the river Volga.

tions. Gregory's pious parents taught their son to read Divine Scripture, which was then the principal education. The holy youth with great zeal began to occupy himself with reading the God-inspired books. Especially often he read the Psalms of David, which strengthened and inspired the pious youth. From his early years he unfailingly attended the church during the services. Often he withdrew into solitude, and here, amid the stillness, fervently prayed and reflected on the purpose of man and on the providence of God. The holy youth thought much about the vanity of human life. It is fleeting as a dream, he thought; man dies, and the memory of him is effaced. Equally transitory are all the goods of this life: they are corruptible, quickly come and quickly pass away. One thing is needful: to please God, to serve Him with all one's soul and to love Him with all one's heart. The pious youth began to lead a life even stricter than before; especially he observed fasting, so that from great abstinence he barely remained alive. But, by thus mortifying his flesh, he enlightened and adorned his soul. Seeing such abstinence in their son, his parents, fearing for his health, asked him to moderate his exploits. But he increased his labors more and more. His soul had long been striving toward solitude. He resolved to devote himself wholly to the service of God and to enter the ranks of the monks. Having received the blessing of his parents, he entered the Volokolamsk monastery, renowned for the strictness of its life. In the same monastery the cousins of Gregory's father had already been tonsured. At that time there labored there the future first hierarch of Kazan, Guriy, and the blessed Maximus the Greek,[20] who was distinguished by his enlightenment and who, through the intrigues of his enemies, had been unjustly confined in this monastery. At about twenty-five years of age Gregory entered this monastery, whither his father afterwards also came, under the name Philotheus. Soon Gregory was tonsured into the monastic life, and the name German was given to him. Having received the monastic life, he began to labor with even greater zeal in the works of piety. Especially did he toil at the study of

20. The Blessed Maximus the Greek, summoned from the Holy Mountain to correct the liturgical books, left many writings. After a long imprisonment, he reposed in the Holy Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra in 1656.

Holy Scripture, often conversed with the enlightened Maximus, and derived profit from these conversations. As before, he strictly observed the fast, and as before, he unfailingly attended the house of God. Setting an example to all by his ascetic life, he was distinguished by extraordinary humility and gladly served the brethren, fulfilling all the obediences laid upon him. He especially loved to occupy himself with copying liturgical books. By the hand of German, the last among the monks, as he himself called himself, were copied the Theotokia and the Gospel, which have been preserved to our time.

The ascetic life of Herman earned him respect among the brethren of the Volokolamsk monastery. They marveled at the labors of the ascetic, were edified by his humility, and gave thanks to the Lord. Soon the report of Herman's pious life reached even the native town of the saint, the city of Staritsa. The brethren of the Dormition Monastery of Staritsa, hearing of Herman's exploits, earnestly asked him to take up the leadership of their monastery. Humble Herman long refused, but at last he yielded to the great entreaties of the brotherhood and went to Acacius, Archbishop of Tver, who received the saint with love, raised him to the rank of archimandrite, and blessed him for his new service. The brethren of the Staritsa monastery met with love their new abbot, whom they had long desired to see in their monastery. Having entered upon the governance of the monastery, St. Herman, with pastoral zeal, took care of its good order: he erected buildings and adorned the churches with splendor. But he cared even more for inner beauty: he set an example of pious life to all, served the brethren as a model of humility and meekness, edified all, exhorted them to observe strictly the duties of monastic life, and introduced into his monastery the rule of the Volokolamsk monastery. In a word, he was a true shepherd, a kind father, and an example worthy of imitation. The brethren strove to follow in the footsteps of their holy archimandrite and advanced in the ascetic labors under the guidance of a shepherd so experienced in the spiritual life. But soon they were obliged to part with their archimandrite. Constantly striving for solitude, St. Herman left the Staritsa monastery after 2 years, in order once more to labor in prayer and fasting in a solitary cell of the Volokolamsk monastery. He handed over the

leadership of the Staritsa monastery to the monk Job, whom he had tonsured, who afterwards became the famous ascetic and sufferer for the Russian land, Patriarch of Moscow. Arriving at the Volokolamsk monastery, St. Herman began to labor as a simple monk. But he was not long destined to live in solitude and quiet. At that time in Moscow a new heretic, Matthew Bashkin, appeared, who denied faith in the Holy Trinity and did not acknowledge the Holy Mysteries. In 1553 a council was convened in Moscow against him. St. Herman, together with his father, was summoned to the sessions of the council. The council condemned the heresy of Bashkin and decreed that he be sent for instruction to St. Herman at the Volokolamsk monastery. Thus the ascetic and holy life of this zealot of the Christian faith became known to all.

But a different and more difficult field of labor awaited the saint. About that time Kazan, the chief bulwark and stronghold of the Tatar Kazan kingdom, was subdued by the Tsar and Grand Prince Ivan Vasilyevich the Terrible. The Tsar of Moscow took care to spread the light of the true Christian faith in the conquered land among the Muslims and pagans, the aliens. In Kazan an archiepiscopal see was established, to which for the first time the hierarch Gury, formerly hegumen at the Volokolamsk monastery, was raised. The hierarch Gury was charged with founding a monastery in the city of Sviyazhsk[21]. The superior of this monastery, at Gury's appointment, was St. Herman, who arrived together with Gury in the city of Sviyazhsk in 1555. Having received generous assistance from the Tsar and the hierarchs, Herman zealously began to build the monastery. He had to expend much labor and effort in its construction. The lack of necessary materials, the high cost of the work, and the hostile attitude of the aliens all hindered and slowed the building of the monastery. But by God's help, after 1.5 years the work was completed. St. Herman built the Church of St. Nicholas, which exists to this day, and beside it a tall bell tower; afterwards he erected a magnificent church in honor of the honorable and glorious Dormition of the Mother of God, which is preserved to this present time. Herman adorned these churches splendidly with icons and other sacred objects.

21. Sviyazhsk is a district town of the Kazan province on the river Sviyaga.

Herman cared with especial zeal for the spreading of the true Christian faith among the Muslims and pagans. The strict and ascetic life of the holy shepherd attracted many to him. Some came for counsel, others for blessing. The blessed one received all with love, making no distinction between Orthodox and unbelievers, equally helping all and treating all alike with solicitude. Such conduct of the holy man had a strong effect upon the pagans, so that they began to accept the true Christian faith. St. Herman generously helped all who turned to him with a request for aid. But though generous and merciful to others, the saint was strict and demanding toward himself. The narrow, cramped cell of the saint, 1.5 sazhens long and about one sazhen wide, is preserved to this day. Helping everyone, he himself strove to manage without outside help, mending his own clothing. To this day the thimble, needles and thread that St. Herman used are preserved. Concerned for the salvation of his soul, this good shepherd was no less concerned for the monks of the Sviyazhsk monastery. Like the superior, all the monks were obliged to lead the strictest life. From among them St. Herman chose the worthy to preach the word of God among the unbelievers, himself setting an example to all of them. By the labors of the saint a large number of manuscript books, liturgical and others, necessary for the great work of preaching, were collected. The Sviyazhsk Monastery of the Mother of God was the center from which the light of the Christian faith began to spread. Thanks to the unceasing care of the hierarch, this monastery fulfilled its high purpose and long remained an enlightening center in the north-east of Russia. Bonds of brotherly love linked St. Herman with the blessed Gury. This archpastor valued the merits and labors of so zealous a fellow-worker as Herman. They often corresponded about various matters concerning the enlightenment of the Church. For his part, the hierarch Gury trusted the zealous preacher of the Christian faith in all things. He entrusted to Herman's judgment and governance not only the Sviyazhsk monastery but all the churches of the Sviyazhsk region. All his labors were known to the Tsar as well. Thus for more than eight years St. Herman labored.

On 6 December 1563, after many labors and exploits, the first hierarch of Kazan, Gury, peacefully surrendered his pure soul to the Lord. Tsar Ivan Vasilyevich the Terrible and Metropolitan Athanasius of Moscow summoned St. Herman to Moscow, desiring to raise him to the archpastoral throne in Kazan. They had already heard much earlier of the zeal of this holy man and saw in him the only worthy successor to the hierarch Gury. St. Herman, summoned to Moscow by a council letter, at first refused, but afterwards had to yield to the demands of the Tsar and the sacred council. On 12 March 1564 he was ordained Archbishop of Kazan and Sviyazhsk. Governing his flock, he unswervingly followed in the footsteps of his great teacher and mentor, the hierarch Gury. He cared with especial zeal for the spreading of the Christian faith. For this purpose he introduced a common life in the Zilantov monastery[22], in order to increase the number of monks in that monastery and to enlarge the school for the children of the aliens. One of his contemporaries, the famous prince Kurbsky, celebrated in Russian history, thus speaks of the hierarch Herman: "Herman was a man of noble birth, not so tall in body as in mind, a man of honest and holy life, an investigator of the Holy Scriptures and a zealot for God in spiritual matters; he was not given to any crafty custom or hypocrisy, but was a simple, true, steadfast man, a great helper of those beset by misfortunes and calamities, and very merciful to the poor."

With the assistance of the hierarch there was then built in Kazan the Ivanovsky Kazan Monastery, which exists to this day. This is a visible sign of the hierarch's zealous care for the beauty of the churches of God. In such labors the hierarch governed the Kazan flock for about two years. In 1566 Metropolitan Athanasius of Moscow, because of his broken health, renounced the governance of the Church. The strict ascetic life of St. Herman was well known to the Terrible, and he desired that Herman occupy the archpastoral throne. By the Tsar's decree, the hierarch of Kazan was summoned to Moscow. At that time a sad change took place in Ivan's character: the suspiciousness that had distinguished him before began to increase. He surrounded himself with a

22. The Zilantov men's monastery near Kazan was founded by the command of Ivan the Terrible on the site of the burial of soldiers who fell at the taking of Kazan.

crowd of unworthy oprichniks, who abused the Tsar's confidence and committed injustices and oppressions. Summoned to Moscow by the Tsar's will, Herman at first refused the burden laid upon him. The Tsar did not tolerate objections, and Herman was obliged to settle in the metropolitan's apartments, even before his consecration as metropolitan. He was not, however, to remain here long. He saw what injustices the Tsar's evil favorites were inflicting upon people, and with sorrow noticed how greatly the character of the Terrible had changed, and he could not endure it: faithful to his pastoral duty, he tried to admonish the Tsar, spoke to him of the necessity of sincerely repenting, of future torments and of eternal blessedness. The Terrible Tsar could not bear the rebukes of the blessed hierarch. He left Herman's presence with a gloomy countenance. The oprichniks, learning of this, began to persuade the Tsar. They knew the hierarch well and understood that this shepherd was a formidable denouncer of them, who would unceasingly and boldly speak the truth to the Tsar.

"Great Sovereign," the treacherous oprichniks said, "it is not fitting for you to heed the senseless words of your servant. Surely you do not wish to be in a bondage heavier than that in which you were for so many years under Sylvester and Adashev."

Most of all against the hierarch spoke the Tsar's favorite, Alexis Basmanov, with his son. All the oprichniks unceasingly begged the Tsar not to raise Herman to the Moscow see. The Terrible One heeded his favorites. He commanded that the following be conveyed to Herman:

"You are not yet raised to the metropolia, and already you are taking away my freedom."

For about two years the hierarch remained in Moscow under disgrace. He was not released to Kazan, although he was regarded as Archbishop of Kazan. At this time he was kept under the supervision of guards, in confinement. But the unfeigned denouncer of unrighteousness was terrible to the oprichniks even in captivity. On 6 November 1567 the repose of St. Herman followed. As is thought, the oprichniks were the murderers of this holy man. The Archimandrite Irodion of the Sviyazhsk monastery, who was in Moscow with the hierarch, commit-

ted the body of St. Herman to burial at the church of St. Nicholas, called "of the Wet"[23].

But it pleased the Lord to glorify His servant with miracles and various signs. During the rebuilding of the Church of St. Nicholas the relics of this hierarch were discovered. In 1592 the inhabitants of Sviyazhsk, hearing of the miracles from the relics of St. Herman, appealed to Tsar Theodore Ivanovich and to the All-Russian Patriarch Job with a request that they be permitted to translate the relics of the hierarch from Moscow to the Sviyazhsk monastery founded by the hierarch himself. This request was fulfilled: on 25 September 1592 the relics of the hierarch were solemnly met by the inhabitants of Sviyazhsk. Many miraculous healings and signs occurred at this time. As soon as the relics of St. Herman were carried into the Dormition church of the Sviyazhsk monastery, a great fragrance spread throughout the monastery. At this two blind men regained their sight, and many other miracles were accomplished. More than a hundred years later, in 1696, the relics of the saint were again examined, and from this time the general celebration of the hierarch's memory throughout all Russia began. In 1704 the relics of the hierarch were transferred from the sanctuary of the Dormition church into the church itself. This translation took place on 23 July 1704 under Metropolitan Tikhon. The memory of this event is solemnly observed to this day.

Such was the life of St. Herman, such were his labors, his steadfastness in the Christian faith. Let us too follow this ascetic, emulate his virtuous life, keep constantly before our spiritual eyes this great hierarch of the Russian Church, and invoke his holy name, that he may pray to the Lord for you, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

As one in character with the great shepherds, and of one mind with the teachers of the universe, a zealous servant of the Church of God, and a reverent steward of the mysteries of Christ, let us, the right-believing people, gathered together, praise with hymns and

23. The Church of St. Nicholas of the Wet is located in Moscow in Kitai-gorod, in Zaryadye.

songs Herman, the God-wise founder of the Sviyazhsk monastery and hierarch of the newly enlightened flock of Kazan, saying: Cease not to visit with thy prayers the monastery and all thy flock, and to keep the monastery in holiness and the flock in faith and piety unharmed.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Watchful in prayers, a good steward of obedience, thou hast gained thy soul through patience, excelling in works of humility and meekness; thou hast adorned the throne of hierarchy with faith and piety, O hierarch and high priest Herman. Pray to Christ God for the monastery and for all thy flock, as the stability of thy flock and the bright adornment of the hierarchs who come after thee.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Luke

Память преподобного Луки

Our blessed father Luke was from the Sicilian city of Taormina[24]. Even in his youth he zealously attended the churches of God, and was not only a hearer but also a doer of the Divine Scriptures. When his parents planned to find a wife for him, he left his parents' home by night for an impassable desert, where he lived among the wild beasts. Having spent 14 days in fasting, he was granted a Divine and angelic visitation. At last he came to a certain monastery, where he became a monk and devoted himself to a severe ascetic life: every three or four days he ate a little bread and drank water, and he scarcely gave himself to sleep. So he lived for a year and a half. Then, together with one monk, he withdrew from there to Mount Etna, where he labored, nourished only by the herbs growing on that mountain; he rested little, slept little, remaining the whole time in one garment and barefoot. By his rule and customary practice he did not leave his cell until he had finished reading the whole Psalter. He usually completed the rule by the third hour. From the third hour until the sixth the venerable one

24. Taormina is a considerable city on the eastern shore of Sicily.

labored. And after the sixth hour he took a little food, without ceasing his labors. By acting thus he was granted great grace and came to understand all wisdom, so that some, marveling, said: whence does he know the books? By a revelation that came to him, he went to one place, where he gathered 12 monks and took great pains over their good ordering. For this purpose he even went to Byzantium, where he examined the arrangement of monastic communities and conferred about this with the fathers there. From there he went to Corinth, where, having lived in one monastery for no more than seven months, he departed peacefully to the Lord.

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THE SEVENTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 7

7 ноября

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

Passion of the Holy Martyr Hieron and His Company

Страдание святого мученика Иерона и дружины его

The homeland of St. Hieron was Second (Great) Cappadocia[1]. He was born in the city of Tyana[2] of a pious and God-fearing mother named Stratonice, in the reign of the emperors Diocletian and Maximian, who were both zealous worshippers of idols and persecutors of Christians.

When word reached the emperors that the inhabitants of the regions of Armenia and Cappadocia, contrary to the imperial decrees, refused to worship idols, then, after much deliberation, they chose two crafty, devoted pagans, cruel men named Agricolaus and Lysias, and sent the first to Armenia and the second to Cappadocia, commanding them, first, to execute all the Christians there who refused to worship idols, and, second, to enroll in the army all men and young men who were strong in body and fit for military service.

Having arrived in Cappadocia, Lysias began in every way to seek out men fit for conscription. Among others, he was told of Hieron, as a man sound and strong, and distinguished by exceptional courage. Lysias immediately sent soldiers to seize and bring him. The men he sent did not find Hieron at home: he was working in the field. The soldiers went there and tried to seize him; but Hieron, learning that they were taking him for military service, refused to go with them, considering it

1. Second, or Great, Cappadocia was a very extensive region in the middle of the eastern part of Asia Minor, west of the upper reaches of the Euphrates. In ancient times Cappadocia was one of the considerable kingdoms of Asia, but later lost its independence and eventually became part of the Roman Empire as a province (in the year 17 or 18 A.D.).
2. Tyana was a city in the southwestern part of Cappadocia. Today it is Nigry or Nigdeli.

harmful for a Christian to have dealings with idolaters and serve alongside them. The soldiers tried to take him by force, but Hieron, enraged, seized a piece of wood that lay at hand and began to beat them; he proved so much stronger than the soldiers that they fled, while he chased them as a lion chases kids. The soldiers whom he had scattered gathered again in one place. They were ashamed before one another that they had not only failed to overcome one man, but had been driven off by him. They feared to return empty-handed to the one who had sent them, and said among themselves that if they returned without Hieron, they would not only be mocked by all because one man had defeated them all, but would also be severely punished for their cowardice. Therefore, they called their comrades to their aid and for a second time, in even greater numbers, rushed upon Hieron. Hearing of this, he gathered a company of eighteen Christian men, hid with them in a nearby cave, and from there repelled the attack of the pagans who had besieged him. Meanwhile, the latter informed their commander that Hieron had shut himself in a cave with other Christians, and that they could not take him. The commander sent still more soldiers to their aid, but they were nevertheless unable to do anything, since, fearing Hieron, no one dared even approach the entrance to the cave. Then the commander sent one of Hieron's friends, named Cyriacus, to them. Cyriacus, having come to the place, advised the soldiers to withdraw from the cave, for Hieron, he said, could be taken only by gentleness and good counsel, and in no way by force. When the soldiers had withdrawn, Cyriacus entered Hieron's presence and urged him not to resist the authorities, but to go and enroll for military service. By his peaceful conversation he calmed Hieron, led him out of the cave, and took him to his home, to his mother, an old and blind widow. She began loudly to lament her son, calling him the support of her old age and the light of her blind eyes, and grieving that she was losing her only comfort in her sorrowful widowhood. Meanwhile, the soldiers surrounding Hieron compelled him to go with them. After taking leave of his weeping mother, neighbors, and acquaintances who had gathered there, Hieron took with him one of his kinsmen, named Victor, and went to the city of Melitene[3] with the soldiers, accompanied by his two close kinsmen,

Matronianus and Antonius, and several other fellow believers. The travelers did not reach Melitene before sunset[4], and spent the night where nightfall had overtaken them. During the night, someone clad in white garments appeared to blessed Hieron and announced to him in a gentle voice, full of love:

"I proclaim salvation to you, Hieron! You are walking the right path, for you are going forth to contend for the King of Heaven, and not to fight for earthly glory that soon perishes ... Soon you will depart to the King of Heaven and receive from Him honor and glory for your struggles."

With these words, the apparition filled Hieron's heart with unspeakable joy.

When he had vanished, Hieron awoke and joyfully told his friends and kinsmen who were with him:

"I have learned the mystery of God's favor toward me, and now I go on the path before me with gladness. There is but one true treasure, one true inheritance, one true wealth: that which is hidden in heaven; while earthly goods bring no benefit to those who acquire them: 'What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' (Mt. 16:26)[5]. For me, there is nothing dearer or better than the soul ... I have spent enough of my lifetime serving vanity; now I go to God. One thing alone troubles me—the grief of my mother, an aged and feeble widow, deprived of the light of her eyes and having no helper or defender. But I go to die for Christ, and to Him, the Father of orphans and widows, I entrust my mother."

Having said this, Hieron shed a few tears for his mother and set out on his way. In Melitene, St. Hieron was imprisoned together with thirty-three other Christians. There he said to his fellow prisoners:

"Listen, friends and brothers, to my counsel, which will be useful to you not in this life, but in the life to come. All who fear God seek not

3. Melitina was a city in Armenia, now Malatya.

4. At that time the city gates—that is, entrances made in the wall surrounding the entire city—were locked at sunset, after which it was no longer possible to enter the city.

5. The words of the Savior. *To harm the soul* means to make it attached to worldly vanity and incapable of eternal blessed life, and thus to subject it to eternal torment in hell.

earthly and temporal goods, but future and eternal blessings. You have heard that tomorrow morning they intend to force us to offer sacrifices to false pagan gods: let us not obey, let us not worship idols or offer them sacrifice; rather, let us offer a sacrifice of praise to our true God and lift up our prayers to Him, and when He hears them, He will grant us strength to endure our torments steadfastly and courageously, and deem us worthy of a blessed end."

Hieron's listeners answered with one accord:

"Your words are sweet to us as honey! You counsel us to do what is indeed useful and salvific for us, and we all desire rather to die for Christ than, by worshipping idols, to live in vanity."

The prison guards informed Lysias himself of the prisoners' decision. In the morning, he ordered the holy martyrs to be brought from the prison before him for judgment, set them before him, and angrily asked:

"What demon has led you to the mad decision to rise up against authority and disobey the imperial command to worship the great gods?"

"We would indeed be madmen and a plaything of demons," the saints answered, "if we were to give to works of wood and stone, made by human hands, the honor due to God alone. But now we act wisely, for we worship the Creator of all, Who created heaven and earth by His word and brought them from non-being into being by the breath of His mouth.[6]"

At that moment one of those present at the trial pointed out Hieron to Lysias and said:

"Here is the man who resisted your messengers, and did all that you have heard."

Lysias looked at Hieron and asked him where he was from; and when Hieron named his homeland and birthplace, Lysias asked him again:

"Was it you who resisted the imperial command, trusting in your bodily strength, and beat the soldiers sent to fetch you?"

"Yes, I was," the courageous Hieron answered boldly. " 'Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee? And do I not loathe them that rise

up against Thee?' (Ps. 138:21). That is why I beat them and chased them like cowardly hares."

Hearing these words, Lysias grew angry and, instead of giving Hieron his due for courage and strength, rebuked him for disobedience and said:

"Your madness has brought you to such insolence that you disobeyed the imperial command, refused to obey my order as well, and beat the men we sent. For this, I command that your insolent hand, which obeyed a mad head, be cut off as far as the elbow."

At once, the hand of St. Hieron was cut off, while the other saints, by order of the same tormentor, were mercilessly beaten for a long time.

Then they were all again thrown into prison and gave thanks to God, Who had deemed them worthy to endure such torments for His holy name. But one of them, the aforementioned Victor, a kinsman of St. Hieron, weakened by the beatings he had received and afraid of even greater torments to come, secretly summoned to him the official who was making a list of the Christians who had been seized and given over to torture, and humbly begged him to erase his name, Victor's, from the list of the prisoners suffering for Christ, promising in return to give him an estate. Bribed by the promised gift, the official granted Victor's request, erased his name from the list, and released him from prison at night. But Victor, having come out of prison, soon died, and thus lost both his estate and his life, and the crown of martyrdom.

When morning came, St. Hieron learned what had happened and, filled with boundless sorrow, wept aloud for his kinsman, crying:

"Alas, Victor! What have you done? Oh, how dearly you have bought your escape! Why did you give yourself into the hands of the enemy? Why did you prefer the shame of flight to the crown of glory? Why did you exchange eternal life for temporal life? Why did you place temporary relief above unending joy? Oh, how the brief sufferings of insignificant wounds have dismayed you—wounds that are nothing compared with the eternal torments awaiting you at God's judgment!"

6. The Martyr's reply to Lysias is based on the words: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host" (Ps. 32:6).

Having lamented him who had fallen away from the company of the martyrs, St. Hieron called to him his two kinsmen, Antonius and Matronianus, who had followed him, and said to them:

"Hear my last will, and when you return from here, carry it out. The property I have in Pisidia[7] I give to my sister Theotimia, so that, receiving from it what is needful for her sustenance, she may commemorate me on the day of my death. All my other property I leave to my mother, because of her widowhood and orphanhood; give her also my severed hand, and tell her to petition by letter the governor of the city of Ancyra[8], the noble Rusticus, to give her a house in Vadasan,[9] where my hand may be laid."

Having left such a testament to his kinsmen, the blessed Hieron calmly awaited his martyr's end. And on the fifth day, Lysias again took his seat at the judgment place and, summoning the saints, began to compel them to worship the idols. For a long time he strove, with both kindness and threats, to turn them away from Christ, but without any success; then he ordered them first to be beaten without mercy with rods, and afterward sentenced them to be beheaded with the sword. After many torments the holy martyrs were condemned to death. Led by the blessed Hieron, on their way to the place of execution they joyfully sang the words of the Psalm:

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord" (Ps. 118:1). When they had come to the place of execution, they knelt and prayed to the Lord:

"Lord Jesus Christ, receive our souls!"

Then their holy heads were struck off with the sword. Antonius and Matronianus asked Lysias to allow them to take the body of their kinsman Hieron; and when Lysias refused, they begged him to give them at least Hieron's severed head. He answered that he would give them the

7. Pisidia was an inland Roman province of Asia Minor, southwest of Cappadocia. St. Paul the Apostle preached Christianity there.

8. Ancyra was the chief city of the Roman province of Galatia in Asia Minor, now Angora. Galatia occupied the very center of the peninsula of Asia Minor, while Ancyra lay on the northwestern edge of the province.

9. It is not known what was called Vadisanont. It is supposed to have been the same as Vasadon or Valvadon, a city in Cappadocia.

head only for an equal weight of gold. Antonius and Matronianus grieved greatly that they did not have as much gold as Lysias demanded for the head, although, without doubt, the honorable head of the martyr was worth immeasurably more. Then God put it into the heart of a rich and illustrious man named Chrysaphius to pay the ransom for the head of the holy martyr Hieron: he gave Lysias as much gold as the head weighed, and, having received it, kept it with honor in his possession. The avaricious Lysias then began to search for the holy man's severed hand as well, hoping to obtain gold for it; but Antonius and Matronianus, learning of this, fled by night to their homeland, carrying the holy hand with them, while other Christians secretly took the bodies of Hieron and the other holy martyrs who had been beheaded with him and buried them in a hidden place. The brothers mentioned above brought the hand of St. Hieron to his mother Stratonice and gave her the holy relic. Taking the hand of her beloved son, severed for Christ's sake, the mother washed it with her tears, kissed it with a mother's kiss, and pressed it to her eyes. Rejoicing on her son's account, yet at the same time yielding to her natural grief, she said through her tears:

"My beloved son, whom I bore alive and in good health! Now I have only a small part of your dead body, yet it stirs up the greater grief in me. Alas, my son! I bore you in pain, brought you up through toil, and hoped to have in you a support in my old age, a stay in sickness, and comfort in sorrow; but instead I have lost you, the light of my blind eyes. Yet why do I weep, when I ought to rejoice and be glad that I am the mother of a martyr, that I have offered the fruit of my womb to God, and that you, my beloved son, have not died as men commonly die? For the martyr's death by which you have ended your life leads to many great blessings! But though you have departed from me, do not leave me altogether, my son; in your prayers intercede for me before the Lord, for whom you shed your blood, that He may soon deliver me too from this life, so full of toil and every kind of misfortune."

After this lament, Stratonice laid the saint's hand in the place he himself had been pleased to designate, and carried out all that he had bequeathed. Chrysaphius, who had paid the gold ransom for the head of St. Hieron, later built a church on the place where the holy martyrs

had been beheaded, and laid the martyr's head there with honor, glorifying the Holy Trinity.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

The choir of martyrs, bright and radiant, having come down to us in understanding, hath enlightened the Church today with wondrous rays. Therefore, celebrating their honorable memory, we beseech Thee, our Savior: by their prayers deliver us from afflictions, that we may sing unto Thee: Alleluia.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Melasippus, Cassinia, and Antoninus

Память святых мучеников Меласиппа, Касинии и Антонина

The holy martyrs Melasippus, his wife Cassinia, and their son Antoninus suffered under Julian the Apostate[10] in the city of Ancyra.[11] Antoninus was cast into prison, while Melasippus and Cassinia were hanged, after which their torturers began to flay their bodies and scorch them with fire. They cut off the breasts of St. Cassinia and severed St. Melasippus's legs up to the knees. While they were undergoing these torments, their son Antoninus was brought out of prison. Seeing the sufferings of his parents, he blessed them and, taking the severed parts of their bodies, kissed them. Amid such cruel torments, Melasippus and Cassinia surrendered their righteous souls to the Lord. Then Antoninus spat in Julian's face. The cruel persecutor ordered Antoninus to be hanged and his body flayed; his shins were broken, and a heavy stone was fastened to his feet. Then, taking him down from the tree, they laid him upon an iron grid heated red-hot. After all these torments, the martyr's head was shaved, a stone was tied around his neck, and he was led through the city. Not content with this, they sent him to the commander Agrippinus, who ordered him to be thrown into a blazing furnace and then cast as food to wild beasts; but in both torments

10. Julian reigned from 361 to 363.
11. Ancyra, the chief city of Phrygia (a western region of Asia Minor).

the saint remained unharmed. Forty youths who watched these torments believed in Christ, and for this they were beheaded. St. Antoninus was laid upon an iron bed heated red-hot and beaten with iron rods. But when the saint remained unharmed even there, the persecutor ordered his head to be cut off.

* * *

Holy Martyrs Auctus, Taurion, and Thessalonica

Память святых мучеников Авкта, Тавриона и Фессалоникии

The holy Martyr Thessalonica was the daughter of a pagan priest. Having received instruction in the Christian faith, she was baptized and became a true Christian. Though her father compelled her to renounce Christ and worship the idols, she did not obey him; therefore the impious father stripped her and beat her so fiercely with clubs that he broke her ribs. Then he drove her from the house and deprived her of her inheritance, so that she was forced to live outside the city on the meagre means given her by her mother. When two men, Auctus and Taurion, learned of the priest's conduct, they reproached him. He went to the governor of that region and informed him that they had taken the part of St. Thessalonica. For confessing Christ, the governor subjected them to torments: they were beaten with stones, thrown into fire, and finally, bound together, cast into a lake, but the holy men remained unharmed. Then they were beheaded with the sword. Thessalonica too was subjected to torments for her confession of Christ, and died of them. Her body was honorably laid at Amphipolis[12] together with those of the holy martyrs Auctus and Taurion.

* * *

Venerable Lazarus

Память преподобного Лазаря

The Venerable Lazarus was born in Asia Minor, in the city of Magnesia[13]. Before his birth, God foretold by a special miracle the

12. A city in eastern Macedonia.
13. Magnesia was a Lydian city in the northwest of Asia Minor, on the Hermus River.

coming into the world of this lamp: such a great light shone upon his parents' house that the women who were in it fled, and only his mother remained, carrying the blessed child in her womb. At his birth he stood upright and turned towards the east in a posture of prayer, with his hands folded upon his breast. From childhood he was distinguished by gentleness, meekness, compassion, and love for the poor. In his youth, though well educated, he shunned every worldly pleasure and followed the devout inclination of his soul; he set out on a pilgrimage to the holy places of Jerusalem, where he entered the monastery of St. Sabbas. There he spent 10 years, surpassing all the brethren in obedience and every virtue, and was ordained to the priesthood by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. During the holy Forty Days he left the monastery for a certain mountain, taking nothing with him, and fed upon the plants of the wilderness[14]. There he heard a voice commanding him to return to his homeland. On the way he was hindered by apparitions of the enemy, but overcame them. In his homeland he met his mother, yet did not remain with her. Longing for the wilderness life, Lazarus settled on the uninhabited mountain of Galesion, not far from Ephesus. There, during prayer, he was once struck by the following vision: he saw a pillar of fire ascending to heaven, surrounded by a multitude of Angels singing, "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered!" He took this as a sign from above and, with the aid of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Monomachos[15], built on that spot a church dedicated to the Resurrection of Christ. Near the church St. Lazarus erected a pillar, upon which he began his ascetic struggle in fasting and prayer, enduring heat and cold and the other hardships of the life of a Stylite. God bestowed upon him the gifts of miracles and prophecy, so that devout people, thirsting for his guidance, began to gather around him. God foretold to him the time of his death, but the brethren begged him to ask God, for their benefit, to prolong his life; and God promised him a further 15 years. When the 15 years had passed, as had happened be-

14. Monks customarily left the monastery for the holy Forty Days on Cheesefare Sunday, before which they performed a rite of farewell; for this reason that Sunday came to be called "Forgiveness Sunday." The monks gathered to return to the monastery on Lazarus Saturday.
15. Constantine Monomachos reigned from 1042 to 1054.

fore his birth, heavenly light shone upon his pillar. When he died and the brethren wept over him because he had left them no testament, he rose and, as though alive, gave them his testament; then he lay down, and at the brethren's request rose a second time to sign the testament he had given them. He died at the age of 72[16], was buried within the pillar, and after death was glorified by many miraculous healings wrought through his holy relics.

* * *

16. His blessed repose is dated to 1053.

THE EIGHTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 8

8 ноября

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

Synaxis of the Holy Archangel Michael and of the Other Bodiless Heavenly Powers

Собор святого Архистратига Михаила и прочих небесных сил бесплотных

The holy Church, following the tradition of the God-inspired Fathers, received the pious celebration of the Synaxis of the Holy Angels after rejecting the ancient impious veneration of the Angels that had been established by heretics and idolaters. Already in the Old Testament, when men fell away from God, their Creator, they began to worship the creature of God and the works of their own hands, making idols in the likeness of visible creatures and offering sacrifices to the sun, the moon and the stars, in which, as they supposed, a living soul dwelt. The expression is taken from Ex. 20: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." At that time people also worshipped and offered sacrifices to the Angels, as is said in the Book of Kings: "And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven" (4 Kgdms. 23). Lk. 2: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying," that is, the Angels, for they are the heavenly host, as is said in the Gospel. Such erroneous veneration of the Angels was widely spread in the times of the holy Apostles. The holy Apostle Paul speaks thus of this erroneous veneration:

Col. 2:18–19: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head," that is, Christ. For at that time there were certain heretics who appeared humble in outward show and who, in pride, boasted of imitating the Angels through their abstinence and pure life. They taught that the worship offered to the Angels should be the same as that offered to God Himself. Later other heretics appeared, who preached that the Angels are the creators of the visible creation and, as bodiless beings, are higher and more worthy of veneration than Christ, the Son of God; they also called the Archangel Michael the god of the Jews[7168]. Finally, others, given to sorcery and deceiving people, under the name of Angels called upon demons and served them, calling them Angels. Such heresies multiplied especially in Colossae[1], which belonged to the Metropolis of Laodicea, where many secretly performed this impious veneration of the Angels, resembling idolatry[2]. When this erroneous veneration of the Angels had been condemned and rejected, a pious and right veneration was established, and their feast was instituted as servants of God and guardians of the human race[3]. And in that same land of Colossae, where formerly the veneration of the Angels had been secretly and impiously practised, the Orthodox celebration of the Synaxis of the Angels began to be kept openly, and splendid churches were built in the name of the holy Archistrategus Michael, the leader of the Angels. Thus at Chonae, over a wonder-working spring, a splendid and wondrously beautiful church was built, in which the holy Archippus was granted an appearance of the holy Archistrategus Mi-

1. *Colossae* was a populous city in ancient Phrygia (in Asia Minor), by the river Lycus, a tributary of the Maeander. In 65 A.D. this city, together with the neighboring cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis, was almost entirely destroyed by a terrible earthquake; but it was later rebuilt and flourished until the XII century. It was subsequently called Chonae.

2. As is evident from Canon 35 of the Council of Laodicea, this canon condemns heretics who pray not to God but only to Angels, as though they were creators and rulers of the world.

3. The local Council of Laodicea, at which Canon 35 rejected the impious veneration of Angels and established their proper veneration and the celebration of their Assembly, was held in the time of St. Sylvester, Pope of Rome, several years before the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea. This Council of Laodicea was held in 319, or, according to others, in 320 and 321; there were 32 bishops at the Council, and it was presided over by Nunechius, Metropolitan of Laodicea.

chael himself. The feast of the Synaxis of the holy Angels was appointed to be kept in the month of November, the ninth from March, the first month from the creation of the world, to signify the number of the orders of the Angelic ranks, which the holy Dionysius the Areopagite, a disciple of the holy Apostle Paul, counts as nine. Paul, having been caught up to the third heaven, there beheld the differences among the orders of the holy Angels and explained them to Dionysius as his disciple. 2 Cor. 12: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven."

The nine orders of the Angelic ranks are divided into three hierarchies, each containing three orders: the highest, the middle and the lowest.

The first, the highest hierarchy, nearest to the Holy Trinity, consists of: *Seraphim*, *Cherubim* and *Thrones*.

Nearest of all to their Maker and Creator stand the God-loving six-winged *Seraphim*, as the prophet Isaiah saw, saying: "Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly" (Is. 6). They are fiery, as standing immediately before Him of whom it is written: "For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12).

Standing before such glory, the Seraphim are fiery, as it is said:

Dan. 7: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." Ex. 24: "And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel."

Ps. 103: "Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire." They burn with love for God and kindle the same love in others, as their very name shows, for "Seraphim" in the Hebrew language means "the burning ones."

After the Seraphim, before the all-knowing God, who dwells in unapproachable light, stand in ineffable brightness the many-eyed *Cherubim*, who shine more than the other lower orders always with the

light of the knowledge of God, the understanding of the mysteries of God and the depth of His wisdom, being themselves enlightened and enlightening others. Their name, "Cherubim," translated from the Hebrew language, means: "abundance of knowledge" or "outpouring of wisdom," since through the Cherubim wisdom is sent down to others and enlightenment is imparted to the eyes of the mind for the vision and knowledge of God.

Then, before Him who sits upon the high and exalted throne, stand the God-bearing *Thrones* (as the holy Dionysius the Areopagite calls them), for upon them, as upon rational thrones (as the holy Maximus the Confessor writes), God rests in a rational manner. They are called God-bearing not by essence but by grace and by their ministry, whereas the flesh of Jesus Christ (as the holy Basil the Great writes) is called God-bearing by essence, since it is inseparably united with God the Word Himself. The Thrones are called God-bearing not by essence but by the grace given for their service, as those who mysteriously and incomprehensibly bear God within themselves. Resting upon them in an incomprehensible manner, God executes His righteous judgment, as David said: "For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right" (Ps. 9:5).

Therefore through them the righteousness of God is chiefly manifested: they serve His justice, glorify it, and pour the power of justice upon the thrones[4] of earthly judges, helping kings and rulers to render righteous judgment.

In the middle hierarchy likewise there are three orders of the holy Angels: *Dominions*, *Powers* and *Authorities*.

The *Dominions* are so called because they have dominion over the rest, who follow these orders of Angels, while themselves being free. Having cast off, as the holy Dionysius the Areopagite says, servile fear, they serve God continually, willingly and with joy. They also send down strength for prudent government and wise administration to the authorities set up by God on earth, that they may well govern the regions entrusted to them. Further, they teach men to master their

4. "Thrones of earthly judges" is a figurative expression concerning the limits of the authority of earthly judges.

senses, to subdue within themselves unseemly desires and passions, to bring the flesh into subjection to the spirit, to rule over their own will, and to be superior to every temptation.

The *Powers,* filled with divine strength, immediately fulfil the will of the Most High and Almighty, their strong and mighty Lord. They also work great miracles and send down the same grace of working wonders upon the saints of God who are worthy of such grace, so that they may work miracles: heal all diseases and foretell the future. The holy Powers also help people who labour and are burdened in bearing some obedience laid upon them, whence they take their name, "powers," and they bear the infirmities of the weak. They also strengthen every man in patience, so that he does not faint in sorrow, but with a firm spirit and courageously bears all afflictions, with humility giving thanks to God, who orders all things for our good.

The *Authorities* are so called because they have authority over the devil, to restrain the power of the demons, to repel the temptations they bring upon men, and not to allow the demons to harm anyone to the degree they would desire. The Authorities strengthen good ascetics in spiritual struggles and labours, guarding them lest they lose the spiritual kingdom; and to those who struggle against passions and lusts they help to drive away evil thoughts, the snares of the enemy, and to overcome the devil.

In the lowest hierarchy there are likewise three orders: *Principalities*, *Archangels* and *Angels*.

Principalities—they are so called because they exercise authority over the lower Angels, directing them to fulfil the divine commands. They are also entrusted with the governance of the universe and the keeping of all kingdoms and principalities, lands and all peoples, tribes, and tongues; for every kingdom, tribe, and people has, from the heavenly order called Principalities, a guardian and governor of its whole land appointed especially for it.[5] The service of this Angelic order, according to the explanation of St. Gregory the Dialogist, is to instruct

5. The teaching that every people and every kingdom has its own Angel is based on the words of the Prophet Daniel (Dan. 10:13), where the Angels of the kingdoms of Persia and Judea are mentioned.

people to render to each ruler the honor befitting his rank. Finally, the Angels of this order raise worthy people to various honorable offices and instruct them to accept authority not for their own profit and advantage, nor for love of honor and vainglory, but for the honor of God, for the spreading and increase of His holy glory, and for the benefit of their neighbors, serving the common needs of all who are subject to them.

Archangels are called great heralds, who proclaim tidings of what is great and most glorious. Their service, as the great Dionysius the Areopagite says, is to disclose prophecies, and knowledge and understanding of the will of God, which they receive from the higher orders and proclaim to the lower orders—the Angels—and through them to mankind. St. Gregory the Dialogist says that the Archangels strengthen holy faith in people, enlightening their minds with the light of knowledge of the holy Gospel and revealing the mysteries of the faith.

Angels are lowest among all the orders in the heavenly hierarchy and nearest to mankind. They proclaim lesser mysteries and intentions of God and instruct people to live virtuously and righteously for God. They are appointed to guard each of us who believe: they uphold the virtuous lest they fall, raise up those who have fallen, and never forsake us, even if we have sinned, for they are always ready to help us, if only we ourselves are willing.

Yet all the higher heavenly orders, too, are called by the common name of Angels. Although, according to their rank and the grace given them by God, they bear different names—such as Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, and the other orders—yet all are generally called Angels, for the word "Angel" denotes not a nature but a ministry, as it is written:

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14)

Their service, however, is varied and unequal, and each order has its own particular ministry; for the all-wise Creator does not reveal the mysteries of His purpose to all in equal measure, but through the higher orders enlightens the lower, revealing His will to them and commanding them to fulfil it, as is clearly shown in the book of the Prophet

Zechariah. There we are told how one Angel, after speaking with the Prophet, met another, who commanded him to go again to the Prophet and reveal Jerusalem's future destiny: "And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, and said unto him, Run, speak to this young man [that is, the Prophet Zechariah], saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: for I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her" (Zech. 2:3–5). Reflecting on this, St. Gregory says:

—When one Angel says to another, "Go, tell," there can be no doubt that some Angels send others: the lower are sent, and the higher send them.[6]

Likewise, in the prophecy of Daniel we find that one Angel commands another to interpret the vision to the Prophet (Dan. 8:16). From this it is clear that the Angels of the higher orders reveal the divine will and the purpose of their Creator to the Angels of the lower orders, enlighten them, and send them to mankind.

The Orthodox Church Militant, needing the help of the Angels, celebrates the assembly of all nine Angelic orders with a solemn supplication, as is fitting, on the eighth day of this month of November, that is, the ninth month; for all these nine Angelic orders will assemble on the day of the dread Judgment of the Lord, which day the divine teachers of the Church call the eighth day, since, they say, when seven thousand years have ended, what is as it were the eighth day will come.

Dan. 8—"And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, 'Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.'"

Mt. 25—"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Mt. 24—"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other," that is, from the east, west, north, and south.

6. St. Gregory the Dialogist. *Commentary on the Gospel*, 4.

O, if only then they would gather us also into the company of God's elect, us who honorably celebrate their assembly!

Over all the nine heavenly orders of Angels named above, God appointed the holy Archangel Michael as their chief and leader, a faithful servant of God.[7][175] At the time of Satan's baneful fall into pride, his apostasy from God, and his descent into the abyss, he gathered all the orders and hosts of Angels and cried aloud:

—Let us attend, let us stand well before our Creator, and let us not conceive what is contrary to God! Let us attend to what befell those who were created together with us and until now were partakers with us of the divine light! Let us attend to how, because of pride, they suddenly fell from light into darkness and were cast down from on high into the abyss! Let us attend to how the Daystar, who rose at dawn, fell from heaven and was broken upon the earth![8]

Speaking thus to the whole assembly of Angels, he stood before them and began, with the Seraphim and Cherubim and all the heavenly orders, to glorify the Most Holy, Consubstantial, and Undivided Trinity, the One God, singing together the solemn hymn:

"And they cried one to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Is. 6:3). This union of the holy Angels was given the name of the Assembly of Angels, for together and with one voice they glorify the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit—the Holy Trinity—to whom may glory also be ascribed by us who dwell on earth, unto the ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

O chief commanders of the heavenly hosts, we unworthy ones beseech you continually: by your prayers encompass us beneath the shelter of the wings of your immaterial glory, guarding us who fall down before you with diligence and cry: Deliver us from tribulations, as commanders of the powers on high.

7. Daystar—the morning dawn. Here, by Daystar is meant the fallen Angel, Satan, who was created by God before the visible world as a luminous spirit, as it were a rising, clear morning dawn; but, growing proud and rising up against God, he fell into the abyss and was subjected to eternal condemnation.

8. St. Gregory the Dialogist. Commentary 4 on the Gospel.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

O chief commanders of God, ministers of divine glory, leaders of the Angels and instructors of mankind, ask for what is profitable for us, and for great mercy, as chief commanders of the bodiless hosts.

* * *

NOTES

7168. Concerning the heretics mentioned, St. Epiphanius of Cyprus reports the following in his book *On Heresies*: "They were called Saturnilians, after Saturnilus, the founder of this heresy. Saturnilus lived in Syria, near Danphis, where he first spread his teaching. His active assistant was Basilides, who spread this teaching in Egypt. Their teaching about the Angels was as follows: seven Angels created the world and everything in it. The creation of man took place in this way: the Angels gathered together, formed a design, and jointly created man in the likeness of the bright image that had looked down from above... But when man had been created, the Angels, being powerless, could not complete his creation. Man lay upon the earth, brought low like a creeping worm, until the Most High Power, looking down and having compassion, for the sake of His own image and likeness, mercifully sent a spark of His power and thus restored and quickened man through it. This spark is the soul of man, which must needs be saved."

7175. By the meaning of the word, Michael is an Angel possessing extraordinary and unparalleled spiritual power. In the prophet Daniel he appears as a special defender and protector of the Jewish people (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1). In the Revelation of St. John the Theologian (in Greek, the Apocalypse), the Archangel Michael is shown as the defender of Christians and the one who cast down the dragon with his Angels: "There was war in heaven; Michael and his Angels fought against the dragon, and the great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent, called the devil and Satan, with his Angels to the earth"; then, in his malice, he began to harm the Church of Christ and continues to wage war against the saints (Rev. 12:1–17). But, for the comfort of believers, the Revelation shows that this age-old struggle with the enemy of our salvation will end in the complete victory of the Lamb (Rev. 19:1–21; 20:1–15), and that in the struggle with the serpent we have heavenly defenders and protectors, headed by the holy Archangel Michael. The veneration of the holy Archangel Michael in the Orthodox Church goes back to the most ancient times.

THE NINTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 9

9 ноября

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

Life and Ascetic Labors of Our Venerable Mother Matrona

Житие и подвиги преподобной матери нашей Матроны

Saint Matrona was born in Perga of Pamphylia[1], to pious parents. When she came of age, she was given in marriage to an honorable and distinguished man named Domitian, and became the mother of a single daughter, whom she named Theodotia.

Once her husband went with her to Byzantium. Here Matrona, visiting the churches of God and praying in them with zeal, became acquainted with a maiden named Eugenia, who, in fasting and ascetic labors, kept her virginity, occupying herself day and night with prayer.

Imitating the life of Eugenia, Matrona did not leave the church; from morning until evening she remained in it at prayer, and only in the evening did she return home. Early in the morning she went back to the church for prayer again, and by abstinence and fasting she mortified her body, flourishing in its youth. At that time she was twenty-five years old, and she prayed diligently to God that He, who knows what is best, would make her free from marriage, so that she might serve the Lord without hindrance. Her husband Domitian, seeing that his wife went out of the house every day early in the morning and returned only toward evening, began to suspect that she was going not to prayer but to some wicked deed. He therefore grew angry with her and would not

1. Perga: a city in Pamphylia in the southern part of Asia Minor, on the right bank of the Kestros, famous in antiquity for a temple of the pagan Greco-Roman goddess Artemis; in the later Roman period Perga was the administrative center of the province. At present the Turkish city of Bergama stands on this site.

let her out of the house. Matrona begged him with tears not to hinder her from going to church, but she did not receive what she asked, and so she grieved greatly, for she had the desire "to be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Ps. 83:11). Once Matrona persuaded her husband to let her go to church for prayer. Hastening to the Church of the Holy Apostles, she poured out her heart before God, praying to Him with tenderness that He would free her from the heavy yoke which was a great obstacle to her contemplation of God, and that, having led her out of the vain and troubled world, He would bring her to a life of silence, where she could please Him alone without hindrance. In such diligent prayer she remained the whole day.

When late evening came, the church doorkeeper ordered everyone to leave so that the church doors could be locked. Then the blessed Matrona also went out of the church, but she did not wish to return home, and remained on the porch. Here she met a maiden named Susanna, who from her youth, having dedicated herself to Christ, spent her life in fasting and prayer beside the church. Having become acquainted with Susanna, Matrona visited her cell and talked with her the whole night, telling her everything about herself and her life. Susanna comforted her and urged her to place her hope in the Lord, who by His will arranges the salvation of men:

"The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way" (Ps. 36:23), she said.

From this conversation with Susanna, Matrona was kindled with still greater love for God, and resolved to flee from her husband, so that, hidden from him, she might labor for God in secret.

When morning came, Matrona went to the aforementioned Eugenia and disclosed to her her intention.

Eugenia said to her:

"You must first, sister, provide for your daughter Theodotia, who is still very young; think how she can be without a mother?"

Matrona answered:

"I entrust my daughter Theodotia to God and to Mother Susanna; I myself will go into the desert, where God will guide me."

Taking her daughter secretly from the house, she gave her to the blessed Susanna, begging her to receive Theodotia as her own child and to bring her up in the fear of the Lord. Susanna, seeing how Matrona burned with fervent love for God and was filled with an unshakable longing for a life of silence, received the child from her in place of a daughter; and Matrona called upon God to guide her into the right way, saying to Him in the words of the psalm:

"Show me [O Lord] the way wherein I should walk" (Ps. 142:8).

Dozing a little from weariness, Matrona saw in a dream the following vision: it seemed to her that she was fleeing from some man who was pursuing her; when he began to overtake her, she ran to some monks, who hid her from her pursuer. Matrona interpreted this vision to herself as meaning that she must take on a man's appearance and go for a time to a men's monastery, for there she could hide from her husband and from all who knew her. Matrona cut off her hair and, dressing in the clothing of eunuchs, went with the blessed Eugenia to the Church of the Holy Apostles, where, after praying, she opened the Holy Gospel, desiring to learn whether her intention was pleasing to God, and there she saw the following words: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt. 16:24).

Finding in these words a good hope that God would be her helper, Matrona kissed Eugenia, and parting from her, went to the monastery of the Venerable Vassian, where she was received as a eunuch. Asked her name, she called herself Vavila. Received into the number of the brethren, she lived the monastic life in virtue, humbly fulfilling obedience, wearing down her flesh by fasting and vigil, and remaining always in prayer. Matrona carefully guarded herself so that it would not be discovered that she was a woman, and therefore kept deep silence and withdrew from everyone. All the brethren marveled at her great virtuous life, praised her labors, and considered her a perfect monk.

Thus Saint Matrona remained in the monastery for a fairly long time among the monks, shining with her virtues like the moon among the stars. It happened once that she was working in the garden with the other monks. One monk, named Barnabas, cultivating the ground

together with her, looked at her face out of curiosity, and seeing that both her ears were pierced, asked:

"Why are your ears pierced?"

The blessed one said to him:

"You must cultivate the ground, brother, and not look at other people's faces, for this is contrary to the monastic life. But since you have seen my pierced ears, learn also the reason for it: when I was a little boy, my tutor loved me greatly and adorned me with golden things; he pierced my ears for precious earrings."

So the blessed Matrona answered Barnabas, and fear entered her heart; for a long time she thought, fearing lest her secret be revealed, and so she prayed to the Lord:

"By Thy command, O Lord, I have come to this monastic dwelling; Thou hast called me, and I have no intention of returning. Therefore cover my weakness with Thy grace and bring to a good end the life I have undertaken, that I may not be put to shame in my hope in Thee!"

And the God who loves mankind, by His unspeakable and inscrutable judgments, was pleased to reveal to the abbots of two monasteries that she was a woman, so that even greater zeal for the monastic life might appear in her.

Once, during sleep, a comely and radiant man appeared to the Venerable Vassian and three times repeated:

"The eunuch Vavila, who is living the monastic life in your monastery, is a woman!"

The blessed Akakius, abbot of the Monastery of Abraham, saw the same vision. When morning came, Vassian summoned one of the monks, named John, who was first after him, and told him what he had seen. During their conversation, a messenger came to the Venerable Vassian from Abbot Akakius with the news that on that night it had been revealed to him in a vision about the eunuch Vavila, that she was a woman. The venerable one, astonished, and wishing to be still more certain of this secret (for he feared lest it prove to be some deception of the enemy, and did not at once believe the vision he had seen in sleep), opened the Gospel, and his gaze fell upon the following words: "Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman

took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (Lk. 13:20–21).

After this, believing the vision, Vassian summoned the blessed Matrona, and looking at her with a stern glance, said to her sternly:

"Why have you come to us, woman? How did you dare to remain so long among the monks? Do you wish to bring shame upon our monastery, or have you come to tempt us?"

The blessed Matrona, struck by the unexpected rebuke and greatly frightened by the stern look and voice of the abbot, fell at his holy feet, asking forgiveness, and humbly answered:

"Not to tempt anyone, but to save myself from the enemy's temptation and to escape the snares of the wicked one, I have come, holy father, to the sheep of your flock."

The abbot again said to her:

"How did you dare, being a woman, with your head uncovered, to approach the Divine Mysteries and to give the kiss of peace to the brethren on the lips?"

Matrona answered:

"In approaching the Divine Mysteries (1 Cor. 11:5), I did not entirely uncover my head, but only a little; and in giving the kiss to the brethren, I imagined that I was touching not the lips of men but of passionless Angels."

The venerable one, astonished at such a wise answer, asked her again:

"Why, then, did you come not to a women's but to a men's monastery?"

The blessed one, laying aside her fear, began to tell him in detail everything about herself:

I was given in marriage and became the mother of an only daughter. I always loved to visit the churches of God and there to remain in prayer day and night. My husband, however, forbade me such ascetic striving; with unpleasantness and blows he sought to divert me from my zealous attachment to the church and to prayer, and in every way hindered my aspiration toward God. Therefore I resolved to flee from him, that I might be free to labor for God. The vision I had brought me

to you. I saw myself in a dream fleeing from my husband, who was pursuing me, and hidden by certain monks. Pondering the vision and understanding that I could hide from my spouse only in the guise of a monk, I changed my woman's garments, put on men's clothing, renamed myself Vavila, and, passing myself off as a eunuch, came to this monastery.

Venerable Vassian, listening attentively to the words of the blessed Matrona, marveled greatly at her understanding and her zeal for God, and said to her:

"Be bold, daughter; your faith will save you."

Having given Matrona a sufficient number of soul-profitable admonitions, Vassian sent her secretly to the blessed Susanna, and he himself gave the promise to take care of her, provided only that she unwaveringly served Christ.

At that time Matrona's daughter, Theodotia, died; Matrona had entrusted her to Susanna. For the good Lord, desiring to free His servant Matrona from care, so that, relieved of concern for her daughter, she might serve Him more freely, took Theodotia to Himself and settled her in the heavenly mansions. Therefore Matrona, instead of grief, was filled with joy, seeing her daughter, who had not yet known the allurements of the wicked world, departed to the Lord and presented to Him in purity. Matrona herself remained hidden with Susanna, or rather, God hid her through Susanna.

Meanwhile Domitian, Matrona's husband, sought her everywhere, going through many cities and villages and various monasteries, searching and questioning everyone about her, but he did not find her. Then he heard that in the monastery of Venerable Vassian there was a certain woman in man's guise, living as a eunuch (for the rumor of this first spread among all the brethren, and afterward among those living in the world). Surmising that this was his wife, Domitian came to the monastery and, knocking loudly at the gate, began to cry out in anger:

"You have done me a great wrong, monks, a great wrong: you have beguiled my wife and keep her with you. Is this how monks ought to act? Is this the manner of your life? Give me back my wife! Why do you

lawlessly separate those whom God has joined for a good life? Give me her who belongs to me as the companion of my life."

The monks, answering Domitian, said:

"There is no wife of yours with us, for women never enter our monastery. We had one eunuch, the monk Vavila, who labored with us for some time, but then, desiring to visit the holy places in Jerusalem, he left us long ago, as everyone knows. Where he is now we do not know; only God, the All-knowing, before Whom nothing is hidden, knows that."

Hearing this, Domitian, agitated by jealousy and at the same time grieving from love for his spouse, withdrew, saddened. And the blessed Vassian reasoned with himself:

"God Himself chose this woman for His service and took her under His good yoke from her stubborn and corrupt husband, entrusting her to my unworthiness, that I might care for her soul. Meanwhile I have revealed her secret before many and made known everything concerning her. If now her husband finds her, turns her from the virtuous path she has undertaken, and harms her salvation, then I shall be guilty of her perdition."

Calling some of the elders who made up the monastic council, Vassian said to them:

"Brethren, we must take care of the sister who has departed from our monastery, for although she is a woman, nevertheless she has been enrolled in our brotherhood. What, then, shall we do, so that the life she has begun in a God-pleasing way may come to a good end, lest the enemy, who always seeks our fall, overcome her courage, turn her away from monastic labors, and turn her back to worldly love, using as a fit instrument for this her husband?"

Thus Vassian spoke to the brethren. One of them, named Markell, a deacon by rank, said to the venerable one:

"In the city of Emesa, where I was born, there is a women's monastery in which my own sister also took the tonsure. So, Father, if you wish, send her there, and in this way the care for her will cease."

Hearing this, Vassian and the other elders agreed with Markell's counsel and ordered a ship sailing to that country to be sought. Soon,

by God's providence, a ship from Emesa was found, which, having made purchases in Byzantium, was returning to its own land. Then, placing the blessed Matrona aboard that ship, they sent her to the monastery of Emesa, to the virgins living there in monastic life, and she was received by them with honor. Living there virtuously in her customary labors, she surpassed all in humility, silence, fasting, and vigil, and in all the monastic exploits, and she astonished everyone by her life, so that she became an example of the harsh and difficult path that leads to the Kingdom of God. After a short time the abbess of that monastery died, and the holy Matrona was chosen by all, as worthy, to succeed the deceased. As abbess, she shone like a candle set on a candlestick, with the clear light of virtues, and zealously cared for the salvation of the sisters entrusted to her.

At that time a certain man, plowing his field, noticed that fire was coming out of the earth in one place. He saw this not once but many times, for over many days a flame kept appearing, rising out of the ground. The man went into the city and reported this to the Bishop of Emesa. The bishop, perceiving in this a special sign, went to that place with his clergy, and, after offering prayer, ordered the earth to be dug up. When this was done, a vessel was found in the earth, containing not gold nor silver, but a treasure more precious than all earthly riches: the head of Saint John the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord.[2] The news spread everywhere, and all the inhabitants gathered at that place, not only from the city of Emesa but from all the surrounding cities and villages. The venerable Matrona also came from her monastery with all the sisters to venerate the discovered head of Saint John the Baptist. This holy head exuded fragrant myrrh, with which the priests anointed those gathered, tracing the sign of the Cross on their foreheads. The venerable Matrona took some of that myrrh in a small vessel for a blessing for her monastery. But the crowds of people striving toward the holy myrrh pressed upon her so that she could not pass; others, seeing the holy myrrh with her, asked her to anoint them with it, since, because of the crush, they could not approach the priests, and so, com-

2. Evidently this refers to the second uncovering of the honorable head of the Forerunner, which is dated to the year 452.

pelled, she did so. There was a blind man there who had not seen the light from birth. He asked Matrona to anoint him with the holy myrrh also; she anointed his eyes, and he immediately regained his sight. Such a miracle was ascribed by everyone not only to the healing myrrh of Saint John, but also to the venerable Matrona, for there were many priests there distributing that holy myrrh to the people, yet no hands of theirs could restore sight to the one born blind. And the virtuous life of the venerable Matrona was glorified among the people. After a considerable time, her husband Domitian heard of Matrona and hastened to the city of Emesa. Learning that he could not enter the women's monastery where the venerable Matrona lived, and see the wife he sought (for it was the rule of that monastery that men never enter there), he planned to attain his desire by cunning. Domitian persuaded some worldly women to come to Matrona and say to her:

"A certain man, hearing of your holiness and perfectly virtuous life, has come from afar to venerate you and to receive your blessing and your holy prayers. So show love for God's sake, and do not despise the man who for your sake endured so difficult a journey, but come out to him, comfort him with soul-profitable words, and send him away with a blessing."

Coming to Matrona, the women spoke as they had been instructed. The blessed Matrona, perceiving the deceit, asked the women what the man who had sent them to her looked like. They described his appearance to her. The saint understood that this was her husband, and said to the women:

"Tell that man to wait seven days, and on the seventh day I shall show myself to him, and he will see me, as he desires."

Having dismissed the women, the blessed Matrona began to pray that the Lord would hide her from her husband. When night came, she took a hair shirt and a small piece of bread, secretly left the monastery unseen by anyone, and set out toward Jerusalem. Meanwhile Domitian waited seven days, hoping to see the one he desired and to take her by force, as being lawfully joined to him. On the seventh day he again sent the same women to the venerable one with the request that she, as she had promised, show herself to him. The women, coming to the monas-

tery, found all the nuns grieving and weeping over their abbess, for they did not know where she had gone. Returning, they reported this to Domitian. And he, still more inflamed by jealousy and sorrow, went about everywhere searching for her. He went also to Jerusalem and, stopping at one lodging, asked the women living there whether they had ever happened to see such-and-such a woman (describing her appearance). They answered him:

"We remember that just such a nun came late to one of the churches there, but where she is now we do not know."

Domitian diligently sought for her there, traveling the roads and asking at the inns. One day they met, and Matrona recognized her husband, but he did not recognize her; for as Domitian passed by her, she covered her face and bent down as though gathering something, and by this ruse she was not recognized by her husband. She wondered at the persistence with which her husband sought her, and, fearing that he might see her somewhere again and recognize her, withdrew to Mount Sinai; but even there she was sought and pursued by her husband. Then she went to Berytus[3] and, finding an empty pagan shrine, entered it and began to live there. The demons, unable to endure her presence there, terrified her in various ways, wishing to drive the saint from that place: sometimes they howled at her without showing themselves to her, and sometimes they attacked her openly; when Matrona sang psalms, the demons hindered her with mockery. But the saint drove away all such demonic illusions and apparitions by the sign of the Cross and fervent prayer to God. While she dwelt in that pagan shrine, the Venerable one's food was the grain growing in the surrounding country, and her drink was water from a spring that miraculously flowed forth for her sake. One day, feeling thirsty, she searched all around for water and found none, for the earth was dry and scorched by the heat of the sun. Finding some small, sharp pebble, she dug with it a little hollow in the earth, about a hand's breadth, and, leaving it, went away to pray. The next morning she came to that place and found a swiftly flowing spring of water; around the spring there had grown delicious

3. Berytus: the most ancient seaport on the Phoenician coast of Asia Minor.

grain. This became a meal for the Bride of Christ—a meal sweeter than all royal feasts. She ate of that delicious grain and drank the water, giving thanks to God, "Who gives food to all flesh, for His mercy endureth for ever... Thou openest Thy hand, and fillest every living thing with good pleasure" (Ps. 135:25, 144:16).

One day a demon took the form of a beautiful woman and came to the Venerable Matrona, speaking to her with flattery:

"Why, my lady, have you chosen for yourself such a strange manner of life? This place is deserted, and there is nothing here to satisfy the needs of the body. Besides, you are still young and fair of face; I fear that someone, seeing you, may be beguiled by your beauty and do you violence, and then there will be no one to help you and free you from his hands. So leave such a life, my lady, and come with me to the city, for you can also live there in quiet. I shall find a house for you to dwell in, just as you need, and you will have everything necessary; no one will dare to trouble you, for your neighbors will help you and deliver you from insult."

Hearing these flattering words, St. Matrona understood that they were the enemy's arrows, and at once "took the invincible shield—holiness" (Wis. 5:19); she not only defended herself from the arrows of the evil one, but also wounded the archer himself with prayer, as with a sword, and drove him away. After this, the demon was transformed into an old woman, from whose eyes fire issued. Rushing angrily at Matrona, this woman seized her by the feet, uttering shameless words and threats. But the saint paid her no heed and stood praying to God; and immediately the demon vanished.

After these demonic assaults, the Lord comforted blessed Matrona by a certain divine revelation and filled her heart with ineffable spiritual joy and heavenly consolation; for He knows how to comfort those who serve Him in their sorrows, help them in tribulations, and turn their grief into joy, as David says: Ps. 93—"When the sorrows of my heart are multiplied, Thy consolations delight my soul."

And the Lord willed through this servant of His to benefit many and guide many upon the path of salvation; therefore He revealed her to the inhabitants of Berytus. She was discovered by three Christians who, as

they passed by the shrine in the evening, saw her praying. They told others of this, and many began to come to her, wishing to see her. Having received from God the gracious gift of teaching, she preached the Word of God to them and, by her God-inspired discourse, brought them great benefit and guided them upon the path of salvation. Some women and maidens also came to her and, marveling at her angel-like manner of life, wished to follow her example and lead a monastic life with her. First there came to the Venerable one a woman named Sophronia, who, though a pagan, loved temperance and chastity and lived like a nun, as a virgin, with other women who had followed her manner of life and teaching. Hearing of blessed Matrona and her strict life, she wished to see her and came to her with her companions. St. Matrona opened her God-speaking lips and began to tell her of the One True God and His Only-begotten Son—how He was incarnate of the Virgin, who knew no man and was most pure; suffered for our salvation; rose again; ascended bodily into heaven; and will come to judge the living and the dead. Matrona revealed to Sophronia many mysteries of the Christian faith and converted her and those who were with her to Christ. Soon receiving baptism from the Bishop of Berytus, they began to lead a monastic life together with the Venerable Matrona in that same pagan shrine, and the den of robbers became a monastery of the Brides of Christ.

After this a maiden named Eucheia, who was a priestess of idols and had preserved her virginity, came to the Venerable Matrona and, falling at her feet, begged her to teach her the faith in Christ Jesus and allow her to live with her. The saint instructed the maiden at length with divine words and kindled her heart with love for Christ and renunciation of the world. At that time a certain God-detested pagan feast was being held there, and the pagans in Berytus assembled before their idols to celebrate it. Not finding the priestess of the idols, who according to pagan custom was to offer their sacrifices, they wondered where she had gone. When it became known that she had gone to Matrona, some of them, especially the maiden's relatives, went there and, finding Eucheia seated with Matrona and listening with compunction to the divine words, said to her:

"Why, maiden, have you scorned the great gods and abandoned the offering of sacrifices to them? Behold, because of you the people have risen against us, unwilling to endure the dishonor done to their gods. Come with us, then, and celebrate the feast today!"

But the maiden wished not only to hear none of their words, but even to look at them; and as Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, so she sat before her instructress, the Venerable Matrona, who spoke gently and lovingly to those who had come:

"Leave this servant of the true God to remain with us. She was once a servant of your vain gods, but she can no longer have fellowship with you, for she desires to be betrothed to Christ."

The maiden's relatives who had come tried for a long time, with both entreaties and threats, to draw her away from Matrona; they even wished to take her by force, but the invisible power of God restrained them. Having failed, they said:

"If you do not obey us and come with us now to celebrate the feast of the gods, then tomorrow morning we shall come, set this shrine on fire, and burn all who are in it, you among them."

Having threatened them thus, they departed. But St. Matrona and the sisters with her gathered a great quantity of firewood and brushwood, piled it all around the shrine, and sent word after the departing pagans, saying:

"Behold, the fire and the wood are already prepared. Fulfill your promise, then—burn us, that we may be a fragrant sacrifice to Christ our God."

The pagans, marveling at the courage with which they were ready to die for their God, did not know what to answer them, and never came to them again.

Meanwhile the Venerable Matrona petitioned the bishop to send a presbyter to her. When the presbyter came, she entrusted the maiden to his care, that he might grant her holy baptism and bring her back to her; and the presbyter immediately fulfilled her wish. After receiving baptism, the maiden zealously struggled in fasting and prayer with the other sisters, of whom there were eight with St. Matrona. They were

all like the wise virgins, adorning their lamps and preparing to meet their Bridegroom[4].

While the Venerable Matrona was leading such a life, laboring for God day and night with the sisters and turning many people to Him, she desired to see once more her spiritual father, the Venerable Vassian. She wished to go to Constantinople, but the thought that her husband Domitian lived in Constantinople restrained Matrona from this intention, and she feared to go there lest he recognize her. At the same time she reflected within herself:

"I can no longer remain here, for many people come to me and praise me as virtuous, and I fear vainglory. Besides, I fear that my husband may hear of me, for the whole country has learned of me, and someone may tell him; and when he comes here and finds me, he will destroy all my monastic struggles. Therefore I shall leave here, either for Alexandria or for Antioch."

Having settled upon this decision, the saint began fervently to pray to God that He reveal to her where she should go, and where she might live to greater profit. As she was praying about this, she once saw in a dream three men disputing over her, for each wished to take her to live with him. But she drew back, saying:

"I have long been fleeing from marriage, and if I were now to desire it again, it would still not come to pass. Who, then, are you?"

The first answered:

"I am Alexander."

Another said:

"I am Antioch."

The third said:

"I am Constantine."

Having said this, they cast lots among themselves to determine who should take her, and the lot fell to the youngest, who had called himself Constantine. He wished to take her. Matrona awoke in terror and pondered what she had seen. She interpreted her dream thus: "The three men—Alexander, Antioch, and Constantine—are the three cities

4. In Christ's parable of the ten virgins. Mt. 25:1.

of which I was thinking, namely, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople; and the lot that fell to me for Constantine means that it is God's good pleasure that I go to Constantinople and see my father, the blessed Bassian. The Lord, Who guides me, is able to hide me there, so that I may not be recognized by my husband. 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me' (Ps. 22:4).

And when she had made ready to depart, the sisters, learning of her intention to leave them, would not let her go, crying out with tears:

"Why are you leaving us, our mother—your children, not yet sufficiently established in the law of the Lord? Why are you leaving the young branches of the faith, not yet sufficiently watered by instruction? Where are you going, our mother? To whom are you leaving us? Or why do you not take us with you?"

The Venerable one comforted them and told them of God's will, revealed to her in a vision: namely, that she should go to Constantinople. At once she sent to the bishop, asking him to send her two deaconesses, experienced in virtue and perfect in their manner of life, that she might entrust to them Christ's newly gathered little flock. The bishop fulfilled her wish and sent her the deaconesses she had requested. Entrusting her spiritual daughters to them as a precious treasure, and giving them her peace, the Venerable Matrona departed from them, taking with her only one sister, the blessed Sophronia. When she reached the sea, she found a ship sailing to Constantinople and embarked. With a favorable wind they reached Constantinople, and Matrona hastened with Sophronia to the Church of St. Irene, which stood near the sea. Entering the church, she met the deacon Marcellus mentioned above, who had advised the blessed Bassian to send her to a women's monastery in the city of Emesa. St. Matrona revealed herself to the deacon and related in detail all that had happened to her: how she had been pursued by her husband in Emesa, Jerusalem, and Sinai; how she had lived in Berytus, in an idol's shrine, and gathered sisters; how through her the Lord had turned many people to Himself; and why she had undertaken such a journey from Berytus to Constantinople, to see her spiritual father, the Venerable Bassian. Marcellus announced Matrona's arrival to the Ven-

erable one and told him all that he had heard from her. The Venerable one at once ordered Marcellus to find a quiet house near his monastery and bring Matrona there. When this had been done, the Venerable Bassian met with her, blessed her, and, learning of her labors, rejoiced in her ascetic struggles and her fervent love for God. From that time the Venerable Matrona lived in Constantinople without anxiety, for her husband had already died. The Venerable Bassian provided her with everything she needed and brought to her the sisters she had left in Berytus: at her request, he sent a letter to the bishop of Berytus, asking him to release the nuns gathered by Matrona and send them to her in Constantinople, as to their spiritual mother. Before long they all arrived there and began to struggle together with the Venerable Matrona, serving God in righteousness and piety. Matrona was an example to all of a God-pleasing life: by looking upon her, not only those who had embraced the monastic life but also many laypeople received spiritual benefit. The fame of her virtues spread everywhere, and the Heavenly Father was glorified on her account.

News of Matrona reached even the Empress Verina, wife of the Emperor Leo the Great, who then reigned.[5] Hearing of the Venerable Matrona's perfect and virtuous life, she desired to see her and came to her in person. Matrona received the empress with honor and offered her such refreshment as could be provided by a great ascetic who possessed nothing. The empress marveled at her manner of life, and especially that the Venerable one asked nothing of her, although she intended to give her many gifts. Having received spiritual benefit from the life and conversation of the blessed Matrona, the empress returned to her palaces.

Many sick people also came to the Venerable one and were restored to health, for her prayer was powerful to heal infirmities, not only of the body but also of the soul.

A noble woman named Euthymia, wife of the eparch Anthimus, had fallen into a grave and incurable illness. After receiving no help from physicians, she came to the Venerable Matrona. Taking Matrona's

5. St. Leo I (the Great), Byzantine emperor, reigned from 457 to 474.

hand, Euthymia applied it to the parts of her body that were in pain, and through the touch of her hand she received perfect health. Seeing that the house where the Venerable one lived with her sisters was cramped and, moreover, did not belong to her, Euthymia wished to build for her healer, the Venerable Matrona, a spacious monastery, convenient for habitation—and soon she did so.

Moving from the cramped house into the newly built monastery, the Venerable one gathered an even greater flock of rational sheep, maidens and women, betrothed them to Christ, and diligently cared for their salvation.

Soon afterward the Venerable Matrona foresaw that her departure to God was near, for this had been revealed to her in a vision. It seemed to her that she was walking through a most beautiful place, planted with fruit-bearing trees, with springs of pure water flowing in its midst; beyond stretched a flowering field. A multitude of lovely birds sang there in various pleasant voices; the trees swayed gently in the softly blowing breeze, and the springs murmured there. In general, the beauty of that place could not be described, for it was the paradise of God. There stood venerable and comely women, who showed the blessed Matrona a radiant chamber, made by God's hand and not by man's, and said to her:

"Behold your home, Matrona, prepared for you by God. Come and dwell in it!"

By this vision the Venerable one understood that her end had drawn near, and she began to prepare for her departure, praying to the Lord with yet greater fervor, for Whose sake she had counted all things as nothing. Then she summoned all her sisters and instructed them at length in what was necessary for salvation. Giving them her peace, she reposed in the Lord and departed from her earthly dwelling to the heavenly one prepared for her, which she had formerly seen in a vision. Thus the Venerable Matrona died in a ripe and good old age.[6] She had lived twenty-five years in the world and seventy-five in the monastic life; all her years numbered one hundred. And now she dwells in eternal

6. Venerable Matrona, d. 492.

life, standing before the throne of the Life-giving and Undivided Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the one God, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

For love of the Lord, Venerable Matrona, thou didst hate the desire for repose, and by fasting didst enlighten thy spirit; for thou didst mightily overcome the beasts, and by thy prayers didst destroy the assaults of the enemy.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Theoktiste

Житие преподобной Феоктисты

In the Aegean Sea there is an island called Paros.[7] On this island stood a beautiful-looking church dedicated to the Most Holy Lady, our Theotokos. For some unknown reason the whole island, including the church, became deserted and turned into a dwelling place no longer for people but for wild beasts.

Once some hunters who lived on the coastal mountain called Euboea agreed to sail by ship to that deserted island to hunt wild beasts, for the island abounded in deer and goats. When they reached the island, the hunters disembarked with their weapons and went about the island seeking prey. Among them was one hunter who feared God and cared for his salvation. Separating himself from his companions, he wandered alone over the deserted island, tracking the beasts. Finding the abandoned church mentioned above, he entered and began to pray as best he could, for he was a simple and unlettered man. As he bowed and prayed, he saw a small hollow in the ground, with water in it, and seeds of a plant called heliotropion[8]—of which many grew on the island—soaked in the water. He thought to himself, "There must be some servant of God here who lives on these seeds." The hunter, however, im-

7. The Aegean Sea, now the *Archipelago*. Paros is one of the large Cycladic islands in the Archipelago.
8. Heliotropion: the sunflower.

mediately left the church, hurrying to catch up with his companions. His companions remained on the island for several days, catching as many deer and goats as they wished, and were already returning from the wilderness to the ship with a great catch. Then the hunter mentioned above again separated from his companions and entered the church to pray to the Most Pure Theotokos; moreover, he hoped to see the one who had soaked the sunflower seeds in the water. While standing in the middle of the church and praying, he saw, to the right of the Holy Table, a dense web of cobwebs, and behind it some creature, as if swayed by the wind. Wishing to discover what it was that moved behind the cobwebs, he approached and was about to brush them aside, when he suddenly heard a voice:

"Stop, man; do not come closer. I am ashamed, for I am a naked woman."

Hearing this, the hunter was frightened and wanted to flee, but great terror made him unable: his legs trembled, the hair on his head stood on end and became sharp as thorns, and he stood there in dread. Recovering somewhat, he dared to ask:

"Who are you, and how do you live in this wilderness?"

And again he heard a voice sounding from behind the cobwebs:

"I beg you: throw me a garment, and when I have covered my nakedness, then, as far as the Lord shall ordain, I will tell you about myself."

Taking off his outer garment, the hunter laid it on the ground and went out of the church. Waiting a little while, until the woman had put on his garment, he went in again and saw her standing in the same place where she had been before. Her appearance was very frightful, for she had only the semblance of a human being: there was nothing in her to show a living person, but she was altogether like a corpse. Her bones were covered only with skin, her hair was white, her face was black, her eyes were deeply sunken, and her whole appearance was like that of a dead man lying in a coffin. She could barely breathe and could speak only in a faint voice. Seeing her, the hunter was even more afraid, and, falling to the ground, he asked the woman for her prayer and blessing. Then, turning toward the east, she raised her hands and

began to pray. The hunter could not hear the words of her prayer, but only heard a faint voice rising to God. Then, turning to him, the saint said:

"May God have mercy on you, man. Tell me, for what purpose have you come into this wilderness? What need do you have on this desert island, on which no one lives? But since, I think, the Lord has brought you here for the sake of my humility, and since you wish to learn about me, I will reveal everything to you."

And she began to tell her story thus:

"My homeland is Lezvie. I was born in the city of Methymna[9]. My name is Theoktista. As for my life, I am a nun, for when I was still a child and lost my parents, I was given by my relatives to a women's monastery and clothed in the monastic order. Once, on the feast of the Resurrection of Christ, when I was eighteen years old, I went with a blessing to a village not far off, to visit my sister, who lived there with her husband, and I spent the night with her. At midnight, the Arabs fell upon that land, led by the fierce Nizar. They took captive the whole village, and among the others they took me too. When morning came, they set us on their ships and sailed away. After sailing all day, they put in for the night at this island. As they disembarked the captives, they examined them, fixing a price at which each one might be ransomed. I was led out with the others, and seeing a meadow nearby, I turned toward it and fled. Those who had captured me pursued me and hunted me as hunters hunt a beast, but the wilderness hid me from them, or rather, God in the wilderness covered me with His grace and protected me from the hands of those who sought me, so that they could not find me or overtake me. I fled into the inner wilderness of this island and did not stop running for fear until I had badly wounded my feet on thorny trees and brambles and on sharp stones. Unable to run further, I fell to the ground as if dead, and the earth was covered with my blood, flowing from my wounded feet. All that night I endured great suffering, but I gave thanks to God that He had saved me from the

9. Lezvia (Lesbos): an island in the Aegean Sea, later named after its chief city, Mytilene. On the northern side of the island lies the city of Methymna, now Molyvos, with extensive harbors, which had fallen into decline as early as the Peloponnesian War (406 B.C.).

hand of my enemies and kept me undefiled. And I desired to die quickly in this wilderness in virginal purity rather than live among wicked men and lose the virginity dedicated to Christ. In the morning I saw that the impious robbers had sailed away from the island, and I was filled with joy at being freed from their bondage, and from that great joy I forgot my illness. And from that time until now I have lived on this island for thirty-six years. I feed on the seeds of the heliotrope that grows here in abundance, but I feed more on the Word of God, for I still remember all the psalms, hymns and readings I learned in my monastery, and by them I am comforted and nourish my soul. My clothing soon wore out, and I was left naked, having as my only covering the grace of God, which covers me from all evils."

Having told this, the Venerable Virgin raised her hands to heaven and gave thanks to God for His ineffable mercy shown to her. Then, turning again to the hunter, she said:

"I have told you everything about myself. One thing I ask of you, and this you shall do for me for the Lord's sake: when next summer you come to hunt on this island (I know that you will surely come, for it is the will of God), take in a pure vessel a portion of the Most Pure and Life-Giving Mysteries of Christ and bring it to me here, for from the time I began to live in this wilderness I have not been counted worthy to partake of such a gift. Now go in peace to your companions, and do not tell anyone about me."

The hunter promised to carry out the command, and, bowing to the wondrous servant of Christ, he departed, rejoicing and giving thanks to God that He had revealed to him such a treasure of His, had granted him to see and converse with her, and had made him worthy of the prayers and blessing of one whom the whole world was not worthy of. Coming to the shore, the hunter found his companions waiting for him and grieving over his delay, for they thought he had lost his way in the wilderness. He did not disclose the secret he had been commanded to keep, and they sailed home. Meanwhile the hunter awaited the following summer as if for some delight, longing to see again the pure Bride of Christ dwelling in the wilderness as in a royal chamber. When the expected time came, he again agreed with his companions to sail to the

island of Paros to hunt beasts. Before departing for the ship, he took from the priest a small pure casket containing a particle of the Most Pure and Life-Giving Mysteries of Christ, as the Blessed Theoktista had commanded him, and, keeping that particle with honor about himself, he set sail. Having reached this island, he went with the Divine Mysteries to that desolate church of the Most Holy Theotokos in which, the previous year, he had conversed with the Blessed One, but on entering that church he did not find Saint Theoktista. He thought that the Venerable One had either gone off into the distant wilderness or had made herself invisible, since some of his companions had come with the hunter. In sorrow the hunter went out of the church and followed his companions. Soon he secretly slipped away from them, and returning alone to the church, at once Venerable Theoktista appeared in the same place where she had stood before, clothed in the garment that the hunter had given her the previous year. Seeing the Blessed One, the hunter fell to the ground and bowed before her. She quickly approached him and said with tears:

"Do not do this, man, for you are holding the Divine gifts. Do not dishonor the Mysteries of Christ, and do not grieve my unworthiness, for I am an unworthy woman."

Taking the hunter by his garment, she raised him from the ground. He took out the casket with the Divine Mysteries and handed it to her[7187]. The Venerable One first fell to the ground before the Divine Mysteries and wet the earth with her tears. Then, rising, she received the Holy Gifts in her hands, partook of them, and said with tenderness:

“Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Master, for mine eyes have seen my salvation, and I have received in my hands the forgiveness of sins. Now I shall depart whither Thy goodness commandeth.”

Having said this, she raised her hands on high and stood for a long time, praying and glorifying God. Then she dismissed the hunter with a blessing to his companions.

Having spent several days in the desert, the hunters caught many goats and deer and returned to the ship. But that hunter again went away from them and went alone to the church, desiring to be granted prayers and a blessing for the journey from the Venerable one. He came

to the place where he had earlier spoken with her, and saw the Venerable one lying dead upon the ground; her hands were folded upon her breast, and her holy soul had passed into the hands of God[10]. Falling down before her honorable relics, the hunter kissed her holy feet and bathed them with tears. He did not know what to do, for he was very simple and had spent his life more in the deserts, among the wild beasts, than in the cities among people. He did not even think to go to the other hunters, to tell them what had happened and to bury this holy body together with them with honor. Digging a little earth, as much as could be dug quickly, he alone laid the body of the Venerable one in it. In doing so he dared to separate a hand from that holy body for himself, as a blessing, wishing to keep that hand with honor in his house. But although he did this in faith, out of love and zeal for the Venerable one, this deed was not pleasing to God, as is seen from the account that follows. Having separated the hand, he wrapped it in a clean cloth, and, putting it inside his garment, went to his companions, who were already on the ship, but said nothing to them. It was already late when they put off from the shore and, unfurling the sails, sailed with a favorable wind. All the hunters thought that their ship was moving swiftly, as a bird flies, so that they hoped to reach the mountain of Euboea early in the morning. But when day dawned, they found themselves again in the same place, by the shore of the island of Paros, and their ship stood motionless, as though held by an anchor or turned back by some remora fish[11]. . Fear fell upon all, and they asked one another whether someone had sinned, and whose sin was holding them back, so that the ship could not even move from its place. Then the hunter who had taken the hand of the Venerable one, recognizing his sin, left the ship and secretly from his companions went to the church. Approaching the relics of the Venerable one, he placed her holy hand at the joint, in its own place, and, after praying a little, returned to his companions. When he entered the ship, it at once moved from its place and sailed without any hindrance, and all rejoiced. But when the ship was sailing

10. Venerable Theoctista, d. 881, after 36 years of ascetic labors on the island of Paros.
11. This fish is called the remora, because it gathers around a ship in large schools and holds back the ship's progress.

swiftly and was already near Euboea, that hunter began to tell his companions everything that had happened to him: how last summer he had found the Venerable Theoktista, and this summer had brought her the Divine Gifts, and how after the holy one's death he had taken her hand, and for this reason they had been held back all night. Those who heard all that had happened were moved to tenderness, but they began greatly to murmur against the hunter and to be angry that he had not told them of this when they were still on that island, "so that," they said, "we too might be granted the blessing of the servant of God." Turning the ship back, they sailed again with great haste to Paros, and, reaching the island, all went together to the church. Entering it with fear, they came to the place where the honorable body of the Venerable one had been laid; they found the place, but did not find the body. They saw only the impression of a body lying on the ground, for the traces of where the head had lain and where the feet had been were clearly outlined. They were all greatly astonished and did not know where the Venerable one had gone. Some of them said that she had risen again; others said that she had not risen before the general resurrection, but had been carried by the hands of Angels somewhere else and buried, as once St. Catherine the Martyr was. In any case, they scattered over the whole island to search whether they might find her, either alive, risen, or dead, transferred to another place. Being simple and unlearned, they wished to comprehend the mysteries of God, which are unknown to anyone. Having searched everywhere carefully and not found her, they returned to the church and with tenderness kissed the place on which the body of the Venerable one had lain. Having prayed, they went back home and told the people everything about the Venerable Theoktista, and all marveled and glorified God, wonderful in His saints, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

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Life of the Venerable John Kolovos

Житие преподобного Иоанна Колова

On the ninth of November the Orthodox Church honors the Venerable John Kolovos[12]. The Venerable John received this name because of his small stature[13]. Still in his youth he left the world and went with his brother Daniel into the Skete desert of Egypt[14]. At first he and his brother Daniel lived in ascetic labors in complete solitude, but later he came to realize that, given his fiery and passionate character, strict ascetic life could be carried out only under the strict guidance of other, more experienced ascetics, the elders. He was brought to this recognition of the need for a strict and experienced guide for himself by the following event, soon after his coming with his brother into the desert. Once he said quite unexpectedly to his brother and fellow ascetic:

"I no longer wish to be concerned with anything; I want to live in the desert without care, like an Angel."

Saying this, he took off his garments and went out of his cell. During the night a great frost came; the naked John struggled a long time with the cold, and at last, unable to bear it any longer, resolved to return to his cell.

"Who is there?" came Daniel's voice from within, when the freezing John knocked at the door.

"It is I, your brother. I can no longer bear the frost and have returned here to serve you," John answered him.

"Begone, demon," Daniel replied, "and do not tempt me; an Angel does not care for his body and does not require food."

Then the Venerable John understood that he had relied too much on his strength, which was not yet strengthened in the struggle against sufferings and temptations; he understood his error and wept bitterly over it. Then Daniel opened the door of the cell before him and said:

12. Venerable John Kolov labored in the first half of the 5th century.

13. "Kolov," translated from the Greek, means "short of stature."

14. The Scete (Skete) Egyptian desert, also called simply "Scete," lay at a distance of a day's journey (25–30 versts) from Mount Nitria, in the northwestern part of Egypt. This was a waterless, stony desert, a favorite place of the Egyptian desert dwellers, famed for the ascetic feats of the monks who lived there. From this locality later monastic desert communities also took the name of skete, in which the most zealous monks settled for the strictest solitude and unbroken silence in the One God.

"My brother, since you have flesh, you must suffer for the sake of clothing and flesh."

After this admonition he soon left Daniel and went to a certain elder, Pimen. He desired to train in himself a firm will, ready for every feat of asceticism, never abandoning the path once chosen; and the Venerable Pimen was known precisely for the firmness and unyielding character of his will. The Venerable Pimen's renunciation of the world was so complete that he refused even a meeting with his own mother, who came to the skete to visit him. To this elder of firm character went John, who had not yet become fully settled in unwavering pursuit of the chosen labors, restless, passionate, and fiery. Coming to him, John gave a promise to obey him in everything, whatever he might require of him. The Venerable Pimen, wishing to test his patience, made him water a completely dry tree, and he labored for three years over watering this tree, although it was so dry that his labor must have seemed entirely fruitless to everyone. But in fact the labor and patience of the Venerable John did not remain fruitless: after three years the withered tree was covered with lush greenery and bore abundant fruit. By all who witnessed the miracle that tree was named the "tree of obedience"[15]. Coming to the Venerable Pimen with a fiery soul, the Venerable John acquired from him the meekness and humility of a lamb. Once a certain brother said to him:

"You have an evil heart."

"That is true," John answered him meekly, "and even more evil than you think."

Thus he knew how to bear insults meekly.

Having lived at first under another's guidance, the Venerable John afterward himself acquired the ability to guide others wisely. The Lord ordained that he should be the guide and teacher of the Venerable Arsenius the Great, who later became as renowned for great ascetic labors as he himself was[16]. This Arsenius, a patrician by birth, came into the desert directly from the imperial court, where he had been tu-

15. This tree was seen by John's contemporary in the year 402. The Tree of Obedience still stands today, abounds in fruit, and is clothed in remarkable verdure.
16. Commemoration of Venerable Arsenius the Great, 8th of May.

tor of the children of the emperor Theodosius the Great, Honorius and Arcadius. Leaving the court, where he was surrounded by great honors, he, though still relatively young (he was then about forty years old) but already an ascetic experienced in the spiritual life, resolved, for the continuation of his spiritual growth and further perfection, to place his will entirely at the disposal of the Venerable John. To some of the brethren at first it seemed strange that a man so highly educated and of such noble birth should come, for his further enlightenment, to simple and unlearned elders. One of the brethren could not hide his curiosity and once asked him:

"How is it that you, having mastered the Greek and Roman sciences, seek instruction from a simple and unenlightened elder?"

"It is true that I possess a scholarly education," Arsenius answered, "but I do not even know the alphabet of what this simple and unlearned man knows, because (he explained) humility is the beginning of all virtues, as the alphabet is the beginning of book learning."

So greatly did he prize the humility that flourished in the monastery of John, once fiery and proud. Only after several years of shared ascetic life, when Arsenius heard a mysterious voice calling him to flee from people and dwell in silence, for "silence is the root of sinlessness," did Venerable John bless him to leave their common dwelling and give himself wholly to solitude and stillness in the desert. Yet his strong love for his humble teacher and for all his disciples made him more than once leave his desert solitude and return for a time to the monastery.

Zealous for his own salvation, Venerable John cared with equal earnestness for the salvation of others. In the city of Alexandria, in his time, there lived a maiden named Thaisia. Raised by pious parents, after their death she devoted all the wealth that had come to her to works of charity. The elders of Scete, among whom Venerable John lived, when they came to the city, more than once found shelter in her house. Then word reached the elders that Thaisia had long since squandered her wealth and, now unable to contend with poverty, had turned her beauty and youth into a source of livelihood. The elders grieved greatly on learning of the fall of the virtuous Thaisia, and re-

solved at last to attempt to turn the orphan from her destructive error. They decided to entrust this difficult task to Venerable John.

"God has given you wisdom," they said to him, "yet word has reached us that our sister Thaisia, who did so much good for us, is living very wickedly. Take the trouble, Father, to visit her and speak with her; perhaps after your words she will come to herself."

Venerable John prayed and soon set out on his way. He knew that in such a matter there was no time to delay: with every hour Thaisia might sink deeper and deeper into her fall. And now he stood before the house of Thaisia, but the entrance was closed to the elders. Whereas formerly all who wished to take something from it for their needs had entered it freely, now, on the contrary, only those who brought money and treasures were admitted. The elder meekly addressed the servant, asking her to announce his coming to her mistress. But with the change in the mistress's disposition came a change in her servants as well. The rude maidservant, knowing that the humble elder could have nothing in common with her mistress, answered his request with harsh abuse. The Venerable Elder received her abuse with meekness and repeated his request, adding only this:

"Tell your mistress also that I can procure precious things for her."

Then the servant resolved to announce him to her mistress.

"Let him come in," said Thaisia. "Monks walk along the seashore, and they sometimes do indeed come upon precious shells and stones."

Venerable John entered Thaisia's house, sat down beside her, sighed heavily, and wept.

"Why are you weeping?" Thaisia asked in surprise.

"What has turned you away from Jesus Christ, the Immortal Bridegroom? Why have you forgotten His bridal chamber and defiled yourself with unclean deeds?" asked the Venerable Elder.

And suddenly the unhappy woman remembered Christ, long forgotten by her, whom her departed parents had taught her in childhood to love. The words of the man of God, like fire, burned away all the tares that had choked the good seed sown long before in her heart. Sincere repentance quickly seized and shook her whole being.

"Father! Father! Tell me: is there forgiveness for such as I am?" she cried out in dreadful distress.

"There is," the elder answered. "The Saviour always waits for and forgives those who truly repent. Repent, and all the Angels in heaven will rejoice over you!"

"Then lead me, lead me away from this place, lead me wherever you will, only show me a place fit for repentance," Thaisia begged the elder.

She went away with him from her house, defiled by the sins of many days, without giving any instructions whatever concerning her unlawfully acquired wealth. She burned entirely with a fervent desire never again to set foot upon the slippery and careless path of life she had chosen. Venerable John marvelled at the wondrous working of God's grace, and, glorifying the Almighty and Merciful Lord, led his companion farther and farther into the desert places, away from the sinful city where she had all but destroyed herself. Night came. For the weary traveller the Venerable Elder made a pillow of sand and said, "Rest now." Having signed her with the Cross, he withdrew from her, and after the usual evening prayers gave himself to night's repose. And in a dream the elder saw the place where he had left Thaisia: it was surrounded by an extraordinary radiance rising up to the very heavens, and there, amid that radiance, a heavenly Angel was bearing her tormented soul up to the Lord Himself. As soon as the elder awoke from sleep, he hastened at once to the place where he had left Thaisia, and on reaching it he indeed found her already dead.

"One hour of sincere repentance by a sinner satisfied the Merciful Judge and returned the erring child to her Loving Father," said the Venerable Elder; and having spent the time until dawn in prayer, in the morning he buried the body of the blessed Thaisia. Returning to the monastery, he brought great joy to all his brethren by his account of the wondrous repentance and glorification of Thaisia, known to them all.

Venerable John Kolov is known also as a writer. Besides the many sayings of his recorded by other monks, there remains from him a detailed and beautiful account of the life of Venerable Paisius, composed by him, as he himself expresses it, "for the common benefit." This

Paisius, who had strayed from the good path, Venerable John succeeded in so persuading that he, suddenly and irrevocably renouncing all his possessions, spent the rest of his life in repentance in the wild desert. In relating in the Life many miracles performed by Venerable Paisius, Venerable John thought fit to make this remark of his own:

"Let no one doubt, hearing of him things glorious and supernatural, nor think that I have added anything of my own for the greater honour of the father so dear to me. He is above all human honour and does not require praise from those lower than himself, for he is praised by the holy Angels among the higher ones. I relate for the benefit of those who listen and wish to imitate his virtues; I pass on only what I have seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears."

This brief remark clearly reveals the person of Venerable John as a writer.

The time of the blessed repose of Venerable John has not been precisely established. It is variously placed at about the year 422 or about 430. As to the place where it took place, it was the desert near Kolzum, or present-day Suez. His holy relics are in the church of St. Mina the Martyr in Egypt. His name, as that of an ancient ascetic of piety, is known also beyond the bounds of the Orthodox Church.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Onesiphorus and Porphyrius

Память святых мучеников Онисифора и Порфирия

The Holy Martyrs Onesiphorus and Porphyrius lived in the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian. During the cruel persecution raised by this impious emperor against the Christians, they too were counted worthy to suffer grievous torments for Christ. They were subjected to inhuman beatings over their whole bodies and to manifold, terrible tortures. After this the tormentors laid the Passion-bearers of Christ upon long frying pans, and, kindling a fire, burned them. At last they bound them to fierce, wild horses. Dragged by them over stony and uneven ground, the holy martyrs were utterly torn to pieces, and in

such torments they yielded up their souls to God. The faithful secretly gathered their remains by night and buried them with honour in the village of Pangian, where from them there began to flow forth manifold miracles and healings, to the glory of the wondrous God in the Trinity, glorified in His saints.[17]

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Two martyrs, who suffered mightily, cast down the pride of the enemy to the earth; they were illumined with the grace of the Uncreated Trinity. Glorious Onesiphorus and Porphyrius, pray unceasingly for us all.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Eustolia and Sosipatra

Память преподобных Евстолии и Сосипатры

Saint Eustolia, daughter of pious parents, lived in Rome in the reign of the emperor Maurice.[18] From her very youth she kept purity, persevering in fasting and vigil. Come of age, she so loved piety that she left Rome and withdrew to Constantinople, where she devoted herself to the ascetic labours of monastic life in one of the monasteries.

Once Sosipatra, daughter of the Emperor Maurice, went to the Church of the Blachernae of our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.[7197] There she met Eustolia, whose fame for a virtuous life had already spread throughout the city. Then Sosipatra began to beseech the blessed Eustolia that she would become her spiritual mother and the keeper of her body. Eustolia consented, and Sosipatra then received the monastic habit and labored in toils and ascetic feats. She obtained from her father a suitable place, and there, having built a church house, she settled together with St. Eustolia. In the course of

17. The Holy Martyrs Onesiphorus and Porphyrius suffered at the beginning of the 4th century. The village of Pangianskoe, otherwise Pankean, lay in Macedonia, near Mount Pangaeus, from which it received its name. Mention of the presence of the holy relics in this village and of the miracles flowing from them is found in the 9th ode of the canon composed by Joseph the Hymnographer (troparion 3).

18. Maurice reigned from 582 to 602.

time certain pious maidens began to beg them to allow them to share with them the laborious monastic life, and they received them into their house. The holy women did not refuse their desire. After many years of ascetic labors, the blessed Eustolia, having guided many on the way of salvation, departed to the Lord, leaving as her successor the blessed princess Sosipatra. The blessed Sosipatra governed the monastery after the example of her spiritual mother, and, having attained perfection in a virtuous life, departed in peace to the Lord, whom she had loved and for whose sake she had embraced such a laborious life.[19]

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Anthony

Память святого мученика Антония

St. Anthony was from Syria and by trade was a stonemason. Grieving for the pagans who offered sacrifices in their temples, the saint entreated them to turn away from such impiety. When they did not heed him, he withdrew to a desert place. There he met a certain hermit named Timothy, and lived with him for two years. Strengthened by his prayers, he again returned to the erring people, to his city, in order to direct them to the path of truth. He came to his city at the time when the inhabitants were celebrating a feast to their demons. He entered their temple and shattered the idols, for which he was subjected to various tortures and was forced to leave the city. Then he went to Apamea in Syria,[20] and there he besought the bishop to allow him to build a church in the name of the Holy Trinity. When he began the construction of the church, the inhabitants of his city learned of this, and coming by night, they hacked him to pieces with their swords. Thus he gave up his spirit to God.

* * *

19. The repose of St. Eustolia belongs to the year 610, and that of St. Sosipatra to the year 625.
20. Apamea in Syria lay in southwestern Syria, on the great river of Syria, the Orontes. In antiquity Apamea was the chief city of the region of Syrian Apamene and received its name from Apama, wife of Seleucus I, ruler of Syria.

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Alexander of Thessalonica

Память святого мученика Александра Солунского

St. Alexander endured severe torments under the Emperor Maximian.[21] Having confessed himself a Christian, he was seized and compelled to offer sacrifice to the idols. He not only did not submit, but, filled with still greater zeal for God, he overthrew the altar with the offering. Enraged, Maximian commanded that his head be cut off. The executioner took up the sword, but suddenly stopped.

"Why do you stand there," said the emperor to him, "and do not carry out the order?"

"I," the man replied, "see a vision and am perplexed as to what it may mean."

Then the saint asked for an hour for prayer. Having offered fervent prayer, he was beheaded. Seeing that an Angel went before his soul, the emperor allowed the Christians to bury the saint's body in the city of Thessalonica.

* * *

NOTES

7187. On this account St. Demetrius of Rostov writes: "At present some Christians are amazed that the Divine Mysteries were entrusted to that hunter to carry into the wilderness, and that he, a layman and uninitiated, dared to carry those Mysteries which only priests ought to bear. But let them not be amazed at this: such was the custom of the primitive Church. At that time even the uninitiated were permitted to take the Divine Communion into their hands and to carry it with them both to their homes at a distance from the church and on a long journey... But afterwards the holy fathers forbade the uninitiated to receive into their hands and carry out of the church the Body of Christ, and especially St. John Chrysostom forbade this, and he forbade it for the following reason. During his patriarchate in Constantinople, a certain noble woman, having received in the church a portion of the most pure Body of Christ, carried it home and mixed it with some potion for sorcery. Learning of this, St. Chrysostom from that time commanded in all the churches that portions of the Body of Christ should not be placed into the hands, but that together with the Divine Blood, under the appearance of wine, they should be given into the mouth by means of a spoon. Until that time no spoon was used in the

21. At the beginning of the 4th century.

Church; the portions of the Body of Christ were placed directly into the hands of the Christians, and the Holy Blood was given from the chalice. From that same time, by the command of St. Chrysostom, the Divine Communion began to be given by means of a spoon, and it was permitted to carry it only to the ordained, while the uninitiated were not permitted to touch it in any way, lest there be any dishonor to the Holy Mysteries."

7197. The blessed Sosipatra had already before this begun to accustom herself to the evangelical life. Her aunt Damiana was abbess of the Jerusalem monastery and afterwards lived as a recluse. Sosipatra traveled to Jerusalem to venerate its holy places, and spent a year with her aunt, listening to her lessons on the spiritual life. "At one time," says the blessed Damiana (see John Moschus, *The Spiritual Meadow*), "my niece, the daughter of the Emperor Maurice, came to the holy city and spent a whole year here. Once, taking her with me, we went to St. Cosmas and Damian. Standing in the church, I say to my niece: 'Look, madam, when an old woman comes and gives you two nummi (a small coin), take them, do not be proud.' She said with a sigh: 'How can I accept them?' I said to her: 'Accept them; this woman is great before God. Every week she distributes her nummi to those who are in the church. Accept the mites; having received them, give them to another; only do not reject the zeal of the old woman.'"



THE TENTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 10

10 ноября

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

Passion of the Holy Martyr Orestes

Страдание святого мученика Ореста

When the impious Emperor Diocletian was reigning in Rome, one of his dignitaries, named Maximin, once came to him and said:

"Great sovereign, chosen of the gods and supreme leader, I beseech you: command me to travel through the lands of Cilicia and Cappadocia and subject the hateful Christians, enemies of our gods and your authority, to diverse torments. I will burn them in fire, drown them in water, crush their bodies upon wheels and break their bones, slay them with the sword, and give them to be devoured by beasts; and, destroying them by every means, I will utterly erase from the earth the very memory of those who do not worship the great gods and do not obey your dominion."

The emperor greatly liked Maximin's speech, and answered him:

"I give you authority to destroy all impious Christianity, not only in Cilicia and Cappadocia, but throughout my entire empire, that the glory of the gods of our fathers, our rulers and protectors of all the earth, may increase and be magnified."

Having received such authority from the emperor, Maximin set out with great pride and malice to destroy the innocent Christians, as a ravenous wolf goes after sheep, or a lion roars against weaker beasts. When he reached the land of Cappadocia, he entered a city called Tyana[1], and, when he began asking about the Christians there, he heard from the townspeople that in this city there was a physician, a

1. Tyana, an ancient city of Cappadocia, at the foot of the Taurus Mountains, near the Cilician Gates.

Christian named Orestes, who every day, with great zeal, taught the people to worship the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and to say that there is no other god save the one true God who is in heaven. When Prince Maximin heard this, he immediately ordered that Orestes be seized and brought before him for judgment.

When Orestes had been brought before the impious tribunal, the prince looked proudly upon him and asked sternly:

"Who are you? Tell us your name!"

The saint answered:

"I am the servant of my Lord Jesus Christ, the one God of all; my name is Christian, for I glory in the name of Him whose servant I am."

The prince said to him:

"Since you have dared to call Christ God and have confessed yourself a Christian, you deserve death. But abandon your madness and offer sacrifice to the gods, lest you suffer torments."

St. Orestes answered him:

"Say this to them: 'The gods that have not made the heaven and the earth shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens' (Jer. 10:11). But from my boyhood I have learned to offer a sacrifice of praise to the living God, whom I honor with a pure heart. I will not bow down to your shameless and vain demons, whom you call gods."

The prince again asked Orestes:

"Why will you not tell us the name given to you at your birth?"

"I have told you," the saint answered, "that I am a Christian, and this name is far more glorious to me than the name given me by my parents, and higher than all the renowned names in the world. But if you wish to know the name I received at birth, I will tell you: by bodily birth I received the name Orestes, but by spiritual birth I am called a Christian; and since spiritual birth is higher than bodily birth, I consider it a greater honor to be called a Christian than Orestes."

Then the prince, hoping to ensnare Christ's servant by cunning, spoke to him thus:

"I pity your youth, Orestes, and wish to spare you. I have heard that you are skilled in the art of healing, and therefore I will not destroy you, but advise you to obey the imperial decree. If you do so, you will

be to me as a son, and all will honor and praise you. The king will hear of you, and you will receive great favor from him."

But the saint answered:

"You will not ensnare me, prince, with your cunning words, for I seek neither temporal honor nor to escape reproach for the sake of my Lord. I am ready to endure every kind of torment for Him, because I desire to find favor with Him and to be called His son in the Kingdom of Heaven, for 'as many as received him, to them that believe on his name, gave he power to become the sons of God' (Jn. 1:12)."

At this the prince said to Orestes:

"Foolish and insolent man, you are deluded, thinking Christ to be the one God, though the Jews crucified Him as a criminal."

Orestes answered him:

"If you knew the great power of the Crucified One, you would reject the vain worship of idols and bow down to Him who is truly God, born of the true, invisible God, who by His will united the divine nature with the human and delivered us from the destructive deception of the devil."

Having heard Orestes' answer, the prince said to him:

"With your deceitful words you vex my ears. Do you wish to convert me, too, to your impious faith? Know that I will not forsake my gods or bow down to your Christ. I tell you: abandon your Christ, bow down to our gods and offer them sacrifices; and if you do this, you shall receive authority equal to mine."

But this did not ensnare the saint, and he answered the prince:

"I worship the eternal God, who ever bestows His goodness upon me—the Lord Jesus Christ—and serve Him. But I will offer no sacrifice to your demons, nor will I ever share in your destructive impiety."

After this the prince brought St. Orestes into an idol temple, adorned with gold and silver and filled with precious idols, and said to him there:

"Bow down, Orestes, to these honored gods."

But the saint answered:

"You are greatly mistaken, prince, for you do not know the truth: your gods are made of gold, silver, bronze, and iron, to ensnare men.

They neither see nor hear, since they are made by human hands, and they can neither help themselves nor do good to anyone else. Why, then, should I bow down to them?"

Then the prince again said to the saint:

"Answer me for the last time, Orestes: will you bow down to the gods or not? Otherwise, torments await you."

The saint answered:

"Do you think, prince, that I fear your threats? No, do not hope to frighten me with torments, but do as you wish; for you do not know that the Lord Jesus Christ is with me, my helper."

After this the prince ordered that St. Orestes be stripped and beaten severely there in the idol temple. And when they began to torment him, the saint lifted his hands to heaven and said:

"Look down from heaven, my God, and help me, Thy servant."

They beat the saint mercilessly with various instruments: rods, ropes, and ox sinews. They beat him for so long that forty soldiers took turns, the instruments broke and split, and not a whole place remained on the saint's body, free of wounds; his entrails were exposed. But St. Orestes endured all this courageously, so that everyone marveled at his patience.

While the saint was being beaten, the prince said to him:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, and I will release you."

But the sufferer made no answer. Then the prince ordered that the saint's ribs be scorched with red-hot iron, that vinegar mixed with gall be poured upon his wounds, and that salt be sprinkled on them. The holy Martyr raised his eyes to heaven and prayed: "Show me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me" (Ps. 85:17). Having thus prayed, he blew upon the idols standing in the temple, and at once they all fell and crumbled to dust. Then the saint said to the prince in a loud voice:

"Where, then, is the power of your gods? Why did they not help themselves?"

Everyone fled from the temple, seized with great terror. The holy Martyr also came out, and as soon as he had left, the whole temple shook and collapsed.

The prince ordered that St. Orestes be taken to the inner prison, and commanded the jailer to give the saint neither bread nor water, but to torment him with hunger and thirst. And St. Orestes, entering the prison, lifted his hands to heaven and began to pray:

"Lord Jesus Christ, who taught me godliness from my youth and drove from me every impious desire, error, and delusion; who created heaven, earth, and sea for mankind, and brought Thy saints Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob into Thy rest! I beseech Thee, forsake me not, for I have given myself wholly to Thee; number me also among the company of those who suffered for Thy Name and inherited Thy Kingdom."

Thus the saint prayed, and remained in prison without food or drink for seven days. On the eighth day the prince ordered that the saint be brought out of prison and brought before him for judgment, and said to him:

"Insolent and impious man, enemy of our gods, are you still stubborn and unwilling to submit? Know, then, that if you do not bow down to the gods, I will subject you to terrible torments and take your life without mercy; and I will command that your impious body be drowned in water."

St. Orestes answered him:

"I am ready to endure every torment, for I ever bear in my heart the image of my Lord Jesus Christ."

Then the torturer, filled with rage, ordered that twelve iron nails, a span[2] in length, be brought and driven into the heels of St. Orestes. When this had been done, the prince ordered that St. Orestes be bound to a wild horse and dragged until he died. The horse, driven at a furious pace, dragged the saint along roads and fields, through thorn bushes and over sharp stones; and amid these torments the holy Passion-bearer Orestes gave up his spirit to the Lord God,[3] the horse having dragged him twenty-four stadia[4] from the city. The torturer

2. A span was an ancient measure of length. It equaled the distance from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger.

ordered that his body be cast into a river called the Phiva. But suddenly a certain man appeared, bright as the sun, gathered the relics of the saint, and buried them on a mountain near the city of Tyana. Glory to our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The writer of this Life[5], having already prepared it for printing in the Holy Great Kiev Caves Lavra in the year 1685 from the Nativity of Christ, and having completed his account of the sufferings of this holy Martyr Orestes in a single night of the holy fast before the Nativity of Christ, shortly before Matins, received in a dream a revelation of the still greater sufferings of the holy Martyr. In a vision while asleep, the holy Martyr Orestes himself appeared to him and, looking upon him with a joyful gaze, said:

"I suffered more for Christ than you have written." Having said this, the Martyr opened his breast and showed a great wound in his left side, reaching to the very entrails, and said:

"This was burned into me with iron."

Then, baring his right arm to the elbow, he showed a wound close to the elbow itself, saying:

"This was cut through."

The severed sinews could be seen in this wound. Likewise, baring his left arm, the saint showed a wound upon it like that on his right arm, and said:

"Here, too, I was cut through."

After this, bending down, the Martyr bared one leg to the knee and showed a wound at the bend of the knee; then, baring the other leg to the knee and showing a similar wound in the same place, he said:

"And this was cleft with a scythe."

Then, standing upright and looking the writer of this Life in the face, the Martyr said:

"You see that I suffered more for Christ than you have written."

3. The Martyr Orestes reposed about the year 304. His commemoration is also celebrated on July 9.

4. A *poprishche* is a measure of distance equal to our 690 sazhens. Consequently, twenty-four *poprishche* make up thirty-three versts and a little more.

5. That is, St. Demetrius of Rostov.

As the writer wondered which Orestes this might be—whether it was the one who suffered among the five Martyrs[6]—the holy Martyr answered his thought:

"I am not the Orestes who suffered among the five Martyrs, but the one whose Life you wrote today."

As St. Orestes spoke these words, the bell was heard calling to Matins, and the vision ended.

* * *

Passion of the Hieromartyr Milus

Страдание священномученика Милия

St. Milus, Bishop, was from the land of Persia.[7]

Having received holy Baptism, he devoted himself to the study of Holy Scripture in his youth. When he had come of age, he resolved to serve in the army of the Persian king then reigning. But God sent him a vision in which he was sternly forbidden to enter military service. After this, having received a Christian education,[8] he continued in unceasing prayers for himself and for his people, and, after some time, left his city and devoted himself to monastic life in Susa, in the land of Elam.[9] He was then ordained bishop by Gennadius, a Martyr and Confessor. St. Milus labored greatly, reproving in word and deed the hardened pagans who lived there, and on this account suffered gross insults at their hands. At last, the enraged crowd beat him and cast him half-dead outside the city. This compelled him to leave Susa. As he departed, the saint foretold the imminent destruction of Susa.

Not three months had passed before this prophecy was fulfilled. The king[10] was greatly angered against that city on account of the abuses and conspiracy of its governor and other prominent Elamites, and sent

6. The memory of whom the Church celebrates on 13 December.
7. From the region of Rakhizin.
8. St. Milus received his scholarly education at Beth-Lapet, eighty versts from Ispahan, one of the most important cities of Persia.
9. The land or region of Elam lay on the far side of the Tigris, between southern Mesopotamia, Media, Babylonia and Iran. Susa, the most ancient Persian city, was the rich capital of Susiana and the residence, first of the Elamite and then of the Persian kings.
10. The Persian king meant here is Shapur II.

an army which utterly destroyed the city itself and put its inhabitants to the sword. The saint went to Jerusalem, and from there to Ammon, a disciple of the great Anthony, in the Nitrian Desert. After remaining there for two years, he returned to Persia. On the way he visited a monk who dwelt in a cave. Entering the cave, he saw a huge serpent and said:

"May the weapon of the Lord destroy you, serpent!"

And, making the sign of the Cross, the saint breathed upon the serpent, and it died at once. From there he went to his own city, where he built a church in order to obtain forgiveness for the disobedient people, who had already endured severe punishment.

After many years, he went to Ctesiphon,[11] where a council was then being held against a certain bishop named Papa.[12] At this council Milus reproved the bishop for his improper claims. After Bishop Papa began to reproach and humiliate the saint, boasting of his own labors, the saint foretold the judgment of God that would soon befall him. And indeed, the condemned Papa died the very next year.

From Ctesiphon Milus went to another city. The prince of this city had been gravely ill for two years. Learning of the saint's arrival, he sent to ask him to visit the sufferer and pray for him. When the messenger delivered this request to the saint, the latter said to him:

"Go and say to the sick man who sent you: 'Thus commands the bishop: In the name of Jesus Christ, Whom I, unworthy as I am, preach, gird up your loins, heedless of your illness, and come to me, that I may see you.'"

As soon as the messenger returned and delivered the saint's command to the prince, the prince's illness passed, and he recovered as though he had never been ill. Coming to the saint, he fell at his venerable feet and, embracing them, kissed them. At the same time he gave thanks to God, Who had so glorified the holy man. This most glorious miracle brought many to faith in Christ. In that land St. Milus cast

11. Seleucia-Ctesiphon was a twin city on the river Tigris, one of the most important ancient trading centers in the East.

12. This was in the year 334. The ecclesiastical dissension arose because a certain bishop, Papa, who had already renounced his see ten years earlier, laid unlawful claims to authority in the Church.

demons out of people; he healed a paralyzed woman who had not risen from her bed for 10 years, taking her by the hand; and, for the instruction of many, he afflicted with leprosy a man who had administered unjust judgment, even sworn falsely, and set the saint's words at naught, as Elisha did to Gehazi (4 Kgdms. 5:1–27). On account of this, many came to him and confessed the Christian faith. St. Milus also wrought many miraculous signs in other places.

At last he returned to his homeland and there brought many to Christ. Hearing of this, the governor of the province, Hormizd Hufriz, ordered Milus and two of his disciples to be imprisoned. When the holy Confessors were then brought before him for trial at his command, the cruel governor questioned them about their faith, threatening them with death unless they proved that their faith was true. But Milus answered fearlessly:

"My faith is true, and I shall not defend it against your lying words. My teaching is pure, and I shall not unfold it for your impure hearing; but I will tell you the truth. Woe to you, godless evildoer, and to all like you who offend God! In His righteousness He will condemn you in the age to come to Gehenna and its dread darkness, and you will be tormented forever with weeping and gnashing of teeth, for you refuse to know the Giver of the blessings in which you boast and take comfort."

Seeing the firm faith of the Confessors of Christ, and angered by the reproof of St. Milus, Hormizd leaped up in fury and pierced the saint's breast with a sword. The governor's brother Nerses, seized by the same madness, also struck the saint with a knife in the heart. While still breathing, Christ's Passion-bearer said to the king and his brother:

"Because you plotted to kill me, though I am wholly innocent, tomorrow, at this same hour when you pierced me, you will shed one another's blood, and your mother will be left childless."

Having said this, he gave up his spirit. The impious rulers ordered the saint's two disciples to be stoned to death.[13] Amid the singing of the Church, the faithful gave the bodies of the holy Martyrs honorable burial.

13. This was on 12 November in the year 341, but in honor of St. John Chrysostom their memory has been transferred to 10 November.

The next day the impious governor went hunting with his brother, paying no heed to the saint's words. When they saw a deer, they both rushed after it and pursued it. When, having wearied the deer, they began shooting at it, by mistake they struck one another and so met their end.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Apostles Olympas, Rhodion, Sosipater, Erastus, and Quartus

Память святых Апостолов Олимпа, Родиона, Сосипатра, Ераста и Кварта

The saints belonged to the company of the seventy Apostles of Christ. Olympas, or Olympan, whom the Apostle Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 16:15), followed the Apostle Peter to Rome and there, by order of the Roman Emperor Nero, was beheaded with the sword on the very day on which the holy Apostle Peter was crucified.

Likewise, the Apostle Rhodion, or Herodion, who was a kinsman of the holy chief Apostle Paul (Rom. 16:11) and preached the word of God in Patras,[14] where he was also bishop, accompanied the Apostle Peter to Rome and was beheaded on the day of his crucifixion.[15]

The holy Apostle Sosipater was from Achaia[16] and was also a kinsman of the Apostle Paul, as the Apostle Paul himself mentions in his Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 16:21). Together with the holy Apostle Jason, he was a disciple of the Apostle Paul and undertook apostolic journeys. Later he was bishop of the Church of Iconium,[17] and died in peace in ripe old age.[18]

Likewise, the holy Apostle Erastus departed to the Lord in peace. The holy Apostle Paul also mentions him in his Epistle to the Romans

14. Patrae, now Patras, is a wealthy trading city in the Kingdom of Greece, on the shore of the Gulf of Patras.

15. The blessed repose of the Apostles Olympas and Rhodion followed in the year 67.

16. A province in Greece.

17. Iconium was a city on a high, fertile plain in the interior of Asia Minor, at the foot of the Taurus mountains; it was once the principal city of the region of Lycaonia; today it is Konya, the chief city of the Turkish Asia Minor province of Karamania.

(Rom. 16:23). The holy Apostle Erastus was at first a deacon and treasurer of the Church of Jerusalem, and later bishop in Paneas.[19]

The holy Apostle Quartus, or Quart, mentioned by the holy Apostle Paul (Rom. 16:23), suffered much for his piety, brought many Greeks to faith in Christ, and died peacefully in the episcopal rank in the city of Beritus.[20]

Now all these holy Apostles stand before the throne of God in eternal joy, receiving from God their reward for their many struggles and labors.[21]

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having illumined your minds with divine light, you wisely overthrew the entanglements of eloquence; and having caught all the nations, O glorious Apostles, you brought them to the Master, teaching them to glorify the divine Trinity.

* * *

18. In the first century, on the island of Corfu, where he, together with the Apostle Jason, preached Christianity.
19. A city in the north of Palestine.
20. Berytus, present-day Beirut, was an ancient city of Phoenicia on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. It is at present the capital of Lebanon.
21. Together with these holy Apostles, the Church on this day also commemorates the Apostle Tertius, whose memory and icon are to be found under 30 October, among the Holy Apostles.

THE ELEVENTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 11

11 ноября

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

Passion of the Holy Great Martyr Mina

Страдание святого великомученика Мины

The holy martyr Mina was an Egyptian by birth. He confessed the Christian faith and served in the army stationed in the district of Kotuan,[1] under the command of Firmilian, commander of a thousand. At that time two impious emperors, Diocletian and Maximian, reigned together in Rome.[2] These emperors issued a decree throughout all lands ordering that all Christians who did not worship idols be tormented and put to death. In accordance with this decree, believers in Christ were compelled everywhere to offer sacrifices to idols. Then the blessed Mina, unwilling to witness such calamity and the worship of lifeless idols, laid down his military rank and departed into the mountains and the desert places, preferring to live among the wild beasts rather than among men who did not know God. The holy Mina wandered for a long time in the mountains and the deserts, instructing himself in the Law of God, cleansing his soul by fasting and prayer, and serving the One True God day and night. Thus a considerable time passed.

Once, in the principal city of the district of Kotuan, an impious festival was held, to which a great multitude of pagans gathered. In honor

1. Kotuan – an ancient city in Phrygia. Phrygia – a large region of Asia Minor, originally embracing the whole central part of the western half of the peninsula, besides the southern shore of the Propontis (Sea of Marmara) as far as the Hellespont (Dardanelles), which later was counted as part of Mysia. Its boundaries: on the west – Mysia, Lydia and Caria; on the south – Lycia, Pisidia and Lycaonia; on the east – Cappadocia; on the north – Galatia and Bithynia.

2. Both emperors reigned together from 284 to 305 A.D. – Diocletian in the East, Maximian in the West.

of their impious gods they performed various games, spectacles, horse races and wrestling contests, which the inhabitants of the whole city watched from specially constructed high places. The blessed Mina, having foreseen by the Holy Spirit this festival, was inflamed with zeal for God, and, leaving the mountains and deserts, came into the city. Entering into the middle of the place where the spectacles were taking place, the martyr stood upon an elevation so that he could be seen by all, and cried out with a loud voice: "I was found by those who sought Me not; I became manifest to those who asked not for Me" (Rom. 10:20).

When the holy Mina had thus cried out, all those present at the spectacle turned their gaze upon him and fell silent, marveling at his boldness. The prince of that city, named Pyrrhus, who was present there at the spectacle, commanded that the saint be seized, and asked him:

"Who are you?"

The holy Mina cried out loudly, before the whole people:

"I am a servant of Jesus Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth."

The prince asked the saint again:

"Are you a stranger, or a local inhabitant? Whence have you such boldness that you dared to cry out thus in the midst of the spectacle?"

While the prince was speaking these words, and the saint had not yet had time to answer him, some of the soldiers standing near the prince recognized Mina and cried out:

“This is Mina the soldier, who served under the command of Firmilian, commander of a thousand.”

Then the prince said to the holy Mina:

"Were you indeed a soldier, as they say of you?"

The saint answered:

"Yes, it is true, I was a soldier and was in this city; but seeing the impiety of men who are deceived by demons and worship idols rather than the True God, I laid down my military rank and departed from the city, so as not to share in the lawlessness and perdition of these people. Until this day I have wandered in the deserts, avoiding contact with impious men, enemies of my God. Now, however, having heard that you have held an impious festival, I was filled with zeal for my God and

have come here to rebuke your blindness and to preach to you the One True God, who created heaven and earth by His Word and who provides for the whole universe."

Hearing such words, the prince commanded that the saint be taken to prison and guarded until morning, while he himself spent that whole day in the festival and the spectacles.

On the following morning the prince took his seat at the tribunal, and, commanding that the holy Mina be brought from prison, he tried by every means to persuade him to idolatry, both promising gifts and threatening torments. But when he could not persuade the saint by words to impiety, he began to compel him by deeds, ordering four soldiers to strip and stretch out the saint and to beat him without mercy with ox sinews, so that blood flowed from the martyr's wounds in streams. A man present there, named Pigasius, said to the holy Mina:

“Have pity on yourself, man, and fulfill the prince's command before your body is utterly destroyed. I advise you: bow down to the gods only for a time, to free yourself from these tortures, and afterward serve your God again. He will not be angered with you for this defection, if you offer sacrifice to the idols only once and turn to them for a short time out of necessity, in order to be delivered from these grievous torments.”

But the saint answered this with anger:

"Depart from me, doer of lawlessness! I have already offered the sacrifice of praise, and I will offer it again only to my God, who gives me His help and so strengthens me in patience that these torments seem to me very light and comforting, and not grievous."

The tormentor, astonished at such endurance in the martyr, commanded that the holy Mina be subjected to still greater torments. The saint was hanged upon a tree, and his body was scraped with iron claws, while the tormentor, mocking the saint, said to him:

"Do you feel any pain, Mina, or are these torments very pleasant to you, so that you wish us to increase them still further?"

But the holy martyr, although he suffered greatly, answered the prince with firmness:

"You will not conquer me, tormentor, by these brief torments, for the warriors of the Heavenly King, invisible to you, help me."

The prince commanded his servants to torment the saint still more severely, and to say to him:

"Do not confess here any other king than the Roman emperors."

The martyr answered this:

"If you knew the true King, you would not blaspheme Him whom I preach, for He is the true King of heaven and earth, and there is no other beside Him. But you blaspheme Him, not knowing Him, and you set your perishable kings, made of dust, beside Him; He gave them their royal dignity and royal power, for He is the Lord of all that has been created."

Then the prince said to the saint:

"Who is this who gives power to kings and rules over all?"

The martyr answered the prince:

"Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who lives forever, to whom all things in heaven and on earth are subject. He raises kings to their thrones and reigns; He gives power and holds dominion."

The tormentor then said to the holy Mina:

"Do you not know that the Roman emperors are greatly angered against all who confess the name of Christ, and command that such be put to death?"

The martyr answered:

"The Lord reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits upon the Cherubim; let the earth quake" (Ps. 98:1). If your emperors are angry with Christ and with the Christians who confess His name, what is that to me? I do not heed their wrath, for I am the servant of my Christ, and I have only one desire: to be a confessor of His all-holy name unto death, and to enjoy His sweet love, from which no one can separate me. "Who shall separate us from the love of God: tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom. 8:35).

After this the tormentor commanded that the saint's wounds be rubbed vigorously with a cloth made of hair. And while this was being done, the holy martyr said:

"Now I cast off the leather garment and clothe myself in the robe of salvation."

Besides this, the tormentor commanded that the saint be scorched with lighted candles; but even when they burned his whole body, he remained silent.

Then the prince asked him:

"Do you feel this fire, Mina?"

The saint answered: "For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).

He for whom I suffer helps me, and therefore I do not feel the fire with which you scorch me, nor do I fear your manifold torments, for I remember the evangelical words of my Lord: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt. 10:28).

Then the prince said to the martyr:

"Whence have you such eloquence? You were always a soldier; how is it that you speak like a man who has read many books?"

The saint answered the prince:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ said to us: 'And you will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the pagans. But when they deliver you up, do not be anxious how or what you are to speak; for it will be given you in that hour what to say'" (Mt. 10:18–19).

The prince asked the saint:

"And did your Christ know that you would suffer such torments for Him?"

The martyr answered:

"Since He is the True One, He also has knowledge of the future. He knew and knows all that is; all that is to be is known to Him, and He knows beforehand all our thoughts."

The prince, not knowing what to answer to this, said to him:

"Leave off your idle talk, Mina, and choose for yourself one of two things: either be ours, and we will cease to torment you, or be Christ's, and we will put you to death."

To this the saint answered with a loud voice:

"I was Christ's, I am Christ's, and I will be Christ's."

The prince said:

"If you wish, I will release you for two or three days, so that you may consider well and give us your final word."

But the saint answered:

"Not two or three days, but for many years I have confessed the faith of Christ, and I never even had in my thoughts the intention of renouncing my God; therefore it is not fitting for me to deliberate about this now. Do not hope, prince, to hear anything else from me; but here is my final word: I will not renounce my God, I will not offer sacrifice to your demons, and I will not bend my knees before lifeless idols."

Such a firm answer of the martyr greatly angered the prince, and he commanded that hooks, tridents and various iron nails be scattered upon the ground, and that the bound holy martyr be dragged over them. But he, as though dragged over soft flowers, rebuked still more strongly the polytheism of the pagans and laughed at the madness of men deceived by demons. And the prince commanded that the dragged saint be beaten further with tin rods. And so the holy Mina was tormented for a long time.

At this time one of the soldiers who were present, named Heliodorus, said to the torturer:

"Prince, does your highness not know that Christians are mad and do not fear torments, enduring them as though they were like soulless stones or trees, and regarding death as a sweet drink? Do not weary yourself further, but command that this hardened Christian be put to death at once."

And the prince immediately pronounced this sentence upon the saint: "We command that the wicked soldier Mina, who has fallen into Christian impiety and has refused to obey the royal command and sacrifice to the gods, be beheaded with the sword, and that his body be burned before all the people."

The soldiers took St. Mina the Martyr and led him outside the city, where they cut off his head. Then, having kindled a great fire, they cast the much-suffering body of the holy Martyr into it.

But when the fire had died down, some of the faithful came to that place and gathered the portions of the saint's relics that remained from the burning; wrapping them in a clean shroud, they anointed them with aromatics.[3] After a little while, they brought these holy remains to their native city of Alexandria,[4] where they buried them in an honorable place. Later, a church was built on that spot in the name of the holy Martyr, and many miracles were wrought there through prayers to the saint.

The Account of Timothy, Archbishop of Alexandria, Concerning the Miracles of St. Mina the Great Martyr

After the deaths of the impious and God-hating Roman emperors Diocletian and Maximian, the pious Constantine the Great ascended the imperial throne. During his reign, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ increased greatly. At that time certain Christ-loving people of the city of Alexandria found the place where the honored remains of the glorious Martyr of Christ, Mina, had been laid, and built a church there in his name.

It happened that a pious merchant from the land of Isauria[5] arrived in Alexandria to purchase goods. Hearing of the many miracles and healings performed in the church of St. Mina, he said to himself:

"I too will go and venerate the honored relics of the holy Martyr and give gifts to his church, that God may have mercy on me through the prayer of His sufferer."

Having thought thus, he went to the church, taking with him a sack filled with gold. Coming to the seaside lake and finding a ferry, he crossed over to a place called Lozoneta. When he came ashore there,

3. The martyr's death of St. Mina took place in 304 A.D. In the church service of this day, together with the martyr Mina, Sts. Victor, Vincent and Stephanida are also glorified, but most of the church hymns are dedicated to the martyr Mina.

4. Alexandria – a famous city founded by Alexander the Great about 333 B.C. on a cape projecting into the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea (somewhat south of the present city of the same name); it was once the center of learning and the first commercial city in the world; at the beginning of the fourth century it became the center of Christianity and the residence of the patriarch.

5. Isauria was a small, little-explored region of ancient Asia Minor, hidden away in the mountains. It bordered Lycaonia on the east, a part of Phrygia on the north, and Pisidia on the west. The chief city of Isauria was Isaura (now Ulubuiar), very rich and populous.

the merchant looked for a place to spend the night, for evening had already fallen. So he entered a house and said to its owner:

"Friend, be so kind as to let me spend the night in your house, for the sun has set, and I am afraid to go farther alone, since I have no one to accompany me."

"Come in, brother," the owner of the house answered him, "and spend the night here until daybreak."

The guest accepted the invitation and, entering the house, lay down to sleep. But when the host saw the traveler's sack of gold, he was tempted and, at the instigation of the evil spirit, resolved to kill his guest and take the gold for himself. Rising at midnight, he strangled the merchant, cut his body into pieces, put them in a basket, and hid it in an inner room. After the murder, he became greatly troubled and, looking about, searched for a hidden place in which to bury the murdered man.

As he was thinking about this, St. Mina the Martyr appeared to him on horseback, like some soldier riding from the king. Entering the murderer's gate, the Martyr asked him about the murdered guest. The murderer, professing ignorance, said to the saint:

"I do not know what you are talking about, sir; no one has been here."

But the saint dismounted and went into the inner room. Taking the basket, he carried it outside and said to the murderer:

"What is this?"

The murderer was greatly afraid and fell senseless at the saint's feet. The saint then joined together the severed limbs and, having prayed, raised the dead man to life, saying to him:

"Give praise to God."

The man stood up as though awakened from sleep, and, understanding that he had suffered at the hands of his host, glorified God and gratefully bowed before the soldier who had appeared. And the saint, taking the gold from the murderer, gave it to the man he had raised from the dead, saying:

"Go on your way in peace."

Then turning to the murderer, the saint seized him and beat him soundly. The murderer repented and begged forgiveness. Then the Martyr forgave him for the murder and, having prayed for him, mounted his horse and became invisible.

In Alexandria there lived a man named Eutropius. This Eutropius had promised to donate a silver dish to the church of St. Mina. So he summoned a goldsmith and ordered him to make two dishes, writing on one, "Dish of St. Mina the Great Martyr," and on the other, "Dish of Eutropius, citizen of Alexandria." The goldsmith did as Eutropius had commanded, and when both dishes were finished, the dish for St. Mina turned out far more beautiful and lustrous than the other. Having inscribed the names of St. Mina and Eutropius on the dishes, the goldsmith gave them to Eutropius.

One day Eutropius was sailing on the sea in a ship and used both new dishes at dinner. Seeing that the dish intended as a gift to St. Mina was far more beautiful than his own, he refused to give it to the saint, but ordered his servant to serve him food on it, intending to send the dish bearing his own name as a gift to the church of St. Mina. When the meal was over, the servant took the dish bearing the Martyr's name, went to the edge of the ship, and began washing it in the sea. Suddenly terror seized him, and he saw a man come up out of the sea, take the dish from his hands, and vanish. The servant, overcome with fear, plunged into the sea after the dish. Seeing this, his master too was frightened and, weeping bitterly, began to say:

"Woe is me, the wretched one, for I wished to keep St. Mina's dish for myself: thus I have lost both the dish and my servant. But Thou, O Lord my God, be not angry with me forever, and show Thy mercy to my servant. Behold, I make a promise: if I find my servant's body, I will have another dish made like it and offer it as a gift to Thy holy servant Mina; or else I will give the church of the saint money equal to the worth of the dish."

When the ship came to shore, Eutropius went ashore and began looking along the seacoast, hoping to find his servant's body, cast up by the sea, and give it burial. As he watched closely, he saw his servant

coming out of the sea with the dish in his hands. Both frightened and overjoyed, he cried out in a loud voice:

"Glory to God! Truly great is St. Mina the Martyr!"

Hearing his cry, all who were on the ship came ashore, and when they saw the servant holding the dish, they were filled with wonder and glorified God. When they asked the servant how he had survived after falling into the sea and how he had come out of the water unharmed, he answered:

"As soon as I plunged into the sea, a gracious-looking man and two others took me; they walked with me yesterday and today, and brought me here."

Eutropius took the servant and the dish and went to the church of St. Mina. Having venerated the saint and left the dish he had promised as a gift, he departed, giving thanks to God and glorifying His holy servant Mina.

A woman named Sophia was going to venerate at the church of St. Mina. On the road she met a soldier who, seeing her alone, resolved to dishonor her. She resisted him fiercely, calling upon St. Mina the Martyr for help. And the saint did not withhold his aid from her, but punished the man who sought to violate her and kept her unharmed. When the soldier tied his horse to his right leg and attempted to assault the woman, the horse became enraged and not only thwarted its master's purpose, but dragged him along the ground. It neither stopped nor quieted down until it had dragged him to the church of St. Mina. Often neighing and raging, it drew many people to witness the spectacle, for it was a feast day and the church was full of people. When the soldier saw such a crowd gathered, and saw that the horse was still enraged and that there was no one from whom he could expect help, he feared that he might suffer something yet more terrible at the horse's hands. Therefore, casting aside his shame, he confessed his wicked intention before all the people; and the horse immediately quieted down and became gentle. The soldier entered the church, fell down before the saint's relics, and prayed, asking forgiveness for his sin.

Near the church of the holy Martyr, among many others, were a lame man and a mute woman, waiting to receive healing. At midnight,

while all were asleep, St. Mina appeared to the lame man and said to him:

"Go quietly up to the mute woman and take her by the leg."

The lame man answered the Martyr:

"Servant of God, am I a fornicator, that you command me to do this?"

But the saint repeated his words to him three times and added:

"If you do not do this, you will not be healed."

The lame man obeyed the saint's command, crawled over, and seized the mute woman by the leg. She awoke and began to cry out, indignant with the lame man. Frightened, he stood up on both legs and ran off quickly. Thus both of them experienced their healing: the mute woman spoke, and the lame man ran swiftly like a deer; and both, healed, gave thanks to God and St. Mina the Martyr.

A Jew had a Christian friend. Once, when leaving for a distant country, he entrusted a little box containing a thousand gold pieces to his friend for safekeeping. When he remained in that country for some time, the Christian resolved not to return the gold to the Jew upon his return, but to keep it for himself, and did so. When the Jew came back, he went to the Christian and asked him to return the gold he had entrusted to him for safekeeping. But the Christian refused, saying:

"I do not know what you are asking me for. You gave me nothing, and I took nothing from you."

Hearing such an answer from his friend, the Jew was grieved, and, considering his gold lost, began to say to the Christian:

"Brother, no one knows this but God alone. If you refuse to return the gold entrusted to you, insisting that you did not take it from me, then confirm it with an oath. Let us go to the church of St. Mina, and there swear to me that you did not take from me the chest of a thousand gold pieces."

The Christian agreed, and the two of them went together to the church of the Saint, where the Christian swore before God to the Jew that he had not taken the gold from him for safekeeping. When the oath had been made, they came out of the church together, and no sooner had they mounted their horses than the Christian's horse went

into a frenzy, so that it was almost impossible to hold it. Tearing its bridle, it reared up on its hind legs and threw its master to the ground. During the fall, a ring slipped from the Christian's hand, and a key fell from his pocket. The Christian got up, took hold of the horse, calmed it, mounted, and rode on together with the Jew. After riding for a little while, the Christian said to the Jew:

"Friend, here is a convenient place. Let us dismount to eat some bread."

Having dismounted, they let their horses graze while they themselves began to eat. After a little while the Christian looked up and saw his slave standing before them, holding in one hand the Jew's chest, and in the other the ring that had fallen from his hand. Seeing this, the Christian was struck with terror and asked the slave:

"What does this mean?"

The slave answered him:

"A certain fearsome warrior on horseback came to my mistress, and giving her a key with a ring, said: 'Send the Jew's chest as quickly as possible, lest a great misfortune befall your husband.' And I was ordered to carry this to you, as you yourself commanded."

Seeing this, the Jew marveled at the miracle, and rejoicing, returned together with his friend to the church of the holy martyr Mina. Bowing to the ground in the church, the Jew asked for holy baptism, having come to faith because of this miracle, of which he had been a witness. And the Christian prayed to St. Mina that he might be forgiven, since he had transgressed the divine commandment. Both received their petitions: one holy baptism, the other forgiveness of his sin. And they went each to his own home, rejoicing and glorifying God and magnifying His holy servant Mina.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Christ our God, the incorruptible crown of the martyrs, delivered thee from the temporal host and showed thee, O Passion-bearer Mina, to be a partaker of the heavenly and incorruptible.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Victor and Stephanida

Страдание святых мучеников Виктора и Стефаниды

In the reign of the Roman emperor Antoninus[6], under the command of the voivode Sebastian, there served a warrior by the name of Victor, a native of Italy. This Victor believed in our Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessed His all-holy name before all. When at that time a persecution had been raised against the Christians, the voivode summoned the blessed Victor and said to him:

"An imperial decree has come to us, commanding that you Christians be compelled to offer sacrifice to our gods, and that those who do not obey be delivered to grievous torments. Therefore you too, Victor, offer sacrifice to the gods, that you may not undergo torments and lose your soul."

But St. Victor answered the voivode:

"I will not obey the impious command of a mortal emperor, nor will I fulfill his will, for I am the slave of the immortal King, God and my Savior Jesus Christ, whose Kingdom is endless, and those who do His will shall live the eternal life. Your mortal emperor's kingdom is temporary, and those who fulfill his ungodly will shall perish forever."

To this the voivode said to Victor:

"You are a warrior of our emperor. Fulfill his command and offer sacrifice."

"No," answered Victor, "I am now no longer a warrior of your earthly emperor, but of the Heavenly One. If I was for a time a warrior under the power of your emperor, I nevertheless never ceased to serve my King, and now I will not forsake Him, nor will I offer sacrifice to your idols. Do with me what you will: my body is in your hands, and you have power over it, but over my soul has power only my one God."

Then the voivode began to persuade Victor:

"You bring disaster upon yourself," he said, "by not fulfilling the emperor's command. I advise you to offer sacrifice to the gods, that you may be spared the torments that await you."

6. Antoninus was a Roman emperor, better known under the name Marcus Aurelius the Philosopher. He reigned from 161 to 180 A.D.

"That is exactly what I desire," answered St. Victor with firmness, "to endure torment for my Lord, and I greatly rejoice that I shall be counted worthy to suffer for His name."

Then the voivode immediately commanded that his fingers be broken and wrenched from their joints. Afterward the tormentor ordered a furnace to be heated strongly and the holy Victor thrown into it. The martyr remained in that furnace three days and was left alive and unharmed, just as the three youths in the Babylonian furnace were (Dan. 3:50). The tormentor, not expecting that St. Victor would remain alive, ordered on the third day that the furnace be opened, that the martyr's ashes be taken from it and scattered into the river. But when the furnace was opened, the Saint came out unharmed, glorifying God that the fire had not touched him and had done him no harm.

Seeing his failure, the voivode summoned a sorcerer and ordered him to put St. Victor to death by poison. The sorcerer cooked meat with deadly poison and gave it to the Saint to eat.

The Saint said:

"Although it is not fitting for me to take unclean meat from you and eat it, nevertheless I will eat it, that you may understand that your deadly poison can do nothing against the power of my Lord, the Giver of Life."

Then, having prayed, the martyr ate the poisoned meat and suffered no harm whatever. The sorcerer, seeing that the Saint had remained unharmed after eating the poison, prepared other meat with a still stronger poison and said to the Saint:

"If you eat this meat and remain alive, I will give up all my magic and sorcery and believe in your God."

St. Victor ate this meat too, poisoned with the strongest poison, and remained unharmed. Then the sorcerer cried out with a loud voice:

"You have overcome the power of my sorcery, Victor, and you have delivered my soul, long since lost, from hell, for I have come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ whom you preach."

After this the sorcerer went to his house, gathered all his magic books and all his magic charms, burned them, and became a true Christian.

The voivode, seeing that nothing could harm the Saint, fell into a violent rage and ordered that the sinews be drawn out of the martyr's body; after which he commanded that the martyr be cast into boiling oil.

And the Saint said at this time:

"This boiling oil is as pleasant to me as cold water is to one who thirsts."

Such steadfastness of St. Victor drove the tormentor into still greater fury, and he commanded that the Saint be hanged on a tree and his body scorched with candles. And to increase the weight of the torments still more, they mixed ashes with vinegar and poured this mixture into the martyr's mouth.

But he said:

"This vinegar and your deadly poison are to me the same as honey and honeycomb."

Then the tormentor, growing more and more enraged, commanded that the eyes of Christ's martyr be put out. After this, having hung the Saint head downward, the soldiers went away and left him hanging in that position for three days. On the fourth day, thinking that the martyr had already died, the soldiers came to look at him, and finding him alive, they were amazed. At this they were struck with terror and became blind, and each of them began to seek a guide for himself.

The Saint, having compassion on them, prayed fervently to God and said to them:

"In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, receive your sight!"

And they immediately regained their sight and, coming to the voivode, told him what had happened. But the voivode was still more enraged and commanded the soldiers to flay St. Victor's skin. While this impious command was being carried out, a woman named Stephanida, a Christian in faith, the wife of one of the soldiers, who had come to watch the Saint's sufferings, saw two beautiful crowns descending from heaven. One of these crowns descended upon the head of the holy martyr Victor, and the other upon her own head.

Seeing this, Stephanida began to glorify the martyr with a loud voice:

"Blessed art thou, Victor, and blessed are thy sufferings for Christ! Acceptable to God is thy sacrifice, like the sacrifice of Abel (Gen. 4:4), for with a righteous heart thou hast offered Him thyself! God has received thee as He once received the righteous Enoch, whom He took from the earth into paradise, that he might not taste even temporal death (Gen. 5:24). Thou art righteous as Noah, full of good works and the holiest of his people (Gen. 6:9). Thou hast believed as Abraham, offered thyself in sacrifice to God as Isaac did, endured labors as Jacob did. Thou art wise as Joseph, to whom it was given to foresee the future; thou hast undergone temptation as Job did, who after many sufferings overcame the devil and showed an example of patience (Book of Job; Jas. 5:10–11)! Thou art like Isaiah, who by the command of King Manasseh was sawn asunder with a saw; fire did not touch thee, as it did not touch the three youths in the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3:1–100); thou hast placed thy hope in God, as David, son of Jesse, did. And now I see two crowns sent down from heaven, one larger and more beautiful, the other smaller. The larger is brought to thee by twelve Angels, and the smaller to me; for I too, though a feeble vessel, am ready to accept the ordeal of martyrdom and to suffer bravely for the name of our Lord and to lay down my soul for Him."

Hearing these words of Stephanida, the voivode commanded the soldiers to seize her and bring her to him. Looking at her proudly, he asked:

"Who are you?"

"I am a Christian," answered the Saint.

Then the voivode asked her about her name and her age, and learning that her name was Stephanida, that she was fifteen years and eight months old, and that she had been married one year and four months, he began to speak to her gently:

"Why are you so eager to leave this fair world, this good life and marriage, and to destroy your young life by giving yourself willingly to death for the sake of the Crucified?"

The Saint answered the tormentor:

"I leave this temporal and vain world, and all earthly and carnal desires, and my mortal husband, that I may go together with the wise

virgins to meet the incorruptible and immortal Bridegroom, Christ my Savior."

The voivode said to her:

"Do not speak such senseless and useless words about your God. Turn to our gods and offer them sacrifice."

But St. Stephanida answered with firmness:

"You and your gods are full of falsehood, but I speak the truth, for my Lord is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. I will not offer sacrifice to false gods, but I desire to be a well-pleasing offering to the True God who lives in heaven, lest I be deprived of the crown prepared for me in His Kingdom."

Then the tormentor commanded that the tops of two date palms growing there be bent down to the earth, and that the Saint be tied to them, in order to tear her apart. One of her legs was tied to the top of one bent palm, the other to the other, and they were released; the palms, springing upward, tore the martyr in two. The holy soul of the martyr, like a bird escaping from a torn net, found its nest in heaven, in the crown prepared for her.

After this the voivode commanded that St. Victor also be beheaded with the sword. Hearing this command, St. Victor gave thanks to God. Before his head was to be cut off, he foretold the deaths of his tormentors, saying:

"In twelve days you shall die, and your voivode, in twenty-four days, shall be taken captive by the enemies."

Having foretold this, the Saint prayed and bowed his head to be beheaded. And the precious head of the holy martyr was struck off by the sword.

After the beheading of St. Victor, milk mixed with blood flowed from his body, and many of the unbelievers, seeing this miracle, came to believe in Christ. Still more came to faith when they saw the fulfillment of the martyr's prophecy, for as he had foretold, so it came to pass: the tormentors perished suddenly, and the voivode was taken captive by the enemies.

St. Victor and the holy martyr Stephanida suffered on the eleventh of November in the city of Damascus. And now they dwell in that city

which has no need of the sun or the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God illumines it, and the Lamb of God is its lamp.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Vincent

Страдание святого мученика Викентия

The homeland of St. Vincent was Spain. This Saint, from the days of his youth, dedicated himself to the service of God, and, diligently studying Holy Scripture, was instructed in the Law of God day and night. He had a wise teacher, full of good works, the blessed Valerius, bishop in the city of Augustopolis[7]. This bishop, seeing that his disciple Vincent was prudent and of good morals, ordained him deacon and made him a preacher of the word of God. For although he himself knew Holy Scripture very well, being slow of speech he could not speak clearly, and therefore he entrusted his blessed deacon Vincent, as a man worthy, wise, and clear of speech, to instruct the people in the church by preaching the word of God. St. Vincent, receiving from his bishop this charge and blessing, not only in the church but in every place where it was convenient, zealously instructed and admonished the people, showing the path of salvation for the soul.

At that time, from the impious emperor Diocletian, a judge was sent into Spain named Datian, a Greek by birth, cruel in character and a fierce persecutor and tormentor of Christians. Datian was sent so that he might without mercy put to death all who confessed the name of Christ. This judge, arriving in a Spanish city, Valencia[8], shed much Christian blood there, seizing the sheep of Christ like a wolf. Hearing there of the bishop Valerius and of his deacon Vincent, who lived in

7. Augustopolis (that is, the city of Augustus) received its name from the Roman emperor Octavian Augustus, who in 27 B.C. founded here a Roman military colony of his veterans. Augustopolis is also known under the name Saragossa. Saragossa at present is the chief city of the Spanish province of the same name and the capital of the former kingdom of Aragon, on the right bank of the river Ebro, with about 100,000 inhabitants.

8. Valencia is the chief city of the Spanish province of the same name. It was founded by Brutus, who established here a Roman colony after his victory over the Lusitanians, in 138 B.C. Situated in a remarkably fertile valley, Valencia is one of the most beautiful and remarkable cities of the Iberian Peninsula.

Augustopolis, Datian sent his soldiers for them, commanding that they be bound in chains and brought to him for judgment. The soldiers, carrying out Datian's command, took both Saints, bound them in heavy iron fetters, and led them toward Valencia, inflicting great hardship upon them on the way, wearing them down with hunger, thirst, and the swift pace, for the soldiers themselves rode swiftly on horses, while the Saints, unable to keep up with the mounted soldiers, fell, and were dragged for a long time, like logs, tied to the horses.

When they were brought into the city of Valencia, the tormentor immediately commanded that they be thrown into a dark and foul prison, where they were kept for a long time without food or drink. But God strengthened them with His grace, that they should not grow faint or lose strength for the accomplishment of their martyr's struggle. Meanwhile the tormentor, fearing that the prisoners would die and he would have no one upon whom to vent his fury, ordered them brought before him. Seeing that they had not suffered at all from hunger, thirst, or the heavy fetters, but on the contrary had grown strong in body and bright of countenance, the tormentor said to the prison guard:

"Why did you give them food and drink? They have grown quite fat."

The guard swore to him that he had given the prisoners nothing.

Then the tormentor began to speak sternly with the bishop, thinking that if he frightened the bishop with his severity, he would all the more make the deacon meek and fearful. But this did not come to pass, for the Lord, who casts down the mighty from their thrones and exalts the humble, was pleased that the pride of this haughty tormentor should be put to shame by one younger and lower in rank. Datian first asked the bishop:

"Why do you resist the imperial command and do not worship our gods, but glorify some Christ?"

The bishop gave answers to Datian in a quiet voice and with gentleness, as if showing some fear. Then the deacon Vincent, filled with the Holy Spirit, was kindled with zeal for God and said to his bishop:

"Why do you speak so quietly, Father, as if afraid, and why do you not answer the barking of this dog with boldness? Confess the power of

Christ with a loud voice and freely expose and overcome the madness of this wicked man, who wishes to go against God, his Creator, who gave him such power, and wishes to render to demons the worship due to God. Now it is necessary to utterly defeat that devil, whom many people, considering him weak and cowardly, have cast out in the name of Christ, and to crush the head of this serpent."

Datian, hearing these words, and seeing that the holy deacon Vincent counted for nothing all his power, authority, and threats, said to those present:

"Lead the bishop away from here; I will talk with this young deacon."

Then, turning to the executioners, the tormentor said to them:

"Prepare all the instruments of torture, that I may answer by deeds him who humiliates us with his words."

Then he commanded that the Saint be tied to a tree and that his body be scraped and torn with iron claws. As the soldiers carried out Datian's order, the ground was watered with blood flowing in a stream from the mangled body, and through the deep wounds of the martyr the bones could be seen. The tormentor, mocking the Saint, said to him:

"What do you say now, Vincent? You see with what wounds your body has been pierced and torn?"

But the Saint answered him:

"What I desired, that I have received, for this is exactly what I desired with my whole soul. Believe me, judge, that there was nothing higher for me than to suffer for my Lord; and no one has shown me this kindness except you. Although you do this out of malice, nevertheless you do me a benefit by delivering me to torment, for as you increase my sufferings, so my Lord prepares for me rewards in heaven. Through these grievous torments I ascend, as by steps, to my God who dwells on high; by hope in Him I already, as it were, touch heaven, and I reject the imperial command and laugh at your madness. Do not cease my torments, but subject me to still greater pains: I beg you, be more and more cruel to me, and command your servants not to cease tormenting me until my body dies; and I, as the servant of Christ my Lord, am ready to endure everything for His name."

The tormentor, hearing these words of the Saint, fell into fury and shouted at the servants not to spare their hands in torturing and to torment Christ's sufferer even more severely. But when he saw that the servants were growing weary, he rose and began to beat them himself.

And the Saint laughed at his anger and said to him:

"What are you doing, judge? Why do you beat your servants? They torment me, and you take vengeance on them for it."

Datian, stung by these words of the martyr and by his invincible patience, fell into still greater fury: he gnashed his teeth, grew very pale, and trembled with rage. Then, somewhat calming himself, he began to speak gently to the servants:

"What does this mean, my faithful servants, that this villain does not feel the weight of your hands and does not fear the torments, but even laughs at you as no one ever laughed? Have there not been many robbers, criminals, parricides, and sorcerers whom you tormented with your strong hands? Yet there has never been anyone like this man, who is now in your hands and laughs at me and at you. Will you endure such disgrace? Gather all your strength and torment him still more severely."

But St. Vincent laughed still more at their weakness and said:

– I do not ask thee, tormentor, that thou shouldst cease to torment me, but devise yet greater torments; for the strength of Christ, which helpeth me, is far greater than thy power which delivereth me to torments, and I shall not weaken in confessing and glorifying Jesus Christ, the One True God. O that thou also wouldst know this God, seeing His great power made manifest in me, who am weak, and which thou, with all thy servants, canst not overcome! But thou, seeing, seest not; and hearing, understandest not, and ceasest not to perform the will of the devil to the perdition of thy soul!

The judge, who could accomplish nothing by torments (for the sharp iron passed through the joints and bones of the martyr and reached his inward parts, yet he remained unharmed), devised by flattery to draw the saint to his impiety, and began to speak to him gently:

– Spare thy youth, Vincent, and desire not that the flower of thy life should wither before its time. Do not cut short the long years of thy

life, but spare thyself and bring us repentance, lest thou perish utterly. For I pity thee, and would wish to see thee not in dishonor and torments, but in honor and glory; for I would obtain for thee great honor, if thou wouldst hearken unto me.

To these flattering words of Datian, the holy Vincent answered:

– Thy deceitful mercy is far worse for me than thy wrath, for I fear not so much the torments as I dread thy flattering words. Cease this deceit, so destructive to my soul, and turn upon me all the force of thy cruelty; deliver me to torment without mercy, and thou shalt know the power of Christ dwelling in those who love Him.

These words of the martyr again roused the tormentor to great anger, and he commanded that the martyr be nailed to a cross and that his whole body be tormented in various ways. When the servants, fulfilling the command of the tormentor, beat the crucified saint and burned his wounds with heated iron, the martyr of Christ suddenly fell from the cross to the ground. The servants, thinking the saint was already dead, took him up, wishing to carry him away from there. But the saint, strengthened by the grace of Christ, freed himself from their hands and again hung upon the cross. At the same time he reproached the servants for negligence, saying that they performed their master's command without zeal. Then the servants fell into great rage and began to torment the saint in every way with all their strength, until they themselves were completely exhausted. After these torments, by the command of the tormentor, St. Vincent was cast into prison, where, all wounded, with his limbs broken and his sinews torn, he was laid upon sharp potsherds. When night came and the guards were fast asleep, suddenly a light shone in the prison, and a host of angels descended from heaven to the saint, comforting him in his sufferings. The holy martyr Vincent, receiving through this angelic visitation the healing of his wounds and filled with ineffable joy, glorified God. The soldiers keeping watch over him awoke, hearing that he was singing with gladness, and seeing an indescribable light in the prison, they were greatly frightened and ran to inform Datian. He, being in great perplexity and devising all night what else he might do with the invincible martyr, at last thought of such a stratagem. He commanded that a

beautiful couch be prepared, and having spread a soft bed upon it, he had the saint laid upon it. At the same time the tormentor commanded that seducers be set beside the saint, instructing them to wipe his blood, bind up his wounds, and render him all kinds of services, as if pitying him and grieving for him; and that, kissing his feet, they should beg him to have mercy on himself, not to bring upon himself still greater torments, but to fulfil the imperial command. When this command of Datian was being carried out, the saint said:

– For me the bed of torments upon the potsherds was better than this; and you, wicked seducers, shall not beguile me with it.

The tormentor, seeing that by his stratagem he could accomplish nothing, again turned to torments. He commanded that iron plates be heated and applied to the sides of the saint. Then, by his order, the martyr was laid upon an iron grate, and a great fire was kindled beneath the grate, and the martyr was roasted as one would roast edible meat.

But the martyr endured all these torments with steadfastness, confessing the name of Jesus Christ, and completed the course of his martyrdom, commending his spirit into the hands of his Lord[9].

The tormentor, seeing that the saint was dead, commanded that his body be carried out into the field and cast there without burial, for the food of birds and beasts; and at a distance he commanded that a guard be posted, lest the Christians take the martyr's body. But God, who "keepeth all the bones" (Ps. 33:21) of the righteous, set a remarkable guard over the body of the martyr, commanding a raven to keep it. The guard posted at a distance by Datian saw that when a multitude of birds of prey attacked the body of the saint, the raven drove them all away and did not allow a single bird to alight upon the body of the martyr. And although the raven, by its nature, loves to peck at dead bodies, yet restrained by the power of God, it did not itself touch the body of the saint, and it hindered the other birds from touching it. And, more wonderful still, when a wolf came and wished to carry off the saint's body, the raven, falling upon it with force and beating it with its wings,

9. The blessed repose of the martyr Vincent took place in 304. The relics of the saint rest in Rome, in the church of his name, in an outlying monastery.

drove it away also. When the guard reported this to Datian, he was greatly astonished; yet he would not see in it the power of God, and commanded that the body of the martyr be cast into the sea. The soldiers, taking the honorable body of Vincent, boarded a ship, and sailing far out to sea, cast it into the depths of the sea, and themselves sailed back toward the shore. When they drew near the shore, they saw the body of the martyr lying on the shore. Struck with terror, they fled. And the Christians, taking the holy relics of the martyr, buried them with honor, glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Theodore the Studite

Житие преподобного отца нашего Феодора Студита

In Constantinople there once lived a rich and noble man named Photinus[10], married to a noble woman named Theoctiste. Both of them were pious and feared God. From them was born the blessed Theodore. His parents, having enlightened him with holy baptism, reared him in good principles and gave him over to book learning. With the accession of the impious emperor Constantine Copronymus[11], the iconoclastic heresy began to spread, and a severe persecution was raised against the Orthodox. In consequence of this, Photinus, renouncing the important state office he held, and taking counsel with his spouse, distributed all his property, and, renouncing the world, dedicated himself, together with Theoctiste, to the monastic life, in which they zealously labored until their death. The blessed Theodore, having learned Hellenic wisdom, became an outstanding orator and an excellent philosopher, and disputed with the wicked heretics about the Orthodox faith. He was so well versed in the Divine Scripture and the dogmas that the heretics could never withstand him.

After the death of the impious emperor Constantine Copronymus, his son Leo[12], also an iconoclast, ascended the throne; but he reigned

10. Photinus, the father of the Venerable Theodore the Studite, was a collector of the imperial taxes.

11. Constantine V Copronymus, the Byzantine iconoclast emperor, reigned from 741 to 775.

12. Leo IV the Khazar reigned from 775 to 780.

briefly and soon died. After him his wife Irene ascended the throne together with her son Constantine[13]. Bearing a name signifying "peace"[14], she indeed established peace in the Church and put an end to the iconoclastic disturbance. She gathered a multitude of venerable fathers and, together with the most holy Patriarch Tarasius, convened at Nicaea the Seventh Ecumenical Council, at which, rejecting the impious teaching of the heretics, she again established, as it had been before, the veneration of the Divine icons and the worship of them[15]. The fathers gathered at the council were more than three hundred; among them was present also the Venerable Plato, who had first labored on Mount Olympus[16]. He was the maternal uncle of the blessed Theodore; the Spirit of God dwelt in him, and as a man well read in the Divine Scriptures and a skilled orator, he was useful to all.

When the council was ended, Plato took with him the blessed Theodore and his two brothers, Joseph and Euthymius, who had expressed a desire to take up the monastic life[17]. Withdrawing with them, he came to a secluded place called Sakudion[18].

The place was very beautiful and well suited to those who sought silence. Set upon a hill, rounded and level, it was surrounded by various tall trees; it had sweet running water and a single approach by a narrow path. Plato and his companions found the spot most pleasing, and they settled there and soon built a church in the name of St. John the Theologian. When the number of the brethren grew, Plato established a monastery.[19] Blessed Theodore, who had been tonsured into the mon-

13. St. Irene, the wife of Leo the Khazar, governed the state after his death, on account of the minority of her son, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, from 780 to 797, and afterwards independently until 802.

14. "Irene" means "peace" in Greek.

15. Nicaea (now Iznik) lies on the northwestern coast of Asia Minor, on the shore of Lake Ascania. In antiquity it was a rich and flourishing city of Bithynia; now it is very poor and sparsely populated. The Seventh Ecumenical Council was held under the presidency of Tarasius himself. The commemoration of the Seventh Ecumenical Council is celebrated on October 11.

16. Olympus is a mountain in Mysia, on the Phrygian–Bithynian border in Asia Minor. Here stood a monastery famed for the ascetic labors of its inhabitants, called "of the Symbols," where the Venerable Confessor Plato labored. His memory is celebrated on April 5.

17. As the Venerable Theodore himself mentions in one of his writings, he had been married before, but at the age of twenty-two he dedicated himself to the monastic life, as did his wife Anna.

18. Sakkoudion was afterwards a famous monastery, not far from the Bithynian Mount Olympus.

19. The monastic community was founded by the Venerable Plato in 782.

astic order by him, surpassed the others in mortifying his flesh by ascetic labors and fasting. Learning humility, he chose for himself the heaviest and lowliest labors and obediences. Many were astonished that a son of wealthy and noble parents, reared in ease and comfort, subjected himself to such severe labors: he chopped wood, carried water, dug the earth in the vineyard, hauled stones, and diligently performed other such obediences, for example, often carrying manure to the vineyard to fertilize the soil. At the same time the saint helped the weaker brethren who were sick in body, and he was a servant to all. He also took care to confess all his thoughts and deeds to his spiritual father, the holy Plato. Coming to him with love, Theodore confessed and diligently received instruction from him. Each day he set apart for himself a portion of time for contemplation of God, so that, standing before the One God, far from all that is worldly and vain, he might perform for Him a certain mystical service. But his virtue could not be hidden, for the very tears that flowed abundantly from his eyes were an unmistakable proof of his many virtues. The saint's abstinence was wonderful and wise. He did not shun food, yet he did not burden his stomach; rather he skillfully crushed the head of the vainglorious serpent. For he did not fast beyond the time set for all the brethren; when all were at table, he too sat and ate together with the others. Yet he ate very little, only as much as was needed to satisfy the most essential bodily need, and at the same time he took care to conceal his abstinence from others, so that it would not be known that he took almost no food, and so that he would not appear to men as one fasting. Many emulated this custom of his and, as far as possible, strove to imitate him. Among these were the following: Joseph, his brother according to the flesh, who afterwards, for his virtuous life, was appointed shepherd of the Church of Thessalonica;[20] Euthymius, his other brother; then Athanasius, Naucratius, Timothy, and many other ascetics who, following the way of thinking and conduct of Theodore, advanced in virtue. Advancing in unceasing labors of prayer and contemplation, blessed Theodore had great zeal for reading books that profit the soul; he diligently read through the Old

20. Afterwards he was numbered among the saints; his memory is celebrated on January 26.

and New Testaments and the writings of the holy fathers. He especially loved to read the works of St. Basil the Great, which were as food for his soul, and from which he received great spiritual delight. The Rules and Statutes of the monastic life laid down by St. Basil[21] he kept carefully, not transgressing a single line of them; those who did not observe these rules, down to the smallest prescription, he considered not monks but laymen.

Seeing blessed Theodore shining with so virtuous a life, the Venerable Plato rejoiced exceedingly for him. Resolving to honor St. Theodore with the sacred rank, he went with him to Byzantium to the Most Holy Patriarch Tarasius, who ordained Theodore to the rank of presbyter, more by compulsion than by Theodore's own willingness; for the blessed one, considering himself unworthy, did not wish to take upon himself such a rank and said that it was beyond his strength. But, being unable to oppose the will of his spiritual father Plato and of the Patriarch, and most of all the Divine good pleasure, he submitted and accepted the priesthood. Returning then to the monastery, the Venerable one pressed on to still greater labors and toils, which cannot even be described.

After some years, the Venerable Plato, having become infirm through his many years and burdensome old age, resolved to lay down the leadership of the monastery and desired that blessed Theodore should take authority after him. He often spoke of this to Theodore, pleading with him and instructing him, that he should lighten the burden of his father and consent to be the superior of the monastery. Theodore refused authority in every way, preferring to live himself under the leadership of others rather than to lead others, judging that it was easier and more beneficial for salvation to receive instruction from others than to instruct anyone himself. The Venerable Plato, seeing that Theodore did not comply with this wish of his, devised the follow-

21. St. Basil the Great was himself a strict ascetic and a zealot of monastic asceticism. He had been instructed in the God-pleasing life of Christian ascetics in Egypt and other lands that flourished in monasticism, and afterwards he himself founded a monastery in the Pontic desert, which became a model for other monasteries. Subsequently he composed a monastic rule, the so-called "Greater and Lesser Monastic Rules," as a guide for the monastic life, which were accepted and spread in the East as statutes for monastic communities.

ing stratagem: he took to his bed as if ill, — and indeed he was weak — and, gathering the whole brotherhood, informed them that he felt the approach of his death, and then asked whom they wished to have as their abbot after him, whom they considered most capable of this. The Venerable knew that they would wish to have none other as their abbot than Theodore, for all loved him and esteemed him for his great virtues. And so it happened: all unanimously answered:

"Father! After you, let Theodore be our abbot!"

Plato immediately handed over all authority to Theodore, and blessed Theodore could not resist the desire of the whole brotherhood, and against his own will accepted authority.[22] At the same time he took upon himself still greater labors, becoming a model for all, teaching by word and deed and correcting those monks who violated the statutes; for some at that time had ceased to observe the monastic rules, especially the vows of non-possession and poverty. Grieving over such, blessed Theodore hastened to correct them for the better, and he benefited also the other monks in the surrounding area. If some grumbled against him, he paid no attention to it, for he did not look to what the murmurers said of him, but cared that his activity should become pleasing to God. Afterwards the grumblers, coming to the fear of God, fulfilled the will of the Venerable and opened their thoughts to him. Examining each one attentively, he gave to each the appropriate remedy, rousing the most sluggish to labor and somewhat easing the labor of the most diligent, lest they grow weary under the burden of the labors they had undertaken. But it is now fitting also to describe the sufferings of the saint, which he endured for zeal for God and the law of God, that we may behold Theodore's courageous endurance in sorrows.

At that time Constantine, the son of the pious Empress Irene, having come of age, removed his mother from the imperial throne and began to rule the realm himself.[23] Young and corrupt, he gave himself over to excess in the passions and to adultery. For this reason he resolved to cast out his wife Mary and compelled her by force to take the monastic tonsure; in her place he took another wife, named Theodote,

22. This was in 794.
23. In October 790, when Constantine was twenty years old.

who was a kinswoman of his father.[24] The Most Holy Patriarch Tarasius, however, did not approve of this adulterous union of the emperor and would not give his blessing to their marriage. But a presbyter named Joseph, who was steward of the Great Church,[25] transgressed the divine laws and disobeyed the patriarch, and consented to perform over them the sacrament of marriage. For this criminal audacity, as the following account will show, he soon received his due recompense. The patriarch strove by every means to dissolve this adulterous imperial marriage, but could not, because the emperor threatened to revive the iconoclastic heresy if this marriage were forbidden him. The patriarch therefore allowed the emperor to remain in his marital union, lest a yet greater evil befall the Church of Christ. This lawlessness, which began in the imperial palace, spread everywhere, not only in the nearby cities but also in distant regions. Princes and grandees living by the Bosphorus and among the Goths[26] began to act likewise, as did the rulers of other regions: they put away their wives, compelled them to take the monastic tonsure, and in their place chose others and committed adultery with them. Hearing of this, the blessed Theodore grieved in his soul and sighed heavily over such manifest sins, fearing lest this adultery become a custom, lawlessness take the place of law, and the law of God be destroyed. Kindled with zeal for the divine law, Theodore sent an epistle to all the monks, reporting the emperor's lawlessness and exhorting them to regard the emperor as cut off from the Church of Christ, as a destroyer of the law of God and a corrupter of many. The report of this zeal and boldness of Theodore spread everywhere, so that the emperor himself learned of it and was angered against the venerable man. But, regarding Theodore as a righteous man who had won great fame and honor from all, he did not openly reveal his anger and at

24. The first wife of Constantine was Mary, the granddaughter of the Righteous Philaretus the Merciful (in northeastern Asia Minor), of Armenian stock; Constantine entered into marriage with her by the will of his mother. The emperor's second marriage, to Theodote, who until then had been a lady of the court, was concluded in 795.

25. The office of "Economos of the Great Church," that is, of the Constantinopolitan "church," was one of the most important offices under the Patriarch of Constantinople; the "economos of the Great Church" managed all the patriarchal treasury and had great influence in church affairs.

26. The Bosphorus is the Constantinopolitan strait between the Black and Marmara Seas. At that time the Goths dwelt along the Lower Danube.

first wished to win him to his side by flattery. And so he commanded his adulterous consort to send to the saint a great quantity of gold, begging prayers for herself and her family. But the saint did not accept the gold and drove away the messengers as abettors of the emperor's lawlessness. Then the emperor devised another means: under a pretext of some necessity, but in truth in order to speak with Theodore and win him to his side, he undertook a journey to the district where the venerable man lived; the emperor supposed that Theodore and the brethren would meet him and render him fitting honor. When the emperor passed by that monastery, neither the venerable man nor any of the brethren of his monastery came out to meet him; they remained shut in and kept silence. When the imperial servants began to knock at the gate, no one gave an answer. Then the emperor was angered still more, and returning to his palace he at once sent to the monastery of the venerable man a certain dignitary with soldiers, commanding that the saint and the other monks of like mind with him be subjected to various tortures, be driven out of the monastery with beatings and sent into exile. The messenger, setting out, suddenly attacked the monastery, and seizing all who were there, beginning with the venerable Theodore, tormented them without mercy, so that pieces of flesh were torn from their wounds and the ground was stained with blood. After these tortures he sent the venerable man to Thessalonica[27] into exile, and with him eleven of the fathers who held office in the monastery, who, sympathizing with the venerable man, bravely endured with him bonds and sorrows, rejoicing that they had been subjected to torments and driven out for the sake of righteousness.

The presbyters and monks of Cherson[28] and of the Bosphorus, hearing of the steadfastness of Theodore and of the monks with him and of their sufferings, greatly grieved over it and, imitating them, likewise began to speak against the emperor's lawlessness and his opposition to the Church, for which many of them suffered exile.

27. This was in 796. Thessalonica, or Salonica, a very considerable ancient city of Macedonia, lay in the depths of the large Thessalonian or Thermaic Gulf on the Aegean Sea (Archipelago). At present this city, under the name Salonica, has a very numerous population.

28. That is, those who dwelt on the Crimean or Taurian peninsula (in its western and eastern parts), where at that time there were many Greek colonies founded in remote antiquity.

Though himself in exile, the blessed Theodore wrote to others banished for the same cause and to those in confinement, strengthening them and exhorting them not to weaken in their ascetic labors, not to faint under sorrows, but to be all the more manly and to suffer for the truth. He also wrote to the Pope of Rome,[29] informing him of how much and for what cause he had suffered from the lawless emperor. The Pope, for his part, replied to him, praising his patience and blessing his zeal for God and his unshaken courage. God did not delay to avenge upon the emperor the unjust offence done to His servants: He deprived him both of life and of his kingdom, and the wicked emperor perished a wicked death. His mother and the boyars rose up against him and blinded him,[30] and he soon died of sickness. After his death, when Irene again ascended the Byzantine throne, all were recalled from exile, and the blessed Theodore was summoned to Constantinople from Thessalonica and, as a confessor of Christ, was greatly honored by the patriarch and the empress. Then the aforementioned presbyter Joseph, who had dared to bless the emperor's unlawful marriage, was condemned, in accordance with the canons of the holy fathers, deprived of the presbyterial rank, and cut off from the Church. But St. Theodore returned to his monastery, and all rejoiced at his return and hastened to see him, consoling themselves that such a zealot of the law of God, who had endured torment and exile for righteousness, had been restored to his flock. The venerable man, gathering all his scattered spiritual sheep, again tended them, leading a God-pleasing life and shining upon all, like a candle on a candlestick, by his great virtues.

After some years, an invasion of the Saracens fell upon the Greeks, who began to lay waste and seize into their hands the regions of Greece.[31] In fear of them, many then fled into fortified cities. At this time the venerable Theodore, not surrendering himself and his monks to voluntary sufferings, but following the words: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thy-

29. The Pope of Rome at that time was St. Leo III (796–816).

30. This was on August 19, 797.

31. The Agarenes, that is, the Arab Muslims, were so called after Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, from whom the Arab tribe descended. At that time, taking advantage of frequent disorders at the Byzantine court, the Arabs made devastating raids into the borders of the Byzantine Empire.

self as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (Is. 26:20), left Sakudion and came with the brethren to Constantinople. His arrival was pleasing to the empress and the patriarch: they rejoiced at him and begged him to accept the governance of the Studion monastery and to establish in it the best order of life.

It is fitting here to recall also the origin of this monastery. Once there came to Constantinople from Rome a certain noble and influential man, who had been honored with the rank of patrician and proconsul.[32] He built a large and beautiful church in the name of St. John the Forerunner and established a monastery at it.

Calling monks from the monastery of the "Sleepless,"[33] he besought them to live in his monastery and to keep its entire rule. That man's name was Studius; from his name the monastery also received its designation and came to be called Studion. In it the monks lived until the reign of the emperor Copronymus, keeping the rule of the "Sleepless." But the impious Copronymus, by disturbing the Church of God with iconoclasm, drove all the monks out of Byzantium, and the Studion monastery became desolate. After the death of this impious emperor and the cessation of the persecution, the monks again began to live at the Studion church, but in small numbers. At the time when the venerable man came to Constantinople with his brethren, only twelve monks remained in the monastery. At the request of the Empress Irene and the Most Holy Patriarch Tarasius, the venerable Theodore accepted the governance of the Studion monastery and began to live in it.[34] Having ascertained that the place was suitable for the dwelling of monks, he restored and enlarged the monastery and gathered a multitude of

32. In the Roman and Eastern, Byzantine, Empire the patricians were persons of the highest rank, corresponding to our hereditary nobility. Proconsuls were the emperor's governors in provinces and regions.

33. The monastery of the "Acoemetae" (the "Sleepless") was founded in the fifth century in Constantinople by the Venerable Alexander (d. 430), after whose death the monks of this community moved to Bithynia, the northwestern region of Asia Minor, where they founded their own monastery, and from where they afterwards returned to Constantinople. The monks of these monasteries were called "Sleepless" because the divine service in them was celebrated without interruption, throughout whole days and nights.

34. The Venerable Theodore the Studite was appointed abbot of the Stoudios monastery in 798; from the name of this monastery he remained known as "the Studite."

brethren. Monks came to him also from other monasteries, desiring to live with him and to have him as their guide and teacher. The venerable man received all as a father and loved all without hypocrisy. With him all were equal; he loved all alike and had an equal care for all. He knew that the manner of monastic life is one and the same, wherever anyone is clothed in it, as the same grace of baptism is one, wherever anyone is granted it. But according to the virtues of the monks there are also various rewards. The disciples of this venerable father greatly advanced in virtue; and since the fame of their holy life spread everywhere, many came to them in the monastery, desiring to emulate their labors, and the number of monks rapidly increased, so that it reached a thousand brethren. In view of such a multitude of his disciples, and the impossibility for one man to oversee all and to discern the deeds, words, and thoughts of each, the venerable man, as a second Moses, appointed as leaders those monks whom he considered the most wise, most experienced, and most diligent in the virtues; to each of them he gave a corresponding title: to one, steward; to another, ecclesiarch;[35] to a third, overseer of church order, and so on. The saint also composed rules as to how each of them should perform the obedience entrusted to him, from the first to the last.

For transgressions he imposed penances: for some a set number of prostrations, for others a stricter fast, and for each offense a corresponding punishment. If anyone failed to stand through the Divine Services, or broke a vessel, or through carelessness dropped something, or did a task negligently, or gave offense to a brother in any way, or, through an unbridled tongue, spoke some superfluous word, or laughed loudly, or walked without gentleness and humility, or talked at table without listening to edifying reading, or murmured about the food, or cast his eyes boldly and shamelessly here and there, or did anything else of the kind, for all such brethren the Venerable Theodore appointed penances in accordance with their faults. He also established in his monastery a common life, so that no one called anything his own, but

35. The ekklesiarches, that is, the head of the church, was bound to oversee the church building and its cleanliness, as well as the order of worship in the monastery, according to the directions of the church typikon.

everything was held in common: common food, common clothing, and every thing common. The Venerable also took care that his monks should not often go out of the monastery into the city on monastic business, for he knew what dangers threaten a monk in the city through contact with laymen and worldly conversation. For this reason he desired to establish within the monastery the practice of various crafts. The brethren of the Studite monastery began to learn different trades: some the carpenter's trade and building, others smithing, others tailoring, others stonemasonry, in short, every kind of work needful for the monastery. Yet while stretching forth their hands to their labor, they always had the Jesus Prayer and the Psalms of David on their lips. The renown of this order of the Studite monastery, its ordinances and its rules spread everywhere, and many other monasteries, not only in the neighboring cities but also in distant lands, adopted the Studite Typikon[7257] and observed it, and some observe it to this day. The Venerable also wrote a number of very edifying books and composed panegyrics for the Lord's and Theotokos' feasts; he honored St. John the Baptist with most beautiful hymns; he composed many canons and triodia, and, like a river filled with waters of wisdom, he refreshed and delighted the Church of God with the streams of his teachings and hymns[7258]. Meanwhile the Byzantine throne was unlawfully seized by Nicephorus the Tyrant, who violently cast the pious Empress Irene from the throne[36]. At the same time the most holy Patriarch Tarasius died; after him a virtuous man, worthy of such a rank, who bore the same name as the new emperor, was raised to the patriarchal throne[37]. Then discord arose again in the Church, for the emperor, by his own authority, restored to communion with the Church the aforementioned excommunicated Joseph, and commanded that he be restored to the right of serving. The patriarch resisted the emperor as far as he was able; but when he saw him deeply angered, he feared that the whole Church would suffer from him a cruel persecution, as it had suffered

36. Nicephorus I reigned from 802 to 811. During the reign of Irene he had been keeper of the state treasury.

37. The successor of St. Tarasius, St. Nicephorus I (the Confessor), held the see from 806 to 815. He died in 826. His memory is June 2.

many evils under former emperors, and he received Joseph into communion, though against his will. The emperor did this in spite of the Venerable Theodore, provoking him; for he knew that the Venerable would not endure this, and so it happened. Theodore rebuked the emperor for doing violence to the Church, by his worldly authority introducing into the Church the one whom the most holy Patriarch Tarasius had excommunicated together with all his clergy. The emperor was greatly angered with the Venerable Theodore and sent him into exile on one of the islands before the city[38]. He treated his brother Joseph, the most blessed elder Plato, and many other Studite monks in the same way.

Meanwhile word reached the emperor that barbarians had attacked Thrace[39] and were laying it waste[40]. The emperor immediately prepared for war. But he desired to overcome not so much the enemies as the Venerable Theodore, and, marching with his army against the Scythians, he sent messengers to Theodore, seeking by turns flattery and threats to bring him into agreement with himself. Theodore answered:

"O emperor, you must repent of the sin you have committed and set right what you have ruined, and only then go to war. But since you have not done this, the All-Seeing Eye now foretells to you through me, unworthy as I am: know that you will not return from the road on which you are setting out."

The emperor paid no heed to the saint's words, but was still more angered against him and threatened that, on returning from the campaign, he would do the saint still much harm. But Nicephorus was not to return, for, according to the saint's prediction, he was slain by the barbarians. After him his son Staurakios ascended the throne, but he too soon died of a wound received in the war in which he had taken part together with his father. After his death Michael was chosen emperor[41],

38. This was in 809.
39. Thrace was a region of the Byzantine Empire, in the northeastern part of the Balkan Peninsula.
40. By the barbarians, who are further called Scythians, the Bulgarians are meant here; in 809, under the leadership of Krum, they made an attack on the northern borders of the empire.
41. Michael I Rhangabe, brother-in-law of Staurakios, reigned from 811 to 813.

who then held the rank of kouropalates[42], a man truly worthy of imperial power, good and Orthodox. Upon taking power he restored from exile the Venerable Theodore and his like-minded companions, honored them with fitting respect, and ended the church discord. Joseph, however, was again excommunicated as an unworthy member.

Soon after this the holy and most praiseworthy Plato departed to the Lord[43]. The patriarch, hearing of his repose, came with all his clergy to the Studite monastery and, kissing his holy relics, gave them honorable burial. The Venerable Theodore, after the repose of his spiritual father Plato, lived only two years in peace with his brethren. When that time had passed, a fierce storm again broke over him and over the whole Church of Christ from the impious Leo the Armenian, who had first served as a voivode under the pious Emperor Michael. Sent to the East against the barbarians, he gathered there a large army and, growing proud, rose against his benefactor, Emperor Michael. Leo the Armenian won over to his side all the officials and soldiers under him, some by promises, others by gifts, others by various flatteries, and with their help proclaimed himself emperor. Learning of this, the right-believing Emperor Michael at once exchanged the imperial purple for the monastic hair shirt, to avoid civil war, and, yielding the empire to his enemy, himself took up the monastic life.

Having taken imperial power, Leo the Armenian at first seemed right-believing and modest, until he was firmly established on the imperial throne and had gathered about himself accomplices in his impiety.

Following this he began to utter blasphemies against the holy icons and to reproach those who venerated them, calling them senseless. His impiety was rebuked by the patriarch, who engaged him in dispute on the basis of Holy Scripture concerning the holy icons; but he had no success and only roused the frenzied emperor to still greater fury. Leo the Armenian, summoning all the well-known priests and monks, the patriarch, and together with them the blessed Theodore, openly dis-

42. At the Byzantine court the commanders of the palace guard were called kouropalatai.
43. The Venerable Plato (d. 814).

played his malice before them, blaspheming and reproaching those who venerated the honorable icons, and praising the iconoclasts.

“Does not the ancient law, written by the finger of God,” he said, “command not to serve the work of human hands: thou shalt not make, it says, an idol or any likeness. Therefore it is not fitting to worship icons made by human hands. How can one paint the Uncircumscribed on an icon, place the Uncontainable on small boards, and call by the name of God what is depicted in colors?”

The holy fathers strongly contested the empty words of the iconoclast emperor, rejecting his blasphemous words and saying:

"If we were wholly to keep the Law given through Moses, our Christian faith would be in vain, the apostolic preaching would be in vain, all the divine traditions of the holy fathers would remain in vain, and there would be rejected (and it is terrible even to utter it) the very Incarnation of the Lord, through which we came to know His human image and received the veneration of icons, honoring in the icons Him whose likeness they bear."

When the saints spoke thus, the Venerable Theodore, who knew well all the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, boldly asked the emperor:

"Why, O emperor, have you resolved to dishonor the image of Christ, to introduce into the holy Church such heretical reasoning, and to tear her garment, woven of the highest grace and of apostolic and patristic teaching? You reason on the basis of the Old Testament, but a new grace, come through Jesus Christ, has put an end to it. If the Old Testament, which you hold to, must be kept, then one must also be circumcised, observe the Sabbaths, and do everything else written in it. Could you not understand, O emperor, that the Law was given for a time and only for the one people that came out of Egypt? But with the coming of grace the shadow ceased. And that very Law does not observe everywhere what it commands. Thus it commanded not to make likenesses and not to serve the work of human hands, yet it set images of the Cherubim above the ark. Were those Cherubim not the work of human hands? Yet they were honored by all. But when the new grace appeared, the Lord Himself, having imprinted His face on a cloth, sent

it to Abgar, who, by touching it, received healing from his long-standing illness[44]. After this, St. Luke, the Apostle and Evangelist of the Lord, with his own hands painted the likeness of the Mother of God and left this image for later generations. Afterwards the image of the Savior, not made by hands, which appeared in Phoenicia, worked many wondrous miracles. And do not the wonders of the holy icons, shown by others, shine brighter than the sun, showing that due veneration is fitting for them?

But the emperor, paying no heed to the words of the Venerable Father, said:

– I have no wish to depict the invisible and incomprehensible Divinity in colors.

Theodore answered:

– Emperor, we too do not portray the Divinity, but we confess and believe that It is indescribable. In iconography, however, we depict the flesh of the Son of God which He took from us; it is this that we venerate and honor.

When the Venerable Father spoke these things and many others, on the basis of Divine Scripture and the traditions of the Fathers, and exposed the emperor's error, the emperor, filled with fury, said to the Venerable Father in anger:

– I know that you always speak without thought, and that you are a quarrelsome man, proud and opposed to everyone. And now you have come to slander and revile me, speaking to me not as to an emperor but as to one of the common people; for this you deserve many torments. But for the present I will spare you, until it becomes more evident that our reasoning is just. And if you do not submit after that, you will receive a fitting punishment for your folly and opposition.

From that time the Venerable Fathers did not wish to say anything to the emperor, reasoning among themselves:

44. Abgar was the prince of Edessa, a city lying on one of the left tributaries of the upper Euphrates. According to tradition, while the Savior was still living, Abgar, having heard of His miracles, sent Him a message asking Him to come and heal him of his illness. The Savior sent him a cloth (a towel) with the image of His face; by touching the cloth, Abgar received healing. Thus appeared the Image of the Savior not made by hands, which afterwards, on August 16, 944, was transferred from Edessa to Constantinople.

– What shall we say to a soul so corrupted and unwilling to be healed?

But the Blessed Theodore, taking up the spiritual sword, answered the emperor thus:

– Emperor, understand and comprehend that it is not your business to examine and investigate the decrees of the Church: it belongs to your authority to deliberate upon and govern worldly affairs, but the affairs of the Church are subject to the hierarchs and teachers of the Church; to you it is only commanded to follow them and obey. So the Apostle also said: "And God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:28), not emperors. And in other places Holy Scripture commands that the affairs of the Church be governed by the teachers of the Church, not by emperors.

The emperor asked the Venerable Father:

– Then are you not casting me out of the Church?

The Venerable Father answered:

– It is not I, but the traditions of the Divine Apostles and holy Fathers that cast you out. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8).

If you wish, together with us who venerate the icon of Christ, to remain within the Church of Christ, then follow the Patriarch and the honorable council that is with him!

At these words the emperor fell into still greater fury and dismissed everyone from his presence with dishonor. Having gone out from the emperor, the Venerable Fathers who had been expelled, together with the Patriarch, surrounded the Blessed Theodore, praising him with their lips and at the same time in their souls, because with great prudence and courage he had resisted the tormentor and greatly put him to shame, boldly exposing his impiety.

As they were departing to their homes, an order went out from the city governor: "That no one shall converse or dispute about the faith, but that all shall do what the emperor has commanded." The messen-

gers bearing this decree came also to the Blessed Theodore. He, hearing this edict, answered them:

– Judge for yourselves: is it right to obey you rather than God? Better that my tongue be cut out than that I should keep silent and not defend the true faith.

And the Venerable one taught everyone to hold the holy faith unshakably, calling some to himself, going himself to others, and sending letters to still others, and so he strengthened those who were faltering in spirit. Often he went to the Patriarch, serving him as a good counselor, and comforted him, seeing him grieving and suffering in soul.

– Father, do not grieve! – he said to him. – Believe that the Lord will not forsake us; He will not permit trials beyond our strength, nor allow evil to prevail over us. If the enemy has raised persecution against the Church, then in a short time the sorrow will turn back upon his own head. You know the word of the Lord: "Woe unto the world because of offenses! For it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!" (Mt. 18:7).

How many heresies have corrupt-minded men raised against the Church from the time of the holy Apostles until the present days, and how many sufferings have the holy Fathers who lived before us endured at their hands! Yet the Church remained invincible; those who suffered were brightly glorified and crowned, and the heretics received according to their deeds."

Hearing this, the Patriarch and all the Fathers of the council took courage, and were ready to endure all sorrows for the sake of orthodoxy and not to submit to impiety.

After a short time, the Most Holy Patriarch Nicephorus was cast down from the patriarchal throne by the impious emperor and exiled from Constantinople[45]; all the Orthodox hierarchs were also condemned to imprisonment. Then there appeared a terrible spectacle of dreadful sacrilege, which the wicked iconoclasts committed. Some holy icons they threw to the ground, others they burned, others they smeared

45. St. Nicephorus the Confessor, Patriarch, was exiled on 1 March to the island of Proconnesus (today Marmara in the Sea of Marmara), and in his place there was raised to the patriarchal throne one of the court officials, Theodotus, an iconoclast.

with filth, and they committed many other outrages. Seeing such wickedness, the Venerable Theodore grieved deeply, and marveling at God's long-suffering, he said with tears:

– How does the earth bear such lawlessness?!

But, unwilling to remain a worshipper of God in secret and to lament such a calamity in silence, he commanded his brethren (at the coming of Palm Sunday) to take the holy icons in their hands and walk around the monastery, raising the icons high above themselves and singing aloud:

"We venerate Thy most pure image, O Good One"[46], and other triumphal hymns in honor of Christ. Learning of this, the emperor again sent to the saint, forbidding such actions and threatening that otherwise imprisonment, wounds, and death awaited him. The holy one, however, not only did not cease to strengthen the faithful in the veneration of icons, but became even more steadfast in his courage, openly teaching everyone to hold to the Orthodox faith and to render due honor to the holy icons. Then the emperor, becoming convinced that the courage and zeal of the Venerable Theodore could be stopped neither by flattery nor by threats, condemned him to imprisonment. The Venerable one, calling to himself all his disciples and giving them soul-profiting instruction, said:

– Brethren! Let each of you now save his soul according to his own discernment, for now is a time of cruelty.

Then, grieving and weeping, he left the brethren who wept over him, and boarding a ship he was carried to Apollonia and imprisoned in a fortress called Metopa[47]. But there too he taught everyone the true faith, speaking with some in person and sending letters to others. His letters reached the emperor himself. The latter again sent a certain Nicetas, son of Alexis, with an order to take the saint to a more remote place called Vonita[48], and, having imprisoned him there, to watch closely that he never converse with anyone there or write anything con-

46. Troparion to the Image of the Saviour Not Made by Hands.
47. Apollonia is a frequently occurring name of ancient cities. Here is meant the ancient city in Illyria, known as one of the leading centres of Roman learning. *Metopa*: the fortress of Apollonia.
48. Vonita, or Bonitus, in Anatolia, otherwise Asia Minor.

cerning the veneration of icons. Nicetas, coming to the Venerable one, informed him of the imperial will. The Venerable one answered:

– I accept this transfer from place to place with joy, since I have no permanent dwelling place in this life; but wherever I am led, there is my place, for the whole earth is God's. But I cannot keep silent and not teach the Orthodox faith, and I will not obey you in this, nor will I be frightened by your threats.

And so the saint, having been brought to the aforementioned place and imprisoned, here too zealously confessed Orthodoxy. The emperor, learning that Theodore submitted to his will in nothing, was kindled with great wrath and sent the same Nicetas with an order to subject the Venerable one to cruel tortures. Nicetas, coming, announced the imperial command to the Venerable one; and the Venerable one, immediately after this announcement, began to strip off his garments, saying: "I have long desired to suffer for the holy icons," and gave his flesh over to torment. Nicetas, being a compassionate man, seeing his naked body wasted by fasting and continual ascetic labors, was moved in soul and did not dare to touch him, for he feared God, and he departed without inflicting any harm on the saint. The latter continued to spread his Orthodox teaching everywhere, for even the guards revered him and could not hinder him in what they had been threateningly ordered to forbid, namely, Theodore's teaching anyone in Orthodoxy. He also wrote to his disciples scattered in various lands; for them he cared especially, instructing them that they should fearlessly keep the true confession of faith, even though they might suffer cruelly countless times. He reminded them that the present temporary sufferings count for nothing in comparison with the glory that will be revealed in us in the future life, which all the true martyrs of Christ shall receive.[49] He also wrote to the most holy patriarchs: to the Patriarch of Old Rome[50], to the Patriarch of Jerusalem[51] and of Alexandria[52], informing them in detail of how the holy icons had been outraged in Byzantium, how the Orthodox

49. That is, the present temporal sufferings are nothing in comparison with the glory that shall be revealed in us in the future life.
50. St. Paschal, who was Pope of Rome from 817 to 824.
51. Thomas I, Patriarch of Jerusalem (d. after 820).
52. Christopher, Patriarch of Alexandria (805–836).

were held in captivity and in dungeons, and how truth had been sacrificed to falsehood. And he asked them for help for the Orthodox faith. Many came to the Venerable one who was in prison to hear his sweet teaching, and they returned with great profit to themselves.

It once happened that a certain cleric of the Asian church[53], passing by, visited the saint. This cleric, hearing his teaching on the Orthodox faith, at once renounced the iconoclast heresy and venerated the holy icons. On returning home, he would not consent to communion with his bishop, who was a heretic. He also admonished another cleric, his friend, and turned him to Orthodoxy and away from communion with the heretics. The bishop, learning that Theodore was the cause of the change in his clergy, wrote to the emperor about it, complaining against Theodore. The emperor again commanded the Asian voivode to subject Theodore to the most cruel beatings. The voivode sent one of his subordinates with orders to give Theodore fifty blows. When this man came to Theodore and told the blessed one the purpose of his coming, Theodore took off his belt and garment and, of his own will, offered his shoulders to the blows, saying:

"It would be a desirable thing for me to be stripped of my body along with these wounds, so that my naked soul might the sooner depart to the Lord."

The man, ashamed before the saint, bowed to him, asking his forgiveness, and went away.

Afterwards another envoy came from the emperor, named Anastasius, very cruel and merciless. Having beaten the saint with his own hands and inflicted up to a hundred blows, he shut him up in a dungeon. He treated in the same way his disciple, named Nicholas, who had always followed his teacher and shared his sufferings; having beaten Nicholas, Anastasius locked him up together with Theodore, and gave orders to the guards to keep them strictly, in harsh privation, and then withdrew. Words cannot express the sorrow the venerable one endured in this dark confinement. His body, worn out by fasting and monastic

53. By Asia is meant Asia Minor, or more precisely its western part.

labors, began to rot and give off a stench. Moreover, the dungeon itself was filled with filth and dust.

Through the winter the venerable one froze in the dungeon from the cold, since he did not even have the necessary clothing, but only a single ragged garment. In summer he wasted away from the heat, since no wind penetrated the dungeon from anywhere to refresh it. In addition, the dungeon was swarming with an immeasurable multitude of unclean insects and vermin. The guards, having received their orders under threat, also treated him cruelly and without mercy. They insulted and reproached him, calling him a madman and an enemy of the emperor. Through a small window they threw to Theodore and his disciple only a small piece of bread each and gave a little water, and that not always, but after a day or two, sometimes even after many days; thus they starved them with hunger and thirst. And the venerable Theodore said to his disciple:

"Child! I see that these men desire to destroy us not only with many beatings and this grievous dungeon, but also with hunger and thirst. But let us place our hope in God, who knows how to nourish not with bread alone but with some better food, at whose command everything that lives is sustained. For me, let the partaking of the Lord's Body henceforth serve as food for body and soul."

(The venerable one always had with him a particle of the Life-giving Body, soaked in the Blood of Christ the Lord, which he had reserved when celebrating the Divine Mystery, whenever this was possible for him.) "Only with this," he said, "let me partake, eating nothing else. And let the bread that is given to the two of us be for you alone, and likewise the water. You yourself see that they give us very little bread, barely enough for you alone to sustain the body; it is better that you remain alive and report to the brethren of my death, if such is God's will, that I should die in this confinement, full of deprivations."

After some time, He Who "openest Thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing" (Ps. 144:16) did not leave His servant, who was dying of terrible hunger, without help, but provided for him in this way. A certain courtier of the emperor, passing by that prison, inquired about the saint and how much oppression and hunger he was enduring.

God inclined the courtier's heart to mercy, and he ordered the guards to give Theodore and his disciple sufficient food and, in general, henceforth not to inflict harm and oppression upon them, but to allow them to live somewhat more comfortably. Thus, freed in some measure by God's good pleasure from many of the sorrows mentioned above, they regained strength in body. But even after that, the holy father continued to struggle with many afflictions, since he had a sick stomach and was subject to severe illness. So the holy servants of Christ lived in the dungeon for more than three years, receiving from the guards poor bread, and even that with reproach and abuse. Yet they endured all this for the sake of Orthodoxy, with joy.

They had scarcely recovered from their sorrows and illnesses when they were destined to suffer new sorrows, even heavier. From no one knows where, a certain letter of the blessed Theodore fell into the emperor's hands, in which was set forth a denunciation of the emperor's impiety and an exhortation to the faithful in piety and Orthodoxy. Having read this letter, the emperor blazed with the fiercest rage and sent to Theodore a certain pitiless voivode, to show him that letter and ask whether it belonged to him, and to beat him even to the last breath. The voivode came, showed the letter to the blessed one, and the latter confirmed that this letter was his and not anyone else's. Then the voivode immediately ordered that his disciple Nicholas be beaten first, having him stretched naked on the ground, since he had written this letter in Theodore's name. Then, stripping the venerable Theodore also, he beat him mercilessly, lacerated his whole body, and almost crushed even his bones. Leaving him barely alive, the voivode again came to his disciple Nicholas, now persuading him with flattery, now threatening, that he should refuse to venerate the holy icons. And since he remained faithful to Orthodoxy, the voivode again beat him more than before and left him overnight in the cold, naked, so that he suffered doubly, for it was then the month of February. The venerable Theodore, from the cruel beatings, fell into an illness hard to bear, and lay like a corpse, barely able to breathe, taking neither food nor drink. Nicholas, seeing his teacher so weakened, forgot about himself, although he himself was suffering the most terrible pain from his

wounds, and cared for Theodore's recovery. Begging a barley drink, he moistened the venerable one's parched tongue with it and, giving him a little to drink, revived him. When he saw that the venerable one was gradually regaining vital strength, he began to treat also the rest of his putrefying body. Many parts of his body, turned blue, rotten, and hanging completely useless, he cut away with a small knife and threw out, so that the remaining flesh might heal more successfully. And when the venerable one began gradually to recover, he in turn tended his disciple.

While the saints, for ninety days, were suffering in this way and had not yet fully recovered from their wounds, another stern and inhuman envoy came from the emperor, who was ordered to lead Theodore and his disciple Nicholas to Smyrna[54]. This envoy was avaricious, and thinking that Theodore had been taking gold from those who came to him for instruction, he ordered, on this account, that all the crevices of the dungeon be searched, the walls broken open, and the earth carried out, in hope of finding gold. But finding nothing, he carried out the emperor's command with especial cruelty. Dragging the venerable one and his disciple out of the dungeon with abuse and blows, he handed them over to soldiers, and they were thus led to Smyrna. The blessed one, although his bodily strength was failing, yet, strengthened by God, walked with the merciless soldiers; they led him without rest the whole day, and at night they tied him by the feet to a tree. Thus he barely reached Smyrna with difficulty, where he was given over to a wicked man, a champion of impiety. The latter shut Theodore up in some low, dark hut. They shut up with him his disciple Nicholas, and thus the blessed servants of Christ suffered together. Soon the aforementioned merciless Anastasius came again from the emperor, and, once more inflicting a hundred blows upon the venerable one, withdrew; the venerable one endured all this with thanksgiving.

At that time, the emperor's nephew and like-minded man was voivode in the region of Smyrna. He had fallen into a severe, incurable

54. This was in the year 819. Smyrna was an ancient and famous trading city on the western coast of Asia Minor; at present it is one of the most flourishing cities of Asia Minor, with a population of over 120,000 inhabitants.

illness and was at the point of death. One of his servants, who held to the Orthodox teaching, came to the sick man and told him that the venerable Theodore had from God the grace to heal every kind of sickness. The sick man at once sent his servants to the venerable one with a request to pray to God for him and to deliver him from death, which was already approaching. The venerable one answered the messengers:

"Tell the one who sent you: Theodore says this: Remember that on the day of your death you will answer before God for your impious life and for the evil you have done to the Orthodox. To your many other lawless deeds you have added also this, that you subjected my monks to countless calamities and in torments killed Thaddeus, great in virtues. And now he rejoices with the saints; but who will save you from eternal torments? At least at your end, repent of your wicked deeds."

The messengers returned and reported all of Theodore's words to the sick voivode. The latter was greatly frightened, reflecting upon the evil deeds he had committed, and again sent envoys to the Venerable Father, asking forgiveness and promising to accept the Orthodox faith if he would raise him up from his sickbed by his prayers. The Venerable Father sent to the voivode an icon of the Most Pure Mother of God, commanding him to keep it with him with reverence all the days of his life. The voivode, receiving that holy icon, obtained relief from his sufferings and began to recover. But soon afterward, under the influence of the Bishop of Smyrna, who was a heretic, he turned back to his former heresy. Receiving from the latter oil, as though it were a blessing upon himself, he anointed himself with it, in hope of complete recovery. But after this his former illness returned to him. Learning of this, the Venerable Father foretold a terrible death for the sinner, and this came to pass, for he soon perished a tormented death. The Venerable Theodore, meanwhile, suffering in seclusion, endured imprisonment in Smyrna for a year and a half. After this, the impious Emperor Leo the Armenian was forcibly deprived of life, being slain by his own soldiers, and after him the imperial throne was received by Michael, surnamed the Stammerer, also called Balbus [55]. This emperor, though

55. Michael II Travlos, or Balbus, that is, the Stammerer, reigned from 820 to 829.

impious, nevertheless did not persecute the Orthodox, but allowed each to believe as he wished. Therefore, under him all the fathers and confessors of Orthodoxy were released from confinement, let out of prison, and returned from exile. Then the Venerable Theodore also received relief from his sufferings. Some of his former disciples came to him, among whom was Dorotheus, who from his early years had advanced in virtue, then Bessarion, James, Dometian, Timothy, and many others, who were distinguished by a pious life and by fervent, unchanging love for their spiritual father Theodore. From the emperor there came to Smyrna an order that Theodore, like the rest, should be released and returned to his monastery.

When the Blessed One was returning from captivity, the Orthodox everywhere met him with joy, anticipating one another and striving to receive him into their homes, that they might be granted his prayers and blessing and be delighted by his sweet instructions. The whole Church rejoiced at Theodore's return, and all extolled him as a man who had suffered so much for the holy icons and by his teaching had established all in Orthodoxy. On the way back, the Venerable Father arrived at Chalcedon [56] to visit the blessed monk Theoctistus, who had once been honored with the rank of magistrianus [57], and, comforted by spiritual conversation with him, he set out to visit his fellow sufferer, the most holy Patriarch Nicephorus, who had been exiled into confinement by the impious Emperor Leo the Armenian. Having enjoyed spiritual conversation with him, the Venerable Father withdrew to the places of Crescentius [58] and gladdened many by his presence, giving them salutary instruction. Returning from there a second time to the patriarch, he went with him and with the other bishops to the emperor and exhorted him to accept Orthodoxy. But the emperor, being unreasonable and untaught in the Word of God, did not heed the words of the holy fathers, and said only the following to them:

56. Chalcedon was the principal city of Bithynia, on the north-western coast of Asia Minor, at the southern end of the Strait of Constantinople, opposite Constantinople. Chalcedon is known in the history of the Church as the place where the Fourth Ecumenical Council was held (451).
57. The title "magister" denoted, at the Byzantine imperial court, one of the highest court offices, and was associated with a rank higher than that of patrician.
58. This locality was situated not far from Constantinople.

"I do not forbid you to do what you wish; only I will not allow icons to be set up in the reigning city, but in another place let those who wish set them up for themselves; as for me, I do not wish to venerate icons."

When he had uttered this in his madness, the venerable fathers departed from Byzantium. The Venerable Theodore with his disciples settled in the places of Crescentius. After a short time, during a war stirred up by a certain Thomas, who wished to appropriate imperial power to himself, the saint found it necessary to appear again in Constantinople with the brethren [59]. After the end of the war, the saint, not wishing to live among a people infected with the iconoclastic heresy, again withdrew from there. Leaving Constantinople, he did not go to the places of Crescentius, but settled in Acritas Chersonesus [60], where there was a church in the name of St. Tryphon, and here, together with his disciples, he spent a God-pleasing monastic life in pious labors. Having lived a little while in such a manner with his beloved friends, the Venerable Father drew near to his blessed end, being sixty-seven years old. Before his death, in the month of November, he was stricken with a grievous illness and suffered terribly in his stomach. The news that the blessed Theodore was ill and drawing near to death spread everywhere. Then there gathered to him a multitude of pious Christians, who came both from the reigning city and from various surrounding villages, either to hear the Venerable Father in conversation and to enjoy his last words, or at least to look upon him as he departed to God. Even merely to approach him was counted a great benefit, for this wondrous man was sweet in speech, wise in understanding, and adorned with all the virtues. When the blessed one lay in bed and was very weakened by his mortal sickness, he nevertheless, as far as was possible, conducted soul-profitable conversations with his disciples. But

59. In December 821 the pretender Thomas, who called himself a son of the Emperor Constantine VI and who, towards the end of the reign of Leo the Armenian, had proclaimed himself emperor in Asia Minor, advanced upon Constantinople. Fearing lest the Orthodox might go over to his side, Michael the Stammerer promised to convene a council for their reconciliation with the persecutors of the holy icons. On this occasion Theodore the Studite also came to Constantinople. But the council did not take place, since the pretender was killed by his own accomplices, and the danger to the emperor passed.

60. Acritas was a cape in Bithynia, near Nicomedia, opposite Constantinople.

from his words only a little could be heard, because his tongue was drying up from the fever. Therefore one of the stenographers, sitting nearby and listening, recorded his words, so that all who wished to know them might read, for their soul's profit, the instructions of the blessed one. During the conversation the Venerable Father felt better, so that he even rose to his feet and began to walk. On Sunday he went to church, celebrated the Divine Liturgy, gave the brethren an instruction, and partook of the meal together with them. Likewise also on the morning of the sixth of November, the day of the commemoration of our holy father Paul the Confessor, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the church, gave the brethren an instruction, and that same day was present at Vespers; then, entering his cell, he lay down on his bed and again fell gravely ill. He was sick for four days, and on the fifth the end of his sickness came, and the beginning of a painless life. When the Venerable Father was drawing near to his repose, a multitude of brethren gathered to him, and they wept over him as over their father and teacher. Looking upon them, he shed a few tears and said:

"Fathers and brethren! Behold, the end of my life has come. We must all drink this common cup: some earlier and others later, yet we shall not escape that hour. And so I am departing by the path by which our fathers went, thither where is eternal life, and above all, where is the Lord and God, Whom my soul has loved. Him I have desired with my whole heart, to Him I have named myself a servant, though I have not fulfilled my service to Him. And you, my brethren and beloved children, remain faithful to my words, which I have delivered to you, holding to the right faith and the pious life. You know that I have not ceased to proclaim to you the Word of God, both in private and before the assembly of all. Now I earnestly beseech you: keep it in your mind and preserve it, for I am concerned for you, as one who desires to give an account of you. Therefore you too take care to depart hence blameless. As for me, if I obtain boldness before the Lord, I promise to pray for you, that your monastery may always remain in the best condition, and that each of you, with the help of God, may make greater progress in the virtues."

Having said this and bidden farewell to all, he commanded the disciples to take candles in their hands and begin the departure prayers. The disciples, standing around the bed, sang: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord" (Ps. 118:1). And when, singing, they uttered the words: "I will never forget Thy commandments, for by them Thou hast quickened me" (Ps. 118:93), the Venerable Theodore, together with these words, commended his holy soul to God. Receiving it, the Angels of God bore it to the Throne of the Lord, as was clearly made manifest by the unerring testimony of the Venerable Hilarion of Dalmatia (†845).

On the very day that Theodore departed, that is, on the eleventh day of November, the day of the commemoration of the holy martyr Mena, the Venerable Hilarion was walking through a vineyard and occupied with work, singing the Psalms of David. Suddenly he heard some most wondrous voices and perceived an indescribable fragrance. He was amazed and stopped, seeking to discover whence this came. Looking up into the air, he saw an innumerable multitude of Angelic orders, in white robes, with shining bright faces, coming down from heaven with hymns to meet a certain venerable person. Seeing this, the blessed Hilarion, in great terror, fell to the ground and heard someone speaking to him:

"Behold the soul of Theodore, abbot of the Studite monastery, who suffered greatly for the holy icons and remained firm to the end in sorrows; now the soul of the departed, rejoicing, ascends on high, met by the heavenly powers."

The blessed Hilarion reported this vision to the other virtuous fathers. They recorded the day and hour of the vision, and after some time they learned that at that very time the most praiseworthy Theodore of Studium had departed and passed from earth to heaven.

Our Venerable Father Theodore, both during his life and after his death, performed many miracles; some of these we shall relate here, for the sake of soul-profit.

A certain hospitable man named Leo sheltered the Venerable Theodore in his house for rest at the time when the latter was returning from captivity. Afterward this Leo found a bride for his son. And

now, when the wedding was being prepared, the bride suddenly fell into a grievous illness and lay, seized by a high fever, so that everyone despaired for her life.

Leon sent to the Venerable Father, informing him of what had happened and imploring him to help them by his prayers. The Venerable Father blessed oil and sent it to Leon, commanding him to anoint the sick woman with it. When this was done, the bride immediately arose, healthy, as though she had never been ill. Once, as Leon was travelling alone on an errand to a distant village, he met a lynx on the road. Seeing Leon, the beast sprang at him, intending to tear him to pieces. Leon cried aloud upon the name of the Venerable Father Theodore, and behold, the beast, hearing the saint's name, stopped and bowed to the ground; then it turned from the road and fled. Leon, untouched by the beast, continued on his way.

A certain woman who suffered from an unclean spirit was brought to the Venerable Father. The spirit tormenting her was so fierce within her that, without feeling pain, she gnawed and ate her own flesh. Seeing her suffering, the Venerable Father took pity on her, made the sign of the Cross with his hand over her head, and read over her a prayer of exorcism; and immediately the unclean spirit came out of her and, driven out by the Venerable Father's prayer, quickly vanished.

After the repose of the Venerable Theodore, a woman of noble birth told the blessed Abbot Sophronius[61] the following. "Once," she related, "a fire broke out in my house. The flames, surrounding it on every side, consumed with a great roar everything that was in it, and we could not subdue the force of the blaze either with water or by any other means; we were at a loss what to do. Then I remembered the letter of the Venerable Theodore that I had with me, which he had written to me a little while before. I thought that I might cast it into the fire, in the hope that it would somehow spare the writing traced by Theodore's holy hand and at least somewhat quiet the flames. I did as I had thought: I threw this letter into the fire and said, 'St. Theodore, help me, your handmaid, who am in distress!' And at that very moment we saw the fierce

61. Sophronius was abbot of the Studite monastery from 861 to 864.

force of the fire weaken, die out, and vanish in smoke." So great was the power contained in calling upon the name of this servant of God!

The aforementioned Sophronius tells of another similar event. "We were travelling," he said, "with the blessed Nicholas, disciple and fellow-sufferer of the great Theodore, in Paphlagonia.[62] . As evening came on, we rested in a certain field where much mown hay lay. Some soldiers were there too; travelling along that road, they had stopped in the same field because it was late, and, having kindled a fire, were preparing their supper. Later, during the night, the fire somehow began to spread unnoticed and, drawing near without our seeing it, became a great blaze, which consumed all the hay. The soldiers awoke in haste and all rushed upon us, thinking that we had set the fire; they were already about to lay hands on us and torment us. At a loss what to do, we called upon the great Theodore for help, saying, 'Venerable Father, help us, and by thy prayers deliver us from the calamity unjustly laid upon us.' As we spoke, a heavy rain suddenly began and completely extinguished the whole fire. When the soldiers saw this miracle, they grew gentle and, falling before us, begged our forgiveness."

On the island of Sardinia[63] there was a certain pious man who possessed copies of the writings of the Venerable Theodore and read them diligently. He also loved the hymns composed by that holy Father, sung during Great Lent and called Triodia or Triodes. Certain ungodly monks, passing by on the road, came to this man and stayed with him during the fast. When they saw the hymns and teachings composed by the Venerable Theodore, they began to revile them, saying that they were composed without reason and were full of folly. The pious man who had received them into his home was corrupted by their conversation; he no longer read the Venerable Father's profitable teachings, and at the morning singing he no longer had the Triodes composed by the Venerable Father, as he had been accustomed to sing them before. When he had thus been led astray, the Venerable Theodore appeared to him one night: he was of small stature, as he had been in life, with a noble face and a hairless head. Other monks followed him, holding rods

62. Paphlagonia is a region in the north of Asia Minor.
63. Sardinia is a large island in the Mediterranean Sea, to the west of Italy.

in their hands, and he commanded them to beat the man who had been led astray by the ungodly monks. As they beat him, the Venerable Father said:

"Why, through unbelief, have you rejected my writings, which you once loved and honoured? Why did you not consider that, had the Church of God seen no benefit in them, she would not have received them? For they were composed not with artful falsehood or rhetorical eloquence, but contain throughout sound and humble words, able to bring the heart to compunction and to move the soul to tenderness. They are sweet and profitable for those who truly desire to be saved."

Having thus chastened the man for his sin, the Venerable Theodore departed. When day came, the man lay sick in bed from the blows he had received, his body covered with bruises, which he showed to all as he told them of the chastisement that had befallen him. He hastened to drive from his house the monks who had led him astray, as the cause of his sin and of such chastisement. From that time, he acquired a far stronger faith in the Venerable Theodore than he had had before, and lovingly read the writings and hymns composed by him, beseeching him to forgive his former sin.

Many healings were also granted at the tomb of the Venerable. Once a man possessed by a demon came to his tomb. At night, the Venerable appeared to him in a vision and, granting him healing, made him well. When the man awoke, he found himself freed from the torment of the enemy, and glorified God and His servant, the Venerable Theodore.

A certain man ate poisoned food, and the poison infected all his inward parts; he was already near death. But when he poured into his mouth oil from the lamp burning at the tomb of the Venerable, he immediately vomited up the deadly poison, recovered his health, and remained unharmed.

A third man suffered greatly from his stomach; but when he merely looked upon the icon of the Venerable Theodore and called upon his name, he was immediately healed. Another man, possessed by a certain fear, was in a state of madness, afraid and terrified of everyone. When he was brought to the tomb of the Venerable and anointed with oil, he

was suddenly delivered from this affliction; regaining his right mind, he gave thanks to God and His servant.

Many other miracles were wrought by the prayers of the Venerable Theodore at his tomb, to the glory of the One God in Trinity. To Him be honour and worship from us, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

O guide of Orthodoxy, teacher of piety and purity, luminary of the whole world, divinely inspired adornment of monastics, O wise Theodore, thou hast enlightened all by thy teachings. O spiritual flute, pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Thou hast made radiant thine ascetic and angel-like life by thy struggles in suffering, and hast been revealed, O Theodore, blessed of God, as a fellow-dweller with the Angels. Cease not to pray with them to Christ God for us all.

* * *

Life of St. Stephen of Dečani, King of Serbia[64]

Житие святого Стефана Дечанского, краля Сербского

Stephen Uroš III of Dečani was a Serbian king, one of the pious kings and rulers of the ancient Orthodox Serbian state. He was the son of St. King Stephen Uroš II Milutin[65], the grandson of Stephen Uroš I,[66] and the great-grandson of St. Stephen, the first-crowned Serbian king,[67] brother of St. Sava, the first Serbian archbishop, and son of the Great Serbian Župan, St. Stephen (in monasticism, Simeon)

64. Two Lives of St. Stephen of Dečani are known and have survived to the present day: one was written by a contemporary, a continuator of the work of the Serbian Archbishop Daniel, who wrote the *Rodoslov*, or *Tsarestavnik*, that is, the lives of the Serbian kings and archbishops; the other was written later, some sixty years afterward, by Gregory Tsamblak, abbot of the monastery founded by St. Stephen of Dečani and afterwards Metropolitan of Kiev. These Lives form the basis of the present account.

65. Milutin ruled Serbia from 1282 to 1320.

66. He ruled from 1243 to 1276.

67. St. Stephen the First-Crowned reposed in 1224; he had ruled from 1195.

Nemanja,[68] founder of the ancient Serbian state. His mother was Milutin's first wife, Elizabeth, daughter of King Stephen V of Hungary. Belonging to a pious Serbian royal family, Stephen was brought up from childhood in Christian piety.

From his earliest years, Stephen had to witness and endure many grievous calamities. In Serbia in those days there were frequent disturbances and feuds within the royal house, uprisings and intrigues among the nobles, and continual wars with neighbouring peoples—the Bulgarians, Greeks, and Tatars.

The enemies of Orthodox Eastern Christianity, the Tatars, after ravaging and subduing Orthodox Rus', laid waste to the other Slavic Orthodox states as well, and threatened Bulgaria and Serbia.

A particularly grave danger threatened the Slavic states of the Balkan Peninsula from Nogai, Khan of Crimea. The Tatar armies sent by Nogai ravaged Bulgaria and Macedonia and invaded Serbia as well. For a time, the Bulgarians even fell under Tatar dependence, and the same fate threatened Serbia. But the Serbian King Milutin took decisive measures. Unable to resist the mighty Tatar khan by force, he entered into negotiations with him and averted the Tatar invasion, but was compelled to send his young son to the Tatar camp as a hostage, together with several noble Serbian boyars.

But God helped the pious Stephen in his misfortunes. The civil strife that soon arose among the Tatars ended with the murder of Nogai. Taking advantage of these disturbances among the Tatars, Stephen returned to his homeland.

To join in the struggle against the Tatars, the Bulgarian Tsar Smilets entered into an alliance with the Serbian King Milutin; this alliance was sealed by the marriage of Milutin's son, Stephen Uroš, to the daughter of the Bulgarian Tsar Smilets.

After his marriage, Stefan Uroš received for independent government one of the important regions, namely Zeta, or Diocleia, present-day southern Montenegro. Here Stefan ruled for some time.

68. St. Stephen (Simeon) Nemanja ruled from 1159 to 1196.

But, as often before, so now strife arose in Serbia, accompanied by the customary calamities and misfortunes.

Stefan's stepmother, the second wife of Milutin, Simonida, daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus the Elder[69] and his wife Irene, desired that the heir to the Serbian throne should be not Stefan Uroš, her stepson, but her own son, Constantine. Urged on by her mother Irene, she began to instill in King Milutin suspicion of his son Stefan, and to slander him, saying that Stefan wished to take the throne from his father.

At the same time, there were not a few among the Serbian boyars who warned Stefan of the danger threatening him, but advised him to escape it by rising up against his father and seizing royal power from him.

Meanwhile evil men succeeded in persuading his father Milutin that his son was plotting rebellion against him and wished to overthrow him from the throne. Then Milutin set out for his son's region and sent men to seize him. The emissaries bound Stefan in chains, put him in prison at Skopje[70], and blinded him.

This took place in the Serbian region called Ovče-polje. There was a church there in the name of the hierarch and wonderworker Nicholas. Blinded, Stefan endured terrible torments and sustained himself only by prayer. Amid such grievous sufferings, the half-dead martyr sees in a light sleep before him a majestic holy man in hierarchal vestments, with a radiant face; this man holds in his right hand the gouged-out eyes of Stefan and says:

"Do not grieve, Stefan! Here are your eyes in my hand," and with these words he shows them.

Thinking that this was an apparition, Stefan said to him:

"Who are you, my lord, who show such care for me?"

The one who appeared answered:

"I am Nicholas, Bishop of Myra."

Awakening from the dream, the sufferer felt some relief from his illness and gave thanks to God.

69. Andronicus the Elder Palaeologus was emperor in Constantinople from 1281 to 1332.
70. A city in Macedonia on the river Vardar; it is now called Üsküb by the Turks.

The persecution of Stefan did not end with this.

Desiring to secure himself fully against the supposed designs of his son, King Milutin banished Stefan from the homeland and sent him to Constantinople to his father-in-law, Emperor Andronicus the Elder, under surveillance together with his two young sons, Dušan and Dušica.

But even in exile God did not forsake the patient Stefan. True, Stefan was deprived of freedom here. At first he was given a separate household and full maintenance by the emperor, but free movement was forbidden him. Later Stefan with his children was moved to live in the Constantinopolitan monastery of the Pantokrator (Lord Almighty), under the supervision of the abbot, without whose permission he was not allowed to receive anyone or converse with anyone. But the valiant Stefan humbly bore all the burdens of confinement; he often repeated: "Endure, Stefan; 'in your patience save your souls' (Lk. 21:19), the Lord said."

He often gave himself to prayer with kneeling, and found consolation in it. When the monastic brotherhood gathered for the rule, he was the first to come to prayer and stood motionless until the end of the service, so that the abbot and brethren marveled at his steadfastness and zeal. For this everyone loved Stefan and showed him attention. Often they went to him for spiritual conversation. All this did not remain unknown to the emperor himself. Hearing of the praiseworthy life of the prisoner, he often summoned him, conversed with him about the benefit of the soul, and shared a meal with him.

In one such conversation, about matters of salvation and affairs of state, the talk turned to the heretic Barlaam, who had come from the west and was then troubling many Orthodox in the Greek kingdom, teaching wrongly about the light that shone around the Lord Jesus Christ during the glorious Transfiguration on Tabor. Stefan expressed this thought: "It is unrighteous and unseemly for an emperor, the shepherd of so great a flock of Christ, to keep in his flock enemies of Him; they must be driven out like wolves that corrupt souls."

A council convened by the emperor and Patriarch Athanasius condemned the heresy of Barlaam, and the heretic was expelled from the borders of the Greek kingdom.

By his virtuous life, his wisdom, and his counsel, Stefan won the universal love not only of the monastic brotherhood and of the emperor, but also of all the noble people in Constantinople, of the patriarch and of the grandees.

Of what was allotted to him by the emperor, Stefan spent only a small share on his own maintenance, and the rest he gave to the abbot for distribution to the poor.

One of Stefan's compatriots, an old acquaintance and admirer of his, wishing to ease the position of the innocent prisoner, sent him by a trusted servant a considerable sum of gold for various needs. The messenger handed the money to Stefan and conveyed the sympathetic words of his friend. Stefan gave thanks to the benefactor, prayed to the Lord God for him, but, calling the abbot, handed over all the gold sent to him for distribution to those in need. The abbot urged Stefan to keep at least a small part for ordinary needs, but he answered that God Himself had judged him to live in a foreign land and to be fed by strangers, and so it must be; the money sent must be given to those truly in need, the poor.

Having shown kindness to the messenger and kept him with him for some time, he sent him back to his friend in his homeland, thanking him and offering prayers to the Lord God on his behalf.

The mercy of God never forsook Stefan for such virtue. In the fifth year of his stay in confinement, the Lord God showed a great miracle upon him.

Once, on the day of the commemoration of the great hierarch and wonderworker Nicholas, Stefan, as was his custom, was present at the solemn All-night Vigil. During the reading of the life and miracles of the hierarch, he, as was his custom, sat down on the bench at his place and, from long toil and wakefulness, dozed off. And then he sees before him that divine man who had appeared to him before.

"Do you remember," said the one who appeared to Stefan, "what I told you when I appeared before?"

Stefan fell to the ground and said:

"I recognize that you are the great hierarch Nicholas, but what you said I do not remember."

St. Nicholas said:

"I told you not to grieve, for in my hand are your pupils, and I showed them to you."

Stefan began to recall the earlier appearance of the hierarch and, falling at his feet, began to beg for mercy. The hierarch said:

"What I told you then, I have now come to fulfill."

And, as though restoring sight, he raised Stefan, signed his face with the sign of the Cross, touched his eyes, and said:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave sight to the blind from birth, gives also to your eyes their original sight!"

With these words the hierarch became invisible.

Seized with trembling, Stefan, coming to himself, by the ineffable mercy of God began to see as before.

Taking his staff, he left the church as he always did, and, coming to his cell, alone gave himself to fervent prayer and thanksgiving for his healing. After long prayer, covering his eyes again with a cloth as before, he returned to the church and stood as usual, concealing from everyone the miracle that had been wrought upon him, and no one learned that his sight had been restored until the day when it pleased God, after his return to the homeland, to set him up as the lawful Serbian king.

Some days after Stefan's miraculous recovery of sight, his younger son, the young Dušica, fell into grievous illness and died. Stefan bore this loss without murmuring, repeating the words, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away," so that all around him marveled at Stefan's fortitude.

Stefan's languishing in confinement in a foreign land continued for two more years. However patiently Stefan bore his exile, as a cross laid upon him by the Providence of God, still he wished to return to his homeland.

And so he wrote a tearful letter to Mount Athos, to the Serbian Lavra of Hilandar, where at that time there was a Serbian bishop, af-

terwards Archbishop Daniel, whom Stefan had always loved and befriended. In his letter he portrays his calamity in vivid colors and asks Daniel, together with the great elders of Athos, to intercede before his father, King Milutin, and to obtain for him mercy and return to his homeland.

On Athos a general council of elders gathered to consider the matter. They resolved to write a letter to the Serbian Archbishop Nicodemus and to send it with chosen venerable elders to Serbia, to petition for the return of the son and grandson.

The eloquent letter and the speeches of Archbishop Nicodemus and of the elders sent touched the father's heart.

At the same time there arrived in Serbia from Constantinople the abbot of the monastery of the Pantokrator, in which Stefan with his son was kept. This abbot, as an eloquent and skilled man, had been sent by the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus Palaiologos to his son-in-law, the Serbian king Milutin, to ask for military aid against the enemies of the Greek kingdom.

Having conferred about affairs of state, King Milutin invited the imperial envoy, the abbot of the monastery of the Pantokrator, to converse with him in private, and began to question him about his son Stefan.

The abbot related to the father in detail the virtues, labors, and patience of his son, and exclaimed that all the treasures of the emperor could not be compared with them. These accounts moved Milutin. Moreover, shortly before, his mother-in-law, the mother of Simonida, Empress Irene, the chief cause of the father's suspicions and enmity toward the son, had died. As a result of all this, Milutin resolved to recall his son.

He sent an embassy to Emperor Andronicus, asking him to send his son Stephen and his grandson Dušan back to their homeland, Serbia. Emperor Andronicus, who had grown fond of Stephen and held him in deep esteem, took leave of the Serbian exile and sent him on his way, providing him with all that was necessary and generously rewarding him with gifts. Andronicus knew of the sufferer’s recovery of sight, but

disclosed it to no one, lest he bring new suspicions and persecutions upon Stephen.

Thus, after eight years of exile in a foreign land, Stephen returned to his homeland with his growing son Dušan. Their meeting was touching. The father was reconciled with his son. He gave him the small region of Budimlje in Dioclea (Zeta) to govern for his livelihood, and kept his grandson Dušan with him to raise, and perhaps also to hold him as a pledge of his son's loyalty.

Three years later came the death of the Serbian King Milutin (29 Oct. 1320). The supporters of Stephen's stepmother, Simonida, stirred up a revolt in favor of her son Constantine, but most of the Serbian nobles took the side of the lawful heir to the throne, Milutin's eldest son Stephen, who came from Dioclea to Prizren,[71] then the capital of Serbia, and in January 1321 was crowned with the royal crown by Nicodemus, Archbishop of Serbia, with all the Serbian clergy assembled in concelebration. Together with his father, according to Byzantine custom, his son was also crowned to the "kingdom"—"Stephen, the younger king," who was called Dušan. Stephen began to reign under the name Uroš III. Now the bandage was removed from his eyes, and it became evident to all that Stephen's sight had been wondrously restored through the intercession of the great Wonderworker Nicholas.

The reign of Stephen Uroš III was neither quiet nor peaceful. Internal disturbances did not subside.

Stephen's brother Constantine, son of the Greek woman Simonida, gathered an army and marched against Stephen, demanding that he yield the royal throne to him. Stephen, for his part, gathered an army and marched against Constantine. Before the matter came to battle, Stephen sent his brother a letter, urging him not to wage war against his homeland with the aid of foreign troops, but to rule peacefully the region he would give him: "Both of us can live in contentment in so vast a land." But Constantine did not heed these peaceful proposals; he entered into battle and was slain, and his men went over to Stephen's side.

71. The city of Prizren is situated in Old Serbia, now belonging to Turkey, near the river White Drin, on its small left tributary, the Marica.

Stephen Uroš III was also opposed by his cousin Vladislav, son of Dragutin, King of Srem and brother of Milutin; but this revolt, too, ended in Stephen's favor. Vladislav was compelled to submit to him.

After the death of his first wife, a Bulgarian princess, Stephen Uroš married twice more: first Blanche, daughter of Philip of Taranto, Duke of Achaea,[72] and, after the death of this second wife, Maria, daughter of John Palaiologos, governor of Thessalonica.

In time of peace, Stephen cared for the welfare of his subjects and for the affairs of the Church. He confirmed earlier charters and secured for the churches their landed estates and other revenues. He also cared for the preservation of the purity of the faith and the eradication of heresies within his realm. One contemporary made the following entry about Stephen Uroš III in a Gospel book:

"The Lord chose and glorified him for his homeland, like a bright and shining star; he established his native land, took possession of many cities and regions, and scattered his enemies. He sent his son against the godless and impious Babuns. With God's help, the latter defeated them, shedding much blood, took a very great number captive, and returned to his father." The Bogomils were called Babuns: dangerous heretics who settled in the mountainous region of Babuna, near the city of Prilep in Macedonia, and from there raided the Orthodox.

In the reign of Stephen Uroš III, Serbia enjoyed complete peace for many years; there were no internal disturbances, nor were there wars with its neighbors. The pious King Stephen occupied himself with charitable works and with building and adorning the churches of God, both in his homeland and beyond its borders.

But toward the end of his reign, a fierce war broke out with the neighboring Bulgarian kingdom, whose people shared the same faith and kinship. Under the Serbian King Milutin, Bulgaria, torn by internal disturbances and laid waste by Tatar raids, had grown considerably weaker and could not match Serbia in power. When the Bdin despot Michael[73] became King of Bulgaria, he united in his hands authority

72. A region in the south of present-day Greece.
73. Michael of Bdin, or of Vidin (from the city of Vidin on the Danube), was Tsar of Bulgaria from 1323 to 1330.

over all the divided Bulgarian regions, seeking to recover certain cities seized by Serbia and even devising to humble Serbia by attaining great power.

The Bulgarian King Michael inflicted a bitter insult upon Stephen Uroš III. Although married to Stephen's own sister, Milutin's daughter Anna (otherwise called Neda), he dismissed his wife without cause and confined her in a monastery together with her young son Stephen; then he himself married Theodora, sister of the claimant to the Byzantine throne Andronicus the Younger and widow of the Bulgarian King Svetoslav. Enmity between the rulers of the two neighboring and kindred peoples grew still more intense because the Serbian king supported the lawful Byzantine Emperor Andronicus the Elder, who had grown fond of the Serbian King Stephen while he was imprisoned in Constantinople and held him in esteem; whereas the Bulgarian King Michael drew close to Andronicus the Elder's rival, his grandson Andronicus the Younger, who succeeded in taking the imperial throne from his grandfather. Andronicus the Younger and Michael of Bulgaria concluded an offensive and defensive alliance against Serbia. These two allies resolved to attack Serbia simultaneously in 1330.

Stephen Uroš knew of these hostile preparations and gradually readied himself to defend his homeland, gathering weapons and troops. By then his son Stephen Dušan had reached full manhood and was assisting his father with the military preparations.

The Bulgarian King Michael set out on campaign in the summer of 1330. He had with him as many as fifteen thousand Bulgarian troops proper, and almost as many auxiliary and mercenary troops—Vlachs[74] (under Voivode Ivanko Bessarab), Black Tatars, and Alans (who lived in what is now Moldavia).[75] The Serbs regarded this invasion as an invasion by godless and impious nations.

At the same time, in accordance with the agreement, the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus the Younger also marched against the Serbs. His army was small. He did not dare to begin military operations, but en-

74. Wallachia: the south-western part of the present Kingdom of Romania.
75. Moldavia lies to the north of Wallachia. Together with the latter it forms the Kingdom of Romania.

camped on the Serbian frontier in Macedonia, to await the outcome of the Bulgarian conflict with the Serbs.

The swift advance of two powerful kings against Serbia could not, of course, fail to alarm the Serbian king. Though he had already made preparations, he wished to avoid bloodshed. He resolved to send a message to the Bulgarian king, urging him not to allow blood to be shed. In this message he wrote: "Why do you come to destroy the Bulgarian and Serbian peoples? What God has granted you, you hold in your hands; be content with it, and do not desire what belongs to another, do not desire what God has granted to others. If you are so warlike, take up arms against those of another faith, and not against the people of Christ, of whom by His grace I am the shepherd, and who have done you no wrong. Consider how much blood will be shed, how many mothers will be left childless, how many corpses from both sides will be cast for birds and beasts to devour, and how much God will exact from the one who destroyed them. Leave us in peace. Keep what is yours, and return to your own people. For those who seek to seize what belongs to another lose even that which they seemed to possess securely. Thus judges the All-Seeing Eye."

But this eloquent message of peace from Stephen had no effect on Michael; on the contrary, he said: "If tomorrow the Serbian king does not come before me with a submissive head, I shall order him brought bound and in disgrace, and put him to a cruel death."

Nothing remained for Stephen but to enter battle with the enemy, relying upon God's help.

The Serbian troops gathered near the Serbian-Bulgarian frontier in the valley of Dobriči, where the rivers Toplica and Morava meet, a place where fierce battles between the two peoples had often been fought before. The Bulgarian king was expected to come there from Bdin. Meanwhile, news arrived that Michael had marched through Sofia[76] into Macedonia, perhaps hoping to join his ally, the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus. Stephen then hastened to lead his troops south. On his way stood the monasteries his father had built: that of St.

76. Sofia is a city in Bulgaria, the present capital of the Bulgarian principality.

George at Nagoričino (near Kumanovo), and that of St. Joachim at Sarandapor. Here King Stephen prayed fervently, especially to St. George the Victorious, who had aided his ancestors, the pious Serbian rulers.

The Serbs reached the Bulgarian camp on the River Struma, at the Serbian frontier, near the village of Zemelna; they halted on the streamlet Kamenča, beside the very city of Velbužd (now called Kyustendil).

For about three days, the camps sent messengers to one another without engaging in battle. The Serbian King Stephen was waiting for certain nobles who had fallen behind, while many of the Bulgarian king's troops had scattered through the surrounding countryside to gather provisions.

At last Saturday, 28 July, arrived. Movement began in the Serbian camp; all were preparing for battle. Because the Serbs had delayed, the Bulgarian king did not expect an attack that day at all, and had not gathered his troops, who were scattered over a wide area.

The Serbian forces were preparing for battle under the leadership of the king's bold son, the young Stephen Dušan. The Serbian elite army, splendidly armed and led by a separate hired company of knights under the command of Stephen Dušan, advanced against the Bulgarians. A fierce battle ensued, in which Dušan set an example of personal bravery. Soon the Bulgarian army, which had not expected so united an assault, was crushed and put to flight.

The Bulgarian Tsar Michael himself took to flight. His horse stumbled beneath him, and the Tsar fell from it and was badly bruised. The Serbs surrounded him, and Stephen Dušan himself cut off his head.

The body of the unfortunate Bulgarian Tsar was carried to the Serbian king, who sorrowfully regretted that his adversary had not heeded his offers of peace and his warnings.

After this cruel bloodshed, the entire Bulgarian army surrendered to the Serbian king.

On the day after the battle, a Sunday, early in the morning, the spoils taken from the Bulgarians were solemnly presented to the Serbi-

an king: weapons, costly royal garments and vessels, magnificent horses; and the Bulgarian boyars were brought before him in chains. They could not believe that their Tsar had perished; they thought he had escaped death. But the sight of the Tsar's corpse had to convince them that their Tsar was lost beyond recall, and nothing remained for them but to weep. Yielding to the boyars' entreaties, the king ordered that the slain Bulgarian Tsar be buried with honor in the Serbian Monastery of St. George at Nagoričane.

Giving thanks to the Lord God for the victory granted him, King Stephen at once sent word of it to his wife Maria and to Daniel, Archbishop of Serbia, together with the whole Serbian Council, in the following letter: "Let it be known that, by God's help and through the intercession of our holy lord, the Venerable Father Simeon, and of St. Sava, and by your prayers, being armed and defended by the intercession, strengthening, and power of the Holy Spirit, I, the Serbian kral, together with our most beloved son Stephen and our warriors, the children of my fatherland, have defeated in battle our malicious enemy, the Bulgarian emperor, who came with many foreign peoples and vaunted himself against our fatherland. The battle took place in a place called Zemlen, in our kingdom; and by God's help I slew the emperor himself and took away their great wealth and glory. Rejoicing in this, render due praise to God. We are now setting forth on our further journey into the Bulgarian land."

This joyful news was received with rejoicing throughout Serbia, and solemn services of supplication were celebrated in all the churches on account of so great a mercy from God.

King Stephen, together with his son, then set out solemnly to restore order in Bulgaria. The captive Bulgarian boyars accompanied him. Soon the boyars who had remained in Bulgaria and governed its towns and provinces came out to meet him; at their head was Belaur, brother of the slain Tsar Michael. In the name of all Bulgaria, they placed themselves under the authority of the Serbian sovereign and declared themselves ready for Bulgaria and Serbia to unite as one state.

But Stephen would not have this. He wished to restore to the Bulgarian throne his sister Anna, who had been wronged and disgraced,

together with her son Stephen. Immediately after his victory over Michael, he sent her word of it in her monastic confinement, urging her not to lose heart but to hope for a better future. Now, by a special embassy, he invited her to come with her son to the Bulgarian capital, Tărnovo, and sent the necessary military aid.

King Stephen declared to the Bulgarian boyars that he himself renounced the Bulgarian throne and would install as emperor of Bulgaria his sister's son Stephen (Shishman II), whom they must obey; they themselves could remain in complete safety and retain their former offices.

Having thus acted magnanimously toward the defeated, the Serbian king returned to his homeland with his army.

A short time after returning from Bulgaria, Stephen Dečanski, together with his son Dušan, made an expedition into Macedonia. The kral wished to punish another enemy as well—the Byzantine emperor—for his alliance with Michael of Bulgaria. The campaign lasted a week. No encounter or battle with the emperor took place; the Serbs recovered the towns and fortresses that had for a time been occupied by Andronikos, who had now fled, and also annexed several towns on the Vardar River[77] whose inhabitants had voluntarily surrendered to them, among them Veles, Prosek, and Štip. Leaving Serbian voivodes in these towns, the two commanders returned home: the father to his court at Nerodimlje[78], and the son to Skadar[79].

Thus the difficult year 1330 ended happily for the Serbs.

After his victories over external enemies, which had brought glory to Serbian arms, King Stephen devoted himself entirely to works of charity, to the building and adornment of the churches of God, and to other God-pleasing deeds, which had always been the delight of his life.

Throughout his life, St. Stephen was a venerator of Orthodox holy places, not only in his own homeland but beyond its borders as well. As

77. The Vardar flows, in the Turkish region of Macedonia, past the town of Kalkandelen.

78. Nerodimlje is situated on the river Nerodimka, a tributary of the upper Vardar, near the watershed between the Aegean Sea, into which the Vardar flows, and the Danube, into which the Sitnica, which rises here, flows through the famous Field of Kosovo into the river Ibar, which flows into the Serbian Morava, which in turn flows into the Danube.

before, and now especially, he sent generous and rich gifts to Jerusalem and throughout the Holy Land, to Sinai, Egypt, and Alexandria, and also to Constantinople—particularly to the Monastery of the Pantokrator there, where he had struggled in ascetic life during his confinement. He also gave to the monasteries of Thessaly[80] and especially to the Holy Mountain of Athos, where stood the renowned Lavra of Chilandar, founded and built by Serbian krals and later Tsars. Besides sending generous gifts, King Stephen granted estates yielding revenues to many of these monasteries and confirmed them by his charters.

All the Serbian sovereigns before Stephen, his forefathers, built zadushbine—that is, churches with monasteries—in which they decreed that they should be buried and commemorated for the repose of their souls. So too did St. Stephen Uroš III, after the victory over the Bulgarians had brought him treasure, resolve, in thanksgiving to the Lord God and for the commemoration of his soul, to raise a church to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For counsel and assistance he turned to Daniel, Archbishop of Serbia, whom he respected and loved. Together with him and trusted boyars, he went about his domains in search of a place worthy and suitable for a magnificent church. They visited many places; at last Stephen settled in a mountainous region, on the little river Bistrica, which flows into the White Drin, northwest of Prizren and three hours' journey from the town of Peć, later the residence of the Serbian patriarchs, at a place called Dečani. The place is extraordinarily beautiful. It is a small valley covered with various kinds of trees, rich in springs and watered by the Bistrica, whose waters are clear and wholesome. On every side, especially to the west, it is surrounded by high mountains. Here Stephen resolved to raise a renowned church. Archbishop Daniel blessed and consecrated the site, and construction began at once.

Stephen Uroš summoned artists and craftsmen from his domains along the Adriatic Sea. Many workers began bringing materials—stones of various kinds, costly marble of different colors, and other

79. Scutari, at the southern end of Lake Scutari, near the outflow from it of the river Bojana, which flows into the Adriatic Sea.
80. Thessaly now lies in Turkey, adjacent to the Greek kingdom, to its north-east.

things. First, the area for the monastery was measured out and enclosed by high, fortified walls with towers; on the south side was a gate, above which rose the highest tower. Inside, cells for the monks were built against the walls, like birds' nests. A common refectory was constructed, remarkable for its size and especially for the artistry of its decoration. A kitchen and bakery were built separately. A splendid building of its own was erected for the abbot. But the chief attention and care were devoted to building, in the center of the monastery enclosure, a magnificent church of the Ascension of the Lord. The entire vast church was built of dressed marble of different colors and adorned with carving, columns, and arches of extraordinary craftsmanship and beauty. This remarkable building has been preserved to the present day. Here is how one Russian traveler[81], who visited this Serbian holy place some fifty years ago, describes it:

"The church is large and high, built in the form of a cross, with one round, lofty dome. Even the exterior walls impress with their magnificence: from bottom to top they consist of marble slabs, regularly arranged in horizontal bands—the lowest course of white marble, the second of pink, the third again white, the fourth gray; then the same pattern begins again. It should also be noted that each time the lower course is wider, the second narrower, and the third and fourth narrower still. The church roof is of lead; the dome is also covered with lead, so massive that, they say, the roof of the dome has not once required repair since the church was built in 1335. Over time, the lead on the dome has taken on a strange sheen, resembling the color of copper. A large cross stands unharmed upon the dome, said to be made of solid silver. On the eastern side of the church, one sees the projecting apse of the great sanctuary and, on either side of it, two smaller apses belonging to the two chapels dedicated to St. Nicholas and St. Demetrius, the prothesis of the great sanctuary, and the sacristy. These five connected apses form an extraordinarily beautiful combination of lines."

The magnificence and beauty of the exterior were matched by the interior adornments of the main church and chapels, fashioned from

81. A. F. Hilferding; see his collected works, vol. 3: *Bosnia, Herzegovina and Old Serbia*. St. Petersburg, 1873, p. 129.

carved stone, gold, and other costly materials. The church was richly furnished with church utensils, golden and silver vessels, and church vestments made of precious fabrics and adorned with beads and precious stones.

Having finished the construction of the magnificent and richly appointed church, Stephen appointed as its superior the Hegumen Arsenius, renowned for his pious life, and solemnly consecrated the newly built church with an assembly of Serbian clergy headed by Archbishop Daniel. To secure its future, St. Stephen Uroš, by his charters, confirmed to the monastery a multitude of villages, lands and other income-producing estates in various parts of his extensive domains.

Besides the side-chapel in the name of his patron and protector, Hierarch Nicholas, in the south part of the main church, Stephen also built in his honor a separate church outside the monastery, nearby, for the constant celebration of services in honor of this saint.

St. Stephen Uroš had always been distinguished by his love of the poor and his compassion for the unfortunate, and now he devoted himself especially to this kind of care. About three versts from the Dečani monastery he founded yet another monastery for the care of the sick, the crippled and the aged from all his kingdom. The spacious halls of this charitable establishment were furnished with beds and everything necessary for the sick and the crippled. A numerous brotherhood was gathered to attend the unfortunate sufferers. Stephen himself visited this monastery constantly; it was a joy to him to help the unfortunate. Sometimes he came into the hospital openly, as a king, and comforted the sufferers by his word and conversation; at other times he came disguised as a warrior and distributed rich alms. This institution was also amply provided for by royal gifts and donations. From all parts of Serbia the sick and the crippled flocked here; some, once recovered, yielded their place to other sick, while others remained here until the end of their suffering lives.

Shortly before his death there appeared to Stephen his ever-present defender and helper, St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, and said:

– Prepare yourself, Stephen, for your departure: you must soon stand before the Lord!

The last days of the life of Stephen Uroš III were darkened by a great misfortune: enmity between him and his son, the "young king" Stephen Dušan, which ended in the martyr's death of the much-suffering Stephen Uroš.

Stephen Dušan, distinguished by feats of valor in the war with the Bulgarians, governed the Zeta region. Self-seeking boyars who served under him began to incite him to take the throne from his father and become king over all Serbia. They frightened Stephen that he would suffer the same fate as his father, who had been blinded in childhood by his grandfather Milutin. The ambitious Stephen believed the slanders, and in his region an uprising against his father arose.

Uroš did not desire enmity; he took measures to put an end to the rebellion, and after long negotiations met with his son, who promised to undertake nothing against his father. Stephen Uroš again left his son in peace, placing his hope in God. But this was not what the boyars desired. They began to tell Dušan that his father harbored hidden enmity toward him and would destroy him. Trusting this, Stephen wished at one point to flee the fatherland to foreign lands, but the boyars would not allow it and again urged Stephen to finish with his father. Dušan yielded to these persuasions, and in Serbia a great crime was committed.

After the reconciling meeting with his son, Stephen Uroš lived peacefully in his domains, now in one castle, now in another, devoting himself to works of charity and taking no special measures for his own safety. At the time when Stephen Uroš was staying in the secluded mountain castle of Petriča near Nerodimlje, the Zeta boyars with Stephen Dušan at their head suddenly arrived there, surrounded the castle, and seized Stephen Uroš with his whole family. Dušan ordered Stephen Uroš himself to be taken to the remote, secluded and inaccessible castle of Zvečan[82], and his wife and children to another place.

But the matter did not end there. It was resolved to finish completely with the old Serbian kral. By Stephen Dušan's order, some of

82. The fortress of Zvečan, whose ruins still exist today, stood to the north-west of the Field of Kosovo, beyond the town of Mitrovica, on the left bank of the river Ibar.

his attendants went to Zvečan, and Stephen Uroš died a martyr's death, being strangled in the castle[83].

The body of the martyr was brought to the newly built Dečani monastery and solemnly buried in a rich tomb in the church of the Ascension of the Lord, which Stephen himself had built.

It was said that Stefan Uroš had died a natural death, but of course everyone soon learned the truth and regarded the deceased king as a martyr.

Seven years later there was a miraculous appearance to the ecclesiarch of the Dečani monastery: in a dream-vision some unknown man commanded that the body of the late king Stephen be taken out of the earth. The ecclesiarch related the vision to the hegumen. The cautious hegumen reassured the ecclesiarch that it was merely a dream. But the appearance was repeated. At last, a third time, the stern man appeared not only to the ecclesiarch but also to the hegumen, and demanded the same.

Then the hegumen reported all this to the archbishop. A council of clergy assembled at Dečani. After a moleben, the coffin of Stephen was opened, and a fragrance spread throughout the church and around it; all beheld the incorrupt relics of the holy martyr. At the same time several miracles took place: a blind man who fell down before the relics of the martyr regained his sight, and other sick people received healing.

And afterward many healings and other miracles occurred. St. Stephen always came to help those who came with faith to seek his intercession, and always protected his monastery from enemies who attempted to encroach on its possessions. From the time of the uncovering of the relics of the holy martyr, the Dečani monastery became a precious shrine for the Orthodox Serbian people.

* * *

Memory of the Blessed Maximus, Fool-for-Christ, Wonderworker of Moscow

Память блаженного Максима, Христа ради юродивого, московского чудотворца

83. The martyric death of St. Stephen of Dečani took place on 11 November 1331.

The merciful Lord has opened several paths for salvation and the attainment of eternal blessedness. But the most difficult and burdensome of them is the ascetic feat of voluntary foolishness for Christ. The Blessed Maximus chose this path and steadfastly walked it until his death. Time has not preserved for us a detailed life of this Wonderworker of Moscow. Renouncing all the comforts of life, he walked almost naked through the streets of the city of Moscow, enduring both cold and heat. By his sayings he restrained many from evil or encouraged them in their labors. "Though winter is harsh, paradise is sweet," he often used to say. "For patience God gives salvation." "God is great, He will find out injustice. Neither He can be deceived by you, nor you by Him." "Everyone crosses himself, but not everyone prays."

The Blessed Maximus labored in the first half of the fifteenth century. It was a hard time for the Russian land: the Tatar yoke, famine, droughts and plague oppressed the people. By his own patience the saint taught people patience. Living himself a life free of covetousness, he wished that others too should not forget their souls for the sake of temporal riches, and he restrained the Moscow merchants from unjust dealings: "A home chapel, but a conscience for sale. Abraham by the beard, but Ham by his deeds."

After such labors the Blessed Maximus reposed on November 11, 1433, and was buried at the church of Sts. Boris and Gleb on Varvarka Street. It pleased the Lord to glorify His servant with miracles. Thus, at the tomb of the saint in 1506 a man whose leg had been drawn up was healed. On August 13, 1547, the incorrupt relics of the Blessed Maximus were uncovered, and at that same time the celebration of the saint was established. The relics themselves remained under a cover. Pious venerators of the memory of the saint built a side-chapel over the relics of St. Maximus of Moscow in honor of St. Maximus the Confessor. In 1698, through the zeal of the Moscow inhabitants Maxim Verkhovitin and Maxim Sharovnikov, the old churches were dismantled. In the course of this, a stone that had come loose from the wall revealed a great treasure: the healing relics of the holy Blessed Maximus. They were honorably transferred to one of the Moscow cathedrals, where they remained during the whole time of the building of the new church.

This church, which exists to this day, was consecrated in the name of the holy Blessed Maximus with a side-chapel in honor of Maximus the Confessor.

For about forty years the relics of the Blessed One were kept in this church. In 1737 a severe fire occurred, known by the name of the Trinity fire. The flames also seized the church in the name of the Blessed Maximus of Moscow. The church burned down entirely, and the reliquary with the relics of St. Maximus also burned. The surviving parts of the holy relics were reverently gathered and transferred to this church in 1768. Here to this day the relics of St. Maximus rest, bestowing healings to the glory of God. Amen.

NOTES

7257. At present the following writings of the Venerable Theodore concerning the typikon and order of the Church are known from the lists: "A Description of the Ordinance of the Studite Community," penances for the whole brotherhood, and a decree concerning the Cheesefare week. The Studite typikon differs from other monastic typika, including the Jerusalem one, more in its rules of monastic life than in its liturgical provisions. Yet the church typikon owes to the Venerable Theodore also a significant addition concerning the composition and arrangement of the church services. The service according to the Studite typikon was somewhat shorter and less solemn than according to the Jerusalem one. Later, at the end of the eleventh century, it was introduced as a guide by the Russian Church and remained in force there until the middle of the fourteenth century, when it begins to yield to the Jerusalem typikon; but in places it remained in force much longer, and in some Russian monasteries it was even in use until recent times.

7258. Apart from the typikon, the Venerable Theodore the Studite wrote many other works, whose chief aim is the edification of the soul unto salvation. The Venerable Theosterictus, one of the teachers of the Church close to Theodore in time, called him "the fiery teacher of the Church." The Venerable wrote homilies, catechetical instructions, letters to various persons, epigrams, and lives. Among his dogmatic writings are: a dogmatic book on icons against the iconoclasts, seven chapters against the same, and many of the letters depicting the history of iconoclasm. Further, the Venerable's writings include exhortations to lead a Christian life; of these, two catechisms are known, a large one of 264 instructions and a small one of 134. These instructions and exhortations the Venerable delivered himself to the brethren, adapting each to the day. Besides this, there remain from the Venerable Theodore: a book of laudatory words on the Lord's feasts, on the feasts of the Mother of God and of John the Forerunner, several chapters of ascetical content, epigrams and iambic verses, by which were written: a book on the creation and fall of Adam, on the fratricide of Cain, on Enoch, Noah and his

sons, and a hymn to St. John the Forerunner. Next follow canons and triodia with stichera, included in the composition of the Lenten Triodion (for the Saturday of Meatfare on the Last Judgment of Christ, for the Saturday of Cheesefare week to all the fathers, for the third week of Great Lent to the Holy Cross, triodia with stichera for all days except Holy Week, tetraodia for the second, third, fourth and fifth weeks of Great Lent, etc.), and the touching canon to the Lord Jesus "for singing at night."



THE TWELFTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 12

12 ноября

New Calendar November 12 · Old Calendar November 25 (civil dates)

Life of John the Almsgiver, Patriarch of Alexandria

Житие Иоанна Милостивого, патриарха Александрийского

John was born on the island of Cyprus and was the son of Prince Epiphanius.[1] From his youth he was brought up in piety and in the fear of God, which for him was the beginning of wisdom. When he came of age, he entered into marriage at the will of his parents and had children. But soon John lost his children, and then his wife, for so God was pleased to ordain, that John, freed from servitude to the flesh, might give himself to the spiritual life. Freed from the bonds of married life, he gave thanks to God and from that time on, now without any hindrance, zealously began to serve the Lord, devoting himself to frequent prayer and to all works pleasing to God. He was especially merciful and compassionate toward all who suffered distress from poverty. For these virtues God glorified him among men, and not only among his equals, but he was also honored and glorified by the emperor himself. After some time the patriarchal throne[2] of the Church of Alexandria was left without a shepherd; then the emperor Heraclius,[3] by divine providence, honored John with the rank of patriarch. The saint, although he did not desire this, was compelled to accept the consecration, and became the archpastor of the Church of Alexandria.

Having ascended the patriarchal throne, John first of all, as a shepherd of rational sheep, took care to cleanse his flock of the heresy that

1. Cyprus is an island in the northeastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. Epiphanius was the chief military commander on the island. St. John was born in the city of Amathus, in the southern part of the island of Cyprus.
2. Alexandria is a city in Egypt, by the western branch of the River Nile; it was founded by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C.

was troubling the flock of Christ. This heresy had its beginning in a certain Peter, surnamed Fullo, otherwise Cnapheus, the false patriarch of Antioch; he dared to add such blasphemous words to the Thrice-Holy hymn, "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, who wast crucified for us, have mercy on us," as though the Divinity had suffered in our Lord.[7310]

Having eradicated this heretical teaching, Saint John devoted himself wholly to the zealous fulfillment of the commandments of God and to works of beneficence. No one in need went away from him sorrowful and empty-handed; he gave alms to all who asked, comforted all in their sorrows, not in word only but also in deed; he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, ransomed captives, and had care for strangers and the sick. His generosity was like a river flowing continually and abundantly, giving drink to all who thirst.

At the beginning of his pastorate John summoned the church stewards[4] and gave them this charge:

"Go through the whole city and enroll all my lords."

The stewards asked him:

"Who then are your lords?"

The patriarch answered:

"They are those whom you call beggars and the poor; they are my lords, for they can truly help me to attain salvation and lead me into the eternal mansions."

The stewards went and enrolled all the poor they found in the streets, in the hospitals, and on the dunghills. Of them all seven thousand five hundred persons were found, and to all of them Saint John commanded that everything necessary for daily sustenance be given.

At that time the Persians made an attack on Syria and Palestine, burned the holy city of Jerusalem, seized the Precious Wood of the Holy Cross, and led many Christians into captivity.[5] The blessed John sent ships with gold and wheat for the ransom of captives and for the relief of those in misfortune; thus by his compassion he delivered many

3. Emperor Heraclius reigned from 610 to 641.

4. Stewards managed the Church's affairs. The steward of the patriarch was responsible for the patriarchate's Church revenues.

from imprisonment and freed them from the calamities of captivity. And since not everyone could come to him without hindrance, for his servants did not announce every visitor to the patriarch, for this reason he chose two days in the week, Wednesday and Friday, and on these days he sat with some pious men at the church doors, receiving everyone who wished, listening to their petitions, judging the disputes that arose, defending the wronged, and establishing peace among the faithful. The holy patriarch said to those around him:

"If the way into the presence of my Lord God has never been barred to me, and I converse with Him in prayer and ask of Him what I desire, why then should I not allow my neighbor unhindered access to me, that he may tell me of his wrong and need and ask of me what he wishes? We must fear Him who said: 'With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you' (Mt. 7:2)."

Sometimes it happened that no one came to the blessed John with a request while he sat at the church doors waiting for those wishing to turn to him; then he would rise grieved and return home in tears. At such times some would sometimes ask him:

"Why do you grieve and lament?"

The saint answered them:

"Today humble John has found nothing and has brought nothing to God for his sins."

His friend, the blessed Sophronius, said to him:

"Truly you ought to rejoice today, Father, since your rational sheep live in peace, without strife and disputes, like the Angels of God."

Once the church stewards informed Saint John that among the crowd of the poor there stood well-dressed maidens asking for alms,

5. Heraclius waged a terrible war against Khosrow II, king of Persia. Khosrow took Syria and Palestine; one of his detachments conquered Egypt, while another advanced as far as Chalcedon, which lay on the opposite shore from Constantinople. The war was so savage that, for example, upon taking Jerusalem, Khosrow destroyed churches and desecrated the holy places. At that time, according to tradition, 90000 Christians were slain, and many of them were bought by Jews for the express purpose of putting them to death. This was in 614. Amid these grievous calamities, Patriarch John the Merciful proved a true healer of the sorrows of Christians. The war ended in peace after Heraclius's victories over Khosrow. Peace was concluded in 628 by Khosrow's son, King Siroes, who had seized the captives and the Precious Life-giving Cross of the Lord.

and at the same time they asked him whether those maidens, like the other beggars, should be given alms. The patriarch answered:

"If you are truly servants of Christ and faithful servants of humble John, then give as Christ commanded, without regard to persons, without inquiring into the lives of those to whom you give. Know that we are giving not what is our own but what is Christ's; therefore let us give as He has commanded. But if you think that the church's property will not suffice for so great an almsgiving, then I do not wish to share in your little faith. I believe God that even if all the poor of the whole world were to gather in Alexandria desiring alms from us, our church's possessions would not be diminished."

And so that they might not be of little faith, the hierarch related the following:

"When, in the sixteenth year of my life, I was still on the island of Cyprus, one night during sleep I saw a most beautiful maiden; she was splendidly dressed and had a wreath of olive upon her head. Standing near my bed, the maiden touched me and woke me. Awakening, I saw that she was standing before me no longer in a dream but in waking reality, and I asked her:

'Who are you, and how have you dared to come to me?'

She, looking upon me with a bright gaze and smiling with gentle lips, said:

'I am the eldest daughter of the Great King and the first among His daughters.'

Hearing this, I bowed to her. And she continued:

'If you make me your companion, I will obtain for you from the King great grace and bring you before His Face, for no one has such power and boldness with Him as I do. I brought Him down from heaven to earth and moved Him to clothe Himself in human flesh for the salvation of men.'

Having said this, she became invisible. Marveling at this most wondrous vision, I said to myself:

'Truly Mercy has appeared to me in the form of a maiden. This is attested by the wreath of olive upon her head, which is a sign of mercy; the words spoken by that maiden also show it: "I," she said, "have

brought God down from heaven to earth, and He became incarnate." The Creator, seeing man perishing, desired to deliver him from perdition, moved by nothing else but mercy, for He willed to show compassion on His creation. Therefore, whoever desires to obtain mercy from God must have mercy toward his neighbors and give alms.'

Thus, reflecting upon this within myself, I quickly rose and went to church at the break of day. On the way I met a naked beggar trembling with cold. I took off my outer garment and gave it to that beggar, saying to myself: 'Now I shall know whether what I saw is true or was a delusion,' and I went on. Before I reached the church, there met me a man clothed in white garments, and he placed in my hands a bundle in which a hundred silver coins were tied. At the same time he said: 'Friend! Take this and use it as you wish.'

I received it with joy, but at once I repented of having received it, reasoning that what was in the bundle was not needed by me; therefore I turned back, desiring to return what I had received; but I no longer saw the one who had handed me the bundle, despite a careful search. Then I understood that what I had seen was the truth and not a delusion. And from that time on, whenever I gave something to the poor, I wished to test whether God would repay me, as He said, a hundredfold. And having tested this many times, I became convinced that it is indeed so. At last I said to myself: 'Cease, my soul, from tempting the Lord your God!'"

Once, when Saint John was going to the hospital to visit the sick (which he did two or three times a week), a certain wayfarer who was begging for alms met him. John commanded his servant to give the wayfarer who had met him six silver coins. Taking the coins, the wayfarer withdrew. But afterward, wishing to test the saint's generosity, he changed his clothes and, taking another road, again met the blessed John and implored him:

"Help me, master, a poor captive."

John a second time commanded that six silver coins be given to him. The servant quietly remarked to the patriarch:

"Master, this is the very beggar who earlier received six silver coins."

But the patriarch, pretending as if he had not heard this remark, again repeated the command to give the petitioner six coins. The wayfarer, having received alms a second time, again changed his clothes and, meeting the patriarch by another road, asked him for alms a third time. The servant again said to the patriarch:

"Master! He who took six silver coins from you the first and second time now asks a third time."

Then the blessed one answered the servant:

"Give him twelve coins. Is it not Christ who is tempting me?"

A merchant, having lost all his wealth at sea and fallen into utter poverty, asked the saint to help him. The saint gave him five litras[6] of gold. Having received the gold, the merchant bought a great quantity of goods with it and, boarding a ship, set out by sea for other cities. But, suffering shipwreck, he again lost everything, and only barely saved himself from drowning. Then he came again to St. John and told him what had happened. John remarked to him:

"You had other gold as well, acquired unjustly, and you mixed it with the church's gold that I gave you. That is why both were lost."

Having said this, he gave him still more gold, twice as much as before, about ten litras. But a third time the same misfortune befell the merchant. All his goods were lost at sea, and he no longer dared show his face before the patriarch, but wept in his house, sprinkling ashes upon his head and intending to take his own life. When the saint learned of this, he summoned the merchant and said to him:

"Why do you fall into despair from grief? Put your trust in God, and He will not forsake you! But I think this misfortune befell you because you owned a ship that had been unjustly acquired."

Having said this, John ordered that the merchant be given a church ship laden with wheat, and then sent him on his way. Having received the ship laden with wheat, the merchant sailed away. And suddenly a strong wind arose and carried the ship to an unknown land. The merchant, seeing in a vision his benefactor, St. John the Merciful, Patri-

6. A litra was a pound, a Byzantine measure of weight equal to 72 zolotniks; in silver it was worth up to 42 rubles, and in gold up to 606 rubles. This measure must be distinguished from the litra used for dry and liquid substances.

arch of Alexandria, standing at the stern and steering the ship, remained hopeful that through the saint's prayers the voyage would end well.

In other words: if you wish people to treat you justly, then act likewise toward them.

After twenty days and as many nights, they put in at the shore of Britain. There was a severe famine in that land at the time. When the people learned that a ship laden with wheat was sailing to their city, they rejoiced greatly and hastened to buy the wheat. And so the merchant sold his wheat there at a profit, receiving gold for one half of what he sold and tin[7] for the other. On his return voyage he arrived at Decapolis[8]. Wishing to sell the tin there, he saw that it had all turned into gold. Having thus grown rich, the merchant returned joyfully to Alexandria and told everyone of this wondrous miracle, which had come to pass through the prayers and almsgiving of St. John.

Once, as the saint was going to church, a worthy and noble man approached him, whose entire property had been stolen by thieves, leaving him destitute. Feeling pity that so worthy and renowned a man had suddenly fallen into utter poverty, the patriarch quietly turned to a servant and ordered him to tell the church stewards to give the man fifteen litras of gold. But the stewards, seeing that there was little gold in the church treasury, disobeyed the patriarch's command and gave only five litras, keeping back ten. As the holy patriarch was returning home from church, a certain very wealthy and worthy woman approached him and placed in his hands a paper on which she had written that she was donating five hundred litras of gold to the church. Having received the paper and read it, the patriarch, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, understood that the woman had not given all that she had resolved in her heart to give. The Lord God had so ordained this in order to expose the stewards, who had not given all to the poor man to whom the patriarch had ordered them to give fifteen litras. Returning home, John

7. Britain, or present-day England, was renowned in ancient times for its abundance of tin.
8. The Decapolis, or Ten Cities, lay in the northern part of Palestine; its cities were inhabited by Greeks.

summoned the stewards and asked how much they had given the man who had been robbed by thieves. They lied, saying:

"As you commanded, vladyka: fifteen litras."

Exposing their lie, greed, and disobedience, the saint said to them:

"May God exact from you a thousand litras of gold, for that devout woman had intended to give us one thousand five hundred. But since you disobeyed me and kept ten, God therefore ordained that the woman keep a thousand. If you do not believe me, you will soon learn the truth for yourselves."

Having summoned the woman, he asked her in the presence of the stewards:

"Tell us, my lady, how much gold had you earlier intended, out of your love for God, to donate to the church?"

She, perceiving that her intention had not escaped the saint, said:

"It is true, vladyka: several days ago I decided to place one thousand five hundred litras of gold in your holy hands, and I drew up a written record to that effect. But today, when I unfolded it, I found—I know not how—the word 'thousand' erased; only five hundred remained, and I thought within myself that God was pleased for me to give your holiness no more than five hundred litras. And so I did."

Hearing this, the stewards were greatly afraid and ashamed, and, falling at the saint's feet, begged his forgiveness.

Once, because of an invasion by foreigners[9], a multitude of people gathered in Alexandria, and a severe famine followed. St. John, taking pity on the starving, spent all the church's property and even incurred a debt of one thousand litras of gold. Then a cleric who had contracted a second marriage, and who because of this was unable to be deemed worthy of receiving the sacred rank, wrote the following to the patriarch:

"I have a great quantity of wheat, all of which I wish to give to Christ through your hands; and I also promise one hundred and fifty litras of gold—only make me a deacon."

9. Here is meant the Persian invasion of Egypt in 618, under the command of Khosrow.

The saint summoned him and began to rebuke him for wishing to purchase the sacred rank with money.

"Repent of your sin and fear the punishment of Gehazi[10]; God is able to feed us in time of famine even without your wheat."

While he was saying this, a messenger appeared with word that two ships had arrived from Sicily[11], bearing a great quantity of wheat. Hearing this, the patriarch fell to his knees and gave thanks to God, who does not forsake those who put their trust in Him.

Here it is fitting to recall also the meekness, humility, and guilelessness of St. John. Two clerics had been punished for one transgression with temporary exclusion from the church. One repented, but the other, on the contrary, became even more entrenched in his malice and, in anger against the patriarch, did many evil things. Hearing of this, the patriarch wished to summon him and meekly persuade him to abandon his malice; but, by Divine Providence, he forgot to do so, that John's humility and meekness might be revealed for the benefit of all. On one Sunday, as John was celebrating the Divine Liturgy in church, he remembered the cleric who was angry with him, and at the same time recalled the words of Christ: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Mt. 5:23–24). Coming out of the sanctuary, he beckoned to that cleric and fell at his feet, asking his forgiveness. Seeing such humility in his patriarch, the cleric was afraid, and himself fell at John's feet, weeping and asking forgiveness. Thus John was reconciled with his cleric, returned to the sanctuary, and, having offered the sacrifice with boldness, could with a clear con-

10. In 4 Kings it is related how the Prophet Elisha healed the Syrian commander Naaman of leprosy without taking money for it. Elisha's servant Gehazi, however, regretting that his master had taken nothing from Naaman, obtained from him much silver and two changes of clothing. Learning of this, Elisha said to Gehazi: "May the leprosy of Naaman cling to you and your descendants forever." And Gehazi went out from the prophet white with leprosy, like snow (4 Kgdms. 5:1–27).

11. An island in the south of Italy, in the Mediterranean Sea, renowned for the fertility of its soil and therefore considered in ancient times the granary of Italy.

science utter the words of the Lord's Prayer: "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Mt. 6:12).

The cleric, having reformed, began to lead a God-pleasing life, and was afterwards deemed worthy of the priestly rank.

No less striking is another example of the meekness shown by St. John. An innkeeper in Alexandria insulted the blessed man's nephew, named George, with abusive and reproachful words. George came to his uncle and bitterly complained of the man who had insulted him.

Seeing his nephew greatly troubled and wishing to comfort him, John said:

"That low-born man dared to insult my nephew! I call God to witness that I shall take revenge upon this offender and deal with him in such a way that all Alexandria will marvel!"

Somewhat comforted by these words of the patriarch, George stopped weeping. Then John, meek and humble of heart, began to speak to him:

"Beloved son! If you wish to be my kinsman, be prepared to endure not only insults, but wounds as well, and to forgive your neighbor everything for God's sake. Do you wish to be noble? Then seek nobility not by blood, but through virtue. True nobility is adorned not so much by the glory of one's ancestors as by good deeds and a life pleasing to God!"

Having thus appeased his nephew, the saint summoned the overseer of the inns and ordered him to exact no church tax from the man who had insulted George, though he had been bound to pay it annually, but to let him live freely.

And indeed, in accordance with his promise, John dealt with the offender in such a way that all Alexandria marveled: instead of punishing and taking revenge upon him, he showed him kindness.

Wishing ever to keep the remembrance of death in his mind, the blessed John ordered a tomb to be made for himself, but not to be finished. He also ordered the stewards to come to him on every solemn feast and, in the presence of all, to say aloud:

"Vladyka! Your tomb is not yet finished; order it to be completed, for death comes as a thief, and you know not at what hour it will appear."

Thus St. John kept the remembrance of death continually and was always ready for it.

Once a certain rich nobleman came to the saint, and managed to see the saint's bed, which was covered with a poor blanket. Returning home, the nobleman sent the patriarch a blanket worth thirty-six gold pieces and asked him to cover himself with it. Not wishing to offend the nobleman, the patriarch, at his persistent request, accepted the blanket and covered himself with it for one night only. Meanwhile, he said to himself:

"Woe to you, wretched John, for you cover yourself with a costly blanket, while Christ's brethren, the poor, are freezing from the frost. How many people lie out in the wind and cold without any covering, having only a little mat or a tattered rag! How many naked ones lie upon dung heaps, shivering from the cold and suffering doubly—from hunger and cold—spending the whole night without sleep, longing for food and dying of the cold!

"Alas for me! How many poor people, like Lazarus, long to be satisfied with the crumbs that fall from my table! Woe is me! How many strangers and sojourners there are in this city who have nowhere to lay their heads, who spend the nights in the streets, enduring every kind of hardship, and give thanks for all things to the Lord Christ! But you, John, desiring to obtain eternal rest, live here in luxury and ease, and have everything you could wish for: you live in splendid chambers, wear soft clothing, drink wine, and eat choice fish. And on top of all this, you have covered yourself with a costly blanket. What, then, can you expect in the age to come? No, wretched John: living such a life, you will not receive the eternal Kingdom, but will hear what the rich man in the Gospel heard: 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have prepared?' (Lk. 12:20). God is witness that humble John will not cover himself with this blanket on another night, but the money received from its sale shall be used to clothe the poor and needy!

At daybreak, the saint hastened to send the blanket to the market to be sold, so that with its price he might buy clothing for the poor. But as the blanket was being sold, the nobleman who had given it to blessed John happened to pass by. Seeing it for sale, the nobleman bought it and sent it back to John, begging him to cover himself with it. The saint took the blanket and again sent it to be sold. The nobleman, seeing that it was for sale once more, bought it a second time and sent it to John, asking him to use it for himself. John sent the blanket to be sold a third time, but the nobleman again bought it and sent it back to John. After this, John had the nobleman told:

"Let us see which of us will tire first: I of selling, or you of buying and giving it back to me!"

In this way, St. John obtained much gold from the nobleman and distributed it to the poor.

The blessed one knew how to move both the miserly and the covetous to give alms. Knowing that a certain bishop named Troilus was exceedingly miserly and covetous, John invited him to accompany him to the hospital to visit the sick and the poor. Noticing that Troilus had gold with him, he said:

"Father Troilus! Here is an opportunity for you to comfort these poor brethren by giving them alms."

Ashamed to appear miserly, Troilus, against his own inclination, began giving alms to everyone, from the first to the last, and spent thirty litras of gold. But afterwards he regretted having given so much gold to the poor. When he returned home, Troilus was so grieved over the gold he had distributed that he took to his bed. Meanwhile, St. John sent for him, inviting him to dinner. Troilus declined the invitation, saying he was ill. Guessing the cause of his illness—that he had fallen sick with grief over the money he had spent—John took with him thirty litras of gold and went to visit the sick man. When he arrived, he said:

"Here is the gold I borrowed from you at the hospital. Take it, and give me a note stating that you transfer to me the reward from the Lord that was meant for you in return for the gold you distributed."

Seeing the gold, Troilus rejoiced greatly, and, having received it, recovered at once and immediately wrote the following:

"O merciful God! Grant the reward to my lord John, Patriarch of Alexandria, for the thirty litras of gold which I gave to the poor, since he has returned my gold to me."

Having received this note from Troilus, John invited him to dine with him. As he entertained him, the saint prayed inwardly to God to deliver Troilus from such covetousness. And that night Troilus saw in a vision a most beautiful house, of indescribable loveliness, above whose door was a golden inscription: "The dwelling and eternal rest of Bishop Troilus."

Troilus rejoiced greatly at the beautiful house prepared for him. But suddenly there appeared a certain majestic and fearsome man, like a royal cubicularius,[12] who said to the servants:

"The Lord of all the world has commanded that this inscription be erased."

And the servants erased it immediately. Appearing a second time, the same man said to the servants:

"Write this instead: This is the dwelling and eternal rest of John, Patriarch of Alexandria, who purchased them for himself for thirty litras of gold."

Waking from his sleep, Troilus was filled with terror. He grieved deeply at having lost the house prepared for him in heaven and reproached himself for his love of gold. Rising, he hastened to blessed John and told him what he had seen. Blessed John, with his customary gentleness, instructed him and sent him away in peace. From that time Troilus amended his ways and became exceedingly charitable and merciful toward all.

The Lord, who once tried the patience of righteous Job, visited blessed John also with a grievous trial. Once, ships belonging to the Church of Alexandria, laden to the brim with merchandise, were in the Adriatic Sea.[13] Suddenly a storm arose, and the sea grew so violent that the ships were on the point of sinking. The danger was so great that the entire cargo had to be cast into the sea. This happened by divine permission, "that the genuineness of your faith, being much more

12. A cubicularius was a bedchamber attendant at the imperial court.
13. The Adriatic Sea lies between the Apennine and Balkan peninsulas.

precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:7).[14] There were thirteen ships, and the value of all the merchandise they carried amounted to three thousand three hundred litras of gold. Though he had lost such wealth, by which he could have fed and clothed the poor for a long time, St. John bore this with thanksgiving, often repeating the words of Job: "And he said: Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; [as it pleased the Lord, so it came to pass;] blessed be the name of the Lord!" (Job 1:21).

When many of the city's leading men came to him, wishing to comfort him in his sorrow, he answered them:

"I am to blame for the loss of the Church's property, for if I had not been puffed up in my mind because I gave abundant alms, such valuable property would not have perished in the sea. I became proud, giving away not what was mine, but what belonged to God. And now God, desiring to humble me, has permitted this impoverishment, for poverty humbles a man. Now I myself understand that through pride I have lost my reward with God and caused a great loss to the needy, for those whose food has perished will suffer hunger. Yet the Lord will not forsake the needy for my sake, but for their own sake, and will provide them with all that they need."

Thus those who had come to comfort John themselves received comfort and instruction from him. And soon the Lord sent John twice as much as he had before.

John gave abundant alms to the poor and especially helped those who suffered some injustice. Once, as he was going to the church of the holy Martyrs Cyrus and John, a poor widow approached him and, having told him of the great wrong done her by her son-in-law, asked the holy patriarch for protection. Those accompanying John said to him:

"Vladyka, hear this widow's plea when you return home!"

The saint answered:

14. Thus wrote the Apostle Peter to the Christians of Asia Minor, exhorting them to bear afflictions with joy (1 Pet. 1:6), so that the tested faith might prove more precious than perishable gold, though gold is tried by fire (1 Pet. 1:7).

"How then shall God hear my prayer today, if I do not hear her at once?"

And he did not move from the spot until he had heard the widow and defended her from the injustice.

After the death of his parents, a young man was left without any means of support. Learning of this, John asked those who were with him how the young man had fallen into poverty, for he had heard that his parents were very rich. God-loving men told him that the boy's parents had been very charitable and had distributed all their property to the poor, leaving their son only ten litras of gold. Before his death, however, the boy's father—his mother had died earlier—called him and offered him a choice between the gold and an icon of the Most Pure Theotokos, saying:

"Dear son! Of all our property, only ten litras of gold remain; all the rest we have placed in Christ's hands. Tell me, then, what do you desire: the gold, or the icon of our Lady the Theotokos, your helper and nourisher?"

The boy, disdaining the gold, took the icon of the Most Pure Theotokos and asked that the gold be distributed to the poor. Thus even their last possession was given to the poor. When his father died, the boy was left destitute, and now suffers every kind of hardship. Despite this, he prays day and night in the church of the Most Holy Theotokos.

Having heard this account, Venerable John marvelled at the virtue and understanding of the boy, loved him with all his heart, and from that time, like a true father to orphans, cared for him and considered what kindness he might do for him. One day he secretly summoned his steward and said:

"I wish to tell you a secret, but take care not to tell anyone."

The steward promised to keep secret whatever the saint would tell him. Then the patriarch said:

Go, take an old sheet of paper and write upon it a last will in the name of a certain Theonemptus, so that from this will it should appear that I and this poor youth are close kinsmen. Then go to the young man and say to him: "Brother, do you know that you are a close kinsman of the patriarch? Therefore, it is shameful for you to remain in poverty."

At the same time show him what has been written and add: "Child, if you are ashamed to tell the patriarch that you are his kinsman, I will tell him of you."

Having heard John's instruction, the steward did as the patriarch had commanded him. He wrote upon a worn sheet of paper a will that showed the poor youth to be kin to the patriarch. Then, summoning the young man to him, he showed him the will and said that he had found it among his father's old papers. After reading the will, the youth at first rejoiced, but then he was ashamed that he was so poor and dressed in a wretched garment, and asked the steward to tell the patriarch of him. The steward came to the saint and conveyed the youth's request, and the saint said:

"Tell the youth that the patriarch says this: I remember that my uncle had a son, but I did not know the latter by sight. You will do well to bring him to me. Bring the will with you as well."

The steward brought the youth and showed the manuscript to the Venerable Father. The patriarch embraced the young man with love and said:

"It is well that you have come, for you are my uncle's son."

The saint provided the young man with great wealth, bought him a house and all that was needful for life, married him to a noble maiden, and endeavored to make him rich, renowned, and honorable, that the words of the psalm might be fulfilled: "I was young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Ps. 36:25). St. John very often visited the sick, whom he served with his own hands, and he attended the dying, helping them at their end with his prayers. Besides this, he often celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the departed, and said that the Divine Liturgy celebrated for the departed brought great benefit to the dead. In confirmation of this, the Hierarch pointed to an event that had taken place a little before this time on the island of Cyprus.

"A certain captive from Cyprus," he said, "was in Persia in grievous confinement. His parents, who lived in Cyprus, were told that he had already died, and so they mourned him as one dead. Three times a year they began to hold a memorial for him, making offerings to the church

for his soul, that the Divine service might be celebrated. After four years had passed, their son escaped from captivity and returned home. When his parents saw him, they were amazed, thinking that he had risen from the dead. Rejoicing at his release, they told him that they had held memorials for him three times a year. Their son asked on which days they had commemorated him. They answered: on the day of Theophany, Pascha, and Pentecost. Hearing this, he remembered and said:

"On those days a certain majestic man came into my prison with a lamp; the chains fell from my feet, and I was free. On the other days, like a prisoner, I remained in chains again."

Blessed John greatly feared judging people for their sins, especially monks. Once it happened that he unjustly condemned a monk, and thereafter he accepted no accusations against them and did not condemn them. The matter was as follows. A young monk had walked about Alexandria for several days with a very young and beautiful maiden. Seeing this, some were scandalized, thinking that he was living unlawfully with her, and informed the holy patriarch. The latter ordered that both be seized at once, given corporal punishment, and locked up separately from one another in prison. At nightfall, the monk appeared to the patriarch in a dream, showed him his shoulders, badly wounded from the blows, and asked him:

"Was this what you desired, O vladyka? Is this how you learned from the Apostle to shepherd the flock of Christ, not by constraint, but willingly (1 Pet. 5:2)? Believe me: you have been deceived, as a man!"

With these words he departed from him. The patriarch awoke from his dream and pondered what the vision might mean. Recognizing his transgression, he sat upon his bed, lamenting and grieving. At daybreak, he ordered that the monk be brought to him, wishing to see whether he resembled the one who had appeared to him in the dream. The monk came with great difficulty, for the many wounds left him barely able to move. When the patriarch saw him, he turned pale and could not utter a word, but only motioned with his hand for him to sit beside him. Then, recovering himself, he asked the monk to remove his clothes and show him his shoulders, so that he might ascertain whether he was wounded as he had seen in his dream. When, after many earn-

est pleas, the monk began to remove his clothing, all saw that he was a eunuch. Seeing his wounded body, the patriarch greatly grieved over what had happened; and, sending for those who had slandered the monk, he excommunicated them from the Church for three years, while he asked the monk's forgiveness:

"Forgive me, brother," he said to him, "for I did this through ignorance. I have sinned before God and before you. Yet you should not have spent time so carelessly with a maiden, to the scandal of worldly people, for you wear the monastic habit."

The monk answered humbly:

"Vladyka, believe me, I will not lie to you, but will tell you the truth. Formerly, when I was in Gaza[15] and went to venerate the tomb of the holy Martyrs Cyrus and John, this maiden met me in the evening and, falling at my feet, besought me with tears not to forbid her to go with me. But I pushed her away and fled. As she followed after me, she said:

'I adjure you by the God of Abraham, who came to save sinners and who desires to judge the living and the dead: do not leave me!'

Hearing this, I said to her:

'Maiden, why do you adjure me so?'

"'I am a Jewess,' she answered me with sobs, 'and I desire to leave the evil faith of my fathers and become a Christian. I beseech you, father! Do not reject me, but save a soul that desires to believe in Christ.'

"Hearing this, I feared the Judgment of God, and, taking the maiden with me, instructed her in the holy faith. Then, having come to the tomb of the holy Martyrs, I baptized her in the church; and in simplicity of heart, I walked with her, intending to place her in a women's monastery."

Having heard the monk's account, the patriarch sighed and said:

"How many hidden servants God has, we wretched ones do not even know!"

Then he told all those around him of his dream, and, taking a hundred gold coins, wished to give them to the monk; but the monk would not take even one, saying:

15. Gaza: a city in Palestine, on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, to the southwest of Jerusalem.

"If a monk believes that God provides for him, he has no need of gold; but if he loves gold, he does not believe that God exists."

Having said this, he bowed to the patriarch and departed. From that time Blessed John honored monks even more greatly; he established a monastery to provide lodging for traveling monks and refrained from condemning them.

The good shepherd also instructed his spiritual sheep not to condemn anyone, even if they knew that someone had sinned, but rather to look upon their own sins and not those of others. It happened once that a young man from Alexandria fled to Constantinople with a nun. Everyone began to condemn him and said:

"He has ruined two souls, his own and the nun's, and has moreover become a scandal to all. Yet the Gospel says: 'Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh' (Mt. 18:7)."

Then St. John said to them:

"Children, cease from condemning, for you too are guilty of two sins. First, in condemning one who has sinned, you break the commandment of God: 'Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God' (1 Cor. 4:5). On the other hand, you slander your brother, not knowing whether he is still sinning, or has already repented."

For their instruction, he told them the following story.

"A certain monk was passing through the streets of the city of Tyre[16]. A harlot named Porphyria, who was known to everyone in that city, saw him and began to cry out after the monk:

'Father! Save me, even as Christ saved the harlot!'

"The monk, paying no heed to human judgment, said to her:

'Follow me!'

"And taking her by the hand, he led her out of the city in the sight of all. Thereafter, a rumor spread throughout the city that the monk

16. Tyre, the ancient capital of Phoenicia, was situated on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, to the north of Palestine.

had taken the harlot Porphyria as his wife. As the monk was leading her to a women's monastery, Porphyria found a child abandoned by the roadside and took him to raise as her own son. Some time later, certain citizens of Tyre happened to be in the country where the elder and Porphyria lived. Seeing that she had a child, they said to her mockingly:

'You have given birth to a fine child, Porphyria!'

"When they returned, they told everyone that Porphyria had borne a child by the monk: 'We saw him with our own eyes,' they said, 'and he greatly resembles the monk.' When the elder foresaw his end and his departure to the Lord, he said to Pelagia (for so he renamed Porphyria after she embraced the monastic life):

'Let us go to Tyre, where I must go today. It is my wish that you accompany me as well.'

"Obedient to the elder's will, Pelagia set out with him. They went to the city, taking with them the child, who was already seven years old. When they entered the city, the elder fell ill, and many townspeople came to visit him. Then the elder said to those who had come to visit him:

'Bring me a censer.'

They brought it to him. Taking the censer, he poured the burning coals from it upon his breast and held them there until they had cooled. The coals burned neither his body nor his clothing. At this the elder said to the people:

"Blessed be God, who once preserved the bush unconsumed by fire! He is witness that, just as these hot coals did not burn my body, and the fire did not touch my clothing, so I have known no carnal sin from the very day of my birth."

Having said this, the elder surrendered his soul to the Lord. All who saw it marvelled and glorified God, who has His servants striving in secret. Having related this story to the people, St. John instructed them with these words:

"Therefore, my brethren and children, be not hasty to condemn. We often observe the sin of a man who is sinning, but do not see his repentance, which he accomplishes in secret."

Thus did this good shepherd instruct his rational sheep, and with gentleness govern the Church of Christ.

It happened that the Persians made an attack upon their country. Remembering the Savior's words, "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another. For truly I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes" (Mt. 10:23), John resolved to withdraw for a time to Constantinople. When he sailed from Alexandria, he fell ill and took to his bed. And then, in a vision, he saw a radiant man holding a golden sceptre and saying:

"The King of kings calls you to Himself."

From this vision the saint understood that the end of his life was near. Having sailed to his homeland in Cyprus, he could not set out on a longer journey; and, reaching his native city of Amathus, he reposed in the Lord in peace. As he was dying, St. John said:

"I thank Thee, O Lord my God, that Thou hast vouchsafed me to offer Thee what is Thine, and that of the goods of this world nothing remains for me except only a third part of a silver coin; but concerning even this portion I bequeath that it be given to the poor. When I was appointed Patriarch of Alexandria, I found about eight thousand litrai of gold in my diocese; and from the offerings of God-loving people I gathered more than ten thousand litrai, all of which I gave to Christ. To Him do I now entrust my soul.[17]"

The blessed one was buried in his native city of Amathus, in the church of St. Tychon the Wonderworker, together with two bishops who were buried there. At this, the following event took place. When they wished to lay St. John beside them, those bodies moved apart, as though alive, and made room in their midst for John's body. All who were present saw this miracle with their own eyes and, struck with amazement, glorified God.

Nor must we keep silent about the following miracle, which occurred after the burial of St. John. A woman, having fallen into griev-

17. The Blessed John reposed in 619, on November 11. His memory, however, is celebrated on November 12 because on the 11th the memory of the Martyr Mena was solemnly observed in Egypt, and in Constantinople that of Theodore the Studite. The relics of St. John the Merciful were first translated to Constantinople (January 23), and later to the city of Pressburg in Hungary, where they are to this day.

ous sin and being ashamed to confess it to her spiritual father, came in faith to the blessed John while he was still alive, though ill and near death. Bowing at his feet, she cried out and spoke with many tears:

"O most blessed one! I am a dreadful sinner, and my sin is so terrible that I dare not reveal it to anyone. But I know that, if you will, you can forgive me. For the Lord said to you: 'Whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven' (Mt. 16:19; Jn. 20:23)."

The blessed one answered:

"If you have come in faith, then confess your sin before me."

To this the woman said:

"Vladyka, I cannot confess my sin, because great shame holds me back."

The Venerable One said to her:

"If you are ashamed to confess it with your lips, go and write it on a sheet of paper and bring it to me."

But she said:

"I cannot do even this."

Then the saint said:

"Write it, seal it, and give it to me."

Having written her sin, the woman adjured the saint not to break the seal or read what she had written. John received it, and on the fifth day thereafter reposed. He told no one about that letter. The woman was not then in the city. In the morning, after his burial, she came to the city and, learning that the patriarch had died and been buried, grieved bitterly, for she thought that after his death others had taken her writing and read of her sin. Coming to the saint's tomb, she cried out to him as though he were alive:

"O man of God," she cried, "I did not dare to confess my sin to you yourself, and now it has become known to all. Oh, would that I had not given you that paper with my sins! Woe is me, wretched woman! I was ashamed before you, but now even greater shame has befallen me, and I have become a laughingstock to all. But I will not leave your tomb until you tell me where you put my writing. For you are not dead, but live even now."

In this state she remained at John's tomb for three days. On the third night, St. John appeared in bodily form, coming out of his tomb with the two bishops who lay beside him, and said to the weeping woman:

"Woman, how long will you not leave us in peace, and cease wetting our garments with your tears?"

Having said this, he handed her the sealed letter, saying:

"Take your letter and, having torn it open, look."

After this the dead returned to their tombs and lay down again. The woman, taking the paper, saw that her seal was intact; and when she broke it open, she found that what she had written had been erased, and in its place were the words:

"For the sake of My servant John, your sin is blotted out."

Having thus received miraculous remission of her sins, the woman rejoiced greatly and returned to her home, glorifying and praising God and magnifying His servant, St. John the Merciful. Through his prayers may the Lord also show us His mercy, blot out all our sins, and inscribe us in the Book of Life unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

By thy patience thou hast gained thy reward, O Venerable Father, ever enduring in prayers, loving the poor and providing for them according to their need. But pray to Christ God, O blessed and merciful John, that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Thou hast scattered thy wealth among the poor, and now hast received heavenly riches, O most wise John; therefore we all honor thee, celebrating thy memory, O namesake of almsgiving!

* * *

Commemoration of the Venerable Nilus the Faster

Память преподобного Нила Постника

The Venerable Nilus was a native of Constantinople, where he received an excellent upbringing, learned all the wisdom of books,

and became a most eloquent orator.[18] When he reached adulthood, he married a virtuous woman, by whom he had two children, a son and a daughter. Because of his noble birth and personal merits, Nilus was appointed prefect of the capital.[19] He led a God-pleasing and virtuous life; but the vices prevalent at the imperial court made him fear for his salvation and leave the world. Having recognized all the vanity of this world, which lies wholly in wickedness (1 Jn. 5:19), and being convinced that in it there is nothing abiding, nothing eternal or just, but that all is corrupted and filled with unrighteousness, Nilus began to strive for the narrow but saving path that leads to eternal life, filled with true and unchanging joy and endless blessedness. He persuaded his wife to consent to his withdrawal from the world. Having distributed all their possessions to the poor, they set their male and female slaves free; then they divided between them the care of their children. Nilus's wife took their daughter, and he took their son, Theodulus, with whom he withdrew from Constantinople, forsaking the world and all worldly attachments.[20] Nilus's wife withdrew with her daughter to Egypt, where she received the monastic habit in one of the women's monasteries and zealously began to serve the Lord in ascetic labors. The blessed Nilus, with his son Theodulus, withdrew to Mount Sinai[21] and, settling in the wilderness, imitated the life of the Venerable Fathers of the desert, spending his time in fasting and ascetic struggle, devoting himself to prayer and vigil, and mortifying the flesh through manifold monastic labors.

Here the Venerable One settled in a cave dug by his own hands, where he struggled for forty years. News of him quickly spread everywhere, and many people of every rank and station began to come to him for instruction and prayer.

When the Venerable One heard that St. John Chrysostom had been sent into exile,[22] he boldly and fearlessly raised his voice from the

18. The Venerable Nilus was born in the second half of the fourth century and was a disciple of St. John Chrysostom.
19. One of the highest officials, who had charge of the supreme police administration of the city.
20. This took place about 390.

depths of his silence and at once rebuked Emperor Arcadius, writing him a letter in stern condemnation of the injustices he had committed against the great Hierarch.

While he was thus leading a hermit's life in the struggles of monasticism, a special temptation was sent upon him to test his love for the Lord. Barbarians[23] raided that wilderness, and, suddenly falling upon it like wild beasts, they killed many holy fathers and took others captive. Among those whom they led away captive was Nilus's son, Theodulus. Nilus wept bitterly for his son, especially when he heard that the barbarians had condemned him to be offered in sacrifice to the pagan gods. But God preserved Theodulus unharmed, for the bishop of the city of Emesa[24] ransomed him from the barbarians and later appointed him a cleric of the Church. Hearing of this, Nilus himself went to the city of Emesa and was received there with honor by the bishop, who, against his wishes, ordained him a presbyter and entreated him to live with him. When the blessed Nilus did not wish to remain there, but resolved to withdraw once more to Sinai, the bishop returned his son to him and dismissed them in peace. The blessed Nilus, having come a second time with his son to the place of his first dwelling in Sinai, lived there many years and reposed in peace in the Lord.[25] The Venerable Nilus left many spiritually edifying ascetic writings, filled with wisdom, and letters to various persons on diverse subjects of the Christian faith and piety.[7333]

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Ahijah

Память святого пророка Ахии

21. Mount Sinai is in the northwestern part of Arabia, on the eastern coast of the Red Sea. Sinai, almost from the very beginning of Christian monasticism, was a favorite place of Eastern ascetic labor and was renowned for the exploits of its monks.

23. The reference is to the tribe of the Blemmyes, who belonged to the Arab peoples and dwelt in Arabia.

24. Emesa was a city in Syria, east of the river Orontes, which flows into the Mediterranean Sea in northwestern Syria.

25. The repose of the Venerable Nilus the Ascetic took place about 450. He spent sixty years in all in the desert.

The holy Prophet Ahijah was from the city of Shiloh[26] and lived in the reigns of Solomon and Jeroboam.[27] In Solomon's reign he foretold the division of Solomon's kingdom and the revolt of ten tribes from him, which formed the kingdom of Israel. Meeting Jeroboam alone in a field, Ahijah tore the garment he was wearing into twelve pieces and told Jeroboam to take ten of them, as a sign that the Lord God of Israel would give ten tribes into his hand, tearing the kingdom from Solomon's hand, and would give Israel to him if he walked in the ways of God. Later, on the occasion of the illness of Abijah, Jeroboam's son, Ahijah foretold to Jeroboam's wife the destruction of all Jeroboam's house because of his wickedness, and the scattering of the Israelites beyond the Euphrates. Ahijah's prophecy was fulfilled, beginning with the immediate death of Abijah.

* * *

Life of the Blessed John the Hairy, Rostov Wonderworker

Житие блаженного Иоанна Власатого, Ростовского чудотворца

The blessed John lived in the city of Rostov in the days of Tsar Ivan Vasilyevich the Terrible. It is not known where he was from.

In Rostov he lived as a Fool-for-Christ, had no settled dwelling, and would sometimes go to rest at the home of a pious widow or of his spiritual father, Peter, a priest of the Church of All Saints. In his time there lived in Rostov and conversed with him, as also with the renowned ascetic of Boris and Gleb, the holy Irinarch, the blessed fool

26. Shiloh was a city in the tribe of Ephraim, almost at the very center of the Promised Land. Here, after the crossing of the Jordan and the conquest of the Promised Land, the Tabernacle of Moses with the Ark was set up, whence the city received its name ("Shiloh" meaning peace, rest). This city had great significance for Israel, but afterward the Lord rejected His dwelling in Shiloh because of the sins of the sons of Israel.

27. Solomon, the son of David, was the third king of Israel, the wisest and most glorious of the kings of Israel, who afterward clouded his reign by apostasy and idolatry, for which God tore the kingdom of Israel from his line, giving ten tribes into the possession of Jeroboam, who had formerly been a servant of Solomon but afterward became, upon the division of Solomon's kingdom, the first king of the kingdom of Israel. The activity of the Prophet Ahijah thus belongs to the years 1010–963 B.C.

John, surnamed the Great Cap, who later went to Moscow and was buried there at the Church of the Intercession on the Moat.

The blessed John of Rostov always carried with him and read a parchment book—a Psalter in the Latin language. It is not known when or where he learned that language.

The blessed John reposed on 3 September 1580. His body was buried beside the church of St. Blasius, behind the sanctuary, through the care of the aforementioned pious widow and his spiritual father, the priest Peter. The burial was accompanied by signs: a violent storm arose, lightning flashed, and thunder roared.

After the blessed one's repose, many began to come to his grave. They sang molebens to the Lord God, the Most Holy Theotokos, and John the Forerunner in the church, asked for water to be blessed, and drank it mixed with sand from the tomb of the blessed John. Others anointed their ailing bodies with it and, according to their faith, received healing from various diseases.

Hearing of the miracles at the grave of the blessed John, the Metropolitan of Rostov, Cyril,[28] worn down by old age and stricken with a grievous illness, unable to use his hand or foot, ordered himself to be carried to the Church of St. Blasius, to the icon of St. John and to the grave of the blessed John the Hairy. During the moleben, while the holy Gospel was being read, the sick Hierarch at once felt himself healed of his illness and regained the use of his hand, so that he was able once more to celebrate the sacred services and govern the Metropolitanate of Rostov; he lived for another year and five months.[29]

Many miraculous healings took place at the grave of the blessed John among the sick who came there with faith. These miracles were recorded and reported to Tsar Michael Feodorovich.

28. He governed the Metropolis of Rostov from 1605, but during the Time of Troubles he was removed from the see and again ascended it in 1612, when Pozharsky and Minin were advancing to liberate Moscow. Metropolitan Cyril was present at the death of Tsar Boris Fyodorovich Godunov, and met and crowned as tsar, near Moscow, the newly chosen tsar after the Time of Troubles, Michael Fyodorovich Romanov.

29. The healing of Metropolitan Cyril belongs to the year 1618.

A pious merchant, having seen the mercy of God toward himself and his household, and many healings, built a church over the grave of the blessed one.

At the present time the relics of the blessed John repose beneath the floor, behind the left kliros, in the stone church of the Tolga Icon of the Mother of God, which has a chapel dedicated to St. John the Forerunner and the Hieromartyr Blasius and was built in the 18th century.

A large cypress cross belonging to the blessed one and a parchment Psalter, written in beautiful Gothic script, have long been kept beside the tomb. One of the notes in the manuscript states that in 1702, upon his appointment to the Metropolitanate of Rostov, St. Demetrius of Rostov inspected the churches of Rostov, took note of this Psalter, observed its worn condition, ordered it to be rebound, and commanded that it be kept as before at the blessed one's grave. Another note, in Latin, reads: "With the greatest reverence I held this book in my hand and kissed it. Nilus, Archbishop of Yaroslavl. On the 14th of May, 1856."[30]

* * *

NOTES

7310. In Constantinople, during the episcopate of St. Proclus (434–447), a disciple of John Chrysostom, a severe earthquake struck the city, and all the people were seized with terror. Christians went in procession through the city, beseeching God to end the calamity and crying out with tears, "Lord, have mercy!" Suddenly, during the supplication, a boy was lifted into the air by an invisible force. When he was then lowered to the ground, he related that he had seen ranks of Angels singing, "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us!" As soon as this hymn was repeated, the earthquake ceased. Thereafter this sacred Angelic hymn was appointed for use in divine services. But during the spread of the Monophysite heresy, which asserted that in Jesus Christ one divine nature had secretly remained, having absorbed human nature, a certain Peter the Fuller, also called Knafeus—which means a fuller of cloth, since in his youth he had practiced this trade (Fuller is the Latin name for a cloth fuller, and Knafeus the Greek)—while still a presbyter, added to the Trisagion the words, "who wast crucified for us."

30. The narrative "On the Miracles of the Blessed John the Merciful, the Shaggy, Wonderworker of Rostov," compiled and added to in Rostov from the seventeenth century, has been printed several times in two recensions in the *Yaroslavl Diocesan Gazette* (in 1860 and 1877) and in separate pamphlets (1877 and 1884).

Later this Peter became Patriarch of Antioch (in the nineties of the 5th century). Since he was a Monothelite, he intended by this addition to express that in the Savior's sufferings not only His Divinity suffered, but even the whole Holy Trinity. Peter's followers formed a separate sect, known as the Theopaschites, which greatly disturbed the Orthodox world; many of these followers were in Alexandria during the patriarchate of John the Merciful (609–620).

7333. The Venerable Nilus, like his great teacher St. John Chrysostom, devoted much labor to the interpretation of Holy Scripture, and also to the exposition of the dogmas of the faith, and is especially known for his ascetical writings. His best ascetical work is the book on prayer. There follow: a treatise *On the Ascetics*, on voluntary *poverty*, *On the Advantages of the Solitary Life*, admonitions to Eulogius with excellent reflections on withdrawal from the world, on steadfastness in struggle, on patience in sorrows and in the battle against the passions, and so on; the *Handbook of Epictetus*, setting forth rules of practical wisdom drawn from the writings of this pagan author, altered in some places by Christian thoughts; and the letters of the Venerable Nilus, sent to various persons and on various occasions, of a moral content. All the writings of the Venerable Nilus, for all the high worth of their content, are distinguished by the purity and elegance of their language, breathe sincerity of feeling, and are filled with a power of thought that is always clear, like the light of God.



THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 13

13 ноября

New Calendar November 13 · Old Calendar November 26 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople

Житие святого отца нашего Иоанна Златоустого, патриарха Константинопольского

St. John Chrysostom, the lamp of the world, the teacher of the universe, the pillar and foundation of the Church, the preacher of repentance, was a native of Antioch in Syria, and was born about the year 347. His parents, Secundus and Anthusa, belonged to the best society of Antioch and professed the Christian faith. Secundus was a military commander and held an honorable office; but he could have no influence on the upbringing of his son, since he died at a time when John was still a very young child. Therefore all the care for John's upbringing fell upon his mother, the pious Anthusa. Having lost her husband at a very early age (she was then about twenty years old), she did not wish to marry a second time, but devoted herself wholly to the upbringing of her son. It was from her that the young John received his first lessons in the Christian truths and in piety.

Having established her son in the Christian faith, Anthusa entrusted him to the sophist Libanius and the philosopher Andragathius, to study rhetoric and philosophy.[1] Later, when John had reached the age of eighteen, he was sent to Athens[2] to perfect himself in rhetoric and

1. Sophists were teachers of eloquence and advocates. Libanius was widely renowned as a teacher of eloquence; Julian the Apostate studied under him, and among the Fathers of the Church, Basil the Great was known as one of the profound and serious philosophers of that time.

2. Athens is the chief city of Greece, in the southeastern part of the Balkan Peninsula. In the time of Chrysostom it was renowned for its schools of philosophy and eloquence. Wealthy and educated young men studied there. Among others, some of the Fathers of the Church studied there: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and others.

philosophy, though he had not yet been enlightened by holy baptism, which according to the customs of that time was received in mature years. Studying here, John soon surpassed his peers and many philosophers in wisdom, for he studied all the Greek books and sciences, and became a wise philosopher and an eloquent orator.

In Athens he had in the person of the philosopher Anthimius a very malicious opponent. The latter, envying John's good reputation, slandered him and stirred up hatred against him in others. But the saint, by the help of God, put his opponent to shame, and at the same time converted many to Christ. It happened in this way. When Anthimius, in a dispute with John, began to utter blasphemous words against our Lord Jesus Christ, an unclean spirit suddenly attacked him and began to torment him. Anthimius fell to the ground, writhing and twisting his whole body and opening his mouth wide, from which foam flowed. Seeing this, all those present were terrified, and many fled in fear. Those who remained began to beseech John to forgive and heal the demoniac. John answered:

"If he does not repent and believe in Christ God, whom he blasphemed, he will not be healed."

Anthimius immediately cried out:

"I confess that neither in heaven nor on earth is there any other God except Him whom John confesses."

As he spoke these words, the unclean spirit came out of him, and Anthimius stood up healthy. All the people who had seen this miracle cried out:

"Great is the God of the Christians! He alone works miracles!"

Holy John, having forbidden Anthimius to blaspheme the Son of God and having taught him the true faith, sent him to the bishop of the city of Athens, and Anthimius, together with all his household, received holy baptism from him. Together with Anthimius, many of the honorable citizens also believed and were baptized. Learning that this conversion of the pagans to Christ had taken place through the agency of John, the bishop resolved to ordain John to the sacred rank and to keep him in Athens, so that after the bishop's own death (for he was already very old) John would take the episcopal see. The blessed John, perceiv-

ing this, secretly withdrew from Athens and came to his homeland, Antioch.

Despising the empty glory of this vain world and all worldly honors, he resolved to embrace the humble monastic life and to labor for God, clothed in the angelic habit. St. John was encouraged to this by his friend Basil,[3] a native of the same Antioch. Having spent their childhood years together, they studied under the same teachers and felt a strong love for each other, since they were akin in soul and shared the same character. This Basil, having first himself taken the monastic habit, advised his peer, St. John, also to choose the monastic life.

Heeding his good counsel, John wished at once to withdraw to a monastery and become a monk, but he was held back by his mother. She, learning of John's intention, began to speak to him with tears:

"My child! Too briefly did the shared life with your father bring me joy, and with his death, by the Divine will, came your orphanhood and my widowhood. But no calamity could compel me to a second marriage, or to bring another husband into your father's house. With God's help I patiently bore the misfortune of widowhood, receiving great comfort and consolation from the unceasing contemplation of your face, which resembles your father's. Nor have I squandered your father's property, but have kept it whole for the needs of your life. Therefore I beg you, child, do not cast me into a second widowhood, and do not, by your departure, again stir up the grief for your father that has quieted within me; but wait for my death, which I expect day by day. When you have buried me beside your father's bones, then do as you wish. But for now remain with me and wait a little while, while I am still alive."

Under the influence of such entreaties from his mother, John resolved not to leave the house for the time being; but even while remaining at home he exchanged his bright garments for poor ones and began to live a hermit's life, spending his time in prayer and in the study of the word of God. At this time John became close to Meletius, the bishop of Antioch, a man of high life, who persuaded John to receive baptism

3. This Basil should not be confused with the famous Father of the Church, Basil the Great, who was a native of Cappadocia and had already attained high rank when John was still a boy; in 370 he was already a bishop, and he died in 379.

without delay; and having baptized him, he appointed him a church reader. John remained in this office for three years. At this time John's mother died. Having buried her, John at once distributed all his property to the needy, granted freedom to the male and female slaves, and himself settled in a monastery[4] and became a monk, laboring day and night for the Lord in great toil and ascetic feats. Here he wrote the books *On the Priesthood* and *On Compunction of Soul*, which contain much that is useful, and the *Letter to the Fallen Monk Theodore*.[7343]

St. John had from God the gift of teaching and the grace of the Holy Spirit, which was revealed to a monk named Hesychius, who ascetically labored in that monastery. Being advanced in years and perfect in the virtues, Hesychius had the gift of foresight. One night, when he was not sleeping but praying, he was caught up in mind and beheld the following vision. Two comely men, clad in white garments and shining like the sun, came down from heaven and entered to the blessed John while he was standing in prayer. One of them held an inscribed scroll, and the other keys. Seeing them, John was troubled and hastened to bow down to the earth before them. Meanwhile the men, taking John by the hand, raised him up, saying:

"Trust and do not be afraid!"

John asked them:

"Who are you, my lords?"

They at once answered him:

"Do not be afraid, man of desires, new Daniel, in whom, for the purity of your heart, the Holy Spirit was pleased to dwell! We have been sent to you by the Great Teacher, our Savior Jesus Christ."

After these words, one of the men who had appeared stretched out his hand and gave John the scroll, saying:

"Take this scroll from my hand! I am John, who at the Last Supper reclined on the breast of the Lord and from Him drew the divine revelations.[5] The Lord grants you also the knowledge of the whole depth of wisdom, that you may feed men with the imperishable bread of Christ's

4. This monastery was situated not far from Antioch, in the mountains adjoining it.
5. That is, the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian.

teaching, and with your mouth may stop the mouths of heretics and Jews who utter blasphemies against God."

The other, stretching out his hand to John, gave him the keys, saying:

"Take these keys, for I am Peter, to whom the keys of the Kingdom were entrusted. The Lord also hands over to you the keys of the holy churches, so that whomever you bind shall be bound, and whomever you loose shall be loosed."

The blessed John again bent his knees and bowed before the appearing Apostles, saying:

"Who am I, a sinner and the very last of all men, that I should dare to take upon myself and bear so great and terrible a service?"

But the appearing holy Apostles again took him by the right hand and set him on his feet, saying:

"Stand upon your feet, take courage, be strong and do what our Lord Jesus Christ calls you to do, for the sanctification and establishment of His people, for whose salvation He shed His blood. Teach the word of God; boldly call to mind the Lord, who said: 'Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom' (Lk. 12:32).[6] So you too do not fear, for Christ our God is pleased through you to sanctify many souls and to bring them to the knowledge of Him. For the truth you will undergo many calamities and sorrows, but bear them like a firm adamant,[7] for by this path you will inherit the Kingdom of God."

Having said this, the appearing men made the sign of the Cross over John, and having given him the kiss in the name of the Lord, withdrew. The Venerable Hesychius told the others, the brethren experienced in the ascetic struggle, about what he had seen, and they marveled and glorified God, who has secret servants who labor in asceticism. At the same time Hesychius forbade them to tell anyone about the vision, lest

6. In the indicated place the Lord addresses His disciples with an exhortation not to cling to earthly things, but to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven. The "little flock" are the disciples first of all, and then also all the followers of Christ, predestined by God to the Kingdom of Heaven.
7. Adamant – diamond, the hardest stone, which cuts other stones.

John learn of it and depart from them, and they thus be deprived of the company of so great a servant of God.

The blessed John, however, untiringly cared for his salvation, laboring in word and deed; himself successfully engaged in asceticism, he encouraged others to the struggle and urged the slothful to strive after heavenly things, mortifying their flesh and subjecting it to the spirit. Laboring pleasingly to God in the monastery, the blessed one at this time worked many miracles.

A certain inhabitant of Antioch, wealthy and of noble family, suffered greatly from headaches, so that his right eye fell out and hung upon his cheek. Having distributed much of his property to skilled physicians, he received no relief from them. Then he, hearing of St. John, came to him at the monastery; approaching the saint, he embraced his feet, kissing them and begging the saint for healing.

St. John said to him:

– Such diseases befall people because of their sins and their little faith. Therefore, if you believe with all your soul that Christ is able to heal you, and you turn away from your sins, you will see the glory of God.

The sick man answered:

– I believe, Father, and I will do all that you command me.

Having said this, he seized the garment of the blessed John and laid it upon his head and upon his diseased eye. The affliction immediately ceased, the eye returned to its proper place, and the man became healthy, as though he had never been ill at all; glorifying God, he returned home.

Likewise another man, by name Archelaus, an elder of the city of Antioch, who suffered from leprosy on his face, came to St. John with a request for healing. Having instructed him in the truths of the faith, John commanded him to wash his brow with the water which the brethren of the monastery drink. Having done this, the sick man was cleansed of his leprosy, and, leaving the world, became a monk.

Yet another, named Euclius, blind from childhood in his right eye, came to the monastery where the blessed John was, and received the monastic habit. John said to him:

– May God heal you, brother, and enlighten the eyes of your soul and of your body.

No sooner had the saint uttered these words than the blind eye of Euclius suddenly regained sight, and the sick man received the ability to see clearly. Seeing this miracle, the brethren marvelled and said:

– Truly John is a servant of God, and the Holy Spirit dwells in him.

A certain woman, by name Christina, who suffered from a flow of blood, begged her husband to take her to St. John. Setting his wife upon a donkey, the husband went to the monastery and left her before the monastery gates, and himself went in to the saint and began to beg him to heal his wife of her infirmity. Holy John said to the man:

– Tell your wife to change her evil disposition and to cease being cruel in her treatment of the slaves, remembering that she too was made of the same clay as they[8]. And let her take care of her soul, giving alms to the poor and not neglecting prayers. Also abstain, and keep yourselves pure on the fasting and holy days, and God will grant your wife healing.

Withdrawing, the husband told his wife all that he had heard from the saint. She vowed to keep all that had been commanded with all diligence until her last breath. The husband returned to the saint and told him of his wife's vow. The saint answered:

– Go in peace! The Lord has already healed her. Returning to his wife, the husband found her healed, and they joyfully returned home, glorifying God.

It happened that at that time, not far from the monastery where John was living, a fierce lion appeared, which, roaming the roads, devoured men and cattle. Many times the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, gathering together with weapons and arrows, lay in wait for the beast, hoping to kill it, but each time without success. Coming out of the grove, the beast attacked people with fury and killed many outright, wounded others so that they could scarcely escape, and carried some off alive to its lair and devoured them there. Coming to John, the neighbouring peasants told him of this and begged him to help them

8. Brenie means clay, mud, earthly dust.

with his prayers. John gave the petitioners a wooden cross, commanding them to erect it on the place from which the beast came out. They did so, and after the passage of several days they noticed that the beast did not appear. Then the peasants went to the cross and found there the corpse of the lion. Delivered from such a calamity by the power of the Cross, through the prayers of St. John, they rejoiced and glorified the servant of God.

John remained in that monastery for four years. Then, desiring greater solitude, he secretly withdrew from there into the desert, found a cave there, and remained in it for two years, living in solitude.

After two years, worn out by his laborious ascetic feats and suffering from the cold, John fell ill, so that he could no longer take care of himself. He was therefore obliged to leave the desert and return to Antioch. This came about through the providence of God and His care for the Church, so that such a lamp should not be hidden in the desert, as though under a bushel, but should shine for all. The Lord permitted John to fall into infirmity, leading him by this path from dwelling with the wild beasts to association with men, so that he might be useful not only to himself but also to others.

When the blessed John arrived in Antioch, the most holy Patriarch Meletius received him with joy, gave him lodging, commanded him to live with him, and soon ordained him to the rank of deacon. In this ministry he lived for six years, adorning the Church of God by his virtuous life and by his writings profitable to souls. During his diaconate St. John wrote the following works: "On Virginity," "To a Young Widow," and, in defence of the faith, "A Discourse on the Blessed Babylas, and also against Julian, and to the Pagans"[9].

At this time it was necessary for St. Meletius to go to Constantinople for the ordination of St. Gregory of Nazianzus as patriarch.

9. The treatises "On Virginity" and "To a Widow" are full of the most elevated thoughts. In them St. John appears as a zealous champion of bodily purity and indicates means of strengthening the spirit in the struggle against the temptations of the flesh. In his work against Julian he discourses chiefly on the Providence of God and denounces the apostasy of the Emperor Julian, who, having been enlightened by holy Baptism, abandoned the faith of Christ, became a pagan and an enemy of the Christians. In history Julian the Apostate is known as a zealous patron of paganism, who strove to give it the upper hand over Christianity.

Soon after his arrival there, St. Meletius reposed in the Lord. Hearing of the death of his patriarch, John again left Antioch and withdrew to the monastery in which he had first dwelt. The monks rejoiced at his return and held a spiritual festival, receiving from him the customary instruction. Pleasing God in silence, John remained there three years.

Flavian[10] occupied the see of the Church of Antioch. When he once stood in prayer one night, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said:

– Tomorrow go to the monastery in which the servant of God John dwells, bring him from there into the city, and ordain him presbyter, for he is a chosen vessel of God, and God desires through him to turn many to the true faith.

At the same time the Angel also appeared to St. John, as he was, according to his custom, performing his nightly prayers in his cell, and commanded him to go with Flavian into the city and receive ordination from him. At the coming of day the patriarch came to the monastery; all the monks, together with the blessed John, came out to meet him; bowing, they received the patriarch's blessing, and then with due honour they led him into the church. Having celebrated the holy Liturgy and given Communion of the Divine Mysteries to all, the patriarch bade peace to the brethren and, taking John with him, withdrew to the city. The monks wept inconsolably, parting from the holy servant of God.

On the following day, in the morning, John was ordained presbyter; when the patriarch laid his hand upon his head, suddenly a white, radiant dove appeared, which flew above the head of St. John. Patriarch Flavian and all who were in the church were amazed and wondered for a long time. The report of this miracle spread through all Antioch, Syria[11] and the neighbouring cities, and all who heard said:

– What will John become? For behold, from the very beginning the glory of the Lord has appeared upon him!

In the rank of presbyter John cared for the salvation of human souls with still greater zeal. Once or twice a week, and sometimes even every

10. St. Flavian occupied the Antiochene see after the death of Meletius, from 381 to 404.
11. Syria is the name of the coastal country east of the Mediterranean Sea, bounded by the Taurus, the upper Euphrates and the Arabian desert.

day, he instructed the people in the church, delivering sermons from the ambo. It happened that, having preached a sermon in one church, he went, tired, to the cathedral, where the bishop was serving, and the bishop, in fulfilment of the general wish, asked him to preach again. During his presbyterate St. John delivered a multitude of homilies, some of which have come down to us. In this he diligently devoted himself, from the height of the church ambo, to the exposition of Holy Scripture. He composed very profitable commentaries on many books of the Old Testament, on the Gospels of Matthew and John, and on the Acts of the Apostles; he especially loved the epistles of the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, and expounded many of them to the people in his discourses.

St. John Chrysostom often delivered his sermons extemporaneously, at which all the inhabitants of Antioch greatly marvelled, praising the blessed man, since until that time no one had preached the word of God without a book or a notebook: the first such preacher among them was John. His instructions were so full of power that all who heard them could never have their fill of them. For this reason many swift writers recorded John's sermons on sheets of paper[12] and, copying them, passed them on to others. His instructions were read at meals and in the public squares, and listeners learned his words by heart from hearing them, as the Psalter. John was such an eloquent orator and beloved teacher to all that there was not a single person in the city who did not desire to hear his discourses, and when it became known that John was to preach, all gladly flocked to the church. The city magistrates and judges left their occupations, the merchants their trade, the craftsmen their work, and hastened to hear the teaching of John, taking care not to miss a single word issuing from his lips. All considered it a great loss when they failed to hear the sweet speech of John. For this reason various commendatory names were given him. Some called him "the Mouth of God and of Christ," others "sweet-speaking," and still others "honey-flowing."

It happened that the blessed man, especially at the beginning of his presbyterate, delivered sermons which, by their content, were not al-

ways understandable to the less educated hearers. Once a certain woman, listening and not understanding what was said, raised her voice among the people and said to John:

"Our spiritual teacher, or rather I should say, John Chrysostom: the well of your holy teaching is deep, and the cords of our understanding are short and cannot reach its depths."

Then many of the people said:

"God himself, through the mouth of a woman, gave this name to John. Let him from now on be called *Chrysostom*."

Indeed, from that time until now the Church has retained this name for John.

Judging it unsuitable to speak to the people in intricate discourses, St. John from that time on strove to adorn his preaching not with refined eloquence but with simple and edifying words, so that even the least educated listener might understand and profit. In instructing the inhabitants of Antioch in the faith and the Christian life, St. John Chrysostom at the same time became a consoler of his fellow citizens in times of public calamity.

In Antioch, because of the imposition of a tax, a burden for the poor inhabitants of the city, a popular uprising took place. The enraged mob threw down the statues of the emperor and of the members of his family standing in the city and smashed them to pieces. But soon terror and despair took the place of frenzied fury. The Antiochenes waited to see the manifestation of the emperor's wrath against the rebels. Yielding to the entreaties of the people, the pious Hierarch Flavian of Antioch set out to the emperor to intercede for the offending city; St. John, however, he left in the city to console and heal the suffering souls. The Great Lent arrived, which for the Antiochenes was truly a time of repentance and sorrow. Daily the lamp of God, John, ascended the church ambo and addressed the people with powerful words of consolation and instruction. Now he sustained in the people firmness and courage, now he revived their hopes for the emperor's mercy, now he kindled in them the hope of the life to come. At the same time he de-

12. On parchment, leather sheets, papyrus and other materials used at that time for writing.

nounced the vices of his fellow citizens: the avarice of the rich, covetousness, debauchery, hypocrisy, cruelty and superstition; he said that by these vices the Antiochenes had brought such misfortune upon the city, and he urged them to amend their lives. Perhaps never had the Great Lent been kept with such strictness, nor carried out with such a penitential spirit, as seized all the inhabitants. The people went in crowds to church and eagerly listened to the words of Chrysostom, finding in them relief from their sorrow. Meanwhile St. Flavian came before the emperor with a speech in defense, and the Christian emperor forgave those who had insulted the supreme authority. The news of the pardon was brought by Flavian just before the day of Pascha. On the very first day of the feast St. John announced the glad tidings to the people and concluded by saying:

"Rejoice with a spiritual joy, and give thanks to God not only for the cessation of the calamities, but also for the fact that He sent them."

In saying this, St. John had in view the significance of the ended calamities: to awaken in the Antiochenes a penitential spirit and to rouse their spiritual life.

The servant of God was a mighty man not only in word but also in deed. By the power of Christ he worked miracles, healing the sick. Here are some of the saint's wonderworkings.

A certain woman named Euclia had an only son, who fell ill with a fever and was already at the point of death. Coming to the saint, Euclia besought him to heal the sick boy. John, taking water, three times made over it the sign of the holy Cross in the name of the Holy Trinity, and sprinkled the sick child. The fever immediately ceased, and the boy, rising up healthy, bowed down before the saint.

The commandant of the fortress in Antioch was an adherent of the Marcionite heresy,[7352] who did much harm to the pious. His wife was afflicted with a grievous illness which no remedy could cure. As the most severe sickness grew worse day by day, the commandant of the fortress called heretics into his house, begging them to help his wife. The heretics prayed for the sick woman zealously, without ceasing, for three days and more, but without success. Then the wife said to her husband:

"I have heard of a certain presbyter named John, who lives with Bishop Flavian, that he is a disciple of Christ, and that whatever he asks of God, God grants him. I beg you, take me to him, that he may pray for my recovery, for I have heard that he works many miracles. The Marcionites do not help me in the least, and from this it is plainly evident how impious they are. For if they had the true faith, God would have heard their prayer."

The husband obeyed his wife and went with her to the Orthodox Church. But being a heretic, he did not dare to bring her inside; he laid her before the church doors and sent to Bishop Flavian and to the presbyter John, asking them to pray to the Lord Jesus Christ for the health of his grievously ill wife. The bishop came out to them together with John and said:

"If you renounce your heresy and join the holy, catholic and apostolic Church, you will receive healing from Christ God."

When they had done this, John ordered water to be brought and asked Flavian to make the sign of the cross over the water. Flavian fulfilled the saint's request. John commanded that the sick woman be doused with this water, and she immediately rose up healthy, glorifying God. After this marvelous miracle the commandant of the fortress, together with his wife, joined the holy Church. There was great joy among the Orthodox over this joining; the heretics, however, were greatly disturbed and angry at John, spreading slanders and calumnies about him everywhere and asserting that he was a sorcerer and magician. But God soon stopped their mouths by bringing upon them a harsh punishment. This happened as follows.

During the great earthquake that occurred in Antioch, the church in which the heretics held their assemblies collapsed; a great multitude of them perished beneath the ruins of the church. Of the Orthodox, however, no one perished during this earthquake. Seeing this, not only the heretics who remained alive but also the pagans came to know the power of Christ and, instructed by St. John, turned to the true God.

After the death of the Constantinopolitan Patriarch Nectarius,[13] the successor of Gregory of Nazianzus, for a long time no one could be

found who was worthy of the patriarchal throne. Then the Emperor Arcadius was informed about John (for his fame had spread everywhere). The emperor at once sent to Flavian a letter with an order to release the saint to go to Constantinople. The people of Antioch, learning of this and burning with love for John, gathered at the church. Unwilling to lose their teacher, the people resisted the imperial envoys, did not heed the exhortations of their patriarch, and did not allow John to be taken away; nor did the servant of God himself wish to go to Constantinople, for in his humility he had decided that he was not worthy of the patriarchal dignity. Learning of this, the emperor was astonished and wanted all the more to see John on the patriarchal throne. He commanded Asterius, the governor of the East, to take John secretly out of Antioch, which was done.

As John drew near to Constantinople, the whole city came out to meet him, together with the many nobles sent by the emperor. The emperor, together with the Holy Council of hierarchs and the people, received St. John with honor, and all rejoiced at the elevation of this lamp of the Church to the patriarchal throne.

Only the Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria[14] and his like-minded adherents did not rejoice. He envied John's glory and, hating him, planned to raise to the patriarchal throne his subordinate presbyter Isidore. But this did not prevent the convening of a council, by whose decree St. John was chosen for the patriarchate.

The blessed one was enthroned on the patriarchal throne on February 26, 398. The emperor, and after him all the princes and nobles, came to John, desiring to receive a blessing from the newly ordained patriarch. Having offered prayer for the emperor and the people and having blessed everyone, John opened his God-speaking lips and delivered a soul-profiting instruction, in which he admonished the emperor to abide unswervingly in Orthodoxy, to shun heretics, to attend church often, to be just and merciful. He said:

13. St. Nectarius governed the Constantinopolitan Church from 381 to 397. Before his election to the episcopal see he was a senator and was only preparing for baptism. After his election he was baptized immediately. His memory is celebrated on the Saturday of Cheesefare.
14. Theophilus occupied the Alexandrian see in 385–412.

"Let your piety know that I shall not be afraid, when the need arises, to speak admonitions and rebukes for the good of your soul, just as the prophet Nathan was not afraid to rebuke the sins of King David.[15]"

John also admonished all spiritual and secular rulers and their subordinates to fulfill their duty honestly. All who listened were delighted by his instructive word. While John was preaching to his flock, there was among the people one possessed man, who in a fit threw himself on the ground and cried out with a terrible voice, so that all who were in the church were struck with horror. The blessed John ordered him to be brought to him, made the sign of the cross over him, and, casting out the unclean spirit, restored the possessed man to health. Seeing this, the emperor and all the people rejoiced and glorified God, who had given them so great a lamp, a physician of soul and body.

Having assumed the administration of the Church, the most holy Patriarch John began zealously to shepherd the rational flock of Christ, eradicating evil customs among people of every rank (and especially among the clergy), destroying impurity, envy, injustice and every deed displeasing to God. At the same time he planted purity of morals, love, justice and mercy, implanted the virtues in hearts, and with his golden-speaking lips instructed everyone in piety. Moral vices deeply grieved St. John, but sincere repentance made him forgive all.

Once, just before Pascha, John was grieved by the unworthy conduct of the people whom he loved so dearly and for whose spiritual welfare he cared so greatly. On Wednesday of Holy Week a terrible storm arose. Frightened, the people rushed to the churches, turning to the mercy of God; public prayers and processions of the Cross began. The calamity passed, and already on Good Friday and Holy Saturday the people, forgetting the visitation of God, gave themselves over to merry spectacles in the circus and the theatre. Deeply indignant, the holy shepherd, on the first day of Pascha, addressed his ungrateful flock

15. David took from Uriah, a warrior who was on campaign against the Ammonites, his wife Bathsheba. This sin of David was exposed by the prophet Nathan, who so influenced the Hebrew king that he repented of his sin, composing the well-known psalm beginning with the words: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy great mercy."

with his famous sermon *Against the Spectacles*. "Can one bear it? Can one endure it? I complain to you yourselves of you," so the blessed hierarch began this sermon. Clearly and intelligibly he portrayed the ruinous effects of the theatre upon morality, and he threatened the guilty with excommunication. The sermon of the holy preacher, spoken with conviction, made a strong impression upon the people, who loved him, and called forth sincere repentance.

Not only in Constantinople, but in all the surrounding cities and villages, the holy servant of God took great care for the salvation of human souls. From among his clergy he sent experienced, God-fearing men to establish Orthodoxy by the preaching of the word of God, to root out impiety and heresy, and to direct the strayed onto the path of salvation. He utterly destroyed the idol temples that had stood for many centuries in Phoenicia[16]. He wisely converted to the Orthodox faith the Celtic people[17], infected with Arianism, by commanding presbyters and deacons chosen for the purpose to learn the Celtic language and sending them to the Celts to preach piety in their native tongue. In the same way John enlightened the Scythians[18] who lived along the Danube. He drove the Marcionite heresy out of the eastern lands and illumined the whole world with the light of the true teaching.

John had especial care for the infirm and the poor, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and providing for orphans and widows. For the comfort of the sick and of strangers who had nowhere to lay their head, he established many hospitals, supplied the sick with all necessities, appointed attendants and physicians, and entrusted two God-fearing priests with their care. At the same time he himself diligently at-

16. Phoenicia – a narrow and long strip of land lying along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Palestine. Here, despite the government's prohibitions, paganism enjoyed considerable freedom.

17. The Celts were a numerous people who in ancient times lived in western Europe, in what is now England, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, and especially France. They also dwelt in Asia Minor (in the region of Galatia, where they were called Galatians). In time the Celts merged partly with the Germans and the ancient Romans (the French, Spanish, Italians, English), and partly preserved their nationality down to the present (the Irish, Scots).

18. Scythians – the Greek name of a numerous people who lived in Asia and Europe, along the shores of the Black Sea, and especially in what is now southern Russia.

tended to the administration of the Church, lovingly confirming the good and punishing and rebuking the wicked.

During the patriarchate of St. John Chrysostom in Constantinople there still remained many followers of the Arian heresy, who professed their faith and celebrated their services without hindrance. The blessed one pondered how he might cleanse the city of this heresy, and, seizing a fitting opportunity, he said to the emperor:

"Pious Emperor! If someone were to set in your crown, alongside the precious stones it contains, a plain stone, dark and unclean, would he not dishonor the whole crown?"

The emperor answered:

"Yes, he would."

John continued:

"Thus is this city also dishonored, which, being Orthodox, still has among its inhabitants unbelieving Arians. And just as you, O emperor, would be angered at the dishonor of your crown, so Almighty God is angered on account of this city defiled by the Arian heresy. Therefore you must either bring the heretics to unity of faith, or else drive them out of the city."

Having heard the words of John, the emperor ordered that all the Arian leaders be brought to him at once, and commanded them to state their confession of faith in the presence of the patriarch. They, however, spoke words full of impiety and blasphemy against our Lord Jesus Christ. Then the emperor ordered them expelled from the city.

After some time had passed, the Arians, having helpers and intercessors among the men of rank serving in the imperial palace, again began on Sundays to enter the city, approaching their assembly house with heretical hymns in which they reviled the Most Holy Trinity. Learning of this, the most holy Patriarch John, fearing that some of the common people might take part in those public Arian prayers, commanded his clergy to walk through the city in sacred vestments, singing hymns in praise of the Most Holy Trinity, composed in opposition to the Arian blasphemous songs. For these processions silver crosses were made on poles, which were solemnly borne through the city together with the holy icons, with lighted candles carried before them. Thus

processions of the Cross first arose. The solemn processions of the Orthodox drew the people away from the Arian public prayers which they held in the squares. Angered by this, the Arians, during one of these processions, attacked the Orthodox and staged a massacre. In this slaughter several persons on both sides fell dead, and the imperial eunuch Vrison, who was among the Orthodox, had his head broken by a stone. Learning of this, the emperor was greatly enraged at the Arians and forbade them to hold their public prayers and to enter the city. Thus the heretical blasphemy was finally expelled from the royal city.

In Constantinople there lived a certain voivode, a barbarian by birth, named Gaina, valiant in war and enjoying the emperor's favor, but at the same time sharing the heretical opinions of Arius. He earnestly asked the emperor to give the Arians some church in the city. The emperor did not know how to answer him, for he did not wish to offend him by a refusal, fearing that Gaina, a man of wicked disposition and fierce, might stir up some uprising in the Greek realm. Therefore the emperor reported Gaina's request to the holy Patriarch John.

John said to the emperor:

"Summon me to you at the time when Gaina is to ask for a church, and I will answer for you."

And so, the next day, when the patriarch had been summoned to the imperial palace and was sitting with the emperor, Gaina began to ask the emperor for a church in Constantinople for the Arian congregation. He asked this as a just reward for the labors he had undergone and the courage he had shown in the wars.

Great John observed to him:

"If you, Gaina, wish to pray in a church, then enter whichever one you wish and pray, for all the churches in the city are open to you."

Gaina answered:

"But I am of another confession; that is why I desire, together with my like-minded associates, to have a separate house of God in the city, and I beg the emperor to grant my request. I have undergone many labors, fighting for the Greek realm; I have shed my blood and laid down my soul for the emperor."

John replied:

"For your labors you have received a reward: great honor from the emperor, glory, rank, and gifts. You ought to consider what you were before and what you are now. Once you were poor and without renown, and now you have grown rich and famous; consider the rank you held while living on the other side of the Danube and the one you hold now. Then you were one of the simple and poor villagers, clothed in wretched garments, and had only bread and water for your sustenance; but now you are a respected and glorified voivode, clothed in costly garments, possessing much gold and silver and countless estates—and all of this you hold thanks to the emperor. Such is the reward you have received for your labors!

Be grateful and continue faithfully to serve the Greek realm, but do not ask for divine rewards for worldly service."

Put to shame by these words, Gaina fell silent and no longer asked for a church. The emperor marvelled at the wisdom of John, who with a few words could stop the mouth of a bold barbarian filled with unbridled ferocity.

A year later Gaina revolted against the emperor and, gathering a numerous army, marched to war against Constantinople. The emperor, not wishing to shed blood, begged St. John to go out to him and subdue him with gentle words. John, although he remembered that he had angered Gaina by forbidding him to hold an Arian assembly in the city, nevertheless, being ready to lay down his soul for the sheep, went out to the proud barbarian. God helped His servant: John, by his words, subdued the beast-like man, turned him from a wolf into a sheep, reconciled him with the emperor, and returned.

After this, in the winter, St. John, despite his ill health, set out for Asia Minor to put in order the affairs of the Church. There many bishops were selling the priesthood, taking money for ordination[19]; such was, for example, Antony, Metropolitan of Ephesus[20]. St. John deposed

19. Chirotonia (Greek) – the laying on of hands, or the ordination to some office.

20. Ephesus – one of the large trading cities on the western coast of Asia Minor; in antiquity it was famous for its renowned temple of Diana (the pagan goddess of the moon and fertility). Here St. Paul preached Christianity and lived; here too St. John the Apostle and Evangelist the Theologian resided for a long time; here in 431 the Third Ecumenical Council took place. The see of the Metropolitan of Ephesus enjoyed, like an apostolic see, a special significance in the East.

in Asia Minor many bishops guilty of simony[21], and deprived of their offices both those who ordained for money and those who were ordained. In their place he appointed more worthy men. Having set order in Asia Minor, St. John returned to Constantinople.

Living in the world in so high a rank, the blessed one nevertheless never abandoned his first monastic struggles, but spent the time free from church affairs either in prayer or in reading the divine books, shut up in his solitary cell. Always observing a strict fast and abstinence in all things, he ate only barley bread and drank water; he slept very little, and that not on a bed but standing. He went nowhere to feasts and banquets. He devoted all his mind to the understanding of the divine Scripture, continuing to occupy himself with the composition of commentaries on the epistles of the holy Apostle Paul, whose icon he had in his cell: at this time he expounded to the people the Epistle of the Apostle of the Gentiles to the Colossians, and somewhat later to the Philippians, Thessalonians, and Hebrews.

While writing his interpretations of these epistles, St. John experienced the following perplexity:

"Who knows whether this is pleasing to God? Have I understood the power of this Holy Scripture or not?"

He began to pray to God that He would reveal the matter to him. God heard the prayer of His servant and gave him the following sign. One night, shut up in his cell, St. John was writing his commentary by the light of a candle. At that time Proclus, who attended him, wished to enter to the Patriarch at the request of a certain man who entreated help; but first Proclus looked through the keyhole to see what the Patriarch was doing. He saw him sitting and writing, and some venerable old man, standing behind him, bent down to the Patriarch's ear and spoke quietly to him. This man in every respect resembled the image of St. Paul on the icon hanging on the wall of John's cell before him. Proclus waited until this man should withdraw. But when the time came for the ringing for Matins, the man became invisible. Proclus observed

21. Simony – the buying and selling of holy things, when some give and others receive the sacred rank not according to merit but for money. The name simony derives from Simon the Sorcerer, who wished to buy from the Apostle Peter the gift of the Holy Spirit in order to work miracles.

the same thing for the two following nights as well. At last he ventured to ask the Patriarch himself:

"Master, who converses with you at night?"

John answered:

"I have had no one."

Then Proclus related in detail how he had seen through the keyhole a venerable old man who whispered in the Patriarch's ear while he was writing; and in so doing Proclus described the appearance and face of the one who appeared. Hearing Proclus's account, John was perplexed. Meanwhile Proclus, glancing at the image of the Apostle Paul on the icon, said:

"The one I saw was like the one depicted in this icon."

Then John understood that Proclus had seen the holy Apostle Paul himself, and was assured that his labor was pleasing to the Lord. He fell to the ground and prayed for a long time, giving thanks to God. From that time he took up greater zeal and fervor for the writing of the Divine books, which he left after himself to the Church as a most precious treasure[7362].

John, the great teacher of the whole world, without any hesitation rebuked injustices, defended the wronged, and persuaded the emperor and empress to wrong no one but to act justly. To courtiers and men of high rank who plundered the property of others and grieved the poor, he threatened the judgment of God. Because of this many worldly rulers became hostile to him. Condemned by their own conscience, yet unwilling to part from their vices, they grew angry at John. Their hearts had hardened; it was hard for them to hear the words of the saint, and so they nursed malice against him. His enemies strove by every means to blacken the saint, saying that the Patriarch, in his sermons in church, did not teach but insulted and accused the emperor, the empress and all the authorities. Moreover, they also called him merciless for the following reason.

In the imperial palace there was a certain eunuch named Eutropius, chief of the imperial bedchamber attendants. He contrived to insinuate himself into the emperor's confidence and became his favorite. Pursuing his enemies, he persuaded the emperor to issue a law abolishing an an-

cient custom which was as follows. People who had violated civil law in some way and been condemned to death took refuge in the church, as once the Israelites in the cities of refuge[22], and in the churches they were saved from capital punishment. The abolition of this custom was exceedingly grievous to St. John Chrysostom, and considering this matter a violence against the Church, he rebuked Eutropius, accusing him of cruelty and of trampling on church ordinances. Before long Eutropius himself fell into the pit he had dug for others, and stabbed himself with the same sword he had sharpened for others. Because of some grave offense the emperor was greatly angered with him, and Eutropius was condemned to death. Then Eutropius fled into the church and hid in the sanctuary beneath the Holy Table. But the blessed John, seated on the ambo from which he customarily taught the people, as a most strict zealot directed a rebuking word against Eutropius; he said it would be just if the newly established unjust law were tested on the very man who had devised and instituted it. John's enemies, seizing upon this word, began to censure the saint, reproaching him for lack of mercy. Thus little by little they provoked the hearts of many people and aroused anger against John[23].

Among those discontented with the holy man of God there were not a few clergy who lived in vice, since he exposed their wicked deeds and excommunicated some of them from the Church; and they were especially irritated by the conduct of a certain deacon, Serapion. The latter, serving the Patriarch in faith and living piously, once said to the saint in the presence of all the clergy:

"Master, you will not correct these men unless you drive them all away with a single staff."

At these words many became angry and began to speak ill among the people of the holy Patriarch, heaping reproaches upon him who was

22. Among the Jews there were six cities of refuge: three on the eastern side of the Jordan, three on the western. Into these cities fled involuntary manslayers, and also those who were avenging the blood of a murdered kinsman. Among the Christians of the ancient Church the right of asylum belonged at first to some churches, and then to all. It consisted in this: if a condemned person found refuge in a church, he was inviolable until his case had been examined anew.

worthy of all praise. Discontent and enmity against St. John also showed itself among the higher clergy. Among the bishops dissatisfied with St. John was one Severian, Metropolitan of Gabala[24]. At first he enjoyed John's love, for when John set out for Asia Minor to arrange the church affairs there, he entrusted to him the governance of his flock. While governing the Church of Constantinople in the absence of the man of God, Severian strove to stir up displeasure against him, and by intrigues he won favor at the imperial court, hoping in this way to take the place of Chrysostom. At the same time he exceeded his authority and allowed certain disorders in his administration. On returning, St. John immediately perceived all of Severian's baseness and treachery, and wished to remove him from the capital for the disorders he had caused. But the Empress Eudoxia interceded for Severian, and at her request John sincerely reconciled with him and forgave him. Severian, however, remained in his soul the same as before, and secretly continued to nurse malice against Chrysostom. The saint knew of the malice surrounding him but paid it no heed, for the more he was reviled, the more his glory flourished; he became known even in distant lands, and many came from afar wishing to see the saint and hear his teaching.

Given such renown of Chrysostom, the malice of all his enemies would not have been dangerous to him, had not Empress Eudoxia herself been among those who opposed the saint. She was the most dangerous and most stubborn enemy of the saint of God, hating him with her whole soul. All the words of John about the lovers of silver and those who plunder what belongs to others, which he addressed to everyone in general, the empress referred to herself, and thought that John was rebuking and insulting her alone; for she was very covetous and possessed by an insatiable greed for gold, which she forcibly took from many. Angered at the blessed man of God, the empress began to contemplate how she might depose him from the patriarchate.

At that time there was in Constantinople a certain distinguished man, named Theodoric, who possessed great wealth. Envying him and

23. Nevertheless, by his intercession before the emperor, despite the opposition of the Empress Eudoxia, John Chrysostom saved Eutropius on this occasion from his deserved punishment. Afterwards Eutropius, however, was exiled and subjected to capital punishment.

wishing to appropriate his property, the empress sought accusations against him, but found none, for Theodoric was a worthy and honest man. Unable to inflict violence upon him, the empress devised a stratagem. She summoned Theodoric to her and said to him:

"You know how great a loss the imperial treasury constantly suffers, how much gold is given out to the army guarding the realm, and how countless are those who daily are fed from the imperial treasures. That is why at present our treasury has somewhat been depleted. So lend part of your property to the imperial treasuries; by this you will gain our favor, and in time you will receive back what you give now."

Theodoric understood that the empress wished to make use of his property not to replenish the imperial treasury but to satisfy her insatiable covetousness. Therefore he went to the blessed John, told him of the empress's intention, and tearfully begged the saint to give him his help and support. John immediately sent the empress a letter, admonishing her with good and gentle words not to do harm to Theodoric. The empress, though angry with the Patriarch, on this occasion acted in accordance with his wish; she was ashamed of his wise words and gave her promise not to inflict any evil upon Theodoric. After this, Theodoric, heeding the golden-speaking lips of the saint, who taught about almsgiving and advised laying up treasure not on earth, where the hand of the envious may take it away, but in heaven, where no one will envy or take away, resolved to give his wealth to the King of Heaven. Leaving for himself a small part of his property to support his family, he donated all the rest of his great fortune to the church hospice for the sustenance of travelers, the poor and the sick. Hearing of this, the empress was greatly angered and sent to say to the blessed John:

"Holy Patriarch! At your counsel I took nothing from the patrician Theodoric for the needs of our realm, and you have seized his property for your own enrichment! Would it not have been more fitting for us to take this property, and not for you, since Theodoric grew rich in the imperial service? Why did you not follow our example? As we took nothing from Theodoric, so you ought not to have taken his estates."

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24. Gebal – a city in Phoenicia, on the Mediterranean Sea. It was located in present-day Syria, between Beirut and Tripoli.

In answer to these words John wrote the empress the following:

– I think it is no secret to you that, had I desired riches, nothing would have prevented me from possessing them. For I had noble, distinguished, and wealthy parents. But I voluntarily renounced riches. You assert that I took Theodoric's property to enrich myself. But know that Theodoric gave me nothing; and even if he had offered it, I would not have accepted it from him. He gave his riches to Christ, distributing alms to the poor and needy. And he did well, for he will receive a hundredfold from Christ in the age to come. I would wish you, too, to imitate Theodoric and lay up your possessions in heaven, so that when you are impoverished you may be received into the everlasting habitations. But if you are plotting to take from Christ what Theodoric gave Him, what is that to us? For, as you shall see for yourself, you will insult not us, but Christ Himself.

When the empress read this letter from John, she grew even more enraged and began seeking an opportunity to take vengeance upon the saint.

At that time a widow named Callitropa arrived in Constantinople from Alexandria on the following errand. When Paulicius, who held the rank of Augustus[25], was governor of the province in Alexandria, certain envious men informed him that Callitropa possessed much gold. Paulicius was exceedingly fond of gold. Having falsely accused Callitropa, he ordered the widow seized and forced her to pay him five hundred gold coins. Having no such money, the widow pledged with her neighbours all that she possessed, and, with great difficulty, gathering five hundred gold coins, delivered them to the governor. Soon Paulicius was stripped of his rank for his unjust deeds and sent to Constantinople to be questioned; the poor widow went there after him as well. Coming before the emperor, she fell down before him with tears and cries, complaining of Paulicius, that he had forcibly taken five hundred gold coins from her. The emperor ordered the prefect of Constantinople to investigate the matter. But the prefect, taking Paulicius's side, acquitted him and dismissed the widow empty-handed. Feeling yet more aggrieved by this,

25. This title was given to the highest governors of provinces, in distinction from the lesser ones.

the widow had recourse to the empress and, telling her of her misfortune, begged her for mercy and assistance. The empress, who loved gold, was glad of such an occasion, for she hoped by means of this affair to acquire much gold for herself. So she immediately summoned Paulicius, angrily reproached him for plundering another's property and insulting a poor widow, and ordered him held in custody until he paid one hundred litrae of gold. Seeing that he could not escape the empress's hands, Paulicius sent home for as much gold as the empress demanded and handed her one hundred litrae of gold. Of all this money the empress gave the widow only thirty-six gold coins and dismissed her, keeping all the rest for herself. The widow left the empress weeping, aggrieved by so unjust a decision. Then she heard of the defender of the wronged, St. John. Appearing before him, she related in detail what Paulicius and the empress had done to her.

Having comforted the weeping widow, St. John sent for Paulicius and, inviting him into the church, said to him:

– We know of the injustices you have committed without fear of God, insulting the poor and violently taking other people's possessions, as you did to this poor widow. We have summoned you so that you may return the five hundred gold coins to the woman whom you wronged unjustly. Give them to her, then, so that she may repay what she borrowed from her creditors and not perish with her children in utter poverty. Then you, too, will be freed from your sin and will appease God, whom you have angered, and who will take vengeance upon you for insulting orphans if you do not repent.

Paulicius replied:

– Vladyka, this widow has done me a far greater wrong than I did her, for by complaining about me to the empress she took one hundred litrae of gold from me. What more does she want from me? Let her go to the empress and take what is hers from her.

The saint answered him:

– Even if the empress took so much gold from you, the widow has not yet received what is hers, and therefore she is not to blame for the wrong the empress did you. The empress took one hundred litrae of gold from you not so much for the widow's wrong as for your other

acts of plunder, which you committed while holding authority. Do not slander the empress. I assure you that you will not leave this place until you have returned to the widow everything you took from her, down to the last gold coin. As for the thirty-six gold coins the empress gave her, let her keep them for her travelling expenses.

When the empress learned that John had detained Paulicius in the church, she sent word to John, ordering him to release Paulicius, since she had taken enough gold from him.

But John answered the messengers:

– Paulicius will not be released from here until he returns what he took from the poor woman.

The queen sent to the saint a second time, demanding that he release Paulicius, but the saint answered:

– If the queen wishes me to release him, let her send this widow five hundred gold coins. This will cause her no great difficulty, for she took much more than that from Paulicius—one hundred litrae of gold.

Hearing this, the queen was filled with fury and immediately sent two centurions with two hundred soldiers to force Paulicius out of the church. But when the soldiers approached the church doors, the Angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to them, standing in the doorway, holding a naked sword in his hand and barring their entrance. At the sight of the fearsome Angel, the soldiers were afraid and fled. Trembling, they returned to the queen and told her of the Angel's appearance. When she heard this, she was terrified and no longer dared to send to John for Paulicius. Seeing that the queen had not helped him, Paulicius sent home for gold, gave the widow five hundred gold coins, and was released from the church. Having received what was hers, the widow returned joyfully to her city.

Meanwhile the queen did not cease to be angry with blessed John; her malice against the servant of God grew day by day in her heart. One day she sent her servants to St. John, ordering them to deliver these words to him:

– Cease opposing us and do not meddle in our imperial affairs, for we too do not meddle in the affairs of the Church, but leave you to arrange them as you will. Cease making me a byword for all, speaking

about me and reproaching me. Until now I have regarded you as a father and have shown you the honour due to you; but if from now on you do not mend your ways and treat me better, I will no longer tolerate you.

Having heard these words from the queen, blessed John was greatly saddened and, sighing deeply, said to the messengers:

– The queen wishes me to be like a dead man: to take no notice of the injustices that are committed, to pay no heed to the voices of those who are wronged, who weep and sigh, and to speak no reproof against those who sin. But since I am a bishop and the care of souls has been entrusted to me, I must look upon all things with an unsleeping eye, hear the petitions of all, teach all, instruct and reprove all. For I know that if I do not reprove lawlessness and punish the lawless, I shall be punished; and therefore I fear lest the words of the Prophet Hosea be applied to me: "As robbers lie in wait for a man, so the company of priests murder on the way to Shechem and commit abominations"[26] (Hos. 6:9). For the Divine Apostle commands that the one who sins be reproved before all, so that the others also may have fear. And the same Apostle teaches, saying: "Those who sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (1 Tim. 5:20); "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Tim. 4:2). I reprove lawlessness, not those who act lawlessly; I have spoken to no one to his face of his lawlessness, have branded no one with dishonour, and have never mentioned the queen's name in my sermons in order to reproach her. Rather, I have taught all in general to refrain from evil and not wrong their neighbours. If the conscience of any among those who hear my instruction condemns him for the evil deeds he has committed, he ought to be angry not with me, but with himself; and let him turn away from evil and do good. If the queen is conscious of no evil in herself, nor of having wronged anyone, why is she angry with me for teaching the people to turn away from all unrighteousness? She ought rather to rejoice that she has done no wrong and that I diligently preach salvation to the people over whom she

26. Hos. 6:9. By these words are rebuked the priests of the Hebrew people, who, instead of pointing out to the people the straight paths of life, concealed them from the people.

reigns. But if she is guilty of the sins which I seek by words of instruction to root out from human hearts, let her know that it is not I who reproach her or bring dishonour upon her; her own deeds expose her, bringing great dishonour and shame upon her soul. Let the queen, then, be as angry as she will, but I will not cease to speak the truth. For it is better for me to anger men than God: "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10).

Having said this to the messengers, the saint dismissed them. They returned to the queen and told her all that they had heard. Then the queen grew even more enraged with blessed John.

It was not the empress alone who was hostile to the saint, but many others as well, who lived impiously. He had enemies not only in Constantinople, but also in more distant lands. Among the latter were Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, who from the beginning had taken a dislike to John and had not wished him to be consecrated patriarch; Acacius, Bishop of Beroea[27]; Severian of Gabala; and Antiochus of Ptolemais[28]. In Constantinople there were two presbyters and five deacons, many of the imperial officials, and three well-known and wealthy widows who lived impiously: Marsa, Castricia, and Eugraphia. All these haters of John, taking counsel together, sought accusations against him in order to slander him before the people. First of all, they sent to Antioch to inquire whether John had committed any evil deed, even in childhood. But "they vanished who search out searchings" (Ps. 63:7), and they found nothing that could be laid to the charge of the holy servant of God. After this they sent to Alexandria, to Theophilus, a crafty liar and slanderer; but even he could find nothing with which to condemn St. John, who shone with virtues like the sun. Nevertheless, Theophilus, instructed by Satan, zealously contrived to cast John down from his throne, and he succeeded, having the empress and other wicked men as his accomplices. John's banishment came about in the following manner.

In Alexandria there lived a presbyter named Isidore, who had formerly been a keeper of a hospice (that is, one who provided for

27. Beroea – a city in Syria, now Aleppo.
28. Ptolemais – a city in Syria, on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

strangers), a man of holy life and great wisdom. He was already old, being eighty years of age, and had been ordained presbyter by St. Athanasius the Great, Patriarch of Alexandria. Theophilus was hostile to this Isidore on account of Peter, a presbyter of Alexandria. For Theophilus intended to deprive Peter of his rank and excommunicate him from the Church without cause, while Isidore defended Peter and maintained that the accusation brought against him was unjust. Therefore Theophilus grew angry with Isidore as well; and after excommunicating Peter, he sought evidence against Isidore, so that he too might be excommunicated from the Church.

At that time a certain widow named Theodotia gave Isidore a thousand gold coins, that with this money he might clothe the poor, orphans, and destitute widows in Alexandria. The widow asked Isidore not to tell Patriarch Theophilus, lest he seize the gold and spend it on the stone buildings he had undertaken. Having received the gold, Isidore did as Theodotia had asked and told Theophilus nothing. Nevertheless, Theophilus learned from someone that Isidore had received a thousand gold coins from Theodotia and spent them on the needs of the poor without his knowledge. The gold-loving Theophilus was greatly angered with Isidore for this, and brought against him the unjust accusation of an unnatural sin. To support his accusation, Theophilus procured false witnesses. But the innocent Isidore was acquitted. Nevertheless, in his unbridled malice, Theophilus still deprived him of his presbyteral rank and drove him from the clergy with blows and dishonor. Having suffered unjustly, Isidore left Alexandria and withdrew to live as a hermit on Mount Nitria[29], where he had lived before, when he was still young. There, shutting himself up in a hut, he prayed to God, patiently enduring his disgrace.

At that time four brothers lived in the monasteries of Egypt, virtuous and God-fearing men who spent their whole lives in fasting and monastic struggles. Their names were Dioscorus, Ammonius, Eusebius, and Euthymius, and they were called the Tall Brothers, for they were

29. Nitria, to the south of Alexandria, west of the river Nile, near the Libyan desert. The name of the mountain arose from the abundance of nitre or saltpetre in the lakes adjoining the mountain.

all of great stature. On account of their virtuous lives they were held in esteem not only by the inhabitants of Alexandria, but by Theophilus himself. One of them, Dioscorus, he appointed against his will Bishop of Hermopolis[30], and he persuaded two of his brothers, Ammonius and Euthymius, to live with him in the patriarchate and compelled them to accept the priesthood. While dwelling in the patriarchate with Theophilus, they saw that he did not live according to God's commandments, loved gold more than God, and committed great injustices. Therefore they did not wish to remain with the patriarch, but left him and returned to the life of hermits. Understanding why they had departed, Theophilus took great offense at them, changed the love he had borne them into hatred, and began to consider how he might take revenge. First he spread the rumor that the Tall Brothers, together with the deposed Isidore, adhered to the heresy of Origen and had led many monks astray with this heresy[7372]. Then he sent orders to the neighboring bishops to remove immediately the elder monks from the Nitrian desert, without giving any reason for this command. When the bishops obeyed the patriarch's order, expelling from the mountains and deserts[31] all the pious ascetics who were pleasing to God, the exiles gathered together and came to the patriarch in Alexandria, begging him to tell them why they had been condemned and driven from their homes. The patriarch, in a fit of mad rage, rushed upon them like a man possessed, threw his omophorion[32] around Ammonius' neck, and began to beat him, crying out:

"Heretic, curse Origen!"

After beating Ammonius and the others as well, Theophilus not only refused to let them say anything in his presence, but drove them

30. This Dioscorus, bishop of Hermopolis and a pious man, should be distinguished from Dioscorus the heretic, who lived somewhat later and from 444 to 451 occupied the Alexandrian see. The latter was a Monophysite, that is, he taught that in Jesus Christ there is one nature, that the divine nature in Him is swallowed up by the human. The Diocese of Hermopolis was located in the north-western part of Egypt, to the south of Alexandria; within this diocese was also included the Mount of Nitria.

31. Beyond Mount Nitria to the west began the vast Libyan desert (now the Sahara), in which were located the cells of the monks. Hence this desert bore the name of Kellia.

32. Omophorion (a Greek word) – literally a shoulder-cloth, a shoulder-covering, one of the episcopal vestments, placed upon the shoulders and hanging down in front and behind.

all away from him in disgrace. And they, having received no answer to their question from Theophilus, returned to their huts, paying little heed to the fury and madness of their patriarch.

Theophilus summoned the neighboring bishops and anathematized four innocent monks: Ammonius, Eusebius, and Euthymius, the brothers of Dioscorus, and also the blessed Isidore mentioned above, without investigating their confession of faith. But his malice was not appeased by this. He himself composed many false accusations against them, charging them with heresy, sorcery, and many other grave sins. Then, having bribed slanderers and false witnesses, he handed them these false accusations, ordering the slanderers to approach him while he was teaching the people in church on a feast day, present him with the written accusations against the monks mentioned above, and produce the false witnesses. When everything had been carried out in this way, the patriarch ordered that the false accusations be read aloud in the cathedral. Then he showed them to the governor of the city, obtained about five hundred soldiers from him, and set out with them for Mount Nitria, intending to expel Isidore, the brothers of Dioscorus, and all their disciples from the province of Egypt as heretics and sorcerers. With the aid of the troops, Theophilus first deposed Dioscorus from his episcopal throne; then, having given the soldiers wine to drink, he attacked Mount Nitria by night, seeking first of all Isidore and the brothers of Dioscorus—Ammonius, Eusebius, and Euthymius. Unable to find them, for they had hidden in a deep ravine, he ordered the soldiers to attack all the monks, burn their dwellings, and plunder all their meagre possessions, clothing, and food. The drunken soldiers rushed through every place and cave, and killed by suffocation in smoke and fire as many as ten thousand holy fasters (on the tenth day of the month of July, when their memory is also celebrated in the holy Church). The remaining monks fled, hiding wherever they could. After this Theophilus returned to Alexandria.

The monks who remained after this devastation gathered together and, after long mourning for their fathers and brothers who had been slain, went their several ways. Dioscorus and his brothers, the blessed Isidore, and many other monks, who had shone in fasting and virtue

and had been honored by God with the gift of working miracles, withdrew in deep sorrow to Palestine. What grieved them was not that they had been wronged and driven out, but that Theophilus had excommunicated them without cause and counted them among the heretics. Yet Theophilus did not leave them in peace even in Palestine. He immediately sent word to the bishops of Palestine:

"You must not receive those whom I have excommunicated and who have fled from me without my consent."

Then the exiles, not knowing where to turn, went to Constantinople, to St. John Chrysostom, as to a sure refuge; falling at his feet, they tearfully implored him to show them mercy and help. Seeing fifty respected men in such distress, John pitied them and wept. Then, learning why they had suffered such a calamity at the hands of Theophilus, he comforted them with gentle words and gave them shelter at the church of St. Anastasia. They were provided for not only by St. John, but also by St. Olympias the deaconess, who supplied all their needs from her own means. This deaconess devoted all her wealth to ensuring that the poor and strangers had rest and all that was necessary for life. She was truly a saint, and so were the monks; the Church later honored the memory of some of them with a feast. Among them one man especially stood out, named Hierax, who had lived alone in the desert for many years and whom the demons tempted in this way:

"Elder! You will live another fifty years! How will you live in the desert for so long?"

But he understood their deception and said:

"You cause me sorrow by foretelling such a short life for me; for I have prepared myself to endure hardships in this desert for two hundred years."

Hearing this, the devils fled in shame. Such was the father whom the devils could not shake, and yet Theophilus of Alexandria expelled him! Among the holy black-robed monks there was also the priest Isaac, learned in Divine Scripture, a disciple of St. Macarius, undefiled from his mother's womb, for he had been brought into the desert at the age of five and had grown up there. And all those black-robed monks expelled by Theophilus were holy and venerable. The Blessed John held

them in high honor and did not forbid them to attend church, though he did not admit them to the Holy Communion until he himself had thoroughly ascertained the causes of their excommunication from the Church and reconciled them with Theophilus. He restrained them from saying anything of their injury to the Emperor and from complaining of Theophilus, promising to reconcile him with them. John indeed wrote to Theophilus, asking him to allow those monks to dwell peacefully in their cells in Egypt and to receive them again into the bosom of Christ's Church.

Meanwhile rumors that John had received the expelled monks into communion with himself reached Theophilus. At the same time, certain slanderers told him that the Bishop of Constantinople had admitted them to Communion (which was untrue). For this Theophilus became greatly angered with John and sent him an insolent letter, accusing him of violating the ecclesiastical canons [33]. John, however, afterward sent Theophilus a second, peaceable letter, entreating him to cease his anger and not to forbid the monks to remain in the places from which they had been expelled. But Theophilus answered John more rudely than before and grew angrier with him than with these monks. Only then did the monks write a complaint to the Emperor, describing all the calamities which they had suffered innocently at the hands of Theophilus. They presented their complaint to the Emperor at the time when he was in the church.

Grieving over the misfortune of such honest and virtuous monks, the Emperor at once sent to the governor of the Alexandrian region an order to send Theophilus, even by force, for judgment at Constantinople, so that before Patriarch John and a council of bishops he might answer for the causes of his malice and bear condemnation for his deeds. The Emperor also wrote to Pope Innocent of Rome [34], asking him to send bishops from his side to Constantinople for a council to judge Theophilus. The Pope immediately commanded his bishops to be

33. The 32nd Apostolic Canon states that one excommunicated by some bishop "must not be received into communion by any other." The same requirement is expressed also in the 6th canon of the 1st Ecumenical Council.
34. Pope Innocent governed the Roman Church from 402 to 417.

ready for the journey and awaited word from Emperor Arcadius as to whether the Eastern bishops had assembled. But the Emperor did not write a second time, and so the Western bishops did not come to Constantinople. Meanwhile Theophilus bribed the governor of Alexandria, and the latter allowed him to remain in Alexandria until he could gather from India all manner of fragrant spices and sweet dainties, which he might send to Constantinople by ship. At the same time Theophilus won over St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus [35], and slandered St. John before him, asserting that he was a heretic because he had received followers of Origen and communicated with them. Epiphanius, being a guileless man, did not perceive Theophilus's treachery, believed the lie, and, zealous for piety, anathematized the books of Origen at a local council in Cyprus; then he wrote to John an epistle exhorting him to do likewise. But John, not hastening in this matter, continued to study Divine Scripture and directed all his care toward teaching the people in church and bringing sinners to repentance.

Meanwhile Theophilus, preparing for his journey to Constantinople, persuaded St. Epiphanius to go there as well:

"We shall arrange," he said, "a council against the Origenists."

Persuaded by him, Epiphanius hastened to Constantinople, arriving there before Theophilus. But before his arrival, the following event took place in Constantinople.

There lived there a nobleman named Theognostus, a good and God-fearing man. He was slandered before the Emperor as having reviled and spoken evil of the Emperor, and of calling the Empress "gold-insatiable," and saying that she unjustly seized other people's estates. The Emperor was angered at Theognostus and commanded that he be sent into exile at Thessalonica, and that all his wealth and property be taken away, except one vineyard outside the city, which the Emperor allowed to be left to Theognostus's wife and children for their sustenance. On the way to Thessalonica Theognostus fell ill and died of grief. His wife,

35. The island of Cyprus lies in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, to the south of Asia Minor. Epiphanius occupied the Cypriot see from 365 to 402. He was a man of wide erudition, and knew the languages: Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Egyptian and Latin. He enjoyed great esteem for his holiness, and after his death was numbered among the saints. His memory is celebrated on May 12.

in deep sorrow for her husband, came to St. John and with tears told him of her grief. The saint began to console her with wise words and advised her to cast her sorrow upon God. At the same time he allowed her to take food daily for herself and her children from the church almonry, while he himself sought a suitable opportunity to ask the Emperor to return to the widow and her children the property taken from them without cause. But the Empress, out of malice, not only prevented this, but also brought the greatest calamities upon the Blessed John.

Once, during the grape harvest, Eudoxia was passing by Theognostus's vineyard, which was not far from the imperial vineyards. Attracted by its beautiful appearance, she entered it, cut a cluster with her own hands, and ate it. Now there was an imperial decree: if the Emperor or Empress should enter another's vineyard and eat a cluster, then the owner of that vineyard no longer has any right to it, and the vineyard is reckoned among the imperial vineyards, and its owner is either recompensed with money or receives another vineyard from the Emperor. In accordance with this decree, Eudoxia ordered that Theognostus's vineyard be assigned to the imperial vineyards. She acted thus for the following reasons: on the one hand, she desired to inflict dishonor upon the widow and her children, being indignant with her for having gone to John and told him of her grief; on the other hand, the Empress was seeking a charge against John in order to drive him from the church. She surely knew that if John heard of this, he would not remain silent but would take the side of the injured widow, and from this there would arise strife, and her design would be fulfilled. And so it came to pass.

Indeed, the injured widow fled to the Blessed John and, weeping, told him that the Empress had taken away her vineyard, her last hope for the sustenance of her children. John at once sent a letter to the Empress through the archdeacon Eutychius, inclining her to mercy, recalling the virtuous life of her parents and the virtues of former emperors, bringing to her mind the fear of God, frightening her soul with the remembrance of the Last Judgment of God, and beseeching her to return the vineyard to the poor widow. The Empress, not heeding John's admonition and not listening to his entreaties, wrote him a harsh reply in which she appealed to ancient imperial laws and, as though she were

the one offended by him, haughtily declared that she would no longer endure such an insult.

"You," the Empress wrote to John, "not knowing the imperial decrees, have condemned me in your speeches as one committing lawlessness, and have wronged me; but I will no longer endure your insulting words, nor will I endure you, who never cease to offend me."

Having read this letter, St. John himself went to the palace to the Empress, where again with gentle words he began to admonish her, entreating and insisting more strongly than before that she give the vineyard back to the widow.

The Empress answered:

"I have already written to you concerning what was established by former emperors regarding vineyards. Let the widow choose another vineyard in place of hers, or receive money for it."

To this the saint said:

"She does not ask for another vineyard, nor does she seek recompense for what was taken from her, but asks for the return of what was taken. Therefore, give her back her vineyard!"

The Empress answered:

"Do not resist the ancient imperial laws, for such resistance will not turn out well for you."

"Do not justify your actions by the ancient statutes and laws which pagan emperors established!" said the holy servant of God in reply. "Nothing hinders you, a pious Empress, from abolishing an unjust law and establishing a just one. Give the vineyard back to the wronged woman, lest I call you a second Jezebel [36] and you incur a curse like that impious Queen of Israel."

When he had said this, the Empress was inflamed with great anger and filled the imperial halls with her outcry, revealing the hidden poison of her heart:

"I myself will avenge myself upon you; therefore I will not only not return the vineyard to the woman, nor give her another, nor give

money for what I have appropriated, but I will punish you for the insult in a fitting manner."

And she commanded that St. John be forcibly removed from the imperial palace. Thus driven out by the Empress with such dishonor, St. John commanded his archdeacon Eutychius, under threat of punishment, to do the following:

"Tell the church doorkeepers that when the Empress approaches the church, they are to close the doors before her and not allow her, nor anyone who comes with her, to enter the church; let the doorkeepers tell her that John has so commanded."

When the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross arrived and all the people gathered in the church, the Emperor came there with his nobles, and the Empress came with all her retinue. When the doorkeepers saw the Empress, they closed the church doors before her, not allowing her to enter, in accordance with the patriarch's command. Then the imperial servants cried out:

"Open to the Lady Empress!"

But the doorkeepers answered:

"The patriarch has commanded that she not be admitted!"

Filled with shame and malice, the Empress said:

"Look, all of you, at the shame this obstinate man is bringing upon me! Everyone enters the church without hindrance, and to me alone he forbids it! Can I not take revenge on him and cast him down from the throne?"

As she cried out thus, one of those who had come with her drew a sword and raised it, intending to strike at the door; and suddenly his arm withered and became motionless, like a dead limb. Seeing this, the empress and all her retinue were struck with terror and turned back; and the man whose arm had withered entered the church, stood in the midst of the crowd, and cried out in a loud voice:

36. Jezebel – the wife of the Israelite king Ahab, daughter of the king of Sidon (in Phoenicia); she was distinguished by a wicked and domineering disposition, as well as by her attachment to paganism. She, among other things, unjustly seized the vineyard of an Israelite named Naboth, and destroyed him.

"Holy Master! Have mercy on me and heal my withered arm, which was raised against the holy church. I have sinned; forgive me!"

Recognizing the cause of the withering of his arm, the saint bade him wash it in the basin of the sanctuary, and the arm was at once healed. Seeing such a miracle, all the people gave praise to God. All this did not remain hidden from the emperor either; but, knowing the wicked disposition of the empress, he attached no importance to what had happened, and, out of respect for St. John, he listened with love to his teaching. But the empress, by every means, sought the expulsion of John, and soon she attained this.

At this time St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, arrived at Constantinople, bringing with him writings directed against Origen. Disembarking from the ship, he entered the church of St. John the Forerunner, which stood at a distance of seven stadia from the city[37], celebrated the liturgy there, and performed the ordination of a deacon, contrary to the canons[38], which forbid a bishop to ordain anyone in another's flock without the permission of the diocesan hierarch[39]. After this he came into the city and took up lodging in a private house. All this became known to St. John; yet he was not angered with Epiphanius for having ordained a deacon within his diocese, for he regarded him as a saint and a guileless man. More than that, he sent envoys to Epiphanius with a request that he come to him and dwell together with him in the patriarchal house, as all bishops did. But Epiphanius would not agree to this, and did not even wish to see John; and to those sent to him he replied:

"If John does not expel Dioscorus and his black-robed monks from the city, and if he does not subscribe to the condemnation of Origen's writings, then I will not have communion with him."

37. Stadion – an ancient measure of distance; the Greek stadion was not less than 100 sazhens.
38. Canons – rules established by the Church concerning faith, morality and ecclesiastical order.
39. The 35th Apostolic Canon states: "A bishop shall not dare, outside the bounds of his own diocese, to perform ordinations in cities and villages not subject to him. If he be convicted of having done this without the consent of the one who has under his jurisdiction those cities or villages, both he and those ordained by him shall be deposed." Compare the 16th canon of the First Ecumenical Council, the epistle of the Third Ecumenical Council, the 33rd canon of the Council of Ancyra, and the 15th of Sardica.

John, through envoys, answered Epiphanius:

"Nothing ought to be done arbitrarily before a conciliar deliberation."

But John's enemies, coming to Epiphanius, persuaded him that in the church of the Holy Apostles, in the presence of all the people, he should anathematize the writings of Origen, cut off from ecclesial communion all the monks who had been expelled from Egypt together with Dioscorus as followers of Origen, and expose John as one who receives the Origenists and shares their opinions. Zealous for piety, Epiphanius set out the next morning for the church of the Holy Apostles, to anathematize the writings of Origen. Learning of this intention of Epiphanius, St. John sent envoys to him with these words:

"Epiphanius! You are doing many things contrary to the canons. First of all, you have celebrated the Divine Liturgy and performed an ordination within my flock without my consent; then you refused to take up residence with us; and now you wish to enter the church of my diocese and pronounce an excommunication without a conciliar judgment. Beware lest you stir up disorder among the people and bring trouble upon yourself."

Hearing this, Epiphanius began to waver, and, withdrawing from the church, resolved to await the arrival of Theophilus. But the Lord, not permitting there to be any enmity between His saints, revealed to Epiphanius that John was pure as the sun and was being accused out of human envy. Epiphanius had indeed heard from many people of John's great virtues, of his unblemished faith and most perfect life, and he marveled that many rose up against John and wove various accusations against him. Therefore the Hierarch of Cyprus resolved to wait patiently to see how the begun affair would end.

Hearing that Epiphanius was avoiding John and had no communion with him, Empress Eudoxia supposed that enmity existed between them. Summoning Epiphanius to her, she said to him:

"Father Epiphanius! You know that the whole Greco-Roman realm is in our sovereign hands. Behold, I will hand over to you all ecclesiastical authority, if you obey me, heal my sorrow, and accomplish what I have devised."

Epiphanius answered:

"Speak, child, and we will strive, to the extent of our strength, to accomplish what will serve for the salvation of your soul."

Then the empress, supposing that by flattery she would succeed in inclining Epiphanius to her design, began to speak to him of John as follows:

"This John has become unworthy to stand at the head of the church administration, since he rises up against me and the emperor and does not render us the honor due. Moreover, many assert that he is a heretic. For this reason it would be desirable to convene a council and deprive John of his rank, and in his place to appoint another who could govern the Church well."

Speaking thus, the empress trembled all over from strong anger against the servant of God. Then she began to speak again:

"However, there is no need to trouble many fathers by summoning them here to a council. Rather, holy father, you yourself remove him from the Church and appoint in his place another whom God shows you; and I, for my part, will arrange that all shall obey you."

"Child," answered Epiphanius, "hear your father without anger. If John is a heretic, as you assert, and if he does not repent of his heresy, then he is unworthy of the patriarchal rank, and we will deal with him as you command. But if you wish to expel him because he has supposedly reviled you, then Epiphanius will not give his consent to this, for emperors ought not to be vindictive but good, gentle, and forgiving of reproaches against them. For you too have over you a King in heaven, and you seek forgiveness of your sins from Him. So act toward others as well: 'Be merciful, therefore, as your Father also is merciful' (Lk. 6:36), said the Savior."

"Father," the empress answered Epiphanius, "if you do not expel John, I will open the idol-temples and bring it about that many, having fallen away from God, will begin to worship idols, and the latter will be worse than the former."

She said this with malice and shed tears. Astonished at the empress's mad anger, Epiphanius said:

"I am clean of such a condemnation of the righteous man."

Having said this, he withdrew from the palace.

Throughout the whole city there spread a rumor that the empress had incited the great Epiphanius against John, and that Epiphanius, visiting the imperial chambers, was taking counsel with the empress concerning the overthrow of the patriarch. This rumor reached John as well, and he, being a man of fiery temperament, delivered in the church before all the people a sermon in which he recalled from Holy Scripture examples of the cruelty of various women. Many of the people, hearing John's words about women, thought that he was speaking allegorically of the empress. John's enemies wrote down these words of his on paper and passed them on to the empress. She, having read them, decided that he had said this about her alone, and with tears she complained to the emperor that John reviled her in the church. Sobbing, she said to the emperor:

"Know that my offense is at the same time your offense, and when John reviles me, he thereby dishonors you as well."

And saying this, the empress implored the emperor to command that a council be convened and John be condemned to exile. At the same time she wrote to Theophilus of Alexandria, that he should come to Constantinople.

"I," she wrote, "will plead for you before the emperor and will stop the mouths of all your opponents; only come to us at once and gather many bishops to expel my enemy John."

Encouraged by the empress's letter, Theophilus, as soon as he received it, set out for Constantinople with ships laden with Indian spices, vegetables, and costly Egyptian silk and gold-woven fabrics. He hoped by means of such treasures to induce many to aid him in his evil design against John.

At that time the blessed John wrote to St. Epiphanius as follows:

"Brother Epiphanius! I have heard that you advised my expulsion; know, then, that you will no longer see your throne."

Epiphanius replied to him in writing:

"Passion-bearer John! Be steadfast in your sufferings, and know that you will not reach the place to which you will be sent into exile."

The prophecy of both was fulfilled. Epiphanius, having remained in Constantinople a little longer, saw that they were rising unjustly against St. John. Unwilling to be an accomplice in the brigands' judgment against a righteous man, he secretly embarked with his retinue on a ship and set out for home. On the way, according to John's prophecy, Epiphanius reposed in the Lord without reaching his city. Likewise John, during his second exile, not having reached the place to which he had been banished, according to Epiphanius's prophecy, fell asleep in the Lord. But of this we shall speak later; now let us return to the interrupted narrative of events.

Trusting in the help of the Empress and fearing nothing, the Alexandrian Patriarch Theophilus at once arrived in Constantinople, having in his retinue many bishops whom he had skilfully brought over to agreement with himself. The Emperor did not wish to receive Theophilus until the Roman bishops should arrive from Pope Innocent. He did not know that the Romans were awaiting from him a second letter inviting them to come to the council. Meanwhile the Empress, summoning in secret from the Emperor Theophilus and all the bishops who had come with him, made known to them her intention concerning John, and asked them to do their best to depose the Saint from his throne. They promised their assistance, for which the Empress rewarded them with gifts. After this she summoned all the monks, presbyters and bishops who had come from Egypt, and who complained of Theophilus. They were six bishops and twenty presbyters and deacons who had separated from Theophilus and sought a judgment against him. Having gathered them all together, the Empress began to beg them not to bring accusations against Theophilus before the court, and to forgive him the wrong done to them. Some heeded the Empress, and, casting their sorrow upon the Lord, fell silent; others, among whom were Isidore and Herax (Dioscorus had reposed shortly before this), withdrew to their deserts, and some utterly refused to accept the proposal made to them by the Empress. The Empress enriched with gifts those who agreed to keep silent, and sent those who resisted into exile at Thessalonica. Thus Theophilus, freed from all his opponents, was able to begin the affair against John with success.

At that time the Saint John, preaching the word of God in the church according to his custom, expounded a certain portion of Holy Scripture from the Third Book of Kingdoms as follows:

"Gather unto me... the prophets of Baal, and the four hundred shameless prophets who eat at the table of Jezebel, that I may say to them as Elijah said: How long will ye halt between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him" [40].

Hearing this, John's enemies reported it to Theophilus and the bishops who were with him. The latter, writing down those words, interpreting them in an evil sense and adding their own, said that John openly before all called the Empress Jezebel, and them false prophets. What they had written down they handed to the Emperor and the Empress. Then the Empress, weeping, again began to beg the Emperor for a judgment upon John. Pitying the Empress, the Emperor turned all the anger he had felt toward Theophilus upon John, and ordered Theophilus to convene a council against him. Theophilus and all his like-minded companions rejoiced at the Emperor's anger against John. Finding two deacons whom John had excommunicated from the Church, for one of them had committed murder and the other adultery, Theophilus promised to ordain them bishops on condition that they bear false witness against John. They, hostile to the Saint and desiring the episcopate, at once promised to fulfil Theophilus' will. Theophilus wrote many false accusations against John and handed them to those deacons, that they might present them to the council as coming from themselves.

The place for the council was appointed in the suburb of Chalcedon, where the imperial palace and the great church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul were situated [41]. The bishops, gathering there, sat to-

40. These words are an altered rendering of 3 Kgdms. 18:19–21, and they belong to the Prophet Elijah, concerning the assembly on Mount Carmel of the Israelites together with the priests of Baal, for the offering of sacrifices to the Lord and to Baal. The purpose of this assembly was to prove the truth of the God of Israel and the falsehood of Baal. When the people had gathered, Elijah said: "How long will ye halt between two opinions?", that is, how long will you serve both God and Baal? If the Lord is God, then worship Him, and not Baal; but if Baal is God, then worship him. Elijah then proposed a trial by sacrifice, and the priests of Baal were put to shame.
41. Chalcedon lay opposite Constantinople, on the Asian shore of the Bosporus.

gether with Theophilus. The blessed John, with the bishops who were with him, numbering forty persons, sat in his patriarchal house. With grief the Saint saw that the malice of his enemies had been crowned with success, and he wondered simply how this had come about, and how Theophilus, himself summoned for judgment over him, had so quickly won over to his side the Emperor and all the dignitaries, and from being the accused had become the judge. And the Saint John said to the bishops:

"Brethren! Pray God for me, and if you love Christ, do not forsake your churches. For me the time of calamities has already drawn near, and after many sorrows I shall soon depart to the Lord. I see that Satan, not bearing my teaching, has convened an impious council against me. But do not grieve for me, and remember me in your prayers."

Hearing this, all were struck with dread and wept. The Saint bade them be silent and comforted them. While he was conversing with his council, there came messengers from Theophilus' council, summoning John to judgment, that he might give answer against the accusations brought against him. The bishops who were with John said to Theophilus through those messengers:

"Do not summon the hierarch as Cain summoned Abel into the field, but come to us, that you may justify yourself before us. We have written testimonies of the lawless acts you have committed. Therefore come here, since we, gathered by the grace of God not for the ruin of the Church but for peace, are far more numerous than at your council."

The Saint John, for his part, said to the messengers:

"I cannot go to my open enemies."

And he did not go.

Being summoned to the lawless trial a second and a third time, the holy servant of God said to the messengers:

"To whom shall I go? To my enemies or to judges? I am ready to stand before the judgment of the whole world, but on condition that my rivals be judged together with me, and that the judges be others. But now my judges are my enemies, who wish not to be judged with me, but to judge me. To such a judgment I will not go. Let bishops be

gathered from all the churches, and then I too will stand before the judgment."

Saying this, he sent in his place three bishops with two presbyters, that they might speak on his behalf. The council of Theophilus, seeing John's messengers and not letting them say a single word, subjected them to insults, and laid upon one of them the iron fetters that had been prepared for John. Then the members of this council began to read the false accusations composed to expose the innocent John, pure in heart, and, producing false witnesses, pronounced judgment upon him.

The Saint John at that time was in the patriarchal church with his bishops, and addressed them with these words:

"Great are the waves, fierce the tempest, but we do not fear drowning, for we stand upon a rock. Let the sea foam and rage, yet it cannot shatter the rock. Let the billows rise, yet they cannot sink the ship of Jesus. Tell me: what have we to fear? Death? But 'for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain' (Phil. 1:21).

Tell me, shall we fear exile? But 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof' (Ps. 23:1). Shall we tremble at the loss of possessions? But we brought nothing into this world, and it is evident that we can carry nothing out. In a word, whatever is terrible in this world, that I do not fear, and all that I possess I hold in contempt. I do not fear poverty, I do not desire riches, I do not tremble at death, but I pray that you may advance in goodness."

Meanwhile Theophilus with his council of bishops condemned the Saint John as worthy of deposition from his rank, and deprived him of his see, without seeing his face or hearing his voice. Thus in the course of a single day they brought to completion the evil deed which they had long been preparing, after which they sent the Emperor the following letter:

"Since John has been accused of many crimes, in which he himself acknowledged his guilt, because he did not desire to appear at the judgment, for this reason he has been deposed; and nothing more is required, except that you should command him to be expelled from the throne."

The Emperor Arcadius did not take the trouble to read the accusations written against John, and did not wish to hear the answer of the holy servant of God. He believed without hesitation the words of the unrighteous council, and commanded that John be at once expelled from the church; for this purpose, as for a war, he sent a nobleman with a force of soldiers against him.

Hearing of this, the people were inflamed with anger, and an innumerable multitude of people, gathering together, did not withdraw from the church for three days, not allowing John to be expelled. At the same time all loudly murmured against the Emperor and the Empress, and against Theophilus, for having unjustly condemned the servant of God. Then John, fearing lest some other accusation be devised against him, as that he disobeyed the Emperor, hid himself from the people, and at evening, leaving the church, went out secretly and gave himself into the hands of the soldiers sent to seize him. The soldiers led him to the gulf of the sea and sailed with him to Prænetus, which lies opposite Nicomedia.

The people, learning of this, raised a great tumult, during which many of the inhabitants were killed and still more wounded. Among the discontented there were some who intended to stone Theophilus. Learning of this, Theophilus secretly fled the city and at once sailed for Alexandria. His other like-minded companions likewise scattered. On all sides were heard the cries of the people, who in the churches and in the squares loudly murmured at the unjust judgment that had cast down so great a light of the world. Surrounding the palace, the people with dreadful outcries and weeping implored that John be restored to the patriarchal throne. At this time, in one night, a violent earthquake occurred, and all were in great fear; especially was the Empress seized with terror, because her palace shook more than the other buildings and a part of it even fell apart. Seeing this, the whole people began to cry out with a loud voice:

"If John is not restored, the whole city will be destroyed!"

The emperor feared God's punishment and a popular revolt, and hastily sent the empress's eunuch, Brisson, to John. Now the empress, too, entreated the emperor to order John's return, for she was greatly

frightened by the earthquake and the popular revolt. And so, messengers came one after another, sent to persuade the saint to return to the city, until the Thracian Sea[42] was filled with boats carrying envoys. Yielding to their urgent entreaties, St. John consented to return to Constantinople. When they learned of this, all the citizens went out to meet him with lighted candles, and the sea was covered with ships welcoming the saint. When John came to the city, he did not wish to enter it until an investigation had been held at a great council into the reason for his banishment. But the people urgently demanded that their shepherd not remain outside his throne, and angrily murmured against the emperor. Yielding to the people's insistence, John was compelled to enter the city; with honor, amid the singing of psalms and sacred hymns, he was conducted into the church. After praying to God, the saint of God took his seat upon his throne and, having bestowed peace upon the people, delivered a homily. As they listened to his eloquent and instructive words, all rejoiced at his return; John's host of enemies dispersed, and all his adversaries fled and fell silent.

Restored to his throne, St. John governed the Church of Christ in profound peace, feeding his rational sheep with sweet teaching. With such a shepherd and teacher, the whole Church flourished and rejoiced for a time. But less than two months passed before the storm that had seemed to abate again rose against the blessed one. This came about in the following manner.

Not far from the church of St. Sophia[43], by order of Eudoxia, a high column was erected, crowned with an image of the empress. On the occasion of the festivities marking the column's unveiling, all manner of games and rejoicings took place around it and continued for several days. The cries and shouts of those rejoicing reached the church of St. Sophia and mingled with the singing of divine hymns. St. John saw in this an evident profanation and insult to the holy things, and therefore sought through the city prefect to put a stop to the disorderly festivities around the column. But the prefect gave him no assistance. Then, zeal-

42. The Thracian Sea is now the Sea of Marmara.
43. The principal cathedral church of Constantinople.

ous for the honor of the holy things, John delivered a stern denunciatory sermon in the church, beginning with these words:

"Again Herodias[44] raves, again she is in tumult, again she leaps and dances, again she seeks the head of John!"

John's informers and enemies hastened, with malicious delight, to report this to the empress, interpreting his words to mean that he had compared her to Herodias. Eudoxia fell into great rage: weeping, she entreated the emperor to order that a council be convened against John once more. And again royal letters were sent to all the bishops, inviting them to assemble in Constantinople and hold judgment on John. All those who had earlier taken part in the unlawful trial against the saint of God assembled. Theophilus alone was absent, for, remembering how he had barely escaped the people's fury the last time, he himself was now afraid to travel to Constantinople, and sent three bishops there in his place. With them he also sent the rulings which the Arians had drawn up against Athanasius the Great,[45] so that on the basis of these rulings John might be condemned for having, after his deposition, unlawfully resumed his throne. On the basis of those unjust heretical canons the blessed one was condemned,[46] for they could find no other accusation against him. They alleged only that Chrysostom, having been deposed, had dared to take his episcopal throne before a new council. St. John observed in reply:

"I was not present at the trial, did not contend with my adversaries, and did not even see the accusations written against me; nor did I receive the judgment of the court. The emperors banished me, and they themselves restored me. But this decree on the basis of which you are judging me was drawn up not by the Orthodox, but by the Arians, for the purpose of deposing Athanasius the Great."

44. Herodias was the wife of Herod the Younger. She brought about the death of John the Baptist.

45. This refers to the 22nd canon of the Council of Antioch of 341, drawn up by the Arians against St. Athanasius the Great. The canon states that if any bishop, having been condemned and deposed by a council, again takes up his see by the decree of the secular authority, he is finally deprived of any right to be restored to his office.

46. The condemnation was unlawful not only because the canon drawn up by heretics was not binding upon Chrysostom, but also because, after John's return from exile, the condemnation of the Council of Chalcedon was lifted from him by a larger council, consisting of 65 bishops.

But the impious assembly paid no heed to the saint's reply and deposed the saint of God. The deposition of St. John took place under the following circumstances.

When the great feast of holy Pascha arrived, the emperor, instructed by the bishops, sent word to John:

"Depart from the Church, since you have been condemned by two councils, and I cannot enter it while you remain there."

In reply, St. John answered the emperor through the messengers:

"I received the Church from Christ my Savior, and I cannot willingly abandon it unless I am driven out by force. The city is yours, and all will obey you. Therefore, if you wish to separate me from the Church of Christ, send your servants to remove me from the Church. Then I shall have no answer to give before God, since I shall not leave the Church of my own will, but shall be driven out by imperial authority."

Hearing this, the emperor at first hesitated over what to do, but later, advised by John's adversaries, he sent to him the dignitary Marinus, who administered the empress's estates, to remove by force from the church the glorious teacher of the Church, St. John. The hierarch was, however, permitted to remain for a time in the patriarchal residence, and, without leaving his cell, he stayed there for two months, until the imperial decree ordering his exile into banishment was issued.

At this time the saint of God was destined to endure many sorrows and calamities. The malice of his enemies went so far that they repeatedly attempted even to take his life: they bribed a man to kill St. John. To conceal his evil design, the hired assassin feigned madness and, with a sword hidden beneath his clothing, prowled around the patriarchal residence, awaiting a favorable moment to murder the saint. But the people, loyal to John, suspecting the supposed madman of evil intent, seized him and found the sword on him. The evildoer was taken to the city prefect for questioning, but when John learned what had happened, he sent the bishops who were with him and tried to remove the man from the authorities' hands. On another occasion, a slave of the presbyter Elpidius was noticed by the people as he hurried anxiously toward the patriarchal residence. One of those guarding John seized

him and asked where he was hurrying so quickly, but the man, making no reply, struck his questioner with a sword. At this, another cried out. Elpidius struck him with the sword, and then a third, who happened to come within reach. Cries and shouts arose, and the slave fled, brandishing his bloodied sword and fighting off the people pursuing him. On the way he met a man who had just come out of the public bath. The man tried to seize him, but before he could do so, he fell dead, struck by the sword. At last, when this enraged robber was caught, he confessed that he had been bribed with fifty gold pieces to kill John. From that time the people guarded the house of their beloved chief shepherd with even greater care, setting up a watch and never leaving him unprotected for a moment, for they saw that John's enemies were seeking an opportunity to kill the saint.

At the coming of Pentecost, an imperial order arrived that John was to depart into exile. A dignitary advised John to leave secretly, without the people's knowledge, lest they be roused and rise against the soldiers who were to lead him into exile.

"Otherwise," he said, "you will be the cause of bloodshed, for you have been ordered to be seized by force, while the people will resist and provoke an uprising."

Hearing this, John summoned some of his beloved bishops and clergy, as well as the blessed deaconess Olympias, and bade them farewell. At their parting, all wept bitterly. St. John himself wept, too. Having taken leave of those close to him, John slipped out through a small door in the direction of the sea, so that the people knew nothing of his departure. Soldiers were waiting for the saint by the sea; they took him and at once placed him in a small boat. In it the saint was carried to Bithynia, and from there he was taken farther on his journey.

After St. John's exile, a fire broke out in the cathedral church of Constantinople, a manifest expression of God's wrath. In a strong wind, the flames burst out of the church and, rising high into the air like a bridge, bent over the hall in which the gatherings against John had been held and burned it completely. A wondrous sight could be seen: the fire, as though alive, twisted about like a serpent, devouring houses at a distance, while those beside the church remained un-

harmed. From this all saw that the fire had occurred not by chance, but through divine wrath, and that the cause of this wrath was the banishment of St. John Chrysostom.

In the course of three hours, from the sixth hour of the day until the ninth, many beautiful ancient buildings, all manner of ornaments in the city, and immeasurable wealth were reduced to ashes. Yet not one person among the people perished in the fire. Seeing this, all said that God was chastising the city with fire for the unjust banishment of the saint of God. But John's enemies claimed the contrary, saying:

"John's adherents set fire to the church."

As a result, many were seized and subjected to every kind of torture and torment by the city prefect, who was a pagan by faith,[47] and some died. Yet, despite this, they could not find the person responsible for the fire, and became even more convinced that it had occurred through God's wrath.

As the saint was being taken into exile, he endured many torments at the hands of the soldiers along the way. The empress had ordered the soldiers to insult and oppress the saint in every way during the journey, so as to wear him out quickly and bring him to his death. Therefore, they set him upon an unsaddled donkey and drove the animal at a swift pace, covering in one day a distance that should have taken two or three days. Along the way, John was given neither rest nor repose; they lodged for the night in simple, filthy inns, sometimes in Jewish houses, and committed many abominations in his presence. Nowhere was he allowed to enter a church; and when the saint asked to do so, he was subjected to every kind of abuse and insult. Moreover, they tormented the saint with hunger and took from him the money provided for his sustenance on the road.

With such malice was St. John Chrysostom led into exile! Whenever the saint happened to pass through cities where his enemies and friends of Theophilus were bishops, the latter inflicted every kind of injury upon him; some would not allow him to enter the city, while others even encouraged the soldiers to treat him as badly as possible. From

47. That is, a pagan.

time to time, holy fathers who dwelt in the wilderness, hearing that St. John was being sent into exile, would come out to meet him and accompany him with weeping. John Chrysostom himself recalls this in a letter from Cucusus[48] to Bishop Cyriacus, in these words: "We endured much sorrow on the road, but we grieve over nothing. When we passed through Cappadocia and Taurocilicia,[49] whole companies of fathers, holy men, and numerous crowds of monks and virgins came out to meet us and shed abundant tears. As they watched our procession into exile, they wept aloud and said to one another: 'It would have been better for the sun to hide its rays than for John's lips to be silenced.' This caused me great confusion and sorrow, for I saw that everyone was weeping for me. As for everything else that happened to me, I gave it no thought."

Thus did St. John himself write of himself.

When he was brought to Lesser Armenia, to the city of Cucusus, the local bishop, Adelphius, kindly received him into his home. Before John's arrival, Adelphius had received a vision from God commanding him to welcome the saint. While dwelling in Cucusus, St. John by his teaching converted many unbelievers to Christ. The fame of St. John Chrysostom spread far and wide through the surrounding country, and many people flocked to him from every quarter, wishing to see him and hear his instructive words. Many of his admirers and acquaintances from Antioch also came to the saint. Word of all this reached Constantinople, and John's enemies were alarmed. He seemed dangerous to them even in exile, and so they resolved to send him still farther away. And so an order came from the empress to Cucusus, directing that John be sent to a desolate place called Pityus,[50] situated on the shore of the Pontic Sea, near the uncivilized barbarians. In accordance with the empress's new command, the soldiers led John to another place of exile, and along the way subjected him to the same mockery as before,

48. The village of Kukuzos was located in Lesser Armenia (east of Asia Minor), in one of the remote valleys of the wild Taurus, where lived the brigand tribe of the Isaurians, who made raids on the surrounding settlements.

49. In the southeastern part of Asia Minor.

50. The city of Pityus lay on the southern shore of the Black, or Pontic, Sea, in the northeastern part of Asia Minor, in what is now Abkhazia.

seeking to bring him to his death as quickly as possible: they took him through rain and scorching heat without clothing, forbade him to enter cities and villages, and as before drove swiftly the donkey upon which the Hierarch was being carried. Such a cruel road did St. John travel during his exile! It was on this journey that he reposed.

Shortly before the blessed man's repose, as he stood at prayer during the night according to his custom, the holy Apostles Peter and John came to him. They had appeared to him before, when he was laboring in the monastery of Antioch. The holy Apostles said to him:

"Rejoice, good shepherd of Christ's rational sheep, steadfast passion-bearer. We have been sent to you by our common Master, Jesus Christ, to help and comfort you in the sorrows and labors you have endured for the purity of your soul. For, in imitation of John the Baptist, you reproved lawless kings. Be courageous and strong; great recompense is prepared for you in the Kingdom of Heaven. We bring you glad tidings of great joy: after a few days you will depart to the Lord your God and be blessed forever with us in the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, hope; for you have conquered your enemies, put those who hate you to shame, and overcome the adversary, the devil. Eudoxia will swarm with worms and call upon you for help, but she will find none and will die in a terrible sickness. She will suffer cruelly and will not receive relief for a single moment, for she will receive this punishment from God."

After this they gave him something to eat and said:

"Take and eat, so that thereafter you need seek no other food in this life. This will suffice you until the time when you deliver your soul into the hands of God."

St. John took what they had given him and ate in their presence, and rejoiced. Then the Apostles who had appeared to him departed.

Two presbyters and one deacon were with John. They had accompanied him into exile from Constantinople and did not leave him, being bound to him by the bonds of love. With their own eyes they saw the Apostles come to John, heard all that they said, and blessed God, Who had vouchsafed them to suffer together with His servant.

After several days' journey, the exiles reached Comana;[51] near this city stood the church of St. Basiliscus, Great Martyr and Bishop of Comana, who suffered for Christ at Nicomedia, together with Lucian,[52] a presbyter of Antioch, under the impious emperor Maximian.[53] They spent the night at this church. The next day was the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross, and on the night before the feast St. Basiliscus appeared to blessed John.

"Brother John, take courage! For tomorrow we shall be together."

The same holy martyr appeared also to the presbyter of his church, saying:

"Prepare a place for Brother John, for he is coming to us."

When day came, John entreated the soldiers to remain at Comana, by the church of St. Basiliscus, until the fifth hour; but they would not listen to him and continued on their way, seeking to travel as swiftly as possible. They took to the water and sailed very swiftly, like a winged bird. Thus, in the course of a few hours, they sailed thirty stadia away from the city.

Yet, by Divine Providence, they again came ashore near the church of St. Basiliscus, to their great astonishment. John once more entreated them to wait there a little while, until he had prayed in the church. Recognizing the power of God in the fact that, against their will, they had returned to the place from which they had sailed, the soldiers resolved to grant John's request. Then the saint entered the church, asked for bright church vestments, and changed all his clothing, beginning with his shoes. He then distributed his garments to those who were with him on the ship, and in the church vestments celebrated the Divine Liturgy and received the Most Pure and Life-giving Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. Then, having blessed all who were present and given them his last kiss, he lay down, saying:

"Glory to God for all things."

51. Comana was a city in the province of Pontus, in the northeast of Asia Minor, now Gümenek.
52. The memory of Hieromartyr Lucian is celebrated on September 15; the memory of Basiliscus on May 22.
53. This refers to Maximian Galerius, son-in-law of Diocletian and his co-ruler in the East; later, after the death of Diocletian, he became Eastern Emperor (305–311). The time of the deaths of Lucian and Basiliscus belongs to the last years of his life.

And thereupon he delivered his spirit into the hands of God. This was on the very day of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross of the Lord. Thus the holy servant of God, who throughout his life had borne his cross, being crucified to the world and crucified with Christ, reposed on the day dedicated to the memory of the Precious Cross.[54] He was laid in the same church where he had died, not far from the tomb of the holy Martyr Basiliscus. Thus was fulfilled the prediction of St. Epiphanius of Cyprus, who had said to St. John:

"You, too, will not reach the place to which they are sending you into exile."

Indeed, St. John was being led to Pityus, but he reposed at Comana, without reaching Pityus. Thus was the lamp of the Church extinguished; thus were the golden lips silenced; thus did the good ascetic and sufferer complete his struggle and finish his course, having spent six years upon the patriarchal throne and three years in exile, being transferred from place to place.[55]

When St. John died, the two presbyters and the deacon who had accompanied him until his death mourned the death of their father and set out for Rome to Pope Innocent, to whom they gave a detailed account of all that St. John had suffered through the malice of his enemies. They also told him of John's repose, and how, before his repose, the holy Apostles Peter and John the Theologian had come to him, what they had said to him, and how St. Basiliscus had appeared to him. Having heard all this, Innocent was greatly astonished and grieved for the great servant of God who had suffered for the truth. The pope informed the Western emperor Honorius,[56] brother of Arcadius, of the circumstances of St. Chrysostom's exile and death; and both of them grieved

54. Because of the feast of the Exaltation of the Life-giving Cross of the Lord, the saint's memory is not kept on the 14th day of September, when the hierarch reposed, but on the 13th day of November. Moreover, his memory is also celebrated on January 27, the day of the translation of the saint's relics, and on January 30 he is honored together with the hierarchs: Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian.

55. Chrysostom died at the age of 60, in 407. He was Archbishop for six and a half years, and spent three years and three months in exile.

56. Honorius, brother of Arcadius and son of Theodosius the Great, reigned in Rome from 395 to 423.

bitterly over this and at once wrote letters to the emperor Arcadius. The pope wrote on his own behalf:

"The blood of my brother John cries out to God against you, O emperor, just as of old the blood of righteous Abel cried out against his fratricide Cain; and this blood will be avenged, since in a time of peace you raised up persecution against the Church of God. For you drove away Christ's true shepherd, and with him you drove away Christ God; and you delivered His flock into the hands of hirelings, and not of true shepherds of Christ."

Innocent wrote this and much else to Arcadius, excommunicating him and Eudoxia from the Divine Mysteries, together with all their accomplices who had taken part in the deposition of St. John. As for Theophilus, he excommunicated him not only from his rank but also from the Church, and summoned him to trial before a council, so that he might receive the punishment he deserved.

Honorius, for his part, wrote to his brother Arcadius:

"I do not know by what temptation you were beguiled, brother, to trust your wife and, at her urging, to do what no Christian king devoted to piety would have done. The bishops and Venerable Fathers here cry out against you and the empress, because you deposed from his throne, without trial and contrary to the canons, the great Hierarch of God, John, and, after exhausting him with cruel torments, delivered him to a violent death."

At the end of this letter, Honorius urged Arcadius to repent before God and to avenge those who had been responsible for John's exile. Having received the letter from his brother and from the pope, the emperor Arcadius fell into deep grief and dreadful fear. He sought out in the city those who had risen up against John and subjected them to various punishments: some he had beheaded with the sword; others he stripped of their rank in disgrace. The emperor ordered that some of the bishops who had judged St. John and were then in Constantinople be seized and shamefully confined in the public prison. Among them was Iechirion, the son of Theophilus's brother. To Theophilus himself he wrote a very stern letter, commanding him to be ready for trial in Thessalonica, so that he might receive the punishment his malice de-

served. Nor did Arcadius's anger spare his own wife, the empress Eudoxia: Arcadius removed her from his presence, confined her in a separate palace, and forbade everyone but her maidservant to visit her. At the same time he sent into exile the empress's kinsmen, who had plotted with her against the saint; from some he confiscated their estates, while he imprisoned others and subjected them to tortures and torments. Then he wrote to Pope Innocent about all that he had done, humbly and repentantly asking his forgiveness. He also wrote to his brother Honorius, asking him to entreat the pope to remove his excommunication. Soon Arcadius received what he had asked for. Having read his humble petition, the pope accepted his repentance and wrote to the blessed Proclus, who was then bishop of Cyzicus[57], that he should remove the emperor's excommunication and deem him worthy of the Holy Mysteries, and that he should number the blessed John among the saints.

While all this was taking place, the All-seeing Lord Himself avenged the enemies of His servant John. He visited them with cruel punishments even here on earth, so that they all died a terrible death. All the bishops, clergy, secular dignitaries, and, in general, all those who had unjustly risen up against St. John were covered with painful boils, which consumed all their flesh and brought them to death. Some had their hands and feet wither; others had their whole bodies putrefy, with worms appearing in great numbers, so that for a long time an unbearable stench came from them. One of the unjust judges who had condemned the blessed man to exile fell from his horse and died suddenly, breaking his right hand—the hand with which he had signed the unjust accusations against the innocent John. Another became mute and lost the use of his hands, and so died. A third man's tongue, which had uttered blasphemies against St. John, grew so large and swollen that he could not speak; then he confessed his sin by writing it on a sheet of paper. And one could see the manifestations of God's terrible

57. This is the same Proclus who had earlier been the cell-attendant of St. John; afterwards he became Patriarch of Constantinople. Cyzicus is a city in the northwestern part of Asia Minor, on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara.

wrath, which fell with various punishments upon those responsible for John's exile.

Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, escaped human trial and punishment because of the death of Pope Innocent of Rome, but he did not escape the judgment of God. He went mad and died of this affliction. The legs of Cyrinus, bishop of Chalcedon, rotted; physicians sawed them off repeatedly, lest his whole body rot, but his flesh still did not cease to putrefy, and he died after his legs had been sawn off as far as the knees. The dreadful judgment of God also befell the wretched empress Eudoxia. Wounded by grief and shame, she fell ill with severe hemorrhaging, and her flesh swarmed with worms, as the Apostles had foretold to the blessed John. Such a foul stench came from her that passers-by could not endure the odor of her flesh. Many of the most skilled physicians treated her and fumigated her with fragrant perfumes, but without success. Then she asked the physicians:

"Why can you not cure me of my illness?"

But they did not dare explain it to her.

"If you do not know," the empress said to them, "why I cannot recover, then I shall tell you: I have received this illness because of the divine wrath that has come upon me for the evil I did to Patriarch John."

She restored to the children of Theognostus the vineyard that had been taken from them, and restored to many others all that she had unjustly taken away. Yet she received no healing, and died in that illness. After her death, to expose her lawlessness, the coffin in which she had been laid shook continually for thirty-two years; and this continued until the time of the translation of the venerable relics of St. John Chrysostom from Comana to Constantinople.

Thus the Lord punished the enemies of St. John; but He glorified the righteous man himself in the following manner. Bishop Adelphius had lovingly received John into his home in Cucusus. When he heard of the saint's repose, he fell into great sorrow and began earnestly to beseech God with tears to show him in what company of saints John dwelt. One day, while praying for this, he fell into an ecstasy and saw a radiant and joyful young man. Taking Adelphius by the hand, the young man led him to a bright place and showed him the company of

the holy teachers of the Church. Looking about on every side, Adelphius wished to see John, but could not find him anywhere. After showing Adelphius each of the teachers and Patriarchs of Constantinople, the young man hastily led him out. As he followed him, Adelphius was grieved, for he had not seen the blessed John among the company of the holy fathers. But as he was leaving that bright place, someone standing at the door held him by the hand and said:

"Why are you leaving here in such sorrow? Whoever enters here in grief returns joyful, but you do the opposite: you entered here joyful, and leave in sorrow."

Adelphius answered:

"I grieve because I did not see John, who is so dear to me, among the teachers of the Church."

"Do you mean," he asked, "John, the preacher of repentance?"

"Yes," Adelphius replied.

Then the one standing at the gate of paradise said to him:

"A man who is in the body cannot see him, for he stands before the throne of God, which is surrounded by the Cherubim and Seraphim."

Having received this news concerning St. John, Adelphius rejoiced and glorified God, who had revealed this mystery to him. Thus, after many troubles, tempests, hardships, and sorrows that he endured for the sake of righteousness, St. John came to the quiet haven of heaven, where, rejoicing with the Angels, he glorifies the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God in Trinity, to whom be glory, honor, and worship from us also, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

The grace that shone forth from thy mouth like a flaming light illumined the world; thou didst not heap up treasures of avarice for the world, but didst show us the height of humility. But by thy words, instructing us, O Father John Chrysostom, beseech Christ the Word, that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 6:

Thou didst receive divine grace from heaven, and through thy lips teach all to worship the one God in Trinity, O John Chrysostom, all-blessed Venerable one, worthily do we praise thee; for thou art a guide, making manifest things divine.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Antoninus, Nicephorus, Germanus, and Manetha

Память святых мучеников Антонина, Никифора, Германа и Манефы

The holy Antoninus, Nicephorus, and Germanus suffered under the emperor Maximian Galerius[58]. Antoninus was an old man, Nicephorus a youth, and Germanus of middle age. They were seized by Firmilian, governor of the province of Palestine, who compelled them to sacrifice to idols. The saints refused to do so and confessed Christ; for this they were taken to Caesarea, the chief city of Palestine, and beheaded there.

A maiden named Manetha, from the land of Scythia, was also seized together with the holy Martyrs. To her shame, she was led naked through the city and then subjected to various torments, from which she emerged unharmed by the help of God. Manetha wrought countless miracles, turned many away from the impiety of idolatry, taught them the true faith, and brought them to Christ. For this she was condemned to be burned by fire. When the furnace had been heated, she entered it herself, and there gave her soul into the hands of the Lord, to whom be honor and glory for ever. Amen.

* * *

NOTES

7343. The Words on the Priesthood were written by St. John Chrysostom on the following occasion. When St. John was living with his friend Basil far from worldly affairs, the bishops gathered in Antioch resolved to ordain both of them as bishops; word of this reached John and Basil. John, considering himself unprepared to fulfil properly the duties of a shepherd of the Church of Christ, secretly withdrew into the wilderness,

58. At the beginning of the 4th century.

hiding from everyone, even from his friend Basil. Basil, however, was consecrated bishop of Raphana, near Antioch. Later, meeting John, he reproached him in a friendly way for avoiding the sacred rank. In reply to these reproaches St. John wrote six Words on the Priesthood, in which he speaks eloquently of the high dignity of the pastoral ministry. The Epistle to Theodore was written on the following occasion: Theodore, being a friend of John, had destined himself for the ascetic life, but afterwards abandoned his resolution, left the solitary life and married. Grieved by this, John wrote to Theodore two exceptionally forceful epistles, in which, describing with vivid features the vanity of the world, he calls his friend to the monastic life. The epistle had its effect on Theodore: he returned again to the monastic life, and afterwards became Bishop of Mopsuestia (in the south-eastern part of Asia Minor).

7352. The Marcionite heresy received its name from Marcion, who lived in the 2nd century A.D. Marcion taught that not one God alone is eternal, but also the substance from which the world was created (matter), together with its ruler, Satan. Marcion ascribed the creation of the world not to God, but to a lower being – the Demiurge, who represents something intermediate between God and matter. The soul of man is also a creation of the Demiurge and possesses all his qualities, that is, it is somewhat more spiritual than the visible world. But matter gradually began to swallow up the soul. All the efforts of the Demiurge to save mankind from such absorption came to nothing. Then the good God descended to earth, took a phantom body and revealed Himself to men as God of mercy and love. But the Demiurge, envying His glory, stirred up the Jews against Him, and they crucified the Saviour; yet His sufferings were phantasmal, because His body was spiritual. Thus Marcion did not acknowledge the redemptive sufferings of the Saviour, and confined the whole of His work to the instruction of men in divine truths.

7362. The works of St. John Chrysostom were kept throughout the whole Christian world as a treasure in the imperial palaces and were written in gold letters. Many of his works have not survived to our time; nevertheless, of him there has survived as much as has not survived of any other Father and Teacher of the Church. According to the Greek Horologion, of all the works of John Chrysostom that have come down to our time, there are up to 1447 and letters up to 244. Of John Chrysostom there survives most of all his ecclesiastical homilies. The sermons of St. John strike one by their harmony, depth of thought and variety of content. "I say nothing of others," wrote St. Isidore about Chrysostom, "even Libanius himself, so famous for his eloquence, marvelled at the language of the renowned John, the elegance of his thoughts and the force of his proofs." The best of Chrysostom's sermons are justly considered to be his discourses to the people of Antioch on the statues, the words on Eutropius, the word on behalf of the poor, the word on his departure from the capital and on his return to the capital, and the panegyrics on the Apostle Paul. In his sermons John Chrysostom speaks of all the particular objects of Christian activity. Moreover, throughout the whole course of his public ministry St. John explained the Holy Scripture in his discourses. Each of his explanatory discourses consists of two parts: in one he occupies himself with the explanation of the texts of the Word of God, in the other with the moral state of his hearers, offering moral instruction. Occupying himself with the explanation of Holy Scripture, St. John left, however, few interpretations of the Old Testament, in comparison with his inter-

pretations of the New. Besides the discourses and homilies on the Book of Genesis, on the eight chapters of Isaiah and on thirty-six psalms, and a few discourses on the history of Samuel and Saul, there are now known under the name of Chrysostom commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel and on the Book of Job. In the interpretation of the New Testament the first place is occupied by the Antiochene homilies on the Gospel of Matthew. Alongside them, by general judgment, stand the homilies on the Epistle to the Romans. For accuracy of explanation of the words of the Apostle a high place is occupied by the exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians. After this, among Chrysostom's best commentaries must be reckoned the homilies on the First Epistle to the Corinthians and on the Epistle to the Ephesians. Chrysostom's strictly dogmatic writings are few, and all of them breathe his solicitude for the moral state of the faithful. Among them we note the book to Stagirius, where John resolves the question: if there is providence, why do the righteous suffer? Also worthy of attention are the six words on the incomprehensibility (of God), spoken in refutation of the heretics the Anomoeans, who sought, on the basis of their own speculations, to clarify the relation of God the Father to God the Son, and taught that the Son of God is a created being and was made by the Father out of nothing. In the words on the incomprehensibility, John overturns the attempt of the Anomoeans to clarify the mystery of the Triune Godhead, and by texts of Holy Scripture proves the incomprehensibility of God; in seven other words the consubstantiality of the Son of God with God the Father is proved. Besides this, John Chrysostom's book on the Holy Spirit is also remarkable, on the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father. In his work against the Jews and pagans the divinity of the Christian teaching is proved by the fulfilment of the prophecies and by the effects of the Christian preaching upon the hearts of men; and in the eight words against the Jews it is shown that the Jewish rites have been abolished, and that therefore to perform them now means to act contrary to the will of God. Known for his writings, John Chrysostom is renowned also for having instituted a special order of the liturgy, which bears his name to this day. St. Proclus, a disciple of Chrysostom and afterwards one of his successors on the Constantinopolitan see, writes thus about this institution of the saint: "St. Basil the Great, dealing with people as with the sick, presented the liturgy in an abridged form. After a short time, our father, golden-tongued John, on the one hand, as a good shepherd zealously caring for the salvation of the sheep, and on the other, regarding the weakness of human nature, resolved to uproot every satanic pretext. Therefore he, omitting much, instituted the celebration of the liturgy in a most abridged form, so that people might by degrees not fall away altogether from the Apostolic and Divine tradition." The liturgy abridged by John did not at first have all the chants which it has now. Some of them entered after St. John, but they did not alter the essential composition of the Liturgy of Chrysostom, because they belong either to the first part of the liturgy (known under the name of the Liturgy of the Catechumens), or to that which follows the celebration of the Eucharist. At present the Liturgy of John Chrysostom is celebrated more often than others in the Christian churches of the Orthodox East.

7372. Origen (born about 180 A.D., died in 254 A.D.) – teacher of the Alexandrian school, one of the greatest scholars of his time. The pagan philosophers themselves said

of Origen that he surpassed them in wisdom. Origen left behind many writings, some of which have come down to us in fragments. He is known chiefly for his interpretations of Holy Scripture. Also known is his work against Celsus, in which he defends the truths of the Christian faith. Unfortunately, in his writings Origen sometimes allowed arbitrary thoughts not shared by the Church, although he expressed them not as the positive teaching of the Church but as his own personal suppositions. Thus, he did not quite accurately teach about the relation of the Persons of the Holy Trinity; he said that the devil, if he had wished, could have been saved, that human souls were created before the creation of the visible world, and so forth. The ardent followers of Origen, of whom he had very many both in Alexandria and in Palestine, often pushed these thoughts to extremes. These followers were called Origenists, and their opinions – the Origenist heresy.



THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 14

14 ноября

New Calendar November 14 · Old Calendar November 27 (civil dates)

Life of the Holy Apostle Philip

Житие святого Апостола Филиппа

Near the Sea of Galilee, close to Chorazin and Capernaum, there was a city called Bethsaida[1]. Three of Christ's twelve Apostles were born in this city: Peter, Andrew, and Philip. Peter and Andrew were fishermen, and followed this trade until Christ called them; but from his youth Philip was devoted by his parents to the study of books. Reading and studying Holy Scripture and the prophecies concerning the longed-for Messiah with diligence, he burned with ardent love for Him and a great desire to see the Lord face to face, although he did not yet know that He whom so many desired to see, awaiting His coming, had already come to earth.

But Christ came into the region of Galilee and found Philip there, burning with such love for the Messiah. "Follow me," Jesus said to Philip (Jn. 1:43).

Hearing the Lord's call, Philip believed with all his heart that He was the true Messiah, promised by God through the prophets, and followed Him. Attentive to the Lord's most holy life, Philip strove to imitate Him and learned divine wisdom from Him, by whose power he later overcame the madness of the pagans. Rejoicing at having found such a Treasure, by whom the whole world was to be redeemed, Philip did not wish to enrich himself alone, but desired that others also might share in the same gift. Meeting his friend Nathanael, he joyfully announced to

1. Bethsaida of Galilee was situated on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee (in the northern part of Palestine), near the cities of Capernaum and Chorazin.

him: "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets wrote—Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth."

Nathanael heard this, but did not believe that the Messiah, the King of Israel, could come from a small city and a humble family. He said: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Then Philip said nothing, but simply advised him to go and see Him.

"Go," he said, "and see."

He felt that as soon as Nathanael saw Jesus and heard His saving words, he would immediately believe that He was the Messiah. And so it indeed came to pass. As Philip was going with him to Jesus, the Lord, who searches the hearts and inward parts and reads the hidden thoughts and hearts of men, saw Nathanael coming to Him, knew him, and said of him: "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

Hearing these words, Nathanael was greatly astonished and said to Him: "How do You know me?"

The Lord answered him: "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

When Nathanael was under the fig tree, he was meditating upon the divine Messiah, in whose coming the whole joy and gladness of God's faithful servants was placed; and at that time God granted him contrition of heart and warm tears, which he joined to his fervent prayer, that the Lord might fulfill what He had promised of old to the fathers and send the Savior of the world to earth. The all-seeing eye of God saw Nathanael at that time, as he abode in a spirit of tender compunction; therefore the Lord said to him that when Nathanael was under the fig tree, He had seen him.

At these words Nathanael was even more astonished. He remembered what he had been thinking while under the fig tree, and with what tender compunction he had prayed to God to send the Messiah; he knew that there had been no one there with him to see him, and that none but God could discern his thoughts. Therefore Nathanael immediately believed that Jesus was the Messiah whom God had promised to send for the salvation of mankind, and recognized in Jesus Christ, who had foreseen the secrets of his heart, the divine nature. So he cried out:

"Teacher! You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel" (Jn. 1:45–49)!

How many grateful feelings Nathanael later cherished toward Philip for announcing to him the Savior who had come to earth and drawing him to the promised Messiah! And St. Philip rejoiced in his heart that men had found the divine Treasure hidden in the depths of human nature, and he burned with still greater love for his Lord. Yet St. Philip saw in his divine Teacher only the highest human perfections, and did not yet recognize His divinity. And so Christ desired to correct him. Once, as the Lord was going to the other side of the Sea of Tiberias[2] with five thousand people, and wished to feed so great a multitude of His hearers by a miracle, He said to Philip: "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (Jn. 6:5–6).

He said this to test him, for He knew there was nowhere to obtain bread; He also knew beforehand what Philip would answer. He asked Philip about this in order that Philip might know himself better and, being ashamed of his little faith, amend it. Indeed, Philip did not remember the omnipotence of God, nor say: "Thou, O Lord, canst do all things; it is not fitting for Thee to ask anyone about this. Only will it, and all shall immediately be satisfied: 'Thou givest them—they receive; Thou openest Thy hand, and they are filled with good'" (Ps. 103:28).

Philip did not say this, but, thinking of his Lord as a man and not as God, said: "Two hundred denarii[3] worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that each of them may receive even a little" (Jn. 6:7).

Then, together with the other disciples, he added: "Send the people away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and buy themselves food" (Mk. 6:36).

But when the Lord broke the five loaves and two fish for the five thousand people (Lk. 9:16), Philip saw that from the Lord's hand, as from an inexhaustible storehouse, all received sufficient food until the whole multitude was satisfied. Then the Apostle was deeply ashamed of

2. The Sea of Tiberias is another name for the same Sea of Galilee, given to it after Tiberias, the Galilean city on the southeast shore of the Sea of Galilee.
3. The denarius was an ancient Jewish coin worth about 21.5 kopecks. Thus 200 denarii equaled approximately 43 rubles.

his little faith, and, being confirmed in faith, glorified the power of God in Jesus Christ together with the others.

Later, the Lord numbered Philip among the twelve chosen Apostles, bestowed grace upon him, and vouchsafed him close communion with Himself. Once, during a feast, some Greeks came to Jerusalem but could not draw near to Jesus, being unbelieving pagans. Therefore they approached Philip and entreated him, saying: "Sir, we wish to see Jesus!"

First he told Andrew about this, and then, together with him, dared to inform Jesus of the Greeks' desire, rejoicing that even the pagans sought to see and hear his Lord and Teacher. Then he heard from Jesus wondrous teaching and a prophecy concerning the pagans, who were to believe in Him, not then, but after His death. "Unless," He said, "a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn. 12:24).

By this Christ spoke, as it were, thus: "While I live on earth, I have only a part of the house of Israel believing in Me; but if I die, not only the house of Israel, but many pagans also, will believe in Me."

On another occasion, after the Mystical Supper, Philip dared to ask the Lord concerning the great mystery of the Godhead, beseeching Him to show them the Father, and saying: "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us!" (Jn. 14:8).

By this question he brought great benefit to the Church of Christ, for from it we have learned to confess the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father and to silence the heretics who reject this divine truth. The Lord answered him with a gentle reproof: "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how then do you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak of Myself; the Father who abides in Me, He does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me" (Jn. 14:9–11).

This answer of the Lord taught St. Philip, and with him the whole Catholic Apostolic Church, to believe worthily in the equality of the

Son's divinity with the Father, and refutes the blasphemy of Arius, who said that the Son of God is a creature and not the Creator.

After the voluntary sufferings and resurrection of the Son of God, St. Philip, together with the other Apostles, saw his Lord in an immortal and glorified body, received peace and blessing from Him, and also saw His Ascension.

After this he was vouchsafed the grace of the Holy Spirit and became a preacher of Christ among the pagans, for it fell to his lot to go and preach in Asia Minor and Syria. First he preached in Galilee. There one day a certain woman met him, carrying in her arms her dead infant and weeping inconsolably. Seeing her, the Apostle of Christ had compassion on her and, stretching out his hand over the dead infant, said: "Arise! Thus Christ, whom I preach, commands you."

And immediately the infant came to life. The mother, seeing her son raised up alive and well, fell at the apostle's feet in joy, giving thanks for the raising of her son and asking him for baptism, for she had come to believe in Christ the Lord whom he preached. The apostle baptized the mother and the son and then set out for the pagan lands. Preaching the Gospel in Greece, he worked many miracles by the power of Christ: he healed diseases and raised one dead man. This miracle astonished the Jews who lived there, and they sent word to Jerusalem, to the chief priests and the princes of the Jews, that a certain unknown man named Philip had come to them, preaching the name of Jesus, by which he casts out demons and heals every disease, and that he had even raised a dead man by that same name of Jesus, and that already many were believing in Christ. Soon there arrived from Jerusalem to Greece a chief priest with scribes, embittered and enraged against Philip. Clothed in his high-priestly vestments, he sat down haughtily and proudly upon the judgment seat, in the presence of a multitude of people, both Jews and pagans. Here too the Apostle Philip was brought in and placed in the midst of the assembly. Fixing him with a stern gaze, the chief priest began to speak with anger: "Was it not enough for you in Judea, Galilee and Samaria, to beguile simple and unlearned people? But you have come here also, to the wise Greeks, to spread the scandal you learned from Jesus, the opponent of the law of Moses, for which He

was condemned, crucified on the cross, and died a shameful death; and only because of the feast of Passover then taking place was He buried. You, His disciples, stole Him secretly and everywhere proclaimed to deceive many that He Himself had risen from the dead."

When the chief priest had spoken these words, the crowd shouted at Philip: "What will you answer to this, Philip?"

And a great commotion arose among the people: some stood for having Philip put to death at once, while others wanted him led to execution in Jerusalem. Then the holy apostle opened his mouth and said to the chief priest: "In vain have you loved vanity and spoken falsehood! Why does your heart remain hardened, and why do you refuse to confess the truth? Was it not you who set a seal upon the tomb and posted a guard? And when our Lord rose, without breaking the seal upon the tomb, was it not you who then gave gold to the soldiers, so that they would lie and say that while they slept His dead body was stolen by His disciples? How, then, are you not ashamed now to distort the truth? The very seals of the tomb will, on the day of judgment, serve as clear accusers of your lie, as witnesses of the true resurrection of Christ."

At these words of the apostle the chief priest became even more enraged, and in mad malice rushed at him, wishing himself to seize and kill the apostle; but at that very moment he was blinded and turned entirely black. Those present, seeing what had happened, attributed it to sorcery, and rushing at Philip they sought to destroy him as a sorcerer; but all who wished to seize him were struck by the same punishment as the chief priest. At this the earth trembled violently, and all were seized with fear and recognized the great power of Christ. The Apostle Philip, seeing their blindness of soul and body, wept over them and turned in prayer to God, asking Him to enlighten them. And behold, by the prayer of the saint, healing was sent from on high to all who had suffered. This miracle caused many to turn to Christ and believe in Him. But the chief priest, still blinded by malice, not only did not wish, after the punishment that had befallen him, to amend himself and know the truth, but again began to utter many blasphemies against our Lord Jesus Christ. Then a still greater punishment struck him. Suddenly the earth,

opening its depths, swallowed him up, as once it swallowed Dathan and Abiram.[4]

After the perdition of the chief priest, St. Philip baptized many there and ordained for them as bishop a respected and worthy man named Narcissus; he himself went on to Parthia. On the way he asked God for help in his labors. And as he knelt in prayer, there appeared to him from heaven the image of an eagle with golden wings outspread, in the likeness of the crucified Christ. Strengthened by this vision, St. Philip set out again to preach, and, passing through the cities of Arabia and Kandakia, he boarded a ship and sailed by sea to the Syrian city of Azotus.[5] At night a violent storm arose on the sea, and all despaired of their lives. Then the holy apostle rose to pray, and at once there appeared in the heavens a sign of the life-giving cross, which illumined the darkness of the night, and the sea suddenly grew calm and its waves subsided. Coming ashore at Azotus, Philip disembarked from the ship and was received into the house of a hospitable man named Nicoclides, who had a daughter, Charitina, afflicted with a disease of one eye. Entering the house of Nicoclides, the apostle began to preach the word of God to those present, and all listened to him with joy. Among the listeners was Charitina; she was so seized with spiritual delight by the apostle's teaching that she forgot even her illness. He, seeing her such zeal for the word of God, bade her call upon the name of Jesus Christ and lay her hand upon the diseased eye. As soon as Charitina did this, her eye was at that very moment healed, and the whole house of Nicoclides believed in Christ and received holy baptism.

From Azotus the Apostle Philip went to Syrian Hierapolis,[6] where, preaching Christ, he aroused strong anger among the people, who even

4. Dathan and Abiram, Reubenites, sons of Eliab, were traitors who formed a conspiracy against Moses; for this they were punished by God with a terrible death: the earth opened and swallowed them. (Num. 16:1–50).

5. Azotus – from the Hebrew: *a fortified place, a fortress* – in remote antiquity a rich and fortified Philistine city, located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Under the Maccabees it was burned and destroyed, afterward restored, but no longer had its former strength. Today there is a small village here called Ezdud.

6. Hierapolis – the name of several cities of antiquity. – Hierapolis of Syria, later among the Greeks Bambyce; from the time of Constantine the Great, the chief city of the Euphratensis province; now only ruins of it remain near present-day Membij.

threatened to stone him. But the intercession of an influential citizen named Ir saved him from the popular uprising.

"Citizens!" he addressed the people. "Hearken to my counsel: do no evil to this stranger until we learn whether his teaching is true, and if it proves not to be so, then we shall destroy him."

The people did not dare to oppose Ir, who thereupon led Philip into his house. The apostle continued there his customary preaching and turned Ir, his whole household and his neighbors to the holy faith, enlightening them with the mystery of holy baptism. The citizens, learning that Ir had received baptism, gathered at night and surrounded his house, intending to burn Ir alive in his sleep together with the apostle and all his household. Discovering their plot, the apostle fearlessly presented himself before them; they, like wild beasts gnashing their teeth, seized him and led him to their council. The head of the council, whose name was Aristarchus, seeing the apostle, stretched out his hand and seized him by the hair, but at that very moment his hand withered and he lost his sight and hearing. Then the feelings of the people changed: their anger, at the sight of this miracle, gave way to astonishment, and the people began to beseech the apostle to heal their governor Aristarchus. Philip said: "If he does not believe in the God whom I preach, he will not be healed."

At that moment a funeral procession was passing near them, and the people, wishing to mock the apostle, said: "If you raise this dead man, then Aristarchus and we will believe in your God."

The apostle lifted his eyes to heaven, prayed for a long time, and then, turning to the dead man, said in a gentle voice: "Theophilus!" And at once the dead man rose on his bier, sat up and opened his eyes. Then Philip said to him a second time: "Christ commands you: arise and speak with us!"

The dead man, rising from his bed, fell at the apostle's feet, saying: "I thank you, holy servant of God, for delivering me at this hour from a great evil: two black and foul-smelling Ethiopians were dragging me away, and had you not stopped them and delivered me from them, I would have been cast down into gloomy Tartarus."

Then all who saw this glorious miracle unanimously glorified the One True God, preached by Philip. The Apostle made a sign with his hand to the people, that they should be silent for a while, and bade Ir lay the sign of the Cross with his own hand upon the afflicted members of Aristarchus. As soon as Ir had done this, the withered hand of Aristarchus was immediately healed; he began to see and to hear, and was completely cured. These miracles, wrought by St. Philip by the power of Christ, turned the inhabitants of Hierapolis to Christ, and all rushed to break their idols. The first of the believers was the father of Theophilus, who shattered twelve golden idols and distributed the gold to the poor. The Apostle baptized them all and appointed Ir their bishop. Having thus founded the Church in Hierapolis and firmly established in the holy faith those who had been enlightened, St. Philip set out to preach in other lands. Passing through Syria and the highland of Asia, he came to Lydia and Mysia[7], and as he passed through these lands, he turned the unbelieving pagans to the True God. There St. Bartholomew, the holy Apostle, joined him; he had been preaching at that time in the neighboring cities and had been sent by God to help Philip. Following them was also Philip's sister, the virgin Mariamne, and all of them together began to serve the work of the salvation of the human race. Passing through Lydia and Mysia and proclaiming the word of God, they suffered from the unbelievers many afflictions, beatings and sorrows; they were cast into prison and stoned, but, despite all persecutions, by the grace of God they remained alive for the labors yet before them in spreading the faith of Christ. In one of the Lydian villages they met the beloved disciple of Christ, St. John the Theologian, and together with him set out for the land of Phrygia. Entering the city of Hierapolis[8], they preached Christ there. This city was filled with idols, which all its inhabitants worshipped; among the false divinities

7. Lydia and Mysia – the northwestern regions of Asia Minor.

8. Hierapolis of Phrygia was situated in the southern part of Phrygia (in the central part of Asia Minor), between the rivers Lycus and Maeander; in antiquity it was a fairly important city, especially famed for its marble quarries and hot springs. Today it bears the Turkish name Pambuk-Kalesi (city of cotton), from its resemblance, owing to the deposits of water flowing down from the high mountains, to bales of white cotton on the rocks, hillocks, cliffs, plains, riverbanks and canals. Today only ruins remain here, and the place serves as a refuge for lepers.

there was also a viper, for which a special temple had been built, where food was brought to it and numerous and varied sacrifices were offered; the madmen also venerated other reptiles and vipers. St. Philip, first of all, together with his sister, armed themselves with prayer against the viper, in which St. John the Theologian, who was with them at that time, also helped them. All of them together, by prayer, as if by a spear, overcame that viper, and by the power of Christ put it to death. After this, John the Theologian parted from them, leaving them Hierapolis for the preaching of the word of God, and he himself went to other cities, spreading the holy Gospel everywhere. But St. Philip, with Bartholomew and Mariamne, remained in Hierapolis, zealously striving to destroy the darkness of idolatry, so that the light of the knowledge of the truth might shine upon those who had gone astray; they labored over this day and night, teaching the unbelievers the word of God, admonishing the foolish and directing the wayward onto the true path. In the city there lived a man named Stachys, who had been blind for forty years. The holy Apostles, by the power of prayer, enlightened his bodily eyes, and by the preaching of Christ enlightened his spiritual blindness. Having baptized Stachys, the saints stayed in his house. And a rumor spread throughout the whole city that the blind Stachys had received his sight. Crowds of people began to gather at his house. The holy Apostles instructed all who came to them in faith in Christ Jesus. Many sick were also brought there, and the holy Apostles healed them all by prayer and cast out demons, so that a large number of people believed in Christ and were baptized.

The wife of the ruler of that city, named Nicanor, had been bitten by a serpent and lay sick, near death. Having heard of the holy Apostles who were in the house of Stachys, that they healed every disease by a single word, she, in the absence of her husband, ordered her servants to carry her to them, and received a double healing: bodily, from the serpent's bite, and spiritual, from the demonic deception; and, taught by the holy Apostles, she believed in Christ. When the city governor returned home, the servants told him that his wife had learned to believe in Christ from some foreign strangers who were living in the house of Stachys. Falling into a terrible rage, Nicanor ordered the

Apostles to be seized at once and the house of Stachys to be burned, which was carried out. A great crowd gathered, and the holy Apostles Philip, Bartholomew, and the holy virgin Mariamne were dragged through the city with blows, mocked, and at last thrown into prison. After this, the city governor took his seat on the judgment place to judge the preachers of Christ, and all the idol priests and the priests of the slain viper gathered before him, bringing complaints against the holy Apostles and saying: "Governor! Avenge the dishonor of our gods, for since these strangers appeared in our city the altars of our great gods have been deserted, and the people forget to bring them their customary sacrifices; our famous goddess, the viper, has perished, and the whole city is filled with lawlessness. Put these sorcerers to death."

Then the city governor ordered the clothing to be removed from St. Philip, thinking that charms of sorcery were contained in it, but when they took off his clothing, they found nothing. The same was done to St. Bartholomew, and in his garments they found nothing. When they, with the same purpose, approached Mariamne to remove her clothing and expose her virginal body, suddenly, in their sight, she was transformed into a fiery flame, and the wicked men fled from her in fear. The holy Apostles were condemned by the ruler to crucifixion. St. Philip suffered first. Having pierced the soles of his feet and passed ropes through them, they crucified him on a cross head downward before the doors of the viper's shrine, and at the same time they threw stones at him. Then they crucified St. Bartholomew by the wall of the temple. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; the earth opened and swallowed the city governor with all the priests and a multitude of unbelievers. All who remained alive, both believers and pagans, were struck with great fear and, with weeping, besought the holy Apostles to have mercy on them and to entreat their One True God, that the earth might not swallow them as it had swallowed those others. They hastened to take the crucified Apostles down from the cross. St. Bartholomew had been hung not high, and he was soon taken down. But Philip could not be quickly taken down from the cross, because he had been hung high, and especially because it was by a special will of God, so that His Apostle, through these sufferings and crucifixion,

might pass from earth to heaven, toward which his feet had been turned all his life. Hanging thus, St. Philip prayed to God for his enemies, that the Lord would forgive them their sins and enlighten their minds to the knowledge of the truth. The Lord inclined to his prayer and immediately commanded the earth to bring forth alive the victims it had swallowed, with the exception of the city governor and the priests of the viper. Then all, with a loud voice, confessed and glorified the power of Christ, expressing the desire to be baptized. When they wished to take St. Philip down from the cross, they saw that he had already yielded up his holy soul to God, and they took him down dead. His own sister, St. Mariamne, who had looked on all the while at the sufferings and death of her brother Philip, embraced and kissed with love the body of him taken down from the tree, and rejoiced that Philip had been granted to suffer for Christ. St. Bartholomew performed baptism over all who had believed in the Lord and appointed Stachys as their bishop. The newly enlightened honorably buried the body of the holy Apostle Philip. In the place where the blood of the holy Apostle had flowed, a grapevine sprang up within three days, as a sign that St. Philip, for the blood he shed in the name of Christ, enjoys eternal blessedness with his Lord in His Kingdom[9].

St. Bartholomew, together with the blessed virgin Mariamne, after the burial of St. Philip, remained for some days in Hierapolis, and, having established in the faith of Christ the newly founded Church, departed from there to the city of Alban in Great Armenia[10], where he was crucified. St. Mariamne journeyed to Lycaonia[11], and there, having converted many to the holy faith, peacefully fell asleep. For all this, glory be to our God now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

9. To this account of the martyric death of St. the Apostle Philip, ancient narratives add that seven days before his death he himself foretold his end. The Apostle Philip died a martyr's death in the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian, in the year 90 A.D., at the age of 87. His relics were transferred to Rome around the year 560, where they rest to this day in the church of the Twelve Apostles. One hand of the holy Apostle was kept in Constantinople in the church of the All-Immaculate Theotokos. The Byzantine emperor Manuel Comnenus gave it, as a holy and precious pledge, to his niece Maria when he gave her in marriage in 1167 to the King of Jerusalem, Amalric. In 1204 this relic was transferred to Florence.

10. In Asia, on the border with the Caucasus.

11. Lycaonia – one of the central regions of Asia Minor, bordering Phrygia.

Troparion, Tone 3:

The universe is adorned, and Ethiopia rejoices, as it is beautified by thee; for, being brightly enlightened, it celebrates thy memory, O Philip, preacher of God: for thou didst teach all to believe in Christ, and didst complete thy course worthily of the Gospel. Therefore the Ethiopian hand boldly cries to God; entreat Him to grant us great mercy.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Thy disciple and friend, and imitator of Thy passion, Philip, the divine preacher, who preached Thee as God to the whole world, by his prayers preserve Thy Church and every city of Thine from the utterly lawless enemies, through the Theotokos, O Thou who art abundant in mercy.

* * *

Life of St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica

Житие святого Григория Паламы, архиепископа Фессалоникийского

St. Gregory Palamas[12], Archbishop of Thessalonica[13], was born in Constantinople, of noble and pious parents, who endeavored from his earliest years to teach him both human wisdom and, above all, divine wisdom and every virtue. In his early youth he lost his father; but Gregory's mother took care to provide him, as well as all his brothers and sisters, with a sound and good upbringing, in the spirit of the law of the Lord and the Divine Scriptures. She arranged for them to live among wise teachers, so that her son might learn wisdom from them; and he, distinguished by natural gifts of understanding and diligence, made swift progress in the study of philosophy and the other sciences then known. But, not trusting his own memory, he made it a

12. St. Gregory Palamas lived in the 14th century.

13. Thessalonica, otherwise Solun – a very important ancient city of Macedonia, lying at the head of the large Gulf of Thessalonica or Thracian Gulf on the Aegean Sea (the Archipelago). At present this city, under the name Salonica, is after Constantinople the first commercial and manufacturing city in European Turkey, with a very numerous population.

rule before every lesson to make three prostrations before the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. And the Most Pure One aided the pious youth, whose rapid progress drew the attention of all. The emperor himself took a lively interest in St. Gregory and cared for his upbringing with fatherly solicitude.

Meanwhile, from his earliest years Gregory had already come to hate all earthly things as a delusive dream, and, filled with fervent love for God, he disdained all temporal goods, striving with his whole soul to cleave to the One God, the Source of all wisdom and the Giver of every grace, and to leave the world and its vain glory. Moved by these feelings, he sought the company and meetings of the monks of holy Mount Athos, asking their counsel and guidance, and learning from them the manner and rules of monastic and ascetic life, while testing his own strength to see whether he could become a true monk. Gregory exchanged his fine clothes for a poor garment and began little by little to alter his former habits and outward conduct, abandoning all the conventions of worldly propriety. This drew the general attention of the court, and many even thought him mad. Thus several years passed, and neither the emperor's entreaties, nor his friends' persuasion, nor the mockery of those around him could turn Gregory from the path he had chosen.

Having successfully undergone this trial, Gregory, in his twentieth year, resolved finally to take the monastic habit and withdraw into the wilderness, and announced this to his God-loving mother. At first she was somewhat saddened by it, but then she agreed to his intention, rejoicing in the Lord, and even, with God's help, persuaded her other children also to embrace monastic life, that she might say with the Prophet: "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me" (Is. 8:18). Following the Gospel commandment, St. Gregory gave all his possessions to the poor and, with all his heart disdaining the beauty, sweetness, and glory of this world, followed after Christ, leading his mother, brothers, and sisters along the same path. He left his mother and sisters in a women's monastery; his brothers he brought with him to holy Mount Athos, and with them settled in the wilderness monastery of Vatopedi[14], placing himself in complete obedience to the holy and grace-endowed elder Nicodemus, from whom he later received the monastic tonsure.

In the second year of his stay with Nicodemus, Gregory was deemed worthy of a divine visitation. Once, during an ascetic struggle of contemplation, a radiant and majestic man appeared before him, in whom he recognized the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian. Looking kindly upon Gregory, the Apostle asked him: "Why, when you cry out to God, do you repeat each time only this: 'Enlighten my darkness, enlighten my darkness'?"

Gregory answered: "What else should I ask, save that I may be enlightened and know how to do His holy will?"

Then the holy Evangelist said: "By the will of the Lady of all, the Theotokos, from this time forth I shall be ever with you."

After the death of his teacher, the holy elder Nicodemus, St. Gregory withdrew to the Great Lavra of St. Athanasius, where he

served the brethren at the common table and also fulfilled the office of church singer. Having lived there for several years in the fear of God and in obedience to all, Gregory subdued the passions of the flesh forever, presenting a consoling example of evangelical dispassion and divine purity. By his humility, meekness, and ascetic labors, he won the love and esteem of all the brethren; but, shunning glory and striving for an even more austere life, he withdrew from the Lavra into the deep wilderness, to the skete of Glossia, and there placed himself under the guidance of the reverent elder Gregory, leading a strict contemplative life and burning with boundless love for God, to whom he had dedicated both soul and body. Having overcome all the assaults of the demons through unceasing prayer, he was deemed worthy of the gifts of grace. Plunging into the depths of the spirit of prayer and illumined by it, he attained such compunction and heartfelt weeping that tears streamed from his eyes like a constant and inexhaustible spring.

But Gregory's solitude and that of his fellow ascetics was soon disturbed by the attacks made by the Hagarenes[15] upon monks living in solitude outside the monasteries. For this reason Gregory, together with other monks, was compelled to leave his wilderness and withdraw to Thessalonica. From there the saint conceived the purpose of going to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places and, if it should be pleasing to God, to end his days somewhere there in the solitude of the wilderness. Wishing to know whether their intention was pleasing to God, he prayed to Him concerning it. And behold, in a dream the holy Great Martyr Demetrius appeared to him, whose relics rested in Thessalonica[16]. The Great Martyr persuaded him not to leave Thessalonica. Then St. Gregory, after an intense fast and prayer, received the priesthood in

14. Athos – a narrow mountainous peninsula in the south of Macedonia, extending into the Aegean Sea and washed by the Strymonic and Singitic Gulfs, famous as a nursery of Orthodox monasticism, inhabited by monks alone, a holy place of the East and the principal center of Eastern monasticism. – The Vatopedi monastery is located on the northeastern slope of Athos, near the sea. Its foundation, according to tradition, is assigned to the earliest times of monasticism in the East (to the end of the 4th century) and is connected with the name of the Emperor Theodosius the Great. From the 10th century Vatopedi acquired first-rank significance on Athos, which it retains to the present day.

15. Agarenes – Arabs, Muslims.

16. His memory is celebrated on October 26.

Thessalonica and, accompanied by a small number of brethren, withdrew to a nearby skete, where they again took up the ascetic life. His manner of life was as follows: for five days of the week he neither went out anywhere nor received anyone; only on Saturday and Sunday, after performing the sacred rites and receiving the Divine Mysteries, did he enter into spiritual communion with the brethren, edifying and comforting them with his moving and instructive discourse. During these hours, which followed the Venerable Father's seclusion, and especially after the Divine Liturgy, a wondrous divine light could be seen upon his face. During the sacred rites he brought everyone to tears and compunction. Many great holy men marveled at his virtuous life, for which he was deemed worthy by God of the gift of working miracles and prophesying, and they called him God-bearing and a prophet[17].

At this time the virtuous mother of St. Gregory departed to the Lord. Her daughters and fellow ascetics, Gregory's sisters, asked him to come to them, to comfort them in their orphanhood and give them spiritual instruction. Yielding to the call of familial love, Gregory came to his sisters in Constantinople, and then hastened back once more to his beloved wilderness. But soon thereafter, after five years of life in solitude at the skete of Veria, he was compelled, because of the frequent incursions of the Albanians, to withdraw again to holy Mount Athos, to the Lavra of the Venerable Athanasius, where the fathers laboring there received him with great love. Here, too, withdrawing outside the monastery to the silent cell of St. Sabbas, he went nowhere and saw no one except on Saturdays and Sundays, and no one saw him save when the needs of the sacred rites required it. All the other days and nights he spent in ascetic prayer and contemplation of God.

Once, in prayer in his cell before the Most Pure Mother of God, the Venerable Father besought Her that, in order to remove from him and his brethren every hindrance to perfect solitude, She might deign to take upon Herself the care and provision of all their earthly needs. In answer to his fervent prayer, the Most Merciful Lady deemed him worthy of an appearance of Herself, accompanied by a multitude of ra-

17. At this time he was a little over 30 years old.

diant men. Appearing before him, She said, addressing the radiant men who accompanied Her: "Henceforth and forever, be the providers for the needs of Gregory and his brethren."

From that time, as St. Gregory himself later related, wherever he might be, he truly always felt the special providence of God toward him. On another occasion, while engaged in prayerful contemplation, Gregory fell into a light drowse. And behold, it seemed to him that in his hands was a vessel of pure milk, so full that it overflowed the rim; then this milk took on the appearance of grape wine which, overflowing the vessel, wetted his hands and clothing, spreading a wondrous fragrance all around. As he sensed it, Gregory was filled with holy joy. And a radiant youth appeared to him and said:

"Why do you not share this wondrous drink, which you are leaving without due care? For this is a gift of God that never runs dry."

"But with whom should I share this drink, when there are none who need it?" asked St. Gregory.

"Although at present there are indeed none who thirst for this drink," the youth replied, "yet you must nevertheless fulfill your duty and not neglect the gift of God, for the Master will require an account from you of its proper use."

At these words the marvelous vision came to an end. St. Gregory interpreted it to mean that the milk signified the ordinary gift of speech, intelligible to the hearts of simple people seeking spiritual guidance, and that the transformation of the milk into wine signified that in time the Supreme Will would require of him a deeper instruction in the higher truths of the Christian faith. Soon after this, Gregory was elected abbot of the Esphigmenou Monastery[18], but after a short time the desire for the solitude of the desert drew him again to the Lavra of St. Athanasius. Here he attained such spiritual perfection that many holy men marveled at his virtuous life and, seeing his wondrous miracles, of which he had been granted the gift by God, called him a God-bearer. He cast out demons; by his prayer he restored fertility to barren trees; he foretold the future as if it were present. But the Venerable One did

18. The Esphigmenou monastery – one of the most ancient monasteries of Mount Athos; it is located on the northeastern slope of Athos.

not escape various and frequent temptations, according to the word of God: "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). He endured all with joy, "so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perishes, though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:7), as the holy Apostle Peter says.

St. Gregory Palamas endured many sorrows in his struggle against the heresies that began at that time to disturb the Church of God. He rendered an especially great service to the Church by exposing the false teachers who rejected the Orthodox teaching on the spiritual, grace-bestowing light, which illumines the inner man and at times is revealed visibly, as on Tabor[19], and on the face of Moses after his converse with God on Sinai (Ex. 34:29–30). At this time there arrived on the holy Mount Athos from Calabria[20] a learned monk named Barlaam, who together with his followers disturbed the peace of the Church of Christ with blasphemous teachings and the tranquility of the Athonite monks. For a full twenty-three years the valiant shepherd bravely contended with Barlaam, and the many sorrows which St. Gregory Palamas endured during this time are hard even to describe in detail. Barlaam taught concerning the light of Tabor that it was something material, created, appearing in space and coloring the air, since it was visible to the bodily eyes of men not yet illumined by grace. He likewise acknowledged as created all the operations of the Divinity, and even the gifts of the Holy Spirit: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, and so forth, not fearing to reduce God to the rank of creatures, thereby overthrowing the light and blessedness of the righteous in the Kingdom of the Heavenly Father, and the power and operation of the Triune Godhead. Thus Barlaam and his followers impiously divided the one Divinity into the created and the uncreated, and those who with reverence acknowledged this Divine light and every power and every operation as uncreated and co-eternal[21] they called ditheists and polytheists. Consid-

19. During the Transfiguration of the Lord.
20. Calabria – a low-lying peninsula in southern Italy.
21. In accordance with the universal belief of the Church, clearly expressed in the troparion for the Transfiguration of the Lord: "Let Thy eternal light shine also upon us sinners."

ering, on the contrary, the faith of the Athonite hermits in beholding the light of God with the bodily eyes, and their preparation for this by sensible means[7422], to be an error, Barlaam openly rose up against them, against prayer, and against their mystical contemplation. But before Barlaam's slanders against the Athonite monks became known, this heretic, for his reprehensible and shameful conduct, was expelled with disgrace by the Patriarch. Barlaam withdrew in anger and sorrow to Thessalonica, spreading his slanders against the Athonite monks there as well. Lacking their own strength to withstand Barlaam, who was eloquent and skilled in the sciences, the monks of Thessalonica were compelled to summon the Divine Gregory from Athos. Upon his arrival in Thessalonica, St. Gregory at first acted in a spirit of gentleness; but seeing that these measures had no effect on the obstinate false teacher, who was bringing such strong disturbance upon the Church and its ordinances, he began to refute Barlaam's objections and slanders not only by word of mouth but also by powerful writings filled with lofty truths and divine proofs. Barlaam himself, learning of them and feeling their force, was compelled to leave the Athonite monks in peace, but for this he rose up with all his strength against the hierarch of God. When this too proved unavailing, the shamed Barlaam withdrew to Constantinople, complaining orally and in writing to the Patriarch of Constantinople, John XIV[22], about St. Gregory and the Athonite monks.

Meanwhile St. Gregory, remaining at Thessalonica for three years, diligently occupied himself with setting forth the principles of Orthodoxy and defending its purity with strength. Here, as before, heartfelt weeping, complete solitude, and silence were the beloved occupation of his leisure. Lacking the conveniences of desert stillness, and at the same time avoiding, as far as possible, ties and relations with the world, he lived in a remote part of the house, where, having fashioned a small cell for himself, he kept silence as much as he could. And so one day, on the feast of St. Anthony the Great, the first founder of the monastic life, when the other monks, the disciples of the blessed Isidore, were

22. John XIV Apren was Patriarch from 1332 to 1347.

celebrating the All-night Vigil, while Gregory remained in his seclusion, St. Anthony suddenly appeared to him in a vision and said: "Good and perfect is solitude, but fellowship with the brotherhood is sometimes necessary, especially on days of prayer and psalmody. Therefore you too must now be with the brethren at the vigil."

Obeying this, the Divine Gregory immediately went to the brotherhood, who received him with joy, and the All-night Vigil passed for them with special solemnity.

Having finished his written theological labors in defense of the Athonite monks and in refutation of heretical conceptions, St. Gregory returned to the holy mountain and showed the monks what he had written concerning piety.

Soon after this, St. Gregory had to contend against heretical conceptions before the whole world, and for his labor he was to receive undying glory in the earthly Church and the crown of righteousness in the Heavenly Church. At this time Barlaam succeeded in winning over to his side the Patriarch of Constantinople, John XIV, and brought the matter to such a point that the Patriarch by a letter summoned Gregory and his other companions to the judgment of the Church. Unable to endure the Arianizing false doctrine, which threatened to shake the very foundations of Christian dogma and morality, the hierarch Gregory, filled with the Holy Spirit, came forward in zealous defense of Orthodoxy and of the Athonite elders. To resolve the arising dispute and to establish Orthodoxy in Constantinople, a council[23] was convened by the pious Emperor Andronicus Palaeologus[24], to which Barlaam also came with his disciples and followers. At this council, held in the Church of St. Sophia in Constantinople under the presidency of the Patriarch, the heretical error of Barlaam, of his follower Akindynos, and of other such false teachers was exposed. Then the great Gregory, opening his God-inspired lips, with words imbued with the fire of inspiration and with Divine Scripture scattered the heresy like dust from the face of the

23. This council took place in 1341. Subsequently the heresy of the Barlaamites was condemned and its followers anathematized at several further councils, in 1347, 1351, 1352 and 1368 (the last took place after the repose of St. Gregory Palamas).
24. Andronicus III Palaeologus, Byzantine emperor, reigned 1328–1341.

earth, burned it up like thorns, and utterly put the heretics to shame[7426].

Put to shame by the God-inspired refutations of the hierarch of God, Barlaam, unable to bear the disgrace, withdrew again to Italy, where he passed over to Catholicism. But in Byzantium he had open and secret friends and followers, whom he stirred up by his letters, while at the same time preaching teachings of the Western Church contrary to Orthodoxy. The tares of his false teaching were after him sown and cultivated by the monk Akindynos. Against him a new council was assembled in Constantinople, at which St. Gregory further exposed the errors of Barlaam and Akindynos concerning the Divine light. The Patriarch, however, supported Akindynos and declared St. Gregory the author of all the disorders and church disturbances of that time. Moreover, Akindynos was raised to the rank of deacon, while Gregory was cast into a gloomy dungeon, where he languished for four years.

But such injustice on the part of the Patriarch did not go unpunished. The pious Empress Anna,[25] learning of the Patriarch's actions and of his attachment to Akindynos, who had already been pronounced a heretic and an enemy of the Church by two councils, found him unworthy of ecclesiastical communion and of his sacred office; and the Patriarch himself, having fallen into heretical opinions, was deprived of his see and of ecclesiastical communion. Peace was thus restored to the Church, and St. Gregory was released from his unlawful imprisonment. For his holy zeal in upholding Orthodoxy and in rooting out heretical teachings and ecclesiastical disturbances, he was, at the urging of Patriarch Isidore[26] and Emperor John Cantacuzenus,[27] obliged to consent to his ordination as Archbishop of the Church of Thessalonica. But, owing to the disorders that had then arisen in Thessalonica, the new archbishop was not received by his flock, and consequently he withdrew to the Holy Mountain of Athos, which he loved. Meanwhile the feast of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos arrived. At that time a pious

25. The widow of the Emperor Andronicus III Palaeologus, who by this time had already died.
26. Isidore I, Patriarch of Constantinople from 1347 to 1349.
27. John VI Cantacuzenus, Byzantine emperor from 1341 to 1356. Because of the disturbances that arose over the imperial throne, he was compelled to share the empire with John V Palaeologus.

priest of Thessalonica, preparing to serve the Divine Liturgy, humbly besought the Lord to be pleased to reveal whether Gregory, as the people thought, was in error in his beliefs concerning the monastic life and spiritual contemplation, and whether he had boldness before the Lord. This revelation the priest asked to be shown through his paralyzed daughter, who had lain for three years without any movement. "If, Lord," he said, "Gregory is truly Thy servant, heal my unhappy daughter through his prayers." And the Lord heard the priest's entreaty: his daughter suddenly rose of her own accord from her bed and from that time received complete recovery, as though she had never been ill at all.

This miracle glorified St. Gregory, but the disturbances in the Church still continued in Thessalonica. Then Stephen, Tsar of Bulgaria,[28] knowing his virtues and his services to the Church of God, addressed him with an earnest entreaty to take up the see of Metropolitan of Bulgaria; but he could not persuade or induce the Divine Gregory to do so.

On Athos, however, the hierarch found no peace. Soon the needs of the Church called him again to Constantinople. From there he withdrew to the island of Lemnos.[29] Here he worked many signs and miracles and preached the word of God without ceasing, remaining until the people of Thessalonica, feeling the need of his presence for their orphaned flock, summoned him themselves, sending to Lemnos representatives of the clergy and the highest dignitaries of Thessalonica. The people met their archpastor with inexpressible joy. The Church of Thessalonica, as though inspired from above, presented a most triumphant appearance: in place of the usual songs of praise, the clergy and people sang paschal hymns and the canon, giving no account to themselves or to others of their feelings and of their extraordinary rejoicing. Three days after this, the Hierarch of God performed, before an innumerable gathering of people, a solemn procession of the Cross and the Liturgy. At this, God glorified His servant with a new miracle. The aforementioned pious priest had a son who suffered from epilepsy.

28. The Serbian king Stephen Dushan (1336–1355), to whom Bulgaria was also subjected.
29. Lemnos: an island in the Aegean Sea, east of Athos, six square miles in size.

When the time of Communion came, the priest, falling at the feet of the archpastor, humbly besought him to give Communion with his own hierarchal hands to his sick child. Moved by the priest's humility and by his son's sufferings, Gregory fulfilled his request, and the child was healed. Once, on the feast of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, St. Gregory was celebrating the Liturgy in a women's monastery. During the service one nun, blind in one eye, named Iliodora, learning that the hierarch was celebrating the Liturgy, unnoticed approached him and secretly applied the hierarchal vestment to her blind eye, and the eye immediately regained its sight.

The Divine Gregory worked many other miracles as well. The Church of Thessalonica, under his wise governance, enjoyed peace and quiet. But new labors and grievous sorrows awaited Gregory. At this time the adherents of Barlaam and Akindynos did not cease to trouble the Orthodox Church in Constantinople with their heretical opinions. Then Gregory once more boldly took up the struggle against the wicked heretics in defense of Orthodoxy. He continued to contend with them both in writing, through his God-inspired works, and in person. In consequence of the great agitation stirred up by the heretics in the Church of Christ, the Emperor and the Patriarch judged it necessary to convene, for the pacification of the Church, a new council at Constantinople, to which St. Gregory was first of all summoned. The enemies of the truth, as before, were put to shame and humiliated: both the hierarch's personal discussions and his dogmatic writings, read at the council, stopped the heretical mouths. Sent forth with the respect of the Emperor and the blessing of the Patriarch and the Church, St. Gregory set out with honor for his flock; but John Palaiologos,[30] who was then in Thessalonica, did not allow him to do so, and Gregory was compelled to go to the Holy Mountain. Nevertheless, three months later he was summoned with honor to Thessalonica by the same Palaiologos.

Here, not long after, St. Gregory fell into a grievous and prolonged illness, so that everyone feared even for his life. But God prolonged it for new labors. Before the saint had fully recovered from his ailment,

30. John V Palaeologus, Byzantine emperor, reigned 1341–1376. See note 3 on p. 395.

he received a letter from John Palaiologos, in which the Emperor asked him to come to Constantinople to put an end to the quarrels and dissensions within the imperial family between himself and his father-in-law, John Cantacuzenus. Gregory set out, but on the way to Constantinople he was seized by the Agarenes and carried off to Asia as a slave and captive. The saint remained in captivity for a whole year. He was sold from one hand to another, from city to city. Such was the will of God, that, like an apostle, passing from city to city, he might preach the Gospel of Christ, confirming the Orthodox in the faith, teaching them to hold fast to it, strengthening the doubters, and unfolding the mysteries of the wisdom of God concerning salvation that are hard to understand. And he was indeed a true apostle of Christ. With holy boldness St. Gregory entered into disputations about the faith with the Agarenes[31] and with heretics who had fallen away from the Church of Christ, who taught wrongly about the earthly ministry of Christ our God, about the honorable and life-giving Cross of the Lord, about the holy icons and the veneration of them. The unbelievers he enlightened with the light of the Gospel, while the enslaved, the captive, and the Christians he comforted and strengthened, persuading them to bear their cross of suffering without murmuring, in expectation of the heavenly rewards and crowns. The opponents of St. Gregory marveled at his wisdom and at the grace flowing from his lips. Some of them, in impotent malice, subjected him to cruel beatings, and he would have suffered even to the crown of martyrdom had not the Agarenes themselves protected him, expecting to receive a large ransom for him. And indeed, at the end of a year the Bulgarians ransomed him from the hands of the Agarenes and returned him to the Church of Thessalonica.

The arrival of the saint from captivity, first at Constantinople, was marked by an extraordinary triumph of the invisible hosts that hovered over the Divine Gregory, and by sweet hymns in his praise, which set in motion the quay where he was to step ashore. And St. Gregory was a chosen vessel of God.

Distinguished by meekness, guilelessness and humility, he at the same time continued boldly to stand against the enemies of God and of

the Orthodox faith, forcefully rebuking and defeating the heretics with the sword of the word of God. Overcoming evil with good, he never listened to those who reported to him the slanders of his enemies against him; he was magnanimous and patient in all sorrows and misfortunes; persecution and every insult he always counted as an honor and glory; and, as a true disciple of Christ, the yoke of Christ was good to him and His burden light.

St. Gregory was admired not only by the faithful but also by the unbelievers. His eyes were always pained from the unceasing tears of prayer that flowed from them. Having put to death all passions and enslaved the flesh to the spirit, St. Gregory labored in a good struggle; and, having brought peace to the Church of God and the Orthodox faith amid the agitations and heretical disorders, he completed the course of his ascetic, suffering, and God-pleasing life.

During the last three years of his life, St. Gregory, by the power of the grace of God, worked not a few miracles over the sick. Thus, he twice raised by his prayer his friend, the hieromonk Porphyry, from a sickbed. Shortly before his blessed repose, he healed by the sign of the Precious Cross and by prayer a five-year-old child of a gold-embroiderer, who was suffering from an extreme hemorrhage and was already doomed to death, and restored him to perfect health.

Soon after this St. Gregory fell ill and took to his bed. Feeling his approaching end, he foretold to those around him also the day of his departure into eternal life: "My friends!" he said to them, after the feast of St. John Chrysostom,[32] "now I shall depart from you to the Lord. I know this because the Divine Chrysostom appeared to me in a vision and, as his friend, called me to himself with love."

Indeed, on that very day, 14 November, St. Gregory departed unto the Lord, to His eternal heavenly dwellings. As he was dying, those around him saw that his lips were still whispering something; but though they tried as hard as they could to make out his words, they could discern only: “To the things on high, to the things on high!” With these words his holy soul quietly and peacefully departed from the body

31. That is, the Muslims.
32. The memory of St. John Chrysostom is observed on 13 November.

to the things on high.[33] When his blessed soul was parted from the body, his face grew radiant, and the whole room in which he reposed was illumined with light. All the city, streaming to the Hierarch's relics for a final kiss, bore witness to this. Thus God was pleased by this miracle to glorify His faithful servant, who even in his lifetime was a radiant dwelling of grace and a son of the Divine Light.[7436]

Leaving his body behind, which had been most gloriously illumined by angelic purity, as a rich inheritance and treasure for his flock after his death, St. Gregory continues to grant healing abundantly, even to this day, to all the sick and infirm who come from every quarter in faith to his holy relics,[7437] to the glory of Christ our God, to whom, together with His Father without beginning and the Most Holy, Good, and Life-giving Spirit, are due all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

O lamp of Orthodoxy, support of the Church and its teacher, adornment of monks, invincible champion of theologians, O Gregory Wonderworker, boast of Thessalonica, preacher of grace, pray ever that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

O sacred and divine instrument of wisdom, bright trumpet of theology sounding in harmony, we praise thee, Gregory, herald of God; but as thou standest before the First Mind, guide our mind to Him, O father, that we may cry: Rejoice, preacher of grace!

* * *

Life of Venerable Philip of Irap

Житие преподобнаго Филиппа Ирапскаго

During the reign of the Grand Prince of Moscow and all Russia, Basil Ioannovich,[34] a certain boy named Theophilus appeared in

33. St. Gregory Palamas reposed on 14 November, around 1360, at the age of 63. He left behind more than 70 writings.
34. Basil Ioannovich occupied the Grand-Princely throne from 1505 to 1533.

the Vologda lands, near the monastery of the Venerable Cornelius.[35] He lodged with a man named Basil. He earned his sustenance in the name of Christ. The youth had the pious custom of attending the Divine services every day and spending each night in prayer, keeping vigil without ceasing. Seeing Theophilus's humility, meekness, and love of prayer, all marvelled at this young boy. No one had ever seen him take part in children's games or laugh. They told the Venerable Cornelius about him, and the Venerable Father commanded that the boy be brought to him. Quietly and gently, Cornelius asked the youth who he was and where he was from, what his name was, and where his parents lived. Weeping, the boy bowed at the saint's feet and said: "Forgive me, honorable father. I do not remember my parents; I was left without them when I was very young. I was told that they were peasants, and my name is Theophilus. I wandered about, living by the name of God; I do not know how I came here, and now I live here with my master. I beseech you, honorable father, allow me to labor in your monastery as much as I am able." With his far-seeing eyes, St. Cornelius foresaw that he would be a chosen vessel of God. He commanded that Theophilus be received into the monastery and entrusted him to the sacristan.

The boy was then only 12 years old. From the day he entered the monastery, he began to serve the brotherhood zealously, distinguished by great obedience and humility. For about 3 years he served the brethren in this way. Seeing his zeal and meekness, the sacristan told the Venerable Cornelius of it. All the monks loved the industrious boy. When he had reached 16 years of age, the Venerable Cornelius called him to himself and said: "My dear child, you are fully worthy to receive the monastic tonsure."

Theophilus answered joyfully: "My soul desires this above all things. I beg you, holy father, do not delay in accomplishing this good and God-pleasing deed."

The Venerable Cornelius himself instructed the blessed youth and tonsured him as a monk, giving him the name Philip. For his spiritual

35. The memory of Venerable Cornelius of Komel is 19 May.

guidance, the young monk was entrusted to the very experienced and pious monk Flavian. First of all, he taught St. Philip to read and write. The Lord helped His faithful servant. In a short time Philip learned his letters well and could read the books of Holy Scripture quickly. For many years the Venerable Philip struggled in the monastery, fulfilling every obedience. At one time he served in the church, at another he worked in the bakery, carried water and firewood, performed various tasks for the brethren by day, and prayed by night. He observed the fast with particular strictness and set an example of true abstinence. The brethren marvelled at these ascetic labors of the Venerable Father and began to ask St. Cornelius to ordain Philip as their presbyter. The blessed Father willingly fulfilled their request. Then Philip redoubled his ascetic labors, so that the monks marvelled even more at his virtuous life. Seeing this, Philip was troubled in spirit and began to grieve.

"Woe is me," he thought within himself, "I have already received my reward from men. What recompense can I still hope to receive from the Lord on the Day of Judgment? No, the praise of men brings me woe."

Wishing to flee from glory, he resolved to leave the monastery and go wherever the Lord should direct him. He told the blessed Cornelius of this. The holy elder gave him soul-profiting instruction, blessed him, and sent him peacefully forth from his monastery. The Venerable Philip began to pray to the Most Holy Theotokos: "Hear me, O speedy Helper; deliver me from the sorrow that troubles my heart."

One night, as he stood in prayer in the monastery according to his custom and sang the canon in honor of the Hodegetria,[36] he suddenly heard a voice: "My beloved servant, leave this place and go where I shall direct you."

36. The name "Hodegetria," that is, "Guide," was adopted for the Smolensk icon of Our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God. Some explain this name by the fact that this holy icon accompanied the Greek emperors on their campaigns; others explain it by the fact that the holy icon of the Hodegetria was originally in the monastery of "the Guides" on the shore of the Sea of Marmara: sailors setting out on voyages prayed before this holy icon. There is also a third explanation: two blind men, by the direction of the Mother of God Herself, were brought to this icon and received healing. The memory of the Most Holy Icon of the Mother of God, the Hodegetria, is 28 July.

The saint looked through the little window of his cell and saw a great light shining in the south. He was seized with awe at this vision and ran out of his cell in fear.

"This is the place," he thought, "which has been shown to me from on high. May the Lord's will be done."

Returning to his cell, he finished his prayer and pondered for a long time on the vision that had appeared to him. When he went toward the church in the morning, he was again vouchsafed to hear a voice: "Leave this monastery and go where I shall direct you."

After this, on the following night, St. Philip left the monastery, taking with him nothing but the clothes he wore, and set out on his way. He came to Lake Kubenskoye,[37] to the monastery of the All-Merciful Savior, and from there continued on his way, seeking a place suitable for stillness and monastic labors. Meanwhile, he nourished his soul with these reflections: "Let us flee the life of the flesh, as the people of Israel once fled from Egyptian bondage. Let us shun love of silver, for it is the root and beginning of every evil. May the Lord be my guide and teacher!"

The Venerable Philip came to Beloe Ozero, to the Andoga district, and wandered through that region. In the forest, on the bank of the River Andoga,[38] he found a beautiful place, quiet and secluded. "This is my rest; here will I dwell," he cried, and offered a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord.

Exhausted by the long journey, the Venerable Father lay down beneath a spreading pine and fell asleep. In his sleep an Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: "Philip, here the Lord has prepared a place for you."

The blessed one awoke at once and began to pray to the Most Holy Trinity. The next morning he went to the ruler of that district, Prince Andrew Vasilyevich Sheleshpansky. Coming before the prince, the blessed one asked him for the place where he had had the vision. The prince went with the blessed one to that place, traced with his staff the boundary from the River Andoga to the Little Irap, and allowed the

37. Lake Kubenskoe is located in the southwestern part of the Vologda Province.
38. The Andoga is a river in the Novgorod Province.

blessed one to live there. The Venerable Father marked off the place with a ditch, built himself a little cell and small cave on the riverbank, and began to pray to the Lord for the salvation of his soul.

Prince Andrei had a brother, Prince Ioann. When Prince Andrei told his brother that the blessed Philip had settled in their district, Prince Ioann, at the devil's instigation, grew exceedingly angry with his brother and with the blessed Philip. In the presence of the people and the priests, he began to reproach his brother. "You have let this man come here, but he did not ask my permission. I will go to him, drive him from there, and not allow him to live there."

In vain did Prince Andrew, together with the priests and the people, entreat his brother not to do evil to the holy man. Prince John grew still more angry, leaped upon his horse and galloped off into the wilderness, intending to drive the saint out from there. When the prince came to Malyi Irap, his horse stopped and would not go through the stream. The prince struck it with his whip. But the horse, champing at the bit, bolted back, carried the prince to the village where he lived, and there, at the church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, threw him off, and itself ran on for about two versts and dropped dead. In falling, the prince struck against a stone and died. Prince Andrew buried his brother and went to the Venerable Philip. He began to offer the hermit silver for the commemoration of his brother. The Venerable, however, did not accept the silver, but asked for the land between the streams Bolshoi and Malyi Irap. Prince Andrew gladly fulfilled his request: he assigned to him all that land, commanding his peasants to obey the Venerable and in every way to help him. From this time Prince Andrew and many others came to have great faith in the Venerable and to ask for his prayers and instruction. The Blessed One set up for himself a chapel and a cell, and afterwards he resolved to build a church in the name of the Most Holy Trinity. Many came to Philip to pray in his chapel. The Venerable taught them concerning the benefit of the soul and said to them: "Listen, fathers and children: let us accomplish a deed good and profitable for our souls, let us build a church in the name of the Holy and Life-Creating Trinity."

Hearing this, the people gladly began to help the saint. In a short time, with God's help and through the prayers of St. Philip, they built a church and adorned it according to their strength. Prince Andrew Vasilyevich himself gave books and church vessels to the church. At last this church was consecrated, and in it prayers and praises began to rise to the Lord. The monastery that was thus newly founded was named the Krasnoborsk Hermitage of Philip of Irap[39]. The fame of the holy ascetic began to spread, and many came to him, asking for his prayers and instruction. The Blessed Philip taught all, gave useful counsel to all, prayed for all, encouraged and comforted all.

"Let us live peaceably and meekly," the saint would instruct all who came to him, "love your parents and honour them. May the God of peace keep you in all peace and quietness; have love for all your kinsfolk, for all the poor and needy, for they are our neighbours; let us remember that the Lord Himself loved the poor. Brethren, let us not exalt ourselves, but let us be meek and humble, for 'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble' (1 Pet. 5:5).

Teaching others in this way, St. Philip increased his labours more and more, and all the while sang the God-inspired psalms of David, fulfilling exactly all the rules of the monastic life. He especially advised everyone to read the Psalms: "Mark well, children," he said, "that nothing so strongly drives demons away from us as the singing of the songs of David."

Once, when the Blessed One was standing in prayer in his cell, he suddenly heard the sound of a trumpet and a din as of a military host. The Blessed One was astonished: "Whence this trumpet-call? Surely there is no battle here."

Meanwhile the unclean spirit who had produced this noise drew near to the saint and said: "No, there is a battle; it is being waged against you. If you do not wish to engage in this battle, then go and sleep, and we will not make war against you."

The saint, offering a prayer, guarded himself with the sign of the Cross and cried out: "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered,

39. The Krasnoborsk Holy Trinity–Philip–Irapa Hermitage, now outside the regular establishment, is located within the Novgorod Diocese, 52 versts from the town of Cherepovets.

and let them that hate Him flee from before His face. As smoke vanishes, so let them vanish" (Ps. 67:2–3).

At once all the power of the demons disappeared. The Blessed Philip, seeing this, exclaimed: "Strong and mighty is the Lord!"

From then on the Blessed One still more devoted himself to fasting and prayer. The Evil One himself could no longer trouble him, but began to incite wicked men against him. They armed themselves against the holy man and wished to drive him from the place which God had appointed for him. Seeing that the people did him evil at the instigation of the devil, the saint prayed for his persecutors, saying: "Lay not this to their charge, O Lord, and forgive them all their sins."

Then other people, seeing his meekness and patience, said to one another: "Here is a holy man: he remembers no malice or offence, but only prays for those who wrong him."

Once the devil, in the form of a monk, came up to the saint's cell and began to knock. The Blessed One said: "Offer a prayer."

But the devil answered: "Now and ever and unto ages of ages."

Then the saint again required the monk to say a prayer, but the devil repeated his answer. The saint commanded the monk a third time to say a prayer, but the same answer followed. The saint said: "Say thus: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen."

The demon, hearing this, quickly vanished, as if he had been scorched by fire. Then St. Philip was seized with perplexity; he even thought of leaving that place, but he heard a voice: "Be not troubled, servant of God. Abide here, as I have commanded you. Then you shall be granted to behold the glory of God and shall find rest for your soul."

The Blessed Philip lived as a solitary hermit in the Krasnoborsk hermitage. Hearing of his ascetic life, many pious people, both monks and laymen, came to him from various directions for soul-saving conversation, asking the saint to tell them how to save their souls from sin. The regular visitors and interlocutors of his were the peasants of the Andozhsk volost. The Blessed One taught all with love, in simple and brief but forceful and heartfelt words: to the monks he spoke of three virtues which give them power over unclean forces—non-acquisitive-

ness, much watchfulness and intense prayer—and he reminded them how grievous and sorrowful is the yoke of the monastic life, and how the monks of old, accustomed to a hard life and to silence, served God; to the lay people he enjoined love of neighbours, especially helping the poor and needy, and keeping justice toward all; he pointed to the strength of spirit of the fathers and to the weakness of spirit of the people of today; as examples of patience in sorrows he set before them the holy martyrs and the blessed ascetics who by their sufferings and privations surpassed the measure of human nature and who live forever in the memory of men; he taught them to watch over their thoughts and to think of the eternal future rather than the short-lived present. To the question of an interlocutor, why we condemn others, the Blessed One answered: "He who condemns others has not yet understood himself, has not waged the struggle with himself." To those who were curious he told of himself: how, as a peasant's son, left a complete and homeless orphan already in childhood, he wandered, sustaining himself by the name of Christ; how he came to the monastery of the Venerable Cornelius and learned the monastic manner of life, spending the day in the monastery service and in bodily labours, and at night praying until the Matins, making a hundred prostrations on each of the 18 steps of the church; and how he settled on Irap.

Once a certain villager named Meletius came to the Blessed Philip, asking for instruction. Cherishing a deep faith in the saint, Meletius often visited the Blessed One's monastery. On this occasion he stayed the night with St. Philip. Until late in the evening the saint talked with the villager. At last the Venerable began to perform his evening prayers, and Meletius, overcome by drowsiness, soon fell asleep. About midnight he woke and called out to the Blessed One; but he was not in the cell. Meletius opened the little window, looked in the direction of the church and saw: the saint, with his hands raised, was standing on his knees at the church, praying; his hands shone like fiery candles. Meletius, closing the window, began to pray to the Most Holy Trinity, marvelling at this vision. Afterwards he told of it to many, and those who heard came to have great faith in the Blessed One.

Thus the Venerable Philip lived for 15 years in his hermitage, awaiting the blessed repose and the departure of his soul to the Lord, encouraging himself with the words: "Endure, Philip, be strong and take courage."

Unceasingly he prayed and cried out from the depth of his pure soul: "O Almighty God, establish peace in the world, have mercy upon and save all Orthodox Christians, grant them quietness and prosperity, and cleanse them from all sins. Merciful and long-suffering art Thou, O Lord; Thou awaitest our repentance and desirest not the death of sinners. Great is Thy mercy and boundless is Thy compassion. And Thou, merciful Lady, Most Holy Theotokos, our swift helper and intercessor, pray unceasingly to Thy Son for us."

At this time there came to the Venerable a monk from the Monastery of the Saviour-on-the-Stone, which is on Lake Kubena. This monk was called Herman. Having come, he begged the Venerable Philip to allow him to dwell with him in the hermitage.

"Hard and grievous here is life, brother," the saint answered to Herman's request.

"Patience, Father, is the beginning of salvation; I will endure for Christ as much as I am able," he replied.

From that time they began together to labour in toil and prayer. Seeing how the much-toiling hermit lived, Herman began to have great faith in the Blessed Philip, conversed with him much, questioned him about his former life, and all that the Venerable told him about himself he wrote down for remembrance by future generations.

For a long time yet the Blessed Philip laboured together with Herman. Foreseeing his speedy end, the Venerable once said to Herman: "I beg you, beloved brother, do not leave me until my death, for little remains for me to be with you."

From this time the Venerable intensified his prayers. His blessed repose followed in the night of 14 November 1537.

At midnight Herman, awaking, was astonished by an extraordinary fragrance which spread through the whole cell.

On looking at the couch of the Venerable Father, he saw that Philip had already committed his soul to the Lord. The face of the righteous

man shone with an extraordinary light. Herman, not having the rank of priest, could not himself bury the body of St. Philip. By the will of God, in the morning, the hieromonk Job came to that desert. Together with Herman he reverently buried St. Philip. Such was the life of this Venerable Father, rich in his humility and great in his labors for the glory of the Holy Trinity. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Right-believing Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora

Память благоверного царя Юстиниана и царицы Феодоры

St. Justinian, Emperor of Byzantium, was a Slav: he was born in the village of Verdiane, near the city of Sredets[40], in what is now Bulgaria. His uncle Justin, who was also a native of Verdiane, came on foot to Constantinople wearing a single sheepskin coat. Here, thanks to his natural gifts, he rapidly rose to prominence and in the end became even emperor. He brought his wife Lupkinya from Verdiane to Constantinople after him, together with her sister Beglyanitsa, the mother of Upravda. This Upravda, upon the death of Justin, ascended the Byzantine imperial throne under the name of Justinian.

The Emperor Justinian is known in history for his successful wars against the enemies of the Byzantine Empire, and also for the publication of the complete collection of Roman laws. But beyond this, he became renowned for his services to the Christian Church and to Orthodoxy. Thus he took many pains for the spread of Christianity and the eradication of paganism. Having closed the pagan schools in Athens, he commanded that the teaching of the sciences be conducted by monks. Paganism was most of all subjected to his persecutions in the very capital of his kingdom, Byzantium, and also in Asia Minor. With the aim of converting the pagans to Christ, Justinian sent John, Bishop of Ephesus, to Asia Minor, and he baptized there as many as 70 thousand pagans, while the emperor built as many as 90 churches for the converted.

40. Sredets: now Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria.

Along with the spread of Christianity, Justinian zealously cared for the preservation of the purity of the Orthodox faith. In his reign the Orthodox Church continued to be troubled by the Nestorians, who taught that Christ was not God-man and that the Divinity merely dwelt in Him as in a simple man[41]. Even more did the Monophysites trouble the Church, who taught that in Jesus Christ the Divine nature had swallowed up the human. Against these arbitrary inventions of the human mind Justinian composed the hymn: "O Only-begotten Son and Word of God," which he commanded to be sung during the Divine services[42]. Also through his efforts, in the year 553 the Fifth Ecumenical Council was convened to condemn the Nestorian ideas in the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Ibas of Edessa[43], and to put an end to the dissensions in the Church[7448].

A zealot of Orthodoxy and piety, Justinian took great care for the worship of the Orthodox Church and for the beauty of the churches as places of worship. In his code of laws he included, among other things, a law on the obligatory celebration throughout the whole empire of the feasts of the Nativity of Christ, the Baptism of the Lord and the Resurrection, the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos, and others. Besides this, Justinian built many splendid churches in honor of the Most Holy Theotokos, the Apostles and other saints. The most famous creation of Justinian is considered to be the church of St. Sophia, the Wisdom of God, in Constantinople.

The church built by the equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine was burned during a rebellion in the time of Justinian. The pious Emperor gathered the best builders, spared no gold or money, and erected a church that by its grandeur and beauty astonished the ages.

In his private life Justinian showed high piety. Always devout, he kept the Great Lent in strict abstinence and prayer; he did not eat

41. The founder of the heresy was Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople in the fourth century, 428–431.

42. At present this hymn is sung during the Liturgy before the Little Entrance.

bread, but was content with vegetables and water, and that only every other day or every second day.

Thus, living in purity and piety, he reigned for 39 years and peacefully fell asleep in the Lord[44]. For his services to the Church and for his piety he was numbered after death among the saints. Together with him, his consort, the Empress Theodora, was also numbered among the saints; she had at first been a sinner, but afterward repented and spent the rest of her life in purity and piety.

* * *

NOTES

7422. St. Gregory and his Athonite companions taught and demonstrated by their very life that by constant purification of the soul, complete stilling of the senses and thoughts, unceasing exercise in contemplation of God and prayer, and by the intellectual work, a man can attain illumination from on high; yet he can behold not the essence of the Divinity, which, dwelling in unapproachable light, is inaccessible to the limited, sinful nature of man, but only the manifestation of the Divine essence, which is revealed to those who keep silence in the form of light, which can sometimes be seen even with bodily eyes, as it was on Tabor at the Transfiguration of the Lord and at all the appearances and revelations of the Divinity in the form of light and fire, for example to Moses and Elijah, or to ancient Christian ascetics, for example to Anthony the Great; all the God-seers saw the Divine light, the reflection of the Divinity, with both bodily and intellectual eyes. This Tabor light and all the manifestations of the Divinity they call uncreated and divine, just as the Being of God is uncreated. This teaching, mysterious in its essence and incomprehensible to the natural mind, is at the same time convincing and unshakable to the believing heart.

7426. "Puffed up with worldly and vain wisdom," said the hierarch of God, "and not heeding men experienced in spiritual teaching, when they hear of the light that shone around the Lord on the mountain of the Transfiguration and was seen by the Apostles, think to see in it something sensible and created; and so this material, unsetting and eternal light, which surpasses not only the senses but the very mind, they reduce to a sensible and created light, although He Himself, shining with light on Tabor, clearly showed that the light is uncreated, calling it the Kingdom of God (Mt. 16:20). Can the

43. Theodore of Mopsuestia, bishop of Mopsuestia, a city in the region of Cilicia in Asia Minor; Theodoret, bishop of the city of Cyrrhus in central Greece; both lived in the fourth century; the latter wrote several works refuting Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, who was an opponent of Nestorius. Later, Theodoret renounced his Nestorian ideas and died in peace with the Church. Ibas, presbyter of the city of Edessa, was a contemporary of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret of Cyrrhus.

44. This was on 14 November 565.

Kingdom of God then be something created and servile? Did the Lord on the mountain take on some other light which He had not possessed before? Far be this blasphemy from us, for whoever thinks so must acknowledge in Christ three natures: the divine, the human, and that of the light. Therefore we believe that in the Transfiguration He revealed no other light than that which was hidden in Him beneath the veil of flesh; and this light was the light of the divine nature, and therefore uncreated and divine. Thus, according to the teaching of the theologizing Fathers, Jesus Christ was transfigured on the mountain, not taking on anything, nor changing into anything new that He had not possessed before, but showing to His disciples only what was in Him... The light of Tabor was the light of the Godhead."

7436. An expression of Philotheus, Patriarch of Constantinople and a contemporary of St. Gregory Palamas (1376), in the Synaxarion for the Second Week of the Holy Great Lent. The service to St. Gregory was composed by Patriarch Philotheus soon after his repose. In it Palamas is glorified as "the trumpet of theology," "the fire-inspired mouth of grace," "the honorable abode of the Spirit," "the unshakable pillar of the Church," "the river of wisdom," and so forth. At the council of 1368, at which Barlaam and his adherents were finally anathematized, among other articles was proclaimed "eternal memory to the most holy Metropolitan of Thessalonica, Gregory Palamas," who "overthrew" these heretics. For his extraordinary great services to the Orthodox faith, the holy Church, in addition to the day of memory of St. Gregory Palamas on 14 November, also established a commemoration for him on the second Sunday of Great Lent, called the "Sunday of the Light-Bearing Fasts." Having celebrated in the preceding week the triumph of Orthodoxy over all heresies (Sunday of Orthodoxy), the Church on this Sunday celebrates the triumph of the Orthodox ascetic teaching over all the false doctrines opposed to it; the first triumph is common to all Orthodox Christians, the second is chiefly that of ascetics and monks,

7437. Among the posthumous miracles of St. Gregory Palamas, the following is especially remarkable, a miracle which attested and bore witness to Orthodoxy and to the power of the grace-filled teaching of the hierarch of God. On the island of Saturnina, on the day of St. Gregory's memory, in the second week of the Great Fast, the Franks went on a spree: taking boys with them, they sailed about on the sea in boats, in complete stillness and fine weather. While they were thus amusing themselves, the demon put an evil thought into their minds, to their own perdition: clapping their hands like madmen, they, together with their children, cried: "Anathema to Palamas! Anathema to Palamas! If Palamas is holy, let him drown us!" And the divine Gregory Palamas, by their own judgment, asked God for the vengeance they desired. The deep opened, and the unfortunate people, together with their boats, sank into the sea and drowned.

7448. This council was convened for the following reason. The Monophysites, after their condemnation at the Fourth Ecumenical Council, stirred up disturbances in the Church, accusing the representatives of Orthodoxy of Nestorianism. The basis for this accusation was the circumstance that at the Fourth Ecumenical Council the Nestorian ideas of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Ibas of Edessa had not been condemned, and the Monophysites themselves had emerged from the denial of these

ideas. In order to deprive the Monophysites of the pretext for accusing the Orthodox of sympathy with the Nestorians, a council was convened to settle the question of the orthodoxy of the above-named Fathers. At the council an unconditional anathema was pronounced on the teaching and person of Theodore of Mopsuestia; but with respect to Theodoret and Ibas the condemnation was limited to certain of their writings; they themselves, as having afterwards renounced their heretical ideas, were not subjected to anathema.



THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 15

15 ноября

New Calendar November 15 · Old Calendar November 28 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Abibus

Страдание святых мучеников Гурия, Самона и Авива

When a cruel persecution had been raised against the Church of God by the impious emperors Diocletian and Maximian, and she was tossed by calamities like a ship in a stormy sea, there lived in seclusion near the city of Edessa[1], as in a quiet haven, two pious and virtuous men, Gurias and Samonas. Brought up in the city of Edessa itself, they did not wish to live in it, because of the vanity and lawlessness that prevailed there; avoiding the world and its cares, they departed from the city and, withdrawing from impious men, strove toward the One God, believing in Him and zealously serving Him day and night. And not only did they themselves work unswervingly for the Lord, but they also instructed others whom they could reach, and turned many pagans away from godless idolatry and brought them to the true God. Learning of this, the representative of the Roman emperors then in Edessa, the voivode Antoninus, ordered that they be seized at once, together with all who had followed their teaching. Taken by the pagans, the confessors of Christ, Gurias and Samonas, and with them a multitude of Christians, were kept under guard for a time. Then Antoninus summoned the seized Christians and commanded them all to submit to the imperial decree and offer sacrifice to the idols; but not one of them was willing to fall away from their Lord. Then he ordered them to be beaten; but afterward he reflected that if the teachers themselves were induced to serve idols, the others, seeing them, could easily be in-

1. Edessa is a city in Macedonia.

duced to the same; and with this in view he kept back for torture only the leaders of Christ's flock, Gurias and Samonas, while the rest, after being beaten, he dismissed to their homes, feigning mercy. And he summoned the two holy confessors to his judgment and said to them:

– Our great emperors command you to bow down to the great god Zeus[2] and offer incense to him in his temple.

Samonas answered:

– It shall never be that we depart from the true faith, for which we look to receive eternal life; we will not worship the work of human hands.

Then Antoninus said:

– In any case you must obey the command of the emperors.

– We will never renounce our holy and undefiled faith, answered Gurias, and we will not yield to the evil and destructive will of men; but we fulfill the will of our Lord, who said: "Whoever confesses Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 10:32–33).

Then the judge began to threaten them with death if they did not submit to the imperial will. But the holy Samonas boldly said to him:

– Tormentor! We, fulfilling the will of our Creator, shall not die, but shall live forever; whereas if we follow the imperial decree, then, even if not slain by you, we shall perish ourselves.

Hearing this, Antoninus ordered the saints to be thrown into a dark dungeon.

At that time the governor of the province, Musonius, arrived in Edessa, sent on purpose by the emperors to put the Christians to death. Bringing the holy martyrs Gurias and Samonas out of the dungeon, he set them before himself and said to them:

– Such is the command of the emperors of the whole earth: that you bring wine and incense to the altar of Zeus; if you do not bring it, I will make you endure various torments: I will crush your body with blows, hang you by your feet and hands, tear apart all the joints of your body;

2. Dius, or Jupiter, according to the belief of the pagan Romans, was the highest of the gods and the father of the gods.

I will devise for you new and unheard-of tortures that you will not be able to bear.

To all this the holy Samonas answered:

– We fear more the undying worm and the unquenchable fire prepared for all who fall away from the Lord than the torments you have enumerated; for He to whom we offer a spiritual sacrifice will first strengthen us to endure torments and make us invincible, and then, delivering us from your hands, will settle us in bright dwelling-places, where all who rejoice have their abode. Therefore we do not fear your threat, for you arm yourself only against the body, but cannot harm the soul, which, while it lives in the body, is ever more purified and enlightened by the sufferings inflicted upon the body. "Though our outward man is decaying, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16). "Therefore... let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

The governor said again:

– Abandon your folly, heed my counsel, and, turning from your error, fulfill the imperial command, for you will not be able to bear the torments I have prepared for you.

The holy Gurias answered:

– We are not in error, as you think, and we will not heed your mad counsel nor submit to the imperial will. We will not be so faint-hearted and senseless as to fear your torments and anger our Lord. We are the servants of Him who, showing us the riches of His goodness, laid down His soul for us; how then should we not stand for Him, even unto blood? Let us stand valiantly, strengthened by Christ Jesus; let us stand unshaken against all the stratagems of the enemy; let us stand until we overthrow the foe who rises against us.

Seeing their steadfastness in the faith, the tormentor proceeded to the tortures. He ordered the saints to be hanged, binding the hand of one to the hand of the other, and fastening a heavy stone to their feet. In this position they hung patiently from the third to the eighth hour; during this time the governor was passing judgment on the others.

After this he asked the saints whether they would consent to submit to the imperial command in order to be freed from torture; but they un-

changingly continued to confess the true faith. Then the tormentor ordered them untied and thrown into a dungeon, extremely narrow, where the light of day never appeared and where the wind did not penetrate. In such a dungeon they remained from the first day of August to the ninth of November; with their feet fastened in wooden stocks, they endured cruel sufferings, hunger and thirst, and nevertheless did not cease to give thanks to God.

After so grievous and prolonged a stay in the dungeon, they were again brought out to judgment before the governor. The holy Gurias was by then barely alive, exhausted by the many constraints of the dungeon, by great hunger and thirst; while the holy Samonas seemed strong. The governor asked them:

– Has it not wearied you to be so long in the dungeon, and have you not changed your obstinate heart, so that you might listen to sound counsel and, by honoring our gods, be freed from your present grievous condition?

The saints answered:

– What we told you before, that we say now as well: we will not depart from our Lord Jesus Christ; torment us as you will.

And so the tormentor ordered the holy Gurias, as one sick, to be taken back to the dungeon, for he did not wish then to torment him, lest he hasten his death and thereby lose the hope of someday inducing him to his impiety; and the holy Samonas he ordered hanged by one foot, head downward, while an iron weight was attached to the other foot. In this position he hung from the second hour of the day to the ninth hour. The soldiers standing around him, out of sympathy for him, urged him to submit to the imperial command and spare himself the grievous torment. He, however, answered them nothing, but from the depth of his heart prayed to God and called to mind the wonders He had wrought from of old:

– O Lord my God, without whose will not one bird falls into a snare (cf. Mt. 10:29), Thou didst enlarge David's heart in affliction (Ps. 4:2), and didst show the prophet Daniel stronger than lions (Dan. 6:6–18, 14:32). Thou who knowest the weakness of our nature, behold the battle that rises against us; for the enemy strives to tear away from

Thee Thy possession; but Thou, looking upon us with Thy merciful eye, preserve in us the unquenchable lamp of Thy commandments, correct our steps by Thy light, and make us worthy to enjoy the heavenly bliss, for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages.

As the sufferer prayed thus, a swift scribe recorded his words. Then the governor ordered Samonas untied. But he could not stand on his feet, for the joints of his knees and hips had come out of their places. Then, by the tormentor's command, the saint was carried to the dungeon and laid beside the holy Gurias.

On the fifteenth day of November, the governor Musonius, rising at the crowing of the cocks[3], went into the hall where he held court, with candles carried before him and attendants preceding him, and, seating himself haughtily on the tribunal, ordered Gurias and Samonas brought before him. The holy Samonas came between two soldiers, leaning on them with both hands and limping, for his legs had been stretched out at the joints while he hung; and the holy Gurias was carried, since he could not walk at all; his feet, because they had been pressed in the wood, were covered with wounds and bent. Looking at the saints, the governor began to speak:

– You have had ample time to consider which to choose, life or death. Tell me, then, what have you agreed to? Have the former tortures wearied you, and have you resolved to fulfill the emperors' command, so as to remain alive and enjoy the good things of the world?

To this the saints answered:

– We have considered and chosen what will profit us: we have chosen death for Christ, having scorned life in this vain world; enough for us is the time that has passed, in which we have looked long enough upon the fading light of day; our souls now desire to pass over to the day that does not wane.

The governor said:

3. The expression "the crowing of the cock" is used to designate a time. It meant one of the four watches into which the night was divided, namely the third watch, that is, the one equidistant from midnight to the dawn.

– Your contrary words are hard for my ears to hear; I give you briefly a useful counsel: lay incense upon the altar of Zeus and go home; but if you do not, I will command your heads to be cut off at once.

"There is no need for us to say much," the saints replied. "Here we are before you. Do what you wish, and do it without delay, for we will not cease to affirm that we are the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we worship Him alone, and that we reject idolatry."

Then the governor gave orders that they be beheaded with the sword. The saints, hearing this, rejoiced with great joy, that they would soon be released from the body and go to their Lord. The governor commanded the executioner to place the martyrs on a chariot, to take them far outside the city, and there to behead them. The saints were led out of the city through the northern gate; none of the citizens knew of this, for all were held in a deep sleep. Having brought the saints to a mountain in the vicinity of Edessa, the soldiers halted and commanded the executioner to behead the martyrs. Stepping down from the chariot, the saints asked for a little time for prayer, and, having prayed fervently, at last said:

"O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, receive our souls in peace."

Turning to the executioner, Saint Samonas said:

"Do what you have been commanded."

Then, at the break of day, the confessors, bowing their holy heads beneath the sword, were beheaded, and so they died. The faithful, learning of the repose of the holy martyrs, took up their holy relics and buried them with honor.[4]

After a considerable number of years had passed, the impious emperor Licinius,[5] separating himself from Constantine the Great, broke the agreement that Constantine had concluded with him. In giving his sister in marriage to Licinius and appointing him co-ruler in the government of the Roman state, Constantine had stipulated this condition:

4. The martyric end of Sts. Gurias and Samonas belongs to the years 293 to 306. The relics and the church in the name of Sts. Martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Abibus were seen in Constantinople in 1200 by the Russian pilgrim Antony.

5. Licinius was ruler of the Eastern half of the Empire from 307 to 324, when he was put to death by order of Constantine.

that Licinius, although he was a pagan in faith, should not oppress the Christians in any way, but should allow each person to live according to his own faith, so that whoever liked a faith might hold to it without hindrance. However, Licinius, not keeping this agreement, stirred up a persecution against the Christians in the eastern lands, and put a multitude of believers to death in various ways. At this time, in the aforementioned city of Edessa, in which the holy martyrs Gurias and Samonas had previously suffered, there lived a deacon named Abibus, who, going throughout the whole city from house to house, taught people the holy faith and exhorted them to be steadfast in confessing Christ. By his preaching, Saint Abibus turned unbelievers to Christ and admonished believers to live in a manner pleasing to God. Learning of him, the city governor Lisanius wrote to Emperor Licinius, reporting about Abibus, that he had filled the whole city of Edessa with the false doctrine of the Christians; and he asked what command would be given concerning him. Lisanius wrote to the emperor precisely in order to obtain from him the right to torment Christians, for he had not yet been charged with doing any violence to Christians. The emperor immediately wrote back to him that he should hand Abibus over to capital punishment. Having received such an order from the emperor, Lisanius commanded that Saint Abibus be sought out, for delivery to torment. Abibus was then living in one part of the city, in an unknown house, together with his mother and his relatives, striving for the spread of the holy faith, which he secretly planted where he could not do so openly. While the soldiers throughout the city were searching for the blessed Abibus, he, learning of this, instead of hiding, went out of the house and sought out the soldiers who were looking for him, that he might himself give himself into their hands. Meeting a military commander named Theotecnus in one place, he said to him:

"Here is the one you are seeking, for I am Abibus, whom you have been ordered to find. Take me, then, and lead me to him who sent you."

Theotecnus, looking upon him gently, said:

"O man, no one has yet noticed that you have approached me; go away and hide, so that some other soldier may not see you and seize you."

Abibus answered:

"If you do not take me, I will go myself and present myself to the city governor, and I will confess my Christ before kings and rulers."

Hearing this, Theotecnus brought him to Lisanius. He asked him about his family and name. The saint first of all declared that he was a Christian; then, stating his name, he reported that he was from a village called *Felsea*. Lisanius compelled him to offer sacrifice to the idols, and tried, now by threats and now by flattery, to turn him away from Christ and to induce him to idol-worship; but he, like an unshakable pillar and an unbreakable wall, remained firm in the confession of Christ. The tormentor, being unable to bring him to his impiety by words, began to compel him by deeds: he commanded that he be hung up and his body be scraped with iron claws. After this he again urged him to bow down to the idols and to offer incense on the altar of the pagan gods. But the saint firmly answered:

"Nothing will separate me from my God, even if you appoint for me torments many tens of thousands of times more cruel."

The tormentor asked him:

"What benefit do you Christians gain from those torments which you endure for your God, and what profit do you have from your bodies being broken into pieces, and from your choosing a bitter death of your own will?"

The martyr answered:

"If you, O tormentor, really wished to turn to the hope of the rewards promised us by our God, you would without doubt say what the Apostle of the Lord once said: 'The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us' (Rom. 8:18)."

The tormentor laughed at the words of the martyr, as at the words of a madman, himself being mad; then, seeing that he could not turn the valiant sufferer away from the One True God, he condemned him to be burned.

A great fire was kindled outside the city, and the martyr was led to the place of execution. He went rejoicing that he would be a sacrifice and a whole burnt offering to God. Behind him followed his mother and

his relatives; he comforted and admonished them not to grieve for him, but on the contrary to rejoice, that he was going to Christ and would pray to Him for them. On arriving at the fire, he prayed, gave his mother and all his acquaintances the last kiss, entered the flame, and immediately commended his spirit to the Lord. When the fire had gone out, his mother, together with the other faithful, found the body of her holy son unharmed by the fire; and taking it, they anointed it with myrrh and buried it beside the tomb of the holy martyrs Gurias and Samonas who had suffered before, for Saint Abibus also suffered on the same day (after a considerable number of years had passed, on the day on which those saints had suffered before).[6] When the persecution ceased and the Orthodox faith shone forth, the Christians built a church in the name of these three holy martyrs, and in it they laid their holy relics in one tomb; these relics bestow healing on the sick and work many miracles. Of these we shall recall here one gloriously accomplished miracle.

Once an impious barbarian people, living near Persia and called *Ephthalites*,[7] moved from the east against the Greek kingdom, and, having conquered many cities, came to Edessa itself, intending to take and destroy it, as they had destroyed the other cities. And the Greek emperors, wishing to protect the city from its enemies and to free it from the siege, gathered a multitude of their soldiers and sent them to the aid of Edessa. Having entered Edessa, the Greek troops remained in it for a considerable time, defending the city from the barbarians. There was in the Greek army one soldier, by origin a Goth.[8] It happened that he was lodging in Edessa in the house of a certain chaste widow named Sophia, who had one only daughter, named Euphemia, whom she guarded as the apple of her eye, preserving her in virginity and instructing her in good morals and the fear of God. Sophia took pains to hide her from human eyes, for she was very beautiful of face; she kept her in a separate room, so that no man's eye should see her. During the long stay of the Goth in the house of this widow, it

6. The martyric end of St. Abibus followed in the year 322.
7. The Ephthalites were a tribe of Huns living in present-day Merv and Afghanistan.
8. The Goths (Goths or Gots) were the easternmost and most numerous Germanic tribe, dwelling in the lowlands along the Danube.

happened one day that he saw this young maiden. Struck by her beauty, he was inflamed with passion for her and thought of nothing but how to beguile her. Approaching the mother, he began to ask her to give her daughter to him in marriage; and although he had a wife and children in his homeland, he concealed this, pretending to be unmarried, in order to obtain what he desired. The mother, however, refused him:

"I will not give my only daughter into a foreign land. You are a stranger: you would take my daughter to your own land, and I would be left without her in great sorrow, for I have no other child with whom I could console myself in my widowhood except her alone. I will not give her to you, for I cannot live without seeing her face."

Then the Goth, falling into a rage, began to threaten her:

"If you," he said, "do not give your daughter, I will not depart from here until I bring many calamities upon you and subject you to the utmost grief; for I am a soldier, and I can easily do you whatever harm I wish."

The widow, although she was alone and there was no one who would come to her aid, boldly answered him. After this the soldier again now asked her kindly, and again fell into a rage, and by turns with entreaties and threats he tried to persuade the widow to give her daughter to him. Thus he troubled her all the time that he lived there. He also offered her some gifts, for he was not poor: he bought golden ornaments and costly garments for her and her daughter, to obtain what he desired; but the widow would not accept the gifts and avoided him, and she hid the maiden with still greater caution, so that this lawless man should not see her. Once she said to him:

"I have heard that you have a wife and children in your homeland."

He himself, mastered by his desire to possess the young maiden and having no fear of God, began to swear and to call God to witness, saying that he had never been married and that he desired to take her daughter as his wife and make her mistress over all his property. Then the widow Sophia, at last believing him, yielded to his request and agreed to give her daughter Euphemia to him in marriage. Lifting up her hands to God, she said:

"O Master, Father of orphans and Judge of widows, look graciously upon Thy creature, and do not forsake this young maiden who is entering into marriage with a man unknown to us. Do not disregard my orphanhood nor leave me helpless, for trusting in Thy good providence I give my poor daughter to a stranger, and I make Thee the witness and surety of his oaths and promises."

The maiden was given in marriage to this Goth, and after the wedding they lived together in peace. Euphemia conceived, and before she gave birth the enemy withdrew from the city with nothing gained, for they could not take it, because the troops within the city bravely defended its walls and waged a stubborn struggle against the enemy, and especially because the city was guarded by the prayers of the holy martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Abibus. When the enemy withdrew, the Greek troops had to return home, and this Goth too hastened to his homeland. The mother, grieving inconsolably at parting from her daughter, tried to take her back from the Goth, not allowing him to carry her off to a foreign land, but she could not dissolve a marital union confirmed by law. When the treacherous son-in-law was already preparing to set out on the journey with his wife, Sophia brought him and her daughter into the church of the holy passion-bearers Gurias, Samonas and Abibus, and, placing them before the tomb of the martyrs, said to her son-in-law:

"I will not entrust my daughter to you unless you give me these saints, who suffered for Christ, as your sureties. Take hold, then, of their holy reliquary and swear to me that you will do my daughter no harm, but will keep her with due love and respect."

The Goth, considering this a trifling matter, at once fearlessly took hold of the honorable reliquary of the holy martyrs and said:

"From your hands, O holy ones, I receive this maiden, and I take you as my sureties and witnesses before her mother, that I will do no harm to this wife of mine, never insult her, but will keep her with love and honor her to the end."

Thus spoke the Goth, and the lawbreaker even swore by God, neither thinking nor fearing that God, the Lord of vengeance, would requite him according to his deeds and destroy him for his deceit. The

mother, having heard the oath of her son-in-law, said with lamentation to the holy martyrs:

"After God, O holy martyrs, I entrust my daughter to you, and through you I give her to this stranger."

Having thus prayed, they gave one another a loving kiss and parted: the widow Sophia returned to her home, and the Goth went on his way with Euphemia, dismissing from his service the slave who was with him, so that this secret would not become known in his household.

When they had traveled the whole way and reached the Goth's homeland and were already near his house, he rose against his wife with great cruelty, as an enemy; forgetting his love for her and disregarding his oaths, he took from her her costly garments and golden ornaments, clothed her poorly as a captive and a slave, and, drawing his sword, gave her this command:

"If you wish to remain alive, then, on entering my house, tell no one anything about what passed between us, but say that you are a captive, for I have a wife and children in my house; you shall be a servant to my wife and obey her in all things as your mistress. And if you reveal to her, or tell any of my relatives, that I have married you, you will see my sword at your neck, and you will die."

Seeing herself deceived and outraged by the cruel barbarian, and hearing his threat, Euphemia said to him:

"Is this your love? Is this the fulfillment of your promises? Were your oaths such, and was your intention such, that you would make me, your wife, a captive, and a free woman a slave? For your sake I left my mother, my kin and my homeland, and I clung to you with unfeigned love, trusting your words which you confirmed with oaths; and you repay my love with hatred, and instead of a husband and friend you have become to me a barbarian, an enemy and a tormentor, who has led me into a foreign land to destroy me."

Having said this, she raised her eyes to heaven, and lifting up her hands, sighing from the depths of her heart and weeping and sobbing bitterly, she cried out to God:

"O God of my fathers, look upon my misfortune, hear my sighing and heed the voice of my prayer! See what this perjurer is doing to me,

and deliver me from evil calamities, through the prayers of Thy saints who suffered for Thee. O holy martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Abibus! Now I call upon you: help me, who have fallen into an unexpected calamity, for, trusting in you, I went with this Goth; be therefore avengers for me against him, and deliver me from this trouble."

While she wept so bitterly and prayed in secret in her heart, they entered the Goth's house. His wife, seeing Euphemia and noticing the beauty of her face, was seized with jealousy, for she suspected that her husband had been living with her in unlawful cohabitation, and she questioned her husband:

"What kind of girl is this, and where did you bring her from?"

He answered:

"She is a captive; I brought her from Edessa to be your servant."

The wife said:

"The beauty of her face shows that she is not a slave but a free woman."

The husband replied:

"Although in her own land she was free, as her appearance shows, now she is your servant."

Euphemia, being unable from fear to say anything, kept silent and obeyed the Goth's wife, serving her as a slave serves her mistress; she did not know what she could do that might deliver her from the calamities that had fallen upon her. And she lived, performing the service of a slave, always keeping the holy martyrs in her mind and calling upon them with tears:

"Hasten to help me, your servant, O holy ones, hasten to show me mercy, and do not disregard the insult and deceit that have been done to me."

Her mistress, nursing jealousy in her heart, was very harsh and merciless toward her; she ordered her to do every kind of the heaviest labor and tormented her in various ways. Worst of all was that she never wished to speak with her; moreover, Euphemia did not know the Gothic language and could give her mistress no information about herself, and she also feared the Goth, lest he kill her if she should tell her mistress anything about herself.

After some time, the Goth's wife learned that Euphemia was pregnant, and she burned against her with still greater jealousy and rose against her with more savage fury, laying upon her the most exhausting tasks, so as to wear her down in this way. When the appointed time came, Euphemia gave birth to a male infant, who in appearance was altogether like the Goth, who was indeed his true father. The Goth's wife, seeing the infant altogether resembling her husband, was filled with terrible anger and began to consider how to kill this infant. She said to her husband:

"Why do you deny that you have known this maiden? Behold, the infant she has borne plainly reveals your deed, for he is wholly your likeness."

The Goth again began to deny it, saying:

"It is untrue; I never lived with her. You have power over her, and do with her what you wish, for she is a captive and your servant."

Then this wicked woman resolved to poison the infant. After a short time she prepared a deadly poison, sent the mother away from the infant to some task, and when the infant was left alone, she poured the poison into his mouth, and the infant soon died. The mother, returning from her work, saw the infant lying dead and was filled with unspeakable grief, and her heart was torn in bitter sorrow for him. She did not know what had been the cause of his sudden death, for no one had been in the room when her mistress poured the poison into the infant's mouth. But while preparing him for burial, Euphemia saw that poison was flowing from the infant's mouth, and then she remembered that her mistress had once threatened to destroy her together with her son, and she guessed who was the cause of the infant's death. Yet she kept silent, not daring to say anything. Taking a little wool, she wiped with it the poison flowing from the infant's mouth, and kept it by her, revealing this secret to no one. The infant was given to burial.

A few days later the Goth invited his friends to supper, and Euphemia served at the table. When the time came for her to bring the cup to her mistress, she, wishing to learn whether her infant had indeed died poisoned by her mistress, took that wool with which she had wiped her son's mouth, dipped it secretly in the drink, and then taking

it out, squeezed it into the cup, and served this drink to her mistress. The mistress, knowing nothing, drank this cup, and so the misfortune fell upon her own head, for that very night the Goth's wife suddenly died, and thus fell into the pit which she herself had dug. In the morning the Goth, rising, saw his wife dead, and was terrified at her unexpected death; the whole house was filled with weeping; all the relatives, friends and neighbors gathered and mourned for her; then, having made a sumptuous coffin for her, they solemnly laid the dead woman in it.

When seven days had passed after the burial of the deceased, her kinsfolk remembered the maiden brought from Edessa, and began to say:

"It is none other than this captive, who was always hostile to her, who is to blame for the sudden death of our kinswoman."

And so they all rose up against Euphemia, and wished to bring her before the ruler of the province, that under torture he might wring from her how she had put her mistress to death. But since the ruler was not at home at that time, they changed their intention and resolved to bury Euphemia alive together with her deceased mistress. Opening the coffin of the dead woman, they laid Euphemia beside the corpse, which gave off a stench and swarmed with worms and was rotting, so that she might die there a violent death. Who can express Euphemia's grief, her sorrow, fear and trembling, dread and horror, sobbing and weeping? Let anyone only imagine the terror of a living person shut up in a coffin together with a stinking corpse: the dread of the dead, the stench of the body, the darkness and narrowness of the grave, worms all around, the breath of death, and unspeakable suffering! Being in such extreme confinement, Euphemia, in anguish of heart, earnestly cried out to God from the coffin, as once the Prophet Jonah cried from the belly of the whale:

"O Lord God of the heavenly hosts, who sittest upon the Cherubim and beholdest the depths, Thou seest the bitterness of my heart and the narrowness of this dark and foul coffin. Thou knowest that for the sake of Thy name I was given to a lawless Goth, for he swore by Thy name when he took me; have mercy upon me, then, for the sake of Thy holy

name. Thou killest and makest alive, Thou bringest down to hell and bringest up (1 Kgdms. 2:6): deliver me from this bitter death and bring me up out of this coffin as out of hell, for Thou art mighty to raise the dead, and even more canst Thou bring up from the gates of death me, who am alive but near to death. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for the sake of the holy martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Abibus, whose outpouring of blood and death for Thee Thou didst accept as a pure sacrifice. O holy martyrs! My enemy has set you as sureties before my mother; therefore save me."

As she prayed thus in the sorrow of her soul, there appeared three radiant men, shining like the sun: the holy martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Abibus. Immediately the stinking odor in the coffin vanished, and Euphemia perceived a great fragrance issuing from the holy martyrs who had appeared. They said to her:

"Take courage, daughter, and do not fear: you will soon receive deliverance."

When the saints had said this, Euphemia's heart was gladdened both by the radiant vision of the saints and by their comforting words; filled with joy, she fell into a sweet sleep. During this sleep she was taken out of the coffin by the invisible, almighty power of God, and in one hour was transported to Edessa, to the church of the holy martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Abibus, and laid beside their honorable reliquary. It was night, and the customary morning service was being celebrated in the church when she was brought there. Awaking from sleep, she again saw the holy martyrs, who said to her:

"Rejoice, daughter, and learn where you now are. Behold, we have fulfilled what we promised; go now in peace to your mother."

Having said this, they became invisible. Euphemia, rising, looked about her to see where she was. Seeing the walls of the church, the icons, the candles and the honorable reliquary of the holy martyrs, and moreover hearing the singing of the clergy, she became convinced that she was in Edessa, in the church of her sureties, the holy passion-bearers of Christ, Gurias, Samonas and Abibus. Then she was filled with inexpressible joy and gladness, and, embracing with love the tomb of the holy martyrs, she with tears gave thanks to God and to His saints

for so great a mercy shown to her. In gratitude she said: "Our God is in the heavens [and on earth]; He does whatever He wills" (Ps. 113:11). He sent from heaven and saved me; blessed be the Lord who saves those who hope in Him. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes with the morning" (Ps. 29:6). As she, with joyful tears, spoke these and many other words, the presbyter heard her words and weeping, and, approaching her, began to question her:

"Who are you, and why do you weep so?"

She began to tell him everything in detail: how she had been given by her mother to the Goth at the reliquary of the saints; what she had endured from that perjurer; how yesterday she had been shut up in the coffin; and how, while she was praying, the holy martyrs had appeared to her and in one hour had carried her from the land of the Goths to this their church.

The presbyter, hearing this, was astonished, marveling at the great power of God. Nevertheless, he was not yet fully willing to believe what she said, and he asked her:

"And who is your mother?"

Learning that her mother was the widow Sophia, the presbyter at once sent for her, inviting her to come to the church. The mother, knowing nothing, came immediately, and seeing her daughter standing by the tomb of the holy martyrs, dressed in poor clothing, she was struck with horror at so unexpected a sight; approaching her, she embraced her and, falling upon her neck, wept. Euphemia wept too, and both, from weeping, could not say a word. Then, after a while, when the tears and sobbing had subsided, the mother asked her:

"How did you come to be here, my daughter, and why are you dressed in such shabby clothes?"

Then Euphemia told her in detail all that she had endured in a foreign land from the treacherous man, how yesterday she had been shut up in the coffin and wondrously saved, and carried away by the holy martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Abibus, who had appeared to her. Hearing all this, the mother melted in heart with pity, and all who were in the church, having listened to the account, greatly marveled and glorified the almighty power and mercy of God. Falling down before the

tomb of the holy martyrs, the mother with a loud voice offered thanks to God and to His saints; and they spent the whole of that day in the church, praying and giving thanks to God, and with love and zeal embracing and kissing the reliquary of the holy martyrs. Late in the evening the mother went home with her daughter with joy, glorifying God.

On the morrow the report of this miracle spread throughout the whole city; from everywhere the widow's kinsfolk and neighbors gathered into her house and, in awe, marveled at what Euphemia told them. All praised the name of the Lord and magnified and glorified the help of the holy martyrs.

Sophia and her daughter spent the remaining days of their lives in a God-pleasing manner. To everyone they told of the power of God mercifully shown to them. Euphemia said: "The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!" The right hand of the Lord brought me from the Goths to Edessa: "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord" (Ps. 117:16–17).

As for the perjurer, the Goth, God executed vengeance upon him in the following manner.

After some time, that same impious people which had earlier warred with the Greeks, having joined with the Persians, again marched against Greek territory and tried to take the city of Edessa. In view of this, the Greek emperors again sent an army to defend it. With this army came also that Goth who by cunning and flattery had taken Sophia's daughter Euphemia. He knew nothing of the miracle that had occurred and thought that Euphemia had died, shut up in the coffin with his dead wife; without any disquiet he came to Sophia's house, as to his mother-in-law. She, seeing that he had come, hid Euphemia in the inner rooms, and received him, showing the appearance of rejoicing at the arrival of her son-in-law. Then, gathering her kinsfolk and neighbors, she began in their presence to question the Goth, saying:

"How did God help you to make the journey from here? Did my daughter not fall ill on the way, being with child, and how did she give birth? I grieved greatly for her, since she was with child, and I was afraid that some misfortune might befall her on the road."

He answered:

"By your prayers God helped us to complete the journey safely; your daughter is well: she has borne a boy. She sends you her greetings, and if this journey, on which we were commanded to set out in haste, had not been unexpected, your daughter would have come with me and with the infant to you, to bring you consolation; however, she will come at a more convenient time."

Hearing such words, Sophia was kindled with righteous anger at the lie of this evil man, and, tearing her garments, cried out loudly:

"Liar, deceitful man and murderer, where have you put my daughter?"

Having said this, she brought Euphemia out of the inner rooms, set her before the Goth, and said:

"Do you know this maiden, who she is? Do you know where you have shut her up, perjurer? You have delivered her to death, lawless one!"

He, hearing these words and seeing Euphemia, trembled, became speechless, and could not utter a single word, like one dead. Then the widow's kinsfolk and neighbors seized him, shut him fast in a room, and remained to guard him at the doors. The mother and daughter summoned a scribe, had written down everything that had happened to them, leaving nothing out of this wondrous miracle, and, going to the bishop of that city, the blessed Eulogius, presented him with this record; they also reported the arrival at their house of the evil and deceitful Goth. The bishop, having read the record, at once took his clergy and went to the voivode who commanded the Greek army that had arrived, and ordered the document given him by the widow and her daughter to be read aloud before the voivode, in which this wondrous miracle of the holy martyrs was described in detail. The voivode, listening attentively to what was read, was struck with horror, marveling at the glorious miracle, and all who were with him were filled with fear. The voivode immediately ordered the Goth to be brought before him. The widow Sophia and her daughter Euphemia were also presented to him. Again he commanded the written record concerning them to be read aloud, for a great crowd of men and women had gathered in the voivode's courtyard. And he asked the Goth whether what was written

was true. The Goth answered that it was true and that there was nothing false in it. Then the voivode said to him:

"Wretched murderer! How did you not fear God and His Dreadful Judgment, and not shrink from the oath you swore at the tomb of the holy martyrs, whom you made the guarantors and witnesses of your promises? Why did you not spare the young maiden whom you beguiled by your cunning? Receive now the punishment merited by your deeds."

The voivode ordered that his head be struck off with a sword. The God-loving bishop earnestly entreated the voivode not to deliver the Goth to death, but to show him mercy and spare his life, that he might glorify the greatness of God. But the voivode answered the bishop:

"I fear to show mercy to one who has committed so great a crime, lest I provoke the holy martyrs whom this oath-breaker has offended."

And at the voivode's command, the Goth was beheaded. Thus this wretched man received his recompense; but God was glorified in His saints. And from us sinners let there be glory, honor and worship to Him, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 5:

Thou hast granted us, O Christ God, an unassailable wall through the wonders of Thy holy martyrs. By their prayers, scatter the counsels of the nations, strengthen the sceptres of kingdoms, for Thou alone art Good and Lover of mankind.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having received grace from on high, O wise ones, ye stand by those in trials, O all-praised saints. Wherefore, O holy ones, ye delivered the maiden from bitter death; for ye are truly the glory of Edessa and the joy of the world.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Elpidius, Marcellus and Eustochius

Память святых мучеников Елпидия, Маркелла и Евстохия

The blessed Elpidius, in the reign of Julian the Apostate, was a member of the state council. As a Christian, he was brought to the judgment of Julian, who commanded that a hair shirt studded with nails and smeared with hot pitch be put upon him. After this he was beaten, so that the nails pierced the body of the blessed one. The martyr endured his sufferings with courage and would not consent to the persuasions to renounce Christ. Then they threw him into a ditch and began to pour hot water over him from above, so that his body was covered with sores. To increase his torments, the lawless ruler commanded that pitch, tar and other similar substances be mixed together, set on fire, and poured upon the festering wounds of the martyr, and that hot pitch be poured into his mouth. Finally, the holy Elpidius, together with Eustochius and Marcellus, was bound to wild horses so that they might tear them apart. However, the horses did them no harm. Then the saints were beaten with rods and cast into the fire, where they gave up their spirit into the hands of the Living God.

Their honorable bodies were buried on Mount Carmel[9] and for some time remained there. But once Christ, together with the Angelic Powers, appeared there amid the flash of lightning and the peals of thunder, and greeted the holy martyrs. At this the Lord quickened the body of the holy Elpidius and sent him forth to new labors. The report of these labors reached Julian as well. As soon as Julian learned that Elpidius was unharmed, he ordered that the holy martyr's body be stretched out and bound to four posts, that he be beaten without mercy, that wounds be inflicted with sharp saws and rubbed with vinegar and salt. Then he commanded that the body be laid upon hot coals and sprinkled from above with hot ashes. When the saint had courageously endured these torments as well, he was hung upon a tree, and a red-hot shield was applied to his body, while he was sprinkled with ashes. During these torments a wondrous miracle took place: by the prayers of the saint, the idols standing nearby crumbled to dust. Seeing this, the pagans, to the number of six thousand people, turned to the Christian faith. After all this, the holy Elpidius was cast into a heated furnace,

9. Mount Carmel is situated in the central part of Palestine; its upper end juts into the Mediterranean Sea, and its southern end abuts the Samarian mountains.

where the saint gave up his soul to the Lord, whom he had loved from his youth[10]. To God, wondrous in His saints, be honor and glory, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Demetrius

Память святого мученика Димитрия

The holy martyr Demetrius was from the village of Dabuda, in Thrace, and suffered under the emperor Maximian Galerius and his co-ruler Maximinus. The prefect of Thrace, Publius, was informed against the saint as a Christian, and by the prefect's command the saint was seized. At his examination Demetrius boldly confessed Christ as God, spoke of the Holy Spirit, and taught of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, of His goodness and love for mankind. Then he denounced the soul-destroying seduction of idolatry, showing how blind and deaf are those who share in it. By his words he greatly provoked the ruler, who commanded that his head be struck off[11]. Thus the holy martyr departed, having received from the Lord the heavenly crown. The honorable relics of the holy Demetrius were buried by faithful and God-fearing men, and they send forth healings to all who come to them.

* * *

10. The holy martyrs Elpidius, Marcellus and Eustochius suffered around the middle of the 4th century.

11. This was in the year 307 A.D.

THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 16

16 ноября

New Calendar November 16 · Old Calendar November 29 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew

Житие и страдание святого Апостола и Евангелиста Матфея

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, son of Alphaeus, otherwise called Levi (Mk. 2:14; Mt. 9:9; Lk. 5:27), lived in the Galilean city of Capernaum[1]. He was a man of means and held the office of a publican[2]. His countrymen despised him and shunned him, as they did all who were like him. But although Matthew was a sinner, he was no worse—and indeed much better—than the Pharisees[3], who prided themselves upon their supposed outward righteousness. And so the Lord fixed His divine gaze upon this publican, despised by all. One day, while He was staying in Capernaum, the Lord went out of the city and walked toward the sea, accompanied by a crowd. On the shore He saw Matthew sitting at the tax booth[4]. And He said to him:

"Follow Me!"

1. Capernaum: a small town on the north-western shore of the Lake of Gennesaret, or Sea of Tiberias, belonging to Galilee. Today the ruins of this town are known by the name Tell Hum.
2. The tax-collectors were persons appointed by the Romans to collect taxes from the Jews. They usually took these duties on contract and used every possible means to extract the greatest profit for themselves. As covetous and insolent agents of a pagan power, the tax-collectors were regarded by the Jews as traitors and renegades to their country and to the Lord God. "Sinner," "pagan," and "tax-collector" were for them one and the same thing; to speak with them was considered a sin, to associate with them a defilement, although among them too there were good and God-fearing men.
3. The Pharisees were one of the Jewish sects, which appeared in the second and third centuries B.C. They received their name, Pharisees (the particular, the separated), from the fact that they strove to distinguish themselves by a special zeal for the Law.
4. The tax-collection station was the place where duties and taxes were collected from caravans passing along the seaside road, and from boats carrying merchandise on the sea.

Hearing these words of the Lord not only with his bodily ears, but also with the eyes of his heart, the publican at once rose from his place and, leaving everything, followed Christ. Matthew did not hesitate, nor wonder that the Great Teacher and Wonderworker should call him, a despised publican; he heeded His words with all his heart, and followed Christ without question. In his joy, Matthew prepared a great feast in his house. The Lord did not refuse the invitation, but entered Matthew's house. And many of Matthew's neighbors, friends, and acquaintances gathered there—all publicans and sinners—and reclined at table with Jesus and His disciples. Some of the scribes[7465] and Pharisees were there as well. Seeing that the Lord did not disdain sinners and publicans, but reclined beside them, they murmured and said to His disciples:

"How is it that He eats and drinks with publicans and sinners?"

But the Lord, hearing their words, said to them:

"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."[5]

From that time Matthew, leaving all his possessions, followed Christ (Lk. 5:28), and, as His faithful disciple, never again departed from Him. Before long he was deemed worthy to be numbered among the company of the 12 chosen Apostles (Mt. 10:1–42; Mk. 3:13–19; Lk. 6:13–16). Together with the other disciples of the Lord, Matthew accompanied Him on His journeys through Galilee and Judea, heeded His divine teaching, beheld His countless miracles, went forth to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and witnessed the Savior's sufferings on the Cross, His redeeming death, and His most glorious Ascension into heaven.

After the Lord's Ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, St. Matthew remained at first in Palestine, preaching the Gospel in Jerusalem and its environs together with the other Apostles.

5. Lk. 5:27–32; Mt. 9:9–13; Mk. 2:14–17. Thus the Lord exposes here the self-conceit and self-satisfaction of the scribes and Pharisees, who, holding only to the external rites of the Law and fulfilling them strictly outwardly, considered themselves righteous and felt no need of repentance and amendment. The Lord shows them that external rites and sacrifices have meaning only when they serve as the expression of an inner feeling, of mercy and of love for one's neighbour; without this they lose their meaning and can only provoke God's anger (Is. 1:11–18).

But the time came for the Apostles to depart from Jerusalem for various nations, to bring them to faith in Christ. Before the Apostle left Jerusalem, the Christians of Jerusalem who were Jews asked him to set down in writing for them the deeds and teaching of Jesus Christ. The other Apostles who were then in Jerusalem also gave their consent to this request. And St. Matthew, fulfilling this common desire, wrote the Gospel 8 years after Christ's Ascension[7467].

Having departed from Jerusalem, the Holy Apostle Matthew preached the Gospel in many lands. Proclaiming the good news of Christ, he passed through Macedonia, Syria, Persia, Parthia, and Media, and traversed all of Ethiopia[6], which had fallen to his lot, enlightening it with the light of understanding of the Gospel. At last, guided by the Holy Spirit, he came to the land of cannibals, to a black, beastlike people. He entered a city called Myrmene, and there, having turned several souls to the Lord, he appointed his companion Plato as their bishop and built a small church. He himself ascended a nearby mountain and remained there in fasting, praying earnestly to God for the conversion of that unbelieving people. And the Lord appeared to him in the form of a beautiful youth, holding a staff in His right hand, and greeted him. Stretching out His right hand and giving the staff to the saint, He commanded him to descend from the mountain and plant the staff by the doors of the church he had built.

"This staff," said the Lord, "shall by My power grow into a lofty tree, and that tree shall bear abundant fruit, surpassing all other garden fruits in size and sweetness; and from its root shall flow a spring of pure water. When the cannibals wash in the spring's waters, their faces shall become comely; and whoever tastes of that fruit shall forget his brutish ways and become a good and gentle man."

Matthew received the staff from the Lord's hand, descended from the mountain, and went to the city to do as he had been commanded.

The wife and son of the prince of that city, whose name was Fulvian, were possessed by demons. Meeting the Apostle on the way, they cried out to him in wild, threatening voices:

"Who sent you here with this staff, to bring about our destruction?"

The Apostle rebuked the unclean spirits and cast them out; those who had been healed bowed before the Apostle and meekly followed him. Hearing of his arrival, Bishop Plato met him together with the clergy. St. Matthew entered the city and approached the church, and did as he had been commanded: he planted the staff given him by the Lord. And immediately, before all eyes, the staff became a great tree, spreading branches thick with leaves; beautiful fruits, large and sweet, appeared upon it, and a spring of water flowed from its root. All who saw this were filled with wonder; the whole city came together to witness the miracle, and they ate the tree's fruit and drank the pure water. And the Holy Apostle Matthew, standing in a high place, preached the word of God to the assembled people in their own language. Immediately all believed in the Lord, and the Apostle baptized them in the miraculous spring. And all the cannibals who were baptized, according to the Lord's word, came out of the water comely of face and white of skin; they received not only bodily whiteness and beauty, but also purity and beauty of soul, putting off the old man and putting on the new man—Christ. When he learned what had happened, the prince at first rejoiced at the healing of his wife and son, but afterward, at the prompting of the demons, grew angry with the Apostle because all the people were coming to him and forsaking their gods, and he plotted to destroy him. But that very night the Savior appeared to the Apostle, commanding him to take courage and promising to remain with him in the tribulation that was to come. When morning came, while the Apostle was in the church with the faithful, singing praise to God, the

6. Macedonia lay to the north of Greece, from its north-eastern region of Thessaly. Syria was the western region of Asia, stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates. Persia was situated in the southern part of the Iranian plateau, between the river Tigris, the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea. Media was the western part of Iran, to the south of the Caspian Sea, bordering on Assyria and Greater Armenia to the west, on Persia to the south, and on Parthia to the east. Parthia was a large country in Asia, to the south-east of the Caspian Sea and farther east to the Indian Ocean. Ethiopia lay in Africa to the south of Egypt, where Nubia and Abyssinia now are.

prince sent four soldiers to seize him. But when they came to the church of the Lord, darkness immediately enveloped them, and they could scarcely return. When they were asked why they had not brought Matthew, they replied:

"We heard him speaking, but we could neither see nor seize him."

Fulvian grew even angrier. He sent still more soldiers, armed, commanding them to bring Matthew by force, and to kill any who resisted and defended him. But these soldiers, too, returned empty-handed, for when they approached the church, a heavenly light shone around the Apostle. Unable to look upon him, the soldiers were seized with great fear and, throwing down their weapons, ran back, half-dead with terror, and told the prince what had happened. Fulvian was terribly enraged and went with all his multitude of servants, wishing to seize the Apostle himself. But scarcely had he drawn near the Apostle when he was suddenly struck blind and had to ask for someone to guide him. Then he began to beseech the Apostle to forgive his sin and restore sight to his blinded eyes. The Apostle made the sign of the Cross over the prince's eyes and granted him sight. The prince saw again, but only with his bodily eyes, not with those of his soul, for malice had blinded him; and he attributed so great a miracle not to the power of God, but to sorcery. Taking the Apostle by the hand, he led him to his palace, as though wishing to honor him, while in his heart he craftily plotted to burn the Apostle of the Lord as a sorcerer. But the Apostle, foreseeing the secret movements of his heart and his treacherous designs, rebuked the prince, saying:

"Deceitful tormentor! How soon will you do what you have plotted against me? Do what Satan has put into your heart; for I, as you see, am ready to endure all things for my God."

Then the prince commanded the soldiers to seize St. Matthew and stretch him out on the ground, face upward, and nail his hands and feet fast. When this had been done, the servants, at the tormentor's command, gathered many branches and brushwood, brought pitch and sulfur, laid them all upon St. Matthew, and set them alight. But when the fire blazed up fiercely and all thought that the Apostle of Christ had already been burned, the fire suddenly grew cold and the flames died

out; and St. Matthew was found alive, unharmed, and glorifying God. Seeing this, all the people were terrified by so great a miracle and gave praise to the Apostle's God. But Fulvian grew still more enraged. Unwilling to acknowledge the power of God, which had preserved the preacher of Christ alive and unharmed by fire, he brought an unlawful accusation against the righteous man, calling him a sorcerer.

"By sorcery," he said, "Matthew quenched the fire and remained alive in it."

Then he ordered even more firewood, branches, and brushwood to be brought, laid upon Matthew, and set alight, with pitch poured over them from above. In addition, he commanded that his twelve golden idols be brought and set around the fire. Calling upon them for help, he sought to make Matthew unable to escape the flames by their power, so that he would be reduced to ashes. But the Apostle, amid the flames, prayed to the Lord of hosts to show His invincible power, reveal the powerlessness of the pagan gods, and put to shame those who hoped in them.

And suddenly a fiery flame, with a terrible thunder, rushed upon the golden idols, and they melted in the fire like wax; and besides this, many of the unbelievers who stood round about were scorched. And out of the melted idols there came forth a flame in the form of a serpent, and it rushed upon Fulvian, threatening him, so that he could not flee and escape the danger until he cried out with humble supplication to the Apostle for deliverance from perdition. The Apostle commanded the fire, and immediately the flame went out and the likeness of the fiery serpent vanished. Fulvian wished to bring the saint out of the fire with honour, but he, having offered prayer, committed his holy soul into the hands of God.[7] Then the prince commanded that a golden bier be brought, and the honourable body of the Apostle, unharmed by the fire, be laid upon it; and, clothing it in precious garments, he lifted it up with his nobles and carried it into his palace. But he still did not have perfect faith, and therefore he ordered an iron chest to be forged, sealed tightly on all sides with tin, and cast into the sea, and he said to his nobles:

7. The repose of the holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, according to tradition, took place about A.D. 60.

"If He who preserved Matthew whole from the fire will preserve him also from drowning in the water, then truly He is the One God, and to Him we shall bow down, having left all our gods, who could not deliver themselves from destruction by fire."

After this iron chest with the honourable relics was cast into the sea, the saint appeared by night to Bishop Platon, saying:

"Tomorrow go to the sea shore to the east of the prince's palace, and there take my relics, cast up on dry land."

In the morning the bishop, accompanied by a multitude of the faithful, went to the place shown him and found the iron chest with the relics of the holy Apostle Matthew, as had been announced to him in the vision.

Learning of this, the prince also came with his nobles and, now fully believing in our Lord Jesus Christ, proclaimed aloud that He is the One true God, who preserved unharmed His servant Matthew, both in life in the fire and after death in the water. And falling down before the chest with the relics of the Apostle, he asked the saint's forgiveness for his transgressions before him and expressed a heartfelt desire to be baptized. Bishop Platon, seeing the faith and zeal of Fulvian, catechized him, taught him the truths of the holy faith, and baptized him. And when he laid his hand upon his head and wished to give him a name, a voice was heard from on high, saying:

"Name him not Fulvian, but Matthew."

Having thus received the name of the Apostle in baptism, the prince strove to be an imitator also of the Apostle's life: soon he handed over his princely power to another, renounced worldly vanity entirely, devoted himself to prayer in the church of God, and was granted by Bishop Platon the rank of presbyter. And when, after three years had passed, the bishop died, the presbyter Matthew, who had laid down his princely power, was visited in a vision by the holy Apostle Matthew, who exhorted him to accept the episcopal throne after the blessed Platon. Having accepted the episcopate, Matthew laboured well in preaching the Gospel of Christ, and, turning many away from idolatry, brought them to God; and afterwards he himself departed to Him after a long God-pleasing life, and, standing before the throne of God with

the holy Evangelist Matthew, he prays to the Lord for us, that we too may be heirs of the eternal kingdom of God. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 3:

Zealously from the tax-booth thou didst follow after Christ the Lord who called thee, who for His goodness appeared on earth as man; and thou wast revealed as the chosen Apostle, and the Evangelist of the Gospel was loudly proclaimed throughout the world. Wherefore we honour thy honourable memory, Matthew, divine speaker. Pray to the merciful God that He grant forgiveness of sins to our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou didst reject the yoke of the tax-collector and wast yoked to the yoke of righteousness, and thou didst appear as a most excellent merchant, bringing riches which wisdom from on high had given; for thou didst preach the word of truth and didst raise up sorrowing souls, having written of the hour of judgement.

* * *

NOTES

7465. Among the Jews, the name "scribes" was given to men generally learned in book-learning, namely: the most learned of the Jews, who explained the Law and publicly taught and instructed the people in it, the so-called rabbis and teachers of the Law; the jurists, who were occupied with resolving disputed questions, doubtful cases and matters requiring knowledge of the Law and practical experience; and the copyists and notaries, who served in the synagogues and sanhedrins. These learned Jews are presented in the New Testament also as a special class, distinct from the Pharisees; yet at the same time they are often joined with the Pharisees and linked with the high priests. Most of them clung to traditions alone and, not understanding the spirit of the Law, interpreted it falsely, and were blind leaders of the people, hypocritically fulfilling the commandments only for show, for human glory, and laying heavy burdens upon others which they themselves did not bear.

7467. The Gospel was written by the Apostle Matthew about A.D. 41. It is the first in time of all the sacred books of the New Testament, and therefore occupies the first place among them. The Gospel was written in the Hebrew language, or in the Syro-Chaldean, otherwise Aramaic, dialect then in use, and was intended originally for the Christians of Palestine from among the Jews. Accordingly, the narratives in the Gospel of Matthew

are directed chiefly to showing that Jesus is the true Messiah, promised to the forefathers of the Hebrew people, which especially needed to be shown to the Jews who believed in Christ, who had been unrecognized by their compatriots and crucified. For this reason, in the Gospel of Matthew, more often than in the other Gospels, the events of Christ's life are compared and matched with Old Testament prophecies and types, and from the whole history of Christ the Savior are chosen narratives especially important and necessary for the Jews. For the same reason Matthew begins his Gospel with the genealogy of the Messiah as son of David and son of Abraham, and in general in his Gospel speaks chiefly of the incarnation and humanity of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham. This distinctive feature of the Gospel of St. Matthew is expressed also in his icons, on which he is depicted together with an angel-like man, who symbolically characterizes the peculiarities of his Gospel.



THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 17

17 ноября

New Calendar November 17 · Old Calendar November 30 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Gregory the Wonderworker, Bishop of Neocaesarea

Житие святого отца нашего Григория чудотворца, епископа Неокесарийского

St. Gregory was born in the glorious and great city of Neocaesarea[1] to pagan parents. He lost them while still young. Devoting himself to the study of Hellenic wisdom[2], he came also to understand the most perfect wisdom, which consists in the knowledge of the One True God: from created things he came to know the Creator, and he strove to please Him by guilelessness and a chaste life. Having become acquainted with the holy teaching of the Gospel, he at once became its follower, and, having received baptism, he strove to live according to the commandments of Christ, in purity and in non-possessiveness; he renounced all the vanity of the world, riches, pride, glory and temporal pleasures. Having renounced the indulgence of the flesh, Gregory remained in great abstinence, mortifying his will, and he guarded the purity of his virginity so strictly that throughout his whole life, from his mother's womb to his blessed repose, he knew no carnal sin and kept himself from defilement, so as to be pleasing to the One Pure and

1. Neocaesarea, the present-day Niksar, a city famous for its beauty and only comparatively late built, the capital of Pontus Polemoniacus in northern Asia Minor, on the river Lycus; it is especially known for the church council held there (in 315), after the death of St. Gregory.

2. By "Hellenic wisdom" is meant here pagan learning, pagan education. The father of St. Gregory of Neocaesarea was a pagan and raised his son in paganism. The father was preparing him to be an advocate, and therefore St. Gregory (in the world Theodore) studied the laws well and the language of the laws of that time, Latin, and at last resolved to go to Rome in order to become better acquainted with Roman law. But the providence of God ordered his life otherwise: together with his brother he had to accompany his sister to Caesarea; from there he afterward set out to study jurisprudence at Berytus, and from there went on to Alexandria, which at that time was renowned for its learning.

Sinless Christ God, born of the Sinless Virgin. Having given himself to Him from his youth, with His help he advanced from strength to strength, from virtue to virtue, and he walked the path of life blamelessly: for this God and good people loved him, while evil people hated him.

When he, still a youth, was studying philosophy and the medical art in Alexandria together with many young men who gathered there from all lands[3], his chaste and blameless life aroused the hatred of his peers. Being intemperate and enslaved to the passions, they lived impurely, entering the houses of harlots, as was the custom among pagan youths; but St. Gregory, as a Christian youth, turned away from this destructive path, avoided impurity and hated lawlessness; like a lily among thorns[4], so among the impure he shone by his purity. Many knew of his pure and blameless life, and for this many worthy philosophers and citizens greatly honored and praised him; but his peers, unable to look on a youth who surpassed not only youths but even the elders in abstinence and purity, plotted to spread a bad rumor among people, to the effect that he too lived as impurely as the rest, and thereby to darken the good reputation which he justly enjoyed among men. They instructed a certain harlot to slander and spread a bad report about the innocent and pure-hearted youth. Once, when the saint was conversing in full view of all with worthy philosophers and foremost teachers, the harlot, instructed by the saint's peers, approached him and shamelessly demanded of him the due payment for a carnal sin supposedly committed with her. All heard this and were astonished; some were scandalized, supposing it to be true, while others, knowing the purity and blamelessness of Gregory, gave no credence to the words of the shameless harlot

3. Alexandria, the famous capital of Egypt, at that time was celebrated for its broad and flourishing learning. Philosophy and medicine especially flourished at that time. Alongside pagan learning, Christian theological learning also flourished. The famous Alexandrian school, which counted among its ranks a multitude of the most remarkable scholars of that century, drew into its walls a mass of students not only from among Christians but also from among pagans.

4. The lily (*krinon*), the white lily, is a beautiful flower of the bulbous family. The Lord Himself praises the beauty of the lily and places it above all the splendid garments of Solomon (Mt. 6:28–29; Lk. 12:27). Therefore in Holy Scripture the lily very often serves as an image of lofty moral perfections; correspondingly, here the virtuous life of the young Gregory is likened to a beautiful lily growing among thorns, which in Scripture serves as an image of impiety and sin.

and drove her away. But she, crying out loudly, pestered the saint to pay the price of the adultery committed. Oh, how ashamed St. Gregory was when he heard such shameless and unjust accusations from a woman openly sinful, in the presence of so many honorable people! Like a pure maiden he blushed in his face; yet, being guileless and meek, he said nothing harsh to the harlot, showed no anger at all, did not defend himself or call witnesses to his innocence, but gently said to one of his friends:

"Give her quickly the payment she demands, so that she may go away from us and trouble us no more."

The friend at once gave her what she wanted, thereby redeeming the innocent Gregory from shame. God, the faithful Witness in heaven, revealed this falsehood as follows. He permitted an unclean spirit to come upon the shameless and flattering harlot, and when she took into her hands the unrighteous hire, she at once received a fierce punishment: for a demon fell upon her and began to torment her before all. The harlot fell to the ground, cried out with a terrible voice, trembled in her whole body, gnashed her teeth and fell into a stupor, foaming at the mouth, so that all present were filled with great fear and horror, seeing so swift and fierce a vengeance upon the innocent youth. And the demon did not cease tormenting her until the saint offered a fervent prayer to God for her and thereby drove the demon out of her. This was the beginning of the miracles of the young Gregory, at whose virtues even the elders marveled.

Gregory had a prudent and well-mannered friend named Firmilian, a native of Cappadocia. Having revealed to him his cherished thought, to leave everything and serve the one God, Gregory found that Firmilian had the same thought and desired to walk the same path. By mutual counsel, both of them left worldly philosophy, left the pagan schools, and began to learn Christian wisdom and the mysteries of Divine Scripture. At that time the renowned Origen[7474] was famous among the teachers of the Church of Christ. Coming to him together with his friend Firmilian, St. Gregory began to learn from him, and, having spent a considerable time with him, returned to his homeland, Neocaesarea. The citizens of Neocaesarea and all who knew him, see-

ing his great wisdom, wished him to be honored among his fellow citizens and to take upon himself the duties of judge and governor. But Gregory, avoiding pride, empty human glory and those many snares with which the enemy entangles the world, left his native city and, settling in the desert, lived in deep solitude for God alone; what exploits and labors he performed there, only He knows who "formed the hearts" of men and "considers all their works" (Ps. 32:15).

When St. Gregory was living in the desert and exercising himself in contemplation of God, the blessed Phedimus, Bishop of the Cappadocian city of Amasea, learned of him and desired to bring him out of the desert into the service of the Church of Christ, to ordain him as hierarch and teacher, for he foresaw in him the grace of God and that he would be a great pillar of the Church and a confirmation of the faith. St. Gregory also had the gift of foresight, and, learning that the bishop wished to take him from the desert into the service of the Church, he hid from him, considering himself unworthy of such a rank, and moved from place to place in the desert so as not to be found. The blessed Phedimus diligently sought him and called him from the desert with entreaty, but, being unable to separate the lover of the desert from his desert and bring him to Amasea for ordination, he accomplished a deed apparently strange and unusual. Moved by the Spirit of God and kindled with zeal for the holy Church, he was not troubled by the fact that Gregory had not come to him and that a considerable distance lay between them, for from the city of Amasea to the desert in which Gregory lived was three days' journey; the bishop Phedimus was not deterred by such a distance between them and ordained Gregory, who was far from him, as bishop of the church of Neocaesarea. Raising his eyes to God, he said:

"All-knowing and Almighty God, look in this hour upon me and upon Gregory, and make this ordination effective by Thy grace."

To this bears witness St. Gregory of Nyssa, describing the life of this saint[5]; confirmation of this is also in the Menaion canon, which relates it thus: "God's intercessor, kindled with zeal, Phedimus anointed thee, without coming to thee, O Father, trusting piously in God,

who knows all things, and hoping in thy honorable life, O Gregory, thou God-speaking one"[6].

Thus the blessed Phedimus performed for Gregory an unusual ordination, and St. Gregory, though against his will, submitted to accept the governance of the Church: for how could he resist the will of the Lord? But first of all he had recourse to prayer, asking for help from on high in such a matter.

At that time the heresy of Sabellius and Paul of Samosata was beginning to spread[7477]. St. Gregory was perplexed about it and fervently prayed to God and to the Mother of God for the revelation to him of the true faith. When one night he was praying about this with especial fervor, the Most Pure Virgin Mary, shining like the sun, appeared to him with John the Theologian, clothed in episcopal vestments. Pointing with Her hand at Gregory, the Most Pure One commanded John the Theologian to teach him how one ought to believe in the mystery of the Holy Trinity. And by the command of the Mother of God, St. Gregory was taught by St. John the Theologian, in a short time, the great mysteries of God, and drew from the inexhaustible depth of wisdom divine knowledge. The words of revelation spoken by John the Theologian were as follows:

God is One, the Father of the Living Word, of the Subsistent Wisdom, of the Power and the Eternal Image, the Perfect Begetter of the Perfect, the Father of the Only-begotten Son. The Lord is One, One of One, God of God, the Image and Likeness of the Godhead, the Active Word, the Wisdom that embraces the composition of all that exists, and the creative Power of all creation; the True Son of the True Father, the Invisible, Incorruptible, Immortal and Everlasting Son of the Invisible, Incorruptible and Everlasting Father. And One is the Holy Spirit, who has His being from the Father and is manifested to men through the Son, the Perfect Image of the Perfect Son, the Life, the Cause of all

5. Works of St. Gregory of Nyssa, Russian translation, vol. VIII, p. 143. Moreover, St. Gregory the Wonderworker accepted the highest ecclesiastical-hierarchical authority, according to the testimony of the same Gregory of Nyssa, only after all the prescribed sacred rites had been performed upon him and after he had requested from the hierarch Phaedimus, who had chosen him for the episcopal see, a short time for precise understanding of the mystery of the faith.
6. Service to St. Gregory, Canon, Ode 5, Troparion 2.

that lives, the Holy Source, the Sanctity that bestows sanctification, in whom God the Father is revealed, who is above all and in all, and God the Son, who is through all: a perfect Trinity in glory, eternity and kingdom, undivided and inseparable. Therefore there is nothing created, subordinate, or introduced into the Trinity, as though it had not previously existed and had afterwards come in. Accordingly, the Son was never lacking in anything before the Father, nor the Holy Spirit before the Son, but the same Trinity is always and unchangeably the same.

After this vision, Saint Gregory wrote down with his own hand the words spoken to him by Saint John the Theologian, and this writing was kept in the Church of Neocaesarea for many years.[7478]

After that, Saint Gregory set out for Neocaesarea. At that time all of Neocaesarea lay in the darkness of idolatry; a great multitude of idols and idol temples was in that city. Many sacrifices were offered to the idols every day, so that the whole air was filled with the stench rising from the animals slaughtered and burned as offerings, and there were only seventeen believers in that so populous city.

As Saint Gregory was walking to Neocaesarea, on the way he had to pass by an idol temple. It was evening and a heavy rain was coming on; of necessity the saint and his companions had to enter that idol temple and spend the night there. There were many idols in that temple; demons dwelt in them, appearing to their priests and conversing with them. Having spent the night there, Saint Gregory performed his customary midnight and morning chants and prayers, and signed with the sign of the Cross the air defiled by the demonic sacrifices. Terrified by the sign of the Cross and by Gregory's holy prayers, the demons left their temple and their idols and vanished. In the morning Saint Gregory went on his way with his companions, and the idol priest entered the temple according to his custom, wishing to offer sacrifice to the demons, but he did not find the demons, for they had fled from there. The demons did not appear to him even when he began to offer them sacrifices, as they had formerly customarily appeared, and the priest wondered why his gods had abandoned their temple. He earn-

estly implored them to return to their place, and they cried out from afar:

"We cannot enter where last night there was a wanderer who was walking from the desert to Neocaesarea."

The priest, hearing this, hastened after Gregory, overtook him, stopped him, and shouted at him in anger, reproaching him for having, though a Christian, dared to enter the temple of their gods, and that because of him the gods had come to hate that place and had withdrawn; he threatened him with the imperial court, intending to lead him forcibly at once to the tormentors. Saint Gregory, by gentle and wise words, calmed the priest's anger and at last said:

"My God is so Almighty that He commands even the demons, and He has given me such power over them that they obey me even against their will."

The priest, hearing this, restrained his anger and implored the saint to command the pagan gods to return to their temple. The holy man tore a small leaf from his little book, wrote on it these words, "Gregory to Satan: Enter," and handed the leaf to the priest, bidding him lay it on the altar of his unclean gods. And at once the demons returned to the temple and conversed with the priest as before. The priest was astonished, marveling at the Divine power of Saint Gregory, by which he commands the demons with a word and they obey him; he hastened again after him and overtook him when he had not yet reached the city, and asked him from whence he had such power that the pagan gods feared him and obeyed his commands. Saint Gregory, seeing that the priest's heart was receptive to faith, began to instruct him concerning the One True God, who created all things by His Word, and imparted to him the mystery of the holy faith. While they were conversing as they went on their way, the priest began to implore Saint Gregory to show some miracle for a visible confirmation of his faith. And they saw a huge stone which, it seemed, no force could move from its place; but Gregory, in the name of Christ, commanded it to move from its place, and the stone moved and went to the other place where the priest wished. Fear seized the priest at the sight of this glorious miracle, and he confessed:

"There is one true and almighty God, whom Gregory preaches, and there is none other besides Him," and at once he believed in Him, and spread the news of this event everywhere so quickly that in Neocaesarea the people learned of Gregory's miracles and of his power over the demons before Gregory himself had come there.[7479] Of his coming the whole city learned, and a multitude of people went out to meet him, wishing to see him, for they had heard that he had moved a great stone to another place by a word, and that he commanded their gods, and they obeyed him.

Entering the great city for the first time, in circumstances unusual for him, Saint Gregory was not astonished at such a multitude of people gathered on his account, but, walking as it were through a desert, looked only at himself and at the road, not turning to anyone among those gathered around him. And this very thing seemed to the people even higher and more wonderful than the miracle the saint had worked over the stone. Gregory entered the city, pressed on all sides by those accompanying him, as if the whole city had already honored his episcopal dignity. But, freeing himself from every worldly burden, the saint paid no attention to this. When he entered the city, there was nowhere, for his rest, not even a house, either belonging to the Church or his own, and his companions were troubled and anxious as to where they should lodge and whom they should find to give them shelter. But their teacher, the God-wise Gregory, consoling them and at the same time as it were reproaching them for their faintheartedness, said:

"Why are you worrying, as if you were outside the protection of God, about where you may give rest to your bodies? Does God seem to you too small a house, though in Him we live, and move, and have our being? Or is the heavenly shelter too narrow for you, that you seek any other dwelling besides it? Let your care be only for that one house which is each man's own possession, which is built by the virtues and raised on high; for that one alone you must care, that such a dwelling may not be left unfurnished in you..."

While Saint Gregory thus instructed his companions, there was present one distinguished and wealthy citizen named Musonius, who, seeing that many had the same desire and concern to receive this great

man into their homes, anticipating the others, turned to Gregory with a request to stop at his house and honor his dwelling with his entrance. Others also asked the saint the same, but he, fulfilling the request of the first, stayed in the house of Musonius. When Gregory entered Neocaesarea, he found there only seventeen believers, while the whole city worshipped lifeless idols and served demons. Then Gregory began to pray to God in the secret of his heart: that He would look upon His creation and enlighten and turn to the path of salvation such a multitude of straying and perishing people. Dwelling in the house of Musonius, Saint Gregory began to teach the unbelievers the knowledge of the true God. At first there was a small number of those who heard his word, but before the day ended and the sun set, so many joined the first gathering that they already formed crowds of people.

God's help so furthered him that not a single day passed without the winning of human souls for the Church of Christ. Multitudes of people, with their wives and children, gathered in the house of Musonius to hear Gregory's teaching and to see the wonderful healings wrought by him.[7] For he drove evil spirits from people, healed every kind of sickness, and day by day believers joined the Church, and their number increased. In a short time, using funds provided by those who had believed in the Lord, Gregory built a wondrous church; people gave the saint for the church's construction everything they had and opened their treasuries, that he might take as much as was needed for the adornment of the house of the Lord, for the sustenance of orphans and the service of the sick. Thus the word of God grew in Neocaesarea, the holy faith spread, the idolatrous polytheism was destroyed, their abominable temples fell into desolation, the idols were shattered; and the Name of the One Almighty God and of our Lord Jesus Christ was magnified and glorified throughout Neocaesarea, and by the power of God through Saint Gregory marvelous and awesome miracles were performed. The following miraculous vision, according to the testimony of St. Gregory of Nyssa, especially contributed to the establishment of the

7. The multitude of miracles accomplished by St. Gregory of Neocaesarea soon gained for him the name of wonderworker and "another Moses," as St. Gregory of Nyssa testifies about him in his sermon on the life of St. Gregory the Wonderworker.

Church of Christ in Neocaesarea and to the increase there of the number of believers.

In the city, according to an ancient custom, a general public pagan festival in honor of one of the local deities was celebrated, and almost the entire region gathered for this festival, since the country folk celebrated together with the city. During the festival the theater was crowded with those assembled, all striving to be closer to the stage in order to see and hear better, whereupon a great noise and confusion arose, as a result of which a common cry burst from the people; all called upon the deity being honored to give them room. "Zeus," cried the unbelievers, "give us room." Hearing this senseless prayer, St. Gregory sent one of his attendants to say that they would soon be given room even more than they were praying for. These words of his proved a sorrowful sentence: following this general festivity, a deadly plague spread through the city; weeping mingled with merry songs, so that their merriment turned into grief and misfortune, and instead of the sound of trumpets and applause, the city resounded with an unceasing succession of mournful songs. The disease, having appeared in the city, spread faster than one could have expected, laying waste the houses like fire, so that the churches were filled with those infected with the plague, who had fled there in hope of healing; around the springs, fountains and wells crowded those tormented by thirst in their helpless illness; but even the water was powerless to quench the fever's heat. Many went out themselves to the cemeteries, since there were not enough of the survivors to bury the dead. And this calamity struck people unexpectedly, but as if some specter first approached the house where the plague was to appear, and only then did destruction follow. After it became clear to all what the cause of the illness was, namely that the demon they had summoned had maliciously fulfilled their request by providing the city, by means of the disease, with this calamitous room, they all turned to St. Gregory, begging him to stop the spread of the disease by the power of the God he preached, whom they now confessed as the one true God, ruling over all. And whenever that specter appeared, foretelling the appearance of the plague in a house, those who suffered this calamity had only one means of salvation: that

the saint should enter that house and by prayer repel the disease that had penetrated it.

When the report of this, from those who were the first to be saved from the plague in this way, very quickly spread among all, then everything they had formerly resorted to in their folly was abandoned: oracles, purifications, staying in idol temples; for all turned their eyes to the great hierarch, and each tried to draw him to himself for the salvation of his household. And his reward from those who were saved was the salvation of souls, for when his piety had been attested by such an experience, those who had truly come to know the power of faith had no reason to delay in receiving the mystery of Christ. And to the degree that during health they were ailing in their thoughts regarding the reception of the mystery, to that same degree they were strengthened in faith by bodily illness. When in this way the error of idolatry was exposed, all turned to the name of Christ: some, brought to the truth by the illness that had befallen them, others, having taken refuge in faith in Christ as a preventive remedy against the plague[8].

After this, the universal reverent esteem for St. Gregory became even stronger in Neocaesarea. The inhabitants, both of the city itself and of its surroundings, struck by the apostolic miracles of the saint, believed that whatever he said or did, he said and did by divine power. Therefore, even in disputed matters of everyday life they knew no other tribunal above him, but every dispute and all difficult and tangled affairs were settled by his counsel. Thus, through the grace-filled influence of St. Gregory, justice and peace took up residence in the city, and no evil disturbed their mutual harmony.

Two brothers, having received much property as an inheritance upon the death of their father, peacefully divided it between themselves. But they had one large lake, over which they quarreled greatly, for each wanted to possess it entirely. They chose as their judge the wonderworker Gregory. Coming to them at the lake, he made many efforts to reconcile them, but had no success: both brothers were obstinate, and neither would yield his share of the lake to the other. After many

8. The account of this miracle is set forth in abridged form according to the narrative of St. Gregory of Nyssa in his sermon on the life of St. Gregory the Wonderworker.

discords and quarrels they were already about to join battle with one another, for each had many supporters, and the saint could barely dissuade them from fighting that day. Evening came, everyone went home, postponing the battle until morning; but the saint remained alone by the lake, and, spending the whole night in prayer, he commanded the lake, in the Name of the Lord, to dry up entirely, so that not a single drop of water nor even moisture would remain, and that the earth might become fit for plowing and sowing. And it was done according to the saint's word: suddenly the water vanished, no one knew where, and the earth became dry. In the morning both brothers came to the lake with a multitude of armed men, to seize it by means of battle, and found not a single drop of water in the place where the lake had been: the earth was found so dried out and overgrown with plants, as if there had never been water there. Struck by such a miracle, the brothers involuntarily reconciled with one another, and all the people glorified God. Such was the righteous judgment wrought by the wonderworker: where there could be no peace between the brothers, and strife was at hand, he removed the very occasion of strife, drying up the watery lake, so that the love of brothers might not fail.

In that region flowed a river named Lycus[9]. In the springtime it overflowed its banks and, spreading widely, flooded the neighboring villages, fields, vegetable gardens and orchards, causing destruction to the crops and great harm to the people. The people living along the banks of that river, having heard of St. Gregory, the wonderworker of Neocaesarea, that he had power over the waters (for he had commanded the great lake, and it had dried up), gathered together, from the young to the old, and, coming to the saint, fell at his feet, begging that he would have mercy on them and restrain the river's flooding: for then that river had unusually filled with water and flooded many villages. The holy one said to them:

"God Himself has set limits for the rivers, and they cannot flow otherwise than as God has commanded them."

9. *Lykos* – from the Greek, "wolf": a river in Pontus, in the north of Asia Minor, flowing down from the mountains of Armenia. It received its name for its swiftness, its untamability and the harm it caused to the surrounding inhabitants.

They, however, implored the saint all the more zealously. Seeing their sorrow, the saint rose and went with them to that river, and, coming to those banks where the river's current flows when it is not flooded, he planted his staff there, saying:

"My Christ commands you, river, that you not cross your bounds nor pour out your waters further, but that you flow in good order within these your banks."

Immediately the staff planted by the saint grew into a great oak, and the waters gathered into their channel between the banks, and from that time the river never overflowed its banks; but when the waters rose and approached the oak, they at once returned back, and did not drown the labors of men[7483].

The holy wonderworker desired to build a church in a beautiful place near a mountain. When he began to lay the foundation, the place proved cramped, and it could not be made more spacious, since the mountain was in the way. Then the saint stood in prayer, and, having prayed, he commanded the mountain, in the name of Jesus Christ, to move and withdraw from its place, as far as was needed for the extension of the church, and immediately the mountain shook, moved and withdrew farther, making the place sufficient for the spacious foundation of the church. Such was the faith of this servant of God that he even moved mountains! Many unbelievers, seeing this miracle, turned to the Lord and received baptism from the saint. His fame spread everywhere because of the great miracles wrought through him by the divine power with which he was filled.

The report of such miracles spread throughout the whole country, and all came to believe that they were wrought by the power of faith in Christ, and they desired to share in this faith, attested by these miracles. Therefore, from a neighboring city named Comana[10] there came to the hierarch an embassy with the request that he establish a church for them and ordain a worthy bishop for them. St. Gregory fulfilled their petition and stayed with them for several days, strengthening them in faith and piety. And when the time came to elect a bishop, the

10. Comana (or Konany) in Pontus, in the north of Asia Minor, on the river Irnoe. In antiquity a famous and wealthy city, now in ruins – Gyumenek.

saint, to the amazement of all, pointed out as worthy of this high honor a pious and God-pleasing man named Alexander, who had previously been a simple charcoal-burner. Thus St. Gregory the wonderworker proved a benefactor to the city, revealing the hidden treasure among the inhabitants of Comana, which afterwards became a beautiful ornament of the Church[11].

As Saint Gregory was returning from there, some unbelieving Jews wished to mock him and to show that he did not have the Spirit of God within him. They devised this plan: on the road by which the saint was to pass, the Jews laid one of their number down, as though dead, naked, and then began to weep over him. When the wonderworker came by, they began to beg him to show mercy to the dead man and cover his body with a garment. He took off his outer garment, gave it to them, and went on. The Jews began to mock and revile the saint with joy, saying: "If he had the Spirit of God in him, he would know that the man lying here is not dead but alive," and they called to their companion to rise. But God requited them for this insult by making their companion truly dead. Thinking that he had fallen asleep, they poked him in the ribs to wake him and cried aloud over him, but there was no answer, for he had fallen into the eternal sleep. Seeing him dead, they wept in earnest; thus their laughter turned to weeping, and the dead buried their dead.

On the further journey, in one place of that land, a devout assembly of believers gathered under the open sky, and all marveled at the teaching of Saint Gregory. But a boy suddenly began to cry out loudly that the hierarch was not speaking of himself, but that someone else standing near him was uttering the words. When, after the assembly had dispersed, the boy was brought to him, the wonderworker told those present that the youth was possessed by an evil spirit. Immediately he took off his omophorion, breathed upon it, and placed it on the youth. Then the youth began to thrash about, to cry out, to throw himself on

11. Afterwards St. Alexander, Bishop of Comana, became renowned for the holiness of his life, fully justifying the hopes placed upon him; and, having well guarded the flock of Christ, he sealed his worthy service with a martyr's death at the beginning of the 4th century, during the persecution of the Roman emperor Diocletian. – His memory is celebrated by the Church on 12 August.

the ground and writhe this way and that, as happens with demoniacs. The saint laid his hand upon him, and the youth's fits ceased: the demon left him, and he, returning to his former state, no longer said that he saw someone speaking beside Saint Gregory, and received complete healing.

When, in the reign of the impious Decius[12], a persecution of Christians began, and an imperial command went out to compel Christians everywhere to worship idols, and to torment and destroy those who disobeyed, Saint Gregory gave his flock the counsel that whoever did not have the strength and gift of God to endure grievous torments should take refuge, lest anyone who had boldly surrendered himself to the tormentors should later be frightened at the sight of terrible torments, and, feeling himself unable to endure them, fall away from God. "It is better," Gregory said, "to hide for a short time and await the call of God and His help for the martyr's struggle." Having given the faithful this counsel, he himself, taking one of his deacons, withdrew into the wilderness and hid there from the unbelievers. The tormentors sent by the emperor, coming to the city of Neocaesarea, sought first of all Gregory, as the representative of all Christians and the shepherd of the rational sheep in that land. One of the unbelievers, learning that he was hiding on a certain mountain, informed the soldiers and led them to that mountain. They hastened up the mountain like hounds rushing after prey in the hunt, and like wolves seeking to snatch a sheep. Saint Gregory, seeing that the soldiers were drawing near and that it was impossible to flee and hide from them, raised his hands to heaven, committing himself to the protection of God, and ordered his deacon to do the same. Both stood with outstretched palms and prayed, while the soldiers searched diligently over the whole mountain for the saint and did not find him, for they could not see him even when they passed by him several times. After much searching, they returned without success, and coming down from the mountain they said to the one who had led them:

12. Decius – a Roman emperor and cruel persecutor of Christianity, who reigned from 249 to 251 A.D.

"We found no one on this mountain, only two trees standing not far from one another."

And he, understanding that a miracle had taken place here, left them, went up the mountain himself, and finding the saint with the deacon standing in prayer, fell at Gregory's feet, expressing the desire to be a Christian. He was granted this, and from a persecutor he became a servant of Christ and began to hide with the other Christians.

Once, while offering his customary prayers to God, Saint Gregory was troubled, and for a long time he stood in silence in fear, as though looking upon some touching spectacle. When enough time had passed, he brightened in countenance and, filled with joy, began to give thanks to God in a loud voice and to sing a solemn song, crying: "Blessed be the Lord, who has not given us as prey to their teeth!" (Ps. 123:6).

The deacon asked him:

"What is the cause, Father, of such a change in you, that you now appear joyful?"

The saint answered:

"I have seen, child, a marvelous vision: a small youth was struggling with the great devil, and having overcome him, he threw him to the ground and conquered him."

But the deacon did not understand the meaning of these words. Then the saint again said:

"Now a certain Christian youth, named Troadius[13], was brought before the tribunal of the tormentor, and after many grievous torments for Christ he was put to death, and he is ascending to heaven in triumph. At first I was troubled, for I feared that the torments might overcome him and that he might renounce Christ; but now I rejoice, seeing that he has completed the struggle of martyrdom and is ascending to heaven."

The deacon, hearing this, marveled that the saint sees from nearby what happens far away. Then he began to beseech his God-bearing teacher to allow him to see with his own eyes and learn of what had occurred, and not to forbid him to visit the very place where this won-

13. The memory of St. Martyr Troadius is celebrated on 2 March.

drous event had taken place. To Gregory's warning that it was dangerous to go among the murderers, the deacon answered with faith that, despite this, he boldly resolved to go, trusting in the help of his prayers.

"Commend me to God," he said to the saint, "and no fear of the enemies will touch me."

And when Gregory, by his prayer, sent him, as it were, a companion in the help of God, the deacon completed the journey with confidence, not hiding from any of those he met. Arriving in the city toward evening and wearied from the journey, he considered it necessary to relieve his exhaustion by bathing in the bathhouse. In that place there dwelt a certain demon whose baleful power acted upon those who approached there during the darkness of night, and slew many, so that people did not go to this bathhouse nor use it after sunset. Approaching the bathhouse, the deacon asked the attendant to open the door and allow him to bathe there; but the man assured him that no one who had dared to bathe at that hour had come out unharmed, but that after evening a demon took possession of everyone here, and that many, through ignorance, had already fallen into incurable illnesses, returning with weeping and wailing instead of the relief they had expected. But the deacon became all the more firm in his intention, and the attendant, yielding to his unbending desire, gave him the key, himself withdrawing to a considerable distance from the bathhouse. When the deacon, having undressed, entered the bathhouse, the demon employed against him various frights and terrors, showing every kind of apparition in the form of fire and smoke, beasts and men. But the deacon, protecting himself with the sign of the cross and calling upon the name of Christ, passed through the first chamber of the bathhouse without harm to himself. When he entered the inner part, he was surrounded by even more terrible visions. But with the same weapon he dispersed these both real and apparent terrors. Finally, when he was already coming out of the bathhouse, the demon tried to detain him, forcibly locking the doors. But by the help of the sign of the cross the door was opened. Then the demon cried out to the deacon in a human voice, bidding him not to consider his own the power by which he had been saved from destruction; for it was the voice of the one who had committed him to God's

protection that had kept him unharmed. Thus delivered, the deacon amazed the attendants of that bathhouse. After this he told them everything that had happened to him, learned that the valiant struggles of the martyrs had taken place in the city exactly as Saint Gregory the wonderworker had foretold, and returned to his teacher, leaving for people of his own time and of later times a common protective means, consisting in each one commending himself to God through the mediation of the priests[14].

When the persecution ended, Gregory returned to his see and, gathering his flock, began again to restore the disturbed order. First of all he established the observance of the memory of the holy martyrs who had suffered during the recent persecution. The glory of Christ spread, and demonic polytheism perished through the labors of Saint Gregory, who did not cease preaching the Gospel of Christ until his death, leading the inhabitants of Neocaesarea and its surroundings to God by teaching and by miracles—and he brought the city to the true faith, cleansed it of idolatrous sacrifices, and sanctified it by the unbloody Sacrifice. In the last days of his life, together with his brother Athenodorus, bishop of Pontus, he took part in the council against Paul of Samosata. Finally, reaching deep old age, he drew near to a blessed end. At his death he asked those standing by:

"How many unbelievers are still in Neocaesarea?"

They answered him:

"Only seventeen still hold to idolatry; the whole city believes in Christ."

The saint said:

"When I came to Neocaesarea for the episcopate, I found just as many Christians—seventeen in all—and the whole city was demonic. Now, at my departure to God, there remain as many unbelievers as at first there were believers, and the whole city is Christ's."

Having said this, he committed his soul into the hands of God[15]. Thus Saint Gregory the Wonderworker of Neocaesarea lived his life in

14. St. Gregory of Nyssa recounts this miracle in detail in his discourse on the life of St. Gregory the Wonderworker.

a manner pleasing to God, and died piously. By his holy prayers may the Lord grant us also to receive a good end. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

Keeping vigil in prayer and persevering in the working of miracles, thou hast acquired the correction befitting thy name; but pray to Christ God, Father Gregory, to enlighten our souls, lest we fall asleep unto death.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having received the power to work many wonders, thou hast terrified the demons with dreadful signs and driven away human infirmities, O all-wise Gregory; thou art called a Wonderworker, receiving thy title from thy works.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Nikon, Abbot of Radonezh[16]

Житие преподобного отца нашего Никона, игумена Радонежского

Venerable Nikon was born in the city of Yuriev-Polsky[17], not far from the monastery of Venerable Sergius. He was descended from pious parents and from his youth was brought up in reverence for God. While still young, he heard of the Angelic life of Venerable Sergius, who struggled with his brethren in his monastery near the city of Radonezh[18]. The struggles of Venerable Sergius, whose

15. The blessed repose of St. Gregory of Neocaesarea is placed between 266 and 270 A.D. Shortly before his death (in 264) he, together with his brother Athenodorus, Bishop of Pontus, was present at the Council of Antioch against Paul of Samosata. – Apart from the Creed of miraculous origin, St. Gregory of Neocaesarea is credited with a "Canonical Epistle" (on the occasion of the attack by the Boraei and Goths upon Pontus and all of Asia Minor) and a "Panegyric to Origen." – The relics of St. Gregory the Wonderworker were originally kept in the church of Neocaesarea that he had founded; in 1587 his head was transferred to Ulissipona (Lisbon).

16. Compiled from the manuscripts of the Holy Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra, from the Life of Venerable Nikon, composed by Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, and from other sources.

17. *Yuriev Polsky* – 86 versts north-west of the city of Vladimir. Founded by Prince Yury Vladimirovich, from whom it received its name; the designation *Polsky* was given to it from the fields surrounding it, and to distinguish it from Yuriev in Livonia. Today it is a district town of the Vladimir Governorate.

fame spread far and wide, moved Nikon's soul to compunction, and his heart burned with the desire to see this holy man and imitate his life. With contrition of heart and shedding abundant tears, Nikon fervently besought the Lord God:

"O God and Lord, eternal and merciful King, grant me to see this holy man and to follow him all my life, that I too may be saved for his sake and be made worthy of Thy eternal blessings, which Thou hast promised to those who love Thee."

And soon he left his parents' home and hastened to the monastery of Venerable Sergius. Having reached the monastery, Nikon hastened to see the great ascetic Sergius himself, and falling at his feet, earnestly begged him to tonsure him into the monastic order in his holy monastery. Venerable Sergius saw the boy's good sense and purity of soul, and at once loved him with all his heart. Yet, foreseeing with spiritual eyes that he would become a future lamp of Divine light, he did not spare Nikon a trial, but dealt with him as Euthymius the Great had once dealt with Sabbas the Sanctified, when the latter came to him while still a youth. He did not receive Sabbas into his monastery, but sent him to a distant monastery, to his fellow faster, Venerable Theoctistus[19]. So too Venerable Sergius sent the young boy to be instructed by his disciple Athanasius of Vysotsk, founder of the Serpukhov Monastery—a man renowned for his virtuous life and seasoned in monastic struggles[20].

"Go without hesitation," he said to the boy, "and, if it be pleasing to God, you will there receive the monastic habit."

18. On the site of ancient *Radonezh* there now stands the village of Gorodishche or Gorodok; it lies 12 versts from the Holy Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra, in the direction of Moscow.

19. "Venerable Euthymius considered it unsuitable to admit to a council composed chiefly of elder ascetics a youth of an age that sometimes requires separate guidance. Thus, probably, Venerable Sergius also reasoned concerning the young Nikon. He resolved to test him in the ascetic labor of obedience and humility. Foreseeing his future destiny, however, he wished that the one who was destined to be superior over the older ascetics of the Lavra should appear before them at least not as a youth, but already in the rank of presbyter." (Life of Venerable Nikon, composed by Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, p. 4).

20. Venerable Athanasius of Vysotsk, builder of the Vysotsky Monastery at Serpukhov, was one of the most beloved disciples of Venerable Sergius.

Nikon humbly accepted this command from the Venerable Father. Burning with love for God and longing to become a monk, he hastened to the blessed Athanasius.

When he reached his monastery, he humbly approached Athanasius's cell and softly knocked at the door. Athanasius opened the little window a crack and asked him:

"What do you want, and whom are you seeking?" The elder loved stillness and rarely left his cell.

The boy bowed to him to the ground and answered:

"Great abba, the blessed Sergius has sent me to you, that you may clothe me in the monastic order."

At this the elder, without looking at him, said sternly:

"You cannot be a monk: monastic life is a great undertaking; you are young, and the rules of the elders are severe."

The boy answered:

"Father, not all people are alike. Only receive me, and time will show whether I can bear the hardships of the monastic life."

But the elder continued:

"Many have come here, but, growing idle and unable to endure the hardships of fasting and abstinence, they have fled. And I tell you that you will not be able to remain here; go elsewhere and give yourself to fasting."

Hearing these words, the boy, his soul burning with Divine fire, tearfully promised the elder that he would patiently endure every affliction. Seeing the boy's abundant tears and ardent longing for the monastic life, the elder brought him into his cell and instructed him:

"Do not be offended, child, by what I have said to you. The monastic struggle is a great undertaking: monks are called voluntary martyrs, and their martyrdom is twofold. Many martyrs suffered for a short time and then met their end; but monks endure sufferings throughout their whole lives. Though they receive no wounds from their persecutors, yet, beset by the flesh and warring against spiritual enemies, they suffer unto their last breath. Therefore, my son, if you wish to serve the Lord, prepare your soul to endure patiently all the temptations and sufferings inflicted by the enemies."

The boy fell at the elder's feet and could scarcely utter:

"Have mercy on me!"

Then the elder raised him and said:

"Rise, child! The Lord will guide you in the way of His commandments. I have said all this to you because I am a sinful man, though I have taken upon myself the ordering of God's work; now your desire shall be fulfilled."

Having said this, the elder offered a prayer and clothed Nikon in the monastic habit.

Athanasius instructed the young monk in virtue and taught him to endure all sufferings that lead to God, striving to fill his soul with courage and strength and setting an example for him in all things. Under Athanasius's guidance, Nikon devoted himself to prayer and advanced in virtue, in the struggles of fasting, and in unceasing vigilance over himself; he guarded purity, humility, and meekness, and diligently studied Divine Scripture. Seeing such diligence in the boy, Athanasius took fatherly care of him and, urging him to further struggles, assisted his gradual progress toward monastic perfection.

When Nikon reached mature age, at the desire of Athanasius and all the brethren, he was honored with the rank of priesthood, as one worthy to stand before God. After receiving the priesthood and being granted a twofold grace, the valiant Nikon showed still greater zeal for the struggles of piety.

Having spent some time in the monastery, Nikon once more burned with an irresistible desire to see the great elder and ascetic, Venerable Sergius, in order to receive his blessing and hear from him a God-wise instruction. Nikon earnestly entreated Athanasius to pray for him and send him forth from the monastery in peace. Athanasius did not detain Nikon, but, having sent him forth with prayers, let him depart.

Coming to the Lavra of Venerable Sergius and seeing the God-bearing Father, Nikon fell at his feet with fervent tears and asked his blessing. The Venerable Father not only gladly received him as a visitor, but kept him in his monastery.

After this, Venerable Sergius commanded Nikon to serve the brethren of the monastery with all diligence, and Nikon fulfilled the

obedience laid upon him with all zeal, ceaselessly devoting himself to prayer and vigil. For such struggles and pious life, Venerable Sergius showed Nikon special love and confidence, and commanded him to dwell in the same cell with himself. Here, in converse with his God-wise instructor, Venerable Nikon found the highest school of spiritual wisdom and, in the close example of the saint, fresh encouragement to the struggles of virtue; in his instructor's discerning guidance and mighty prayer Nikon found strength to guard against temptations, fortitude against weaknesses, and the delight of paradise in sharing that prayer. Sergius's loving heart was an open door, whence grace-filled light and peace shone forth upon Nikon. And Nikon's faithful heart toward Sergius was likewise an open door through which he disclosed to his father all his thoughts and intentions, so that no darkness of doubt or confusion might cloud the purity of his conscience. Thus, like a tree planted beside a stream of water, Nikon, faithfully receiving all the instructions and teachings of his teacher, brought forth abundant fruits of virtue in his deeds.

The wise instructor, Venerable Sergius, foreseeing with inward eyes the most radiant grace that was to shine forth in Nikon, wished to appoint him superior of the monastery in his own stead. At first Sergius entrusted Nikon with part of his care for the brethren, setting him, as it were, second after the superior. Nikon discharged this new service with all heed and vigilance, constantly keeping unceasing care for the brethren entrusted to him and treating each with love and fatherly concern. Finding in Nikon so skillful a guide for the brethren, Sergius rejoiced in spirit, and at last, six months before his repose, summoned Nikon and, before them all, entrusted to him, as a capable leader, the care of the monastery and the brethren. Although Nikon did not wish to take upon himself the difficult duties of guiding the whole Lavra, he did not dare disobey his instructor, but humbly obeyed his command like an obedient son.

Before long, Venerable Sergius departed unto the Lord[21]. The heart of his faithful disciple was pierced with great sorrow.

21. The repose of Venerable Sergius took place on 26 September 1392.

In grief and shedding abundant tears, he addressed the saint as though he were alive, saying:

"Thou hast departed, Venerable Father, my every hope. In whom shall I find refuge after God, and where shall I find consolation?"

And falling upon the saint's bier and embracing his precious relics, he would rather have been buried together with his teacher than parted from him.

Having committed the holy body of his teacher to the grave with great lamentation and weeping, Nikon took up the leadership of the Lavra after him. He resolved to carry out faithfully everything that the great founder of the monastery, Sergius, had established and commanded, and, sharing the labors of the brethren as the abbot of the monastery, he took care of and was solicitous for each one. Those who were advancing in the service of the Lord he encouraged not to relax their ascetic struggles; the negligent and the lazy he admonished with grief not to forget that they had renounced the world and, concerned for their own salvation, must not give themselves over to worldly cares, lest they lose the eternal reward. He had the custom of going around all the places of the monastery where the monks labored, encouraging and exhorting them to bear their toil with patience, and he himself served as an example to the brethren by taking part in the common labors. By his meekness, by his fatherly concern for the brethren, and by his wisdom in governance and counsel, Nikon not only won the respect and love of the brethren, but his fame spread far beyond the walls of the Monastery of Sergius, and the name of Nikon, as "a certain sanctification," was glorified everywhere, in the cities and the villages. Many devout and distinguished people came to him for instruction for the benefit of their souls, and he received them all with fatherly goodwill, being a great spiritual physician.

But Nikon, who loved above all silence and prayer in solitude, was not seduced by this human glory, and was greatly burdened by it. And so, with the thought that one who desires to do the will of God must first of all despise and hate all the allurements of the world, Nikon began to shun the leadership over his flock, and at last he shut himself up in a solitary cell. The brethren grieved greatly over this, and, not

wishing that he should leave them and abandon them without his guidance, they begged him with tears not to forsake them, as sheep without a shepherd. But he remained unyielding in his resolve, asking the brethren not to break his heart with their entreaties. Seeing Nikon's so unyielding desire, the brethren did not try to keep him back, knowing that he was shrinking from the burden of leadership not for the sake of bodily rest, but striving toward higher labors and contemplative silence. Being unable to remain without a superior, the brethren chose one of Nikon's disciples, named Sabbas, a man who shone with a virtuous life, and, with Nikon's blessing, appointed him hegumen over themselves.[22]

For six years Nikon remained in silence while Sabbas governed the flock, tending it with diligence and aided by the prayers of the blessed Sergius. But after six years had passed, Sabbas also laid down the leadership. Then the brethren, as if giving the Venerable Nikon rest from the affairs of governance and allowing him to enjoy the silence he desired, came to him again and with tears implored and urged him to take them under his guidance once more. Seeing that Nikon was now also intent on shrinking from leadership and authority, the brethren said to him:

"It is not fitting for you, Father, to seek only your own benefit; take thought also for the salvation of your neighbors."

This insistent entreaty of the monks and their love compelled Nikon to part with his beloved solitude, and he yielded to the wishes of the brethren, but on the condition that they grant him a portion of each day for solitary ascetic labors and prayer.

Quietly and pleasingly to God the life of the holy monastery flowed on. Nikon, for his part, unceasingly abided in prayerful vigil, being instructed in the Word of God and in the writings of the Fathers.

But then a rumor spread of the invasion of the Russian land by the wild hordes of the fierce Edigey.[23] The approach of the Tatar hordes filled the whole Russian land with terror and trembling. The Venerable Nikon, praying fervently for deliverance from the cruel enemy, called upon in his prayers the great founder of this monastery, the Venerable

22. Sabbas of Dubna (afterwards of Zvenigorod or Storozhevsk). His memory is 3 December.
23. The invasion of Edigei took place at the end of 1408.

Sergius, that he might extend his prayer before the throne of the Lord of all, Christ, lest He give over the holy monastery to desolation at the hand of the impious Hagarenes, and lest the triumph of the unbelievers shake the faith of the weak. And so, one night, Nikon sat down to rest after his labors in prayer and was in a half-slumber or light sleep. Suddenly he sees entering his cell the hierarchs Peter and Alexis, accompanied by the Venerable Sergius, who, turning to him, said:

"Thus it is pleasing to the Lord that this invasion of foreign peoples should come and touch this place. But you, child, do not grieve, but take courage, and let your heart be strengthened: the trial will not be long, and the monastery will not be laid waste, but will spread even more."

Then, having bestowed peace and blessing upon Nikon, the saints became invisible. Nikon, coming to himself, quickly rose and went to the door of his cell, but found it locked. He unlocked it and went out and saw the saints departing from his cell toward the church. Then he understood that this had not been a dream but a true vision.

In submission to the will of God, Nikon awaited the fulfillment of the prediction. Soon the barbarians, who had flooded the Russian land with their hordes, reached also the monastery of the Venerable Sergius and gave everything in it over to devastation and fire. The Venerable Nikon and the brethren, forewarned by the heavenly message, withdrew in good time from the monastery and took with them some sacred objects and cell belongings. Thus were saved some books and vessels of the Venerable Sergius, which had survived to that time.

When the danger had passed, Nikon and the brethren returned to the ashes of the holy monastery. The monastery had been burned to the ground and the holy place defiled by the unbelievers. But Nikon did not give himself over to grief and despondency, nor did he grow weak in his labor. Just as a valiant warrior, at his first defeat by the enemy, does not flee but bravely gathers his strength and wins the victory, so he began with calm firmness to labor at the restoration of the monastery. As a good shepherd, he first gathered the scattered brethren and worked with them on the monastery buildings. In less than three years the structures necessary for common monastic life were built; for common prayers, it seems, they at first gathered in the refectory hall. At

the same time Nikon hastened the construction of a wooden church in the name of the Life-Originating Trinity, which was consecrated in 1411, on 25 September, the day of the repose of the Venerable Sergius.

When word of the return of the Venerable Nikon and of the restoration of the monastery spread through the surrounding places, monks and laity began to gather to him from everywhere in multitudes. Nikon received them all with fatherly affection, and, as a good shepherd, he left no one without his care, instructing each in useful teachings, enlightening their souls, and offering them rules for ordering their lives. The monastery was reborn on its ashes and spread more and more.[24]

As a provident superior, the Venerable Nikon did not neglect his concern for the adornment of the monastery. The final labor of his in this respect was the building of a stone church over the grave of his teacher Sergius, in the name of the Life-Originating Trinity.

At the very beginning of the works, while digging the trenches for the stone church, there took place the uncovering and glorification of the incorrupt relics of the Venerable Sergius.[25] Nikon received this discovery of the relics of the great teacher as a joyful crown and a sweet reward for his labors and patience. Amid general rejoicing, the holy relics of the Venerable were placed in a new reliquary and for a time were set in the wooden church,[26] until a place had been prepared for them in the stone church.[27] As the resting place for the relics of the great Sergius, the new church was built and adorned with reverent love and with

24. Under Nikon the Sergian monastery acquired several lands, sometimes through gifts and sometimes by purchase. Through Nikon's care the monastery grew rich also in spiritual treasure. In his time, and at his direction, there were copied in the Sergian monastery, besides several liturgical books, two copies of the "Ladder" with the chapters of Gregory the Sinaite, the instructions of Abba Dorotheus, the "Diopter" of Philip the Hermit with the answers of Abba Barsanuphius and with the admonitions of Hesychius. (Description of the Sergius Lavra, pp. 155, 156, etc.).

25. The uncovering of the relics of Venerable Sergius took place 30 years after the saint's repose – on 5 July 1422; in memory of which the feast was established.

26. The wooden church that stood over the relics of Venerable Sergius was moved to a new place (where the church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit now stands), and in it the holy relics were placed while the stone church was being built.

27. This stone church in the name of the Holy Trinity, built by Venerable Nikon, is the Trinity Cathedral that exists to this day.

fervent prayers. For the erection of this church Nikon gathered wise architects and skilled stonemasons, who, with God's help, quickly completed its construction. The new church was consecrated, and at its consecration the holy relics of the Venerable Sergius were transferred and placed within it. As the work of the saints and the repose of Sergius, this beautiful church, not shaken by the centuries, sanctifies even now those who pray in it, and the hands of impious enemies have not touched it.[28]

Nikon also cared for the interior adornment of the church and the painting of its walls. For this work he invited two ascetic monks, renowned for their virtuous life, Daniel and Andrew, skilled in iconography.[29] By their diligence and under their direction, the church was splendidly adorned with iconography. When Nikon saw that the decoration of the church with painting was finished, he gave thanks to God with great joy:

"I thank Thee, O Lord," he said, "and glorify Thy most holy name, that Thou hast not despised my petition, but hast granted me, unworthy as I am, to see all this with my own eyes."

By this time Nikon had already reached deep old age, but zeal and vigor of spirit did not leave him, and bodily infirmity did not slacken the rigor of his labors. Having attained perfection in his ascetic struggles, he possessed all the forms of that wealth by which a man becomes rich in God. He burned, as it were, with a wondrous striving for a life according to God: his food was abstinence, his wealth was non-acquisitiveness; his aged body was covered by a single hair shirt.

At last the Venerable Nikon drew near to his own end. Old age, together with his great fasting labors and many prolonged illnesses, had worn down his body, and its strength had failed.

28. Venerable Nikon built the Trinity Cathedral with the assistance of princes and boyars who venerated the memory of Venerable Sergius. The chief among these admirers, who most helped Nikon in building the church, was the godson or godchild of Venerable Sergius – Prince Yury Dmitrievich of Zvenigorod-Galich (son of Donskoy). [Having begun to build the church in 1422 or 1423, Venerable Nikon built and arranged it almost until his own death.]

29. Daniel the Black and Andrei Rublev – monks of the Moscow Andronikov Monastery – were the renowned icon painters of that time. The icons painted by them enjoy great fame to this day. Among the surviving examples of their work, the church icon in the Trinity Cathedral of the Sergius Lavra is especially remarkable.

Foreknowing the nearness of his departure to the Lord, Nikon ordered the brethren to be summoned to him. While they surrounded his bed, standing in tears, the Venerable, raising himself a little, addressed them with his final word of admonition.

He bequeathed that the order of prayer established in the monastery, by day and by night, be observed; that they should not often go out of the monastery; that they should keep patience in temptations; that they should observe obedience to those in authority in the monastery; that they should hate idleness, the nest of vices; that they should love diligence, joining it with the chanting of the sacred Psalms; and that they should gladly keep silence, as the mother of virtues, leading to perfection. Adding to this an admonition concerning love for mankind, he bequeathed to the brethren:

"If it is possible, do not let anyone depart from you empty-handed, lest you unwittingly show contempt for Christ Himself, who appeared to you in the guise of one who asks. Be watchful and pray unceasingly, that the Lord may keep you unharmed from the enemy, and that you may preserve the vow of chastity and obedience, in accordance with my exhortations."

Having finished his instructions to the brethren, that they keep all the rules he had bequeathed, Nikon fell silent. And behold, in a vision, even before the separation of the soul from the body, the place of his future repose beside Venerable Sergius was shown to him. Not clearly revealing this to the brethren, out of his humility, Nikon, in the exhaustion of his last hour, suddenly said:

"Carry me into that bright chamber which has been prepared for me through the prayers of my father; I no longer wish to remain here."

Having said this, Nikon received the Most Pure Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. After this, forewarning the brethren of his approaching death, he said:

"Behold, brethren, I am released from the bond of the body and am departing to Christ."

Giving them his final blessing, and speaking to himself, "Depart, O my soul, to the place that has been prepared for you; go forth with joy, for Christ calls you," Nikon, making the sign of the Cross over himself

at the last, gave up his honorable and laborious soul to the Lord with prayer. This was on 17 November 1426.

Nikon had been abbot for 36 years, in no way violating the monastic rule, shepherding in a manner pleasing to God the flock entrusted to him by Christ, and teaching it the highest virtues. The brethren lamented greatly, shedding tears at their parting from their father and teacher. Having escorted him with the singing of psalms and funeral hymns, the brethren, with due honor as befitted a revered father, committed his honorable body to the earth, laying it near the shrine of Venerable Sergius, where to this day they offer supplicatory hymns in his honor to the Holy Trinity—the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.[30]

For his great struggles and holy life, Venerable Nikon was granted by the Lord, even during his life, the gift of clairvoyance, and after his repose the gift of wonderworking. Of his many miracles we mention here some.

Once, Nikon intended to send one of his monks, named Acacius, to one of the villages belonging to the monastery of St. Sergius. Unwilling to obey, Acacius said:

"I did not renounce the world in order to go around cities and villages."

The venerable one long entreated Acacius, but he would by no means fulfill his abbot's command. Then the venerable one foretold:

"Look, Acacius, lest it happen that you find yourself there against your will, and then you will receive the reward for your disobedience."

Soon after that, Venerable Nikon reposed in the Lord. Acacius, however, forgot everything that the holy father had foretold him, and set off for the very village to which Venerable Nikon had sent him. And

30. Venerable Nikon is buried outside the Trinity Cathedral, by its southern wall opposite the place where Venerable Sergius was buried within the cathedral itself. Venerable Nikon was numbered among the saints by the council of 1547, but a service to him and his Life had been written by Pachomius the Logothete nearly a hundred years earlier, at the will of Metropolitan St. Jonah. The church over the tomb of Venerable Nikon was erected in 1548. In 1623, that is, 76 years later, a new, larger church was set up in place of this first church. This second church exists to the present time. [The shrine of Venerable Sergius is separated by a single stone wall from the shrine of his disciple, Venerable Nikon. In the north-western corner of the church, along the north wall, stands a shrine – a tomb-cover – over the relics of Venerable Nikon, which lie in the earth or beneath a covering.]

there the judgment of God, foretold by the saint, suddenly overtook him: he fell into a derangement of mind, so that the brethren brought him back to the monastery. There St. Nikon appeared to him and, holding a staff in his hands, said to him reproachfully:

"Acacius! Did you renounce the world in order to go around cities and villages?"

Then great fear seized Acacius and he began to cry out frantically. He remained in this grievous state for several days, staying at the shrine of Venerable Sergius and Nikon and praying with tears for the forgiveness of his sin; the brethren likewise prayed for him with equal zeal. And then, by the grace of Christ and through the prayers of the saints, Acacius received forgiveness for his transgression and was healed. He himself told all this with tears to the many who questioned him.

In their earthly life, Venerable Sergius and Nikon were especially close to one another. This mutual closeness does not leave them in the life eternal, for the love of the saints, like divine love, is not subject to the law of time. Together they have many times appeared and worked wonders jointly.

One of the inhabitants of Moscow, named Simeon, who was born according to the saint's prediction, fell ill so gravely that he could neither move, nor sleep, nor take food, but lay like one dead on his bed. Suffering thus, he one night began to call upon St. Sergius for help:

"Help me, Venerable Sergius, deliver me from this sickness; even during your life you were so merciful to my parents and foretold my birth to them; do not forget me, who suffer in so grievous an illness."

Suddenly two elders appeared before him; one of them was Nikon. The sick man at once recognized him, for he had personally known this saint during his lifetime; then he understood that the second of those who appeared was Venerable Sergius himself. The wondrous elder made the sign of the Cross over the sick man, and after this bade Nikon take the icon that stood by the bed—it had once been given to Simeon by Nikon himself. Then it seemed to the sick man that all the skin had come away from his body; after this the saints became invisible. In that very moment Simeon felt that he was completely healed: he rose from

his bed, and no one supported him any longer; then he understood that it was not his skin that had come away, but that the illness had left him. His joy was great; rising, he began to thank fervently St. Sergius and Venerable Nikon for his unexpected and so marvelous healing.

Especially many miracles were wrought by Venerable Sergius and Nikon during the siege of the Trinity Monastery by the Poles under the leadership of Lisovsky and Sapieha, when the holy monastery had to endure many calamities from the enemy. Nikon together with Venerable Sergius often appeared not only to the besieged, encouraging and strengthening them with hope in the help of God, but also to the enemies who besieged the Lavra, terrifying them and threatening them with the wrath of God.[31] Many of the besiegers and their commanders saw two radiant elders, resembling Sergius and Nikon, walking along the monastery walls; one censed the walls with a censer, and the other sprinkled them with holy water.

Once, when the siege of the monastery by the enemy still continued, and among the besieged there appeared sicknesses from hunger and all kinds of privation, Nikon appeared in a dream to the sacristan Irinarkh and said to him:

"Tell all who suffer from sickness that this night snow will fall, and let all who desire to be healed of their infirmities rub themselves with this snow."

Irinarkh awoke with trembling and in the morning told those around him what the wonderworker Nikon had related to him. And indeed, during the night snow fell, and whoever with faith rubbed himself with this snow became healthy.[32]

Here is another case from recent times (1846). In the monastery infirmary, the rassophore novice Gabriel suffered grievously from nervous fever; for several days he was unconscious, and it was thought he would not survive the illness. On the night of the commemoration of Venerable Nikon, he saw that his soul seemed to be parting from the

31. The siege of the Trinity Monastery by the Poles, under the command of Lisowski and Sapieha, began on 23 September 1608; the siege ended on 12 January 1610.
32. "Account of the Siege of the Trinity Sergius Monastery," by Abraham Palitsyn. Moscow, 1822, p. 157.

body and hastening into some abyss. Mentally he began to beseech Venerable Sergius and Nikon to restore him to life, that he might prepare himself by repentance for eternity. (All this time, as others saw, he lay unconscious and motionless.) Suddenly he saw, as though doors had opened; two radiant elders entered, one with a staff—in this one he recognized Venerable Sergius, and in the other Venerable Nikon. Venerable Sergius, pointing with his staff to the sick man, said to Venerable Nikon, "Help!" Venerable Nikon approached, and by his very nearness filled the sick man with strength and joy. The sick man raised himself, crossed himself, and the venerable ones became invisible. Gabriel came to his senses; the illness passed, and only weakness remained.[33]

Troparion, Tone 1:

Having been a diligent steward of obedience, O Venerable Nikon of blessed memory, thou didst raise up the beautiful Church of the Holy Trinity in praise of thy father. Wherefore we also, thy children, cry out to thee with love: Glory to Him who gave thee strength; glory to Him who crowned thee; glory to Him who through thee worketh healings for all.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having wholly clung to thy spiritual superior, O Father Nikon, and being taught by him, having in all things been enslaved to Christ, thou wast the head of monks and the companion of the venerable ones; with them pray unceasingly to Christ God for us all.

* * *

Memory of Venerable Lazarus the Scribe

Память преподобного Лазаря Писца

Venerable Lazarus lived in Constantinople and from his youth dedicated himself to monastic struggles. From childhood he led a

33. *Monastery Letters*, Moscow, 1863, pp. 69–71. Letter 19, of 18 November 1846.

severe life, constantly abiding in fasting and prayer. But chiefly he exercised himself in works of mercy, feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. For his ascetic and pious life, the Venerable Saint was granted the priestly rank. This was in the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus.[34]

Under Theophilus, Venerable Lazarus also suffered torment for his zeal on behalf of the veneration of icons. Having dedicated himself to the service of God, Lazarus studied the art of icon-painting and zealously devoted himself to painting holy icons to the glory of God, of His Most Pure Mother, and of His saints. Theophilus, however, was an iconoclast; he subjected all who venerated the holy icons to persecution, and he compelled icon-painters to spit upon the icons and trample them underfoot. Venerable Lazarus, as an icon-painter, was seized and subjected to examination in the faith. But in vain did they seek to incline him to iconoclastic heresy, now by flattering exhortations, now by threats; Lazarus remained unyielding. Then they began to beat him without mercy, and afterward cast him into prison. But even in prison the holy man continued to paint icons. Then the lawless tormentor commanded that the saint's fingers be seared with red-hot iron plates, so as to deprive him of every ability to paint icons. At this, Venerable Lazarus was even threatened with death. Only with difficulty was his life saved, through the intercession of the pious Empress Theodora.[35] Released to freedom, Venerable Lazarus found refuge in the church of St. John the Baptist, and there he painted an icon which quickly acquired fame as wonderworking. When Theophilus died, the Venerable one was thereafter free to devote himself without hindrance to the painting of holy icons. In this, the saint did not in the least recall the evil done to him, but even prayed for his tormentor.

In the reign of the Emperor Michael III,[36] son of Theophilus and Theodora, Venerable Lazarus took part, among the members of an em-

34. Emperor Theophilus reigned from 829 to 842 A.D.

35. Empress Theodora is known in history for her services on behalf of Orthodoxy. When, after the death of Theophilus, the empress, because her son Michael was a minor, became regent of the empire, she restored the veneration of icons. In the capital the icons were restored to their places for veneration with particular solemnity on the first Sunday of Great Lent. This day is called the "Triumph of Orthodoxy" and is commemorated annually by the Church.

bassy sent to Pope Benedict III,[37] and on the return journey from Rome he reposed. His honorable relics were transferred to Constantinople and buried there in the church of St. Evander.[38]

* * *

NOTES

7474. Origen, the most famous Christian teacher of the Alexandrian Church (d. 254), the wonder of his age for the greatness of his mind and the depth of his learning, was at that time the outstanding catechist of the Alexandrian catechetical school. He educated 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 reconcile knowledge and philosophy with that faith. Especially remarkable are his labors in the study of Holy Scripture, in its interpretation, and especially 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 also for subsequent ages, and all the great teachers of the Church of the fourth century regarded Origen with the greatest respect and made considerable use of his writings. Origen drew into the catechetical school a mass of listeners, among whom were many pagan youths zealously seeking higher enlightenment. It was with him that St. Gregory became acquainted in Alexandria, and he became his zealous disciple. Origen, according to Gregory's own words, first caused him to seek the scattered seeds of truth in the systems of the philosophers and awakened in him a love for truth; then he began to set forth the beginnings of the Christian faith and to explain Holy Scripture. After eight years' stay with Origen, Gregory received holy baptism from him and, having thanked his teacher with a public address, returned to his homeland in sorrow at the parting from him. "I think," thus Gregory wrote of his teacher, "that he spoke this only under the inspiration of the Spirit of God: in order to be a prophet and to interpret a prophet, his power is needed. And no one can understand a prophet unless the Spirit of God Himself imparts understanding of His words. This man received from God the greatest gift: to be an interpreter of the word of God to men, to understand the word of God as God Himself used it, and to explain it to men as they can understand it."

7477. Sabellius and Paul of Samosata incorrectly taught concerning the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. The former asserted that God is one Person: as Father He is in heaven, as Son He is on earth, as Holy Spirit He is in creatures. According to the teaching of Sabellius, these are only certain forms in which God appears to men: in the Old Testament He appears as Lawgiver, as Father; in the New, as Savior, He appeared as Son, and continues to appear as the Spirit who sanctifies them. Paul of Samosata (by his

36. Emperor Michael III reigned from 842 to 877 A.D.
37. Pope Benedict III governed the Roman Church from 866 to 868 A.D.
38. In 1200 the relics of the Venerable Lazarus were seen in Constantinople by the Russian pilgrim Antony, afterwards Archbishop of Novgorod.

place of birth), bishop of Antioch, wrongly taught that the Son and the Holy Spirit are in God the Father, just as mind and power (reason and spirit) are in man. Acknowledging Christ as a mere man filled with the Holy Spirit and with divine wisdom, Paul forbade, in the Church of Antioch, the singing of verses in honor of Jesus Christ as God, and baptism in His Name. The followers of this heresy were called Patripassians, since, not distinguishing the Persons of the Godhead, they ascribed the incarnation and sufferings to God the Father.

7478. St. Gregory of Nyssa, having related the miraculous origin of this Creed, adds: "If anyone wishes to be assured of this, let him hear the Church in which he preached, and in which to this day the original, written by a blessed hand, is preserved." Blessed Macrina, grandmother of Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, who had heard the Wonderworker himself, brought his symbol to Cappadocia and taught her grandchildren by it, including Basil the Great. Gregory the Theologian also was guided by this symbol. Rufinus included it in his translation of the Church History of Eusebius of Caesarea. And the Fifth Ecumenical Council (623) approved it. The Creed of Gregory the Wonderworker represents one of the most precious monuments of antiquity. It is not lengthy, but it contains the exact teaching concerning the Three Persons of the Godhead, Their consubstantiality, the personal qualities and actions of Them in relation to man, and therefore it is fully worthy of precise study.

7479. "After this miracle," says St. Gregory of Nyssa, "this man, immediately believing the word (of Gregory) and leaving his family, house, wife, children, friends, priesthood, and property, preferred, in place of all the goods that belonged to him, fellowship with that great man and participation in his labors and in that divine love of wisdom and teaching. Let every artificial inventiveness of the chroniclers be silent here, which with rhetoric exaggerates the dimensions of wondrous deeds, for the aforesaid miracle is not such that the power of the rhetoric that recounts it could make it larger or smaller than it is. Who, by saying something beyond what has been said, will increase this miracle?... A stone is rejected from stones..., a stone becomes a preacher of the divine faith and a guide of the unbelieving unto salvation, not by any voice, not by a word proclaiming the divine power, but by what it did, showing that the One proclaimed by Gregory is God, to Whom all creation is equally subject and obedient, not only that which is sensible, living and animate, but also every other thing besides these, which serves Him so obsequiously as though it were not deprived of sense"...

7483. "For the river," says St. Gregory of Nyssa, "this tree served as the limit of its course, and for the inhabitants of that place it serves as a spectacle and the subject of a historical account. For when this river, swollen by rains and streams, rushes forward with rapid force and terrible noise, then, striking the surface of its waves against the trunk of this tree, it rises upward again and directs the flow of the waters toward the middle of the channel, and as though afraid to touch this tree, it goes around the place with an oblique current. Such is the power of the great Gregory, or rather, of God, who works wonders through him! For the nature of the elements, like some servant, appears to change as it is bidden, so that a lake is transformed into dry land, and a place flooded by water becomes inhabited, because the staff made it safe for the inhabitants. To this

day the tree bears the name *staff* (*zhezl*), and the local inhabitants preserve it all the while in memory of the grace and power of Gregory"...



THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 18

18 ноября

New Calendar November 18 · Old Calendar December 1 (civil dates)

Passion of Holy Martyr Plato

Страдание святого мученика Платона

Holy Martyr Plato, brother of Holy Martyr Antiochus, was from the land of Galatia, from the city of Ancyra,[1] born of Christian parents, and was brought up in piety. Even before reaching his majority he had made progress in the virtues. Though still of youthful age, he was already mature in mind. Among the godless idolaters he boldly preached Christ, the Eternal God, and taught the pagans who lingered in error, that they might know the truth and turn from demonic delusion to God. For this he was seized by the unbelievers and brought to trial before the provincial governor Agrippinus.

Agrippinus at that time was in the temple of Zeus, and there he sat down to judge the Confessor of Christ. Looking at him, he said:

– The whole world honors its gods; you alone go astray and turn away from them!

The Saint answered:

– You have gone astray, forsaking God who created heaven and earth and all their beauty, and you worship stone and perishable wood, the work of human hands.

Agrippinus said:

– Your youth makes you bold and insolent. Tell me your name, what you are called, and from what city you come.

1. Galatia – a small mountainous but fertile region of Asia Minor, lying between Phrygia, Bithynia, Pontus and Cappadocia, in the centre of the Asia Minor peninsula. Christianity was planted here by St. Paul, who founded the Galatian Church and afterwards wrote an epistle to the Galatians, who listened to him as an Angel of God (Gal. 4:14). – Ancyra, now Ankara, one of the principal cities of Galatia.

The Saint answered:

– My parents named me Plato; from my mother's womb I am a servant of Christ, and by citizenship I belong to this city. Now, for my piety, I stand before your unrighteous judgment and await an undeserved death, which I ardently desire to accept for my Lord. Do, then, what you intend to do.

– It is not fitting for you, Plato, – the provincial governor replied, – to teach about the Crucified One or even to keep His name in your mind, since royal authority commands that those who confess Him be put to a grievous death, while those who renounce Him be granted great honors. Therefore I advise you to submit to the royal command, and then you will be able to escape death.

Saint Plato answered:

– I obey my King, God. For Him I fight, and I gladly accept temporal death in order to be an heir of the eternal Kingdom.

– Consider, Plato, – the governor said to this, – what is better for you: to remain alive, or to undergo a grievous death?

Plato answered:

– The Lord will provide for what is more profitable for me.

– Do you not know, – the governor replied, – the unalterable royal laws which command that Christians either offer sacrifice to the gods or suffer death? How, then, do you dare to violate the royal laws and lead others astray?

The Saint answered:

– I know the statutes of my God and I do what His holy and life-giving commandments require, and they require, rejecting demonic sacrifices, that we serve the One True God. To Him alone I render service, and your gods I despise. But you, in accordance with the royal command, subject me to torments as you wish. You are already accustomed to torturing Christians, and Christians are accustomed to suffering for Christ.

The provincial governor Agrippinus, who was of a savage disposition, seeing that the Saint did not submit to his godless will and contradicted him, in terrible wrath commanded that he be laid naked on the ground, and he set twelve soldiers to beat the Saint in turn. And they

beat him mercilessly over his whole body for a long time, so that the soldiers who struck him grew very weary, but the holy sufferer did not tire of enduring and confessing the name of his Lord Jesus Christ.

Then, when the soldiers ceased beating him, the governor, as though sparing him, began to speak to him gently:

– I advise you as a friend, Plato: turn from death to life.

The martyr answered:

– You teach me well, Agrippinus, to turn from death to life. I myself flee from eternal death and seek immortal life.

Agrippinus, in wrath, said to the Saint:

– Tell me, wretched man, how many deaths are there?

The Saint answered:

– Two deaths: one temporal and the other eternal. Likewise there are two lives: one of brief duration and the other endless.

– Leave off your fables, – the governor replied, – and bow down to the gods, so that you may be spared cruel torment.

The Saint answered:

– Neither fire, nor wounds, nor the fury of beasts, nor the loss of my limbs (of my body) will separate me from the Living God, for I have loved not the present age, but Christ my Lord, who died for me and rose again.

Then the governor commanded that Saint Plato be led to the prison. As he was being led, the people followed him, looking upon his sufferings as upon some spectacle. Among the people there were many Christians. Approaching the prison, the steadfast and great-spirited martyr of Christ, Plato, turned to the people, and, bidding them be silent, began to speak in a loud voice:

– Men who love the truth, know that I have undertaken this feat of suffering for no other reason than for the sake of God who created heaven and earth and all that is in them. As servants of Christ, I beg you not to be troubled by what is happening now, for "many are the afflictions of the righteous, and out of them all the Lord will deliver him" (Ps. 33:20).

Come, then, and let us all together take refuge in the quiet harbor and in the Rock of which the great Apostle says: "And that Rock was

Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4). And let us not faint in the afflictions to which we are subjected for the Christian faith, remembering that "the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18).

Having said this, the martyr entered the prison, and, kneeling down on the ground, addressed God with the following prayer:

– Lord Jesus Christ, Creator and Provider of all, who grantest to Thy servants patience and victory, grant that I, Thy humble and unworthy servant, may endure to the end worthily for Thy holy name. Send Thy Angel to deliver me from the deceitful and all-malicious serpent, Agrippinus, that all may know that those are not gods, whom the hand of man creates, but Thou art the One True God, long-suffering and abundant in mercy, glorified unto ages. Amen.

After seven days had passed, the tormentor again sat upon the tribunal in the temple of Zeus, and commanded that the holy martyr be brought. First he laid out before him various instruments of torture: copper cauldrons, boots with nails, red-hot balls, sharp rods, iron spikes, wheels, and many others, hoping to frighten the valiant warrior of Christ with them. Then he began to speak to him:

– Beloved Plato! Seeing your youth and the nobility of your parents, and sparing the beauty of your body, before I begin to torment you again, I advise you: taste of the sacrifice to our gods and be in fellowship with us, knowing well that none who opposes me will remain alive, and, on the contrary, none who obeys me will lose honor and the gifts I promise. And I, fair Plato, if you are willing to listen to me as to a father who gives you good counsel, will give you in marriage the only daughter of my brother, with great wealth, and I will call you my son.

But the blessed Plato, mocking him, said:

– Wretched man, hater of mankind, son of the devil and servant of Satan! If I resolved to bind myself with worldly allurements, and if I wished to take a wife, would I not find a better one than your brother's daughter? Indeed, I would rather take a slave-girl in her place. So shall I desire to take her now, when, leaving the world, I unite myself with Christ?

Then the tormentor, in a rage, commanded that the Saint be laid upon a bed of bronze, and that many coals be placed beneath the bed and kindled, pouring oil, wax and pitch upon the fire, and that the martyr's body be scorched, while from above he was struck with a thin rod, so that both the beating and the burning might intensify his torments. After such prolonged torments, Agrippinus said to the holy martyr:

– Wretched man, have mercy at last on yourself! If you will not bow down to the gods, then merely say these words: "Great is the god Apollo," and I will immediately cease tormenting you, and you will go home in peace.

But the Saint answered to this:

– Let it not be that I spare my body and prepare a fiery Gehenna for my soul.

After three hours, during which Plato was subjected to such torments, he was taken down from the bed, but his body was found whole and healthy, without even a trace of wounds or of fire, as if he had come out of a bath. Moreover, a strong fragrance went forth from his body, so that all who were there marveled and said:

– Truly great is the Christian God!

The provincial governor said to the Saint:

– If you will not offer sacrifice to our gods, then at least renounce only your Christ, and I will let you go.

But the Saint answered:

– You mad and godless man, how can you say that I should renounce my Savior? Do you really wish me to become like you, impious one? Is not your own destruction enough for you? But you wish to draw into it also others who belong to the number of Christ's warriors! Depart from me, lawless one. I believe in my God, that He will not forsake me or allow me to fall as you have fallen.

Then Agrippinus rose from his throne and himself began to torment the Saint. He heated iron rings, placed them under his shoulders, and scorched his ribs. Then he laid two very hot iron rings upon the martyr's chest, and smoke appeared from his nostrils, for the power of the fire penetrated even to his inner parts. Many thought he had already died. But after a little time he said to the tormentor:

– Feeble are your tortures, cruel blood-drinker!

Then, lifting up his gaze, the Saint said:

– "I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who struck Me; I hid not My face from shame and spitting" (Is. 50:6)[2]; "Be not far from me, O Lord, for trouble is near" (Ps. 21:12); "Why should the heathen say, Where is their God?" (Ps. 78:10). Grant me, Jesus Christ, Thy servant, having been wholly delivered from the torments of the enemy, to stand boldly before Thy dread Judgment, having completed this good contest; for in every place of Thy dominion, glory, honor, and might are due unto Thee, now and ever and unto the ages of ages.

And when he had said, "Amen," the temple shook, and all were afraid. Nevertheless, the stiff-necked would not acknowledge the power of God.

Then the torturer commanded that the skin of St. Plato be cut into strips and flayed from him. But the saint tore off one strip hanging from his body and flung it into Agrippinus' face, saying:

– Inhuman man, fiercer than all beasts! How is it that, unwilling to know God, Who created us in His own image, you have no pity even for flesh like that with which you yourself are clothed, but take delight in seeing my limbs mangled? Yet deliver me to still more savage torments, that both your inhumanity and my endurance may be seen by all; for I gladly endure all this for the sake of my Christ, that by His grace I may find rest in the age to come.

– Oh, how utterly mad you are! – Agrippinus replied. – You spare not even your own body, although your entrails are already protruding through your ribs, and yet you still do not cease to blaspheme the gods and provoke me to anger?

Then Agrippinus commanded that the saint be hung upon a tree and that his body be beaten until the flesh that had remained untouched fell away altogether from his bones, and almost all his blood had flowed out. He so mangled the holy face of the martyr with iron claws that no

2. These prophetic words in their full sense refer to the saving sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. But they may rightly be applied, to some degree, also to the martyrs of Christ, insofar as by their sufferings they share in the sufferings of Christ.

trace of human likeness remained, only bare bones. But St. Plato, whose tongue was free, reproached the torturer for his cruelty and cursed the idols and idolaters.

Then the torturer said:

– Plato! If you were not so obstinate and disobedient, you would resemble that wise Plato, the chief of philosophers[3], who composed divine teachings.

But the saint replied:

– Though I share a name with Plato, I do not share his purpose. A name cannot unite those whom their beliefs divide. Therefore, neither am I like that Plato, nor he like me, save in name alone. I learn and teach that philosophy which is Christ's; but he is the teacher of that philosophy which is foolishness before God, for it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (1 Cor. 1:19; cf. Is. 29:14). The teachings of Plato which you call divine are false fables, which by cunning words corrupt the minds of simple and guileless people.

When the saint ceased speaking, Agrippinus too fell silent, for he knew not what more to answer him or what to do with him, and marveled at his great endurance and bold replies. He ordered that he be taken to prison and that none of his acquaintances be allowed to visit him. But, lest the holy martyr die, the torturer commanded that a little bread and water be given him each day. The wretched man knew not that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every [word] that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deut. 8:3). But the martyr of Christ accepted nothing from the hands of the idolaters and remained without food or drink for eighteen days, so that the words of Scripture were fulfilled in him: "the just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4). He hoped that He Who had fed Daniel among the lions in the den (Dan. 6) would also nourish him in prison with incorruptible

3. *Philosopher* – in Greek means: lover of wisdom. Thus are called scholars who devoted themselves to the investigation of the highest questions of being: concerning God, concerning the beginning and laws of the world and of man, and the ultimate ends of the existence of the world, and so forth. – Plato, the most famous and greatest philosopher of antiquity (late 5th and early 6th century B.C.), who left behind him a multitude of works remarkable for the depth of their thought.

food. The guards, seeing that he took neither bread nor water, said to him:

– Eat and drink, man, lest you die, and we fall into trouble on your account.

But the blessed one replied:

– Do not think, brethren, that I shall die if I do not partake of your food. You are nourished by bread, but I am nourished by the Word of God, which abideth forever; meat satisfies you, but holy prayers satisfy me; wine gladdens you, but Christ, the true Vine, is my joy.

After this, the governor Agrippinus, seeing that he could in no way turn Plato away from Christ, condemned him to be beheaded with the sword. The martyr was led out of the city. Having asked for an hour to pray, he raised his hands on high and said:

– I thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, that by Thy holy name Thou hast defended me, Thy servant, from the enemy's deception, and hast granted me the grace worthily to complete the course of the contest I undertook for Thy sake. And now I beseech Thee: receive my soul in peace, for Thou art blessed forever. Amen.

Then he bowed his holy head and said to the soldier who was to behead him:

– Do, friend, what you have been commanded. – And at once he was beheaded. Thus did the holy Martyr Plato contend and die for Christ, that he might live and reign with Him forever.[7516]

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Thy holy memory maketh the universe glad, calling all the faithful to thy most honorable church, where now, gathered together in joy, we sing with hymns and splendor. Therefore, O Plato, we cry unto thee: deliver thy city from the assault of the heathen, O holy one.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Romanus and the Youth Varulus

Страдание святых мучеников Романа и отрока Варула

The holy Martyr Romanus was from Palestine and was a deacon of the Church of Caesarea. During the persecution of Christians by the pagans, he lived in Antioch[4], preaching the teaching and strengthening the faithful, that they might remain steadfast in their confession of Christ. When the impious eparch Asclepiades wished to raze the Christian church there to its foundations, St. Romanus urged the Christian people to resist the eparch and not allow him to destroy the holy church.

– Now, – he said to his fellow believers, – the struggle for the altars of God lies before us. Asclepiades is an enemy of his country and seeks to take God from us; and we shall do well if, defending the altars of God, we fall wounded at the threshold of the holy church. Whatever the outcome of the struggle, we Christians shall prove victorious: if we prevent the house of God from being destroyed, we shall triumph in the Church militant on earth; but if we fall slain beside the holy sanctuary, we shall sing the song of victory in the Church triumphant in heaven.

With such words he stirred them all to defend the holy church, to resist resolutely even unto death, and to allow the eparch neither to enter the church nor to destroy it.

At that time a pagan festival was held, and a multitude of heathen, with their wives and children, flocked to the idol temple. Then St. Romanus was inflamed with divine zeal, entered the crowds of the impious people, and began loudly to denounce their error. He even stopped the eparch Asclepiades himself as he was entering the idol temple, and said to him:

– You are deceived, eparch, in going to the idols: the idols are not gods, but there is one true God, Jesus Christ.

The eparch immediately ordered Romanus to be seized and struck violently on the mouth. Then, taking his seat on the judgment bench, he long compelled him to renounce Christ; but when he saw that he would not yield, he ordered him to be tortured. He was hung up, beaten with various instruments, and torn with iron claws. But St. Romanus, enduring these torments courageously, confessed the one God, Creator

4. This was on 17 November 303, under the co-ruler of the Roman emperor Diocletian, Maximian Galerius.

of all, and reproached the eparch for his folly in refusing to know the truth.

While the saint suffered thus and courageously preached Christ amid his torments, many people stood there, both unbelievers and believers, watching the contest of the sufferer for Christ. Not far away stood a Christian youth named Varulus. Looking at him, the martyr said to the torturer:

– This little youth is wiser than you, an older man, though he is still but a child, because he knows the true God, while you, advanced in years, do not know Him.

Then the eparch summoned the youth to him and asked:

– What God do you worship?

– I worship Christ, – the youth replied.

The eparch asked him:

– Which is better: to worship one God, or many?

– It is better to worship the one God, Jesus Christ, – the youth answered.

The eparch asked him again:

– In what is Christ better than all the gods?

The youth replied:

– Christ is better because He is the true God and created us all, while your gods are demons and created no one.

The youth spoke much else as though he were a wise theologian: the Holy Spirit, working in him, perfected praise from his lips to the shame of the impious eparch and all the idolaters.

The torturer and all who were with him marveled at the youth's understanding and wise words, and felt great shame because they could not refute his words. Therefore the torturer ordered Varulus to be scourged mercilessly with rods. After a long scourging, Varulus began to grow faint and asked for a drink. But his mother, who stood there among the people and watched her son's sufferings with joy, saw him weakening and asking for a drink, and sternly and insistently bade him bear his sufferings courageously to the end. When the torturer ordered the youth to be beheaded with the sword, his mother took him in her arms and carried him to the place of execution. Embracing and kissing

him, she comforted and strengthened him, that he might not fear at the sight of the sword above his head:

– Do not be afraid, my son, – she said. – Do not be afraid, my dear child! Do not fear death! You shall not die, but live forever! Be not terrified, my flower! You shall at once be carried to the gardens of Paradise! Fear not the sword! As soon as you are beheaded, you shall depart to Christ and behold His glory. He will receive you with love, and you shall live with Him in joy unspeakable, delighting in blessedness with His holy Angels.

Thus consoling her child, the pious mother brought him to the place of execution. After the youth was beheaded, the mother gathered his blood into a clean vessel, and taking up his body, she bathed it with tears of joy, kissing it with love and rejoicing that her son had shed for Christ the blood which he had received from her. After this she gave the body of her son to honorable burial.

After the beheading of St. Varulus, St. Romanus was condemned to be burned. Bound and surrounded with wood, St. Romanus, while the servants had not yet kindled the fire or set the wood alight, and were awaiting the judge's final word, cried out in a loud voice from the midst of the pyre, addressing the tormentors:

"Where is the fire? Why do you not kindle it? Light it, that the flame may surround me on every side."

When the fire was lit and the wood blazed up strongly on all sides, suddenly a heavy rain poured down and extinguished the fire. St. Romanus remained alive and suffered no harm whatever from the fire. After this, on account of the bold words of the holy martyr (for he reproached the impious pagans, condemning their folly and cursing their gods, and he glorified Christ, the One God), the tormentor commanded that his tongue be cut out. But he himself handed over his tongue to the tormentors to be cut. Yet even after the cutting out of his God-speaking tongue, the Confessor of Christ did not fall silent, but by a supernatural means, even without a tongue, he spoke clearly as before, glorifying the One God. Then they cast him into prison, where he remained a long time, with his feet fastened in the stocks. When it was reported to the emperor Maximian that, even with his tongue cut out, he spoke well,

the emperor commanded that he be strangled. Entering the prison, the soldiers drew a cord around his neck and strangled him.[5]

Thus the holy martyr Romanus completed the course of his sufferings for Christ, in whose kingdom he is now glorified, glorifying the Holy Trinity unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Zacchaeus and Alphaeus

Память святых мучеников Закхея и Алфея

In Caesarea of Palestine, as the twentieth year of the reign of the emperors approached, the prisoners held in the dungeons were usually granted a pardon of their crimes. So it was also in the reign of Diocletian. At the same time, the governor of the province, while granting freedom even to the greatest criminals, subjected the Christians to the most cruel torments. At this time, for confessing the faith of Christ, the deacon Zacchaeus of the church at Gadara was arrested.[6] Questioned about his faith at the tribunal, he boldly and fearlessly confessed Christ. For this he was subjected to cruel tortures: they flogged him with rods, then tore him with hooks, and finally, fastening his feet in the stocks, they cast him into prison. The saint bore the sufferings valiantly. While St. Zacchaeus was being tormented, another confessor for the name of Christ, named Alphaeus, was brought before the tribunal. He came of a noble family and was a kinsman of Zacchaeus; he was born in the Palestinian city of Eleutheropolis.[7] When Diocletian's persecution of the Christians began, Alphaeus held the office of reader in the church of Caesarea. The persecution raised against the confessors of the Christian faith was very cruel, and many of the Christians could not bear the weight of the tortures; they fell away from the faith of Christ and were already prepared to offer sacrifices to the idols. Then Alphaeus, zealous for God, ran into the crowd of those who had fallen

5. Died in 303.

6. The city of Gadara was situated in the south-east of the Lake of Gennesaret, on the southern bank of the river Hieromax.

7. Eleutheropolis was situated in the southern part of Palestine, in the former Judea.

away and turned them from the idol sacrifices. For this he was seized and led in chains to prison. After several days he was subjected to the same tortures as his kinsman Zacchaeus: he was lashed with rods, torn with hooks, and finally fastened in one set of stocks together with the righteous Zacchaeus. In this condition they remained a night and a day. When, even after these tortures, the holy martyrs continued unceasingly to confess Christ, they were beheaded.[8] Thus the holy martyrs died, having endured many sufferings for the name of Christ.

* * *

NOTES

7516. The martyric death of St. Platon followed about 306. – After his death, many who turned to him in prayer received his wonder-working help. Thus at the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787) there was read a letter of St. Nilus, a disciple of John Chrysostom, concerning a miracle of the holy martyr Platon. The son of a monk from Galatia was taken captive by barbarians who suddenly attacked. The old man with tears besought the martyr Platon, a fellow countryman of his, for help in this captivity. And behold, there appeared to his son a horseman on a horse, who brought also another horse and bade the youth mount. The youth recognized in him the martyr, for he had often seen him so depicted on icons; the youth mounted the horse; and the saint, having delivered him to his father, became invisible. In Constantinople the emperor Anastasius I (491–518) built a church in the name of this martyr, and the emperor Justinian (reigned 527–565) restored it.

8. This was in 303.

THE NINETEENTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 19

19 ноября

New Calendar November 19 · Old Calendar December 2 (civil dates)

Life of the Holy Prophet Obadiah

Житие святого пророка Авдия

The holy prophet Obadiah was a native of the village of Vitharam, near Shechem[1]. He served at the courts of the kings of Israel and was steward of the house to King Ahab[2]. From his youth he was exceedingly God-fearing, and when all Israel had fallen away from God and begun to worship the abominable Baal[3], he secretly served the One True God of his fathers, who had saved Israel from Egypt and led it through the Red Sea on dry land. When the lawless Jezebel was destroying all the prophets of the Lord[4], Obadiah took a hundred prophets, hid them by fifties in two caves, and fed them with bread and water during the famine that occurred in the days of the prophet Elijah. Once Ahab summoned Obadiah and said to him:

1. Shechem, now Nablus, one of the ancient cities of Palestine, lay in Samaria on Mount Ephraim, eighteen hours' journey from Jerusalem, in a high, rich and fertile valley between the mountains Garizim and Ebal. At present the city has lost its former preeminent importance; it is rich in its many very ancient monuments that have been preserved.

2. Ahab, son of Omri, the most impious king of Israel, reigned from 924 to 903 B.C.

3. Baal, from the Hebrew: "lord," "master," was revered by the Phoenicians as the supreme god, and the Israelites who had abandoned their faith also worshipped him. In his image the pagans deified the sun and the male generative power acting through his wife Astarte, in whose image the moon was deified. The worship of them was distinguished by extreme and vile depravity and by sensual, immoral rites.

4. Jezebel, daughter of the king and priest of Sidon, wife of Ahab, was distinguished by extreme impiety and dissolute morals. Blindly submitting to her influence, Ahab surpassed in impiety all his predecessors and gave himself over to the most shameful idolatry. He built a temple to Baal in Samaria, allowed Jezebel to erect altars on his land to the Syrian and Sidonian deities, and to keep at her side a multitude of false pagan prophets. At last Jezebel raised a persecution against the prophets of the True God, and they would all have perished had not Obadiah, the king's steward, hidden them from her frenzy (3 Kgdms. 18:4).

"Go through the land, to all the springs of water and to all the brooks in the earth, and see whether we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts."

So they divided the land between them to pass through it: Ahab went alone by one way, and Obadiah went alone by another way. As Obadiah was on the way, behold, Elijah met him. He recognized him, fell on his face, and said:

"Art thou my lord Elijah?"

He answered him:

"I am. Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here."

He said:

“What have I done wrong, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me? As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee; and when they told him that thou wast not there, he made that kingdom and nation swear that they had been unable to find thee. And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. When I go from thee, the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and if I go and tell Ahab, and he finds thee not, he shall slay me; but thy servant feareth the Lord from his youth. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid a hundred men of the prophets of the Lord by fifties in caves, and fed them with bread and water? And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. He will slay me.”

And Elijah said:

"As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him this day."

So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him of Elijah. When Ahab saw Elijah, the prophet of God rebuked him for his error, and then wrought a great miracle: he brought fire down from heaven upon the sacrifice and the water, as is written in the Third Book of Kingdoms (3 Kgdms. 18:4–8). Seeing this, Obadiah rejoiced in the almighty power of his God, was kindled with love for Him and burned with zeal for Him, and served Him more diligently, fulfilling His commandments. Then, when Ahab died and his son Ahaziah[5] received the kingdom of Israel after him, Obadiah served in the king's military service. According to the testimony of St. Dorotheus and the blessed Jerome, he was one of the three captains of fifty sent by Ahaziah to the prophet Elijah, of whom two were consumed by fire that fell from heaven at the prophet's word, while the third, who was Obadiah, was spared: he approached the holy prophet Elijah with humility, entreated him, and said to him: "O man of God, let my life, and the life of these thy servants, these fifty, be precious in thy sight."

Therefore Elijah spared him, and rising, went with him to the king. From that time Obadiah left the royal service and followed the holy prophet Elijah, and received the spirit of prophecy, as one who had preserved and fed the prophets of the Lord and had himself followed the prophet (4 Kgdms. 1:13–15). At his death he was buried together with his forefathers[6].

* * *

Life of the Venerable Barlaam and of Josaphat, Prince of India, and of his father, King Abenner

Житие преподобных Варлаама и Иоасафа, царевича индийского, и отца его царя Авенира

5. Ahaziah, king of Israel, successor of Ahab, died in the second year of his reign, while his father was still living, leaving the throne to his brother Jehoram.

6. Obadiah was buried in Samaria; he lived and acted at the end of the tenth and the beginning of the ninth century B.C.; he left a prophetic book, which occupies the fourth place in the series of books of the so-called minor prophets and consists of a single chapter. His prophecies are almost all directed against the Edomites, or Idumeans. At the end of the book there is a messianic prophecy of salvation from Zion and of the opening of the kingdom of the Lord, which clearly points to the New Testament Church.

In the East there is a very extensive country called India, peopled by many nations and surpassing other countries in every kind of wealth and in its fruits; its borders approach the frontiers of Persia. This land was enlightened in former times by the holy Apostle Thomas, yet it did not wholly abandon the service of idols, for many, hardened in paganism, did not accept the saving teaching and remained in the delusion of the demons. With the passing of time impiety grew up like thorns, and began to choke the good seed of piety, so that pagans in India became far more numerous than the faithful.

In that country there ascended the throne a king named Abenner, great and renowned for power and wealth, but very poor in spirit, for he was a pagan and served demons rather than God, worshipping lifeless idols, and he cruelly persecuted the Church of Christ, especially its teachers, presbyters and monks. Some of his courtiers, having believed in Christ and being convinced of the vanity of this world, forsook everything and became monks; because of this the king fell into great fury. Seizing many monks, he put them to death, and commanded that Christians everywhere be compelled to bow down to idols. He also sent a decree throughout all the lands under his rule to the princes and governors of the regions, that by torments and every kind of murder they should destroy all who believed in Christ and were unwilling to worship idols. As a result, many of the faithful wavered, and some, unable to endure the torments, fell away from the faith; but others gave themselves up to torments and, suffering steadfastly for their Lord, laid down their souls for Him. The majority, concealing their faith in view of the danger, secretly served the Lord, keeping His holy commandments, while others fled into the deserts, especially the monks, and there hid themselves in the mountains and thickets.

At this time a son was born to the king and was named Josaphat. The infant was exceedingly beautiful, and this extraordinary beauty seemed to foreshadow the great beauty of soul that was to be in him. The king gathered a multitude of magicians and astrologers and questioned them about what awaited the child when he came of age. After many observations they said that he would be greater than all the kings who had been before him. But one of the astrologers, the wisest, not by

the course of the stars but, as once Balaam[7] by divine revelation, said to the king:

"The child will not come of age in thy kingdom, but in another, better and incomparably greater; I think also that he will accept the Christian faith which thou persecutest, and I hope that this my prophecy will not prove false."

When the king heard that his son would be a Christian, he was greatly grieved and pondered what to do so that this prophecy would not be fulfilled. He built a special beautiful building with many bright chambers, where Josaphat was to be brought up. When he began to grow and come to his senses, the king assigned to him tutors and servants, young in age and of beautiful appearance, and commanded that they not allow anyone from outside to approach the prince, who was to see no one but them. Besides this, the king arranged that they should say nothing to the prince about the sorrows of this life: death, old age, sickness, and other such griefs, the knowledge of which might hinder his joy; but they were to present to his attention only what was fair and cheerful, so that his mind, always occupied with pleasures and amusements, might not reflect on the future. He also commanded that no one should dare to speak a single word about Christ, so that Josaphat should never hear even the name of Christ, for the king desired above all to hide this name from him, fearing lest the astrologer's prediction be fulfilled; and if any of the attendants fell ill, he was to be removed from the prince, and another, young and handsome, was appointed in his place, so that the prince's eyes should see nothing sorrowful. When the king learned that in his land there still remained some surviving monks, whom he had thought were no longer to be found, he fell into great fury and at once sent heralds through all the countries and cities, who were to proclaim that after the lapse of three days no monk should remain in the whole kingdom; and those found after the appointed time

7. (Num. 22:1–41, 23:1–30, 24:1–25). Balaam was a prophet from the city of Pethor, near Haran, in Mesopotamia. There was such a report about him that whom he blessed would be blessed, and whom he cursed would be cursed. Balak, king of Moab, frightened by the victories of the Israelites, summoned Balaam that he might curse them; but, instructed by God, Balaam, instead of a curse, uttered words of blessing.

were to be put to death by burning or by the sword: for, said the king, they teach people to honour the Crucified as God.

Thus the king's son, remaining always in the chambers prepared for him, reached youthful age, mastered all the wisdom of India and Egypt, and was very intelligent and quick of understanding and adorned with every virtue of good conduct. He pondered why his father kept him in a closed seclusion, and asked about this one of his tutors. The tutor, seeing that the youth had perfect reason and was very kind, related to him in detail everything that the astrologers had foretold at his birth, and how his father had raised a persecution against the Christians, especially the monks, many of whom he had killed, while the rest he had driven from his land, for he feared, said the tutor, lest you become a Christian. Hearing this, the king's son fell silent and in his heart considered all that the tutor had said.

The king often visited his son, for he loved him very much. Once Josaphat said to him:

"I would wish, my father, to learn from thee something about that of which I constantly grieve and am sorrowful."

The father, seized with heartfelt pain, answered:

"Tell me, dear child, what sorrow has taken hold of thee, and I shall at once endeavour to change it into joy."

Then Josaphat asked:

"What is the cause of my confinement here, why do you hide me behind walls and gates, deprive me of going out, and make me invisible to all?"

The father answered:

"I do not wish, my child, that thou shouldst see anything that might cause sorrow in thy heart and deprive thee of a joyful life; I desire that thou shouldst live out all thy days in unceasing delights, in every gladness and merriment."

"Know then, Father," replied the youth, "that this seclusion brings me no joy or gladness, but such sorrow and grief that even food and drink seem to me not sweet but bitter. I long to see all that lies beyond these gates. Therefore, if you do not wish me to perish of sorrow, allow

me to go out wherever I desire and to delight my soul with the sight of what I have not seen until now."

The king was saddened on hearing this, and he resolved that if he forbade his son to go out, he would plunge him into even greater sorrow and grief. And he said to his son:

"Let it be, my child, as you desire."

At once he ordered that choice horses be brought and that everything befitting royal honor be prepared, and he no longer forbade his son to go out wherever he wished. At the same time he commanded the prince's attendants not to allow him to meet anything reprehensible or sorrowful, but to show him only what was good and beautiful, what gladdens the eyes and the heart. Along the way he ordered choirs of singers to be stationed everywhere, and all kinds of music to go before him and various spectacles to be presented, so that the prince's spirit might be delighted by all of this.

Often going out from the palace with such honors and diversions, the royal son one day, through the carelessness of the servants, saw two men, one of whom suffered from leprosy and the other of whom was blind. He asked those who accompanied him who these men were and why they were in such a state. The attendants, no longer able to hide the infirmity of human nature, said:

"These are human sufferings, which ordinarily befall people from our mortal nature and the feeble constitution of our flesh."

The youth asked:

"Does this happen to all people?"

They answered him:

"Not to all, but to those whose health is broken by the abuse of earthly blessings."

Then the youth asked:

"If this does not happen to all people in the usual way, do those who are destined to suffer these calamities know of it beforehand, or do they come suddenly and unexpectedly?"

The attendants answered:

"Who among men can know the future?"

The prince ceased asking, but his heart grieved over what he had seen, a phenomenon unusual for him, and the expression of his face changed. A few days later, again on the road, he met a decrepit old man with a wrinkled face, feeble limbs, bent over, entirely gray, toothless, and barely able to speak. Seeing him, the youth was horrified, and having him brought to him, he asked those who had brought him: who is this, and why is he like this? They answered:

"He is already many years old, and since his strength has gradually waned and his limbs have grown weak, he has come to that decrepitude which you see."

The youth said:

"What will become of him further, when he lives still more years?"

They answered him:

"Nothing more, except that death will take him."

The youth asked:

"Does this also await all people, or does it happen only to some?"

They answered:

"If death does not overtake someone in youth, it is impossible for a person, after many years, not to come to the same decrepitude."

The youth asked:

"At what age does this befall people? And if death awaits all without exception, is there not some means of escaping it and of not falling into such a calamity?"

They said to him:

"People come to such decrepitude at eighty or a hundred years, and then they die, and it cannot be otherwise, for death is the natural debt of man, and its coming is inevitable."

Having seen and heard all this, the wise youth, sighing from the depths of his heart, said:

"If this is so, then this life is bitter and full of every kind of sorrow. And who can be free of grief, always awaiting death, whose coming is not only inevitable but, as you have said, unknown?"

And he went to his palace and was in great sorrow, constantly reflecting on death and saying to himself:

"If all die, then I too shall die, and yet I do not know when... and when I die, who will remember me? Much time will pass, and everything will fall into oblivion... is there not some other life after death, and another world?"

He was greatly disturbed by these thoughts, yet he said nothing to his father, but questioned much the aforementioned tutor, asking whether he knew anyone who could tell him about all this and strengthen his mind, which was weary from reflection. The tutor said:

"I told you before how your father destroyed those wise hermits who always reflected on these things: some he killed, others, in anger, he exiled, and now I do not know of any of them within our borders."

The youth grieved greatly over this, suffered painfully in his soul, and spent his life in constant sorrow; therefore all the sweetness and beauty of this world seemed to his eyes an abomination and impurity. And God, who wills all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, by His customary love for mankind and mercy, guided the youth onto the right path in the following manner.

At that time there was a wise monk, perfect in virtues, named Barlaam, a priest by rank, who lived in the Senaar desert. Guided by Divine revelation, he learned of the situation of the royal son, left the desert, changed his garments, took the appearance of a merchant, and, boarding a ship, set out for the Indian kingdom. Having sailed to the city in which the royal son's palace stood, he stayed there many days and gathered detailed information about the prince and his attendants. Learning that the aforementioned tutor was closest of all to the royal son, the elder went to him and said:

"Know, my lord, that I am a merchant and have come from a distant land. I have a precious stone, the like of which has never been found anywhere, and which until now I have shown to no one. I tell you of it now because I see that you are a sensible and clever man. Therefore, bring me to the royal son, and I will give him that stone, whose worth no one can calculate, for it surpasses all good and costly things. It gives sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the mute, health to the sick, drives demons out of people, makes the foolish wise in all things, and gives its possessor all desired blessings."

The tutor said to him:

"By your appearance you are an old man, and yet you speak empty words and boast beyond measure. However many precious stones and pearls I have seen, and however many of them I have had, I have never seen or heard of a stone with such power as you describe. Nevertheless, show it to me, and if your words prove true, I will at once bring you to the royal son, and you will receive honor from him and a fitting reward."

Barlaam said:

"You rightly said that you have not seen or heard of such a stone anywhere. But believe my words that it is in my possession. I do not boast or lie in my old age, but speak the truth. As for your request to see it, listen to what I say: my precious stone, with its actions and wonders, has yet another property: no one can see it who does not have healthy eyes and a pure, wholly undefiled body. If someone defiled unawares should see that stone, he will lose both sight and mind. Now I, knowing the healing art, see that your eyes are diseased, and therefore I fear to show you my stone, lest I become the cause of your blindness. But I have heard that the royal son leads a blameless life and has healthy and clear eyes, and therefore I wish to show my treasure to him. So do not be negligent, and do not deprive your master of so important a purchase."

The tutor answered him:

"If so, then do not show me the stone, for I have defiled myself with many impure deeds, and, as you say, I have an unhealthy appearance. But I believe your words, and I will not hesitate to tell my master."

Going to the palace, the tutor told the prince everything in order. He, having heard the tutor's speech, felt in his heart a certain joy and spiritual gladness, and at once ordered that the merchant be brought to him.

Barlaam entered before the prince, bowed to him, and greeted him with wise and pleasant speech. The prince bade him sit. When the tutor had left, Josaphat said to the elder:

"Show me the stone about which you told my tutor such great and wondrous things."

Barlaam addressed him with this speech:

"Everything said to you about me, prince, is true and certain, for it is not fitting for me to say anything false before your majesty. But before I learn your thoughts, I cannot reveal to you the great mystery, for my Master said: 'A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside, and the birds came and devoured it. Some fell upon rocky ground, and when it sprang up, it withered away because it had no moisture. Some fell among thorns, and the thorns choked it. Some fell on good ground and brought forth fruit a hundredfold' (Mt. 13:3–8). So, if I find in your heart fruitful and good soil, I will not hesitate to sow the Divine seed in you and to reveal to you the great mystery. But if this soil is rocky and full of thorns, or is the wayside trodden by passers-by, then it is better not to cast the saving seed into it at all, and not to give it to be plundered by birds and beasts, before whom it is strictly forbidden to cast pearls. But I hope to find in you the best soil, so that you may receive the word-seed, behold the priceless stone, be enlightened by the dawn of light, and bring forth fruit a hundredfold. For for your sake I have undertaken much labor and traveled a long way, to show you what you have not seen and to teach you what you have never heard."

Josaphat answered him:

"O honorable elder, I am possessed by an inexpressible desire to hear new and good words, and within my heart burns a fire that kindles me to learn certain important and necessary things. Until this day I have not found a man able to explain to me what is in my mind and to set me on the right path. Yet if I had found such a man, I would not have given over the words I heard to be devoured by birds and beasts, nor would I have become stony and full of thorns, as you said; rather, I would have received them with gratitude and kept them in my heart. And you, if you know anything, do not hide it from me, but tell it to me. For as soon as I heard that you had come from a distant land, my soul rejoiced at once, and I hoped to receive through you what I desired. That is why I admitted you to my presence without delay and received you with joy, as one of my acquaintances or peers."

Then Barlaam, opening his mouth, full of the grace of the Holy Spirit, began to speak to him of the One God who created all things, and of everything that had come to pass from the beginning of the world: of the fall of Adam and his expulsion from Paradise, of the forefathers and the prophets; then of the Incarnation of the Son of God, of His voluntary Passion and of the Resurrection; of the Holy Trinity, of Baptism, and of all the mysteries of the holy faith. For Barlaam was exceedingly wise and skilled in the Holy Scripture. Expounding the teaching by parables and similitudes, and adorning his speech with beautiful narratives and sayings, he softened the heart of the prince like wax. The prince listened ever more attentively and with delight. At last the prince came to know that that priceless stone is Christ the Lord, for light shone in his soul and opened the eyes of his mind, so that he believed without any doubt everything that Barlaam had told him. Rising from his throne, he went to the wise elder and, embracing him with joy, said:

"O most worthy of men! This, I think, is that priceless stone which you hold in secret and do not show to every man who desires it, but only to those whose spiritual perceptions are sound. For as soon as your words reached my hearing, a sweet light entered my heart, and at once the heavy veil of sorrow that had long lain upon my soul was lifted. So tell me whether I am reasoning rightly about this, and if you know anything better still, tell it to me."

And Barlaam, continuing his discourse, spoke to him of a good death and an evil death, of the general resurrection, of eternal life, of the recompense of the righteous and the torment of sinners. By his words he brought him to great compunction and contrition of heart, so that he was wholly in tears and wept for a long time. Besides this, Barlaam told him of the vanity and inconstancy of this world, of its renunciation, and of the monastic and desert life.

As precious stones in a treasury, Josaphat laid up all the words of Barlaam in his heart. He so delighted in his discourse and came to love him so greatly that he wished to be always inseparable from him and to hear his teaching. He questioned him about the desert life, about food and clothing, saying:

"Tell me, what is your food and the food of those who live with you in the desert? And what is your clothing, and of what kind?"

Barlaam said:

"Our food consists of the fruits of trees and of the herbs that grow in the desert. If any of the faithful bring us a little bread, we accept what is brought as sent by Divine Providence. Our clothing is of hair cloth and of the skins of sheep and goats, very worn and all patched, the same in winter and in summer. The garment with which I am covered above I took from a faithful layman, so that it might not be known that I am a monk. If I had come here in my own clothing, I would not have been admitted to you."

Josaphat asked the elder to show him the usual monastic garments. Then Barlaam took off his outer garment, and a terrible sight presented itself to Josaphat: the elder's body was all dried up and blackened by the action of the sun, the skin clinging only to the bones. From his loins to his knees he was girded with a torn and prickly hair-cloth rag, and he had a similar mantle on his shoulders. Josaphat marvelled at such heavy ascetic labour, and, astonished at the great patience of the elder, he sighed and wept, and implored the elder to take him with him to the same desert life.

Barlaam said:

"Do not desire this now, lest the anger of your father fall upon the brethren because of you. But receive baptism and remain here, and I will go alone. When the Lord wills it, you too will come to me, for I believe that both in this age and in the age to come we shall live together."

Josaphat, with tears, said:

"If such is the will of the Lord God, then perform the holy baptism over me, and take from me a good quantity of gold to carry to your brethren who are in the desert, for their food and clothing."

"The rich give to the poor," Barlaam answered, "not the poor to the rich. How then do you wish to give to us, who are rich, when you yourself are poor? For the very least of our brotherhood is incomparably richer than you. I hope that you too, by the mercy of God, will soon be

enriched with this true wealth; but when you become rich in that manner, you will become sparing and unwilling to share."

Josaphat did not understand what was said to him, and Barlaam then explained his words, to the effect that those who forsake all earthly things for Christ's sake acquire the heavenly good things, and that the smallest heavenly gift is dearer than all the riches of this world. At the same time he added to Josaphat:

"Gold is often the cause of sin, and therefore we do not keep it with us. And you wish me to carry to my brethren a serpent which they have already trodden under foot."

Then he advised Josaphat to prepare himself for holy baptism, enjoined on him a lengthy fast and prayer, and himself withdrew from him and prayed to God for him in a solitary place. On the following day he came to him again and for a long time instructed him in the true faith. And so over a considerable time the elder came daily to the prince and set before him the teaching of the prophets and Apostles and the traditions of the Fathers. On the very day on which he intended to baptize Josaphat, Barlaam gave him the following exhortation:

"Behold, you wish to receive the seal of Christ, to be signed with the light of the face of God, to become a son of God and a temple of the Holy and Life-giving Spirit. Believe now in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in the Holy and Life-originating Trinity, glorified in three Hypostases and in one Godhead, distinct in Hypostases and in the properties of the Hypostases, yet one in essence. Believe, then, in the one God the Father, unbegotten, and in the one Lord our Jesus Christ, Light of Light, True God of True God, begotten before all ages. For from the All-good Father was born the All-good Son; from the unbegotten Light shone forth the Light eternally existing; from the True Life proceeded the Life-giving Fountain; from the very Power of the Father appeared the Power of the Son, who is the Brightness of glory and the Hypostatic Word, existing from the beginning with God and Himself God, without beginning and eternal, through whom all things visible and invisible came into being. And believe in the one Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father, perfect and life-giving God, sanctifying, having the same will, almighty, co-eternal, abiding in His own Hypo-

stasis. Therefore worship the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, in three Hypostases, with distinct properties, but in one Godhead. Common to all of them is the Godhead, and one is their nature, and one their essence, one their glory, one their kingdom, one their power, one their authority; common to the Son and the Holy Spirit is that they are from the Father; but proper to the Father is unbegottenness, to the Son begetting, and to the Spirit procession. Believe this; but do not seek to grasp the manner of the begetting or of the procession, for it is incomprehensible; and with an upright heart, without any inquiry, accept that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are in all respects one, except for unbegottenness, begetting and procession; and that the Only-begotten Son and Word of God and God, for our salvation, descended to earth by the good pleasure of the Father, and by the cooperation of the Holy Spirit was conceived without seed in the womb of the Holy Virgin and Theotokos Mary, and was born of her incorruptibly, and became a perfect Man, for He is both perfect God and perfect Man, of two natures, that is, Godhead and manhood, in two rational, willing and active natures, possessing perfection in all things according to the property of each nature, having will, word and authority, according to the Godhead and manhood in one composition. Accept all this without inquiring with the mind, and do not seek to know the very manner in which all this came about: how the Son of God diminished Himself, and how a man came forth from virginal blood without seed and incorruptibly, or in what manner the union took place. We have been taught to hold all this by faith, as delivered to us in the Divine Scriptures, but we cannot comprehend or express the very essence. Believe in the Son of God, who in His mercy became Man and took upon Himself all the properties of human nature except sin: for He felt hunger and thirst, slept, grew weary and sorrowed as man, and for our iniquities was delivered to death, crucified and buried, tasting actual death, while the Godhead in Him remained impassible and unchanging. We in no way attribute anything pertaining to suffering to His immortal Divine nature, but confess that He suffered and was buried in His assumed human nature, and by divine power rose from the dead in incorruption and ascended into heaven, and is again to come in glory to judge the

living and the dead (Jn. 5:20) and to render to each according to his deeds by a just measure (Mt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12): for the dead shall rise and those who are in the graves shall arise, and those who have kept the commandments of Christ and departed in the true faith shall inherit eternal life, while those who have defiled themselves with sins and turned aside from the true faith shall go into eternal torment. And do not believe that there is some primordial essence or kingdom of evil, nor imagine that it is without beginning, or self-existent, or received its beginning from God: to think so is senseless. In truth, evil enters into us through our own fault and the action of the devil, through our inattention to ourselves. Since we possess freedom of will, we can by our own choice choose either good or evil. Confess also the one baptism of water and of the Spirit for the remission of sins. Partake of the Communion of the Most Pure Mysteries of Christ, believing that this is truly the Body and Blood of Christ our God, which He gave to believers for the remission of sins; for on the night in which He was betrayed He expressly bequeathed to His holy disciples and Apostles and to all His future followers, saying: 'Take, eat; this is My Body, which is broken for you... Likewise also the cup after supper, saying: This cup is the new covenant in My Blood; do this... in remembrance of Me' (Mt. 26:26–28; 1 Cor. 11:24–25)."

"This is the Word of God Himself, acting and creating all things by His power; through the holy words and through the descent of the Holy Spirit He acts and transforms the bread and wine set forth into His Body and Blood, and gives them for sanctification and enlightenment to those who partake with faith."

"Worship also, with faith, and kiss the honorable image (icon) of God the Word, who became Man for our sake, bearing in mind that in this image you see the Creator Himself: for 'the honor shown to the image,' says St. Basil the Great, 'passes to the prototype.' The prototype is the one whose countenance is depicted and who was the cause of the image; thus, beholding the icon painted, we ascend with the eyes of the mind to Him whom the icon depicts, and with reverence worshipping the image of Him who took our flesh, we do not deify the painted image itself, but firmly and with love kiss the image of God incarnate, who for

our sake humbled Himself even to the form of a servant. Likewise kiss the images of His Most Pure Mother and of all the saints. Worship with faith also the image of the Honorable and Life-giving Cross, and kiss it for the sake of Christ our God and Savior of the world, who was crucified upon it in the flesh for the salvation of the human race, and who gave us the image of the Cross as a sign of victory over the devil, who fears and trembles before the power of the Cross. This is what you must believe, and with this faith you receive holy Baptism: keep this faith unchanged and free of all heretical additions to your last breath... Hate, then, all teachings contrary to this spotless faith and consider them hostile to God, for, as the Apostle says: 'But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you anything other than what we have preached to you, let him be anathema' (Gal. 1:8). Indeed, there is no other Gospel, no other faith, than that preached by the Apostles, confirmed by the God-bearing Fathers at the various councils, and handed down to the Catholic Church."

Having said this and taught the royal son Josaphat the Creed set forth at the Council of Nicaea, Barlaam baptized him in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in a pool that was in the royal garden. Thus the grace of the Holy Spirit descended upon Josaphat. Then, entering Josaphat's bedchamber, Barlaam performed the divine service there and gave him communion of the Most Pure and Life-giving Mysteries, and both of them remained in spiritual joy, offering praise to God. After that Barlaam taught the prince how he ought to live after baptism, giving him instruction in virtue, and withdrew to his dwelling.

Meanwhile the servants and tutors of Josaphat, seeing the elder's frequent visits to the prince, were perplexed; and so the eldest of them, named Zardan, whom the king, for his faithfulness and devotion, had appointed to oversee the prince's household, once said to Josaphat:

"You know well, my lord, how I honor your father and how faithful I am to him; for this reason he appointed me to serve you. But now, seeing how often this strange man comes to you and converses with you, I fear that he may be of the Christian faith, against which your father is so hostile, and that I may be subjected because of him to a sentence of

death. Therefore either speak of him to the king, or cease altogether conversing with him, or dismiss me from your presence, so that I may not be held to account."

The prince answered:

"Here is what we shall do first, Zardan: you will secretly conceal yourself behind the curtain and listen to his conversations with me, and then I will tell you what must be done."

And when once Barlaam came to the palace, Josaphat, having first hidden Zardan behind the curtain, said to the elder:

"Remind me briefly of your teaching, so that it may take firmer root in my heart."

Barlaam began to speak and told him much about God, piety, future blessings and eternal torments, and at last, after a long discourse, he rose, offered a prayer, and withdrew to his dwelling.

The prince then called Zardan and, testing him, asked:

"Did you hear what this deceitful old man spoke with me? He seeks to beguile me with his teaching, to deprive me of all my pleasures and enjoyments, and to lead me to a strange god."

Zardan answered:

"Do not test me, my lord, your servant: I know well how deeply the words of this man have touched your heart, and we all know that his preaching is true. But since your father has raised a cruel persecution against the Christians, their faith is doomed to destruction; and if it has nonetheless pleased you, and you are able to bear the sufferings and labors joined with it, then may your good desire be fulfilled. But what am I to do? I cannot even bear to look upon such sufferings and their sorrowful life. My heart stands still with fear of the king's wrath; I do not know what to answer him for having permitted that man to come in to you."

To this the prince said to Zardan:

I have found no better reward for your great devotion and faithful service to me than to try to open to you the ineffable blessings: the knowledge of your Creator and faith in Him. I hoped that as soon as you heard the right teaching you would at once love it and follow it together with me. But I see that my hope has deceived me, for you have

hardened your heart and do not wish to know the truth. At least fulfil one wish of mine: say nothing to your father for the time being, for by this you will achieve nothing and will only cause him grief and sorrow.

On the following day Barlaam came to the prince and told him of his intention to leave him. Josaphat, unable to bear the separation, grieved in his soul and wept bitterly. The elder conversed with him at length, strengthening him in faith and virtue and urging him not to weep for him. He also foretold to the prince that they would both soon be united forever. Then Josaphat, not wishing to cause the elder distress, and at the same time fearing lest Zardan report the elder's arrival to the king, said to Barlaam with tears:

"Since you desire, my spiritual father and good teacher, that I should remain here in this vain world while you yourself withdraw to the place of your spiritual rest, I dare not detain you any longer. Go, then, kept by God in peace, and always commemorate my wretchedness in your holy prayers, that I too may in time receive the opportunity to come to you and to see your honorable face constantly. But show me your love: leave me this your poor and worn mantle, as a memory of your monastic life and teaching, and for protection from every satanic action."

The elder gave him his mantle, which Josaphat valued more than royal purple. Then Barlaam stood up to pray and, with tenderness, prayed for Josaphat, commending the newly enlightened youth to God's providence and protection. Having finished the prayer, he turned to the prince, kissed him, and said:

"Child of the heavenly Father! Peace be to you, and eternal salvation."

Then he went out of the palace, rejoicing and giving thanks to God, who had directed his path well.

After Barlaam's departure, the blessed Josaphat devoted himself to constant prayer and ascetic life. Seeing this, Zardan was exceedingly grieved and, feigning illness, withdrew to his house. The king, learning of Zardan's sickness, sent his most skilled physician to treat him. The physician carefully examined Zardan's illness and informed the king that he could find in Zardan no other cause of the illness except some

sorrow, by which he was afflicted and therefore ill. Then the king thought that his son had become angry with Zardan for something, and that the latter had fallen ill from grief; and he wished to visit the sick man himself and learn more precisely the cause of the illness. But Zardan himself hastened to come before the king, fell to the ground before him, and acknowledged himself worthy of every punishment for having negligently guarded the prince; and he told the king everything that had happened with Josaphat.

"A certain crafty man," he said, "a magician and deceiver named Barlaam, came out of the desert and conversed with your son about the Christian faith, and now the prince is already a Christian."

Hearing this, the king shuddered with sorrow, and then fell into indescribable rage. He at once summoned the chief of his nobles, named Arachias, a wise counselor and skilled astrologer, and related to him everything in order, as it had happened.

Arachias, consoling him, replied:

"Do not grieve, O king, for we shall very easily turn your son away from the Christian faith if we lay hold of Barlaam. But if we cannot find him, I know another elder, already of our faith, named Nachor, who lives in the desert and practices astrology, from whom I myself learned, and who in appearance is very like Barlaam; indeed, I know Barlaam well by sight, having seen him before. So let us summon this Nachor from the desert and order him to pretend to be Barlaam, and let us hold a disputation with him about the faith. He will pretend to be defeated and will declare the Christian faith false, and your son, seeing this, will turn away from Christianity and return to the gods of his fathers."

The king, finding this counsel good, was somewhat comforted in his sorrow, gave himself up to vain hopes, and quickly sent Arachias himself with a multitude of soldiers to seek Barlaam. Arachias, having traveled a long way, at last reached the Senaridian desert. Here he wandered for a long time without any roads, through barely passable thickets, and in one place beneath a mountain found a small number of hermits, and seized them. One of them was their elder and carried with him a hair sack filled with the bones of some saintly fathers who had

departed earlier, as a constant reminder of death. Arachias asked the hermits:

"Where is that deceiver who has seduced the king's son?"

"He is not among us," answered the one who carried the hair sack on behalf of all, "and will not be, for he flees from us, pursued by the power of Christ, and he dwells among you."

"Do you know him?" asked Arachias.

"I know him," answered the hermit, "the deceiver, the devil; he is the one who lives among you, and you please him."

"But I am asking you about Barlaam."

"If you ask about Barlaam," answered the hermit, "you ought to have said: 'Where is he who turned the king's son away from seduction?' He is our brother and shares with us the struggle of monastic asceticism, but for many days now we have not seen him."

"Where then is he?"

"We know his cell in the desert, but I will not disclose its place to you."

Arachias, enraged, threatened them with death, but they rejoiced on hearing of death. He inflicted upon them many wounds and subjected them to cruel torments, demanding that they point out the dwelling place of Barlaam, but they remained silent. After that Arachias again searched diligently everywhere for Barlaam and, not finding him anywhere, returned to the king with nothing, leading with him only the aforementioned hermits, seventy in number. The king tried in every way to compel them to say where Barlaam was, and to renounce Christ; but they not only did not obey him, but reproached him for his impiety, for which the king ordered their tongues to be cut out, their eyes gouged out, and their hands and feet cut off. Thus perished these valiant sufferers.

After their death, Arachias, by the king's command, went by night to the magician Nachor, who lived in the desert together with demons and practiced sorcery, and, having related everything to him in detail, persuaded him to pretend to be Barlaam. Then he returned to the king, and on the next day assembled a detachment of soldiers and again spread the rumor that he was going to seek Barlaam, and set out again

into the desert. Here Nachor appeared to the detachment as it came out of a certain thicket; the soldiers, noticing him, pursued him and, overtaking him, seized him and brought him to Arachias, who, as though not knowing Nachor, asked him who he was. Nachor answered that he was Barlaam. All rejoiced greatly and led him bound to the king. Meanwhile the news spread everywhere that Barlaam had been seized, and Josaphat grieved greatly over this and wept bitterly. But God, the common Comforter, revealed in a vision to Josaphat that it was not Barlaam who had been seized, but the magician Nachor in his place.

The king first went to his son's palace and, now with kind and gentle words, now with fierce and stern ones, urged him to abandon the Christian faith and return to the gods of his fathers; but he could not turn him from his love for Christ at all. Josaphat answered all his father's speeches with great wisdom, proving the nothingness of the pagan gods, glorifying the One True God, the Creator of all, and declaring his readiness to go for this God to wounds and death. But since the natural love of a father for his son did not permit the king to torment him, and moreover his own conscience condemned him when he heard the truth proclaimed by the prince, he said:

"You ought, my child, to obey your father's will in all things, but you are rude and disobedient and stubbornly oppose me, imagining that you are wiser than everyone. Therefore let us leave this vain contention and give place to truth itself. Behold, I will gather a very large assembly and summon all the wise men from all our kingdom, and likewise invite the Christians, and I will command my heralds to proclaim loudly everywhere that no Christian should fear anything, but that they should go to the assembly without fear, where by common judgment we shall examine which faith is better. In my hands is also Barlaam, who seduced you, bound in iron; I have not rested until I seized him. I will bring him out to the assembly, and let him, together with his Christians, stand against our wise men and contend with them about the faith. And if you Christians, with your Barlaam, overcome ours, you will receive whatever you may desire; but if you are defeated, you must obey my command in all things."

"Let the will of the Lord be done," answered the blessed Josaphat, "and let everything be as you wish; and may the true God help us not to turn aside from the right path!"

Then the king, by means of letters dispatched everywhere and through heralds who loudly proclaimed the royal will in all the cities and villages, commanded all the servants of idols and all Christians to gather in one place—the Christians being bidden to fear nothing—for the settling of the question of the true faith by means of a disputation between the Christians, in the person of Barlaam, and the pagan priests and magicians. The king had also summoned all the most learned priests, sorcerers and magicians of his realm, Persian and Chaldean, who were to overcome the Christians. And so there gathered before the king a great multitude of idolaters, teachers wise in malice and crafty in falsehood, who, "professing themselves to be wise, became fools" (Rom. 1:22). The Christians, of whom some had been slain by the unbelievers and others were in hiding, scattered among the mountains and caves, assembled in very small number, and among them there was found only one, named Varakhiya, versed in Holy Scripture. He alone came forward to aid the supposed Barlaam, not knowing that this was not in truth Barlaam but the magician Nachor.

The king sat upon a high throne, bidding his son also to sit beside him; but the prince, out of reverence for his father, did not sit beside him but near the throne upon the floor. Before the face of the king stood all the pagan sages, and Nachor—the supposed Barlaam—was brought forward.

"Behold," said the king, addressing his sages, "a no small contest awaits you, and one of two things lies before you: either, having overcome in debate Barlaam and his fellow-believers, the Christians, you shall receive every honor; or, being defeated, you shall bear shame, dishonor and a cruel execution, for I shall without pity destroy you all and give your bodies to be devoured by beasts and birds, and your children I shall reduce to everlasting slavery, if you do not overcome the Christians."

When the king had spoken these words, Josaphat cried out:

"You have judged righteously today, O king! And I shall say something similar to my teacher."

And turning to Nachor, he said:

"Barlaam! In what glory and amid what delights did you first make my acquaintance! But by your long discourses you caused me to turn away from the gods and laws of my forefathers, to serve an unknown God, and to provoke my father and my lord. Therefore, now imagine yourself standing as it were upon scales: if you come forth victorious from the impending contest and prove that your teaching is true, you will be glorified as a preacher of the truth, and I shall remain faithful to your teaching, serving Christ to my last breath; but if you are defeated, and through that become the cause of my disgrace, then I myself shall avenge my offense: I will set my feet upon your breast, and tearing out your heart and tongue with my own hands, I will cast them with the rest of your body to be devoured by dogs, so that all others too may learn from your example not to dare to seduce the children of kings."

Nachor was struck with great terror at these words, seeing that he was caught in his own net and had fallen into the pit which he himself had dug. Fearing the inevitable death awaiting him should he provoke the prince, who had full power to torment him whenever he wished, Nachor resolved to take Josaphat's side and to defend the Christian faith. And when the disputation between the priests and the Christians began, Nachor spoke in the manner of the ancient and well-known Balaam, who was sent by King Balak to curse Israel but instead blessed it with many blessings (Num. 22:1–41). Likewise Nachor, having begun the contest, continued it from morning until evening, speaking as if by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; thus sometimes the grace of God can act even in unclean vessels for the sake of its holy glory. And so wisely did Nachor expose the vanity and falsehood of the pagan gods, and so irrefutably did he prove that Christianity alone is the true faith, that no one could yet answer him a single word. Of this disputation of Nachor with the idol-priests, St. John of Damascus has written at length and beautifully in his narrative of the Holy Barlaam and Josaphat.

Thus all the pagan sages, priests and philosophers stood sorrowfully before Nachor and were silent like the mute, covered with shame, hav-

ing nothing to answer him. The prince rejoiced in his soul and glorified the Lord, who, as once He had made Saul, so now had made Nachor from a persecutor into a teacher and preacher of the truth. The king and Arachias, astonished at Nachor's unexpected change, were terribly angered against him. The king would have wished to torment Nachor together with the Christians, but he could not break his royal word, by which he had invited the Christians to come freely and without fear to the contest concerning the faith, promising, as a king, to do them no harm. Therefore he commanded the assembly to disperse, saying that on the morrow there would supposedly be another disputation.

Then the prince said to his father:

"O king! At the beginning of the affair the trial was rightly set in order, according to your command; so act justly to the end, and decide one thing: either order my teacher to spend this night in my house, so that we may together consider what we shall have to say tomorrow, and you shall do likewise with your fellow-believers; or else leave them to me and take my teacher to yourself. For if both opposing sides spend the time before the disputation in your house, my teacher will inevitably be in oppression and fear, and your sages in joy and ease, and in such a case the matter cannot, in my opinion, proceed justly, and there will be only the violence of the strong against the weak and the breaking of the promise you gave the Christians."

The king, overcome by his son's wise words, left Nachor to him, taking with himself the rest of his priests and still hoping that Nachor would fulfill his promise (to return Josaphat to paganism). The prince, taking Nachor with him, went to his palace, rejoicing in God his Savior.

"Do you not think," he said to Nachor when they had come to his chambers, "that I do not know that you are not Barlaam but Nachor? Nevertheless, you have acted well, proving the truth of the Christian faith and exposing the nothingness of the idols. Therefore believe in that God for whose name you so valiantly rose up."

Moved by Josaphat's words, Nachor repented of all his former vices and, sincerely desiring to turn to the true God, besought Josaphat to permit him to flee secretly into the wilderness, to join the hermits who were hiding there, and to receive holy baptism. Josaphat, having in-

structed him in the faith, dismissed him in peace. He fled into the wilderness, found there a priest of holy life, and, receiving baptism from him, spent his life in repentance.

In the morning the king, learning what had happened to Nachor, despaired of the hopes he had placed upon him. Seeing that his sages were utterly defeated and in a hopeless position, he was enraged against them, subjected them to shameful mockery, and some of them to severe bodily punishment; he commanded that their faces be smeared with soot and drove them from his presence. And from that time he no longer honored the priests nor offered sacrifices to the idols, but reviled them. Yet, not worshipping the idols and at the same time not accepting the Christian faith, he was in extreme perplexity and confusion of mind. Meanwhile many of the pagans came to Josaphat, and, delighted by his saving conversation, turned to Christ. Therefore the priests, seeing their dishonor and disgrace and the king's turning away from their gods, hastily sent envoys to a famous magician named Theudas, who lived in the wilderness in company with demons; informing him of all that had happened, they earnestly begged his help. Theudas, accompanied by a great host of demons, boldly went to the king, who knew and loved him personally, and by his flattering speeches again inclined him to paganism, and arranged with them a great festival in honor of the idols. Seeking once more to turn the blessed Josaphat to idolatry, the magician gave the king a crafty counsel: that he should remove from Josaphat all his servants and, in their place, appoint to serve him comely women and beautiful maidens.

"And I," he continued, "will send one of the demons to kindle in him a sensual fire, and as soon as the prince falls into the sin of fornication, straightway, O king, everything will be as you wish."

The king obeyed the crafty counsel, gathered a multitude of beautiful girls and young women, adorned them with costly garments and golden ornaments, and led them to his son in the palace, while all his servants he led out, so that no men remained in the palace, and all service to the prince was performed by women and girls. Invisibly there also entered the crafty spirits sent by the magician Theudas, and they began to kindle carnal passion in the youth and to suggest unchaste

thoughts to him. The blessed Josaphat endured great temptation and struggle with himself, especially when one maiden, the most beautiful of all, instructed not only by the king but also by the demons, spread upon him the nets of her beauty. She was the daughter of a certain king; taken captive and led away from her homeland, she had fallen, as the most precious spoil, to King Avenir. Relying upon her exceptional beauty, the father sent her to seduce the son; having entered into her, the demon-seducer taught her wise speeches and skillful conversation, and at the same time implanted in the holy youth first a love without any lust, striving gradually to ensnare him in his nets. And indeed Josaphat came to love her for her wisdom and good manners, and moreover pitied her because, being a king's daughter, she had become a captive and lost her fatherland and high station; he finally pondered also how he might turn her away from idolatry and make her a Christian.

With such thoughts, feeling no carnal lust within himself, he began to converse with her thus:

"Know, maiden, God who lives forever, that thou mayest not perish in error. Know the Creator, and thou shalt be blessed, espoused to the Immortal Bridegroom."

He said much more of the same kind to her, and then the unclean spirit taught her to begin the work of seduction and to lure the innocent soul to destruction. And the maiden said:

"If thou, my lord, art concerned for my salvation and wishest to deliver my soul from pagan error, then fulfill also one request of mine, and I shall at once renounce my ancestral gods, turn to thy God, and serve him to my last breath; and thus thou shalt receive a reward for my conversion."

"In what does thy request consist?" asked the holy youth of the maiden.

She, enticing him with her gaze and the tone of her voice, answered:

"Enter into marriage with me, and I shall fulfill every command of thine."

"In vain hast thou dared," he said, "to address me with such a request, for although I desire thy salvation, I will not consent to defile myself."

Seeking to smooth his path to sin, she in her turn said:

"Thou thyself, my lord, being so wise, speakest in vain: thou callest marriage defilement. I too know the Christian writings; I have read them much in my own country and have often conversed with Christians. Is it not written in your books: 'Let marriage be held in honor among all, and the bed undefiled' (Heb. 13:4), and again: 'It is better to marry than to burn' (1 Cor. 7:9)? Did not the ancient patriarchs, prophets, and righteous men know marriage, as your Scriptures bear witness? Does not Scripture declare that Peter, whom you call the chief of the Apostles, had a wife? Who then taught thee to call marriage defilement, my lord? In truth, thou thyself hast departed from the truth of your teaching."

"Although the Scripture contains all that thou hast said," the holy one replied, "and indeed each person is free, if he wishes, to enter marriage, yet this excludes those who have promised Christ to keep their virginity. As for me, as soon as I received holy baptism, I vowed to present myself to Christ pure in undefiled virginity; how then shall I dare to transgress the oath given to God?"

The seductress said to him:

"If thou wilt not take me in marriage, then fulfill my other desire, which is easily fulfilled and of no consequence. If thou wishest to save my soul, be with me this night. If thou dost so, I promise thee that tomorrow I shall embrace the Christian faith; and then thou wilt receive not only forgiveness of sins for such care for my conversion, but also a great reward; for 'there shall be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents' (Lk. 15:7), says thy Scripture. And if there is joy in heaven over the conversion of a sinner, will not the recompense also be great for him who converts the sinner and becomes the cause of such joy? Without doubt it will, for your Apostles too did many things at their own discretion, transgressing a lesser divine commandment for the sake of a greater one. Did not the Apostle Paul circumcise Timothy (Acts 16:3), although circumcision was not obligatory for Christians?

Yet he did not fear to act so for the greater benefit of the work of preaching. And you will find much similar to this in your books. Therefore, if thou truly desirest to save my soul, fulfill this my small desire."

As she spoke, the soul of the saint, assailed by opposing thoughts, began to waver between good and evil; the firmness of his resolve to keep his virginity began to weaken, and his will and reason seemed as if softened. Seeing this, the sower of sin, the devil, was filled with joy and announced to the other demons:

"Look, this maiden wishes to do what proved beyond even our strength! Therefore let us now attack the youth with especial force, for we shall not have another more favorable time to fulfill the desire and the command of him who sent us."

Having cried this, the unclean one, together with his servants, boldly rushed upon the warrior of Christ and threw all his powers of soul into disorder, kindling in him impure love for the maiden and strong lust. Then the saint, striking his breast and sighing from the depth of his heart toward God, quickly had recourse to prayer; and, shedding abundant tears, he cried out to the One who could save him from the turmoil and storm, and said:

"'In Thee, O Lord, I have put my trust; let me never be put to shame... let not my enemies triumph over me' (Ps. 30:2; Ps. 24:2). I trust in Thy power; be my defense in this hour, and direct my ways, according to Thy will, to the glorification of Thy holy and terrible Name in me, Thy servant."

The saint prayed long, bathed in tears and making many prostrations, and at last he fell to the ground and fell asleep. In his sleep he soon saw that he was taken by certain unknown men, passed through wondrous places, and led into a great field covered with beautiful and exceedingly fragrant flowers. Here he saw a multitude of various and beautiful trees bearing unknown and extraordinary fruits, pleasant to behold and stirring the desire to taste them; the leaves of these trees rustled cheerfully in the light breeze and gently swayed, ceaselessly giving forth fragrance. Beneath the trees stood thrones of pure gold, precious stones, and pearls, emitting a strong, brilliant light; there were also couches covered with various coverings of inexpressible beauty and

splendor. In the midst flowed waters, clear and fair, delighting the eye. The aforementioned extraordinary men led Josaphat through the whole described field and brought him into a city shining with ineffable light, having walls of pure gold and precious stones such as no one had ever seen, and its wall-pillars and gates of solid pearl... But who can express the whole beauty and splendor of this city? Light shone down from above in abundant rays, filling all the streets of the city; and certain winged warriors, bright in appearance, walked about the city and sang sweet-sounding songs such as the ear of man had never yet heard. And Josaphat heard a voice:

"Behold the rest of the righteous! Behold the joy of those who in their life were pleasing to the Lord."

The men who had taken Josaphat wished, having led him out of the city, to take him back. But he, captivated by the beauty and magnificence he had seen, said:

"I beg you, do not deprive me of this ineffable joy, but permit me to dwell in some corner of this city."

"Now thou canst not remain here," they answered him, "although for many labors and efforts thou wilt in time enter here, if only thou employ all thy strength for it, for 'the violent take it by force' (Mt. 11:12)."

Afterward they led him again through the aforementioned great field and brought him into dark places full of gloom and sorrow, and in everything opposite to that light and joy which Josaphat had seen before. There was unbroken, dreary darkness, and all was full of grief and confusion. There burned a fiery furnace, around which crept worms devouring the human body, and there stood spirits of vengeance. Some people were cruelly scorched by the fire, and a voice was heard:

"Behold the place of sinners! Behold the place of those who have defiled themselves by shameful deeds!"

Then those who had been leading Josaphat in the vision brought him out of the darkness, and at once he awoke and came to himself, but he trembled all over, and tears flowed in streams from his eyes. Then all the beauty of the young seductress and of the other women and maidens appeared to him worse than filth and pus. Remembering his vision,

he was by turns seized with desire to attain the bright city and possessed by fear of eternal torments; and, weakened, he lay in his bed and could not rise.

The king was informed of his illness, and the king immediately hastened to him and began to inquire about the cause of his sickness. Josaphat told him everything that had been shown to him in the vision, and added:

"Why hast thou laid nets for me, desiring to catch me and cast my soul into destruction? For if God had not helped me, my soul would almost have been in hell. But how good is the God of Israel, who delivered me, a sinner, from the mouths of lions! In confusion I fell asleep; but my Savior God from on high visited me and showed me what good things they lose who provoke Him, and what torments they prepare for themselves... Therefore, father, if already thou stoppest thine ears as it were and wilt not listen to me whenever I speak to thee of the true good, then at least do not hinder me from walking the right path. I desire one thing only: to leave everything and go to where the servant of Christ Barlaam dwells, and to spend with him all the rest of my life. But if thou wilt try to hold me by force, thou wilt soon see me dead of grief and despondency, and then thou, having no son, shalt no longer be called a father."

Again the king was seized by the greatest sorrow, and, grieved, he went to his palace. The cunning spirits also left the invincible warrior of Christ and returned in shame to Theudas, who began to reproach them:

"See how powerless you are, wretches," he said, "you could not even overcome a youth!"

And they, compelled by the power of God against their will, confessed:

"We cannot withstand the power of Christ; we cannot even look upon the sign of the Cross with which the youth protects himself."

After some time the king, taking Theudas with him, came again to his son, and this time Theudas disputed with the youth in defense of his gods; but he could not prevail against him to whom wisdom and utterance were given from above, a wisdom against which no one can stand.

Vanquished and put to shame, Theudas was silent for a long while, like a mute, finding nothing further to say; and at last, scarcely recovering himself, he turned to the king and said:

"O King! The Holy Spirit dwells in your son; we have indeed been defeated, and we have nothing to answer him... Truly great is the God of the Christians, great is their faith and great are their mysteries!"

And turning to the prince, he asked:

"Tell me, you who are sanctified in soul: will Christ receive me, if I forsake my evil deeds and turn to Him?"

Saint Josaphat began to speak to him of the repentance of sinners and of the mercy of God, which quickly receives those who truly repent. Theudas was moved in heart, and at once hastened to his cave, burned there all the books by which he had occupied himself with sorcery, and then followed the example of Nachor: he was granted holy baptism and passed his life in repentance.

Since the king no longer knew what to do with his son, Arachia advised him to divide his kingdom into two halves and give one to his son.

"If you should wish to torment your son," he said, "you will be an enemy of nature itself, and you will be called not a father but the tormentor of your own son; moreover you will destroy him, and you yourself will remain without children and add still more sorrow to yourself. There remains only one thing to do: divide your kingdom in two and let your son reign in the part assigned to him. Occupied with worldly cares, he will little by little grow accustomed to the life that we live, and everything will be done according to our way, since habits rooted in the soul are changed not so much by force as by faith. Even if he remains faithful to Christianity, it will be some consolation for you in your grief that you are not childless, that you have a son who is a king."

Accepting Arachia's counsel, the king did so: he divided the kingdom in half and set Josaphat as king over one half. Josaphat, although he had not been thinking of royal power, desiring the desert monastic life, but reckoning that all was tending toward the better, accepted the part of the kingdom assigned to him, and upon ascending the throne, first of all strove to root out pagan polytheism and to spread faith in the one true God. He destroyed the idols throughout his land and razed

their shrines to the ground, and in their place he built Christian churches, and in every way spread the faith of Christ. Hearing of this, Christian bishops, presbyters and deacons came down from the mountains and deserts and gathered to the pious king, who received them with joy and together with them cared for the salvation of human souls. Soon he enlightened with the light of faith and baptized all his subjects, while at the same time not ceasing to pray tearfully to God for the conversion of his father.

And the merciful God did not despise his zealous prayer and tears: He touched the heart of Avenir with the light of His grace, the veil of darkness fell from the eyes of his mind, and he saw the dawn of truth and recognized the vanity of the false-named gods. Avenir gathered his counselors and disclosed to them his heartfelt desire to accept the Christian faith. All praised his intention, for, through Josaphat's prayers, all had been visited by "the dayspring from on high" (Lk. 1:78). At once the king summoned his son by letter, that he might learn the faith and piety from him. With what joy and gladness was the heart of Josaphat filled when he saw that his father was turning to the true God! Having sufficiently instructed his father in the faith over many days, and imparted to him the mysteries of the holy faith, just as the Venerable Barlaam had imparted them to him, Josaphat brought him to holy baptism and himself received him from the holy font. A deed truly new and wondrous! To his father he became a father, and to him who had begotten him according to the flesh he appeared as the mediator of his spiritual rebirth. After the king, his nobles, soldiers, servants received holy baptism; in a word, the whole Indian land did. And there was then great joy on earth and in heaven: on earth the faithful rejoiced at the conversion of unbelievers, and in heaven the Angels rejoiced over the countless sinners who repented.

After his baptism Avenir gave all royal power to his son, and himself lived in seclusion in silence, always sprinkling his head with ashes, grieving over his sins; thus he lived four years, and having received from God the forgiveness of his sins, he reposed in peace.

On the fortieth day after the death of King Avenir, Josaphat, observing his memory, gathered all his nobles, counselors, military com-

manders and other important officials, and disclosed to them his secret, namely that he wished to leave the earthly kingdom and all worldly things, go into the desert and become a monk. All were grieved and shed tears, for all loved him greatly for his meekness, humility and beneficence. In his place he wished to set as king one of his nobles, namely Varachias, who had long been a Christian, the very one who had taken the side of the supposed Barlaam in the disputation about the faith against all the pagan sages. Josaphat knew that Varachias was very firm in the faith and had a great love for Christ.

But Varachias refused the kingdom, saying:

"Love your neighbor, O King, as yourself. If to reign is good, reign yourself. And if not, why do you give me the kingdom? Why do you lay on me a burden from which you yourself flee?"

Then all earnestly, with tears, began to beseech Saint Josaphat not to forsake them. But at night he wrote a letter to the whole senate and to all the commanders, in which he commended them to God and commanded that they should set no one as king over themselves except Varachias; and leaving this letter in his bedchamber, he himself secretly went out and hastened to the desert. In the morning a rumor of his departure spread. The people were troubled and fell into sorrow. Many wept. At last all the inhabitants of the capital rushed to search for him and found him praying with raised hands in a dried-up stream-bed. There they surrounded him, and falling down before him, with weeping they besought him to return to the palace and not to leave them. Josaphat, compelled by these entreaties, returned, but soon again gathered everyone and said:

"In vain do you resist the will of the Lord by holding me back."

Then he confirmed his words with an oath, so that from that moment he could not remain king even one day. He placed his crown on Varachias against his will, seated him on his throne, and gave him due instruction concerning the duties of a king; and he himself, taking leave of the people, went out of the palace and out of the city, hastening to the desert. All the people, together with Varachias and all the authorities, convinced that Josaphat was unyielding in his purpose to leave the kingdom, being unable to keep him by entreaties and not daring to turn

him back from his path by force, went after him weeping and accompanied him far; but he asked them not to grieve him and to leave him alone; still some followed him at a distance, with sobs, until sunset, when night hid their beloved sovereign from their eyes and they ceased to see one another.

Thus Varachias received the scepter of the Indian kingdom, while Josaphat "counted all things but loss, that he might gain Christ" (Phil. 3:8). On the very first night of his journey he entered the dwelling of a poor man and gave him his clothing, and himself went forth to the ascetic life of the desert in the hair shirt which Barlaam had once given him. Yet he had with him neither bread nor anything else needful for food, nor water: he placed all his hope in the providence of God and burned with fervent love for his Lord. Reaching the desert, he, lifting his eyes to Christ, cried out:

"Let my eyes no longer see the good things of this world, and let my heart no longer take delight in anything but Thee, my hope! Direct my path and lead me to Thy saint Barlaam! Show me the author of my salvation, and let him teach me the desert life who taught me to know Thee, O Lord!"

For two years Saint Josaphat walked alone through the desert, seeking Barlaam. He fed on the herbs growing there, and often suffered hunger because of the lack of the very herbs, since the soil of that desert was dry and little fruitful. He endured many afflictions from the devil, who attacked him, now disturbing his mind with various thoughts, now terrifying him with apparitions; sometimes he appeared to him black and gnashing his teeth, sometimes he rushed upon him with a sword in his hand, as if desiring to slay him; at other times he took the forms of various beasts, serpents, asps. But the valiant and invincible soldier of Christ overcame all these visions and drove them away with the sword of prayer and the weapon of the Cross.

At the end of the second year, Josaphat found in the Senaridan desert a cave, and in it a monk who lived in silence, from whom he learned where Barlaam was. In joy he quickly went along the path shown to him, reached Barlaam's cave, and standing at the entrance, knocked at the little door, saying:

"Bless, Father, bless!"

Barlaam, hearing the voice, came out of the cave, and by inspiration from above recognized Josaphat, whom it was impossible to recognize by his outward appearance, for he had grown black from the heat of the sun, had become shaggy with hair, and had withered cheeks and deeply sunken eyes. The elder, turning his face to the east, offered a prayer of thanksgiving to God, and then they embraced with love and kissed with the holy kiss, bathing their faces with warm tears of joy. Having sat down, they began to converse, and Barlaam spoke first. He said:

You have done well to come, my child, child of God and heir of the Kingdom of Heaven! May the Lord give you in place of temporal goods eternal ones, and in place of corruptible things incorruptible ones. But I beg you, beloved, tell me: how did you come here? What happened after my departure from you? Did your father come to know God, or does he still remain in his former error?

Ioasaph related to him in order everything that had happened after Barlaam's departure, and what the Lord had accomplished by His almighty help. The elder, having heard it all, greatly rejoiced and marvelled, and at last said:

"Glory to Thee, Christ God, that Thou hast been pleased that the seed of Thy word, sown by me in the soul of Thy servant Ioasaph, should so sprout and bring forth a hundredfold fruit."

Meanwhile evening came, and having offered the customary prayers, they at last remembered food. And so Barlaam prepared a meal rich in edifying conversation, full of spiritual nourishment, but meagre in bodily food, for it consisted only of raw, uncooked vegetables, a small quantity of dates, and water from the nearest spring. Having strengthened themselves with this meal, they gave thanks to God, who opens His hand and satisfies every living thing with His good pleasure. Then they performed the night prayers and again began their edifying conversation, and they conversed all night until the time of the morning chanting.

Living such a wondrous and angelic life, Ioasaph and Barlaam lived together for a good many years. At last the Venerable Barlaam felt the

approach of his death, summoned his spiritual son Ioasaph, whom he had brought to new life, and said to him:

"My son, I have long desired to see you before my death, and when once I was praying for you, our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to me and promised to bring you to me. Now the Lord has fulfilled my desire: I see you having renounced the world and all that is worldly, and united with Christ. And since the time of my departure has now drawn near, bury my body in the earth, give dust to dust, and remain yourself in this place, continuing the spiritual life and remembering me, who am humble."

Having heard these words, Ioasaph wept bitterly at the parting from the Venerable, and the elder could scarcely comfort him with spiritual conversation. Then he sent him to some brethren who lived in the same desert, and bade him bring all that was needful for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Ioasaph hastened off, took what was necessary, and returned just as quickly, fearing lest his spiritual father should die without him and he should be deprived of his last blessing. Barlaam celebrated the Divine Liturgy, and both of them partook of the Holy Mysteries. Then the Venerable long conversed with his disciple about edifying things, and with tender feeling prayed to God for himself and for his disciple; after the prayer, embracing Ioasaph as a father, the elder kissed him for the last time and blessed him, signed himself with the sign of the Cross, and lay down upon his bed; then his face became bright and joyful, as though some friends had come to him. Thus he departed to the Lord, having lived in the desert seventy years, and being about one hundred years old in all.

Ioasaph, shedding abundant tears over him, sang psalms over him the whole day and the whole night; and in the morning, having dug a grave near the cave, he committed the body of the honourable elder to burial, and, sitting beside the grave, wept bitterly until he was exhausted from weeping and fell asleep. In his sleep he again saw those wondrous men whom he had seen once during the temptation: they came to him, took him, and led him again onto the great field which he had seen before, and into the radiant city. As he entered the city gates,

the Angels of God met him, bearing two crowns of indescribable beauty.

Ioasaph asked:

"Whose are these shining crowns?"

"Both are yours," the Angels answered him, "for having saved many souls, and for having, for God's sake, left the earthly kingdom and dedicated yourself to the monastic life; but one of them must be given to your father, for having, with your help, abandoned the path leading to perdition, sincerely and diligently repented, and been reconciled with the Lord."

"But how can it be possible," objected Ioasaph, "that my father should receive for repentance alone a reward equal to mine, who have borne such labours?"

No sooner had he said this than he saw Barlaam, who said to him:

"Did I not once tell you, Ioasaph, that when you grew rich you would become stingy and unyielding? Why, then, do you now not wish your father to have an honour equal to yours? Ought you not rather to rejoice with all your soul that your prayers for him have been heard?"

Ioasaph, saying to Barlaam what he had always been accustomed to say to him during his life, "Forgive me, father, forgive me," continued:

"Tell me, where do you yourself live?"

"I have received a bright dwelling in this beautiful and great city," answered Barlaam.

Ioasaph began to beg Barlaam to take him with him to his dwelling and to receive him lovingly as his guest. Barlaam answered:

"The time has not yet come for you, who bear the burden of the body, to be here; but if you bravely persevere to the end in the monastic labours, as I have enjoined you, you will soon come here and be counted worthy of an abiding life here, of the glory and joys of this place, and will be with me for ever."

Awakening, with his soul still full of the light he had seen and of unspeakable glory, Ioasaph glorified the Lord of all, offering up an inspired hymn of thanksgiving.

In the place where he had dwelt together with the Venerable Barlaam, Saint Ioasaph lived until his death. In the twenty-fifth year of his

life he laid down his earthly reign and took upon himself the ascetic labour, and having lived in the desert thirty-five years, he departed to the Lord.

A certain holy hermit who lived not far off, learning by inspiration of the repose of Saint Ioasaph, came to him at the very hour of his death, chanted over his honourable body with tears of love the customary funeral hymns, and laid him together with the relics of the Venerable Barlaam, so that the bodies of those who had been inseparable in spirit might rest inseparably in one place. After the burial of Saint Ioasaph, the hermit received a revelation from God commanding him to go to the Indian kingdom and to inform Emperor Varakhiya of the saint's death. Having received this news, the emperor set out with a multitude of people for the desert, and on arriving at the cave of the venerable fathers, he opened their tomb and found the relics of Saints Barlaam and Ioasaph incorrupt, and a great fragrance issued from them. Taking the holy relics, Varakhiya with honour carried them from the desert to his own homeland and placed them in the church built by Saint Ioasaph, glorifying God in Trinity, to Whom be honour and worship from us also, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Learning from thy spiritual instructor, O Emperor Ioasaph, to know God, and being enlightened by Baptism, thou didst turn the people to the faith, and having received thy father from the font, thou didst leave the kingdom and attain the desert, and in it didst labour diligently in ascetic struggle: pray to Christ God with thy teacher Barlaam, that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

God alone, who knoweth hearts, knew thy good purpose from thy infancy, Ioasaph. And having brought thee from the earthly kingdom to the monastic life, He vouchsafed thee to follow the great Barlaam, with whom now, having the all-radiant Jerusalem on high as thy fatherland, and beautifully enjoying the desired

goodness of the Holy Trinity, we beseech thee, royal beauty: remember us who honour thee in faith.

* * *

Passion of Saint Barlaam the Martyr

Страдание святого мученика Варлаама

Saint Barlaam the martyr was a native of Antioch in Syria. In his old age he was seized for confessing the name of Jesus Christ and brought to trial before a pagan prince. They began to compel Barlaam to offer sacrifice to the idols. When he refused to do this, they subjected him to many cruel tortures for Christ the Lord: first they beat him mercilessly with ox sinews, and then they scraped him with iron claws. After this, the pagans led the holy martyr to the temple of the idols, and there, at the command of the tormentor, having stretched out his hand over the altar on which a fire was burning, they placed upon it hot coals with incense, so that he might lay the incense-offering upon their altar of unclean gods. The tormentors thought that the martyr, from unbearable pain, would cast the hot coals with the incense down before the idols. And had he done so, they would have said to him:

"Now you have already offered sacrifice to our gods."

But the pagans did not attain what they desired, for the martyr of Christ stood unshaken as a pillar, holding the burning fire in his hand, and was stronger than bronze and iron, for he held the fire in his hand until his fingers were burned and fell with the fire to the ground. Despite this, he did not move his hand nor lay the coals with incense upon the altar before the idols. Having appeared so brave and invincible a sufferer and warrior of Christ, Saint Barlaam, in a valiant confession, committed his soul to the Lord.[8]

Word of Saint Basil the Great concerning Saint Barlaam the Martyr

In former times the deaths of the saints were honored with lamentation and tears. Joseph wept bitterly over the dead Jacob (Gen. 50:1); the Jews made great lamentation over the death of Moses (Deut. 34:8), and Samuel was honored with many tears (1 Kgdms. 25:1). But now

8. St. Martyr Barlaam died in 304 in Caesarea in Cappadocia.

we rejoice at the repose of the venerable, for the character of sorrow has changed since the Cross. We no longer weep when we accompany the deaths of saints, but rejoice in exultant celebration at their tombs; for death is sleep for the righteous—or, rather, a departure to a better life. Therefore the martyrs rejoice as they are slain; the desire for the most blessed life deadens in them the sense of pain as they are slaughtered. The martyr looks not upon dangers, but upon crowns; he is not dismayed by blows, but reckons his rewards; he sees not the executioners scourging him here on earth, but beholds the angels welcoming him from heaven; he has in mind not momentary dangers, but eternal recompenses. And even here the martyrs reap the bright pledge of glory; for as all proclaim them with exultant greetings, they draw thousands of people into their net from their tombs.

This very thing has now come to pass with the valiant Barlaam. The battle-trumpet of the martyr has sounded and, as you see, has gathered the warriors of piety. The athlete of Christ, lying here, has been proclaimed, and has opened a spectacle for the Church. And as the Master of the faithful said: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (Jn. 11:25).

Thus the valiant Barlaam died, and calls us together for solemn assemblies; he is swallowed up by the tomb, and invites us to a feast.

Now it is fitting for us to cry out: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?" (1 Cor. 1:20).

Today a peasant is for us an invincible teacher of piety. The tormentor dragged him along as an easy prey, but, after putting him to the test, recognized in him an unconquerable warrior; he mocked him for his faulty speech, yet the man struck terror with angelic courage. For his character had not grown coarse along with his instrument of speech, nor did his understanding share the same deficiencies as his words. Rather, he became another Paul, saying with Paul: "Though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge" (2 Cor. 11:6). The executioners who scourged him grew benumbed, while the martyr was found to increase in strength; the arms of those who flayed him weakened, but the understanding of the one being flayed did not yield; the scourges

tore apart the fair interweaving of his sinews, but the strength of his faith became yet more unbreakable; the flesh disappeared from his lacerated sides, but the philosophy of his mind flourished; most of his flesh was dead, yet the martyr was vigorous, as though he had not even begun his struggles.

When love of piety takes up its dwelling in the soul, then every kind of combat seems to it a jest, and all who torment it for the object it loves delight it more than they afflict it. The love of the Apostles bears witness to this for me, for once it made the scourges of the Jews sweet to them. For it is said: "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41).

Such is the warrior whom we glorify today. He counted torments his delight; when scourged, he thought they were showering roses upon him. He shunned the wounds of impiety as arrows, and regarded the judge's anger as a shadow of smoke; he laughed at the cruel commands of the guards; he rejoiced at the sight of dangers as at the sight of crowns; he took pleasure in blows as in honors; amid the harshest torments he leapt as though receiving the most splendid rewards; he despised the naked swords; he received the hands of the executioners with the same feeling as though they were softer than wax; he kissed the tree of execution as a means of salvation; he delighted in the prison doors as in a variety of flowers. His right hand was stronger than the fire which his enemies employed against him as their last resort. For they placed fire upon an altar for libations to the demons, brought the martyr and set him before it, and commanded him to hold his right hand outstretched over the altar; then they used it in place of a bronze altar, cunningly laying burning incense upon it. They hoped that, overcome by the power of fire, his hand would soon be forced to drop the incense upon the altar.

Alas, what an intricate deception of the impious! "Since," they say, "thousands of wounds have not shaken his will, let us shake the hand of this stubborn fighter with flame. Since by diverse means we have not troubled his soul, let us at least bring his right hand to trembling by acting upon it with fire." But these wretched men did not attain the

hope they had placed in this. For though the flame burned his hand, the hand continued to bear the flame upon it like ashes; it did not turn its back upon the hostile fire, as deserters do, but held firm, valiantly battling the flame, and gave the martyr occasion to speak in the words of the Prophet: "Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight" (Ps. 143:1).

Fire entered into combat with the hand, and defeat was found on the side of the fire. The struggle between the flame and the martyr's right hand continued, and the hand won a victory such as had never before been seen in battle: though the flame pierced through the hand, the hand was still outstretched for the fight. Truly, this is a hand surpassing fire in steadfastness! A hand that had never learned to yield to fire! Fire, taught to suffer defeat at the hand! Iron yields to fire, softened by its grievous force. Bronze does not resist its dominion. Yet fire, whose power overcomes all things, burned the martyr's outstretched hand but did not shake it! Rightly could the martyr then cry out to the Master: "Nevertheless I am continually with Thee: Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou hast guided me with Thy counsel, and afterward received me with glory" (Ps. 72:23–24).

What shall I call you, valiant warrior of Christ? Shall I call you a statue? But I would greatly diminish your endurance. Fire, when it takes a statue into

itself, softens it; yet it did not persuade your right hand even to make the slightest movement. Shall I call you iron? But I find that even this image falls short of your courage. You alone persuaded the flame not to do violence to your hand; you alone had a hand for an altar. You alone struck the faces of demons with your flaming right hand, and then, with your hand turned to coal, struck their heads; now, with your right hand turned to ashes, you trample and blind their hosts.

But why do I belittle the valiant athlete with childish babbling? Let us leave his praises to those whose tongues are far more powerful; let us summon for this task the louder trumpets of teachers. Arise now before me, renowned painters of the athlete's deeds! With your art, add to this incomplete portrait of the commander! With the flowers of your wisdom, illumine the crown-bearer whom I have portrayed indistinctly!

Let me be vanquished by your painting of the martyr's valiant deeds; I shall gladly acknowledge even now such a victory of your strength over me. I shall look upon this struggle of the hand with the fire, depicted by you more precisely. I shall look upon this combatant, portrayed more vividly in your picture. Let the demons weep, even now struck down in you by the martyr's prowess! Let the hand, burned yet victorious, be shown to them once more! Let the Master of the struggles, Christ, also be depicted in the picture. To Him be glory unto the ages of ages! Amen.

A Homily of St. John Chrysostom on the Holy Martyr Barlaam

Blessed Barlaam has called us together for this sacred feast and celebration, not that we might glorify him, but that we might imitate him; not that we might be hearers of praises, but that we might be imitators of his struggles. In the affairs of this life, those who attain high authority never wish to see others sharing the same honor with them, because there envy and hatred break the bonds of love. But in spiritual matters it is not so; quite the contrary: martyrs feel their honor most especially when they see fellow servants attain a share in their blessings. Thus, whoever wishes to praise the martyrs, let him imitate the martyrs; whoever wishes to extol the athletes of piety with praises, let him imitate their labors—this will bring the martyrs no less pleasure than their own valiant deeds. And that you may be convinced that they truly feel their blessings most especially when they see us in safety, and consider this the greatest honor for themselves, listen to Paul, who says: "For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord" (1 Thess. 3:8).

And Moses before him said to God: "Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written" (Ex. 32:32).

"I do not feel," he says, "the honor from on high because of their misfortune. The company of the faithful is a body knit together: what profit is it for the head to be crowned, when the feet suffer torment?"

But how, you may say, can we now imitate the martyrs? This is no time of persecution. I know that too: it is no time of persecution, but it is a time of martyrdom; not a time for such struggles, but a time for crowns. People do not persecute us, but demons do; the tormentor does

not pursue us, but the devil does, who is more grievous than all tormentors. You do not see coals before you, but you see the flame of lust kindled. They trampled upon coals, but you must trample upon the fire of nature; they fought with beasts, but you must bridle anger, that wild and untamed beast; they stood firm against unbearable torments, but you must overcome the indecent and wicked thoughts that abound in your heart—thus imitate the martyrs. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

The lust of the flesh is a fire, an unquenchable and perpetual fire; it is a mad and furious dog. Though you drive it away a thousand times, it attacks a thousand times and does not leave off. Cruel is the flame of coals, but the flame of lust is worse still. We never have a truce in this war, and we never have rest in the present life; there is a constant struggle, so that the crown may also be bright. Therefore Paul always arms us, since it is always a time of war and the enemy is always awake. Do you wish to know that lust burns no less than fire? Listen to Solomon, who says: "Can one walk upon hot coals and not burn his feet? So is it with him who goes in to his neighbor's wife; whoever touches her shall not be unpunished" (Prov. 6:28–29).

Do you see that lust by its nature rivals the nature of fire? As it is impossible for one who touches fire not to receive a burn, so a glance at beautiful faces seizes the soul that is incontinent in its looking more quickly than fire does. And as some combustible substance serves fire, so bodily beauty serves the eyes of lustful people. Therefore one must not give the fire of lust food, which is outward contemplation, but must in every way cover and quench it with pious thoughts, restraining the further spreading of the flame and not allowing it to break the firmness of our spirit. And every pleasure, when the passions prevail, is wont to burn the soul more strongly than fire, unless one resists each passion bravely, with patience and faith, as the blessed and valiant ascetic of Christ, Barlaam, acted with his own hand. He held a whole fire in his right hand, and did not yield to the pain, but remained more impassive than statues; or rather, although he experienced pain and suffered,

since he had a body and not iron, yet, experiencing pain and suffering, he showed in a mortal body the wisdom of the incorporeal powers.

2. But that this story may be clearer, I shall go on to tell of his martyrdom; and you consider the treachery of the devil. Some of the saints he set upon griddles, others he cast into cauldrons boiling more fiercely than fire; some he scraped along the sides, others he plunged into the sea, some he delivered to beasts, others he threw into the furnace; some had their limbs broken, from others the skin was stripped while they were still alive, under others he placed coals beneath bloody bodies, and the sparks that fell into the wounds tormented them more sharply than any beast; for others he devised still heavier tortures. But seeing that all this was scorned, and that the sufferers endured it with great firmness, and that those who came after them to the same struggles were given the greatest incentive to courage, what does he do? He devises a new kind of snare, so that by the unexpectedness and unusualness of the torment he might overthrow the soul of the martyr, since what we know and what we have heard of, however unbearable it may be, is held in contempt as already known and expected, while the unexpected, though light, is most insufferable of all. So let there be a new struggle, and let there be an extraordinary cunning, so that novelty and unexpectedness, confusing the ascetic, may easily cast him down. What does he do? He brings the saint out of the prison bound. And this too was the work of that treachery: not to use heavy instruments and cause terrible torments at once from the beginning, but to begin the struggle with something less. Why? So that if the ascetics were struck down, their defeat would be shameful, because they had not stood even against the small; but if they prevailed and conquered, then, having wearied their strength on the lesser, they would be easily overcome by the greater. Therefore he first used the lesser, so that whether he prevailed or did not prevail he should not be deceived: if I prevail, he said, I shall laugh; and if I do not prevail, I shall make them weaker for the future. So he brings him out of the prison, and he came out as a valiant ascetic who had long exercised in the palaestra[9]; and indeed the prison was a school

9. Palaestra was the square on which the Greeks and Romans held gymnastic games or combats.

of struggle for the martyr, and there, conversing alone with God, he learned from Him every struggle, for where such bonds are, there is Christ also.

So he came out, made stronger by the longer stay in prison. When, after his coming out, the devil through the servants of his lawlessness led him into the middle, he did not bind him to a tree nor surround him with executioners, since he saw that he desired this and had already grown accustomed in thought to this punishment; but against this tower he uses some extraordinary, new and unexpected instrument that could cause its fall: for in every case he seeks to bring down the saints more by deceit than to torment them with pain. What then was this instrument? Having ordered him to stretch out his hand, palm upward, over the altar, they placed on it hot coals and incense, so that if he felt the pain and turned his hand over, they would reckon this to him as a sacrifice and an apostasy (from the faith). Do you see how treacherous the devil is? But see how he "catches the wise in their craftiness" (1 Cor. 3:19). He made his snares vain, and turned the very intensity of his manifold cunning to the exaltation and the increase of greater glory for the martyr. When the enemy, having used countless wiles, then withdraws defeated, the ascetic of piety appears all the more glorious, as happened here too. Blessed Barlaam stood without bending or turning his hand, as if it had been made of iron; and even had his hand turned over, the fault would not have been the martyr's.

3. Listen to me attentively, all of you, so that you may be convinced that, even if his right hand had turned over, this would not have been a defeat. Why? Because we must judge this as we judge those whose ribs are torn or who are tortured in some other way. If they cannot endure and offer sacrifice, the fault lies in their weakness: unable to bear their sufferings, they offered sacrifice. But if, while enduring torments, they fall ill from their sufferings and yet do not forsake piety, no one blames them for these illnesses; rather, we praise them and marvel at them all the more, because, though weakened by their sufferings, they endured and did not deny the faith. So it would have been here: if blessed Barlaam, unable to bear the burning, had promised to offer sacrifice, he would have been vanquished. But if his hand had turned over while he

remained steadfast, this would not have been the fault of the martyr's will; it would have come about through the weakness not of his will, but of the nature of his sinews: in keeping with their strength, his hand would have bent away from the fire against the saint's will. We do not condemn those whose ribs are torn because their flesh is ripped apart; or, rather, to give a closer example, no one would reproach those suffering from fever and convulsions because their hands are bent out of shape. This happens not through their softness, but through the feverish heat of their illness, which drains away moisture and unnaturally contracts the sinews. So no one would have reproached this saint either, had his hand turned over. If fever, even without the sufferer's will, ordinarily contracts and distorts the limbs, then all the more could the coals laid upon his right hand have done so, even though the martyr did not yield. Yet they did not, so that you might be fully convinced that the grace of God was present with him, strengthening the athlete and making good what nature lacked. Thus his hand itself did not suffer what was natural to it, but remained unturned, as though it had been fashioned of adamant.[10] Who, beholding this, would not then have marvelled? Who would not have trembled? The Angels looked down from above, the Archangels gazed on: the sight was glorious and truly beyond human nature. Indeed, who would not have wished to see a man who contended and suffered none of what is natural to men, who was himself both altar and sacrifice and priest? Therefore a twofold incense arose: one from the incense being burned, and the other from the flesh being melted; and the latter incense was more pleasing than the former, its fragrance sweeter than the first. Here the same thing happened as with the bush: as that bush burned and was not consumed, so here the hand burned, but the soul was not consumed; the body was being destroyed, but the faith was not spent; the flesh grew weak, but zeal did not grow weak. The hot coals, burning through the middle of his hand, fell down, but the courage of his soul did not fall; his hand was injured and perished—for it was of flesh, not of adamant—but his soul called

10. Adamant is the diamond, a stone of such hardness that it scratches and cuts other stones without being harmed thereby. In ecclesiastical literature this name is applied by many to saints who were renowned for the firmness of their faith and character.

for another hand, to show its endurance upon that one also. As a brave warrior, who has entered the midst of his enemies and shattered the ranks of those fighting against him, when his sword breaks from the many unceasing blows, looks about for another sword because he is not yet sated with slaying his foes, so too the soul of blessed Barlaam, having lost one hand while striking down the armies of demons, called for another hand, to show its zeal upon that one also. Do not tell me that he gave up only one hand. First consider that he who surrendered his hand would have surrendered his head as well, offered his ribs, and stood against fire and beasts, the sea and the abyss, the cross and the wheel, and every torment ever heard of; he would have endured all, if not in actual experience, then in intention. Martyrs do not go forth to torments that have been determined beforehand, but prepare themselves for unknown tortures. They are not masters of their tormentors' will, nor do they set limits or measure to their torments; whatever evils the inhuman and beastly will of their tormentors may choose to inflict upon them, they go forth to meet with resolve—unless, perhaps, the body, overcome amid the torments, leaves the tormentors' desire unfulfilled. Thus his flesh was being destroyed, but his will grew more ardent, outshining the very coals with its radiance and shining more brightly than they, for within him burned a spiritual fire, far more brilliant than this flame. Therefore he felt no external fire, because within him burned the bright and flaming fire of love for Christ.

4. Let us, beloved, not only listen to this, but imitate it as well. As I said at the beginning, so I say now: let each of you not merely marvel at the martyr here and now, but, as he goes home, let him take this saint with him; let him bring the saint into his home—or, rather, into his heart, by remembering what has been said. Receive him, as I said above, and set him in your heart with his hand outstretched; receive the crowned victor, and never allow him to depart from your mind. We have brought you to the tombs of the holy martyrs so that, by looking upon them, you might receive some encouragement toward virtue and prepare yourselves for the same zeal. The report of a hero stirs a soldier, but his appearance and the sight of him do so much more—especially when the soldier enters the hero's tent and sees his bloodstained

sword, the head of his enemy lying there, the spoils hanging aloft, the fresh blood dripping from the hands of him who raised the trophy, and spears and shields and arrows and every other kind of weapon lying everywhere. This is why we too have gathered here. The tomb of the martyrs is a soldier's tent; and if you open the eyes of faith, you will see here lying the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the shoes of the Gospel, the spiritual sword, and the very head of the devil, cast down to the ground (Eph. 6:14–17). When at a martyr's tomb you see a demoniac lying on his back and often tearing at himself, you see nothing other than the severed head of the evil one. These weapons still lie beside the soldiers of Christ; and as kings bury heroes together with their weapons, so Christ also buried them with their weapons, in order to reveal, even before the resurrection, the full glory and power of the saints. Recognize their spiritual armor, and you will depart from here having received the greatest benefit. Great, beloved, is your warfare with the devil; it is great, fierce, and unceasing.

Therefore, learn the ways of the struggle, that you may imitate also the victories; despise wealth, money, and every other worldly splendor. Do not count those who grow rich as blessed, but call blessed the martyrs: not those who live in luxury, but those on the gridirons; not those at sumptuous tables, but those in the boiling cauldron; not those who bathe daily in baths, but those in the cruel furnaces; not those who are perfumed with fragrant ointments, but those who give forth smoke and stench from their burning flesh. That fragrance is better and more profitable than the other; the one leads to torment for those who use it, but this one leads to rewards and crowns on high. And that you may be convinced that luxury is evil, as also anointing with fragrant oils, and drunkenness, and immoderate use of wine, and sumptuous feasting, hear what the prophet says: "They lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall... they drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments" (Amos 6:4–6). If this was forbidden under the Old Testament, how much more under grace, where there is greater wisdom. I say this both to men and to women;

the arena is common, for there is no distinction of sex in the camp of Christ, but one assembly. And women too may put on armor, guard themselves with the shield, and cast the arrow, both during martyrdom and at other times when great boldness is required. As an excellent archer, skillfully releasing the arrow from the bowstring, throws the whole line of the enemy into confusion, so the holy martyrs and all champions of the truth, resisting the snares of the devil, skillfully send forth words from their tongue as from the bowstring, and these, like arrows flying through the air, striking the invisible hosts of demons, throw all their army into confusion. The same thing happened also with this blessed Barlaam: by simple words, as by flying arrows, he threw the diabolical camp into confusion. Let us too imitate this skill. Do you not see in what weariness those return who come from the spectacles? And the cause is that they attentively watch what takes place there, and they come from there keeping in their souls both the distortions of the eyes, and the movements of the hands, and the twistings of the feet, and the images of all the displayed forms of distortion of the tormented body. How is it not absurd that they show such concern for the perdition of their soul, and constantly retain in memory what takes place there, while we, having been called to become equal to the Angels through imitation of what is here, do not show equal zeal in keeping what has been said? No, I beg and entreat: let us not be so negligent about our salvation, but let us all keep the martyrs in our souls, with their gridirons, with their cauldrons, with the other tortures; and as painters often cleanse a picture darkened by smoke, by soot, and by the lapse of time, so you, beloved, make use of the remembrance of the holy martyrs: when the cares of life that intrude darken your soul, cleanse it by the remembrance of the martyrs. If you have this remembrance in your soul, you will neither marvel at wealth, nor lament poverty, nor praise glory and power, and you will count nothing whatever of human affairs—the brilliant things as great, or the grievous things as unbearable—but, having risen above all this, you will have in constant contemplation of this image a lesson of virtue. He who sees every day warriors acting courageously in wars and battles will never desire luxury, nor will he delight in a soft and dissipated life, but in one that is strict, firm,

and ready for exploits. And what is there in common between drunkenness and battle, between gluttony and manliness, between fragrant ointments and arms, between war and feasts? You are a soldier of Christ, beloved: arm yourself, then, and do not concern yourself with adornments; you are a valiant ascetic: be therefore manly, and do not concern yourself with finery. So let us imitate these saints, so let us honor these heroes, crowned victors, friends of God, and having traversed the same path as they, we shall be counted worthy of the same crowns, which may we all be vouchsafed, by the grace and love for mankind of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father be glory, with the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou hast appeared most wondrously strong, and hast offered thyself as fragrant frankincense of a whole burnt offering, a sacrifice to Christ; and having received the crown of honor, O Barlaam, do thou ever pray for us, O sufferer.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Barlaam of the Kiev Caves

Житие преподобного Варлаама Печерского

At the time when our Venerable Fathers Anthony, Theodosius, and Nikon shone in the Kiev Caves with valiant ascetic labors, like three lamps worthy to stand before the throne of the Holy Trinity, a certain man named Barlaam, son of noble and Christ-loving parents—John, the first among the boyars of Prince Iziaslav, and Mary—and grandson of the glorious and valiant Vyshata, great-grandson of the voivode Ostromir[11]—often came to them to enjoy their sweet conversation.

11. Izyaslav Yaroslavich, son of the Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise and grandson of St. Vladimir the Great, reigned in Kiev from 1054 to 1068. Vyshata was the voivode of the Kievan militia that set out under Yaroslav, with his son Vladimir, against the Greeks in 1042. Ostromir was the posadnik of Novgorod; his name is preserved with the Ostromir Gospel, one of the oldest monuments of Church Slavonic writing.

From his youth Barlaam shone with bodily beauty and purity of soul, and he conceived love for the aforementioned Venerable Fathers, and so strong that he desired to live with them and to leave the worldly life, regarding glory and wealth as nothing. The word of the Lord, which the Venerable Fathers related to him among other things, struck him especially with fear: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God" (Mt. 19:24).

And so, coming once to the Venerable Anthony, he disclosed to him his intention.

"I would wish, Father," he said, "if it be God's will, to become a monk and to live with you."

"Good is thy desire, child," the elder answered, "and blessed is thy purpose; but see that wealth and the glory of this world do not turn thee back, for according to the word of the Lord: 'No one who has put his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God' (Lk. 9:62)."

The elder said much more for the benefit of Barlaam's soul, and his heart kindled more and more with love for God.

In such a disposition of soul he went home. On the very next day after his conversation with the elder, leaving not only his parents but also the bride already betrothed to him, he mounted a horse, clothed in bright and costly garments, and with him a multitude of attendants on foot leading adorned horses, he solemnly arrived at the cave. When the Venerable Fathers came out and bowed to him to the ground, as they then bowed to people of rank, he too bowed to them (having dismounted from his horse). Then he took off his boyar's garment and laid it at the feet of the Venerable Anthony, and set before him the adorned horses, saying:

“Behold, Father, the vain goods of this world: do with them what you will; ‘I count all things as refuse, that I may gain Christ’ (Phil. 3:8), and I wish to live with you in this cave, and I will no longer return home.”

"Take heed, child," the Venerable Anthony answered him, "to whom thou dost promise thyself, and whose soldier thou wishest to be, for be-

hold, the Angels of God invisibly stand here, receiving thy vow. Beware lest thy father, coming here with an armed force, should lead thee out of here even though thou shouldst not wish it; for we can help thee in nothing, and thou wouldst appear before God a liar and an apostate."

"I believe in my God, Father!" exclaimed Barlaam. "Even if my father should wish to torment me, I will not return to the worldly life; of one thing only I beg thee: perform the tonsure over me quickly."

Then the Venerable Anthony bade the Venerable Nikon tonsure Barlaam and clothe him in the monastic garment, and this was done.

Boyar John, learning that his beloved son had taken the tonsure into the monastic life, was greatly enraged against the Venerable Fathers. Taking with him a multitude of servants, he fell upon the monks who were dwelling in the cave, drove them all out of it, and forcibly dragged his son out. Tearing from him the mantle and the klobuk, he threw them into a brook. Then he clothed him in bright and costly garments befitting his station; but the Saint at once cast them off, not wishing even to look upon them. This was repeated several times, so that the father ordered his hands to be bound, forcibly dressed him again, and in that state had him led home through the city. But Barlaam, seeing on the way a pit filled with filth, quickly went down into it, and, hastily stripping off his clothing, trampled it underfoot in the mire, treading down together with it the wiles of the Evil One. When they came home, his father ordered him to sit with him at table. He was compelled, against his will, to obey, but he ate nothing of the dishes set before him and sat with his head bowed. At the end of the meal the father sent Barlaam to his room, setting servants to guard him so that he would not get away. Then he commanded the maiden betrothed to the Saint to put on her finest adornments to ensnare him, and to attend upon him in every way. But the Servant of Christ, Barlaam, went into one of the rooms and sat down on the floor in a corner. His betrothed, in obedience to the order given her, followed him and entreated him to sit upon her bed. Then he, seeing her foolishness and perceiving that his father had sent her to beguile him, lifted up from the depth of his heart a secret prayer to the All-merciful God for deliverance from temptation. For three days he sat in one place without rising, taking no

food, not dressing, and remaining only in his hair shirt. Meanwhile the Venerable Antony and those who were with him in the cave were deeply grieved by his fate and prayed to God for him. And God heard their prayer, for, according to the word of the Psalmist, "the righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles" (Ps. 33:18). Seeing the patience and humility of the Saint, He turned the hardened heart of the father toward mercy for his son. The servants reported to the boyar that his son had now gone four days without taking food and without dressing. The father took pity on his son, and fearing lest he should die of hunger and cold, summoned him and, kissing him with love, let him go to the cave. And then something most wondrous came to pass: sobbing and wailing were heard in the house, as over one dead. All wept: the father and mother, because they were losing their son; the betrothed, because she was being parted from her bridegroom; the male and female servants, because their good master was leaving them. But the Saint Barlaam, like a bird that has escaped from a snare, quickly made his way to the cave. The monks dwelling in it rejoiced with all their hearts on seeing Barlaam, and they glorified God, who had heard their prayer for him.

When the number of brethren in the cave had increased to 12, the Venerable Antony, seeing the valiant ascetic labors of Barlaam and his progress in virtue, thanked God with all his heart that in a flourishing youth there had appeared the spiritual fruits proper to an elder, and that such grace had been manifested that he was fully able to be a guide in life for the others. Therefore, having taken counsel with all the brethren who lived in the cave, he appointed Barlaam as hegumen in his place. He himself, having grown accustomed to living alone, and unable to bear the bustle and talk of men, moved to another hill, beneath the new monastery, and there dug out a cave in which he lived, devoting himself to silence and conversing always with the one God. There his honorable body lies to this day.

The Venerable Barlaam, having taken charge over the brethren, began to lead an even stricter ascetic life. When the number of brethren had greatly increased, while in the cave during the choral services no more than 20 persons could be accommodated, he then, having asked

the blessing of the Venerable Antony, built above the cave a small wooden church in the name of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, so that in this church those brethren who, because of the crowding, could not take part in the singing at the services in the cave might gather for the chanting of the services. From that time the place of the cave itself, which had until then remained unnoticed, was made visibly manifest. Some years later Grand Prince Izyaslav Yaroslavich, named Demetrius in holy baptism, built a stone church in the name of his own namesake, the holy Great Martyr Demetrius, and established a monastery at this church. The Venerable Barlaam, as his kinsman and a man experienced in the monastic life, the prince appointed hegumen of this monastery. Here the Venerable continued the manner of life to which he had grown accustomed in the cave. He taught and earnestly exhorted the brethren, and all others, above all to take care for the salvation of the soul with all zeal, and to keep a conscience always pure before God and neighbor. And God, seeing the Venerable's love for the brethren and his care for them, helped them to grow perfect in all the virtues.

To his many other labors the Venerable Barlaam added here yet another: choosing a suitable time, he set out for the holy city of Jerusalem, and, having travelled through the Holy Land, returned to his monastery. After some time he went to Constantinople, visited all the monasteries there, and, having bought everything needful for the monastery, set out homeward. On the way he fell into a grievous illness, and on reaching the city of Vladimir he stopped near it, in the monastery called Holy Mountain, and there fell asleep peacefully in the Lord,[12] having bequeathed before his death that his body be carried to Kiev for burial in the Kiev Caves Monastery, and that his icons and everything he had bought for the needs of the monastery be handed over to the Venerable Theodosius. The bequest of the Venerable was fulfilled, and his honorable relics lie incorrupt in the cave to this day.

By the prayers of the Venerable Barlaam may we also be granted, fulfilling the commandments of the Lord on the path of our earthly life,

12. Died in 1065.

to become heirs of our heavenly fatherland in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory forever. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Aza and with him 150 soldiers

Память святого мученика Азы и с ним 150 воинов

The Holy Martyr Aza was a soldier in Isauria[13] under the emperor Diocletian. But afterward, desiring to be a soldier not of an earthly king but of the Heavenly King, he left his military rank and withdrew into the desert. Performing here many wonders and healing the sick, he, as a zealous follower of Christ, was seized and brought to trial before Aquilinus, the governor of the Isaurian province. When the soldiers were leading the Saint to trial, the Holy Aza instructed them in the Christian faith, and the soldiers came to believe after the Saint had wrought a miracle before them. Since the soldiers accompanying the martyr greatly desired holy baptism, Aza turned in prayer to God, and at the Saint's prayer water flowed forth. Nevertheless the soldiers, taught by the Saint, who had impressed upon them that they were obliged to obey the authorities in power, brought Aza to trial before the governor, and together with him confessed themselves Christians. Then the governor Aquilinus, to frighten the others, commanded that the martyr be subjected to great torments, that his body be torn with iron claws, and finally, binding him to a wheel, that the wheel be turned. Yet the Saint, by the help of God, remained unharmed. Seeing this, the governor's wife and daughter believed in Christ and confessed their faith. Then the governor was so enraged that he at once commanded that his wife and daughter be beheaded, together with all the soldiers who had come to believe, who numbered 150 men.

After that the Holy Aza was subjected to new tortures and at last was beheaded.[14]

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13. Isauria is a small region in the south of Asia Minor.
14. At the beginning of the fourth century.

Memory of the Holy Martyr Heliodorus

Память святого мученика Илиодора

In the reign of Aurelian,[15] in the Pamphylian[16] city of Magidis, which was governed by Aetius, a certain pious man named Heliodorus preached Christ fearlessly. For this he was seized and brought before the governor, accused of spreading the persecuted teaching. The Saint was brought to trial. At the interrogation the governor Aetius long urged Heliodorus to renounce Christ and offer sacrifice to the idols. But the Saint bravely and steadfastly confessed Christ as God. Then the governor commanded that he be hanged and that his body be flayed with iron claws. During the torments the Holy Heliodorus cried out in a loud voice:

"Lord Jesus Christ, help me!"

Immediately a voice came from heaven:

"Fear not, I am with thee!"

This voice was heard by the executioners, who also saw four Angels at that moment. The vision so affected them that they believed in our Lord Jesus Christ and began to denounce the governor. The enraged governor at once commanded that they be cast into the sea. Together with this he commanded that a bronze bull be heated and the martyr thrown into it. When the Saint was cast into it, then, through his prayers, the bull at once cooled, and the Saint sang a song of thanksgiving to God.

Learning of this, the governor was astonished, and, going up to the bronze bull, ascertained that the bull had instantly cooled. Turning to the Saint, he said:

"Impious one! Your sorceries have overcome even fire!"

The Saint answered:

"It was not sorcery that did this, but the help of Christ."

Having said this, the Saint asked the tormentor for three days' respite in order to consider what to do.

When the saint had been released, he secretly went into the idol-temple and began to pray there. By the saint's prayer an earthquake oc-

15. *Aurelian* was a Roman emperor who reigned from 270 to 276.

curred, during which the idols fell and were broken. Learning of this, the governor commanded that St. Heliodorus be brought again to judgment; filled with wrath, he ordered that the saint be hanged and that heated nails be driven into his head. Suffering dreadful pain, the saint called upon God for help, and at once his torments were eased. Then the governor ordered that heavy iron fetters be put upon him and that he be taken to the governor of a neighboring city. When St. Heliodorus was brought before this governor, the latter talked with him at length, aiming to compel him to offer sacrifice to the idols. But seeing his steadfastness, the governor commanded that his hands and feet be placed in four split pieces of wood and that he then be cast into a heated cauldron. While in the cauldron, the saint prayed, and at the same time he called to those standing by to come to him, saying that this would do them no harm. And many of those present believed in our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Truly great is the God of the Christians," they said.

The governor, seeing that many had come to believe in the God of Heliodorus, and fearing lest those who believed might conceal the holy martyr, ordered that he be taken to Magida. Then the soldiers took him and went with him. Arriving at Magida, they brought him again to judgment. Having subjected the saint to examination, the governor commanded that he be hanged, that his body be scraped, and then that his head be cut off. As Heliodorus was being led out of the city, the holy martyr made a sign with his hand to those leading him, that they should stop; and when they had complied with his request, he offered a prayer, after which he was beheaded.[17]

* * *

16. Pamphylia is a region in the south of Asia Minor.
17. About 273.

THE TWENTIETH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 20

20 ноября

New Calendar November 20 · Old Calendar December 3 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Gregory the Decapolite

Житие преподобного отца нашего Григория Декаполита

Venerable Gregory was born in the city of Irinopolis in the Decapolis[1], to Christian parents, Sergius and Martha, a pious and God-fearing woman. At the age of eight he was given over for instruction in letters, and even in his youth he came to know the word of God well and was distinguished by his zeal for the house of God. Striving after the heavenly, he hated everything earthly: he did not partake of foods pleasing to the palate, eating only simple and coarse fare, refused to wear rich and soft garments, supported himself by his own handiwork, and gave what remained to the poor. Often he withdrew into solitude and there, alone, prayed to God that He would deem him worthy to be His faithful servant.

When Gregory reached maturity, his parents intended to marry him, but he secretly fled and withdrew into a certain desert monastery, where he received the monastic tonsure and zealously labored in fasting and abstinence, in prayers and unceasing nightly vigils, taking upon himself every hardship of the strictest monastic life.

Meanwhile his father soon died; his pious mother, having found him after long searching, not only did not reproach him but approved his purpose of devoting himself to the ascetic labors of monasticism. She asked only that he move to another monastery, where his brother also was. Obeying his mother's wish, the Venerable moved there; but when

1. The Decapolis (in Greek *Dekapolis*) was a union of ten cities in Isauria, a small region in the mountains of southern Asia Minor; Irinopolis was one of these cities. It was from the name of this union of cities that Venerable Gregory received the designation "Decapolite."

he learned that the abbot of that monastery was an iconoclast, he, as a fervent zealot of Orthodoxy, denounced him before the whole brotherhood. Then the abbot, in fury, beat him cruelly, after which Gregory went to another monastery, where the abbot was Symeon, a relative of his mother. Greeting Gregory with joy, Symeon, as a man experienced in the ascetic life, instructed the youth in every virtue. Having lived here about fourteen years, Venerable Gregory earned general respect, and everyone came to regard him as a virtuous and holy man. Progressing in profound humility and desiring to become a perfect monk, he asked the abbot's permission to settle in a secluded cell, so that, having no worldly cares, he might spend his time in silence. The abbot, perceiving his good intention, assigned him for his labors a single cave in a deep, sheer ravine. And the saint began to labor in that cave with even greater zeal. But, undisturbed by the talk of men, he endured here great torment from demons, who in every way enraged and tempted him, trying to drive him from their dwelling. They threatened him, crying: "Leave our dwelling, or you will suffer much from us"; they rushed at him, taking the form of terrible scorpions. But he remained invulnerable and fearless. When he stood in prayer, the demons stung his hands and feet; but he disregarded the wounds inflicted on him, counting them as nothing. And the demons withdrew in shame. A few days later, they appeared to him in the form of warriors, threatening to kill him; but he made the sign of the Cross, and they vanished. After that, they appeared to the saint shining with light, saying that they were the forty martyrs and had come to give him grace and strength against the demons; but he, perceiving their snares, forbade them, and they again vanished. Other temptations were likewise powerless, for the grace of God assisted him and destroyed in him all the assaults of the flesh. Soon afterward, the Lord granted His faithful servant a wondrous visitation: Gregory fell into a state as it were of rapture, during which there appeared to him from heaven a radiant light with ineffable fragrance, which filled the cave and remained in it for many days. The saint thought it fitting to report this miracle to his abbot, in order to ask him, as a man experienced in the spiritual life, whether this vision was from God or was a working of the devil, sent to seduce and beguile

him. Having attentively listened to Gregory's account, the abbot calmed him and told him not to have any doubt or fear, but that this was the divine light, which by its fragrance had driven away the deadly stench of the evil spirit. "Labor in the struggle as much as you can," the elder concluded, "trusting that you have God as your helper." And indeed Saint Gregory was healed by that gracious vision, and was freed both from the bodily sickness that oppressed him and from the sickness of the soul, the carnal temptation with which the demons had wished to beguile him, and from all their malicious temptations. From that time the Blessed One redoubled his labors and prayers, unceasingly calling upon the Lord from the depths of his soul. Having thus overcome the diabolical snares, Venerable Gregory, for his holy and blameless life, was deemed by God worthy of the gracious gift of working miracles. And since it was not fitting for this divine lamp of the Church to remain under a bushel, then

the Lord called to him from heaven, as once to the patriarch Abraham (Gen. 12:1):

"Gregory! If you desire to attain perfection, depart from your land and from your kindred, and go forth for your good."

Obeying this divine voice, Gregory, leaving the cave, set out for Ephesus to find a ship to sail to Constantinople: at that time the Church of Constantinople was agitated by the iconoclastic heresy, and, zealous for the glory of God and the purity of Orthodoxy, the saint intended to enter upon its defense and to expose the false wisdom of the heretics. But the providence of God judged otherwise: Saint Gregory was to spend the rest of his life, according to the divine call, in wanderings, "for here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come" (Heb. 13:14), like our Lord Jesus Christ, who was a wanderer on earth and had nowhere to lay His head (Mt. 8:20; Lk. 9:58).

Setting out from Ephesus for Constantinople, the Venerable first stopped on the way at Proconnesus[2], where a poor man, despite the strict decrees of the iconoclast emperors[3] forbidding them to receive

2. Proconnesus is today Marmara, an island in the western part of the Sea of Marmara.
3. Leo III the Isaurian (716–741), and especially his son Constantine Copronymus (741–775), and the son and successor of the latter, Leo IV the Khazar (775–780).

monks, warmly took him into his house for the Lord's sake, and for this the Lord enriched him within a few days. From here the saint went on toward Byzantium, but, meeting an obstacle to this, he understood from it that it was not the will of God for him to travel there, and went to Aenus[4]. Here he received cruel blows from a horseman, stirred up to this by the devil; but the righteous man, enduring the blows, prayed to God that He would forgive his assailant, and the latter, seeing his meekness, repented, asked forgiveness, and received from the Venerable the instruction never again to wrong anyone. Setting out from here by ship, the Venerable arrived at Christopolis[5], from where he crossed over to Thessalonica.

Having spent a few days in Thessalonica, Saint Gregory set out by land for Corinth. Sailing from there to Rome, he stopped on the way for some time in Rhegium[6]. Here certain people, seeing that the Venerable had nothing, gave him a certain amount of gold. The saint, although he did not know the benefactors, by divine grace perceived that the gold given to him had been acquired unjustly; therefore, desiring to teach them to refrain from injustice, he exposed the guilty one and returned the unjustly acquired money. Leaving Rhegium, the saint went on to Rome. On the way, one of those sailing fell from the ship into the sea, near the shore where they were to disembark to go on foot to Rome. And there occurred a miracle that clearly witnessed that the grace of God rested upon the Venerable; for by a single prayer he brought him out onto the land and saved him from imminent destruction.

Having arrived in Rome, Venerable Gregory spent three months in silence in a secluded cell, so that no one even knew of him. But a demoniac made his presence in the city known: for the saint healed him, driving the unclean spirit out of him, and everyone began to regard him as a saint. Then Gregory withdrew from there, and, arriving in Sicily, shut himself up in a certain tower and remained in it in silence. Here demons attacked him, destroyed the mat on which he slept, and in

4. Aenus was a seaport city on the south of present-day Rumelia, to the west of Constantinople.
5. Christopolis, otherwise Emvolae, was a city in Macedonia on the river Strymon, which flows about 50 versts north-east of Thessalonica.
6. Rhegium was a city in the south-west of Italy, on the shore of the Strait of Messina.

every way tempted him and caused him various malicious disturbances; but he drove them away by prayer. Here too he saved from eternal perdition a sinful woman who, by countless stratagems, enticed men, especially sailors arriving from foreign lands, to the uncleanness of fornication. Threatening her with eternal torments, the saint by his exhortations brought her to the point of renouncing the world and taking the monastic tonsure, and the place of fleshly defilement was turned into a monastery. After that, a possessed woman came to Venerable Gregory in the tower, and he, by his prayer, drove the demon out of her. He worked many other miracles in this place as well. When everyone learned of this and began to honor him, the saint withdrew from there too.

Once, while traveling, he met an army of Saracens[7]. One of them was watering his horse at a well, and when the saint approached, that man aimed his spear to kill him. But suddenly his hand stopped in the air, so that he could not lower it. Then he went after the Venerable, begging him for healing. The saint, touching his hand with his own, healed him. Further along the way, a demoniac who was cruelly tormented met the saint. Taking pity on him, the saint offered a prayer to God, and the demon left the sufferer.

At last Gregory again arrived at Thessalonica and settled in the monastery of St. Mina. He lived there in such poverty that he had no food and nothing with which to cover himself; he wore only the one garment, which served him both by day and by night. When he felt an overwhelming hunger, he would go out of the church, and if he saw anyone at table, he would enter and eat a little food with them. But afterwards he felt that he ought not to feed upon the labor of others without working himself, and he resolved to remain at the church without food, until the Lord should send him help from on high. And the Lord, who had once fed the Prophet Elijah through the raven (3 Kgdms. 17:6), and many other virtuous servants of His in a wondrous manner, did not leave His faithful servant without help: at the prompting of heaven, a God-loving widow brought him food every day.

7. "Saracens" was the name for the Arabs, a nomadic and predatory tribe of Arabia; later this name came to be extended to all Muslims in general.

Soon the Venerable Gregory became renowned throughout the surrounding region for his miracles. Thus, once a demon-possessed woman came to him and asked the saint for help in rebuilding her small house, which had fallen into disrepair. In answer to her request, the saint said:

– Go, begin the work, and God, the Father of the fatherless, will send you help.

The woman went in faith and began to dig the ground in order to lay the foundation of the building. And then from that place there poured forth pitch in immeasurable abundance. The woman sold it, and with the money she gained she not only built the house but also lived off the sale of this pitch and met her other needs.

To a monk who was practising asceticism on a pillar near the monastery of St. Mina, the Venerable Gregory, having foreknown it through the Holy Spirit, foretold his approaching death, as he did for some other persons. Working unceasingly upon himself, keeping the purity of his soul in holiness and perfecting himself in Christian virtues, the Venerable Gregory had great boldness before the Lord and prepared himself as a dwelling for the Holy Spirit; with divine zeal he walked the narrow path of humble and wise ascetic labour, by unceasing watchfulness driving far away all negligence and hostile assaults, so that the enemy could not act upon his imagination and thoughts even in sleep; in accordance with his name, he was truly watchful[8] in regard to all deeds and thoughts, and he cleansed soul and body from all passions. Ordained to the rank of priest, he celebrated the Divine services with a contrite heart and a humble spirit; pride and vainglory he uprooted completely. Above all he kept the purity of Orthodoxy both in word and in deed; refuting the heretics as far as he could, he taught by words and writings to worship the holy icons and to honour them according to the tradition of the Church; he cleansed many cities of the defilement of iconoclasm and urged men even to shed their blood for the holy icons, should this be required, and he himself was ready to accept death for them and was a martyr by his own good will. Above all the virtues he possessed constant holy prayer, always directing his mind to

8. Gregory in Greek means: *watchful*.

God; hymning and glorifying Him together with the holy Angels, he received even here the pledges of the unspeakable joy of eternal blessedness. Once in the night the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision, handing him a flaming sword to smite all the power of demons and to cut away from the Church heretical teachings, and from his heart sinful passions.

At times the Venerable, occupied with contemplation of God, heard the singing of the Angels: so pleasing was he to God and the Angels that, while still in mortal body, he was already counted worthy of immortal, divine delights, and was granted to hear the singing of the Angels, which the ear has not heard, and to be ineffably delighted by it.

After spending several years in Thessalonica, the Venerable Gregory went with one of his disciples to Bulgaria, which was still pagan then, but, not reaching it, he returned. When the disciple asked him why he had so quickly changed his intention, the Venerable answered:

– I wished to be there, but I see that the sun does not shine there.

By these words he prophetically foretold the disorders which soon afterwards arose there, and during which blood flowed like a river and the whole land was laid waste.

After this the Venerable Gregory went from Thessalonica to Byzantium, and from there to Mount Olympus[9], from which he again returned to Thessalonica.

Thus laboring, and on earth thinking of the heavenly, the Venerable Gregory drew near to the time of his departure from this life. Grievously stricken with the falling sickness, he lay motionless on his bed and fervently prayed to God that He would free him from this illness and replace it with another, dropsy. God heard his prayer: having freed him from the first sickness, He gave him the one he had asked for. And his body swelled so that it seemed like a skin filled with air. Leaving Thessalonica, the Venerable with great difficulty came to Constantinople, to oppose here the heresy of iconoclasm[10], and he never returned again. With him he brought also two disciples and fellow-la-

9. Here is meant Mount Olympus of Bithynia and Mysia, in the north of Asia Minor, on the borders of Bithynia and Mysia, where monasticism then flourished.

bourers, Joseph and John. The first of these he soon sent, at the request of the Orthodox monks, to Rome to Pope Leo III[11], to ask him for help in view of the persecution against the holy icons that was then breaking out; but on the way there he was seized by sea-pirates bribed by the iconoclast emperor Leo the Armenian and imprisoned on the island of Cyprus.

Joseph was not destined to see his great teacher alive again. The Venerable Gregory soon after this yielded his pure soul to the Lord. Twelve days before his death he foreknew the day of his departure and ordered himself to be taken to a hospice, where, on November 20, he quietly died[7550]. When they came to bury his honourable body, a sick man who had a grievous ailment, so that he could not stand upright but his face was constantly turned toward the earth, approached it in faith. And it seemed to him that someone laid a hand on him from behind, and he asked the man standing near him whether he had touched him. The other answered in the negative, and the sick man understood from this that it was the power of God overshadowing the saint, who had granted him healing; and he stood upright, completely healed of his sickness. Another was tormented by an unclean spirit, but as soon as he drew near to the Venerable's tomb, the demon left him. One brother was very much tormented by carnal passion and near to falling, but, coming to the saint's tomb, he asked for help with tears, and the carnal battle ceased, and he glorified the saint and gave thanks to God.

Thus, after his long and laborious earthly pilgrimage, the Venerable Gregory attained eternal rest in heaven among the holy Angels, whose visions and voices he had been counted worthy to behold and hear even during his earthly life, and now together with them he glorifies the One God in the Trinity forever with thrice-holy hymns.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

10. This took place during the reign of the Emperor Leo the Armenian (813–820). This emperor, being unable to induce the Patriarch of Constantinople, Nicephorus, to embrace the iconoclastic heresy, sent him into exile in March 816, as well as other bishops, abbots and monks who boldly defended the veneration of the holy icons; he cast them into prisons in Constantinople or sent them into banishment.
11. Pope Leo III, 795–816.

The Church recognizes thee as a bright sun, illumining all with the beauties of virtues and the rays of healings, O thou who wast well-pleasing to Christ: wherefore we keep thy honourable memory and honour thy labours, O all-blessed and wise Father Gregory.

* * *

Life of St. Proclus, Patriarch of Constantinople

Житие святого Прокла, патриарха Константинопольского

St. Proclus was a disciple of St. John Chrysostom[12], and was granted to see how the holy Apostle Paul, in a wondrous vision, secretly conversed with St. John, whispering into his ear.

A certain Constantinopolitan nobleman was slandered by his envious rivals before the Emperor Arcadius[13], was expelled from the palace, and was deprived of his high rank. Desiring to seek help from St. John, he asked him beforehand to allow him to come to him at night, for he feared to go by day, lest some of his enemies should see him and slander him even more before the emperor. Then St. John, summoning Proclus, who served him, a pious man who shone with every virtue, ordered him to remind him at night about the nobleman and to bring him in: for Proclus's service to Chrysostom consisted in this, that he reported to the patriarch those who came and introduced them to him. When night came, the nobleman came to the patriarch to converse with him and to recount to him in detail his misfortune. And Proclus, rising from his bed, approached the door of the patriarch's bedchamber and through the crack of the door saw that John was sitting and writing, while the holy Apostle Paul had drawn near behind his back and, bending down to his right ear, was conversing with him. In appearance the Apostle resembled the holy Prophet Elisha, with the front of his head bald and a large, broad beard. What they were talking

12. St. Proclus was a deacon under St. John Chrysostom, afterwards a hieromonk, and at the same time a synkellos, that is, a cell attendant of the patriarch, living in the same quarters with him, and at the same time his closest disciple.

13. Arcadius, son of Theodosius the Great, emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, reigned from 395 to 408.

about could not be heard through the door. Stepping away from the door, Proclus said to the one who had come:

– Do not be distressed, – have patience a little: someone else came to the patriarch before you, and therefore, until he leaves, I cannot bring you in there.

In fact Proclus was in fear, not guessing who had come to the patriarch: apart from Proclus, no one could gain access to the patriarch, and he did not know that this was a manifestation of the Apostle Paul.

The nobleman sat for a long time, and at last again began to ask Proclus to announce him to the patriarch.

– You yourself see, – Proclus answered, – how long I have been waiting until the one conversing with the patriarch comes out; however, I will go and look through the crack, to see whether they have stopped talking.

Proclus went and saw that the conversation was still going on. He returned and sat down. Then he went up to the door a third time and saw the same thing.

– You should not have admitted anyone before me, Father, – said the dignitary then, – for you knew that I am in great trouble and expect death from day to day.

"Believe me, brother," Proclus answered him, "I did not bring him in, and I do not even know who he is; nor is there any other entrance here by which anyone could enter, except this one. Nevertheless, wait a little longer."

But at that moment the blows calling to Matins were heard, and Proclus said to the visitor:

"Now go in peace. From this moment the patriarch speaks with no one, and thinks of nothing extraneous during the time appointed for nightly prayer, but remains alone until dawn, wholly absorbed in prayer and conversing with God alone. Come again the following night, and I will bring you in before everyone else, whatever may happen."

The nobleman rose from his place and went home sorrowfully, with tears in his eyes.

The following night he came again to the patriarch's house. Proclus again rose, as before, and went to announce his arrival; and again he

saw the Apostle speaking something into the saintly John's ear. He returned, not daring to interrupt their conversation, and once more, when the blows calling to Matins sounded, the nobleman went home sorrowfully and empty-handed.

For his part, Proclus wondered greatly and was perplexed as to who exactly came to the patriarch, and when he managed to enter. And so he made a vow neither to eat nor drink nor sleep, and not to leave the patriarch's door until he should succeed in bringing the unfortunate nobleman to John and discovering who it was that entered the patriarch's presence in this unknown manner. The nobleman appeared at night as usual. Proclus, certain that there was no one with the patriarch, said to him:

"For your sake, my lord and brother, I have not left this place at all; and now I will go and announce you to the patriarch."

He went at once and, having approached the door, saw once more the Apostle speaking into the patriarch's ear. Then Proclus returned and said to the visitor:

"Go home, my brother, and pray God to help you; for, as I see, he who converses with the patriarch is sent to him by God and enters invisibly. No one but the patriarch has entered through this door."

The nobleman departed in tears, wholly despairing of receiving help from St. John. But when morning came, John at last remembered him himself, and, calling Proclus, asked:

"Did not the man come whom I commanded you to bring to me?"

"Yes, Father," Proclus answered. "Indeed, he has come here for three nights now, but you were conversing alone with someone else, and therefore I did not dare enter and announce him to you."

"With whom was I conversing?!" John replied. "There was no one with me this night."

Then Proclus described both the appearance of the one he had seen with the patriarch and how the stranger, bending over John from behind, spoke with him, whispering something into his ear. Then Proclus happened to look at the icon of St. Paul the Apostle, which was on the wall in John's cell, and suddenly cried out:

"There he is—the very one whom I saw speaking with you, Father! This is his true likeness!"

Thus both John and Proclus learned that the Apostle Paul had appeared to the former, and both gave thanks to God: one because the Apostle had secretly inspired him in his writings, and the other because he had been vouchsafed to see this Apostle Paul, a dweller of heaven.

After this, John gave the persecuted nobleman the help he needed, while St. Proclus, guided by his holy teacher and spiritual father, St. John, advanced in virtue and was perfected in a life pleasing to God.

After the exile and repose of St. John Chrysostom, Proclus was appointed bishop of the city of Cyzicus[14] by Sisinius, Patriarch of Constantinople.[15] But when he came to his see, he was not received by the local clergy, who had fallen into heresy; therefore he returned to Constantinople and lived there for a whole year. After the death of the holy Patriarch Maximian,[16] and even before his burial, St. Proclus was elected Patriarch of Constantinople, and on Holy and Great Thursday was elevated to this high rank.[17]

Having ascended the patriarchal throne, St. Proclus valiantly shepherded Christ's flock until the end of his life. Among other things, he persuaded Emperor Theodosius, son of Emperor Arcadius,[18] to translate the relics of St. John Chrysostom from Comana[19] to Constantinople.

During the patriarchate of St. Proclus, a great earthquake in the Byzantine Empire lasted six months, destroying many magnificent buildings—churches, palaces, and the like—and the stone city walls. Many villages and small towns seemed to be swallowed up by the earth; some islands disappeared altogether; some springs and rivers suddenly dried up, while streams appeared in places without water. This terrible

14. Cyzicus is a small city on the northern coast of Asia Minor. St. Proclus was consecrated bishop in 426.
15. Sisinnius was Patriarch of Constantinople from 426 to 427.
16. St. Maximian was patriarch from 431 to 434.
17. This was in 434.
18. Theodosius II the Younger reigned from 408 to 450.
19. Comana was a city in Armenia, where St. John Chrysostom died on the way into exile and was originally buried.

earthquake was felt throughout the empire, but was especially severe in Bithynia, the Hellespont, and Phrygia.[20] When the finest and strongest buildings in Constantinople were collapsing, Emperor Theodosius and Empress Pulcheria, together with the patriarch and all the inhabitants, left the city and made processions of supplication, earnestly beseeching the Lord for mercy. And a great miracle came to pass. While the frightened people filled the air with their prayerful cries, "*Lord, have mercy!*", suddenly a child was snatched from the crowd by an invisible power, and, before the eyes of all, was lifted to a height beyond their sight; an hour later he was likewise lowered unharmed. He told the emperor, the patriarch, and all the people that he had heard the Angels singing in heaven:

"Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal."

All the people at once began repeating this thrice-holy hymn, adding the prayer, "Have mercy on us," and the earthquake ceased. The boy who had brought the Trisagion down from heaven immediately gave up his spirit to God and was buried with honor in the church of St. Irene. From that time the singing of the Trisagion came into use throughout the Christian Church.

St. Proclus lived as patriarch for 20 years and five months, and departed in peace to the Lord.[21]

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Today the most honored of all cities truly celebrates, O wise Proclus, father of fathers, thy honored repose.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Eustathius, Thespesius, and Anatolius

Страдание святых мучеников Евстафия, Феспесия и Анатолия

20. Bithynia, the Hellespont and Phrygia were Asia Minor provinces of the Byzantine Empire.

21. St. Proclus died in 446. St. Proclus was an outstanding church orator. In his eloquence one sees the weight of St. Basil the Great combined with the charm of Chrysostom; his speech is varied, lively, clear and at the same time concise. Besides this, his epistles are known, among them *To the Armenians concerning the Faith* and *concerning the Tradition of the Liturgy.*

The holy Martyrs Eustathius, Thespesius, and Anatolius were brothers by flesh and were born in the city of Nicomedia.[22] Their father was named Philotheus, and their mother Eusebia. Philotheus was from Galatia,[23] from the city of Gangra.[24] He left his homeland, settled in Nicomedia, and, having married Eusebia there, had by her three sons—three who were called citizens of the heavenly city.

At first Philotheus, his wife, and their children were pagans. He sent his eldest son Eustathius to study pagan wisdom, while he prepared Thespesius and Anatolius for trade, since he himself was a merchant and a very wealthy one. But one day, taking his youngest son Anatolius with him, he went to Galatia to buy goods; on his return, he met St. Lucian, a presbyter of Antioch, on the road. As they journeyed, Philotheus learned the Christian faith from him, and he and his son were baptized in a river they came upon along the way. Returning home, he sought out Anthimus, Bishop of Nicomedia,[25] who was hiding in a secluded place—for at that time, during the reigns of Emperors Maximian and Diocletian, a fierce persecution of Christians was raging, and many of the faithful were hiding from their torturers. Having found him, Philotheus brought him to his house by night. There St. Anthimus baptized the entire household of Philotheus. Then, having celebrated the Divine Liturgy, he gave the newly baptized Communion of the Holy Mysteries, ordained Philotheus a presbyter and his eldest son Eustathius a deacon, and departed, hiding from the pagan persecutors. Philotheus and his household served the true God in secret and led godly lives.

Soon he and his wife departed to the Lord, leaving as orphans three pious youths: Eustathius the deacon, Thespesius, and Anatolius—

22. Nicomedia (now Nemid) was the principal city of the Asia Minor province of Bithynia, situated to the south-east of the Bosphorus Strait. Here the Byzantine emperors Diocletian and St. Constantine the Great had their residence.
23. Galatia was a province of the Byzantine Empire occupying the very centre of the Asia Minor peninsula.
24. This city is remarkable for the local council held there (340), whose canons are regarded by the Church as canonical.
25. His memory is celebrated on 5 September.

brothers both in the flesh and in the spirit, for they served God with one accord, fervent in spirit and advancing in virtue. A court official named Aquilinus once sent his servant to buy certain things. The servant knew that these three pious youths were merchants with an extensive and prosperous trade, and went to their shop, which he found open. Entering and finding no one there, he went up the staircase leading to the third floor of the house and heard the voice of Eustathius reading David's psalms. The servant quietly went up the stairs, entered the upper room[26] without a sound, and there saw Eustathius holding a Psalter and reading: "Let all that worship graven images be put to shame, who boast themselves of their idols; worship Him, all ye gods" (Ps. 96:7). He also saw crosses and holy icons on the walls. Saying nothing, he immediately returned to his master and told him all that he had seen and heard. Aquilinus hastened at once to Emperor Maximian and reported what the servant had said. Soldiers were immediately sent to seize Eustathius and his brothers. When they came to the place with Aquilinus's servant, the soldiers found the shop locked. At that time all the household were gathered together and kept complete silence, receiving the Mysteries of Christ on the occasion of Sunday. The men sent knocked at the doors and called, but there was no answer.

St. Eustathius understood in spirit that the soldiers had been sent to seize him and his brothers and lead them to martyrdom, and he said to his brothers:

"Take courage, brethren, and fear not; our Master calls us to the crown... Last night I saw that we were being led to an unrighteous trial before Maximian, and a certain man, black of countenance, walked behind us weeping and wailing, striking himself on the face and crying: 'Woe is me, for now I am being overcome.' But before us went a bright youth, holding in his hands three crowns and three books, and he said to me: 'Eustathius, deacon of Christ! This is what the Father of mercies and God of all joy has prepared for you. Therefore fear not the tor-

26. From Apostolic times the Christian Church preserved and for a long time maintained the custom of holding liturgical gatherings in the upper, uninhabited part of a house (cf. Acts 1:13, 14, 20, 8), and only under Constantine the Great, when Christians were freed from persecution, were churches erected for public worship (though in fact there were already a small number of them in various places before this).

mentors, as St. Stephen did not fear them.' Having said this, the youth ascended into heaven, while the black man departed weeping toward the west.[27]

Having related his vision, Eustathius strengthened the brethren in courage, saying:

"Let us not, beloved, deny Christ our God before men, lest He also deny us before His Father and before His holy Angels (Mt. 10:32)."

"Our brother and lord and father," answered Thespesius and Anatolius, "we are ready to die for our Creator, and nothing shall turn us from love for Him."

While they were thus conversing, the soldiers, striking the doors vigorously, shouted loudly that they should be opened. At last Thespesius and Anatolius came to the doors and opened them. The soldiers, rushing inside, asked them who else was with them, and then, at the direction of Aquilinus's slave, went upstairs. Entering the door of the prayer room, they saw Eustathius holding the Holy Gospel in his hands. Suddenly unfolding it, he read: "Fear not those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul (Mt. 10:28)."

The commander of the soldiers shouted to him to put down what he held in his hands (he himself did not dare to touch the Holy Gospel, being the son of Christian parents). Eustathius pressed the Holy Gospel to his breast, kissed it, and laid it on the table, whereupon one of the soldiers remarked:

"Look how the Christians love their books, in which are contained all their sorceries."

The soldiers took Eustathius and led him downstairs. He, looking around and seeing the sacred books, said, addressing them as if they were alive:

"We bid you farewell!"

Then, glancing at the many costly things with which they had traded, he exclaimed:

"We renounce you and all that is perishable, and we go after Christ!"

27. The West is the place where the sun sets and, as it were, the kingdom of darkness; therefore the name of this quarter of the compass may be understood as an image of the kingdom of the devil, which was evidently seen by St. Eustathius.

Then they all went out. The doors of the house were locked and sealed, and the soldiers, binding the three holy brethren together, led them to the emperor Maximian.

Seeing them, the emperor smiled and said:

"Who ordered these youths to be bound? I am certain they are friends of our gods."

And he commanded that they be unbound at once, and asked them:

"First tell me, each of you, what your names are and of what family you are?"

"The dearest and most glorious name for us is Christians," answered Eustathius on behalf of all, as the eldest; "by birth I am called Eustathius, my brother on the right is Thespesius, and on the left Anatolius. We are brothers in the flesh, born here of the same father and mother, and our father, a native of Galatia, was a Christian presbyter."

"Who ordained your father a presbyter?" asked Maximian.

"He who, not long ago, you unjustly condemned to death," answered Eustathius: "St. Anthimus, bishop of our city. He also ordained me a deacon, that I might serve the priests of God in the celebration by them of the most holy and most pure Mysteries of Christ."

Then the emperor said:

"Cease talking nonsense; rather, bow down with your brothers to our gods, and I will give you an honorable and glorious position at my court. If not, I shall sentence you to death by the sword."

The saints answered with one voice:

"Do what you will: we are Christians and worship only the one God who created heaven and earth, His Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Life-giving Spirit; but we will never bow down to your vile and abominable idols."

Enraged at this answer, Maximian commanded that they be thrown to the ground and beaten with rods. After long torments, the saints, as with one mouth, cried out to God:

"Glory to Thee, O Lord, that we have been made worthy to endure sufferings for Thy holy name."

And St. Eustathius added:

"'Often have they fought against me from my youth,' let Israel now say; 'often have they fought against me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed against me' (Ps. 128:2–3) — help us, O God, our Savior.

When the saints had been beaten to the utmost degree, Maximian ordered those who were beating them to stop, and said to the martyrs:

"Godless men! How long will you endure such torments? Offer sacrifice to the gods, and do not destroy yourselves in vain for the sake of faith in a certain man who was beaten just as you have been and died a violent death."

"Far be it that we should renounce the Savior Christ," answered the saints, "of Whom we know that He is the true God, though He suffered on the cross for our salvation."

Then the tyrant commanded that they be taken to prison, that their feet be fastened tightly in stocks,[28] and that they be given neither food nor drink, so as to wear them down with bonds, hunger, and thirst. And so, as they sat in prison, at midnight one night a light shone upon them, an Angel of the Lord appeared to them, freed them from their bonds, healed them, nourished them with manna,[29] and said:

"Struggle with a good struggle for Christ, and I will not leave you, but will be with you in all your sufferings, for I have been sent by Christ the Lord to guard you."

Having said this, the Angel became invisible, and the saints, full of inexpressible joy, gave thanks to God, Eustathius saying: "The Lord looses the prisoners; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord raises up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous; the Lord keeps the strangers (Ps. 145:7–9)."

After some time Maximian again appeared in court and sent soldiers to the prison to bring the prisoners of Christ a second time for examin-

28. Stocks: a device designed so that a criminal could not run away. In appearance it was a stump of a thick log or board split lengthwise into two halves; in both halves were cut two matching hollows for the feet; the criminal's feet were placed in the hollows of one half, the other half was laid over them, and the two ends of the stump were fastened tight.

29. Manna (a Hebrew word meaning "what is this?") was properly the food miraculously sent by God to the Israelites during their forty years of wandering in the desert, in place of bread, which they had no means of obtaining, and which had the appearance of small seed; this seed was ground or pounded in a mortar, boiled, and made into cakes (see Ex. 15:15–34; Num. 11:7). In a broader sense, by manna may be understood any food whatever miraculously sent by God.

ation. The soldiers went and found the saints freed from their bonds, in perfect health, and sleeping peacefully. They raised a cry, reviled the guards, and demanded to know who had freed the prisoners from their bonds. The guard solemnly assured them that no one had freed them and that no one had even entered to the prisoners or given them food or drink. The soldiers bound the saints again and led them to the emperor.

The emperor, seeing them healthy and cheerful, was astonished that neither blows, nor bonds, nor hunger, nor thirst had affected them, and said to them:

"Pitiful men! Consider carefully what is more advantageous for you, and, having been persuaded, offer sacrifice to the gods — and I will release you with honor."

But St. Eustathius answered:

"Do not hope to change our firm resolve either by flattery, or threats, or torments: we are attached to nothing in this life, for we know that as we came naked from the womb of our mother, so naked we must depart from this vain life."

The emperor immediately ordered them to be given to the wild beasts to devour, and they were led into the circus,[30] where the beasts were to devour them, and the whole populace of Nicomedia followed them, among whom were many secret Christians, all wishing to see the death of the martyrs. When they were placed in the midst of the circus, two lions and three bears were released upon them, and all the spectators were struck with terror at the roaring of these beasts. But St. Eustathius was chanting psalms.

"Save me from the lion's mouth," he chanted, "and from the horns of the unicorns, hear [and deliver] me. I will declare Thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will praise Thee (Ps. 21:22–23)."[31]

Thespesius and Anatolius were terrified by the roaring of the beasts, and Eustathius, seeing their fear, said:

30. The circus was the building in which horse races took place among the Romans and Greeks; the very name (*circus* — circle) indicates its circular construction. The contests themselves took place inside the circle, and the spectators were seated in special places along its edge. In the circuses, during the times of persecution, Christians were given over to be eaten by beasts or were killed by men specially appointed for this purpose.

"Why, brethren, do you fear these beasts? Do you not know that our Master is able to tame their fury, as He tamed them in Daniel's den? Do you not remember the words of the Angel who promised to be with us in all our sufferings and to guard us?"

As Eustathius was saying this, the lions rushed toward the martyrs, but drawing near them, they stopped and wagged their tails like dogs that recognize their master, and Eustathius laid his hands on their heads and, stroking them as dogs, fully tamed them. The bears, meanwhile, seized one another and threw each other to the ground, and did not even come near the holy martyrs. The people gathered for the spectacle raised a clamor, the pagans shouting: "They are sorcerers, and by witchcraft they have subdued the beasts!" while the Christians cried out: "Great is the Christian God, who has stopped the mouths of the beasts so that they could not harm His holy servants!"

Finally the emperor ordered the martyrs thrown back into prison, and here they were comforted a second time by the appearance of the Angel and strengthened with manna.

Meanwhile the emperor's son Maxentius[32] fell gravely ill, and the emperor, grieved and troubled by his sickness, entrusted the martyrs to Antonius, the count of Nicaea.[33]

"Take," he said to the count, "the Christians to your city and there compel them to bow down to the gods; and if they obey you, send them back here with honor; but if not, then, after long torments, slay them like wild beasts."

The count took the prisoners and set out with them for Nicaea. On arriving home he found his wife ill. He ordered the martyrs locked in prison for the night, and in the morning he had them brought before him, sat down in the judge's seat, and, addressing them, said:

"Youths, your fate greatly troubles me, and I would very much wish to spare you and send you to the emperor to receive from him every

31. Ps. 2:22–23. These words the Psalmist speaks about himself and in his own person (save me..., I will declare... and so on). The *unicorn* is a wild and dangerous animal with one horn on its forehead, not a rhinoceros, since it was regarded as clean and fit for sacrifice; exactly what kind of animal this is, is not known. By "church" here is meant generally a large assembly.
32. Maxentius was afterwards emperor — from 306 to 312.
33. Comes: a city governor.

honor. Trust me as your friend, obey me, and offer sacrifices to the gods."

"We pray," answered the saints, "to our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would keep us unblemished in the faith in which He taught us and for which we are ready to die, and that He would not permit us to turn away from Him and fall into the perdition in which you are perishing."

When the comes heard this, he flew into a rage and ordered them to be hung by their feet, head downward, and raked with iron claws. For a long time they were tormented in this way; their blood flowed in streams, their bodies were torn into pieces, and their bones were laid bare... At last the saints cried out loudly to God:

"O King and God of ages! Look down from Thy holy dwelling upon us, Thy unworthy servants, who suffer for Thy holy name!"

And invisible help was granted to the saints from on high, so that they might endure such cruel torments with courage.

Seeing the invincible patience of the sufferers, the tormentor commanded that they be taken down and led off to prison. But the saints, because of their wounds and pain, could not walk on their own; they were carried and thrown into the prison like some burden. And again, as before, there appeared to them an Angel of the Lord, shining with great light, who comforted them with joyful hopes and healed their wounds. And the saints glorified God, saying:

"Glory to Thee, O God, for Thou dost not forsake those who hope in Thee and who suffer for Thy sake! 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? Who is so great a God as our God? Thou art the God who doest wonders' (Ps. 115:3; Ps. 76:14–15)." Soon the tormentor again brought the holy martyrs out of the prison and commanded that they be set before him. He placed his idols before them and compelled them to bow down to these idols, threatening them for their disobedience.

"If you do not carry out the royal command," he said, "and do not bow down to our gods, I will put you to death by the sword and give your bodies to be devoured by wild beasts and birds."

But the saints answered with one voice:

"We will not turn away from Christ our God, and we will not bow down to filthy idols, dumb and deaf, which have eyes and see not, have ears and hear not, have mouths and speak not, have feet and walk not. Let all who make them and all who worship them become like them."

At these words the tormentor roared with anger like a lion, and commanded that the martyrs be led outside the city and run through with the sword like wild beasts, and their bodies cast out unburied to be torn by beasts and birds. The saints were led to the place of execution. In that place there was an olive grove, and the martyrs were bound to trees for their execution. Into this grove came two close friends of the saints, the Christians Palladius and Acacius. When the executioners were about to kill the condemned, those who had come threw themselves at their feet, gave them much gold, and begged them to wait a little while they conversed with the condemned, and only then to proceed with the execution. Taking the gold, the executioners withdrew a little from the martyrs; Palladius and Acacius drew near to them, kissed them with love, wept bitterly, and asked them to pray for them. During the saints' prayer before death, a voice was heard from heaven calling them to eternal rest, and at once they joyfully committed their souls into the hands of God. The servants of the tormentor, though they saw that the martyrs were already dead, nevertheless, fearing their master, carried out his command even over the dead: they pierced the throats of Eustathius and Thespesius, pierced the ribs of Anatolius, and then, when the bodies of the dead were already lying on the ground, cut off their heads and, leaving them unburied, departed.[34] Then six Angels in the form of eagles descended from heaven and hovered over the bodies until Palladius and Acacius buried them with honor.

On that same day, at sunset, the comes Antonius fell ill, and in the morning his wife died first, and then he himself, falling upon his wife's body, expired in suffering. And so he is tormented in hell, while the holy passion-bearers rejoice in the Kingdom of Christ our God. To Him be glory unto ages of ages. Amen.

34. The holy martyrs Eustathius, Thespesius and Anatolius suffered about 312.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Dasius

Память святого мученика Дасия

In the reign of Diocletian and Maximian, in the pagan city of Dorostolon,[35] there was a custom that thirty days before the feast in honor of the pagan god Kronos[36] a handsome young man from among the soldiers was chosen to be offered in sacrifice to him. For the thirty days until the feast of the sacrifice arrived, the chosen youth was clothed in royal garments, and he could fulfill every wish of his own. After this the youth was slaughtered as a sacrifice to Kronos. And so once this sorrowful lot fell upon Dasius, the valiant and most beautiful among the other soldiers. Until that time he had been a secret Christian. Now, hearing of the lot that had fallen to him, St. Dasius resolved to declare himself at once a follower of Christ, rather than give up his life to appease the vile god of the pagans.

"If I must die," he said to his comrades, "it is better to die as a Christian, for Christ."

Therefore St. Dasius scorned the earthly goods and delights of which he might have partaken during the thirty days according to the pagan custom. He rejected all the gracious promises of the pagans, firmly bearing in mind the words of the Apostle: "I count all things to be loss that I may gain Christ" (Phil. 3:8). Instead of merriment and feasting, the saint began to denounce the impiety of the pagans and their mad service to the idol, and boldly preached the teaching of Christ. Inspired by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the confessor of Christ zealously urged all to believe in the One True God and in His Only-begotten Son Jesus Christ. When rumor of this reached the pagan rulers Diocletian and Maximian, by their order St. Dasius was brought to trial before the governor of Moesia, Vassa. At the trial the saint again denounced the folly of the idolaters and confessed Christ. For this confes-

35. Dorostolum, present-day Silistra, situated on the river Istros (Danube) in the ancient region of Moesia, not far from the shores of the Black Sea.

36. Kronos, also called Saturn, is according to pagan legends the most cruel of the gods. To appease him the pagans offered human sacrifices every year.

sion of the Christian faith he was subjected to cruel tortures and then beheaded with the sword.[37]

* * *

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyrs Nyrsa and Joseph

Память святых священномучеников Нирсы и Иосифа

St. Nyrsa was a bishop in the land of Persia, and he had as his co-worker his disciple Joseph. Both of them, as true servants of Christ, feared God, who made heaven, earth, the sea, and all that is in them (Ps. 145:6), and strove for a virtuous life, fulfilling the law of Christ.

Seeing the virtuous life of his disciple Joseph and his zeal for the glory of God's name, St. Nyrsa raised him to the rank of bishop. Their countrymen the Persians, worshipping the sun as god, bowed down to fire and gave themselves to various vices. The holy Nyrsa and Joseph, grieving over their error, zealously labored for the benefit of the Church of Christ. Strengthened by the grace of Christ and by their mutual zeal, they converted many pagans to faith in the True God and taught them piety.

At this time Sapor, king of Persia, raised a cruel persecution against Christians, compelling them to worship the sun and fire.[38] Hearing that Bishop Nyrsa and Joseph, denouncing the error of the Persians, were turning many of them to Christ, the king ordered them seized and brought before him.[39]

Before the king there appeared an eighty-year-old elder with his disciple and co-worker. To the king's command that they bow down to fire or prepare for torments and death, the saints boldly answered:

"Even if you, O king, could after our death raise us up seven times for torments, you would not thereby separate us from love for Christ."

37. At the beginning of the fourth century.

38. This persecution of Christians in Persia took place around the middle of the fourth century.

39. The holy martyrs Nirsus and Joseph were seized and placed under guard in the Persian city of Sciagarcadatus in the fourth year of the persecution raised by Shapur (about 343–347 A.D.), and were beheaded with the sword on November 20.

Hearing such an answer from the holy confessors, who were filled with firm resolve to suffer for Christ, the enraged persecutor ordered their heads cut off at once.

Thus these holy martyrs received the incorrupt crowns in heaven.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyrs John, Saverius, Isaac, Hypatius, and Others with Them

Память святых священномучеников Иоанна, Саверия, Исаакия, Ипатия и других с ними

The holy martyrs John, Saverius, Isaac, and Hypatius were bishops in various cities of the land of Persia.

When the impious fire-worshipper Sapor, king of Persia, compelled Christians to worship the sun and fire, these saints strengthened the faithful to be steadfast followers of Christ, and turned the impious Persians to Christ. They denounced the errors of the fire-worshippers, persuading them that the sun and fire are not gods, but only creatures made for the glorification of the Creator and for the service of men.

When rumor of their teaching reached King Sapor, he sent soldiers and his nobles to the cities where the saints were preaching, and ordered them seized.

Once seized, they fearlessly stood trial before the king himself. He addressed them sternly and said:

"Are you not aware that I descend from the gods, pray to the sun, and honor fire? And you—who are you, that you rise against my decrees, belittle the sun, and hold fire as nothing?"

The saints with one voice confessed their faith in the One God.

"For our benefit," said the saints, "God has ordained that there be a sun and fire. But the True God is One, who created all things, and to Him alone belong worship and glory."

At this the king cried out:

"What god is more glorious than Ormuzd, or who is more terrible than Ahriman?[40]

And who can be called a wise man if he does not worship the sun?!"

Bishop Saverius again affirmed the confession of faith on behalf of all:

"We know no other God, O king, than the One who made heaven and earth, the sun and moon, and all things visible and invisible; and we believe in His Son, called Jesus of Nazareth."

Then the king commanded that the saint be struck on the mouth, and this was carried out with such cruelty that his teeth were knocked out. The king added mockingly:

"Call upon Jesus to put your teeth back in for you."

When Saverius for this called the king a godless man, he was scourged almost to death and then cast into prison. After this the tormentor summoned the saint Isaac and asked him with a threat:

"Are you of one mind with Saverius, so that I must shed your blood as well?"

Inspired by the steadfast example and confession of faith of Saverius, the holy Isaac answered the king thus:

"Our unanimity, O king, is the highest wisdom, which you do not comprehend."

Irritated by the steadfastness of the Christians, the king threatened to cut out Isaac's tongue should he continue such speeches. Then the king turned to the second part of the accusation brought against Isaac by the Persian magi[41], and demanded an account: why was he building Christian churches?

To this Isaac replied:

40. Ormuzd is the name of the supreme deity among the ancient Persians. They revered him as the wise god, the creator of the whole world, who made the sun, the moon, the stars, the heavens, the earth, the water and man. According to their beliefs, he is the friend and guardian of good, the enemy of liars, and the avenger of injustice. In the religion of the Persians, Ahriman is the personification of evil. He is in constant struggle with the good god Ormuzd and seeks to sow the seed of evil in his creation. Therefore Ahriman is the source of harmful forces of nature, of diseases, of crop failure and of other calamities.

41. The Magi among the Persians were members of a closed priestly community. They were originally the keepers of all scientific learning and religious rites; they presented themselves as people able to determine the future from the positions of the stars, and they enjoyed enormous honor among the people and great political influence.

"And when did I ever cease to do so, that the name of God might be glorified even among the pagans?!"

Then the king addressed the notable citizens who, seeing the king's cruelty, had previously renounced Christianity. He rebuked them severely and threatened them with death should they return to the Christian faith. He swore that, so long as he reigned, he would not tolerate a single Christian in his kingdom. Then he commanded the apostate courtiers, trembling with fear, to stone Isaac. And indeed these noblemen who had apostatized stoned their own bishop outside the city, in the camp.

After this, all the Persians, especially the notable citizens and officials, armed themselves against the Christians. Thus John, Bishop of Seleucia, who was languishing in prison at the fortress of Vet-Gasquita, was put to death by order of the governor of Gadiabe. Another Isaac, a presbyter of the village of Gulsala, was also stoned.

The confessor Saverius died in prison two days later from the tortures inflicted upon him. When this was reported to the king, he, out of malice, did not believe the news and ordered the dead man's head to be cut off and presented to him.

Despite the apostate courtiers of King Sapor, who were cowed by his cruelty, many Christians from among the laity proved steadfast in the faith and, following the example of their pastors, firmly endured torments for Christ.

Thus Azat, a eunuch of the governor of Gadiabe, was brought, together with other Christians, into the pagan shrine where the Persians offered sacrifices. But, brought up in Christianity from childhood, he, together with the other believers, denounced the impious and refused to offer sacrifice to the sun, knowing "that the pagans sacrifice to demons and not to God" (1 Cor. 10:20; cf. Deut. 32:17).

For this they were subjected to various tortures.

Azat was afterwards strangled by the hands of one apostate. Together with him, Sasonius was also tortured and put to death.

A certain Christian named Abraham had his eyes torn out with red-hot nails, from which he died two days later in terrible torment, never ceasing to call upon the name of Christ.

The Persians buried a Christian named Simeon in the ground up to his chest and pierced with arrows the body left exposed.

In this same persecution in the land of Persia, many women and virgins among the Christians also shone forth with the crown of martyrdom, emulating the aforementioned holy men in their love for Christ.

Thus the virgins Thecla and Anna, and with them Buguta, a noblewoman, Mamia, Tatona, Mama and Nina, and many others, who fearlessly denounced the impiety of the Persians and the cruelty of the persecutor, were hacked to death with swords. The earth watered with the blood of these martyrs brought forth a healing fig tree, as it were in denunciation of the persecutor. The Manichaean heretics, some time later, unable to endure this miracle, by which the very earth bore witness to the true faith of Christ's confessors, destroyed that fig tree; but for this they were punished with a grievous sickness.

Thus also in the land of Persia the Lord raised up a numerous host of martyrs and confessors who received sufferings for Christ.

* * *

NOTES

7550. The repose of Venerable Gregory the Decapolite took place in 826 — Venerable Joseph did not find his teacher still alive. Returning to Constantinople after six years of exile, he had only the consolation of touching with his hands the incorrupt body of Venerable Gregory, and he settled with Gregory's disciple John beside his tomb. After John's death, Joseph left that place and settled at the church of St. John Chrysostom, where he laid the relics of Venerable Gregory the Decapolite and of his disciple John, both glorified by incorruption and by miracles; some time later, not far from this church, he founded a monastery of monks in the name of St. Nicholas of Kasoul and transferred the relics of the venerable ones into it. Joseph the Hymnographer also wrote a service in honor of Venerable Gregory. The incorrupt and whole relics of Venerable Gregory are at present in Romania, in the Bystritsa monastery of the Rymnik eparchy.

THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 21

21 ноября

New Calendar November 21 · Old Calendar December 4 (civil dates)

Account of the Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

Сказание о Входе во храм Пресвятой Богородицы и Приснодевы Марии

When the Most Pure God-Bearing Maiden, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, had completed three years from her birth, her holy and righteous parents, Joachim and Anna, resolved to fulfill the vow they had made—to dedicate the child born to them to the service of God. They summoned to Nazareth, where they lived, all their kinsmen of royal and high-priestly descent—for righteous Joachim himself was of royal lineage, while his wife, holy Anna, was of high-priestly descent—and also a choir of immaculate maidens. They prepared many candles and surrounded the Most Pure Virgin Mary with royal splendor, as all this is attested by the holy Fathers.

St. James, Archbishop of Jerusalem, speaking in the person of Joachim, says:

"Call the immaculate daughters of the Hebrews, that they may take burning candles."

Speaking in the person of righteous Anna, St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, says:

"I fulfill before the Lord the vow which I uttered in my affliction, and for this I have gathered a choir of maidens with candles, summoned the priests, and invited my kinsmen, saying to them all: Rejoice with me, all of you, for I have now become a mother and parent, bringing my Daughter not to an earthly king, but to God, the King of Heaven."

Of the royal adornment of the God-Bearing Maiden, St. Theophylact, Archbishop of Bulgaria, says:

"It was fitting that the entrance of the most Divine Maiden should be worthy of her, and that no poor garment should touch so radiant and precious a Pearl; she ought to be clothed in royal vesture, for her greater glory and adornment."

Having thus made all the preparations required for the honorable and glorious entry, they set out on the road from Nazareth to Jerusalem, which took three days.

When they reached the city of Jerusalem, they entered the Temple solemnly and led there the living Temple of God, the three-year-old maiden, the Most Pure Virgin Mary. A choir of maidens went before her, carrying lighted candles, as St. Tarasius, Archbishop of Constantinople, attests, putting these words into the mouth of holy Anna:

"Begin, maidens bearing candles, and go before me and the God-Bearing Maiden."

Her holy parents, one on either side, took their God-given Daughter by the hands and led her between them with tenderness and honor. After them, the whole multitude of kinsmen, neighbors, and acquaintances followed joyfully, holding candles in their hands and surrounding the Most Pure Virgin, like stars encircling the bright moon, to the wonder of all Jerusalem. St. Theophylact describes this in the following manner:

"The Daughter forgets her father's house and is brought to the King, who has desired her beauty—not without honor or glory, but amid a solemn procession. Behold, she is led forth from her father's house with glory, while all clap their hands at her departure; her parents were followed by their kinsmen, neighbors, and all who loved them. Fathers rejoiced with the father, and mothers rejoiced with the mother; young girls and maidens, with candles in their hands, went before the God-Bearing Maiden. All Jerusalem gathered to behold this unprecedented procession, like a circle of stars shining around the moon, and to see the three-year-old Maiden surrounded by such glory and honored by candles borne before her. And not only the citizens of earthly Jerusalem, but also those of the heavenly Jerusalem—the holy Angels—gathered to behold the most glorious entry of the Most Pure Virgin Mary; and when they saw it, they marveled, as the Church

sings: 'The Angels, beholding the entry of the Most Pure One, were amazed: how did the Virgin enter into the Holy of Holies?'[1]"

Joining the visible choir of immaculate maidens, the invisible choir of the bodiless orders went with them, leading the Most Pure Virgin Mary into the Holy of Holies and, at the Lord's command, surrounding her as God's chosen vessel. Concerning this, St. George, Archbishop of Nicomedia, says:

"Her parents were already leading the Virgin, surrounded by Angels, to the doors of the Temple, while all the heavenly powers rejoiced together. For the Angels, although they did not know the power of the mystery, nevertheless, at the Lord's command, ministered at her entry into the Temple. First, they marveled, seeing that she would be a precious vessel of the virtues, that she bore the marks of eternal purity, and that she had such a body as no stain of sin would ever touch; and secondly, fulfilling the Lord's will, they performed the ministry commanded them."

Thus was the All-Immaculate Maiden led into the Temple of the Lord with honor and glory, not only by men but also by Angels. And rightly so: for if the Old Testament ark, which held the manna and served only as a type of the Most Holy Virgin, was brought into the Temple with great honor, in the presence of all Israel, then with even greater honor, in the presence of Angels and men, should the entry into the Temple have been made of that very living Ark,[2] which held the Manna—Christ—the Most Blessed Virgin appointed to be the Mother of God.

When the Old Testament Ark was brought into the Temple of the Lord, an earthly king, David, the forefather of God, who then reigned over Israel, went before it; but at the entry into the Temple of God of this living Ark, the Most Pure Virgin, it was not an earthly king who went before her, but the King of Heaven, to whom we pray every day: "O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth." That it was this very

1. Refrain of the ninth ode of the canon.

2. Kivot, ark: a wooden chest covered outside with gold. In it were the tablets of the Covenant, the manna and the rod of Aaron. It was a prefiguration of the Mother of God, for which reason the Holy Virgin is called the Kivot and the Ark.

King who led this royal Daughter is attested by the holy Church in the hymns for this day: "Into the Holy of Holies the holy one, the holy and immaculate, is led by the Holy Spirit."[3] When the Ark was brought in, there were music and singing, for David commanded the chiefs of the Levites to appoint singers, that they might play on organs,[4] psalteries,[5] cymbals,[6] and harps,[7] and sing joyful songs. But at the entry of the Most Holy Virgin, the rejoicing was accompanied not by earthly music and singing, but by the song of the Angels, who were invisibly present. For as she entered the Holy of Holies to serve the Lord, they sang with heavenly voices; and the Church recalls this today, singing in the kontakion:[8] "Bringing grace with her, which is in the Divine Spirit, and which the Angels of God sing: this is the heavenly abode." Nevertheless, the entry of the Most Pure Theotokos into the Temple is also represented as accompanied by human hymns. For righteous Anna (in the homily of St. Tarasius) says to the maidens going before her:

"Sing her a hymn of praise; sing to her to the sound of harps; cry aloud to her a spiritual song; glorify her with the ten-stringed psaltery."

The Church also recalls this, saying: "Joachim and Anna rejoice in the Spirit, and the virgin ranks sing unto the Lord, hymning in psalmody and honoring His Mother."[9]

From this it is clear that the choir of virgins who went before the Most Pure Virgin then sang some of the psalms of David.

In keeping with this, the composer of the present canon likewise says to the maidens mentioned above: "Begin, maidens, and sing songs, holding candles in your hands."[10]

3. Sticheron of the feast at Great Vespers.
4. Organ: a spiritual instrument, probably of the kind of the flute (a musical instrument of shepherds).
5. Psaltery: a stringed instrument, of the kind of the harp or lyre. The singing of sacred songs or hymns was chiefly accompanied by playing upon it.
6. Cymbal: a clashing instrument consisting of two wide metal discs which, when struck one against the other, produced a loud sound.
7. Gusli: a stringed instrument having the form of a triangle.
8. The kontakion is a sacred song briefly expressing the essence of the feast.
9. Sticheron at Great Vespers.
10. Canon, ode 4.

The holy and righteous parents themselves, Joachim and Anna, according to the testimony of St. Tarasius, had upon their lips this song of the forefather David: "Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house. And the King shall greatly desire thy beauty" (Ps. 44:11–12).

According to Theophylact's account, the priests who served in the Temple came forth to meet the glorious entry of the God-Bearing Maiden, and received the Most Holy Virgin with hymns; she was to become the Mother of the Great High Priest who had passed through the heavens.[11] When they brought her to the doors of the Temple, holy Anna, as St. Tarasius writes, said:

"Go, my Daughter, to Him who granted you to me; go, O sacred Ark, to the merciful Master; go, O Door of Life, to the compassionate Giver; go, O Ark of the Word, to the Temple of the Lord; enter the church of the Lord, O Joy and Gladness of the world."

And to Zacharias, as a prophet, high priest, and her kinsman,[12] she said together with Joachim:

"Receive, Zacharias, the pure shadow; receive, O priest, the immaculate Ark; receive, O prophet, the Censer of immaterial Coal; receive, O righteous one, the Spiritual Censer."

And again, righteous Anna, as St. Germanus relates, said to the high priest:

"Receive, O prophet, my Daughter, given by God; receive her, and having led her in, set her upon the mountain of holiness, in the dwelling prepared by God, asking nothing of her until God, who has called her hither, fully reveals His will concerning her."

There were, writes blessed Jerome, fifteen steps at the entrance of the church, corresponding to the fifteen Gradual Psalms, for on each of these steps the priests and Levites ascended while singing a separate psalm.[13] So the righteous parents set the All-Immaculate Maiden upon the first step. At once she went up the remaining steps by herself, very

11. By the Great High Priest who has passed through the heavens is meant Jesus Christ. Heb. 4:14.

12. This, according to tradition, is the same Zachariah who was the father of John the Baptist. The Gospel calls him a priest of the course of Abijah (Lk. 1:5).

quickly, led and supported by no one; and when she had ascended to the highest step, she stood there, strengthened by the invisible power of God. All marveled when they saw the three-year-old maiden ascend these steps so swiftly; but the great high priest Zacharias marveled especially, and, as a prophet, through divine revelation, foresaw the future of this Virgin, for, according to Theophylact, he was filled with the Spirit. St. Tarasius likewise says concerning this that Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out:

"O pure Maiden! O Virgin who knowest no stumbling! O beautiful Maiden! O adornment of women! O glory of daughters! Thou art blessed among women! Thou art most greatly glorified for thy purity; thou art sealed with virginity; thou art the loosing of Adam's curse!"

Taking the Maiden, Zacharias, says St. Germanus, led her into the Holy of Holies[14] with a joyful spirit, saying to her:

"Go, fulfillment of my prophecy; go, accomplishment of the Lord's promises; go, seal of His covenant; go, revelation of His counsel; go, fulfillment of His mysteries; go, mirror of all the prophets; go, renewal of those grown old through sins; go, Light of those lying in darkness; go, newest and most divine Gift. Enter now the lower part of the temple of thy Lord, accessible to mankind, and after a little while, the upper part, inaccessible to them."

The Maiden went joyfully and with great gladness into the house of the Lord, as into a chamber; for although she was young in years, being only three years old, she was perfect in the grace of God, as one foreknown and chosen by God before the foundation of the world.

Thus was the Most Pure and Most Blessed Virgin Mary brought into the temple of the Lord. At this, the high priest Zacharias performed an extraordinary deed, amazing to all: he brought the Maiden into the innermost tabernacle, called the "Holy of Holies," which was

13. These fifteen steps were at the entrance to the sanctuary, where no one could enter except the priests and the high priest. When ascending into the sanctuary, the priests sang a psalm on each step; passing from step to step, they sang sixteen psalms in all; hence these psalms are called "songs of degrees" or "gradual." By count these are Psalms 119–133 (Ps. 119:1–7, 133:1–3).

14. The Holy of Holies was the most important and most sacred part of the temple. Only the high priest could enter it, and that once a year.

behind the second veil, where stood the ark of the covenant, overlaid on every side with gold, and the Cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat (Heb. 9:3–5). No one might enter there—not women, nor even priests; only the high priest could enter, once a year. There the high priest Zacharias appointed a place for the Most Pure Virgin to pray. According to the testimony of St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Gregory of Nyssa, all the other virgins dwelling in the temple were assigned a place for prayer between the church and the altar.[15] None of these virgins was permitted under any circumstances to approach the altar, for this was most strictly forbidden them by the high priests; but the Most Pure Virgin, from the time of Her entrance, was not forbidden to enter the inner altar at every hour, behind the second veil, and pray there. The high priest did this through a mysterious enlightenment from God, concerning which St. Theophylact says:

"The high priest, being then beside himself and filled with the Spirit of God, understood that this Maiden was a vessel of divine grace and that She was more worthy than he to stand continually before the Face of God. Remembering what was said in the Law concerning the ark—that it was appointed to be in the Holy of Holies—he immediately understood that this had been foretold concerning this Maiden, and, without any doubt or hesitation, dared, contrary to the Law, to bring Her into the Holy of Holies."

As blessed Jerome says, the righteous parents, Joachim and Anna, having entrusted their child to the will of the Heavenly Father, offered gifts to God, sacrifices and burnt offerings; and, having received a blessing from the high priest and the whole assembly of priests, they returned home with all their kinsfolk and held a feast there, rejoicing and giving thanks to God. From the beginning of Her life in the house of the Lord, the Most Blessed Virgin was lodged in the dwelling for maidens, for the Jerusalem temple, built by Solomon and later destroyed and rebuilt by Zerubbabel,[16] had many dwelling places, as

15. That is, the vestibule of the priests, in which sacrifices were offered and on whose sides were the living chambers for those consecrated to God, and the sanctuary.
16. The Temple of Solomon was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. The new temple was built by Zerubbabel sixty-two years after the destruction of the first.

Josephus, the ancient Jewish historian, writes.[17] Outside, built against the walls of the temple, were stone buildings, thirty in number, separate from one another, spacious and very beautiful; above these were other buildings, and above those, still others, so that altogether there were ninety, all having every convenience for habitation. Their height was equal to that of the temple; they were like pillars supporting its walls from the outside. In these buildings were dwellings for various persons: separately lived the virgins dedicated to the service of God for a time; separately, the widows who had vowed to God to preserve their chastity until death, such as Anna the prophetess, daughter of Phanuel; and separately dwelt the men called Nazirites,[18] who lived unmarried, like monks. All these served the Lord at the temple and received their sustenance from its revenues. The remaining buildings were set aside for the lodging of strangers and sojourners who came from afar to worship in Jerusalem.

The three-year-old Maiden, the Most Pure Virgin Mary, as has been said, was lodged in the dwelling for maidens. Maidens more advanced in years and skilled in writing and handicrafts were assigned to Her, so that from childhood the God-child might learn both writing and handicrafts. Her holy parents, Joachim and Anna, often visited Her; Anna, as a mother, came especially often to see her Daughter and instruct Her. According to the testimony of St. Ambrose and the historian George, the Virgin soon learned perfectly the Hebrew writings of the Old Testament—and not only the Scriptures, but also handicrafts, as St. Epiphanius says:

"She excelled in strength of mind and love of learning; She not only studied the Holy Scriptures, but also practiced spinning wool and flax and sewing with silk. By Her prudence She amazed all; She devoted Herself chiefly to such labors as might be needed by the priests in their service at the temple. She learned this handiwork so well that later,

17. Lived in the 1st century A.D.

18. Nazirites were persons who vowed to God not to enter marriage, to abstain from wine and all intoxicating drinks, and not to cut their hair. Ordinarily the nazirite vow lasted for a certain time and was undertaken voluntarily, for various reasons; but sometimes parents vowed a nazirite vow on behalf of their children, namely in the case when, having no children, they wished to receive them from God.

with Her Son, She was able by it to provide for Herself; with Her own hands She made a tunic for the Lord Jesus, not sewn, but woven throughout."

The customary food from the temple was served to the Most Pure Virgin, says the same Epiphanius, as it was to the other maidens; but it was eaten by the poor and strangers, for She, as the Church sings, was nourished by heavenly bread. St. Germanus says of Her that She usually abode in the Holy of Holies, receiving sweet food from an Angel; and St. Andrew of Crete[19] speaks thus:

"In the Holy of Holies, as in a chamber, She received food that was wondrous and incorruptible."

Tradition further relates that the Most Pure Virgin often abode in the inner tabernacle behind the second veil, called the "Holy of Holies," and not in the ordinary dwelling for the maidens at the temple; for although a place for Her to live had been prepared in that dwelling, She was not forbidden to go into the Holy of Holies to pray. When She had come to the age of maturity, having learned the Holy Scriptures from Her youth and devoted Herself diligently to handicrafts, She applied Herself still more to prayer, and was accustomed to spend whole nights and most of the day in prayer. She entered the Holy of Holies to pray, but returned to Her dwelling for handiwork, for according to the Law nothing could be done or brought into the Holy of Holies. Thus She spent most of Her life in the temple, behind the second veil, in the inner tabernacle, at prayer, and not in the dwelling assigned to Her, occupied with handiwork. Therefore all the teachers of the Church agree in saying that the Most Pure Virgin spent her whole life in the Holy of Holies until Her twelfth year, since She seldom went out from there to Her dwelling.

What Her life was like in Her early years, Jerome has described thus:

"The blessed Virgin, even in Her childhood and infancy, while at the temple with the other maidens of Her own age, lived according to a strict order. From early morning until the third hour She stood at pray-

19. Lived in the 8th century.

er; from the third until the ninth She occupied Herself with handiwork or reading books; at the ninth hour She began Her prayer again and did not cease until an Angel appeared to Her, from whose hands She customarily received food. Thus She grew ever more and more in love for God.[20]"

Such was Her life in childhood, while She still lived with maidens of Her own age. As day by day She grew and was strengthened in spirit, so also did She advance in ascetic labors and grow stronger in prayer and diligence, going from strength to strength, until the power of the Most High overshadowed Her. That an Angel appeared to Her and brought Her food was seen with his own eyes by the high priest Zacharias, as St. Gregory of Nicomedia relates, saying:

As She grew from day to day, the gifts of the Holy Spirit increased in Her with the years, and She remained in fellowship with the Angels. Zachariah also came to know this; for when he, according to the priestly custom, was in the sanctuary, he saw that someone of extraordinary appearance was conversing with the Virgin and providing her food. It was an Angel who had appeared; and Zachariah marveled, reflecting within himself: what is this new and extraordinary occurrence? In appearance like an Angel, speaking with the holy Maiden; incorporeal in form, bringing food that nourishes the flesh, immaterial in nature, offering the Virgin a material basket. An Angelic appearance happens here only to priests, and even that not often; but for a woman, and such a young Maiden at that, the coming of an Angel, now visible, is entirely extraordinary. If She were among the married women, and, afflicted by the disease of barrenness, were praying for the grant of offspring, as Anna once prayed, I would not be surprised at the appearance I see; but the Maiden does not ask for this [21]; yet the Angel, as I now see, always appears to Her, whereby I am brought to even greater wonder, dread and perplexity: what will come of this? Is the Angel coming to proclaim good tidings? And what is the nature of the food he

20. The Israelites counted the hours of the day from sunrise, so that the 3rd hour corresponded to our 9 a.m.; the end of the 6th hour to our noon; from the 9th hour the day was inclining toward evening.

21. That is, concerning the grant to her of fruit of the womb.

brings? From what storehouse is it taken? And who prepared it? What hand made this bread? For it is not proper for Angels to concern themselves with the needs of the flesh; even if many have been nourished by them, nonetheless the food was prepared by a human hand. The Angel who served Daniel, although he could, by the power of the Most High, have accomplished what he was commanded not through another but by himself, nevertheless sent Habakkuk with vessels for this purpose, so that the extraordinary vision of the Angel and the unusual food would not terrify the one being nourished. Here, however, the Angel himself comes to the Maiden — a matter full of mystery, concerning which I am perplexed; She in infancy has been granted such gifts that incorporeal beings serve Her. What is this? Will the predictions of the prophets be fulfilled in Her? Is She not the goal of our expectation? Is it not from Her that He who is to come to save our race will receive nature? For this mystery was foretold long before, and the Word seeks the one who could serve the mystery. And is it not another who has been pre-chosen to serve this mystery, namely this Maiden upon whom I look? How blessed are you, house of Israel, from whom has sprung such a seed! How blessed are you, root of Jesse, from whom this branch has come forth, destined to bring to the world the flower of salvation! How blessed am I also, who enjoy such a vision and prepare this Virgin as a bride for the Word.

These are the words of George of Nicomedia. Similarly Jerome says:

Angels visited Her every day, and if anyone were to ask me how the Most Pure Virgin spent her time of youth there, I would answer: this is known to God Himself, and to the Archangel Gabriel, Her unceasing guardian, along with the other Angels who often came to Her and conversed with Her in love.

Thus dwelling with the Angels in the Holy of Holies, the Most Pure Virgin desired to live forever in Angelic purity and in inviolate virginity. According to the testimony of the holy teachers, Gregory of Nyssa, Jerome and others, this Virgin was the first to dedicate her virginity to God, for in the Old Testament it was unusual for maidens not to enter marriage, since wedlock was held in greater honor than virginity [22]. But the Most Pure Virgin was the first in the world to prefer virginity to wedlock, and, espoused to God, she served Him with her pure virginity day and night. The Holy Spirit, by the good pleasure of God the Father, was preparing in Her a vessel for God the Word. Glory and thanksgiving be to the Holy, Consubstantial and Undivided Trinity; and honor and praise from all generations for ever to our Most Pure Lady, the Theotokos, Ever-Virgin Mary. Amen [23].

Troparion, Tone 4:

Today the foreshadowing of God's good pleasure and the proclamation of mankind's salvation: the Virgin appears clearly in the temple of God, and beforehand announces Christ to all. Therefore let us also cry aloud to her: Rejoice, fulfillment of the Creator's providence!

Kontakion, Tone 4:

The most pure temple of the Savior, the costly chamber and the Virgin, the holy treasure of the glory of God, today is led into the house of the Lord, bringing with her the grace which is in the Divine Spirit, whom the Angels of God extol: she is the heavenly dwelling.

22. At that time everyone desired to have offspring, so that the memory of him might be preserved longer on earth, and so that, if not he himself, then his descendants might become partakers of the blessings in the kingdom of the expected Messiah-Deliverer.

23. In memory of the entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the temple of Jerusalem, the Church of old established a feast on 21 November. Indication of this feast may be found in the 4th century, in the traditions of the Christians of Palestine, who to this day point to the church of the Entry of the Theotokos which formerly existed and attribute its construction to St. Empress Helena. In the 4th century indication of this feast is also found in the words of Gregory of Nyssa. In the 8th century, as stated above, Germanus and Tarasius, patriarchs of Constantinople, delivered homilies on this day.

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THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 22

22 ноября

New Calendar November 22 · Old Calendar December 5 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Cecilia, and with her the Holy Martyrs Valerian, Tiburtius and Maximus

Страдание святой мученицы Кикилии и с нею святых мучеников Валериана, Тивуртия и Максима

The Holy Virgin Cecilia[1] was born in Rome to honorable and wealthy parents. Having heard the preaching of the Gospel, she believed in Christ, and, kindled with heartfelt love for Him, resolved in her mind not to marry, and to keep her virginity pure for the sake of the Immaculate Bridegroom, Christ God. But her parents, against her will, betrothed her to a noble young pagan named Valerian, and began to compel her to wear precious garments and golden ornaments. Yet beneath her precious clothing she wore upon her body a harsh hair shirt, and in her heart she bore Christ, and she prayed to Him continually and fervently, that He Himself, as it should please Him, would keep her pure, undefiled, and free from the bond of marriage. When the day of the wedding came and the wedding festivities began, she, sighing from the depth of her contrite heart, secretly cried out to the Lord: "Let my heart be undefiled in Thy statutes, that I be not put to shame" (Ps. 118:80).

And with tears she fervently besought Him to send His Angel to guard her virginity. When night came, the newlyweds were led into the bridal chamber, and Cecilia said to her bridegroom:

"I wish to disclose to you, dear youth, a certain mystery: I have a guardian of my virginity, invisible to you, an Angel of God, and if you

1. The name Kikilia is a reworking of the Roman name Caecilia, which means *blind*.

touch me, he will immediately slay you, for he stands here, ready to defend me from every violence."

Hearing this, Valerian was seized with fear, for beside Cecilia there was indeed an invisible Angel, sent from heaven to guard the Bride of Christ from union with the pagan youth. He began to beseech Cecilia to show him the Angel. The maiden answered:

"You are a man who does not know the true God, and therefore you cannot see the Angel of God until you are cleansed from the defilement of your paganism."

"But how," asked Valerian, "can I be cleansed?"

"There is an elder," she answered, "named Urban, a Christian bishop; he can cleanse pagans by baptism and make them able to see Angels. If you wish to be cleansed and to see the Angel of God, go to him and tell him everything that you have heard here from me; and when he has cleansed you, then return here, and you will see the Angel and receive from him whatever you desire."

"But where am I to seek this elder?" asked Valerian.

"Go," answered Cecilia, "along the Appian Way,[2] and when you meet beggars on the road, say to them: Cecilia, wishing to convey a certain mystery through me to the elder Urban, has sent me to you, that you may lead me to him."

Valerian went, and on the Appian Way, according to the words of his betrothed, he met beggars, with whom Saint Cecilia was well acquainted, since she had often distributed alms to them; they led him to Bishop Urban, who was hiding from the persecutors in tombs, caves, and ruined poor churches. When Valerian conveyed to him the words of Saint Cecilia, the bishop rejoiced greatly, and, kneeling and raising his hands to heaven, said with tears:

"Behold what Thy servant is, O Lord Jesus: like a bee, she bears honey into the Church! The youth whom she received as a lion, she has sent to me as a meek lamb, for if he did not believe her words, he would not have come to me. Therefore, O Lord, open his heart fully to the

2. The Appian Way led from Rome to southern Italy; it was named after its builder, a certain Appius Claudius Caecus, in the 4th century B.C.; its remains have survived to this day.

knowledge of the truth, that he may know Thee, the True God, and renounce Satan and his works."

As he prayed thus, suddenly there appeared an elder, venerable in appearance, clothed in garments white as snow and holding a book in his hand; standing before Valerian, he opened the book to read. Valerian, terrified by this vision, fell to the ground, but the appearing elder raised him up and said:

"Read, my son, what is written in this book, and you shall be deemed worthy to be cleansed and to see the Angel whom your betrothed promised to show you."

Valerian looked into the book and read the following words, written in gold: "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all" (Eph. 4:5–6).

When Valerian had read these words, the appearing elder asked him:

"Do you believe, child, that this is the truth, or do you still doubt?"

Valerian answered loudly:

"Truly, under heaven there is nothing more certain than these words."

And at once the one who had appeared became invisible, and Bishop Urban, beginning with the words Valerian had read, instructed Valerian sufficiently, and, having baptized him, sent him back to his holy betrothed.

Valerian, returning to his home, found Saint Cecilia in her chamber at prayer, and beside her he saw an Angel of God standing, shining with great light and beauty; in his hands the Angel held two wreaths, woven of red roses and white lilies and giving forth a wondrous fragrance; one wreath he placed upon the maiden's head, and the other upon Valerian's head, saying:

"Keep these wreaths, remaining both pure in heart and undefiled in body; I have brought them to you from paradise, and they have such a wondrous property that they will never wither nor lose their fragrance, and no one except those who, like you, love purity can see them. You, Valerian, have agreed to your betrothed's decision to keep purity; for

this God has sent me to you, that you may receive whatever you ask of Him."

"There is no one in this world dearer to me than my brother Tiburtius," answered Valerian, bowing to the Angel. "Therefore I beseech the Lord that He deliver my brother from perdition and the power of the devil, as He has delivered me, turn him to Himself, and grant that we both be made perfect in the confession of His holy name."

The Angel, with a joyful countenance, said to him:

"Your petition is pleasing to God, and He will fulfill the desire of your heart: He will save your brother Tiburtius through you, as He saved you through the maiden, and you both together shall go forth to the martyr's contest."

Having said this, the Angel became invisible, and Valerian and Saint Cecilia rejoiced in Christ and spent their time in conversations profitable to the soul.

At this time Tiburtius once came to them and said:

"I am amazed: I have perceived here the fragrance of roses and lilies, but whence comes this fragrance, by which I have been so refreshed that I felt myself as though renewed?"

"You truly enjoyed the fragrance, dear brother," answered Valerian to Tiburtius, "for I have prayed to God on your behalf, that you too might be deemed worthy of the unfading crown and might love Him whose blood is like the color of roses and whose flesh is like white lilies."

"Am I hearing this in a dream, or are you speaking the truth?" exclaimed Tiburtius.

"Until now we have truly lived as in a dream," answered Valerian: "we worshipped false gods and unclean demons, but now we live in the truth and the grace of God."

"Who taught you this?" asked Tiburtius.

"The Angel of God taught me," answered Valerian. "And you too will be able to see him, if you are cleansed from the defilement of idolatry."

Tiburtius desired to see the Angel, but Valerian said that it was necessary first to believe in the One True God and to receive holy bap-

tism, and only after that could one expect the appearance of the Angel. Saint Cecilia undertook to instruct Tiburtius in the truths of the Christian faith, and proved to him, on the one hand, the falsity of the pagan gods and the impotence of lifeless idols, and on the other, the power and almightiness of the true God, our Lord Jesus Christ. The God-wise discourses of the holy maiden had such power over Tiburtius that he wholly abandoned paganism, and once he said to Cecilia:

"I believe that there is no other God but the Christian God, and from now on I wish to serve Him alone."

Hearing this, Cecilia rejoiced beyond measure and began to instruct Tiburtius even more zealously, relating to him the incarnation of the Son of God, His miracles, His voluntary sufferings, and the death which He endured out of love for the human race. And Tiburtius, on his part, was more and more moved in heart and kindled with love for the Lord. Seeing the warmth of his faith, the maiden said to him:

"If you believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, go together with your brother to our Christian bishop and receive from him holy baptism: then, cleansed of your sins, you will be worthy to behold the Angel."

Tiburtius, glancing at his brother, asked him:

"To whom do you wish to lead me?"

"We shall go to the man of God Urban," answered Valerian. "He is a Christian bishop, an old man, wise and righteous; his face is like an Angel's, and all his words are true."

"Do you not mean that Urban," Tiburtius continued, "concerning whom I have heard that he was twice condemned to death and now is hiding somewhere, saving himself from death? But if we go to him, and those who seek his death find us with him, they will surely kill us too."

Saint Cecilia answered this question of Tiburtius. She began to speak to him of the eternal life in heaven, never again disturbed by anything, and of the reward of the holy martyrs who suffered death for Christ.

Then Tiburtius, kindled with desire to suffer for the faith, said:

"Let people deprived of understanding love this short-lived life, but I desire eternal life: lead me, then, brother, to the bishop, and let him cleanse me and make me a partaker of eternal life!"

Valerian led his brother to Bishop Urban, to whom he told everything. Rejoicing at the conversion of Tiburtius, Urban received him with love, baptized him, and kept him with himself for seven days, until he had thoroughly taught him all the mysteries of the holy faith.

After his Baptism, Tiburtius was vouchsafed such grace that he saw the holy Angels and conversed with them, and received from God whatever he asked. Together with his brother he wrought many miracles, healing the sick. They distributed their estate among needy Christians, orphans, and widows, redeemed prisoners from the prisons, and honorably buried the bodies of the holy martyrs for Christ, who at that time were being slain in great numbers.

The city prefect, named Almachius, who by the emperor's command had ruthlessly shed the blood of Christians, delivering them to tortures and death, learned all this from his informers and ordered Tiburtius and Valerian to be seized at once and brought before him.

"Why do you dishonor your noble lineage," he asked them, "and bury those who, by the emperor's decree, were put to death for many crimes, and distribute your estate among people from whom everyone has turned away? Do you also cling to the same delusion as they, and wish to become like them?"

"Would that," answered Tiburtius, as the elder, "God would vouchsafe us to be numbered among His servants, who have rejected what seems to exist but in truth does not, and have found instead what seems not to exist but in truth does."

"What is it," the prefect asked him, "that seems to you to exist, but in truth does not? I do not understand what you are saying."

Tiburtius explained to him that all that this temporal world possesses, shows, and promises to give to men only seems to be something substantial, but is in truth nothing, for it perishes in a short time. As for the life to come, people attached to the world believe it will not exist at all, since they cannot see it; yet it does exist, and without any change it shall endure forever. In that life the righteous and faithful shall receive a generous reward, while the wicked and unbelieving shall receive fire and eternal torments.

The prefect entered into a lengthy discussion with them and heard from them the gracious teaching concerning the holy faith and renunciation of the world; but he did not accept this teaching, and ordered them to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. When they refused to obey his command, he ordered Valerian to be cruelly beaten with rods. But during the torture the saint rejoiced, saying:

"Behold, the hour I desired with all my heart has come; behold, this is my feast, this is a day of gladness for me."

At that time the herald was shouting:

"Do not dishonor the gods and goddesses!"

But Valerian too cried aloud to those standing around:

"Men, Roman citizens! Let not my sufferings turn you away from the truth. Be courageous and shatter the wooden and stone gods, for all who worship them shall be scorched by everlasting fire."

Meanwhile, a certain nobleman named Tarquinius approached the city prefect and quietly said to him:

"Unless you put these Christians to death as soon as possible, all their estate will be distributed by their fellow believers among the poor, and nothing will be left for you."

After hearing Tarquinius, the city prefect ordered the martyrs to be led to a place called Pag, past the shrine of Jupiter[3], where they were to offer sacrifice to him, on pain of death by the sword if they refused. With the executioners and soldiers he sent his chamberlain, named Maximus, to oversee the beheading of the martyrs. But on the way, as Maximus looked upon the holy Passion-bearers, he wept and cried out:

"O precious flower of youth! O bond of brotherly love! O beautiful pair of noble and revered young men! Why do you hasten to death as though to a great feast?"

"If we," the holy Tiburtius answered him, "did not know for certain of the eternal life that awaits us after this death, we would not rejoice so greatly at the loss of this temporal life."

"What, then, is the life that follows earthly life?" Maximus asked.

Tiburtius answered:

3. Jupiter was the chief pagan god of the Romans.

"As our flesh is clothed in garments, so the soul is clothed with a body; but at death the flesh shall turn to dust—though it shall live again, like the phoenix bird[4], when the time comes—while the soul, if it is found holy and righteous, shall at once be carried by the Angels to the heavenly mansions, and there, abiding in joy, shall await the general resurrection."

"I too," said Maximus then, moved to tenderness by Tiburtius's words, "would renounce this temporal life if I knew for certain that I should be found worthy of that life of which you speak."

"If you wish to be assured of eternal life," Valerian said to him, "then promise us that you will sincerely repent and, renouncing paganism, turn to God, whom we preach. And we promise you that as soon as we are beheaded and our souls are parted from our bodies, God will at once open your eyes, and you shall see the glory of eternal life granted to us."

Maximus gave his solemn oath:

"May I be consumed by fire," he said, "if from this very moment I do not believe in the One God, who grants eternal life after this temporal one—only do you fulfill your promise."

"Then tell your servants," the saints said, "not to hinder us from entering your house for a short time, and we shall endeavor to call to you a man who will enlighten your soul, so that you may clearly see what we have promised you."

Maximus gladly brought them into his house, since none of those accompanying them dared gainsay him in anything. There the saints began their saving preaching and taught faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. All who were in the house listened attentively to them until nightfall and believed—Maximus with all his household, and many of the guards. During the night St. Cecilia came to them with the clergy, and all who had believed were baptized. They spent the night in prayer and conver-

4. The phoenix is a fabulous bird of antiquity. According to the belief of ancient peoples (the Egyptians), this bird (the only one in the whole world) every 500 years burned itself and was reborn from its ashes. It is mentioned also by some Christian writers, for example St. Clement of Rome, St. Cyril of Jerusalem and others, who saw in the pagan legend about it proof that the pagans had a belief in the possibility of the resurrection of the body. On ancient Christian monuments one may meet an image of the phoenix as a symbol of immortality.

sation about eternal life; and when day began to dawn, the holy maiden said to the Passion-bearers of Christ:

"Be courageous and fearless, soldiers of Christ! Behold, the darkness of night is passing and the light is beginning to shine: do you also put on the armor of light and go forth to accomplish your contest. You have fought the good fight and kept the faith; go, then, to receive the 'crown of righteousness' (cf. 2 Tim. 4:8), which the Lord shall grant you."

And the saints hastened to the appointed place. As they passed by the temple of Jupiter, its priests tried to compel them to offer incense upon the altar of the god, for no one dared pass by that temple without doing so. The priests stopped all who entered or left the city and forced them to offer the prescribed sacrifice to Jupiter. But the saints not only refused to obey the priests; they also mocked their madness, and for this they were immediately beheaded with the sword.

As soon as the execution had taken place, Maximus solemnly testified before all that he saw the Angels of God, shining like the sun, who, having brought the souls of the saints out of their bodies as though they were beautiful maidens from a bridal chamber, bore them up to heaven in great glory. As a result, many pagans believed in Christ. When the city prefect learned that Maximus had embraced the Christian faith, he ordered him to be mercilessly beaten with rods; and under the blows Maximus gave his soul to the Lord. St. Cecilia took his body and buried it with the bodies of the martyrs Tiburtius and Valerian. On the tomb of St. Maximus, wishing to signify his belief in the future resurrection of the dead, as something like the phoenix's rising from the ashes, she ordered that this bird be depicted.

Having put Tiburtius and Valerian to death, the city prefect thought he would make use of their property, but there was none, for St. Cecilia had already distributed it all among the poor. Therefore, by order of the city prefect, his servants seized her. When they came to the saint, she said to them:

"Listen to me, my fellow citizens and brothers! Although you are servants of the city prefect, I think that in your hearts you do not approve of his unbelief. I desire to suffer and die for my Christ, for I do

not value this brief earthly life at all, but seek eternal life. So that I may pass to it more quickly, take me, torture me without sparing my youth, and put me to death."

Those who heard her greatly lamented that so beautiful, noble, and wise a maiden should desire death for herself, and entreated her not to destroy her beauty of her own accord. But she said to them:

"I am not destroying my flourishing youth, but only exchanging it for something better: I give dirt for gold, clay for precious stones, and an earthly bodily prison for the radiant mansions of heaven. Is such an exchange a poor one? I desire the same for you."

For a long time she spoke to them of the reward awaiting the righteous, until all who heard her were deeply moved; and they had gathered in her house in great numbers, men and women alike. At last the saint asked them in a loud voice:

"Do you believe that all I say is true?"

And all, as one man, answered:

"Yes, we believe and confess that Christ, whom you preach, is the true God, and that you are His true servant."

Deeply rejoicing at this answer, the holy maiden at once sent for Bishop Urbanus; and when he came to her house, he baptized as many as 400 men and women who had believed in Christ. And the house of Cecilia became a church of God.

Then the city prefect Almachius ordered the Righteous servant of Christ to be brought to trial and, having questioned her concerning her faith, heard from her a bold confession of the name of Christ.

"Whence comes such boldness in you?" he asked her angrily.

"From a good conscience," the saint replied, "and from an unshaken faith."

"Do you not know, wretched woman," Almachius retorted, "that I have from the emperors authority over the life and death of citizens?"

"You lie," the saint replied, "when you say that you have power over life. You should have said that you have power only to kill, and not to give life, for you can kill, but you cannot bring to life."

"Offer sacrifice to the gods," the judge insisted, "and renounce Christ, and you shall be set free."

But the saint declared that she was ready to die for Christ. Then the torturer ordered her taken home and there left to perish in a fiercely heated bathhouse. For three days and three nights they tormented her with heat and smoke, but the grace of God refreshed and revived her. When Almachius learned that the martyr had remained alive for so long in the overheated bathhouse, he ordered her to be beheaded there with a sword. The executioner came to her and struck her neck three times with his sword, but did not sever her head completely; leaving her there, he went away. The faithful gathered her blood with a sponge and a cloth, and the saint lived for another three days, reasoning with perfect clarity and strengthening the Christians around her in the faith. At last, during prayer, she gave up her spirit to God and was buried with honor by the faithful.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Apostles Philemon, Archippus, and Apphia

Память святых Апостолов Филимона, Архиппа и Апфии

The Holy Apostles Philemon, Archippus, and Apphia were converted to Christianity by the Holy Apostle Paul and suffered for Christ at the hands of the pagan Greeks, in the reign of Emperor Nero[5], in the city of Colossae.[6] Once, when they were gathered together with other Christians for prayer, the pagans suddenly fell upon them. All who were assembled there fled, except Philemon, Archippus, and Apphia; these three were seized and brought before Artoclis, the keeper of provisions at Ephesus.[7]

5. The Emperor Nero, known for his inhuman cruelty, reigned from 54 to 68 A.D.

6. Colossae was a city in the Asia Minor region of Phrygia, located in the western part of the peninsula; in the Middle Ages this city was renamed Chonae (now Honas or Konus). The Apostle Paul wrote an epistle to the inhabitants of Colossae. This city is known in the history of the Church through the miracle of the Archistrategos Michael on 6 September.

7. A *zhitokhranitel* is the overseer of the grain stores belonging to some city, region or state. Ephesus was one of the most famous cities of ancient Asia Minor, on the western shore of the peninsula. The Apostle Paul, who preached the Gospel there, wrote an epistle to its inhabitants.

First Archippus was cruelly beaten, and passers-by, even children, stabbed him all over his body with knives. Then St. Philemon was mercilessly tortured and stoned. St. Apphia was likewise stoned.

Thus, amid torments, the holy servants of God departed unto the Lord.[8]

Kontakion, Tone 2:

As all-radiant stars enlightening the ends of the earth, let us praise the Apostles of Christ, the glorious Philemon and the holy Archippus, and Onesimus, and Mark, and Apollos, and with them the all-wise Apphia, crying: Pray unceasingly for us all.

* * *

Memory of the Righteous Michael the Warrior[9]

Память праведного Михаила Воина

St. Michael lived in the reign of Michael III.[10] By birth he was a Bulgarian, and was born in the city of Potuka,[11] which then belonged to the Greek Empire. Michael's noble parents were among the foremost Christians of Bulgaria; Michael too was such a Christian from childhood, and his parents and acquaintances called him *the holy child* on account of his piety. From his earliest years he was distinguished by purity of life; he ever bore the fear of God in his heart, persevered in fasting and prayer, gave alms to the poor, and visited the sick, adorning himself with meekness and humility and every virtue.

When he had reached the age of twenty-five, Michael entered military service and commanded a considerable detachment of troops.

At that time the Ethiopians and Hagarenes—that is, Arabs of the Mohammedan faith[12]—rose up in war against the Greek Empire and

8. The memory of these saints is also celebrated on 19 February.

9. The Life is set forth on the basis, first, of the Slavonic synaxarion narrative, whose ancient texts were published by Archbishop Philaret and the academician A. N. Veselovsky; the same narrative, with some differences, entered the printed Slavonic Prologue; and second, of the Panegyric to Michael the Warrior, written by Euthymius, Patriarch of Tarnovo (1375–1393), and published among the works of Euthymius by Mr. Kaluzhnitsky in Vienna in 1901.

10. The Byzantine emperor Michael III died in 867.

advanced toward its capital. A great Greek army went forth to defend the fatherland and encountered the numerous forces of the Ethiopians and Hagarenes. Seeing that the Ethiopians and Hagarenes were stronger and ready to overcome them, the Greeks fled to the mountains and hid in places of safety.

Michael the Warrior and his detachment were among the Christian Greek troops. He did not fear the enemy or take to flight, but continually strengthened and encouraged his men. Seeing the general flight of the Greeks, he wept, fell prostrate upon the ground, and prayed to the Lord God for the salvation of the Christians. When he had finished praying, he and his detachment rushed irresistibly upon the enemy and plunged into the very midst of the Ethiopians and Hagarenes, striking down the foes fiercely, while neither he nor his men suffered harm. At that same moment a storm suddenly arose to aid the Christian warriors: lightning and thunder struck terror into the enemy, so that they all took to flight. With God's help, Michael routed all the foes, while he and his detachment remained entirely unharmed.

Having given thanks to God for the victory granted to him, Michael dismissed his army and set out for home with only a few servants. During this journey the following wonder came to pass.

Michael stopped at a certain place[13] to rest. There was a great lake, from which a monstrous serpent would emerge and devour people and cattle.

One of Michael's servants saw smoke near the lake from the place where they had stopped. He hastily took provisions for a meal and went toward the smoke. There he saw a maiden sitting in tears, awaiting something. The servant began to question her, and became so absorbed in her account of the terrible serpent that the food he had come to cook

11. It is thought that this is the present-day Batak, within the bounds of the city of Plovdiv or Philippopolis.

13. The place of the miracle with the serpent is named Raithu in the printed Prologue, and Bishop Philaret considers that the well-known Desert of Raithu two days' journey from Sinai is meant here. But in the ancient manuscript lives it is not the place of Raithu that is spoken of, but the Styranian or Tyranian place. Perhaps by "the Tyrannian place" is meant, in the opinion of Academician Veselovsky, Tyranna, a city and region near Durazzo and Alessio on the Balkan peninsula near the Adriatic Sea.

was burned on the fire. When the servant returned to his master, Michael the Warrior asked him why he had been delayed and why the food had burned. The servant then told him in detail all that he had seen and heard from the maiden about the serpent.

Having heard the account, St. Michael resolved to go there and called his servants, but they were afraid and refused to go with their master. Then Michael prayed to the Lord God, crossed himself, mounted his horse, and rode to the lake, taking only his oldest servant with him.

When he arrived, he began to ask the maiden why she had come to that place.

The maiden first urged Michael the Warrior to go away, lest he be devoured by the monstrous serpent. But at the saint's insistence, she told him of the custom established in the city, whereby children were given in turn to be devoured by the serpent.

Astonished by the maiden's account, Michael ordered his servant to withdraw with the horse and wait at a distance. He himself fell to the ground and began to pray to the Lord God. When the saint had finished praying and stood up, the serpent appeared in the midst of the lake. Raising its head high and lashing the water with its tail, it began to approach the shore, opening its three mouths. The saint took his shield and sword and severed the three heads with which the evil creature had appeared. The serpent then curled its tail, struck the saint on his right cheek and left hand, and wounded him. Michael fell unconscious, but soon came to himself and stood up.

Seeing such a wonder, Michael's servant hurried to the city and reported what had happened. The townspeople came out and solemnly welcomed their deliverer, and the maiden was returned to her parents.

Thus it pleased God to glorify Michael the Warrior by a wonder like that which had been wrought of old by St. George the Victorious.

After this, having exhorted the townspeople to hold fast to the Christian faith, Michael the Warrior continued on his way and returned to his home. Not long afterward, he peacefully gave his blessed soul to the Lord.

Many signs and wonders began to take place at the tomb of St. Michael, and those who came to it in faith received healing from their ailments.

Many years later, in the time of the Second Bulgarian Empire, the Bulgarian Tsar Kaloyan, waging war within the borders of the Greek Empire, whose capital was then occupied by the Latins, took the city of Potuka and resolved to translate the relics of St. Michael the Warrior to his Bulgarian capital, the city of Tarnovo. The Bulgarian Patriarch Basil, hearing of the approach of the holy relics, went out with all his clergy and the townspeople to meet them in a procession with crosses, candles, and censers. The Bulgarian Tsar and the Patriarch took the holy relics upon their shoulders and carried them with their own hands, setting them in the cathedral church of the patriarchal see.[14]

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Procopius

Память святого мученика Прокопия

St. Procopius was born in Jerusalem. He was strict in his manner of life and adorned himself with many virtues. Appointed to the office of reader in the church of Caesarea,[15] and possessing the gift of understanding the Scriptures, Procopius expounded the Word of God to the faithful. Besides this, he translated Holy Scripture into Syriac and, during his lifetime, healed those afflicted with demonic possession, driving out demons.

Once, while traveling to Scythopolis, he read the Word of God in Christian churches and joined interpretation to the reading. When the governor of Caesarea heard of St. Procopius, he ordered him seized as a Christian. At that time there was a persecution of Christians.[16] The

14. In the 14th century, under the last Patriarch of Tarnovo, Euthymius, who composed a panegyric to St. Michael, the relics rested in Tarnovo in the patriarchal cathedral church. At the beginning of the 19th century they were transferred to Wallachia.
15. Here Caesarea Palaestinae is meant, a city on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea; after the destruction of Jerusalem (in 79 A.D.) it was the chief city of Palestine and the seat of a bishop, to whom Jerusalem too was for some time subject. Afterwards Caesarea was destroyed and now presents a complete desert with heaps of ruins.
16. Under the emperor Diocletian (294–305).

governor of Caesarea demanded that St. Procopius offer sacrifice to the pagan idols and pay homage to the four emperors then ruling the empire.[17] But the saint answered boldly:

"Christians ought not to honor and worship many gods and rulers. We have but one Master, one King and Lord, the Creator and Maker of all."

Hearing this, the governor of Caesarea was filled with fury against the saint and ordered that his head be cut off with a sword. Thus St. Procopius completed his earthly course and was led by a swift path to heaven, receiving from Christ God the crown of martyrdom.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Menignus

Память святого мученика Менигна

St. Menignus was born in the city of Parion, in the region of the Hellespont.[18] By trade he was a fuller, washing and cleansing garments and linen cloth. While engaged in this work by the river, St. Menignus twice heard a voice from heaven calling him to struggle for the sake of the name of Christ. This was in the reign of Decius, the cruel persecutor of Christians.[19]

By order of the emperor, many Christians were seized in the city where Menignus lived, condemned to torture, and thrown into prison. When the prison gates had been sealed and were guarded by soldiers, the Angel of the Lord appeared to the prisoners. Removing their chains, the Angel released them from prison unharmed.

The tormentors, missing the prisoners and not finding them in the prison, asked the guards about them; but the soldiers could say noth-

17. The emperor Diocletian shared power over the empire with Maximian, to whom he ceded the eastern half. Each emperor had his own co-ruler: Diocletian had as co-ruler Maximian Galerius, who after Diocletian's death became emperor of the East; and in the West of the empire Maximian Herculius reigned with Constantius Chlorus. Thus, at the time of the martyrdom of St. Procopius in 303, there were four rulers in the Empire. And emperors were honored by the pagans on a level with the gods, and altars and statues were set up in their honor and sacrifices were offered to them. St. Procopius, the martyr, did not wish to serve this error of the pagans.

18. The Hellespont is the northern region of Asia Minor, along the shore of the Black Sea.

19. Decius was a Roman emperor who reigned from 249 to 251 A.D.

ing, since the gates had remained sealed. The pagans fell into confusion, and word spread through the city from the soldiers that Jesus the Nazarene had come to the prison by night and led out the prisoners. The pagans, blinded by malice, searched for the Christians. The faithful, strengthened by the sign that had been granted them, prepared with joy for sufferings.

St. Menignus, hearing this account from the soldiers, was kindled with a zealous love for Christ and recalled the heavenly voice that had called him to the exploit. Without lengthy deliberation, he gave back to the owners the garments entrusted to him for washing, and declared himself a follower of Christ. He tore up the edict of the impious emperor Decius, which commanded that all Christians be handed over to torments and death if, after admonition, they did not renounce Christ. After this Menignus was seized and presented to the authorities. The judge sentenced him to have the fingers that had torn the imperial edict cut off. When his fingers were cut off, not blood but milk flowed from them. After this the martyr was urged to offer sacrifice to the idols, that he might escape further torments and death. But the saint bravely confessed Christ. Then the tormentor commanded that he be beaten and tormented without mercy. He was cast to the ground by the heavy blows of the executioners, then hanged on a tree and scraped with iron. Yet this did not weaken the zeal of the Confessor of Christ. Then he was taken down from the tree and his head was cut off. At that moment a pure dove flew from the saint's mouth toward heaven. Thus, obeying the heavenly summons, St. Menignus accomplished his exploit for Christ, and his soul departed to heaven to receive from the Lord the crown of martyrdom.

After the saint's death, the Christians came secretly by night to the place of his sufferings and took his body. His head, left in that place, was afterwards discovered by a certain Christian. The holy martyr appeared in a vision to this Christian, and after the vision the man found the saint's head, guided by a bright star shining above it.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Agabus

Память преподобного Агаввы

The Venerable Agabus was an Ishmaelite by birth. Leaving his homeland, his parents and his wealth, he followed a certain monk, from whom he received the monastic habit. The teacher of St. Agabus went together with him to the great ascetic Eusebius; with him St. Agabus learned to remain for a long time in prayerful vigilance. After the death of the blessed Eusebius, St. Agabus remained in his cell and lived there for 38 years. He never put on footwear; on his loins he wore heavy chains; his food was pulse boiled in water. During the course of day and night he spent most of the time standing and kneeling, performing the services of prayer to the Most High. He completely refused to sit: no one ever saw him seated. As an ascetic he presented an example of love of wisdom and obedience. Having ended his life in such exploits, he reposed in peace in the Lord[20].

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the holy right-believing Prince Michael of Tver

20. The time of the exploits and repose of the Venerable Agavva is dated to the 5th century.

THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 23

23 ноября

New Calendar November 23 · Old Calendar December 6 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium

Житие святого отца нашего Амфилохия, епископа Иконийского

Saint Amphilochius[1], Bishop of Iconium, friend of the great Ecumenical teachers Saint Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian, was a native of Cappadocia and was born in the city of Caesarea. His father, who was also called Amphilochius, was the own brother of the blessed Nonna[2], mother of Saint Gregory the Theologian. He was a man of great intellect and profound learning, and to these he joined eloquence and, besides all this, kindness of heart and piety, and he served as a help to all his kin and as a teacher in the word. Caring for his children, he gave them an excellent education and raised them in the spirit of Christian piety.

His younger son, having come of age, first came forward as an orator and advocate. But, already from his youthful years, he loved God above all things, and therefore, soon after, at the urging of Saint Gregory the Theologian, avoiding worldly cares and vanity, he withdrew into the desert, where he began to lead the monastic life of strict asceticism, zealously serving God alone. Here his occupations were prayer, reading of Scripture, and fasting. In such strict self-mortification and ascetic labors of fasting Saint Amphilochius lived for a fairly long time, until the Lord indicated to him another, higher service, that

1. Iconium was a city on the eastern fertile plain in the interior of Asia Minor, at the foot of the Taurus mountains; it was once the chief city of the Lycaonian region; in the Middle Ages it was the capital of the Seljuk sultans (1096–1308). Today it is the Turkish city of Konya. Christianity was first planted here by the Apostles Paul and Barnabas.
2. The memory of the righteous Nonna is celebrated on 5 August.

of the episcopate, setting him as it were a lamp upon the lampstand of the Church.

When the bishop of the church of Iconium[3] died, an Angel of the Lord appeared to Amphilochius at night and told him to go into the city and shepherd the spiritual sheep; but Amphilochius did not dare to go. The following night the Angel appeared to him again and said:

"Go into the city, Amphilochius, and shepherd the sheep which God entrusts to you."

But Amphilochius did not obey the Angel on this occasion either, thinking that his appearance was a delusion of the evil spirit: "Satan," thought the saint, "can sometimes transform himself into a bright Angel." On the third night the Angel, appearing to him, called him:

"Amphilochius! Rise from your bed!"

Rising quickly, Amphilochius said in fear:

"If you are an Angel of God, let us both stand in prayer." Bowing his head, Amphilochius began to sing: "Holy, holy, holy Lord of Sabaoth, the heaven and the earth are full of Thy glory." But the one who had appeared sang with him together. Then the Angel took him by the right hand and led him into a church that was not far off, the doors of which opened of themselves before them. When they entered within, Amphilochius saw a bright light and a multitude of men in white garments, who took him, led him to the sanctuary, and gave him the Holy Gospel in his hands, saying: "The Lord be with you!" And one of them, apparently the eldest, loudly proclaimed: "Let us all pray," and then said:

"The Holy Grace ordains our brother Amphilochius bishop of the city of Iconium; let us pray for him, that the grace of God may be upon him."

After the prayer, all took leave of Amphilochius and became invisible, while he himself stood, marvelling at the wondrous vision and at his strange consecration as bishop, and prayed to God, committing himself to His holy will. As soon as dawn began to break, he went out of the church and set off for his cave. And behold, on his way he met sev-

3. This was in 372.

en bishops, who had gathered from the surrounding cities into Iconium for the election and consecration of a bishop for that city. They had a command from God to seek out the black-robed monk Amphilochius. Having left Iconium, they searched for him everywhere and, having at last met him, asked:

"Are you not Amphilochius? Tell us the truth, for every lie is from the evil one."

"I am the sinner Amphilochius," he answered them humbly. They led him with honor into the church in order to consecrate him, but he said to them:

"If God has been pleased that I, unworthy and sinful, should be pointed out to you for election as bishop, then it is no longer right for me to conceal and remain silent further about His wondrous works; on the contrary, we must certainly proclaim them and give all glory to God."

And Saint Amphilochius told them everything from the very beginning, about how he had been consecrated bishop in a night vision. Having heard him, the bishops were astonished and gave thanks to God for the wondrous consecration of Amphilochius, and no longer dared to consecrate him a second time, but, bowing to him with reverence and kissing him with love, they seated him directly upon the episcopal throne (in the reign of Valentinian and Valens[4]).

For a fairly long time Saint Amphilochius shepherded the flock of Christ: he lived until the times of the emperor Theodosius the Great and his sons. As a teacher of the Orthodox faith, he struggled against the heresy of Arius[5], endured many oppressions and insults from the heretics, was a companion of the holy fathers who rose up against the blasphemy of Eunomius, and at the Second Ecumenical Council labored much against the spirit-fighter Macedonius[6] and the adherents of the

4. The Emperor Valentinian (in the West) reigned from 364 to 375; Valens (in the East) from 364–378. The ordination of St. Amphilochius as bishop took place in 373.

5. Arius, condemned by the 1st Ecumenical Council, taught that the Son of God is not God but only the highest creature, through whom God created the whole world.

6. The 2nd Ecumenical Council (1st Constantinopolitan) was in 381. Macedonius, condemned by the council, taught that the Holy Spirit is a creature, having no share in the Divinity and glory of the Father and the Son.

same Arius. For his zeal for piety and his virtuous life he was glorified everywhere and enjoyed the love of the holy fathers, especially of Saints Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian, who regarded him as their close friend and corresponded with him[7630].

In the reign of Theodosius the Great[7], Saint Amphilochius once came before the emperor and entreated him to abolish the prayer assemblies of the Arians in all the cities. But the emperor did not wish to grant his request, so as not to appear an oppressor in the eyes of the people. Then Amphilochius left the palace in silence, but after several days he came there again and, by his wisdom, did something worthy of remembrance. He bowed to the emperor seated upon the throne, rendering him due honor, and respectfully greeted him, but toward his son Arcadius, recently raised to the throne and sitting beside his father, he paid no attention whatever and showed him no fitting honor. Theodosius, thinking that Amphilochius had forgotten himself, ordered him to give due greeting to Arcadius.

"It is enough that honor has been given to the emperor," observed Amphilochius.

Then the emperor, the father, was greatly angered and, not wishing to allow disrespect toward his son, ordered Saint Amphilochius to be driven from the palace in disgrace.

Saint Amphilochius said to him:

"Do you see, O emperor, how you do not tolerate disrespect toward your son, and how you are angered at me? So too God the Father does not suffer disrespect toward His Son; He turns away from and does not love those who revile Him, and is angry with those who enter into communion with the blasphemers."

The emperor then understood why Amphilochius had not shown honor to his son — because he wished to show that the Son of God is due equal honor with the Father — marveled at the wisdom of the saint, and, rising from the throne, bowed to him and asked his forgiveness. Immediately Theodosius sent decrees throughout the whole empire for the removal of the Arians from all the cities, and, where neces-

7. Theodosius the Great reigned from 379 to 395.

sary, by force and threats. Thus Saint Amphilochius cleansed the Church of Christ of heretics.

About the same time the heresy of the Messalians[8] penetrated into the region of Lycaonia. Saint Amphilochius zealously defended his church against this contagion as well. He refuted the heretics both personally and by the power of his God-inspired word, and afterward he was present at the Council of Side in Pamphylia[9], where this heresy was condemned. At this time Saint Amphilochius had advanced so far in spirit that he could beseech healing for the sick by his prayers.

Having attained a deep old age, Saint Amphilochius reposed peacefully in the Lord[7634].

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Divine thunder, trumpet of the Spirit, cultivator of the garden of faith, and axe against heresies, Hierarch Amphilochius, great servant of the Trinity: standing ever with the Angels, intercede unceasingly for us all.

* * *

Life of Our Holy Father Gregory, Bishop of Acragas

Житие святого отца нашего Григория, епископа Акрагантийского

Saint Gregory was born on the island of Sicily[10], in the village of Pretoria, near the city of Acragas[11], to pious and virtuous parents, Chari-

8. The Messalians, otherwise called Euchites, denied the Trinity of Persons in God, the sacraments, fasts, outward ascetic labors, and all the institutions of the Church. To combat the demon, in whose power, in their view, every man lies, only intensified prayer was sufficient, after which the All-Holy Spirit takes up His abode in the one praying. They gave themselves to contemplations and mystical dances, and asserted that they saw the Deity with their bodily eyes. The heresy of the Messalians arose in the 4th century, was condemned in 431 at the 3rd Ecumenical Council of Ephesus, but finally disappeared already in the 7th century.

9. Pamphylia is a southern region of Asia Minor. The council was held at Side, a considerable city of Pamphylia.

10. The island of Sicily lies in the Mediterranean Sea off the southern tip of the Apennine Peninsula, from which it is separated by the Strait of Messina.

11. The city of Acragas, now Agrigento, is situated on the south-western shore of the island of Sicily.

ton and Theodotia. His parents were very wealthy people and generously gave of their possessions to all who were in need.

At the baptism of the infant Gregory, his sponsor at the font was the blessed Patamion, Bishop of Acragas. In his eighth year Gregory was given over for instruction in letters to a skilled teacher named Damian, and in two years he thoroughly learned to read, write, and sing the church chants. In his twelfth year he was ordained a cleric by Bishop Patamion and entrusted to the archdeacon[12] Donatus, who was to guide him in spiritual labors and virtuous life. The youth exercised himself in prayer and spent whole days and nights in reading Holy Scripture and the lives of the holy fathers; hence in him there grew ever more strongly the desire to walk in the footsteps of those of whom he read.

When he reached the age of 22, he resolved to go to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places; and he began to pray fervently to God that He would prepare his way. One night, as he slept in the archdeacon's house beside his bed, someone suddenly called him:

"Gregory!"

He answered, "I am here," and, rising, asked the archdeacon:

"Why did you call me, my lord?"

"I did not call you, child," the archdeacon answered.

And Gregory went, lay down again, and fell asleep. But the same voice called him a second time, and he again approached the archdeacon, asking why he had called him; and again the archdeacon answered that he had called no one. But this time the archdeacon, understanding that God Himself was calling Gregory, trembled with fear and said to the youth:

"If the same voice calls you once more, answer it: 'What, Lord? What dost Thou command Thy servant?'"

When Gregory, having left the archdeacon, lay down again on his bed, the voice called him by name a third time. The one calling was an

Angel of the Lord. Gregory responded as he had been taught, and the Angel said to him:

"Thy prayer has been heard: go to the seashore, and there thou wilt find men who will take thee with them to the holy places."

Gregory at once rose up, and, without telling anyone anything, early in the morning went to the sea; and coming to the shore, he found there a ship and asked the mariners where they were sailing. They answered that it was to Carthage[13], and he entreated them to take him with them. All went aboard the ship, and after three days they arrived safely at Carthage.

In Carthage Gregory spent several days, during which he often went to the church of the holy martyr Julian. Once, when he was in this church and occupied with the reading of Holy Scripture, three monks of venerable appearance entered and began to pray. At the end of the prayer one of them sat down, while the other two stood beside him. Gregory, seeing them, bowed to them. The monk who was seated, looking at Gregory, said:

"What are you doing here, Gregory, servant of God, who have chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from you, according to the word of the Lord?" (Lk. 10:42).

Hearing his own name, Gregory was struck with terror, and, bowing down to the elder to the earth, said:

"Forgive me, father, and pray for me, a sinful and negligent man."

The elder answered:

"Oh, would that I had your sins, my son[14]! Know," he added, "that the merciful God has revealed everything about you to us, and rejoice, for He has sent us to take you and to escort you to the holy places, as you desire; we too are going there."

12. The word *archdeacon*, from the Greek, means chief of the deacons, that is, the senior or highest minister. At present this title is given to the foremost deacon among the monastic clergy (the foremost deacons from among the white clergy are called protodeacons). But in the ancient Church the archdeacons stood in immediate proximity to the bishop and assisted him in the governance of the Church; at times, as for example at councils, they even served as his representatives.

13. Carthage is a city on the northern shore of Africa; today it consists of nothing but ruins.

14. That is: "Oh, that I too were free from sins as you are."

Then Gregory, in tenderness, exclaimed:

"Blessed be God, who orders all things for our good!" Then all four set out on the road. On the way the elder, testing Gregory, once asked him:

"Child Gregory, do you not long for your parents?"

"Our Lord has said," answered Gregory, "'He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me' (Mt. 10:37). Yet, father, let us pray to God that He may also give consolation to my parents, who have lost me, and that He may preserve me, a sinner, from the snares of the enemy."

After many days of travel they drew near to the holy city and stopped at a monastery they came upon on the way. Meanwhile the fast of the holy Forty Days had begun, and therefore they did not go further, but remained in the same monastery until Holy Week. Here Gregory saw the strict fasting of the monks and their vigilance: many of them took no food and did not sleep the whole week. Here he saw people living like Angels and unceasingly glorifying God, as they glorify Him in heaven; he saw monks shedding tears in streams and standing in prayer all day and night; he saw also their other labors and unimaginable ascetic feats, and was struck with terror, and beat his breast, crying out:

"Woe is me! What then am I? What shall I do, negligent and lazy as I am? How can I stand on the day of judgment together with the saints?!"

But, not wishing, however, to plunge completely into the abyss of despair, he said to himself:

"If, as David says, 'The Lord is near to them that are of a broken heart, and saves the humble in spirit' (Ps. 33:19), then He can save me too, as He saved those who came at the eleventh hour[15] and had done nothing worthy of reward."

The monks, seeing his troubled face, comforted him, thinking that he was grieving for his homeland and parents.

15. The meaning of the Gospel parable is that repentance and turning to God are never too late.

"Do not grieve, child," they said to him, "that you have come with us so far: we hope that, with God's help, you will return again to your own country and see your parents alive."

"With God," he answered, "there is no foreign land: everything belongs to Him, and everywhere He penetrates with His all-seeing eye. I do not grieve that I have come here, nor do I long for my parents; on the contrary, I rejoice that, having left father and mother, I have found God, who cares for me. No, another sorrow lies on my heart. I beg you, holy fathers, to pray to the Lord for me, a humble man."

After this answer the monks fell silent.

When the feast of Christ's Resurrection came, the travelers set out for Jerusalem, and having venerated the holy places, came for a blessing to the patriarch, St. Macarius[16]. Seeing them, the patriarch said:

"Rejoice in the Lord, Abba Mark! From where have you brought us this God-pleasing youth Gregory?"

"It was not we who brought him, Master," answered Mark, "but the Lord, who desires all to be saved, and your holy prayers."

Gregory was amazed that the patriarch called both him and the elder by name, and he rejoiced to learn the elder's name; for although he had been with them so long, until then he had not known the names of the elder or of the two other companions, and he did not dare to ask them where they were from or what their names were—so silent and incurious was he.

Then the patriarch looked at the other two monks and said:

"It is well that you have come, Serapion and Father Leontius. I thank God, who gave you strength to come here and to bring with you this youth, burning in spirit, serving the Lord, comforted by hope, steadfast in prayer, as the Lord has revealed to me concerning him."

Having said this, the patriarch went to the church to serve the Divine Liturgy, and all the travelers partook of the Most Pure Mysteries. And the next morning Abba Mark, with two brethren, having received the blessing of the patriarch, went to visit the brotherhood living around Mount Zion. Gregory did not know that they were leaving, and

16. Macarius II was Patriarch of Jerusalem from 663 to 674.

when he stayed behind he grieved greatly at having fallen behind them. But the patriarch, to comfort him, said that the fathers would not go to their own country without first returning to the monastery.

Then Gregory, bowing to the patriarch, ventured to ask him where these three great men had come from. The patriarch answered that they were from Rome. When the monks returned to Jerusalem, Abba Mark, taking Gregory by the hand and bending him down to the patriarch's feet, said:

"Holy father! This one too is from the flock of Christ: he will take up authority in the Church and, like an oar, will steer it toward good by spiritual teaching. And you, father, take care of him, that he may keep his spiritual perfection in all purity and not be defiled by the sinful thoughts natural to youth."

"God has chosen him for Himself," answered the patriarch, "from his mother's womb, and has fenced him about with His fear: He will also preserve him to the end."

Then, raising Gregory up and noticing that he was weeping, the patriarch said to him:

"If it pleases you, my child, to stay here, remain with us, and our Lord Jesus Christ will arrange everything for your good; but if you wish to go with them, then go in peace."

"No, most holy father," answered Gregory, "I do not wish to leave here, but I only pray God to grant me once more in this life to see these holy fathers."

Thus the monks, having obtained from the patriarch blessings and prayers for the road, departed from the holy city, and Gregory remained in Jerusalem with the patriarch Macarius.

On the way to Rome, Abba Mark with Serapion and Leontius had to sail past Acragas. They stopped here, greeted Bishop Patamion, and stayed for some time in the episcopal house, since the feast of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul had arrived. After the feast, when they were already preparing to leave and were asking the bishop for a parting blessing, there came to Patamion from their village the parents of Gregory, Chariton and Theodotia, to perform on the first day of the month of July the commemoration of their son, since it was on this very

day that Gregory had left his homeland. Theodotia wept bitterly for her son, and no one could comfort her. Abba Mark asked the bishop:

"Father, why do these people weep so?"

The bishop, sighing, shed tears and answered:

"They had an only son, whom I received from the holy font. When he reached the age of eight, his parents brought him to me, and I ordered that he be taught letters; and God gave him such abilities that in two years he learned to read and write beautifully and to sing in church. In his twelfth year his parents dedicated him to God by my sinful hands, and I ordained him a cleric and entrusted him to my archdeacon, that the latter might instruct him in the way of the commandments of the Lord; and the youth became so learned in Holy Scripture that to this day no one like him can be found in all Sicily. And now we do not know what has happened to him, where he has gone! He suddenly disappeared without a trace; and for a long time we searched for him all over the island, in towns and villages, in mountains, caves and deserts, but could not find him, and we do not know whether someone killed him and buried him in the earth, or whether he was carried off and taken to a foreign land. And now all of us grieve for him exceedingly, and his parents have already begun to hold memorial services for him from the day he vanished."

Meanwhile Abba Mark, looking closely at Chariton's face, guessed that this was the father of Gregory, since Gregory resembled his father in every way, and said to the weeping parents:

"Why do you grieve so immeasurably for your son? You ought rather to rejoice and to thank God, who orders everything for the good of His servants."

And, turning to the bishop, he added:

"Order your archdeacon to come here."

The bishop at once commanded that the archdeacon be called, and when he appeared, Mark addressed him with a question:

"Tell us, where has the youth entrusted to you gone, and why do you not reveal to your master, the bishop, the greatness of God made manifest in the youth?"

Struck by these words, the archdeacon bowed to the elder and asked forgiveness, and then began his account:

One night, when I was sleeping in my cell and the youth was sleeping near me, someone suddenly called him: "Gregory!" He rose, came to me, and asked why I had called him. I told him I had not called him. When he lay down again, the voice called him a second time, and he came to me again and said: "Here I am. Why did you call me?" Then I understood that this call was not human but from God, and I taught him that if the voice called him again, he should answer: "Here I am, Lord. What wilt Thou have Thy servant do?" He went back to his bed, and I heard the voice speak to him again: "Gregory! Thy prayer is heard. Go to the seashore, and there thou shalt find men who will take thee with them." But although I myself heard this voice, I did not fully understand what it said, and I fell asleep at once. In the morning, when I rose, I no longer found Gregory, and from that day to this he has not been found. I did not dare to tell anyone what I had heard, for I feared that they would say I was lying, and, not believing my words, would say that I had killed the youth myself or sold him into a foreign land.

Having heard the archdeacon, the bishop and the parents were consoled in their sorrow and gave thanks to God, and the blessed Abba Mark said:

"Just as we read in the Book of Kingdoms concerning Samuel (1 Kgdms. 3:3–8), so it was in our own days with Gregory. As the Angel of the Lord called the youth Samuel, who was sleeping in the tabernacle, three times, saying: 'Samuel, Samuel!', so also the blessed youth Gregory was granted a like call. Truly he will be equal to the prophet Samuel! Now listen to what I will tell you of your youth. When I was in Rome, I once went with my brethren to pray in the church of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul. When night came, we spent the night at the lodging of a monk, and that night two bright men, resembling the Apostles, appeared to me in a vision and said:

'Rise quickly with Serapion and Leontius, go aboard a ship and sail to Carthage. There you will find a wanderer from the island of Sicily, named Gregory, of the church of Agrigentum. Take him with you and conduct him to the holy city of Jerusalem, to Patriarch Macarius. We

have already told the patriarch about this youth and bidden him to receive him, for upon him rests our spirit, as the spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha.'

Having said this, those who appeared to me became invisible. Awakening, I went with my brethren Serapion and Leontius to the harbor, where, by God's providence, we found a ship ready to sail for Carthage. We went aboard and soon arrived there. Disembarking, we entered the church of the holy martyr Julian and there found Gregory reading books. We took him with us, set out for Jerusalem, and left him there with the patriarch."

All the hearers of the abba were exceedingly astonished at his words and gave thanks to God. Chariton and Theodotia, overcome with emotion, fell to the ground in a faint, but Mark raised them up and said:

"Give glory to God that your son is alive and leads a virtuous life."

Chariton and Theodotia, ceasing their lamentation, together with the bishop and all those present, offered thanks to God, and they also thanked Abba Mark for his care of Gregory, and no longer gave themselves over to sorrow.

Meanwhile St. Gregory lived in Jerusalem under the most holy Patriarch Macarius, who ordained him deacon. After some time he asked the patriarch to release him to go to the Mount of Olives[17] to visit the fathers who lived there, and, receiving permission, he spent a whole year visiting the valiant ascetics and receiving from them every spiritual benefit. Then he resolved to go into the inner desert[18], disclosed his intention to the fathers, and asked for their prayers. They, having prayed for him, released him, saying:

"Go, child, in peace. The faith and love that thou hast for Christ will save thee."

Descending from the Mount of Olives, Gregory went deep into the desert, and after three days, by God's providence, he found a black-robed monk praying at the sixth hour of the day. Perceiving in spirit

17. To the east of Jerusalem, across the valley called Kidron. Here the Lord foretold the end of the world, of Jerusalem and of the Temple, and from here He ascended into heaven. The Mount of Olives is 2,600 feet higher than the level of the Mediterranean Sea.
18. The Inner Desert lies between Jerusalem and Jericho; it is a rocky, wild, and barren place.

that the young Gregory was seeking salvation, the monk called him to himself and asked:

"Where art thou going, child?"

"Wherever Christ will lead me through this desert," Gregory answered.

"Come with me," said the monk.

After twenty days' journey they came to a place from which the monk showed Gregory a cell standing at a distance, with two date palms before it, and said:

"In that cell lives a great elder. If thou wishest to be saved, go to him. I must go in another direction."

Bowing to each other, they parted.

As Gregory approached the cell of the great elder, he first heard the singing of a numerous choir; but when he drew nearer, he heard the voices of only three singers; and coming close to the door of the cell, he became convinced that only one elder was singing, who was finishing the ninth hour. But Gregory did not dare to knock at the door and stood outside in fear. When he had finished his rule, the holy elder looked outside the door, saw the youth, and, recognizing him at once in spirit, called him into the cell by name, at which Gregory was seized with still greater fear. Entering the cell, Gregory saw that there was no one there except the one elder, and he marveled how he could have heard the singing of many voices when only one elder was singing. From this he understood that holy Angels were singing together with the elder. He fell at the elder's feet and with tears begged him:

"Have mercy on me, Father, and pray for me, a sinner, that God may save my soul."

"God will have mercy on thee, child," answered the elder, "and will reward thee for thy labors."

Gregory lived four years with the holy elder and learned much from him, both spiritual wisdom and the outward order of the monastic life. He studied the interpretation of the divinely inspired Scriptures and became very discerning and eloquent. The elder, seeing his understanding and virtue, and foreseeing that he would be a great light to the world, did not wish to keep him any longer in the desert, and bade him leave

his solitude and come to the aid of the militant Church. At the same time he foretold that Gregory would suffer many persecutions from his envious adversaries, and he instructed him to be patient and free from malice. Then, having prayed over him and given him his blessing, he released him from himself.

Leaving the elder, Gregory returned again to Jerusalem, where he was received with joy by the patriarch. After living in Jerusalem for one year, the saint then set out for Antioch and from there to Constantinople, and there he lived in the monastery of the holy martyrs Sergius and Bacchus. The abbot of the monastery, seeing the ascetic labors and abstinence of Gregory, who for a whole week would take no food and spent all his time reading and writing books, informed Patriarch Eutychius about him.

"There has come to my monastery," he said to the patriarch, "a wondrous monk, a deacon of excellent appearance and manner of life, a great faster, a diligent performer of every monastic labor, and an outstanding scholar of the Divine Scriptures. It seems to me that at the present time there is no other such man to be found in all Constantinople."

The patriarch was greatly gladdened by this report. Summoning Gregory with honor, he conversed with him, and, having become convinced of his wisdom, he gave thanks to God who had sent such a man at a time when great heretical storms troubled the Church.

Meanwhile Theodore, bishop of Agrigentum, the successor of the blessed Patamion, died. Among the Agrigentines there arose disagreement and strife. Some wished to see as bishop the presbyter Savinus, others a certain Crescentius, others Paul, who was then archdeacon, and still others relied upon the will of the Lord:

"Whomever the Lord chooses, let him be our bishop," they said.

On this account all the presbyters, civil authorities, and citizens gathered and set out for Rome to the pope; among them was Gregory's father, Chariton. Arriving before the pope, they divided into three parties: some headed by Savinus, others by Crescentius, and the third by Euplus and Chariton. The first asked for Savinus as bishop, the

second for Crescentius, and Euplus with Chariton and the rest said to the pope:

"Whomever God shows to your holiness, him ordain as our bishop."

The pope, seeing their disagreement and wrangling, bade them leave him. And while he was in this difficulty, during the night two radiant men in the likeness of Apostles appeared to him in a vision and said:

"Why dost thou grieve so over the disagreement of the Agrigentines? All whom they have proposed are unworthy of the episcopal rank. But there is in Rome a stranger, named Gregory, who until now has lived in the monastery of St. Sabbas, and now, having heard of the arrival of the Agrigentines, has fled from that monastery and is hiding in the monastery of St. Mercurius. Summon him and ordain him bishop for them, for Agrigentum needs a bishop upon whom the Spirit of God rests in a special way."

With these words the visitors vanished. The pope, awakening, summoned the presbyters and Abbot Mark, who had happened at that time to come to Rome from his monastery. He told them of his vision and at once sent two bishops with other clergy to find Gregory and bring him back with honor. They went to the monastery of St. Sabbas and asked there where Gregory was. The monks replied that two days earlier he had gone to the monastery of St. Mercurius. They set out for that place, but St. Gregory, who had just been about to leave the monastery, saw the approaching bishops from afar and recognized them, since he had seen them earlier at the council in Constantinople. Understanding in spirit that they were coming for him, he ran back behind the enclosure and hid in the monastery garden. The bishops, entering the monastery, asked about him, and the monks answered that a certain wanderer had indeed been at the monastery that day, but they did not know where he had gone. The bishops turned to the abbot and insisted that if he did not produce this wanderer at once, he would incur a severe punishment. The abbot begged them to wait a little, and he himself began to search carefully for Gregory, and at last found him hidden in the grass of the garden. Lifting him up in anger, he scolded him, saying:

"Whence hast thou come here, man? What are thy sins, and what hast thou done, that such honorable men are seeking thee? Thou hast brought trouble upon our monastery. Go, then, and give an answer for thy sins."

St. Gregory made no reply, and in silence followed the abbot, who held him by the hand. When he was brought before the bishops, they at once recognized him. They had seen him at the council, when all the fathers praised him and the emperor himself showed him honor. Rising, they bowed to him and embraced him with love. But he himself fell at their feet and said:

"Forgive me, holy fathers, for I am a sinner. Why do you seek my unworthiness, me who am unworthy?"

"The most holy Father Pope calls for thee," they answered, raising him from the ground and giving him the kiss of peace.

The abbot was astonished and confused that the bishops showed such honor to the very Gregory whom he had taken for some kind of evildoer. The bishops, however, took Gregory and led him with honor to the pope.

When Gregory entered and bowed to the ground before the pope, the pope said to him:

"Thou hast come to us at a fitting time, child Gregory; blessed is God, who has shown thee to us."

Rising, he kissed him with the episcopal kiss, and then continued:

"Child Gregory! Our Lord Jesus Christ calls thee to the episcopate in His Church at Akragas, that through thee those who dwell there may be saved."

"Forgive me, Master," answered Gregory. "I am unworthy of such a rank."

"Do not be disobedient," said the pope in reply, "fear God, and remember that many have provoked the Most High by their disobedience."

Then Gregory said:

"Give me a little time for reflection, most honored father, and for a final answer to your holiness."

The pope entrusted Gregory for the time being to Abbot Mark. Seeing the abbot, Gregory threw himself at his feet with tears of joy.

"I thank God," he cried, "that He has granted me to see you once more in this life, beloved father of mine!"

Abbot Mark went with him into a separate room, and they spent the whole night without sleep in spiritual conversation. Before this, Gregory had intended to withdraw to Spain, especially when he learned that his father Chariton had arrived in Rome. But Mark restrained him.

"Child," he said, "do not provoke God, and do not, instead of His blessing, bring a curse upon yourself."

From that time Gregory abandoned his intention. Soon the pope summoned the inhabitants of Akragas and asked whether they had at last agreed upon a bishop for themselves.

"We, Master, do not know," they answered, "what to say to you. We have entrusted ourselves to God and to your holy prayers. Give us whomever God shows you, and we will receive him with love."

The pope, looking closely at the face of Chariton, guessed from the close resemblance that he was the father of Gregory.

"Let us go into the church," he then said, "and pray to God, that He may point out to us whom He Himself considers worthy."

And so, while the pope with the bishops and the whole clergy were offering prayers in the church of the holy chief Apostles Peter and Paul, and Gregory was with them, a dove appeared flying over the holy table and alighted upon the head of St. Gregory. All were struck with reverent awe at this unexpected miracle.

"Behold, God has shown us whom He has chosen as worthy of the episcopal rank," said the pope, and he ordained Gregory bishop of the Church of Akragas.

All the citizens of Akragas rejoiced at this and received Gregory with love, as one chosen by God Himself. And Chariton recognized his son and gratefully thanked God that He had granted him to see his son alive and in such a rank.

A few days later the people of Akragas, having received the blessing of the pope, returned with their newly ordained bishop to their city. As they passed by Panormus[19], the bishop of that city came out to meet them with the clergy and all the people, and received them warmly. He had heard of the virtuous life of Gregory and asked him to enter the church and bestow a blessing upon the people. As Gregory was entering the church, a monk stricken with leprosy approached him and cried loudly to him:

"Have mercy on me, servant of Christ, and pray to God for me, that He may ease my grievous sickness."

"In the name of the Lord, be healed of your infirmity," said the saint to him.

And the monk was immediately healed and cleansed of leprosy, so that his body became like that of a little child.

All praised and blessed God, who works miracles through His saint.

Gregory with his companions left Panormus and drew near to Akragas. Here the abbot of the suburban monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos met them. When Gregory entered the monastery, a deaf-mute monk fell at his feet. The abbot tried to pull him away from the bishop's feet, but St. Gregory said to him:

"Leave him, brother; let him tell us what he needs."

The abbot said:

"He is a Fool-for-Christ, vladyka, and besides that he is mute and deaf." The hierarch sighed, and raising his hands to heaven, offered a prayer; then he lifted the monk from the ground and said to him:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who commanded the deaf and mute demon to come out of the creature of God, begin to speak, brother, and hear, and glorify God, who has done this for you!"

And at once the monk began to speak and cried out loudly:

"Great are Thy works, O Lord, which Thou hast done for this man!"

The saint asked the monk how many years had passed since he had ceased to speak.

19. Panormus, now Palermo, is a city on the north-western shore of the island of Sicily.

"I do not remember, vladyka," answered the healed man, "the time when I spoke or heard."

The abbot then said on his behalf:

"It has been twenty years, vladyka, since we tonsured him. He was tonsured at the age of eight, and until today he was deaf and mute; but now he has been healed by your prayers."

At the sight of the miracle, a reverent fear seized everyone, and all gave thanks to God, who had given them a Wonderworker bishop.

St. Gregory remained in this monastery until morning, and in the morning set out for Akragas. The citizens who had stayed at home, hearing that the new bishop was coming, asked one another: who has been chosen, Sabinus, Crescentius, or Euplus? And learning that none of these three had been deemed worthy of the episcopate, but that a wanderer named Gregory had been chosen, they were very surprised. Hearing that he was a Wonderworker and had already healed the deaf-mute, they were filled with reverence. The whole population of the city came out to meet him and received his blessing, and as he blessed them he laid his hands upon everyone. Among others, his mother Theodotia came out together with other elderly women; she did not yet know that the new bishop was her son. But looking at him, she immediately recognized him and said:

"Truly, this is my son, who was lost and is found" (Lk. 15:24).

Gregory, seeing his mother, cried out:

"Greetings, Lady Theodotia, my mother!"

"Blessed is God," she answered with great joy, "who has chosen you to shepherd His people and has granted me to see you, dear son of mine!"

Then all entered the church with singing. And when St. Gregory celebrated the Divine Liturgy, some of the worthy saw the grace of the Holy Spirit descend upon him in the form of a dove and overshadow him, just as it had been at his ordination. A multitude of the sick were brought to the church, and St. Gregory restored them to health by laying his hands upon them, so that all were amazed and said:

"Truly, he is like St. Gregory the Wonderworker of Neocaesarea."

And there was great joy in the city.

Having entered upon the governance of his flock, Gregory cared greatly for the poor, healed the sick, and cast out demons. His father Chariton hardly left the church, serving God day and night in fasting and prayer. Likewise his mother Theodotia, setting aside all worldly cares, labored only for her own salvation, served the sick and those suffering from poverty, and fed and clothed them at her own expense. Thus Gregory, together with his parents, was an adornment of the Church of Christ and an example of virtuous life for all.

One day St. Gregory went into the city to visit the sick and the poor, and all the residents who had sick people laid them along the road by which the holy physician was to pass, for he healed every kind of disease by the mere touch of his hands. Among them, the presbyter Savinus had a paralyzed daughter, who lay on her bed utterly without strength, so that she could not make a single movement by herself, and others had to turn her over. Her mother, hearing that the bishop would pass by their house, carried her outside and laid her in the path of the saint. When Gregory drew near, she fell weeping at his feet and said:

"Have mercy upon me, servant of God, and show compassion to my paralyzed daughter."

The saint asked her whose wife she was. Then the presbyter Savinus came out of the house and, bowing to the bishop, said:

"She is your servant, my lord, and she is my wife."

"How long has your daughter been ill?" the bishop continued.

"Nine years, vladyka," they answered, "since she lost the use of her strength."

Having offered a prayer, the saint made the sign of the cross over the maiden and said:

"In the name of Jesus Christ, maiden, arise and stand upon your feet."

And at once the maiden rose up completely healed and gave thanks to her healer. The people who followed the hierarch marveled at the miracles wrought through him.

But some years later the enemy of all good, the devil, rose up against the saint and plotted to deprive him of his throne, through the same Savinus, whose daughter St. Gregory had healed, and through

the aforementioned Crescentius. Both were presbyters in Agrigentum, and at the time, as has already been mentioned, each of them had sought the episcopate, which is why they were at enmity with each other. Now, however, they had reconciled and together began to act against St. Gregory, and, moved by the devil through envy, they said to one another:

"How long shall we obey this man, this sorcerer, who works miracles by his charms and astonishes the simple people? Do we not know that once he fled from our city, lived with a sorcerer, and learned witchcraft from him, and now, returning here, he deceives people, claiming that he is a man of God, when in truth he is like a demon, for he neither eats nor drinks, just as a demon does?!"

All these reproaches and slanders against the righteous man they raised out of envy of Gregory's high position and glory. They drew some of the clergy and citizens to their side and swore an oath to one another that they would not rest until they had driven Gregory out of the city; in his place they wished to set up as bishop a certain Eleusius, a heretic deprived of the presbyterate and anathematized by the Council of Laodicea[20]. He had secretly come to Agrigentum and, unknown to St. Gregory, was hiding at the house of a citizen named Theodore. Earlier, St. Gregory had seen this Eleusius in the East, had debated with him concerning the incarnation of the Son of God, and had defeated him. This same Eleusius, during his three-month stay in Agrigentum, succeeded in stirring up envy and enmity against St. Gregory in Savinus, Crescentius, and some others. Gregory's enemies, after consulting together, bribed a young wife named Eudocia, comely of face but shameless and dissolute in character, to declare publicly to the bishop's face that he had sinned with her. At first she did not agree and said that the citizens of Agrigentum, who regarded Gregory as an angel of God, would not believe her, and that she feared the people might stone her; but they assured her she would remain unharmed, and with

20. The Council of Laodicea (in Phrygia) was at the end of the fourth century, shortly before the Second Ecumenical Council. Its canons (60) concern various details of the liturgical order, the discipline of the clergy, family life and the morals of the laity, the vices and errors of that time, and heretical teachings; in this respect they furnish a good many characteristic indications of the ecclesiastical customs and the life of the Christians of that time.

a generous bribe they enticed her to agree to their proposal. Then they waited for a convenient time to bring Gregory into misfortune and disgrace. One night, when St. Gregory was in the church for the midnight office, Savinus and Crescentius took with them a hired harlot and secretly brought her to the bishop's house. There they found the doorkeeper standing watch at the doors, and by means of gold they persuaded him to keep silent; they themselves led Eudocia into the saint's bedchamber, locked her in there, and went out. Gregory, knowing nothing, remained in the church until the very end of Matins. Day came, and when the bishop at last came out of the church, all the people who had been at Matins followed him, for it was the custom of the Agrigentines always to escort their bishop from the church to his very house. Having reached his door, St. Gregory turned to those accompanying him, gave them various instructions, and blessed them. Among the crowd were Savinus and Crescentius with the rest of their accomplices; they rushed into the bishop's bedchamber, brought the woman out from there in the presence of the bishop and the whole people, and shouted loudly:

"Look, people, what our bishop is doing! Is this how he ought to live? We all said that he was a saint, and he has turned out to be a fornicator: from now on he is unworthy of the episcopal rank!"

The people were astonished, and all fell silent like stones, not knowing what to say. St. Gregory himself, too, was amazed at such an unexpected calamity, and he was silent.

They began to question the woman whether the bishop had been with her, and she confirmed before everyone that he had been with her the previous night. The archdeacon and others close to the bishop asked her at what hour of the night he had been with her. She, having been instructed beforehand by Gregory's enemies, answered: after the evening office.

"As the Lord lives," exclaimed those close to the bishop, "this lying woman speaks falsely!"

But his enemies replied:

"You are his own people and do not deserve belief, since you are trying to cover up the sins of your master?"

To this a young deacon named Philadelphus said, in the words of the psalm: "Let the lying lips be silenced, which speak against the righteous with pride and contempt" (Ps. 30:19).

Crescentius ran up to Philadelphus and began to strike him on the cheeks. Many of the people were scandalized and believed the slander, seeing how the woman had been led out of the bedchamber and hearing her say before the bishop himself that he had been with her; others, however, despite everything, did not believe her. Yet the opposing side prevailed, and the bishop was seized, led out of his house, and cast into the prison in which Hieromartyr Gregory, Bishop of Libya, had once suffered for Christ. There his enemies also locked up this St. Gregory, fastened his feet in the stocks, and, barring the doors, kept a close watch over him. Then they hastened to send a letter to the exarch of the pope[21], who was in Sicily, with news of what had happened and a request that he come to Agrigentum to judge Gregory.

Meanwhile the report that the bishop Gregory had been caught with a harlot spread not only throughout Agrigentum but also through the neighboring cities and villages, and even through all of Sicily.

A multitude of people who loved the saint and did not believe the slander gathered near the prison; they sat in tears around it.

Meanwhile St. Gregory gave thanks to God, who had granted him to suffer without fault. At midnight, as he was praying, a great light illumined the prison, an Angel of the Lord appeared, freed Gregory from his fetters, and, strengthening him with words of patience, became invisible, while the prison doors opened of their own accord. Those at the prison bowed to the saint, saying:

"Now we are fully convinced that God is on your side, and that all that was said against you is slander."

They wished to go and kill Savinus and Crescentius, but the saint restrained them from this, forbade them to stir up strife again or to shed blood, and persuaded them to await the trial that was to come upon him. The exarch, arriving in Agrigentum, convened the whole civic assembly, and, seating himself in the judge's place, ordered

21. An exarch was a bishop subject only to the Pope and not dependent on the provincial bishop, wherever he might appear.

Gregory to be brought and set before him. Gregory's opponents also stood before the court together with Eudocia, whom the exarch asked:

"Are you speaking the truth, that the bishop was with you?"

"Yes, vladyka, this is true; he was with me."

No sooner had she uttered this than a demon fell upon her, threw her to the ground, and she writhed, crying out terribly, tormented by an evil spirit. Fear seized everyone.

"Gregory," said the well-disposed, "is innocent of the evil deed, for behold, the chastisement of God has overtaken the woman who slandered him."

But the saint's opponents, having lost all shame, said:

"Did we not say that he is a sorcerer and enchanter? By his witchcraft he has caused the woman now to be raging."

Meanwhile the wife of the presbyter Savinus, together with the daughter whom St. Gregory had healed of her infirmity, ran hastily into the assembly and shouted angrily at her husband:

"Wretched villain! You have forgotten the benefaction of this holy man, who healed our daughter, and you slander an innocent man! Get out of my house; from now on I will not live with you any longer!"

Then she fell at the saint's feet and with tears begged him:

"Have mercy on us, servant of God, and do not remember the evil which these impious envious men have done to you!"

A murmur and tumult rose among the people: some cried that Gregory was innocent, others, believing the slander, continued to assert that by his sorcery he had brought a demon upon the woman who had been with him. The exarch, bribed by Savinus and Crescentius, took their side, but seeing the disorder that had arisen among the people, he grew afraid and, rising from his seat, left the court, announcing that the matter must be investigated more thoroughly. Then St. Gregory of his own accord went back to the prison and sat there as one under trial, awaiting the outcome of the case begun against him.

The exarch, seeing that he could do nothing with Gregory without stirring up tumult among the people, resolved to send him to Rome, to the Pope himself, and gave orders to prepare a special ship for the journey. At the same time he wrote to the Pope a letter containing the ac-

cusation against Gregory; a similar letter to the Pope was also written by Gregory's slanderers on their own account. The exarch waited for the coming of night, and together with Savinus and Crescentius, taking Gregory with him, secretly led him to the ship. Behind him followed his parents and household, weeping and sobbing over him; but he comforted them and urged them not to weep, assuring them that they would soon see him again in health and upon the episcopal throne. When they had seated him on the ship, his enemies entrusted him to the care of the ship's master, named Procopius, to whom they also handed their letters to the Pope. The archdeacon Euplus, with the other deacons, surrounded the exarch and begged him to allow them to go with their father and teacher, but he would not even listen to them, and permitted only one of them, the deacon Platonicus, to sail with Gregory. At last the ship set sail, and Gregory's kinsfolk, together with his parents, wept long for him on the shore, and, grieving, went home.

In the morning a great multitude of people gathered at the prison together with the presbyters. Not finding Gregory in the prison, they fell into confusion, began to weep, and to complain of the unjust judgment against their bishop. Then they went to the exarch, surrounded him, and asked:

"Where have you put our father and good shepherd? Surely you have not killed him?"

"No, brethren," answered the exarch, "we have done him no harm at all, but have sent him in peace to the Pope, as he himself asked us."

Those assembled summoned the archdeacon Euplus and the other deacons and asked them:

"You must know where our holy bishop is, for you were with him in the prison yesterday. Tell us truly, where is he now?"

Euplus and the others answered that in the night the exarch had sent Gregory to the Pope. The exarch, seeing that a rising was beginning among the people, grew frightened and fled from Acragas. The enraged people set fire to the houses of the treacherous presbyters Savinus and Crescentius and sought them themselves to put them to death, but they took refuge in the church. The people rushed after them, but Chariton, standing in the church doors, begged the angry

men not to shed blood on account of his son, saying that if the accusation brought against their bishop and his son should prove true, they themselves would also be brought to judgment.

The people obeyed Chariton and dispersed. But Gregory's partisans nevertheless sent a letter to the governor of Sicily, who lived in the city of Syracuse, and to the bishop of that city, and informed them of everything that had happened to their bishop; the governor and the bishop of Syracuse were very surprised and greatly grieved for Gregory, knowing well his virtuous life. Together with the letter they sent the most distinguished citizens of Acragas, and the management of church affairs was entrusted to the archdeacon Euplus until Gregory should return, having been acquitted before the Pope.

After some time Gregory's opponents banded together again and sought an opportunity to kill Euplus; seeing their malice, he fled and hid until Gregory's arrival, while Savinus and Criscentius, with their associates, set upon the throne the aforementioned heretic Eleusius. The city authorities and the presbyters, persuaded by Chariton, showed their displeasure in no way and fell completely silent when it became known to them from Chariton that Gregory would sooner or later return to the throne. Thus, in those days, the Church of God was pastured, instead of a shepherd, by wild beasts, which did as they pleased: the heretic Eleusius carried out the relics of the saints, which lay in the sanctuary, and wished to burn them, but the fire did not even touch them, after which he ordered them secretly thrown into the sea at night, unseen by anyone.

When St. Gregory arrived in Rome, Procopius, who accompanied him, handed the Pope the letters of the exarch and of Gregory's slanderers. The Pope, having read these letters, was greatly angered against Gregory, and without even admitting him to his presence personally or asking whether he acknowledged himself guilty, ordered him to be bound hand and foot in chains and cast into prison, and also the deacon Platonicus to be locked in a separate prison. As the saint sat in confinement and prayed, a light shone upon him in the night, and two men in the likeness of Apostles entered to him and said:

"Rejoice, Gregory, servant of Christ and beloved of us! The Lord has sent us to free you from your bonds, and we rejoice, seeing how bravely and patiently you bear your sorrow. God is pleased, through you, to work many miracles also in this city."

Having said this, they touched his bonds, and at once the chains fell from him, and he, wholly freed, stood up and bowed down to the ground before those who had appeared, who, after kissing him, became invisible. In the same way they appeared to the deacon Platonicus, and, having led him out of confinement, brought him to Gregory. The two who had been freed together glorified and blessed the Lord.

The jailer who guarded the prisoners had an only son, twenty-six years old, whom for six years an evil spirit had tormented, driving him along roads and into deserts; many times the father had bound him with iron fetters and locked him in a special room, but he broke the fetters, broke down the door, and ran away again. It so happened that when Gregory sat in the prison, already freed from his fetters, and Platonicus was with him, the father of the demoniac seized the latter and bound him firmly to a pillar by the hands, feet, and neck. But at midnight the demoniac broke the iron bonds, ran away, and, finding the prison doors open, entered the prison and, in a fit of possession, fell at the feet of St. Gregory, who, raising his hands to heaven, prayed to God and then said to the demon:

"The Lord our Jesus Christ commands you, unclean spirit, to come out of His creature."

The demon at once came out. Meanwhile the guard had searched a long time for his lost son, and in his search, seeing that the prison was open, he was struck with mortal terror, thinking that the prisoner had escaped. But, entering inside, he saw Gregory and Platonicus standing there and singing sacred hymns to God, and with them his son, quite well. The guard fell at the saint's feet and cried out:

"Truly, you are a man of God! Forgive me that I sinned against you by raising my hands upon you."

From that moment the jailer served the saint with reverence day and night, honoring him as if he were an Angel of God.

About the same time a woman who had a crippled daughter, hearing that St. Gregory had healed the jailer's son, came to him in the prison with her daughter, and, falling to the ground before him, begged him to heal her daughter. He told her that this was not his work but the work of God alone, who can do all things by a single word of His. But she persistently continued to beseech him, until at last he offered a prayer and laid his hand upon the crippled girl, after which she immediately straightened up. The mother and daughter gave thanks to God and, bowing to the saint, returned home rejoicing.

"Who healed your daughter?" the neighbors asked the mother.

"A certain bishop who is not from here," she answered, "who, they say, has been condemned for some offense and is sitting in prison: first he healed the jailer's son, and now my daughter."

The report of the miraculous healing of the demoniac and of the crippled girl by the single word of St. Gregory spread throughout Rome, and great numbers of the sick began to be brought to him, and these also he healed.

A year passed from the time of Gregory's arrival in Rome, and the Pope at last remembered the bishop sitting in prison and sent for Abbot Mark, of whom much has already been said above. When Abbot Mark came from his monastery, the Pope asked:

"Do you not know, brother, that Gregory, bishop of Acragas, has been brought here bound and sits in confinement because he committed a sin against the seventh commandment?"

Abbot Mark, with a sigh, answered:

"Oh, if only I might have his lot on the day of the Last Judgment!"

Then the Pope changed countenance and said:

"Look at what my exarch in Sicily writes to me." Mark read the exarch's letter, laughed, and then said loudly:

“As the Lord lives, this is a slander against an innocent and pure man, who, as you yourself know, vladyka, by his life and miracles is like the great Fathers of old.”

"I know," the Pope replied, "that the grace of God was upon him before his fall; but when he sinned, that grace was taken from him."

"God knows His own truth," answered Mark.

"So then, what shall we do with him?" asked the Pope. "How would you advise?"

Abbot Mark answered:

"Hear me, vladyka, and follow my counsel: convene a council, summon bishops, not only from your western lands, but send word to the East as well. Let us not judge Gregory without the knowledge of the pious emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople, but let them also send chosen men. Send also to Sicily and summon here the accusers and that woman, and then we shall do whatever God shows us."

The Pope found Mark's counsel good, and at once wrote letters to the emperor Justinian and to the most holy Patriarch of Constantinople, informing them of everything and asking them to send chosen men to the council; he also wrote to his exarch in Sicily, and likewise to the authorities and citizens of Acragas, ordering them without delay to send to him at Rome every one of the accusers and the woman who, it was said, had fallen into sin with Gregory.

The emperor and the patriarch, having received the letters of the pope, marveled at the calumny brought against Gregory, and, giving it no credence whatever, grieved that Gregory, who was guiltless of anything, had been sitting in prison for so long. Therefore they hastened to send from themselves to Rome men of distinction: the emperor sent one dignitary, named Marcian, and the patriarch sent three bishops, of Ancyra, of Cyzicus and of Coryne, and the *chartophylax*[22] Constantine.

All the envoys, both from Constantinople and from Sicily, gathered in Rome in the second year of St. Gregory's stay in prison. But Marcian, not reaching Rome, fell dangerously ill at a distance of about eighteen stades, so that all despaired of his recovery, and the bishops who had come with him were in great distress. He barely managed to reach Rome. All who surrounded him attended him with the most careful diligence, and no physician was able to help him. One evening, past the house in which Marcian had stopped, the woman whose daughter

22. *Chartophylax* means keeper of papers. This was a special official attached to the Patriarch of Constantinople; among his duties was, among other things, the adjudication of ecclesiastical matters.

had been healed by St. Gregory happened to pass. Hearing the weeping of his servants, she asked them what they were weeping for.

"For this," they answered, "that our master is dying."

"If you wish your master to be alive and well," she said, "then carry him after me, and I will show you a physician who will heal him with a single word. This physician has healed many in our city, and there has been no sick person who went away from him unhealed."

The servants believed her, took their master together with his bed, and carried him after the woman. Marcian, for his part, did not realize what was being done with him, since he was in the highest fever and lay unconscious. Having brought them to the prison where St. Gregory was, she said:

"Here sits that physician who heals diseases with a single word."

The servants carried their master into the prison, laid him at the feet of Gregory, and with tears implored him to grant healing to the sick man. The saint twice called Marcian, but he could make no answer to him. The saint, moved to tears, laid his hand upon the sick man, and he at once fell asleep, having not slept for many days before. At midnight the servants came up to him and, touching him, found no trace of fever in him whatever, and they thanked God. When the night was over and the saint began to sing Matins, Marcian awoke and rose entirely well, and could not understand where he was; but seeing Gregory, he recognized him, and understanding that by the prayers of the saint he had been healed of his illness, he fell at his feet. In the daytime the bishops, Marcian's companions, came to visit him and did not find him at home. Learning that he had been carried to the prison to Gregory, they went there, and seeing Marcian well, sitting and conversing with Gregory, they were amazed and said to Gregory:

"Blessed are you, Father Gregory, for you have been counted worthy of the grace of God and of the gift of healing human infirmities."

They kissed Gregory with love and asked how long he had been sitting in prison. He answered that it was two years and four months. The bishops were very displeased that the pope had kept a guiltless man in confinement for so long without conducting a thorough investigation. They wished to lead him out of the prison, but he forbade them, saying

that it was impossible for him to leave his place of confinement without a trial and the command of the pope. Then the bishops went and reported everything to the pope, who was very astonished and confused by their words.

After this the pope commanded a council to assemble in the church of St. Hippolytus, which was near the prison. At the council there appeared, together with the pope, 154 bishops, and a great multitude of Roman monks and citizens, so that all could not fit in the church. The accusers were also brought to the council, together with Savinus.

The pope began to question the accusers:

"What accusation do you bring against your bishop?" he asked them.

"We found him, vladyka," they answered without any shame, "committing sin with a woman."

"Did you see this with your own eyes, or did the woman herself declare this to you?" the pope continued his questioning.

"We, vladyka," they answered, "entered, as is the custom, to bow to the bishop, found the woman asleep on his bed, and seized her; and she, already in the presence of the exarch and the people, confessed that the sin had indeed been committed."

The bishops who had arrived from the East demanded that the woman herself be brought to the court, so that she might convict Gregory before the whole council. But the accusers objected:

"But how can she convict him, when she is possessed? Since she sinned with the bishop, a demon has tormented her."

Nevertheless the demon-possessed woman was brought to the council. Two men held her, and she, having lost her reason through her affliction, did not understand where she was.

"At a trial," said the pope, turning to the slanderers, "one does not question the demon-possessed and the insane; but you, unfortunate men, must tell the truth."

"We have already told it," they answered, "now question the accused himself; let him say something about himself."

Then St. Gregory, sighing from the depth of his soul, said:

"Unrighteous witnesses have risen against me: what I do not know they ask me about; they repay me evil for good, to the bereaving of my soul" (Ps. 34:11–12).

As soon as he uttered these words of the psalm, the woman fell, tormented by the demon, and rolled at the saint's feet, foaming at the mouth and sinking into insensibility. All present were filled with horror. But the saint, having prayed, said:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for the sake of the holy fathers gathered here, come out, unclean spirit, from the creature of God, and let the woman, coming to her senses, speak the truth concerning me!"

At once the spirit shook the woman and came out of her. The woman lay as one dead, but the saint took her by the hand and raised her up. First she was asked what her name was, and then the *chartophylax* addressed her with a question:

"Do you know your bishop?"

She answered:

"I know him very well, for I have seen him many times when he went around the city, visiting the poor, the sick and the orphans and distributing abundant alms. And I myself, wretched one, have more than once been counted worthy to receive mercy from him."

"Did your bishop ever commit sin with you?" they continued to question her.

Sighing from the depth of her heart and weeping, she raised her voice and cried out:

"As the Lord of hosts lives, he never knew me; and only these two crafty men standing before you, Savinus and Crescent, by the promise of great sums of money, compelled me to slander a righteous man! May God repay them also for my sin, because they brought me into such calamity. Since these treacherous tempters came around me and I yielded to their words, I have been in great affliction: a demon entered into me and torments me even now."

Having said this, she fell at the feet of the saint and, with tears, spoke to him:

"Have mercy on me, servant of God, and forgive me, wretched one, who have grievously sinned against you! I swear by the Lord my God that I will not rise from your feet until you promise me forgiveness!"

He answered her:

"It is not our business to forgive sins, but only that of the One most merciful God; and we ought only to entreat Him for forgiveness of transgressions. I will pray the All-good One to forgive you your sins."

The bishop raised the woman from the ground. Amazement and fear seized all who were at the council, and all blessed God, crying out:

"Blessed is the Lord God, who has revealed His servant and exposed the false calumny!"

The pope and all the bishops were greatly provoked against the slanderers and began to reproach and shame them, and then they commanded that they be divided into two parts: the clergy with Savinus and Crescent, and the laymen (the former numbered thirty men in all, the latter eighty). Eudocia, who had lied against the innocent man, was freed from punishment by the court, as having already been punished by God, since by His permission the demon had tormented her for two and a half years; and the perpetrators of the wrongdoing were sentenced to exile: Savinus to Thrace, Crescent to Spain, and the remaining clergy, with disgrace, were sent into exile at Ravenna[23] and were to live there in confinement and want. The laymen, the opponents of Gregory, the court handed over to the dignitary Marcian sent by the emperor, and he put them all in prison, intending afterwards to subject them to severe punishments; but when the soldiers led them off to prison, all of them wept bitterly and loudly called upon the Venerable One:

"Have mercy on us, servant of Christ; do not give us over to cruel torments."

And St. Gregory, who was a man of extreme forgiveness, fell on his knees before the pope and the whole council, and with tears implored them to pardon his enemies and not to punish them on his account; and he did not cease to entreat and weep until all, moved to tears, said:

23. Ravenna is a city with a harbour and fortress on the Adriatic Sea, on the north-eastern shore of the Apennine Peninsula. Ravenna exists to this day and is the principal flourishing city of the Italian region of the same name.

"If you forgive them and intercede for them, then we are disarmed."

And they ordered the guards to leave them in peace. But while all the slanderers were standing before the council, suddenly a violent storm arose, the earth quaked, the air grew dark, and darkness covered all. Those present at the council, in terror, thought the earth would split open and swallow them, and, raising their hands, cried out: "Lord, have mercy!" The storm ceased, it became light, and at once God's punishment became manifest upon the slanderers: the faces of all of them turned black, as if with soot; and in the case of Savinus and Crescent, moreover, their lips were drawn down so that they could no longer close them or speak: thus did the wrath of God overtake them. The whole council, at the sight of such a miracle, exclaimed: "Now I have known that the Lord saves His anointed; He answers him from His holy heaven with the might of the saving right hand of His" (Ps. 19:7).

After this the pope said to the slanderers:

“Hear, you wretches! Behold, you have become like your father the devil, who was darkened of old, because you slandered a righteous and holy man. Therefore I command you: from this day forward, you and your children and all your descendants unto the ages shall be slaves of the Bishop of Agrigentum and his successors; let none of your descendants be a priest, nor a cleric at all; and whatever bishop shall dare to ordain anyone of your race a priest, a deacon, or a cleric of any rank, knowing of your present lawless deed, let him be under a curse.”

The entire council agreed with this judgment of the Pope. And the woman who had slandered the saint fell to the ground and, weeping, cried out to the bishops:

"Have mercy upon me, holy fathers; place me in a women's monastery, for I can no longer return to my city."

In accordance with her request, she was placed in the monastery of the holy Martyr Cecilia, and took the angelic habit, in which she lived for 22 years in continual ascetic labors, and she reposed, repenting of all her sins.

Gregory's vindication called forth general joy. Meanwhile the ninth hour had come, and the Pope bade the saint celebrate the Divine Liturgy. During its celebration, many of the bishops, the most worthy

among them, beheld the grace of the Holy Spirit overshadowing Gregory. At the conclusion of the Liturgy, a lavish meal was offered to all at the Pope's expense, and everyone ate and drank to the glory of God.

At that same time the following miracle took place in Rome. Ten huge, choice trees, destined for the adornment of the church of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and floated down the Tiber[24], stopped in the middle of the river, as though lodged against something, or held fast by iron anchors; and, stretching across almost the whole width of the river, they hindered vessels from passing upstream. Many times the inhabitants of the city tried by their united strength to drag these trees out, and could not, for some invisible power hindered them. At last the Pope himself asked St. Gregory to move these trees by his prayer. The saint obeyed and went to the river, accompanied by a multitude of people. On the way to the river he saw a blazing furnace, and turning aside from the road, he gathered hot coals into the fold of his mantle and carried them; when he reached the aforementioned trees, he cast incense upon the coals and, with prayer, censed them as with a censer, the flaming fold of his mantle, which, like the burning bush of Moses, burned without being consumed. Then he bade the people drag the trees to the bank, and the trees became wondrously light and seemed to move of their own accord, so that they were drawn out of the river without any difficulty. On them they found the following inscription: *"Five trees to the holy Apostle Peter, and five to the holy Apostle Paul."*

Afterwards the Pope again assembled the bishops; the heretic Eleusius was then condemned and exiled to Spain, and St. Gregory was dismissed with honor to Agrigentum. He first went to Constantinople, where he was received in a fitting manner by the emperor and the patriarch, and only then returned to Sicily. The inhabitants of Agrigentum arranged a solemn welcome for him, but the saint refused to enter the church defiled by the heretics, and the episcopal house as well; he built a new, beautiful church in the name of the holy Apostles Peter and

24. The Tiber is one of the most considerable rivers of central Italy; on it stands the capital of Italy, Rome.

Paul, and for himself he set up a new episcopal house, in which he lived for a long time, valiantly shepherding the flock of Christ.

St. Gregory wrote many instructive words and worked miracles; and in deep old age he departed this earthly life[25] and received eternal life in heaven together with Christ the Lord, to Whom be glory unto ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

The Church of the Holy Spirit with beams of radiant light leadeth into light those who celebrate thy bright repose, O Venerable and all-blessed Father Gregory.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Sisinnius

Память святого мученика Сисиния

The holy Martyr Sisinnius was from the city of Cyzicus[26]. He suffered torments in the reign of Diocletian at the hands of the governor of the city, Alexander. For confessing Christ he was bound to wild horses, beaten without mercy, and strong vinegar was poured into his nostrils. He endured many other torments, and worked great miracles in the midst of the assembly. After this his head was struck off with a sword.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Theodore

Память святого мученика Феодора

The holy Theodore lived in the city of Antioch and was engaged in trade. By the command of the emperor Julian the Apostate[27], he was placed under guard by the local governor for the following reason.

During the translation of the holy relics of the martyr Babylas and other martyrs who lie in Daphne[28], the Christians, among whom

25. At the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century.
26. Cyzicus is a city on one of the peninsulas of the Propontis, in Greece.
27. Julian the Apostate reigned from 361 to 363.

was the holy Theodore, carrying the holy relics, sang verses from the Psalms of David: "Let all be put to shame who serve graven images, who boast in idols; worship Him, all ye gods" (Ps. 96:7).

For this the holy Theodore was seized. They hanged him from a tree, beat his shoulders with ox sinews, and, putting iron fetters upon him, shut him up in a dungeon. In the morning Julian learned from the eparch that the torments which the holy Theodore was enduring for Christ brought reproach and shame upon the pagans, and glory and joy to the persecuted (Christians). Then the God-hating ruler commanded that the holy Theodore be released from the dungeon. When the holy Theodore was questioned about the cruel torments he had suffered, he said that at first he felt a slight pain. Then someone appeared to him, and wiping the sweat from his face with a fragrant towel white as snow, bade him be of good courage; so that when the executioners ceased their torments, the saint did not rejoice but began to feel pain, and desired to be tormented again.

And indeed, the tormentors saw an Angel going to the holy Theodore and strengthening him.

The impious emperor Julian, for his cruelties, was punished with death during the war with the Persians; but the holy Theodore, rejoicing, fell asleep in the Lord.

On the same day is the commemoration of the holy right-believing Prince Alexander Nevsky.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day is the commemoration of St. Mitrophan, first Bishop of Voronezh.

NOTES

7630. St. Amphilochius repeatedly traveled to Caesarea to see St. Basil the Great. On one of these journeys he persuaded Basil the Great to write about the Holy Spirit, to re-

28. Daphne is a suburb of Antioch.

fute the Pneumatomachians. Besides personal consultations on various church questions, Amphilochius more than once asked Basil the Great to resolve in writing his doubts concerning church order. At Amphilochius's request, the great father wrote, among other things, the well-known "canonical epistle." In 375 St. Basil the Great, inviting Amphilochius to come to him again, entrusted to him, because of illness, the Caesarean church; but Amphilochius, himself being ill and at the same time not knowing of Basil's illness, invited him to a council at Iconium. Basil's illness, however, did not abate, and in his place he sent to the council (376; at this council the Pneumatomachians were condemned) a book on the Holy Spirit. After that, St. Amphilochius, for the successful struggle against the Eunomians, the extreme Arians, asked St. Basil to resolve several questions of Eunomian dialectic, and St. Basil, despite his grievous illness, wrote him his answers. St. Amphilochius was in a similarly close and friendly communion with his kinsman St. Gregory the Theologian, at whose persuasion he first withdrew into the desert, and who sent him letters there, as well as supplies of bread.

7634. St. Amphilochius of Iconium, c. 395 A.D. – St. Amphilochius left behind a very considerable body of diverse theological writings: he wrote books, verses, letters, and homilies. The most important among them were his apologetic works, written in defense of the Orthodox teaching and in refutation of heretics. Such is his book on the Holy Spirit and his book against the Euchites, which have not come down to us; the book "On the Birth of the Lord according to the Flesh," which was read at the Ecumenical Councils and has survived only in fragments; and his book on the Prophet Isaiah, which likewise has not come down to us. There has come down to us a lengthy letter of St. Amphilochius to Seleucus, nephew of St. Olympias and grandson of the military commander Trajan, in 333 verses, of a pedagogical character. Also known is St. Amphilochius's epistle to Seleucus, grandson of the military commander Trajan, on the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son of God, as well as several other letters and epistles, chiefly on the Holy Trinity and in particular on the Holy Spirit. In addition, St. Amphilochius left behind many homilies and instructions, chiefly of a dogmatic character.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 24

24 ноября

New Calendar November 24 · Old Calendar December 7 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of the Holy Great Martyr Catherine

Житие и страдание святой великомученицы Екатерины

In the reign of the impious Roman emperor Maximinus[1], in the city of Alexandria[2], there lived a maiden named Catherine, who was of royal lineage[3]. She was remarkably beautiful and renowned for her wisdom. Being only eighteen years of age, Catherine had thoroughly studied the writings of all the pagan authors and of all the ancient poets and philosophers, such as Homer, Virgil, Aristotle, Plato and others. Nor did Catherine know only the works of the wise men of antiquity; she had also studied the writings of the most famous physicians, such as Asclepius, Hippocrates and Galen. Besides this, she had learned the whole art of oratory and dialectic, and she knew many languages and dialects, so that everyone marveled at her learning and knowledge. Many rich and noble men sought her hand and for this purpose came to her mother, a secret Christian who concealed her faith because of the cruel persecution then raised by Maximian against the believers. Her relatives and her mother often urged Catherine to marry, so that her father's royal inheritance would not pass into the hands of some stranger, through which they would have lost that inheritance altogether. But Catherine, as a wise maiden, had firmly resolved in her heart to preserve the purity of virginity all her life, and she was utterly

1. Maximin reigned from 306 to 313.
2. Alexandria is a city in Egypt, on the western branch of the river Nile; it was founded by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C.
3. By nationality Catherine belonged to the Alexandrian Greeks. This may be surmised from the oldest copies of her Life; and the very name of the Great Martyr is Greek (ever pure). Catherine is an already somewhat altered form of the name.

unwilling to marry. When her kinsfolk began to press Catherine insistently to enter into marriage, she said to them:

"If you want me to marry, then find me such a young man as possesses those four gifts in which, as you know, I surpass all other maidens; and then I will agree to choose him as my husband. But I do not wish to marry a man who would be worse or lower than I in any respect. So search everywhere, and see whether you can find such a young man as would be like me in nobility of birth, in wealth, in beauty and in wisdom; for any young man who lacks even one of these gifts is unworthy of me."

Catherine's household, seeing that it was impossible to find such a young man, remarked to her that the sons of the emperor and other noble suitors for her hand might become even more noble and rich if they entered into marriage with her, but in beauty and in wisdom no one could compare with her. To this Catherine replied:

"I wish to have as my bridegroom no one other than one equal to me in learning."

Seeing her daughter's unyielding resolve, the mother decided to try yet another means. She had recourse to the counsel of her spiritual father, a pious and holy man who lived in a hidden place outside the city. She took Catherine with her and went with her to that righteous man. He, seeing the beautiful maiden and hearing her wise though modest words, resolved to teach her the knowledge of Christ, the Heavenly King.

"I know," he said to her, "of a wondrous Youth, Who incomparably surpasses you in all your gifts. His beauty is brighter than the light of the sun; His wisdom governs all sensible and spiritual creatures; the wealth of His treasures is spread throughout the whole world and never diminishes, but, as it is distributed, grows more and more; and the height of His lineage is ineffable and incomprehensible. There is no one like Him in the whole world."

Hearing these words of the elder, Catherine thought that he was speaking to her of some earthly prince; she was troubled, her face changed, and she asked the elder whether all that he told her was true.

He answered that all this was true, and added that this Youth possessed yet other great gifts, which it was impossible even to enumerate. The maiden asked him:

"Whose son is this Youth whom you praise?"

The elder answered her:

"He has no father on earth, but was born ineffably and supernaturally of one Virgin, most honorable in lineage, the All-Holy and All-Pure. She was granted to bear such a Son on account of her great purity and holiness; she abides immortal in soul and body and has been raised above the heavens, where all the holy Angels worship her as the Queen of all creation."

Catherine asked the elder:

"Is it possible for me to see that Youth of whom you report so many wondrous things?"

"If you do what I tell you," the elder answered her, "you will be granted to behold His radiant Face."

Catherine said to him in reply:

"I see that you are a wise man and a venerable elder, and therefore I believe that you speak the truth. I am ready to do all that you command, only let me see Him whom you so praise."

Then the elder gave her an icon of the All-Holy Mother of God holding in her embrace the Divine Infant, and said to her:

"Here is the image of the Virgin and Mother of Him of whom I have told you so many wondrous things. Take this image to your home, and, having shut the doors of your chamber, with reverence offer fervent prayer to this Virgin, whose name is Mary; beseech her to deign to show you her Son. I trust that if you pray to her with faith, she will hear you and grant you to see Him to whom your soul aspires."

Then the maiden Catherine, taking the holy icon, returned home, and at night, withdrawing into her chamber, began to pray as the elder had taught her. During the lengthy prayer, Catherine fell asleep from weariness and beheld in a vision the Queen of Heaven in the form in which she was depicted on the icon, together with the holy Infant, surrounded by a radiant brilliance. Catherine could not see His face, for He turned it away from her and turned it toward His Mother. Trying to

see Him, Catherine moved to the other side, but Christ turned His face away from her there too. This was repeated three times. After that Catherine heard the Mother of God say to her Son:

"Look, my Child, upon Thy servant Catherine, how beautiful and good she is."

And the Divine Infant answered Her:

"No, this maiden is greatly darkened and so ugly that I cannot look upon her."

Then the All-Holy Mother of God again said to the Lord:

"Is not this maiden wiser than all the philosophers? Does she not surpass all maidens in her wealth and nobility of birth?"

But Christ answered her:

"Once again I say to Thee, My Mother, that this maiden is foolish, poor and of lowly birth, and I will not look upon her until she abandons her impiety."

To this the Most Blessed Mother of the Lord said to Him:

"I beseech Thee, my sweetest Child, do not despise Thy creature, but enlighten her and teach her what she must do, that she may delight in Thy glory and behold Thy radiant and desired Face, upon which all the Angels long to gaze."

Then Christ answered:

"Let her go to that elder who gave her the icon, and let her do what he commands her; and then she shall see Me and obtain grace before Me."

Having seen and heard all this, Catherine awoke from sleep and marveled at that vision. When morning came, she went with a few of her maidservants to the cell of the holy elder and, falling at his feet with tears, told him of her vision and begged him to tell her what she must do in order to behold the Bridegroom-Christ whom she desired.

The venerable elder thoroughly instructed her in all the mysteries of the true Christian faith, beginning with the creation of the world and the making of our forefather Adam, and extending to the Second Coming to earth of the Lord Christ; he also told her of the ineffable paradisal glory of the righteous and of the most painful endless torments of sinners. As a wise maiden, enlightened by God and thirsting for truth

and salvation, Catherine soon comprehended the whole Christian teaching, believed in Jesus Christ with all her heart, and received holy Baptism from that same elder. After that, the elder bade her again to pray with great diligence to the All-Pure Mother of God, that She would appear to her once more, as on the first night.

Thus, having put off the old man (cf. Col. 3:9) and having put on the garment of the renewal of the spirit, Catherine returned to her house and spent the whole night in tearful prayer, remaining without food, until she fell asleep. And behold, once again she saw the Queen of Heaven with the Divine Infant in her arms. The Infant looked upon Catherine with great goodness and meekness. The Mother of God asked her Son:

"Is this maiden pleasing to Thee, my Son?"

The Lord answered His All-Pure Mother:

"Very pleasing, for now she is beautiful and glorious, and not ugly and dishonored as before; now she is rich and wise, and not poor as she was at first; now I have loved her, and she is so pleasing to Me that I wish to betroth her to Myself as an incorruptible bride."

Then Catherine fell to the ground and cried out:

"I am unworthy, O most glorious Lord, to behold Thy Kingdom, but grant me to be even among Thy servants."

At this time the All-Holy Mother of God took the maiden's right hand and said to her Son:

"Give her, my Child, a betrothal ring as a sign of Thy betrothal to her, make her Thy bride, that Thou mayest grant her to share in Thy Kingdom."

Then the Lord Christ gave the most beautiful ring to Catherine and said:

"Behold, I now choose thee as My bride, incorruptible and eternal. Keep, then, this union inviolate with great diligence, and in no wise choose for thyself any earthly bridegroom."

After these words of Christ the Lord, the vision ended. The maiden awoke and clearly saw on her right hand a wondrous ring. She felt in her heart such gladness and such joy that from that hour her heart was wholly given over to divine love. And so great a change came over her

that she no longer thought of anything earthly, but only unceasingly, day and night, meditated upon her beloved Bridegroom, and desired Him alone; concerning Him alone she meditated, waking and in sleep.

Shortly after Catherine had been converted to Christianity, the impious emperor Maximin came to Alexandria. He had a zeal, without understanding, for his lifeless gods, being himself as it were insensible and speechless. Wishing to hold a solemn festival in honor of these gods, he sent throughout the neighboring lands and cities an order that all his subjects should assemble to offer sacrifices, so as to honor the gods publicly. An innumerable multitude gathered, each bringing for the sacrifice whatever he could: some oxen, some sheep, and those who were unable brought birds or something similar. When the day of the abominable celebration arrived, the emperor sacrificed one hundred and thirty bulls; the princes and nobles sacrificed fewer, and each offered what he could. The whole city was filled with the cries of the slaughtered animals and the stench of the offerings; everywhere there was dreadful crowding and confusion, and the air was saturated with the foul smoke. While this was taking place, the pious and most beautiful Catherine, seeing so deadly a snare for human souls, was grievously wounded in her heart, grieving over their perdition. Burning with divine zeal, she took with her several servants and went to the temple where the madmen were offering sacrifices. When she stood in the doorway, all turned their eyes upon her, for she shone with her extraordinary beauty, which bore witness to the beauty of her inner soul. She ordered it announced to the emperor that she had a very necessary word to say to him. The emperor bade her approach him. Standing before the emperor, Catherine first bowed to him, paying him the honor due, and then said:

"O Emperor, recognize the snare into which you have been drawn by the demons. You honor as gods corruptible and insensible idols, and you serve them. It is a great shame to be so blind and mad as to worship such abominations. Believe at least your own sage Diodorus[4], who says that your gods were once men who ended their lives impiously, but that

4. Diodorus of Sicily was a well-known pagan writer, historian and philosopher, distinguished by his impartiality and deep powers of observation.

on account of certain deeds they performed during their lives, people erected memorials and statues to them. The later generations, not knowing the thought of their forefathers, who had set up these memorials only as remembrances, but thinking the thing itself pious and fitting, began to worship them as gods. And the famous Plutarch of Chaeronea[5] scorned these gods and despised them. Believe, O Emperor, at least these your teachers, and do not be the cause of the perdition of so many souls, for which you will be subjected to eternal torments. Know the One True God, eternal, without beginning and immortal, who at the last of the ages took upon Himself human flesh for our salvation. By Him kings reign, countries are governed, and the whole world holds together. By His single word all things were created and preserve their being. This almighty and most good God does not require sacrifices like yours, nor is He gratified by the slaughter of innocent victims, but He requires only that we keep His commandments steadfastly and unshakably."

Hearing this, the emperor was kindled with strong anger and at first kept silence for a long time. Then, being unable to answer her words, he said:

"Leave us in these days to complete the sacrifice, and afterwards we will hear your speeches."

Having finished his godless festival, the impious emperor ordered St. Catherine brought into his royal palace and said to her:

"Tell us, maiden, who you are, and repeat what you said to us before."

"I am a king's daughter," the saint replied, "and I am called Catherine. Formerly I devoted myself with great love to various sciences: I studied rhetorical and philosophical writings, geometry and other sciences; but now I despise all this as vain and useless occupation, and I have become the bride of the Lord Christ, who through His Prophet Isaiah said:

"'The wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid' (Is. 29:14)."

5. Plutarch of Chaeronea was a famous Greek historian. Chaeronea is a city in Central Greece.

The emperor marveled at her words and at her extraordinary mind, but he was still more struck by her remarkable beauty, and thought that she had not been born of mortal parents, but of those gods whom he honored. Scarcely consenting to believe that a maiden of such indescribable beauty was born of earthly parents, he, struck by her beauty and looking upon her with a shameless gaze, began to speak enticing words. The saint, however, perceiving his lawless thoughts, said to him:

"The demons whom you honor as gods beguile you and lead you into senseless lusts; but I consider myself earth and dust. God created me in His image and likeness and endowed me with such beauty so that people might marvel at the wisdom of the Creator, who could bestow such wisdom and beauty upon so insignificant and frail a face."

The emperor was embittered by her words and said:

"Do not speak so ill of gods who have immortal glory."

But the saint answered him:

"If you wish to dispel even a little the darkness and blindness of delusion, understand the utter nothingness of your gods and know the true God. The mere pronouncing of His name, or merely a cross depicted in the air, drives away your gods and crushes them; and if you wish, I will clearly prove to you the truth of my words."

The emperor, seeing her free speech and fearing to be defeated and put to shame by her words, said to her:

"It is not fitting for an emperor to converse with women. But I will gather the wisest philosophers to dispute with you, and you will learn the worthlessness of your opinions and will believe our teachings."

Having said this, he ordered the holy maiden to be guarded with all strictness. He himself at once sent throughout all the subject cities this order:

"I, Emperor Maximin, wish joy to the wisest philosophers and orators in my domains. Let all who serve the wisest god Hermes[6], and

6. Hermes (Hermias) or Mercury was considered the messenger of the gods, the patron of commerce and of orators, and was one of the most popular pagan gods. Thus the ignorant population of the cities of Lystra and Lycaonia was so astonished by the miracles of the Apostles Paul and Barnabas that they called Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes, because he was the chief speaker (Acts 14:12).

who invoke the instructors of reason, the Muses[7], assemble before me, so that the mouth of one wise maiden may be stopped, who has appeared in these days and mocks the great gods, calling all their deeds fables and empty talk. Come, then, to show all your wisdom, for which men will praise you, and from me you will receive a reward for your labor."

And so there gathered, to the number of fifty men, the chosen and wisest orators, distinguished for great keenness of mind and great power in speech. The emperor addressed them with these words:

"Prepare yourselves with all care and attention for a valiant contest with one maiden, so that you may overcome her by your proofs in the dispute about the gods. Do not disdain the fact that you are to hold discourse with a young maiden, but apply all your effort and show your wisdom as if you were to stand against a valiant opponent and the wisest orator; for she, as I have carefully learned, surpasses in wisdom even the great Plato[8]. Therefore I beg you, show in your dispute with her the same zeal you would show in contending with that sage himself. If you conquer, I will reward you with great gifts; but if you are defeated, you will suffer great shame, and instead of gifts you will receive a painful death."

To these words of the emperor, one of the most famous and wisest orators replied:

"Do not be afraid, O Emperor. Perhaps our opponent is exceptionally clever, but being a woman, she cannot possess wisdom in full perfection, nor be wholly skilled in eloquence. Only bid her appear before us, and you will see that as soon as she beholds so great a multitude of philosophers and orators, she will at once be put to shame."

Hearing this boastful speech of the philosopher, the emperor was calmed and rejoiced, hoping that the impious and proud tongue of the learned men would overcome the maiden, who was full of meekness and

7. Goddesses who were considered the patronesses of the sciences and arts.

8. Plato was a well-known Greek philosopher of the 4th century B.C., a contemporary and teacher of the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle. Plato was a disciple of the renowned and glorious philosopher Socrates. It is remarkable that in his philosophical views, especially in his teaching about God, the creation of the world and the life beyond the grave, Plato comes close to the Christian teaching.

divine wisdom. He at once commanded that she be brought before him. A great crowd also gathered to hear the dispute of the Christian maiden with the pagan sages. But before the messengers had reached Catherine, the Archangel Michael appeared to her from heaven and said:

"Do not fear, handmaid of the Lord! Your Lord will add to your wisdom still more wisdom, and you will overcome in debate those fifty orators. And not only they, but many others will believe through you and will receive the crown of martyrdom."

Having said this, the Angel departed.

Meanwhile the messengers sent by the emperor came to Catherine, took her, and brought her before the emperor and the philosophers for the spectacle of all. And at once that self-confident philosopher, who had boasted before, turned proudly to St. Catherine:

"Is it you who with such audacity and madness reproach our gods?"

"It is I," the saint answered him meekly, "but not with audacity and not with madness, as you said, but with meekness and out of love for the truth I say that your gods are nothing."

Then the philosopher said to her:

"The great poets[9] call them the highest gods; how, then, can you with such boldness utter blasphemy against those from whom you yourself have received wisdom, and whose gifts you have tasted with sweetness?"

"I have not received wisdom from your gods," Catherine replied, "but from my One True God. He Himself is wisdom and life, and whoever fears Him and keeps His divine commandments is a true philosopher. The deeds of your gods and the tales told of them are worthy of laughter and reproach, and are full of scandal. Tell me, which of your great poets calls them gods, and in what terms?"

"The most wise Homer[10]," replied the philosopher, "addressing Zeus[11] in prayer, says first: 'Most glorious Zeus, great god, and you

9. Homer, Virgil and other poets are meant here. In general, the pagans drew their tales about their gods chiefly from poetic works.

10. Homer was one of the most learned and most glorious Greek poets, who lived long before the Nativity of Christ. He wrote the famous poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

11. Zeus (or Jupiter) was a Greco-Roman god, whom the pagans revered as the ruler of heaven and earth, the father of all gods and men.

other immortal gods.' And the renowned Orpheus[12], addressing Apollo[13] with thanksgiving, says: 'O son of Leto, who shoots from afar! Mighty Phoebus, who looks upon all and rules over mortals and immortals, the sun soaring on golden wings.'"

"Thus," said the pagan philosopher, concluding his speech, "the very first and most glorious poets revered the gods and plainly called them immortal. Therefore you too must not err, nor worship the Crucified One as God[14]. None of the ancient sages called Him God or acknowledged Him as such; indeed, none even knew of Him."

Saint Catherine answered:

"But this same Homer of yours says elsewhere of your great god Zeus that he was a cunning and lying deceiver, and that the other gods, Hera, Poseidon and Athena[15], wished to bind him, but he managed to escape them by flight. Many deeds of this kind, which inspire contempt for your gods, are described in your books. But since you say that none of the ancient teachers acknowledged the Crucified One as God, it would not be necessary to investigate much about Him in order to prove that He is the true and incomprehensible God, the inscrutable and ineffable Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, the sun, the moon and the whole human race. Nevertheless, for greater assurance of this truth, I will cite testimony from your own books. Listen to what your most wise Sibyl[16] says of Him, bearing witness to His divine incarnation and saving crucifixion: 'In later times there will come upon this earth One who will take on flesh apart from sin. By the boundless almighty power

12. Orpheus was a legendary figure who enjoyed special veneration among the pagans.

13. Apollo, or Phoebus, son of Zeus and Leto, was one of the most revered Greco-Roman pagan gods. He was honored as the god of the sun and of intellectual enlightenment, as well as of public welfare and order, guardian of the law, and the deity of the foretelling of the future.

14. It seemed especially outlandish to the pagans that Christians worshipped the Crucified One, since execution on the cross was considered shameful. That is why the Apostle Paul says that the preaching of Christ crucified is foolishness to the Greeks (that is, the pagans) (1 Cor. 1:23).

15. Hera (Juno) was regarded by the ancient Greeks and Romans as the sister and wife of their chief god Zeus, the most revered among the goddesses; she was considered the goddess of the earth and of fertility, and the patroness of marriages. Poseidon was considered the god of the seas. Athena was considered the goddess of wisdom, chiefly of military wisdom. The passage cited above is borrowed from the *Metamorphoses* of the Roman poet Ovid. In general, the gods of the Romans and the Greeks, according to their belief, were distinguished by the same passions and criminal inclinations as men.

of the Godhead He will destroy the corruption of incurable passions, and unbelieving men will envy Him, and He will be hanged on a high place, as one worthy of death.' Remember also that your sage Apollonius[17], not of his own will but compelled by His divine power, confesses Christ as God: 'One,' he says, 'the Heavenly One urges me to confess Him. He is the thrice-bright Light; the suffering One is God, yet the Godhead itself did not suffer: for in Him both are present, that He is mortal according to the flesh and at the same time free from corruption. And this Man, who endures everything from mortals, the cross, dishonor, burial, is God.' Apollonius said this of the true God, who is co-beginningless and co-eternal with the One who begot Him. He is the beginning, the foundation and the source of all created goods; He created the world from non-being into being and governs it. Being consubstantial with the Father, He became man for our sake, lived on earth, instructing, teaching and doing good to people; then He accepted death for us ungrateful ones, to free us from the ancient condemnation and to grant us again the former blessedness and delight. Thus He opened to us again the gates of paradise, which we had closed by the fall. On the third day He rose, ascended into heaven from which He had descended, and sent the Holy Spirit to His disciples. They went out through the whole world and preached His Godhead, in which you too, philosopher, should believe, so that you may know the true God and become a servant of Him who is merciful and compassionate and calls all sinners, saying: 'Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Mt. 11:28). Believe, then, at least your own teachers and gods, Plato, Orpheus and Apollonius, who, though against their will, quite openly and clearly acknowledged Christ as God."

Thus and much more spoke the wise Catherine, and she amazed the philosopher, so that he remained speechless, having no strength to say

16. In antiquity, the Romans called prophetesses sibyls. Their predictions were gathered into three books, which were kept in the temple of Zeus (Jupiter) Capitolinus, and afterward in the temple of Apollo on the Palatine hill. These "Sibylline Books" enjoyed deep respect in the pagan world. Christian writers also paid attention to their predictions, finding in them certain hints of the coming of the Kingdom of Christ.

anything in reply. The Emperor, seeing him defeated and astonished, ordered the rest to begin a debate with the holy maiden. But they refused, saying:

"We cannot withstand the truth, for if the most learned of us is silent, defeated, what shall we say?"

Then the enraged Emperor commanded that a great fire be kindled in the midst of the city and all the philosophers and orators burned. Hearing this sentence and the Emperor's command, they fell at Catherine's feet, asking her to pray for them to the One True God, that He would forgive them all they had done in ignorance, and grant them holy baptism and the gifts of the Most Holy Spirit.

The saint, filled with delight and joy, said to them:

"Truly blessed and happy are you, for having left darkness, you have known the true light, and, despising the mortal earthly emperor, you have come to the Immortal Heavenly One. Firmly hope in His mercy, and believe that the fire with which the impious threaten you will serve you as baptism and as a ladder leading up to heaven. In this fire you will be cleansed of every defilement of flesh and spirit, and you will stand before the King of glory bright and pure as stars, and become His beloved friends."

Having said this, Saint Catherine made the sign of the cross over each of them, and they went joyfully to their torment. The soldiers cast them into the fire, and thus they received a martyr's death[18]. In the evening some pious and Christ-loving people came to bury the remains of the holy martyrs, but they found their bodies completely whole, so that the fire had not touched even their hair. Through this miracle many of the pagans turned to the knowledge of the truth, and the relics of the holy martyrs were buried with due honor.

Meanwhile Maximin resolved to use every effort to turn Saint Catherine to his impiety. Failing through philosophical disputation, he began to tempt her with flattery and guile. Summoning her, he said:

17. Apollonius of Tyana was a pagan sage who performed false miracles and attracted many followers (3rd century). His sayings, recorded in a special book, enjoyed especially deep respect in Alexandria, where such a book was kept in the most hidden, sacred place of one pagan temple.
18. This was on November 17, 307.

"Listen to me, good daughter; as a father who loves his children, I advise you to worship the great gods, especially Hermes, the patron of learning, who has adorned you with such philosophical gifts. And if you fulfill my proposal, I will share with you my kingdom and my power, the gods are my witnesses, and you will live with me in unceasing merriment."

But the wise Catherine, perceiving his intention and seeing his cunning and flattery, said to him:

"Leave off your craftiness, Emperor, and do not imitate the fox. I have told you firmly, once and for all, that I am a Christian and am betrothed to Christ. Him alone I have as my Bridegroom, my Teacher and the adornment of my virginity. Do not entice me with the imperial purple[19]; I prefer to it the garments of martyrdom."

Then the Emperor said to her again:

"You compel me, though against my will, to dishonor your dignity and cover your beautiful body with many wounds."

"Do as you wish," the saint replied. "Through temporary dishonor you will win for me eternal glory, and a great multitude of people, as I hope, will believe in my Christ through me; and from your palaces many will go with me into the holy heavenly chambers."

So the saint prophesied; and God, looking down upon her from on high, brought her prophecy to fulfillment.

Then the greatly enraged Emperor ordered that the purple be stripped from Catherine and that she be beaten mercilessly, naked, with ox sinews. The servants beat the martyr cruelly for two hours on the shoulders and belly, so that her whole body was covered with wounds and disfigured; blood flowed in streams and stained the ground. But the saint endured all these torments with such courage and valor that those who watched her were struck with great astonishment. After this the cruel Emperor ordered Catherine to be shut in a dungeon and given neither food nor drink until he devised new torments to destroy her.

Meanwhile Augusta, the Emperor's wife, greatly desired to see Saint Catherine face to face. Hearing of her virtues, wisdom and cour-

19. A *bagryanitsa* (purple robe): a long garment dyed purple or blood-red, held in high value in antiquity and regarded as the mark of royal dignity.

age, she came to love her greatly without ever having seen her. After a vision in a dream, the Augusta's heart burned with such love for Catherine that she could not even sleep. When the Emperor went out of the city on some business and delayed his return for several days, the Empress found a convenient time to fulfill her desire. There was then at the court a nobleman, a faithful friend of the Emperor, a military commander by rank, named Porphyrius, a man distinguished for prudence. To this Porphyrius the Empress confided her secret desire.

"On one of the past nights," she said to him, "I saw Catherine in a dream, seated in the midst of a multitude of beautiful youths and maidens clothed in white. From her face there issued such radiance that I could not look upon her. Having seated me beside her, she placed a golden crown upon my head and said: 'The Lord Christ sends you this crown.' From that time I have had such a strong desire to see her that I find no rest in my heart. I beg you, Porphyrius, arrange in some way that I may see her secretly."

"I will fulfill your desire, Empress," Porphyrius replied.

When night came, Porphyrius took two hundred soldiers and went with the Empress to the dungeon; giving money to the guards, they entered to the holy martyr. When the Empress saw the saint, she was struck by the radiance of her face, which shone with divine grace. Quickly falling at Catherine's feet, the Empress cried out with tears:

Now I count myself happy and blessed, for I have been made worthy to see thee. Like a hart that longs to quench its thirst (cf. Ps. 41:2), I have greatly desired to see thee, and I have longed to hear thy sweet words. Now that I have been made worthy to obtain what I desired, I no longer grieve, even though I should be deprived of life and kingdom: how happy am I that I have seen thee! Blessed art thou, and worthy of praise, that thou hast given thyself up to the Almighty Lord, Who has poured out upon thee such great gifts.

The Saint answered her:

"Blessed art thou also, O Queen, for I see a crown above thy head, held on high by the hands of Angels; in three days thou shalt receive it for the few sufferings which thou shalt endure for Christ, and through them thou shalt pass over to the True King, to reign for ever."

The Queen answered Catherine:

"I fear the torments which thou foretellest for me, and still more my husband, who is very cruel and inhuman."

"Fear not," said the Saint to her, "Christ Himself will be thy helper; He will strengthen thy heart, and no torment shall touch thy soul; only thy body shall suffer here a little and for a time, and afterward it too shall receive eternal rest."

When the Saint had spoken these words, Porphyrius asked her:

"What does Christ bestow on those who believe in Him? For I too desire to believe in Him and to be His soldier."

The martyr answered him:

"Have you not read, or heard anything from the Christian Scriptures?"

"From my early years," answered Porphyrius, "I have practiced military exercises, and have had no care for anything else."

The Saint said to him:

"It is not possible to express in human speech the good things which the most good and loving-kind God has prepared for those who love Him and keep His commandments."

Then Porphyry, filled with immeasurable joy, believed in Christ, and with him two hundred soldiers and the Empress; and all of them, having reverently taken leave of the martyr, departed.

The merciful and loving-kind Christ did not leave His holy Bride without care, but, like a loving father, provided for her. Every day a dove flew to her through the window and brought her food. At last our good Lord, the Bestower of struggles, Jesus Christ Himself, visited her, surrounded by great glory and all the heavenly orders, and strengthened her still more in courage and filled her with the spirit of boldness:

"Fear not, My beloved Bride," He said to her, "I am always with thee, and no torment shall touch thee; by thy patience thou shalt win many to Me, and as a reward for this thou shalt be made worthy of many incorruptible crowns."

Having comforted her with such words, the Lord became invisible.

In the morning the Emperor, seated in the judgment hall, commanded that Catherine be brought. She entered before the Emperor, shining with spiritual grace and a certain blessed radiance, so that those standing near were illumined by the brightness of her beauty. The Emperor was greatly astonished and thought that someone had been bringing her food in the prison, and therefore she had not grown weak in body and had not changed in the beauty of her face; for this reason he wished to put to death the guards. But Saint Catherine, not wishing that others should be tormented without cause, told him the whole truth, saying:

"Know, O Emperor, that no human hand has brought me food, but my Lord Christ, Who invisibly cares for His servants, has nourished me."

The Emperor, marveling at the extraordinary beauty of Saint Catherine, wished again to influence her by flattery and cajolery, and said to her:

"Thou, maiden radiant as the sun, dost surpass even Artemis[20] in thy beauty; thou wert born to rule, my daughter. Come, then, bow down and offer sacrifice to our gods, and thou shalt reign with us and pass thy life in joy; I beg thee: do not destroy such bright beauty of thine through torments."

"I am earth and dust," answered the Saint. "All beauty fades like a flower, and vanishes like a dream at the slightest sickness or from old age, and after death it is given over to complete corruption; therefore, O Emperor, do not concern thyself about my beauty."

During this conversation of Saint Catherine, a nobleman named Hursaden, a cruel and merciless persecutor of Christians, wishing to show love and devotion to the Emperor, said to him:

"O Emperor, I have devised such a torment that by it thou shalt overcome this maiden. Command that four wooden wheels be set on one axle, and around them let various iron points be driven in; two of the wheels shall turn to the right and two to the left; and in the middle of

20. Artemis, otherwise Diana: a well-known pagan goddess among the Greeks and Romans, who enjoyed especial veneration among them. (She was held to be the goddess of the moon and was depicted as a beautiful, radiant maiden huntress.)

them let the maiden be bound, and the turning wheels will crush her body. But first let these wheels only be shown to Catherine, so that seeing them she may fear the cruel torment and submit to thy will; but if after this she remains in her former obstinacy, then let her suffer a painful death."

The Emperor liked this counsel, and he commanded that such wheels be made as Hursaden had described. When the wheels were ready, the Saint was brought to the place of torment, and at first the wheels were turned with great force before her eyes, in order to frighten her; and then the tormentor said to her:

"See what torments have been prepared for thee! And thou shalt suffer in them the most dreadful death, if thou dost not bow down to the gods."

But to this Catherine answered:

"Many times already I have declared my resolve to remain a Christian; therefore, O Emperor, do not waste time in vain, but do what thou wishest."

The tormentor, seeing that he could not terrify Catherine and turn her away from Christ, commanded that she be bound to the wheels and that they be turned with force, so that she might be torn to pieces and thus die the most dreadful death. But as soon as they began this torment, suddenly an Angel came down from heaven, freed the Saint from her bonds, and shattered the wheels into pieces; and the wheels, struck with force, flew to the side and slew many unbelievers. Seeing such a glorious miracle, all the people cried out:

"Great is the God of the Christians!"

But the Emperor was dark with fury and raged, devising new tortures for the martyr.

Empress Augusta, hearing of this miracle, came out of her chambers and began to rebuke the Emperor.

"Truly," she said, "thou art bold and mad, for thou dost dare to contend with the Living God and unjustly torment His servant."

Hearing these words unexpectedly, the Emperor was enraged with frenzy and became more savage than any beast. Leaving the Saint Catherine, he turned all his fury upon his wife. Forgetting even natural

love for her, he commanded that a large chest be brought and filled with tin, so that it would be immovable, that nails be driven into the lid of the chest, and, pinching his wife's breasts between the chest and the lid, that they press them. And the torturers, inflicting unspeakable sufferings on the Saint, pressed her breasts until they were torn off with dreadful pain. The blessed Augusta, enduring this dreadful pain, rejoiced that she was suffering for the True God, and prayed to Him that He would send her His gracious help. When the breasts were torn off, the blood flowed like a river, and all those standing around were filled with pity and expressed their compassion for her, enduring so dreadful and unbearable a torment. But the merciless tormentor did not spare his wife, and commanded that her head be cut off with the sword. She, hearing this sentence with joy, said to Saint Catherine:

"Servant of the True God, pray for me!"

"Go in peace," answered the holy maiden, "that you may reign with Christ for ever."

And the blessed Queen was beheaded outside the city on the twenty-third day of November[21]. The voivode Porphyrius, taking her body at night, honorably gave it to burial. On the next morning Porphyrius himself, with the soldiers who had believed in Christ, appeared before the Emperor and said:

"We too are Christians, soldiers of the great God."

Unable to bear hearing this, the Emperor sighed from the depth of his heart and cried out:

"Alas, I am undone, for I have lost the wonderful Porphyrius!" Then, turning to the other soldiers, he said:

"And you too, my most beloved soldiers, have been seduced, and have renounced the gods in whom your fathers believed; what have the gods done to you, that you have forsaken them?"

They did not answer him a single word. Only Porphyry said to him:

"Why do you disregard the head and question the feet? Speak with me."

21. The memory of St. Empress Augusta (or Basilissa) is celebrated by the Church on 24 November; on the same day the Church also commemorates Porphyrius and 200 soldiers, who were beheaded for confessing Christ.

"Thou evil head, the cause of their destruction!" cried Maximin.

And being unable, from fury, to continue his speech, he commanded that all their heads be cut off. Thus they ended their lives. In this way was fulfilled the prophecy of Saint Catherine, who had foretold to the Emperor that many from his own palace would believe in Christ the God through her.

On the following day the tormentor, bringing Catherine into the judgment hall, said to her:

"Thou hast caused me great sorrow and great grief. Thou hast seduced my wife, and destroyed my valiant commander, who was the whole strength of my army; many other evils have been done to me through thee, so that I ought to put thee to death without mercy; but I forgive thee, because I do not wish to destroy thee, a maiden so beautiful and so wise. Fulfill, then, at last my will, my beloved: offer sacrifice to the gods, and I will make thee my queen, and never offend thee, and I will do no deed without thy counsel, and thou shalt live with me in such joy and bliss as no queen has ever enjoyed."

The flatterer spoke this and much more, seeking to seduce the chosen Bride of Christ; but by his flattering words he could not separate her from Christ, to Whom she was bound by the strong bond of true love. Seeing that neither by blandishments, promises, threats, nor torments could he bend to his will the holy maiden, steadfast as a diamond,[22] he at last decreed that she should be beheaded by the sword outside the city. The soldiers took Catherine and led her to the place of execution. Many people—men and women—accompanied Catherine; all wept and grieved that so fair and wise a maiden was perishing. Many of the noble and most distinguished women following her said to her with tears:

“Fairest and most radiant maiden! Why are you so hard-hearted toward yourself that you prefer death to a sweet life? Why do you destroy, before its time and without fruit, the flower of your youth? Would

22. Adamant (diamond): a stone of such hardness that it scratches and cuts other stones without being harmed by them. In church literature this name is given to many saints (especially to the Fathers and Teachers of the Church) who became famous for the firmness of their faith and character.

it not be better for you to heed the emperor and enjoy the good things of this life, rather than die so shamefully?"

"Cease your useless weeping," the saint replied, "but rather rejoice that today I behold my beloved Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, my Creator and Savior, Who is the beauty, crown, and glory of the martyrs. He calls me to the ineffable blessedness of Paradise. With Him I shall reign and delight for endless ages. Therefore, weep not for me, but for yourselves, for by your unbelief you shall go into the everlasting fire, to endless torments."

When the saint had been brought to the place of execution, she uttered this prayer:

"Lord Jesus Christ, my God! I thank Thee that Thou hast set my feet upon the rock of patience and directed my steps. Stretch forth now Thy most pure hands, once wounded upon the Cross, and receive my soul, offered to Thee as a sacrifice for love of Thee. Remember, O Lord, that I am flesh and blood, and suffer not that cruel tormentors make manifest at the Last Judgment the sins I committed in ignorance; but wash them away with the blood that I shed for Thee, and grant that this body, wounded in torments for Thy sake and now to be cut down by the sword, be invisible to my enemies and persecutors. Look down from on high, O Lord, upon these people standing here, and guide them by the light of the knowledge of Thee; and grant for their good the petitions of those who shall call upon Thy holy name through me, that all may praise Thy greatness for ever."

When she had ended her prayer, the saint said to the executioner:

"Carry out the command."

Then the soldier raised his sword and cut off the precious head of Catherine,[23] and from the wound milk flowed instead of blood. Her precious relics, as the faithful who were deemed worthy to see them be-

23. To this day, pious travelers in Alexandria are shown the place of the martyrdom of the Great Martyr Catherine, which has always enjoyed special reverent veneration on the part of the local Christians. Some of the citizens of Alexandria, enlightened by faith in the crucified Lord, have preserved to the present time a small marble column, on which, according to tradition, the honorable head of the holy Great Martyr was severed. This column is still kept with reverence in the Orthodox Alexandrian monastery of St. Sabbas and stands in the left side-chapel of the church dedicated to the name of this saint.

held, were immediately taken up by the holy Angels and translated to Mount Sinai,[7677] to the glory of Christ God, Who reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the One Godhead unto the ages. Amen.[7678]

Troparion, Tone 4:

By thy virtues, as by the rays of the sun, thou didst enlighten the unbelieving wise men; and, like the most radiant moon shining upon those who walk in the night, thou didst drive away the darkness of unbelief. Thou didst convince the queen[24] *and also confound the tormentor, O God-called bride, blessed Catherine. With desire thou didst hasten to the heavenly bridal chamber, to Christ the fair Bridegroom, and wast crowned by Him with a royal crown. Standing before Him with the Angels, pray for us who celebrate thy most honorable memory.*

Kontakion, Tone 2:[25]

Raise up today a divine and honorable choir, O lovers of martyrs, honoring the all-wise Catherine; for she preached Christ in the prison, trampled the serpent beneath her feet, and subdued the understanding of the rhetors.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Great Martyr Mercurius

Страдание святого великомученика Меркурия

The impious Roman emperors Decius and Valerian,[26] having summoned their princes and nobles, took counsel with them con-

24. That is, Augusta, the wife of Maximian.

25. As for the service to the Great Martyr and the church hymns composed in her honor, they belong to deep antiquity. In the ninth century Theophanes of Nicaea, a well-known Christian hymnographer, and an unknown monk Vavilas wrote many hymns in honor of the Great Martyr Catherine, which are now sung by the Orthodox Church on 24 November, the day of her repose. The Venerable Theophanes composed in honor of the holy Great Martyr a canon, the acrostic of which expresses the following thought: "I sing Catherine, of ever-blessed memory, in hymns."

26. Decius reigned from 249 to 251. Valerian reigned alone somewhat later (253–260). The present Life represents him as taking part in the governance of the empire already under Decius.

cerning the spread of the worship of their false gods and the eradication and destruction of the holy Christian faith. And, with one mind and common consent, they issued the following decree in the Capitol:[27]

"The Roman emperors, invincible conquerors, ever-honored, great and faithful, Decius and Valerian, with their nobles: Since we have experienced the benefits and gifts of our gods, and have also enjoyed the victories they grant us over our enemies; since, moreover, we receive from them an abundance of every kind of fruit through the tempering of the air, and regard them as our benefactors and the arrangers of the common welfare; therefore, having taken counsel with our nobles, with one mind we command that people of every rank—free and enslaved, military and civilian—offer sacrifices to the gods, prostrating themselves and praying to them with zeal. If anyone dare transgress our imperial command, issued by us in common council, we command that he be bound and cast into prison, and thereafter subjected to various torments. If, having repented, he submit to the command, he shall be deemed worthy of no lesser honor from us; but if he resist, then, after many torments, let him be executed by beheading with the sword, or cast into the sea, or given to the birds and dogs to devour. Christians especially shall be so executed, if any be found among them; but those who obey our command shall receive great honors and gifts. We desire that you enjoy prosperous health."

When such an imperial decree was issued, all Rome was thrown into confusion, for this godless command was proclaimed throughout the city and sent to the neighboring cities and lands. At that time the barbarians rose up against the Roman Empire.[28] The emperors were making ready their soldiers and ordered the military regiments from all the cities to assemble in Rome. Then came also the regiment in which Mercurius served as a soldier; it was called the Martenses, from First Armenia,[29] and was under the command of the tribune[30] Saturninus.

27. The Capitol: the temple of the supreme god Jupiter and of the goddesses Juno and Minerva, on one of the hills on which ancient Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire, was spread out. This hill, together with the temple, was the chief sanctuary and was called the Capitoline.

28. The Greeks and Romans called people of other tribes barbarians. The very name points to men with unintelligible speech. Here the Goths are probably meant, in war with whom Decius, somewhat later, was killed.

When Emperor Decius departed for the war, Valerian remained in Rome.

During the war between the Romans and the barbarians, when a prolonged battle had begun between them, an Angel of the Lord appeared to Mercurius in the form of a great man. Clad in white garments and holding a sword in his hand, he said to him:

"Fear not, Mercurius, neither be afraid, for I have been sent to help you and make you victorious. Take this sword and rush upon the barbarians; and when you have overcome them, forget not the Lord your God."

As though in a trance, he took the one who had appeared to him for one of the Roman princes. Taking the sword offered to him, he rushed upon the enemy with great courage and cut them down like stalks of plants. Passing through the barbarian ranks, he came to the barbarian king himself, slew him with his sword, and struck down with him a great multitude of brave warriors, so that his hand was stuck to the sword by the blood. Thus the barbarians were defeated and put to flight by the Romans.

Then Decius, learning of the great courage of Mercurius, summoned him and, honoring him with great gifts, appointed him commander over the whole army. Decius, believing that the enemies had been overcome with the help of the gods, was exceedingly glad; and, having distributed much gold among the soldiers, he dismissed each to his own home. He himself, journeying with Mercurius to Rome, held great feasts in the cities. One night, while the general Mercurius was asleep, the Angel came to him in the same manner as before and, touching his side, awoke him. When he rose and saw the apparition, he was, as it were, struck dumb with terror. The Angel said to him:

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29. Properly, Armenia bordered on the north with Colchis, Iberia and Albania, on the west with Asia Minor, on the south-east and east with Media and Assyria. Originally it was dependent on the Assyrians, Medes and Persians; later it was the object of contention between the Parthians and the Romans, and then between the Romans and the Persians, and alternately depended now on one, now on the other. The *first* Armenia lay near the eastern part of the southern shore of the Pontus Euxinus (the Black Sea); the *second* and *third* Armenias lay to the south-west, and the *fourth* to the south of the first.

30. Tribune: the Roman title of the commander of a military unit, midway between our colonel and company commander.

"Mercurius! Do you not remember what I said to you in the war? See that you forget not the Lord your God, for you must suffer for Him and receive the crown of victory in His most glorious Kingdom, with all the saints."

Having said this, the Angel became invisible. Coming to himself, Mercurius began to give thanks to God and remembered the Christian faith, of which he had heard from his grandfather and his father. His father, whose name was Gordian, serving as a soldier in the same regiment in which Mercurius later served, often used to say:

"Blessed is he who serves as a soldier of the Heavenly King, for he shall receive from Him a reward in the Heavenly Kingdom. For this King created all things by His word, will judge the living and the dead, and will reward each according to his deeds."

Remembering these words of his father and pondering in his mind the Angel's appearance, Mercurius was moved in heart and began to weep and lament, saying:

"Woe is me, a sinner! Though I was as a branch of a green tree, I have withered, having now no root in the knowledge of God.[31]"

While he spoke thus with sobs, the imperial servants came to summon Mercurius to the emperor for a certain council. Mercurius declined, pleading illness, and the emperor postponed the council until the following day, for he would discuss nothing without Mercurius—so greatly did he love and honor him. In the morning, the emperor summoned Mercurius to him with honor, and they took counsel concerning matters that pertained to the welfare of the Roman Empire. When their council was ended, the emperor said to Mercurius:

"Let us go together to the temple of Artemis, to offer sacrifices to her."

The saint secretly withdrew from the emperor and went to his dwelling. But one of the nobles slandered him before the emperor, saying:

"Great emperor, invincible conqueror, chosen by the gods to possess the empire! Deign graciously to hear me. He who received honors from

your imperial right hand, whom your power has glorified and exalted—behold, he did not come to the temple of the great goddess to offer sacrifice for your empire."

The emperor asked:

"Who is it that refuses to offer sacrifice, in agreement with us, to the most venerable Artemis?"

The counselor Catulus answered:

"Mercurius, whom your imperial favor has exalted—he refuses to worship our gods."

The emperor said:

Are you slandering him out of some envy? I will not believe you until I have tested him myself and am firmly assured. If what you say proves not to be so, you will be punished with many torments for your slander; but if it proves to be the truth, you will be honored by us for your loyalty to the gods and to our kingdom.

Having said this, the emperor at once sent for Mercurius with honor, and when he appeared, Decius said:

"Was it not I who honored you by setting you over all my princes, for the reason that, with the help of the gods, you conquered my enemies? Why, then, do you show yourself ungrateful for such benefits of mine to you, and despise my power and my command, not rendering due honor to our gods, as we have heard from some who are loyal to us?"

The valiant warrior of Christ, having put off, according to the word of the Apostle, the old man with his deeds, and having put on through baptism the new man, created according to God,[32] answered boldly:

"Let your honor remain with you, for I have conquered the enemies not with the help of your weak gods, but by the power of Christ my

31. The manner of speech is borrowed from the Gospel (cf. Lk. 23:31; Jn. 15:1–6). In these words St. Mercurius expresses the thought that although his father was a Christian, he himself had remained, until then, a pagan, not concerned with enlightenment by the Christian faith.

32. Eph. 4:24. This expression points to the change of mind and feeling accomplished in St. Mercurius through baptism, by the power of Christ's grace. Instead of his former attachment to the pagan manner of life, he was now filled with readiness to perform the exploits of Christian self-denial.

God. Nevertheless, take back from me what you gave me, for I came naked from my mother's womb, and naked shall I depart.[33]"

Having said this, he took off his military belt and his officer's garment and cast them at the feet of the emperor, crying aloud:

"I am a Christian! Let all hear that I am a Christian!"

Then Decius was seized with terror, and, looking at the saint in silence, he marveled at his bold word and deed, and marveled also at the beauty of his body, for the saint was tall of stature, ruddy of face, and courage shone in his very gaze. Then he commanded that he be cast into prison, saying:

"This man has not valued his honor; but when he experiences dishonor and grief, I think he will turn to pious thoughts."

The saint, when he was led away to prison, glorified and thanked God. In the night the Angel of the Lord appeared to him again, saying:

"Be of good courage, Mercurius, and do not fear; believe in the Lord whom you have confessed, and He will deliver you from all sorrow."

Mercurius was greatly strengthened by this angelic appearance. In the morning of the next day Emperor Decius sat in judgment, and when Mercurius was brought before him, he said to him:

"Through your madness you have earned such honor[34] that you stand as one condemned before the court."

The saint answered:

"Indeed such honor[35] befits me for the sake of my Lord. You have taken what soon perishes,[36] but I shall receive what abides forever.[37]"

The emperor said:

"Tell us of what family and country you are."

33. Here St. Mercurius speaks in the words of the much-suffering Job (Job 1:21), in which he expressed his submission to the will of God, after the devil, by God's permission, deprived the righteous man of all his property. The sense of the words is this: I was born into the world with nothing, and I shall need none of the goods of this world when I die.

34. In the sense of mockery, the expression "honor" is used instead of "dishonor."

35. The Saint, using the above-quoted expression of the tormentor, affirms the thought that in sufferings for the name of Christ there lies for him not dishonor but, on the contrary, great honor.

36. That is, that which has meaning for a man only for the time of his brief earthly life, such as riches, glory, honors, and the like. All this leaves a man and perishes for him at the approach of death.

37. That is, the spiritual, heavenly goods. The manner of speech is borrowed from Mt. 6:19–20.

The saint answered:

"Concerning my family and country, if you wish to know, I will tell you. My father was called Gordian; by origin he was a Scythian,[38] and he was a soldier in the regiment of the Martenses; and my country, to which I go with zeal, is the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the Heavenly King.[39]" The emperor said:

"Why do you not obey our will, why do you not fulfill the command given by us for all? Why do you not wish to worship the gods, that you might receive your former rank? Or do you wish to die in torments? Answer quickly, for to this you have been called."

St. Mercurius said:

"I have come here in order to conquer you and your father the devil, the author of all evil, and to receive the crown of victory from the Lord of the contest,[40] Jesus Christ, my Lord. Carry out without delay what you are plotting against me, for I have a breastplate and a shield with which I shall overcome all the tortures you devise against me."

Then the emperor, angered, said:

"Since you say that you have a breastplate and a shield, I command that you be hung up naked, stretched between four pillars."

When this was done, the tormentor said:

"Where now are your instruments for your struggle?"

But St. Mercurius, looking up to heaven, said:

"Lord Jesus Christ, help me, Thy servant!"

The emperor commanded that sharp knives and swords be brought to cut the saint's body, and that a fire be kindled on the ground beneath him, so that, wounded above by knives and swords and scorched below by the fire, he might suffer cruelly. When they began to do this, blood flowed in streams from his body, so that the fire was even quenched by the blood, yet the saint endured it all valiantly.

38. Scythians: an ancient people who lived partly in the northern regions of western Asia, as far as the Caspian Sea, but chiefly along the northern shores of the Black Sea; the northern limits of the Scythians' settlement were unknown to the ancients.

39. That is, the Kingdom of Heaven. The expression is borrowed from Heb. 12:22.

40. Christ is so called because through His earthly life, especially through His sufferings on the cross and His death, He gave for all times the highest example of the exploit of obedience to the will of God and of self-sacrificing service to people.

After this Decius commanded that he be untied, lest he die too quickly, and that he be firmly shut up in a certain chamber. The servants took him and carried him, for he could not walk himself, being barely alive, and they threw him into the prison, thinking that he would die at once. And the saint lay as one dead, barely breathing, because of the cruel wounds. As night came on, the Angel of the Lord came to him and said:

"Peace to you, good sufferer!" And he healed him of his wounds. The saint, feeling strength within himself, rose up healthy and thanked God, who had visited him through His Angel.

In the morning the emperor again commanded that Mercurius be brought before him. The soldiers, going to him, found him healthy, and taking him, led him to the emperor. The emperor, seeing that he was well and walked without any needed help, said:

"He whom we yesterday carried away from us dead now walks by himself, as though he had no wound upon him at all," and he commanded the soldiers to examine his wounds.

When they had examined the martyr's body, they said to the emperor:

"We swear by the integrity of your empire, Mercurius' whole body is unharmed, without any blemish, as though no torment had ever touched him."

The emperor said:

"He will certainly say that Christ healed him. Did you not bring some physician to him in the prison?"

They answered:

"We swear by your empire, which governs the whole world, that no one examined him, for we thought he would die at once; and how he was healed and now stands well, we do not know."

The emperor said:

"Look at this Christian sorcery: he who yesterday seemed dead today stands healthy before us!" and with fury he said to the saint:

"Tell us truly, who healed you? For I do not consider it possible for you to be healed except through sorcery."

The saint answered:

"As you yourself first said, against your will, so it is: our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Physician of souls and bodies, healed me, He who, binding with unbreakable bonds all sorcerers and magicians along with those who worship idols, will deliver them to the fire of Gehenna because they have not known the true God who created them."

The emperor said:

"I will again cut your body with wounds and see whether Christ, whom you confess, will heal you."

The saint answered:

"I believe in my Lord Jesus Christ that you will not conquer me by all your tortures devised against me, for I am not in the least afraid of them, being strengthened by the words of my Master, who said: 'And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell' (Mt. 10:28). After I am slain, He will raise me again on the terrible day of the righteous Judgment."

The emperor commanded that he be tormented again with fire and wounds. When the saint was beaten and burned with fire, from his scorched body, instead of a stench, there came forth a great fragrance. The martyr endured so valiantly that he uttered no cry, no groan, no sigh, so that all marveled at his patience. The emperor said to him, mocking:

"Where now is your Physician? Let Him come here and heal you, for you said that He can raise you even after death."

St. Mercurius answered:

"Do what you will; you have power over my body, but God has power over my soul. Even if you put my body to death, the soul will remain incorrupt forever."

The emperor commanded that he be hung head downward, and that a large stone be tied to his neck, so that, pressed down by the weight of the stone, he would die. The martyr, strengthened by the grace of God, endured this torment for many hours, remaining alive. Then, untying the stone, the emperor commanded that he be beaten with whips whose ends were sheathed in copper; and they beat him so cruelly that the

very earth was stained with his blood. He, hard as adamant, endured manfully, saying:

"I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast granted me to suffer for Thy name."

The emperor, seeing that the martyr could in no way be turned to his will, and having no more time to torment him, for he was hastening to Rome, pronounced over him the following final sentence:

"Mercurius, who has counted our gods as nothing and has scorned the honorable decree of our clemency, our power commands to be led into the country of Cappadocia[41] and there to have his head cut off, for the instruction of many, for whoever opposes the emperor shall be put to death by the sword after many tortures."

The soldiers, taking the saint, placed him upon an animal[42] and, binding him firmly (for he was very weakened in body because of the many tortures), carried him off to Cappadocia. When they were at Caesarea,[43] the Lord appeared to the saint and said:

"Mercurius! Come to Me and find rest; you have completed the course, you have kept the faith, receive now the crown of your struggle,[44] for here you are to die."

The martyr, greatly strengthened by this vision of the Savior, and desiring to be released from the body quickly and to live with Christ,[45] said to the soldiers who were with him:

"Carry out what you have been commanded, without further delay. And may the Lord, who calls all to repentance, grant you His grace; rich in mercy, He bestows His gifts abundantly upon those who come to Him."

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41. Cappadocia: the eastern region of Asia Minor.

42. Here a mule or donkey is to be understood, which were ridden and used to carry small burdens. For carrying heavier burdens camels were used.

43. The name Caesarea was borne by several Roman cities. Here Caesarea, the capital of Cappadocia, is meant, named so by the Emperor Tiberius (formerly it was called Mazaca).

44. An expression from 2 Tim. 4:8. *Course*: the path of earthly life, especially of martyric sufferings and death; *crown of the contest*: the crown of glory in the Heavenly Kingdom, earned by the martyric exploit.

45. The expression is borrowed from Phil. 1:23. The Apostle expressed the desire to die sooner, so that, freed from the body, he might be more closely united in soul with Christ in His Heavenly Kingdom.

After he had said this, his head was cut off, as he confessed our Savior Jesus Christ, on the 24th day of the month of November. On the second day after the saint's repose, his body was found white as snow, and a fragrance of precious myrrh and incense issued from it, and because of such a miracle many believed in Christ.

His holy body was laid with honor in a glorious place, granting many healings to the sick. This warrior, the holy Great Martyr Mercurius, already triumphing in soul in heaven, was employed by the invincible Commander, the Most Holy Theotokos, after a considerable time, in her next military service.

When St. Basil the Great[46] was praying before an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, beside which was also an image of the holy Great Martyr Mercurius with a spear, as a warrior, that the wicked Emperor Julian the Apostate[47], the great persecutor and destroyer of the orthodox Christians, might not return from the Persian War[48] to destroy the Christian faith, he saw that there, beside the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, the image of St. Mercurius became for a time invisible, and then appeared with a bloodied spear. And at that very time Julian the Apostate was pierced in the Persian War by the spear of an unknown warrior, who immediately after that became invisible. The accursed Julian, vomiting up the blood that gushed from the wound, turned toward heaven with such blasphemous words against Christ:

"Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!" – and he died with malice upon his lips.

This miracle became manifest then, for, through the prayers of St. Basil the Great, the Most Holy Theotokos herself sent this God-pleas-

46. St. Basil the Great was born in 330, in a pious family in Cappadocia, and received a broad secular and spiritual education. At first, together with his friend St. Gregory the Theologian, he lived the life of a hermit; afterwards he was ordained first a presbyter, and then, in 370, Bishop of Caesarea. Like St. Athanasius of Alexandria, he was a zealous defender of Orthodoxy in the age of the Arian disturbances, and he wrote many remarkable works in defense and exposition of the Orthodox teaching, for which the Church gave him the title of *the Great*. He died in 379.

47. The Emperor Julian reigned from 361 to 363. Having become emperor, he fell away from the Christian faith and made it the purpose of his life to restore paganism. For this he is called the Apostate.

ing saint and her own, the holy victorious Great Martyr Mercurius, from the Church Triumphant to the Church Militant, for the punishment of the God-opposing apostate Julian, in defense of the holy faith and the orthodox Christians. By his holy intercession and protection may we too be preserved from the God-opposing enemies, who are overcome with his help, and may we together with him glorify God and the Theotokos, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Unconquered warrior in battles, and unashamed intercessor in misfortunes, let us extol Mercurius with hymns, glorifying him, for those who joyfully keep his memory, he delivers from misfortunes and sorrows.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Mercurius of Smolensk

Память святого мученика Меркурия Смоленского

A great and grievous calamity befell the Russian land at the beginning of the thirteenth century. By God's permission, for the multitude of our sins, evil enemies – the Tatars – fell upon the Russian people. A multitude of inhabitants were slain or led into captivity; great desolation came upon the whole Russian land. The fields remained untilled, and only wild beasts roamed in multitudes over the fields, devouring human corpses. Many Russian princes then perished, defending their fatherland. The godless enemies spared neither infants nor defenseless inhabitants. They slaughtered all and destroyed them without mercy. Many they shamefully subjected to cruel mockery. The cruel conquerors bound their captives by their own hair and drove them before them like animals, mercilessly striking them with whips. The holy churches and monasteries were plundered, and the monks were slain. Already Kiev had been burned by the barbarians and lay in ruins.

48. The Persians lived in Asia, near the Persian Gulf. At different times the borders of the country were different. With the accession of the Sassanid dynasty among them (in A.D. 226), they waged war repeatedly with the Romans. The Persian war during which Julian was killed belongs to the reign of the Persian king Sapor II.

The Tatar khan Batu began to subdue other cities; he reached Moscow and took it. Then he advanced upon Smolensk and resolved to lay it waste; already he was approaching this city with a vast host. Among the barbarians one giant with his son especially distinguished himself by his strength. Their strength was extraordinary; many had already perished at the hand of this tormentor. He was at the head of the vanguard. Fear and trembling seized the inhabitants of Smolensk: inevitable destruction awaited them. Their only hope remained in the protection of the Queen of Heaven; they began earnestly to beseech the Most Holy Theotokos to deliver them from the godless enemies and cruel tormentors. The Queen of Heaven, the invincible helper of all who call upon her in faith, did not permit this city to fall into the hands of the enemies, whose advance host was already not far from Smolensk and had halted at the place called Dolgomostye.

At this time there lived in Smolensk the holy Mercurius. He was born in the west of noble parents who held the orthodox faith. Still in his youth he moved to Smolensk and entered the service of the local prince. Being a warrior, Mercurius distinguished himself by his strength and tall stature. No less was he great in spiritual strength; from an early age he drew attention by his pious life: he labored in fasting and chastity, and every night, secretly from all, he sang hymns of thanksgiving to the Lord. Hearing of the approach of the evil enemies and the devastation of God's churches, the holy Mercurius grieved and ached in soul; with each day he burned more and more with divine zeal, desiring to suffer and lay down his soul for the faith of Christ. And his prayer was heard.

At night, in the cathedral church, before the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, a certain sexton who served in that church was praying. With tears he besought the Most Pure Mother of God for the deliverance of the city from the enemies. Suddenly he heard a voice sounding from the icon.

“Go to my servant Mercurius in Podolye.”

At this the Most Holy Mother of God showed him the door where the holy Mercurius lived.

"Go, then, to the courtyard of the indicated house and quietly say to him: Mercurius! The Lady calls you. Go in military armor against the enemies."

The sexton was astonished at this voice from the icon. Immediately he left the cathedral and came to that house which the Most Holy Theotokos herself had pointed out to him.

He found the holy Mercurius in the courtyard; the holy ascetic was praying and raising his hands to heaven. He was in his military armor, for at the very hour when the sexton heard the voice from the icon of the Most Pure One, the holy Mercurius too had been miraculously forewarned of the sexton's coming to him.

Meanwhile the sexton approached the saint and said to him:

"Mercurius, go at once, for the Lady calls you."

The holy Mercurius, together with the sexton, went to the church of the Most Holy Theotokos. In the church they found a candle that was burning before the icon of the Theotokos. The holy Mercurius, falling down before the icon, began to pray with tears, asking the Most Holy Lady for help and intercession. Then suddenly a voice sounded from the icon:

"My servant Mercurius, I send you, that you may repel the enemies from this city and protect this church. For this I have called you here from the Roman land. The enemies have secretly plotted this very night to fall upon the city and lay it waste. But I will not forsake this city: by my prayers it shall not be delivered into the hands of the enemies. Go at once, my servant, to meet the enemies; go to the place known by the name of Dolgomostye. There stands an armed host of cruel barbarians. Fear not: you shall overcome the enemy's commander. I will not forsake you. In this battle you shall conquer the enemies, and you yourself shall receive from the Lord the crown of victory and of eternal blessedness."

Hearing this voice, the holy Mercurius was filled with great joy. The Queen of Heaven herself promised him that for which he had long striven with all his soul, for he had always been seized with the desire to suffer for his brethren and for the faith of Christ. Giving thanks to the Most Holy Theotokos, he left the church, and burning with divine zeal, immediately went to the appointed place.

It was deep night. Not expecting the enemies' attack so soon, the citizens were held in a sound sleep. Quietly and unnoticed the holy Mercurius passed by the guards at the city gates. Coming to Dolgomostye, he drew his sword and, with the words "Most Holy Theotokos, help me," rushed upon the Tatar host. The proud giant, haughty in his strength, fell first by the hand of the holy Mercurius: the strength in which he had so exulted left him as soon as the warrior of Christ stood before him. Many other enemies of the vanguard also perished by the sword of the holy Mercurius. The enemies who remained alive were seized with terror and fled. The holy Mercurius, stepping aside, began to pray and give thanks to the Most Holy Lady for her wondrous and glorious intercession.

“Most Pure, most glorious and most blessed Lady! By your intercession you have saved this city and did not permit your people to fall into the hands of wicked enemies of the Christians. Now I beseech you, Most Holy Theotokos, do not reject me also, a sinful and unworthy servant of yours: I know that I am destined to be crowned with the glorious crown of martyrdom and to shed my blood for the holy faith. This does not frighten me, for I have long had the desire ‘to depart and be with Christ.’ Pray for me, glorious Protectress of our city, to your Son and our God, that He may number me among His chosen flock and grant me to be worthy to praise His holy name forever.”

Then a voice sounded:

“May it be done to you according to your petition.”

Meanwhile the enemies, having received reinforcements, again rushed upon the holy Mercurius. But the warrior of Christ, calling upon the name of the Lord, again struck them down; the enemies retreated once more in shame:

"Woe to us," they cried, "we cannot stand against this warrior, for with him some lightning-like men strike us down. And above them we see a radiant Woman."

At this time the son of the slain giant, wishing to avenge the death of his father, treacherously attacked the holy Mercurius and cut off his honorable head with a sword. Great terror fell upon all the enemies: throwing down their weapons, driven by some unknown force, they fled

from the city, beneath which so many of their best fighters had perished, and withdrew from the borders of Smolensk.

At dawn the citizens saw the wondrous intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos: before them lay a field covered with corpses. With gratitude they took the body of the glorious protector of the city—the holy Mercurius—and with honor buried him in the cathedral of the Most Holy Theotokos beside the left kliros.

Soon after his repose, the holy Mercurius appeared in a dream vision to the aforementioned sexton and said:

"Tell the citizens of this city: let them hang my weapons above my tomb, as a memorial of the glorious protector and help of the Most Holy Mother of God."

With this, the holy one promised his help to all who call upon him for aid. The citizens at that time hung the holy one's weapon above his tomb.

Today the relics of St. Mercurius rest in the Smolensk Abraamiev Monastery, in a church built in the name of the glorious Warrior of Christ, who grants healing and help to all in sorrows and calamities. May he help us also to overcome the passions of the flesh and to praise without ceasing the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

An invincible warrior appeared in battles, of Roman lineage, a son of the city of Smolensk; for thus was he named, as a strong guardian sent to the city by the Theotokos. With hymns let us extol Mercurius, joyfully keeping his memory, that the warrior may deliver our city from harm.

Memory of the Venerable Simon of Soiga

Память преподобного Симона Сойгинского

The Venerable Simon came from the city of Solvychegodsk. From his early youth the grace of God rested upon him. He turned away from worldly vanity. In his youthful years he left the house of his parents and came to the monastery of the Venerable Cornelius of Komel. Seeing the venerable elder, St. Simon fell on his knees before

him and with tears asked the blessed one to tonsure him as a monk. The far-seeing eyes of the Venerable Cornelius did not fail to perceive that before him stood a future ascetic of God. Yielding to his entreaties, he received Simon and gave him as guide an experienced elder. Imitating St. Cornelius, St. Simon labored in fasting and prayer. He performed without murmuring all the obediences laid upon him, and he was distinguished by his extraordinary humility. Thus for many years he labored without leaving the monastery of Cornelius. In 1537, after the repose of his great teacher, St. Simon together with the elder Longinus, who was distinguished by his God-pleasing life, set out for his homeland of Solvychegodsk. Both ascetics sought solitude. Fifteen versts from the city, at the mouth of the river Koryazhema, they stopped. Here the Venerable Longinus resolved to settle in the midst of a remote forest. St. Simon resolved to help Longinus, who was already worn out by monastic labors and advanced in years. Both of them built here a cell and a chapel. For some time the Venerable Simon labored in this locality together with Longinus. But then, intending to seek a more solitary place for himself, he parted from St. Longinus and set out up the Vychegda.

Sixty versts from Koryazhema, on the elevated bank of the Vychegda, at the mouth of the river Soiga, in the midst of a wild forest, the saint built himself a log cell, and afterward built a church in the name of the honorable and glorious Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ[49]. This church was consecrated on May 17, 1541. It was in this wild and remote place that the Venerable Simon began to labor. His abstinence and vigils in prayer were truly astonishing.

People began to gather to him, desiring to labor in the wilderness under the guidance of the holy man, who was distinguished by his piety. And the blessed one instructed and taught them all. As a true shepherd, he showed everyone the way leading to salvation and eternal blessedness by his own example. Thus for a full twenty years the saint

49. The Savior-Transfiguration–Soyga, or Soezhskaya, Hermitage, now the Soyga-Transfiguration churchyard, is located in the Vologda Governorate, Solvychegodsk uyezd, 82 versts from Solvychegodsk, on the right bank of the river Soyga, where it flows into the river Vychegda. This hermitage was entirely abolished in 1791 and converted into a parish church.

labored in his wilderness. Shortly before his death the venerable one was gladdened by the news that his spiritual friend and teacher, St. Longinus, had been glorified with miracles. After such an ascetic life he peacefully yielded up his honorable soul to the Lord on November 24, 1562, mourned by his orphaned disciples. His holy relics rest beneath a covering in the monastery founded by the venerable one, now abolished, in the church in the name of the holy Great Martyr Catherine.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Mastridia

Память преподобной Мастридии

In the city of Alexandria in Egypt there lived a holy virgin named Mastridia, who, caring for her soul, dwelt for Christ's sake in silence, in fasting, in constant vigil, in prayers, while at the same time giving much alms. But the devil, who always hinders people in the labors of a God-pleasing life, could not endure the virtues of the holy maiden, and began to contend with her in the following way. He implanted in a certain youth an impure desire for this maiden. The youth came to her house himself or sent someone to her, inclining her to this passion, yet he received no answer at all. When Mastridia went out of her house and set off for the church to pray to God, the youth did not leave her side at that time either, which caused the holy maiden great sorrow. He spoke to her such words as only the lovers of sin like to hear, which prompted the holy Mastridia not to go out anywhere from her house, not even to church.

One day Mastridia sent her maidservant to the youth with these words:

"Come, my mistress is calling you."

The youth came to her gladly, thinking that she would consent to his impious desire. When the youth entered, Mastridia was occupied with weaving linen, and she asked him:

"Brother, why do you cause me so much vexation and sorrow, not even letting me go to church?"

"Truly," answered the youth, "I love you very much, and whenever I see you I am all as though on fire."

"What do you see in me?" asked Mastridia of the youth.

"I see your eyes as so beautiful," said the youth, "that they enchant me."

The holy maiden, hearing that her eyes enchanted people, at once pierced her own eyes with the shuttle with which she had been weaving the linen.

The youth, seeing this, was horrified. When he understood that the holy maiden had done this out of zeal for Christ and for the salvation of her neighbor from temptation[50], the fear of God came upon him and he repented. Going off to a skete, the youth put on black garments and became a strict monk, imitating the holy fathers in his prayerful labors and abstinence.

Mastridia, for her part, completed her life serving the Lord, before whom she appeared.

* * *

NOTES

7677. For a long time the holy relics of St. Catherine lay unknown in the earth, and were discovered only more than two hundred years later. This came about as follows. Once, about the 30s–40s of the sixth century after the Nativity of Christ, the brethren of the Sinai monastery, founded by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian, eight hundred versts from Alexandria, were miraculously informed from on high that the relics of the holy Great Martyr Catherine lay incorrupt not far from them; and at the same time they received a command to transfer them to the newly built church of the Sinai monastery. The pious elders hastened with joy to the mountain indicated to them, not far from the monastery. This elevation reached up to 1200 sazhens; but the hermits, moved by religious zeal and aided by the grace of God, overcame all the difficulties of the way and soon reached its summit, where they found the holy relics of the Great Martyr Catherine incorrupt and fragrant. Only Angels could have laid them there. – Not the whole of St. Catherine's relics was found, but only her head and her left hand. These parts of the incorrupt body of the most praiseworthy Martyr of Christ were then solemnly transferred

50. Christ the Savior, teaching His followers to overcome evil passions, said: "And if thy eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire" (Mk. 9:47). Holy Mastridia, out of zeal for Christ, deprived herself of her eyes, so that, by removing the cause of temptation for the youth, she might thereby also move him to salvation.

to the Sinai monastery, and to this day rest in that monastery, remarkable for its antiquity. In 1689 the Russian Emperor Peter the Great donated for the relics of St. Catherine a reliquary of wrought silver to the Sinai monastery. But this gift is kept in the sacristy. "Fear of the greed of the Muslims, and the publicity given by travelers," observes the well-known Bishop Porphyry, who was on Sinai, "has taught the Sinaites to conceal this treasure." At present the holy relics of the Great Martyr Catherine are preserved in a small marble reliquary in the sanctuary of the great church of the Sinai monastery, in honor of the Transfiguration of the Lord, on the right side of the holy table. The holy head of the Bride of Christ is now covered with a golden crown, and on one finger is placed a precious ring, in memory of the mystical betrothal of St. Catherine to the Heavenly Bridegroom, Christ. In the reliquary the holy parts of the relics rest on a silver tray, under which lies a thick layer of cotton wool, saturated with the fragrance of the shrine. When the parts of the relics are brought out for the veneration of the brethren, they are set in the middle of the church, together with many other remains of the shrine, on a table specially prepared for this purpose. The relics of St. Catherine are opened for a distant pilgrim at any time, but for the brethren and near visitors only after the end of Matins on the Lord's feasts.

7678. The memory of St. Catherine is honored throughout the whole Orthodox world with special reverence and solemnity. Churches are built in her honor, many monasteries are named after her, and very many Orthodox and heterodox Christian women bear her name. The glory of this martyr was great also in antiquity. Paula, the famous Roman woman who founded a monastery at Bethlehem in 386, dedicated a church in it to the Martyr Catherine, of whom St. Epiphanius told Paula that Catherine was born on the island of Cyprus, in the city of Salamis, within his episcopal see, from there passed to Alexandria, was in the holy places at Jerusalem, and before the manger at Bethlehem vowed virginity and received a ring from Christ. In the West she is regarded as the patroness of studying youth, especially of philosophy. The holy Great Martyr is even venerated by some of the pagans, for example, the Mongol-Buryats of Transbaikalia.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 25

25 ноября

New Calendar November 25 · Old Calendar December 8 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Clement, Pope of Rome

Житие и страдание святого священномученика Климента, папы Римского

In the glorious and great ancient city of Rome there lived a man of noble birth named Faustus, who was descended from the ancient kings of Rome. He had a wife named Matthidia, likewise of royal descent and related to the Roman emperors Augustus and Tiberius.[1] The husband and wife were zealous pagans and worshipped idols. They had two twin sons, one of whom they named Faustinus and the other Faustinian; then a third son was born to them, whom they named Clement.

Faustus had a brother, an evil and dissolute man. Seeing the beauty of Matthidia, he was captivated by her and began to tempt her to sin; but she, being very chaste, did not wish to break faith with her husband nor, by defiling the marriage bed, to dishonour the dignity of her noble family. Therefore she strove with all her strength to keep the seducer away from her. Not wishing to expose him openly, she spoke of it to no one, not even to her husband, fearing that an evil report would spread about them and their house would be brought to shame. But Faustus's brother, for a long time, compelled her by entreaties and threats to submit to his impure desire. Matthidia, seeing that she could not rid herself of his pursuit unless she withdrew from his company, resolved upon the following.

1. Octavian Augustus was the first Roman emperor after the abolition of the republic in Rome; he reigned from 30 B.C. to A.D. 14. Tiberius, his stepson, reigned from A.D. 14 to 37; in his reign our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and underwent the death of the Cross.

One morning she addressed her husband with these words: "A wondrous dream did I see this night, my lord: I saw a venerable and aged man, like one of the gods, who said to me: If you and your twin sons do not leave Rome for ten years, you will die together with them a painful and sudden death."

Hearing these words, Faustus was astonished and pondered this long, and resolved to let her and the two sons depart from Rome for ten years, reasoning: "It is better that my beloved wife and children should live in a foreign land than die here a sudden death." Having equipped a ship and provisioned it with all that was necessary, he sent her away with her two sons Faustinus and Faustinian to the Greek land, to Athens. With them he sent a multitude of male and female slaves, and provided them with much property, instructing Matthidia that in Athens she should give the sons over to be educated in Greek wisdom.

Thus they parted from one another with inexpressible sorrow and tears. Matthidia with her two sons sailed away in the ship, while Faustus remained in Rome with his youngest son Clement.

As Matthidia was sailing on the sea, a violent storm arose and a great tempest began; the ship was carried by the waves and the wind to an unknown land, was wrecked at midnight, and all were drowned. But Matthidia, borne by the raging waves, was cast upon the rocks of an island not far from the land of Asia.[2] Inconsolably she wept for her drowned children, and from bitter grief she even wished to throw herself into the sea; but the inhabitants of that land, seeing her naked, crying out loud and groaning, took pity on her, brought her into their city, and clothed her.

Some women who loved to show hospitality came to her and began to console her in her sorrow; each of them told her all that had happened in her own life that was grievous, and by their sympathy somewhat relieved her sadness. One of them said at that time: "My husband was a shipman; while still very young he drowned at sea, and I was left a young widow; many wished to marry me, but I, loving my

2. Asia was the name given by the Romans to the province located in what is now Asia Minor (the Anatolian peninsula), along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea; it comprised several cities with their regions, and its capital was considered to be Pergamum.

husband and unable to forget him even after his death, resolved to remain a widow. If you wish, remain in my house and live with me, and you and I will sustain ourselves by our labours."

Matthidia followed her counsel, and, settling in her house, won her food by her own labours, and remained in this condition for twenty-four years.

Her children Faustinus and Faustinian, by the providence of God, also remained alive after the shipwreck; cast ashore, they were seen by sea robbers who were there, who took them into their boat, brought them to Caesarea of Stratonia,[3] and sold them here to a woman named Justina, who raised them as her own children and gave them over to be educated. Thus they learned the various pagan sciences, but afterward, having heard the Gospel preaching about Christ, they received holy baptism and followed the Apostle Peter.

Their father Faustus, however, living in Rome with Clement and knowing nothing of the calamities that had befallen his wife and children, after a year sent some slaves to Athens to learn how his wife and children were living, and sent with them many various things; but his slaves did not return. In the third year Faustus, receiving no news of his wife and children, was very grieved and sent other slaves with all that was necessary to Athens. Arriving there, they found no one, and in the fourth year they returned to Faustus and reported that they had been wholly unable to find their mistress in Athens, for no one there had even heard of her, and they could not pick up her trail, since they could not find any of their own people. Hearing all this, Faustus was grieved still more and wept bitterly. He went round all the seaside cities and harbours in the Roman land, questioning shipmen about his wife and her children, but he learned nothing from anyone. Then, having fitted out a ship and taken with him several slaves and some property, he set out himself to seek his companion and his beloved children, leaving

3. In ancient times there were many cities named Caesarea or Cesarea. By Caesarea Stratonis one should understand the Palestinian city on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, known more widely as Caesarea Palestinae. This city was built by the Jewish king Herod on the site of the ancient city of Stratonis and was named Caesarea in honor of Caesar Augustus (the Roman emperor Octavian Augustus). At present, on its site there are only ruins, covered with wild plants.

his youngest son Clement at home with faithful slaves to study the sciences. He went almost over the whole world, by land and by sea, seeking his kin for many years and not finding them. At last, despairing even of seeing them, he gave himself over to deep sorrow, so that he did not even wish to return home, considering it a heavy burden to enjoy the blessings of this world without his beloved wife, whom he had loved greatly for her chastity. Rejecting all the honours and glory of this world, he wandered through foreign lands like a beggar, revealing to no one who he was.

Meanwhile the youth Clement came to mature age and thoroughly studied all the philosophical doctrines. For all that, having neither father nor mother, he was always in sorrow. He had by then reached his twenty-fourth year since his mother had left the house, and twenty years since his father had disappeared.

Having lost hope that they were alive, Clement grieved for them as for the dead. Together with this he also remembered his own death, for he well knew that everyone may die; but, not knowing where he would be after death, or whether there was any other life after this brief one or not, he always wept and would not be comforted by any worldly pleasures or joys. At this time Clement, hearing of the coming of Christ into the world, began to strive to learn of it with certainty. It befell him to converse with a certain wise man, who told him how the Son of God had come into Judea, granting eternal life to all who would fulfil the will of the Father who sent Him. Hearing this, Clement was kindled with an extraordinary desire to learn more about Christ and His teaching. To this end he resolved to go to Judea, where the Gospel of Christ was being spread. Leaving his house and great estate, he took with him faithful slaves and a sufficient quantity of gold, boarded a ship, and sailed to the land of Judea. Owing to a storm that arose on the sea, he was carried by the wind to Alexandria, and there he found the Apostle Barnabas. Then he sailed to Caesarea of Stratonia and found the holy Apostle Peter. Having received holy baptism from him, he followed him with the other disciples, among whom were also his two brothers, the twins Faustinus and Faustinian. But Clement did not recognize them, and likewise his brothers did not recognize him, because they had been

very young when they were separated and did not remember one another. Peter, setting out for Syria, sent Faustinus and Faustinian ahead of himself, but kept Clement with him, and together with him boarded a ship and sailed upon the sea.

As they sailed, the Apostle asked Clement about his origin. Then Clement told him in detail: of what lineage he was, and how his mother, under the influence of a dream, had gone to Rome with her two young sons, how his father, after four years had passed, had gone out to seek them and had not returned; to this he added that twenty years had now passed since he had known nothing of his kin, whence he thought his parents and brothers were dead. Peter, hearing his account, was moved to tenderness.

Meanwhile, by the providence of God, the ship put in at that island where Clement's mother, Matthidia, was. When some went out of the ship to buy in the city what was necessary for the needs of life, Peter too went out, while Clement remained on the ship. Making his way toward the city, Peter saw an old woman sitting at the gate and asking for alms; it was Matthidia, who could no longer support herself by her labours because of the weakness of her hands, and so she begged for alms to feed herself and another old woman who had taken her into her house, who was also infirm and lay sick in the house. The Apostle, seeing the seated Matthidia, perceived in spirit that this woman was a stranger, and asked her about her homeland. Heaving a heavy sigh, Matthidia wept and said: "Woe is me, a stranger, for there is no one in the world poorer and more unhappy than I."

The Apostle Peter, seeing her heavy sorrow and the tears of her heart, began to question her attentively: who was she, and whence?

From the conversation with her he understood that she was the mother of Clement, and began to comfort her, saying:

"I know your youngest son Clement: he is in this land."

When Matthidia heard of her son, she was struck with terror and fear, and became as one dead; but Peter took her by the hand and bade her follow him to the ship.

“Do not grieve, old woman,” the Apostle told her on the way, “for you shall soon learn all about your son.”

As they made their way to the ship, Clement came out to meet them and, seeing the woman following Peter, was amazed. But she, looking closely at Clement, at once recognized him by his likeness to his father, and asked Peter:

"Is this not Clement, my son?"

Peter said:

"It is he."

Matthidia fell upon Clement's neck and wept. Clement, not knowing who the woman was or why she wept, began to push her away from him. Then Peter said to him: "Do not thrust away, child, the one who bore you."

Hearing this, Clement wept and fell at her feet, kissing her and weeping. Great was their joy, for they had found and recognized one another. Peter prayed to God for her and healed her hands. She then begged the Apostle to heal the old woman with whom she had lodged. The Apostle Peter entered her house and healed the latter; and Clement gave her 1000 drachmas[4] as payment for having provided food for his mother. Then, taking his mother and the old woman who had been healed, he brought them aboard the ship, and they sailed away.

On the way, Matthidia asked her son about her husband Faustus, and, learning that he had gone in search of her and that for twenty years nothing had been heard of him, she wept bitterly for him, as for one dead, having no hope of seeing him alive. When they reached Antandros[5], they left the ship and continued their journey by land. On arriving at Laodicea[6], they were met by Faustinus and Faustinianus, who had arrived there before them. They asked Clement: "Who is this strange woman with you, together with another old woman?"

4. The drachma was an ancient Greek weight and silver coin worth 21 kopecks.

5. Antandros was a city on the Gulf of Adramyttium in Mysia, in the northwestern region of Asia Minor. The ruins of this ancient city exist to this day.

6. Laodicea was the principal city of ancient Phrygia in western Asia Minor. The Church of Laodicea belonged to the number of the seven famous churches of Asia Minor mentioned in the Apocalypse. Now only ruins on a low hill, beside the desolate village of Eski-Hissar, serve as a memorial of the ancient city. In Church history Laodicea is known for the council held there in 365, which left detailed canons concerning the order of worship, the moral conduct of clergy and laity, and the various vices and errors of that time.

Clement answered: "She is my mother, whom I found in a foreign land."

Then he began to tell them in order how long he had been separated from his mother, and how she had left their home with the two twins.

Hearing this, they understood that Clement was their brother and that the woman was their mother, and they wept for great joy, crying out: "Then this is our mother Matthidia, and you are our brother Clement, for we are the twins, Faustinus and Faustinianus, who left Rome with our mother."

Having said this, they threw their arms about one another's necks, wept long, and kissed one another affectionately. Seeing their mother rejoice over the children she had unexpectedly found safe and sound, and telling one another by what providence of God they had been saved from drowning, they glorified God. Only one thing grieved them: that no one knew anything of their father. Then they began to beseech the Apostle Peter to baptize their mother. Early in the morning they went to the sea, and the holy Apostle Peter, in a secluded place, baptized Matthidia and the old woman who accompanied her in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. He then sent her with her sons ahead to their lodging, while he himself went by another road.

And behold, on the road he met a comely man with a gray beard, poorly clothed, who was waiting for the Apostle Peter and greeted him respectfully:

"I see that you are a foreigner, and no ordinary man; your very countenance shows that you are a man of understanding. Therefore I wish to converse with you a little."

Peter answered him:

"Speak, sir, if you wish."

"I saw you," said the man, "today praying in a secluded place on the shore. I watched you unobserved, then withdrew and waited for you here a little, wishing to tell you that you are laboring in vain by praying to God, for there is no God either in heaven or on earth, nor is there any providence of God concerning us; all things in this world happen by chance. Therefore do not be led astray or weary yourselves with prayer to God, for He does not exist."

The holy Peter heard these arguments and said to him:

"Why do you think that all things happen by chance, and not by God's ordering and providence? And how will you prove that there is no God? If there is no God, who created heaven and adorned it with stars? Who created the earth and clothed it with flowers?"

The man sighed from the depths of his heart and said:

"I know something of astronomy, sir, and I served the gods with such zeal as no other man; yet I have learned that all hopes in God are vain, and that there is no God. If there were some God in heaven, He would hear the sighs of those who weep, heed the prayers of those who pray, and look upon the sorrow of a heart fainting under grief. But since there is no one to bring comfort in affliction, I conclude that there is no God. If there were a God, He would have heard me, praying and weeping in my grief; for, my lord, I have been in great sorrow for twenty years and more. How often I prayed to all the gods, how many sacrifices I offered to them, how many tears and laments I poured forth! Yet not one of the gods heard me, and all my labor was in vain."

After this Peter said:

"That is why you were not heard for so long: you prayed to many gods, vain and false, and not to the One True God, in whom we believe and to whom we pray."

As he spoke with the man and reasoned about God, Peter understood that he was speaking with Faustus, the husband of Matthidia and father of Clement and his brothers, and said to him:

"If you desire to believe in the One True God, who created heaven and earth, you shall now see your wife and children safe and sound."

He answered:

"Can it be that my wife and children will rise from the dead? I myself learned from the stars, and from the wise astrologer Annubion I know, that both my wife and my two children were drowned in the sea."

Then Peter brought Faustus to his lodging. When Faustus entered and saw Matthidia, he was astonished and gazed at her in silence, full of wonder. Then he said: "By what miracle has this come to pass?

Whom do I see now?" And coming nearer, he cried out: "Truly, my beloved wife is here!"

At once, overcome by sudden joy, they both grew faint, so that they could not speak to one another; for Matthidia, too, had recognized her husband. When she had somewhat recovered, she said: "O my beloved Faustus! How have you been found alive, when we heard that you had died?"

Then there was inexpressible joy for all, and great weeping for joy, for the husband and wife had recognized one another, and the children had recognized their parents. They embraced, wept, rejoiced, and gave thanks to God. All who were there, seeing their unexpected reunion after a long separation, wept and gave thanks to God. Faustus fell at the Apostle's feet, asking to be baptized, for he had sincerely believed in the One God; and after being baptized, he offered prayers of thanksgiving to God with tears. Then they all departed from there for Antioch.

While they were teaching the faith in Christ there, the hegemon of Antioch learned everything about Faustus, his wife, and his children, their high birth, and their adventures. He immediately sent messengers to Rome to inform the emperor of it all. The ruler commanded the hegemon to bring Faustus and his family to Rome as quickly as possible, with great honor. When this had been done, the emperor rejoiced at their return, and, learning all that had happened to them, wept for a long time. That same day he gave a feast in their honor; the next day he gave them much money, as well as male and female slaves. And they were held in great honor by all.

Living in deep piety, giving alms to the poor, and in advanced old age distributing all they had to those in need, Faustus and Matthidia departed to the Lord.

Their children, when Peter came to Rome, labored in the apostolic teaching, and the blessed Clement became Peter's inseparable disciple in all his travels and labors, and a zealous preacher of the teaching of Christ. For this reason Peter appointed him bishop before his own crucifixion, which he suffered under Nero.[7] After the death of the Apostle

Peter, and then of Linus and Anacletus, Clement wisely steered the ship of the Church of Christ[8] amid the turmoil and factions in Rome. The Church was then troubled by persecutors, and he shepherded Christ's flock with great labor and patience, surrounded on every side by savage persecutors, like roaring lions and ravening wolves, who sought to swallow up and destroy the faith of Christ. In such distress, he did not cease to care with great diligence for the salvation of human souls; thus he brought many unbelievers to Christ, not only from among the common people, but even from the imperial court, men of noble birth and high rank. Among them were a certain dignitary named Sisinius and many of the house of the Emperor Nerva.[9] Through his preaching, St. Clement once, at Pascha, brought four hundred and twenty-four people of noble birth to Christ and baptized them all; and he dedicated his niece Domitilla, who was betrothed to Aurelian, the son of the foremost Roman dignitary, to the preservation of virginity. Moreover, he divided Rome among seven scribes, so that they might record the sufferings of the martyrs who were then being put to death for Christ.

When the Church of Christ began to increase through his teaching and labors, his wondrous deeds, and his virtuous life, the persecutor of the Christian faith, the comite Torcutian,[10] seeing the countless multitude of those who had believed in Christ and been taught by Clement, stirred up some of the people to rise against Clement and the Christians. A tumult arose among the people, and the rioters went to the city eparch, Mamertinus, and began to cry out, asking how long Clement would continue to dishonor their gods. Others, however, defended Clement, saying: "What evil has this man done, or what good deed has he failed to do? Whoever of the sick came to him, he healed; everyone who came to him in sorrow received comfort; he never did evil to anyone, but did many good deeds for all."

But all the others, filled with the spirit of enmity, cried out: "He is doing all this by sorcery, and is destroying the service of our gods. He

7. 29 July 67.
8. St. Clement governed the Roman Church from 91 to 100.
9. Nerva was a Roman emperor who reigned from 96 to 98 A.D.

does not call Zeus a god; Hercules, our protector, he calls an unclean spirit; the honorable Aphrodite he names nothing but a harlot; of the great Vesta he says that she must be burned; likewise Athena, Artemis and Hermes, and Chronos and Ares he reviles and dishonors. All our gods and their temples he constantly dishonors and condemns. Therefore let him either offer sacrifice to the gods or be punished."

Then the eparch Mamertinus, under the influence of the noise and agitation of the crowd, ordered St. Clement to be brought before him, and began to say to him: "You are of noble birth, as all the Roman citizens say, but you have been led astray, and therefore they cannot bear you and keep silent. It is not known what God you worship: some new one, called Christ, contrary to our gods. You ought to abandon every error and infatuation and bow down to the gods to whom we bow."

St. Clement answered: "I beg your prudence to listen to me, and not to the mad words of the coarse rabble, which rises up against me in vain. For although many dogs bark at us, they cannot take from us what belongs to us. We are sound and reasonable men; they are dogs without reason, barking senselessly at a good deed. Disturbances and rebellions have always arisen from the unreasoning and unthinking crowd. Therefore command them first to be silent, so that when there is quiet, a reasonable man may speak of the important matter of salvation, and so that one may turn to the search for the True God, before Whom one must bow down in faith."

This and much more the saint said, and the eparch found in him no fault. Therefore he sent word to the emperor Trajan[11] that the people had risen up against Clement on account of the gods, although there was no sufficient evidence for accusing him. Trajan answered the eparch that Clement must either offer sacrifice to the gods or be banished to a desert place of Pontus near Chersonesus[12]. Having received such an answer from the emperor, the eparch Mamertinus grieved for Clement and implored him not to choose for himself a voluntary exile, but to

10. The Romans called the associates and retinue of provincial governors comites (a Latin word).
11. Trajan was a Roman emperor from 98 to 117.
12. Chersonesus was a city in Taurica, a peninsula of the Black Sea (now the Crimea); it was situated near the present-day Sevastopol. In it the Russian prince, Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles, received the Christian faith.

offer sacrifice to the gods, and then he would be free from banishment. The saint declared to the eparch that he did not fear exile; on the contrary, he desired it all the more. Such was the power of grace in Clement's words, which God had given him, that even the eparch was moved in soul, wept, and said: "May the God whom you serve with all your heart help you in your exile, to which you have been condemned."

And having prepared a ship and everything necessary, he sent him off.

Together with St. Clement there went into exile also many of the Christians, having resolved to live with their shepherd in exile rather than remain without him in freedom.

Arriving at the place of banishment, St. Clement found there more than two thousand Christians, condemned to hew stone in the mountains. To this same labor Clement too was assigned. The Christians, seeing St. Clement, approached him with tears and sorrow, saying:

"Pray for us, hierarch, that we may become worthy of the promises of Christ."

The saint said:

"I am unworthy of such grace of the Lord, Who has made me worthy to be only a partaker of your crown!"

And working with them, St. Clement comforted them and instructed them with useful counsel. Learning that they suffered a great lack of water, since they had to carry water on their shoulders for six miles[13], St. Clement said: "Let us pray to our Lord Jesus Christ that He may open to His followers a spring of living water, just as He opened it for thirsty Israel in the desert, when He struck the rock and water flowed; and having received such grace from Him, let us rejoice."

And they all began to pray. At the end of the prayer, St. Clement saw a lamb standing in one place and lifting up one foot, as if showing the place. Clement understood that this was the Lord appearing, whom no one sees except him alone, and he went to that place, saying: "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, dig in this place."

13. *Poprishche* (*poprishche*) originally meant a racecourse, a place for contests; afterwards the word came to mean the same as *stadion*, that is, a measure of length of 125 paces.

And all, standing in a circle, began to dig with spades, but for a time there was nothing, since they could not reach the place where the Lamb had stood.

After this, St. Clement took a small spade and began to dig in the place where the foot of the Lamb had stood, and at once there appeared a spring of sweet, clean water, and from the spring a whole river was formed. Then all rejoiced, and St. Clement said: "The streams of the river make glad the city of God" (Ps. 45:5).

The report of this miracle spread through the whole neighborhood, and people began to flock in great numbers to see the river that had unexpectedly and miraculously formed through the saint's prayers, and also to hear his teaching. Many believed in Christ and were baptized in the water by St. Clement. So many people came to the saint, and so many turned to Christ, that every day five hundred or more were baptized. In a single summer the number of believers increased so much that as many as seventy-five churches were built, and all the idols were smashed, and the pagan shrines throughout the whole land were destroyed, since all the inhabitants had accepted the Christian faith.

The emperor Trajan, learning that in Chersonesus an innumerable multitude of people had believed in Christ, at once sent there a dignitary named Aufidian, who on arrival subjected many Christians to torture and put many to death. But seeing that all went gladly to suffering for Christ, the dispatched dignitary no longer wished to torment the people, and only with all his strength sought to compel Clement alone to offer sacrifice. But finding him unshaken in faith and firmly believing in Christ, he ordered him to be placed in a boat, taken to the middle of the sea, and there, with an anchor tied to his neck, cast into the deepest place of the sea and drowned, so that the Christians might not find his body. When all this had happened, the believers stood on the shore and wept bitterly. Then two of his most faithful disciples, Cornelius and Phoebus, said to all the Christians: "Let us all pray that the Lord reveal to us the body of the martyr."

When the people prayed, the sea withdrew from the shore to a distance of three miles, and the people, like the Israelites at the Red Sea, crossed over on dry ground, and found a marble cave like a church of

God, in which the body of the martyr lay; and near it they also found the anchor with which the martyr Clement had been drowned. When the faithful wished to take the honorable body of the martyr from there, there was a revelation to the above-mentioned disciples that his body should be left here, for every year in his memory the sea would withdraw in this way for seven days, giving those who wished the opportunity to come and venerate it. And so it was for many years, from the reign of Trajan to the reign of Nicephorus, emperor of the Greeks[14]. Many other miracles were also wrought there through the prayer of the saint, whom the Lord glorified.

Once, at the usual time, the sea opened access to the cave, and many people came to venerate the relics of the holy martyr. By chance a child had been left in the cave, forgotten by his parents when they departed. When the sea began to return to its former place and was already covering the cave, all who were in it hurried out, fearing that the sea would cover them too, and the parents of the forgotten child also hurried out, thinking that the child had gone out earlier with the people. Looking about and searching for him everywhere among the people, they did not find him, and it was no longer possible to return again into the cave, since the sea had covered it. The parents wept inconsolably and went home with great lamentation and sorrow. The following year the sea withdrew again, and the parents of the child came once more to venerate the saint. Entering the cave, they found the child alive and well, sitting by the tomb of the saint. Taking him, the parents, in indescribable joy, asked him how he had remained alive.

The child, pointing with his finger at the tomb of the martyr, said: "This saint kept me alive, nourished me, and drove away all the terrors of the sea from me."

Then there was great joy among the parents and among the people who had come to the feast, and all glorified God and His servant.

In the reign of Nicephorus, emperor of the Greeks, on the day of the memory of St. Clement, the sea did not withdraw as in former years, and it was so for fifty years and more. When Blessed George became

14. The Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus reigned from 802 to 811.

bishop in Chersonesus, he grieved greatly that the sea did not withdraw, and the relics of so great a servant of God lay, as it were, under a cover, hidden by the water.

During his governance of the eparchy there came to Chersonesus two Christian teachers, Methodius and Constantine the philosopher, afterwards named Cyril[15]. They were on their way to preach to the Khazars[16], and along the way they inquired about the relics of St. Clement; learning that they were in the sea, these two church teachers began to urge Bishop George to open this spiritual treasure, the relics of the hieromartyr.

Bishop George, urged on by the teachers, set out for Constantinople and related everything to the then-reigning emperor Michael III[17], as well as to the Most Holy Patriarch Ignatius[18]. The emperor and the Patriarch sent with him chosen men and the whole clergy of St. Sophia[19]. Having arrived at Chersonesus, the bishop gathered all the people, and with psalms and singing they all went to the seashore, in hope of obtaining what they desired; but the water did not part. When the sun had set and they had embarked on the ship, suddenly, in the midnight darkness, the sea shone with light: first the head appeared, and then all the relics of St. Clement came out of the water. The hierarchs, taking them with reverence, placed them on the ship, and, bringing them solemnly into the city, set them in the church. When the holy Liturgy began, many miracles were wrought: the blind received sight, the lame and all manner of sick were healed, and the demoniacs were freed from demons, through the prayers of St. Clement, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever. Amen[7725].

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15. Sts. Methodius and Cyril

16. The Khazars were a people of Turkmen origin, dwelling around the Caspian Sea in the lower reaches of the Volga and in the Ciscaucasia. They were partly pagans, partly Muslims, and partly professed the Jewish faith.

17. The Byzantine Emperor Michael III reigned from 855 to 867.

18. St. Ignatius governed the Church of Constantinople from 847 to 857, and then, after Photius, from 867 to 877.

19. St. Sophia was the cathedral church of Constantinople.

Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria

Житие и страдание святого священномученика Петра, архиепископа Александрийского

St. Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria, was raised in infancy by the blessed Theonas, archbishop of that same city of Alexandria, and after him was set upon the episcopal throne at the time when the impious Roman emperors Diocletian and Maximian raised severe persecutions against the Christians. The prisons were then filled with Christ's martyrs, and their blood flowed through all the streets, cities and surrounding fields; in that terrible and sorrowful time of calamities and misfortunes, St. Peter governed the Church of God with patience and great labors. By his teaching and unconquerable firmness of spirit he supported the faint-hearted and fearful, kept many from apostasy and fall, and led a great number of believers to the crown of martyrdom. Exiled for Christ, and while in Tyre, Phoenicia and Palestine, the saint sustained his sheep by letters and strengthened them with the power of the Holy Spirit; fearing, however, that someone, frightened by torments, might fall away from Christ, he prayed to God for them day and night. Returning again to Alexandria, Peter helped those imprisoned in the dungeon, who numbered six hundred and fifty, among whom were many presbyters and clerics; all of them were put to death after various tortures. Peter, seeing their suffering and endurance, rejoiced in spirit. During the good governance of his flock, there arose in Alexandria a ravenous wolf in sheep's clothing, Arius the heretic, who began to sow among the wheat the tares of the accursed devilish teaching, blasphemed the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and by such blasphemy harmed the Church of God. The good shepherd often stopped this wolf's mouth and restrained him, admonishing and forbidding him not to violate the good confession of the Holy Trinity, faithfully handed down to the Church of Christ. But when Arius remained equally incorrigible, and his malice would not submit to the truth, then St. Peter cursed the blasphemer and cut him off from the Church as an unworthy member. And Arius, the vengeful one, being expelled from the flock of Christ, hid himself as darkness from light, for everyone who does evil,

as it is said, hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed (Jn. 3:20); and the lawless one did not dare to come to this vigilant shepherd, whom he could not seduce by any flattery or cunningly devised words.

The number of believers in Christ in Alexandria, however, grew and increased more and more, despite the cruel times; for no tortures could hinder or block the way to Christ for those who desired salvation; many spared neither their possessions nor even their lives, and hastened to St. Peter to receive baptism, having abandoned idol worship.

The impious emperor Maximian, who ruled the eastern lands and resided in Nicomedia, learning that many, through the teaching of St. Peter, were turning from idolatry to Christ, sent a tribune with soldiers to seize the saint and bring him to him bound[20]. The envoys, arriving in Alexandria, found St. Peter in the church, celebrating the commemoration of all the saints with a multitude of the faithful; they seized him and loaded him with heavy chains. Then a great commotion arose among the people; many wept over St. Peter, others cried out: "Why are you taking our shepherd from us?" And all Alexandria gathered, desiring to lay down their souls for their teacher, and the whole people cried out against the emperor and his envoys. The tribune, seeing the strong agitation and uprising of the people, ordered the saint to be kept in the prison near the church, and wrote to the emperor about everything that had happened. The emperor, having read what was written, was greatly angered and by letter commanded that the head of Peter, the Christian teacher, be cut off, and that all who resisted be executed by the sword. The tribune, receiving the emperor's letter, endeavored to carry out his order and tried to lead Peter out to execution, but the crowd of people, who day and night stood at the prison, did not allow their father to be led to death. There were countless men and women, old and young, monks and nuns, who, bound by love for God's hierarch, did not leave the prison. When they saw armed soldiers going

20. From ancient times the population of Rome was divided into several parts, which were called tribes. The chiefs or elders of the tribes were also given the name of tribunes. In time this name came to be applied to many state officials, chiefly to military commanders, like our colonels. In the present passage one of such commanders is meant.

to the prison to bring Peter out, they all cried out with one voice: "First strike us all down, if you have an order from your emperor, and only then take our father; we will not withdraw from our shepherd, and we will not allow the teacher and physician of our souls to suffer."

The tribune, hearing this and seeing the multitude of people, did not wish to cause a great bloodshed, but in order to fulfill the emperor's command, he sought to behead Peter secretly.

While all this was happening, Arius, learning that the archbishop who had cut him off from the holy catholic Apostolic Church was sitting in chains in the prison and was to be killed for Christ, came to him with a flattering and hypocritical repentance, hoping after him to ascend the episcopal see and become Archbishop of Alexandria. He came as if asking forgiveness and repenting of his sin of heresy, and he persuaded certain presbyters, and most of all Achillas and Alexander, to plead for him with Peter, that he would forgive his transgressions and receive him into communion with the Church. God, who knows all the thoughts of human hearts, knew also the deceitful heart of Arius; and so, appearing by night to the blessed Peter, He revealed to him all the guile of the accursed heretic and commanded him not to receive him into the Church. In the morning many faithful and honorable citizens, headed by the presbyters Achillas and Alexander, came to the prison and, falling at the feet of the holy archbishop, began to beg him to forgive Arius and absolve him from the anathema. The blessed Peter, weeping and sighing, answered them: "Beloved, you do not know whom you are asking for: you are asking for one who tears the Church of Christ. You know that I love my sheep and would not wish any of them to perish. Above all I pray God to grant forgiveness of sins and salvation to all; only Arius I reject, for he has been rejected by God Himself, and has been cut off from the holy Church not so much by my judgment as by God's, since he has sinned not against man but against God, blaspheming the mystery of the Holy Trinity, upon which the Cherubim and Seraphim cannot look, and which they only unceasingly sing: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Sabaoth; the heavenly powers say: Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory[21]. The shameless heretic, by his blasphemy,

dares to make a division between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; how can he be forgiven, when all creation is angered against him for its Creator? Therefore let Arius be accursed both in this age and in the age to come."

When Blessed Peter had said this, all who had been interceding for Arius fell at his feet and no longer dared to trouble him further. He, drawing aside the presbyters Achillas and Alexander, said to them: "I am a sinful man, but I know that the Lord God is calling me to the crown of martyrdom, and before I die I will declare to you, the pillars of the Church, the mystery of God which the Lord revealed to me this night. You, honorable Achillas, shall ascend the archiepiscopal throne after me, and after you the worthy presbyter Alexander. As for Arius, do not think that I am unjust to him or harsh toward sinners, for a sin committed through weakness, though it were the greatest, is less than the malice of Arius. Those who sin through weakness may be forgiven; but that accursed man for whom you ask, how can I forgive him, when his soul is full of deceit and blasphemy? For from his heart flows a river of reviling against the Almighty Son of God; he calls a creature Him who is Himself the Creator of all things visible and invisible, and whom the prophets, apostles and evangelists proclaimed. How can you make me condescend to your request and forgive Arius, when he has not heeded my punishment and admonition? And if I have cursed him, I have done so not of myself but by the permission of Christ my God, who appeared to me this night. As I was praying as usual, suddenly a great light illumined the prison, and I saw my Lord Jesus Christ in the form of a twelve-year-old youth, with a face brighter than the sun, so that I could not look upon the indescribable glory of His face. He was clothed in a white tunic, torn from top to bottom; holding it to His breast with both hands, He covered His nakedness. When I saw all this, terror and trembling seized me, and in fear I prayed to Him, saying: 'Who, O Creator, has torn Thy tunic?' And the Lord answered: 'The mad Arius has torn it for Me, for he has separated from Me the people whom I acquired with My Blood. Beware, and do not receive

21. Here is indicated the vision of the Prophet Isaiah; see Is. 6 and elsewhere.

him into ecclesiastical communion: he plots what is wicked and hostile against Me and My people. Behold, they will beg you concerning him, that you forgive him; but do not listen to them, and do not receive the wolf into the flock as a sheep. Charge Achillas and Alexander, who will be bishops after you, that they not receive him, but curse him before all.' Thus I have declared to you what I was commanded; if, however, you do not obey and fulfill what has been enjoined upon you, then I shall be innocent of it."

Having said this, he knelt and prayed, and all prayed with him. When he had finished the prayer, he said: "Pray for me, brethren." Those present, having prayed, answered: "Amen." Achillas and Alexander, kissing his hands, wept, for he had told them that they would no longer see him. And the presbyters reported to the people all the words spoken by Blessed Peter about Arius, and what he had charged them: not to receive Arius into ecclesiastical communion, as a wolf and an enemy of the Son of God.

Then St. Peter, seeing that the Christian people, burning with zeal, would not let the emperor's envoy lead him out from the prison to death, and fearing that a great bloodshed might result from a clash between the people and the emperor's men, and also desiring himself to be quickly parted from the body and to depart to the Lord, wished secretly to give himself up to the tormentors, that he might preserve the people without harm and more quickly reach the desired end. Secretly from the people he sent to the tribune one of the trusted slaves assigned to him, with the words: "If you wish to do what is pleasing to the Emperor Maximian, come secretly by night into the prison, and, breaking through the wall, take me and carry out the emperor's command."

So it happened: night came, and the people in great numbers crowded at the doors of the prison where the holy shepherd of Christ's flock was, admitting no one to him. The tribune came with soldiers and broke through the wall at the back, as wide as one man could pass. The night was wintry and windy, and none of the Christians heard the sound of the wall being broken. St. Peter, making the sign of the Cross over himself, said: "It is better for one man to die than for all the people

to perish," and he went out of the prison through the breached wall, so that none of the faithful knew of it.

The tribune and the soldiers marveled at the courage of the saint, who went to his death, and, taking him, they led him to the place where the holy Apostle Mark had received his martyr's end, and there they struck off his honorable head.

Near the tomb of St. Mark there was a certain virgin recluse; when she was praying to God on the night in which St. Peter was beheaded, she heard a voice from heaven saying: "Peter, the beginning of the Apostles; Peter, the end of the Alexandrian Martyrs."[7728]

With the coming of morning, all the people, learning that their shepherd had been secretly led out of the prison and beheaded at the tomb of Mark, hastened with weeping to his holy body, and taking it, carried it into the church. Here, having joined the honorable head to the body, they seated him on the throne, that is, in the high place, for the following reason: this holy hierarch, during his whole life and throughout his pastoral ministry, never sat in the high place, but when the time came he sat only at its foot, and never ascended to the very steps of the place; for this the people and his clergy were often displeased and asked him to sit in the high place, but he never consented. Once, after the Divine Liturgy, having summoned the whole clergy, he said: "Do you know why I do not sit in my high place and do not ascend its steps? Because when I approach the throne, I see upon it a heavenly light, and as it were a certain Divine Power abiding upon it. Terror seizes me, and I do not dare to sit there, considering myself unworthy of it, but I sit at its foot, and that with fear. I tell you this so that you will no longer press me."

On the basis of this, after his death the people seated him, dead, in the high place, and all cried out: "Pray for us, holy servant of God!"

Then they buried him honorably, glorifying the Holy Trinity:

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, to Whom be honor and worship from us also, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion common to hierarchs, Tone 4:

O God of our fathers, who always deals with us in Thy meekness, withdraw not Thy mercy from us, but through their prayers direct our life in peace.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Immovable towers of the Church, and divine pillars of piety, truly steadfast: Clement and Peter, all-praised, by your prayers keep us all.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Peter the Silent

Память преподобного Петра Молчальника

Our holy father Peter was born in Pontus of pious parents, with whom he lived only seven years. The rest of his life he spent in the love of wisdom, first in Galatia, then, for his perfecting, he went to Palestine, where he devoted himself to prayer, and afterward settled in Antioch. Shut up in a certain shed, caring for his soul, he spent his time in unceasing prayer. He partook of nothing but bread, and drank nothing but water, and that in small measure every two or three days. He had power over demons. Thus St. Peter freed a man named Daniel from a demon; healed, Daniel, by the instruction and teaching of St. Peter, became an imitator of his life. St. Peter opened the eyes of the blind and healed various infirmities. He gave instruction either in writing or by word of mouth. By his holy life he became renowned throughout Antioch and its environs. Having lived ninety years, adorned with many virtues and the ascetic labors of silence, the saint peacefully departed to the Lord, about the year 429.[22]

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NOTES

7725. It is known that Sts. Cyril and Methodius took with them a part of the relics of St. Clement and sent them to Rome in the time of Pope Adrian II (867); yet the body of the saint, together with the honorable head, remained in Chersonesus until the time

22. The memory of St. Peter the Silent is also celebrated on February 1.

when that city was taken by the Russian Grand Prince, St. Vladimir. The latter, having received holy baptism in Chersonesus, took with him also the relics of St. Clement "for a blessing upon himself and for the sanctification of all the people," and placed them in the Kievan Tithe Church of the Most Holy Theotokos. Here the relics of the Hieromartyr remained until the Tatar invasion. What became of these relics during the Tatar invasion, whether they were hidden by the faithful or transferred to another place, is not known. Now one can encounter only particles of these relics, for example in one altar cross of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra, in St. Petersburg.

7728. This was in the year 311. The well-known church historian Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, a contemporary of St. Peter of Alexandria, calls the latter "the holy adornment of bishops, both in holiness and in his practice of holy words." Through his exhortation whole hosts of Alexandrian believers were crowned with the crown of martyrdom. The weakness of some, who could not endure the cruelty of the torments, prompted him in 306 to send out rules of penance, which from ancient times have been received into the body of the rules of the Ecumenical Church, and which breathe Christian love and are grounded upon sayings of Holy Scripture. In doing so he was chiefly concerned to return the fallen into the bosom of the Church, dividing the fallen into classes, paying attention to the circumstances of the fall, calling all to repentance, and declaring only one offense unforgivable: unrepentance. Besides this, there is known his work on Pascha, and in extracts the book *On the Divinity*, whose excellent passages concerning the incarnation of the Son of God were read at the Third (Ephesian) and Fourth (Chalcedonian) Ecumenical Councils, the work *On the Coming of the Savior*, and some other works of philosophical and theological character.



THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 26

26 ноября

New Calendar November 26 · Old Calendar December 9 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Alypius the Stylite

Житие преподобного отца нашего Алипия Столпника

The servant of Christ Alypius was a native of the Paphlagonian city of Adrianopolis[1]. The Lord chose him for His service even before his birth. One night, shortly before her son was born, his mother had the following vision. It seemed to her that she was holding in her arms a lamb of great beauty, with two burning candles on its horns. When the time of Alypius' birth came, the room was filled with a divine radiance, which was a foreshadowing of the radiance of Alypius' future righteous life, for he was destined to become a light of the world. After Alypius was born, his mother fell asleep, and in her sleep she again had the following vision: all the inhabitants of the city flowed into her room and surrounded the infant, singing psalms and sacred hymns. His mother remembered these visions, pondering them in her heart and reflecting on the future destiny of her son.

After some time her husband died, and, not wishing to marry a second time, she spent her widowhood in fasting and prayer, pleasing God by the purity of her life, and together with her son placing all her hope in the true Father of orphans and widows.

Having nursed her son and dedicated him to the service of God, she, like Hannah of old, the mother of Samuel (1 Kgdms. 1:24–28), brought him to the house of God and entrusted him to the Bishop of Adrianopolis, the blessed Theodore. Discerning in spirit the grace of God resting upon the youth, the bishop came to love him greatly and

1. Paphlagonia: a province of the Roman Empire in the north of Asia Minor, with its chief city Gangra.

began to instruct him in the Divine Scriptures. As he grew to manhood, Alypius surpassed his peers in wisdom and understanding; by his good conduct and virtues he won the love of God and of men. His soul was filled with the fear of God, humility and meekness; and in his wisdom he showed, as it were, the wisdom of gray hairs, having "wisdom, which is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age" (Wis. 4:9). For these virtues he was appointed church steward, and then ordained to the rank of deacon, and in this rank he performed his blameless service to God.

After some time, Alypius desired a solitary life, so that in silence he might serve God more diligently by himself and enjoy unceasing contemplation of God. He revealed this desire of his heart to his righteous mother, who, like the prophetess Anna[2], did not leave the church and day and night performed her service to God in fasting and prayer; she had long since distributed her possessions to the poor and, betrothed to Christ, had been appointed a deaconess. To this God-pleasing handmaid of the Lord, who was his own mother, St. Alypius disclosed his intention:

"I wish to go to the east," he said to her, "for I have heard that there, in the deserts, many holy fathers live in silence; I will dwell with them, and by looking upon their God-pleasing life I will strive, with God's help, to imitate their virtuous way of life. As for you, mother, pray for me, that the Lord, by His holy will, may direct my path and that my undertaking may be pleasing to Him."

Not at all grieved by parting from her son, the mother raised her hands to heaven and, after fervent prayer to God, blessed him and sent him off in peace. Telling no one but his mother, St. Alypius left his native Adrianopolis and, burning with a divine desire, set out on his way, as a deer thirsts for the water-brooks. The news of his departure greatly saddened Bishop Theodore, the clergy and the laity, who had lost in him a good fellow-citizen, one who adorned the Church of God with the example of his virtuous, angelic life and brought great benefit to many of her faithful children. The bishop at once dispatched his ser-

2. The memory of St. Anna the Prophetess is celebrated on 3 February.

vants throughout the region to search for the saint, and after a short time they found him at Euchaita[3] on the day of the commemoration of the holy martyr Theodore. Only with great difficulty, sometimes by entreaty, sometimes by threats, was he brought back to his homeland; for it was not God's will that Paphlagonia should be deprived of such a lamp, by which many were to be called out of the darkness of sin into the light of a God-pleasing life. Returning to his house, St. Alypius grieved deeply over the failed journey and his unfulfilled desire. But the God of all consolation consoled his sorrow also by a divine manifestation. A certain wondrous man, or rather an Angel of God, appeared to him in a vision and said:

"Do not grieve, Alypius, over your return from the desired path, but know firmly that holy is every place which a man who loves God chooses for a pious and God-pleasing life."

Comforted by this vision, Alypius ceased to grieve and continued his monastic life, diligently striving and serving God. Nevertheless, the desire to withdraw into some desert place did not leave him. Therefore he often went out from his house and walked around the nearby mountains, fields and forests, seeking a place suitable for contemplation of God. Once, ascending a mountain lying to the south of the city, he found on it a high and picturesque spot, remote from the noise and bustle of the town. It pleased him, and bringing digging tools, he dug himself a well there. In doing this, he drew water out of the earth not so much by working with the spade as by fervently praying to God with his lips. Having finished this labor, St. Alypius went to the bishop, asking permission to settle there and build a church. The bishop, although he did not forbid him to fulfil this desire, secretly sent servants to block up the spring with large stones and cover it with earth: he did not wish the blessed man to dwell in that place, since the mountain was very high and almost inaccessible to anyone who might wish to visit the saint, and moreover it lay far from the city; the bishop desired that Alypius settle nearer the town and in a more convenient place. Finding

3. Euchaita: a city in the north of Asia Minor, now Mereivan.

his spring covered over, the blessed man left that mountain and began to seek another place in the vicinity of the city.

Right before the city there lay a desert in which in ancient times the Hellene pagans buried their dead. The desert was inhabited by legions of unclean spirits; because of this everyone feared that place, and no one could pass through it on account of the terrors inspired by the demons. Noticing that everyone avoided this desert, the blessed Alypius settled there in one of the tombs[4]; above the tomb stood a stone pillar, and on the pillar an idol. Having shattered the idol like a clay vessel, the venerable man erected in its place the honorable Cross. Thus, not in the least fearing the terrors and assaults of the demons, he began to live there, driving the demonic hosts far from himself with the weapon of the Cross and the arrows of his prayers. Once, while he was asleep, two honorable men clothed in priestly vestments appeared to St. Alypius in a vision and said to him:

"Why have you made us wait for you here so long, man of God? If you are that Alypius who is destined by God to sanctify this place and to multiply on it the praise of God, then set about without delay the work that befits you to accomplish."

Awakening, the venerable man was amazed at the words of the men he had seen, wondering who they were and what he was to accomplish in this place in order to multiply the praise of God. Soon after this, Theodore, Bishop of Adrianopolis, had occasion to travel to the emperor, and St. Alypius was to accompany him as a cleric. Against his own wishes, and submitting only to the will of the bishop, he set out and escorted him as far as Chalcedon, where the bishop intended to embark on a ship to sail to Constantinople.

Meanwhile Alypius entered a church standing on the seashore, and, having prayed in it, fell asleep. And there appeared to him in a vision a maiden beautiful as the sun, who said:

"Arise quickly, Alypius!"

Amazed at her beauty, Alypius asked her:

4. The tombs were then usually caves in the mountains, sometimes natural, sometimes dug out or hewn artificially, in which the bodies of the dead were laid, wrapped in special winding-cloths or sheets.

"Who are you, lady, and why do you bid me rise quickly?"

"I am Euphemia, a servant of Christ and a martyr," she answered. "Arise, and if you wish, let us go to your homeland! By the will of God I shall be your companion and helper."

When the holy martyr had spoken these words, Alypius awoke and saw no one before him, but his heart was full of spiritual joy. He understood that God desired his return to silence. Therefore, leaving the bishop, he returned to his homeland, accompanied by invisible help and the prayers of the holy great martyr Euphemia, whose wondrous image and sweet conversation he kept in his heart all the time, rejoicing in spirit.

Arriving at Adrianopolis, at his silent desert, he resolved to build on that spot a church in the name of St. Euphemia. He did not have the necessary means for this, for, having distributed all his property and, following the Lord who became poor for our sake, he had, like a beggar, neither gold, nor silver, nor even copper at his belt. Then he entreated the citizens and neighbors he knew to help him. Learning of his desire, they zealously brought him all that was needed, and in a short time a church in the name of the holy martyr Euphemia was built among the pagan tombs. When the foundation had been dug, the two aforementioned men in priestly vestments again appeared to St. Alypius in a dream. One of them held a censer in his hand and censed the foundation, signifying how great a church was to stand there; the other sang:

"Hosanna to this place!"

It is not known who these men were; but some time later, there were discovered there the incorrupt and fragrant relics of those two men who had twice appeared in a vision to St. Alypius. By his command, these holy relics were laid in the church he had built.

Even before the church was consecrated, the legions of demons, seeing that through the labor of St. Alypius a dwelling of the saints was rising in the midst of their habitation, and that in the place where they had spread fear and terror among all men the grace of God was beginning to appear, rushed with great outcry and wailing upon the newly built church and upon the saint's cell, desiring to destroy the building

down to its very foundations and, by terrifying the holy man, to drive him out from there. In their fury the demons shrieked with various voices, like enraged beasts or angry warriors; but the soldier of Christ took his stand in prayer, armed himself with it as with an invincible weapon, and at once overcame the phantom power of the demons, so that they fled in shame like dust driven before the wind.

When the church was consecrated, the people began to flock to it from the city to glorify God and to hear the saint's edifying teachings. Then Alypius, arming himself still more strongly against the enemy, ascended a pillar, like St. Simeon, the first stylite, and stood as it were a sentinel, discerning from afar the advancing hostile armies of demons and bravely contending with them day and night. The demons, though always being defeated by him, nevertheless did not cease their shameless assaults upon the saint.

Once in the night the evil spirits began to hurl stones at Alypius, inflicting severe wounds upon him. Enduring the blows of the stones, the saint said to the demons:

"What do you want of me, man-hating and destructive demons? In vain do you rage and wickedly rise up against the servants of God. These stones which you hurl at me will bear witness before Christ on the day of the Second Coming to your shameless audacity and malice. Know that I count your throwing of stones as nothing and consider it as it were a children's game. Behold, I take off the light boards that served as a covering over my head, so that I may receive the blows with greater ease and endure for my Lord what the holy Protomartyr Stephen endured. You slew him by the hands of the Jews, with whom you shall inherit the fiery Gehenna."

Hearing these words and perceiving that the invincible sufferer was ready to endure everything for God, the demons scattered in all directions from that place. Some passers-by heard this during that night, and they also saw the demons fleeing from there under various forms, loudly weeping and crying out:

"Alypius has driven us from our dwelling! Where shall we go? We have no place anywhere!"

The Venerable one took from the pillar the light canopy that had been over his head, and stood with the sky as his only covering, bravely enduring cold and heat, rain and hail, snow and frost. And he was such a voluntary martyr not for a short time, but for fifty-three years, suffering on his pillar as one nailed to a cross. And at this time multitudes of people, men and women, youths and elders, flocked to him to hear his profitable teachings and to receive healing of their infirmities. Since many of them settled there beside him, the saint ordered two monasteries to be built, one for men and one for women, one on one side of the pillar, the other on the other side. He himself stood on the pillar in the middle, enlightening both monasteries by his teaching and by the example of his angelic life, and defending them by his prayers. Alypius gave them the rules and statutes of the monastic life, commanding them to guard themselves carefully against the snares of the demons; and to the women he especially enjoined never to show themselves before the eyes of men.

In the women's monastery there lived the mother of the Blessed Alypius with her daughter, his sister Maria, and other noble wives of Adrianopolis, and among them certain Euphemia and Eubula, who had left all their property, children, relatives and friends, and all the vanity and sweetness of this world, in order to be clothed in the angelic image and by their life to become like the Angels themselves.

The mother of the Venerable one held the rank of deaconess, and although she lived as a monastic, she did not wish to be tonsured,

"It is one and the same thing," she said, "to be a deaconess or a nun."

Her son many times begged her to clothe herself in the monastic garb, but she did not listen to him, until she received an indication of this in a night vision. Then she herself began to ask her son for her tonsure into the monastic life. In a vision there appeared to her rich chambers, within which was heard sweet-voiced singing glorifying God. When she wished to enter there, a certain glorious and light-bearing man, standing at the entrance of the chambers, barred her way and said:

"You shall not enter here, for here rejoice the handmaidens of the Lord, who have served Him in the monastic rank. But you are not clothed in the monastic garb, therefore you cannot enter here and take part in their joy."

These words greatly shamed the mother of St. Alypius, and awakening, she begged her son to have her tonsured into the monastic rank. After her tonsure she redoubled her ascetic labors, adding new labors to her former ones.

Having lived many more years in monasticism, she departed to the Lord, having pleased Him on earth. Her son, our Venerable Father Alypius, was so pleasing to God that even during his life he was illumined by heavenly light: several times over his head there appeared a fiery pillar, reaching to the clouds and illumining all the place around him. This appearance occurred often, sometimes by day, sometimes by night, but for the most part by night, and when thunder and lightning happened, this heavenly light above the saint appeared higher than the stone pillar on which he stood.

Many of the faithful, who lived holily, were granted to see this; others, who chanced to observe the light from afar, thought that the saint's pillar was burning with real material fire. But the worthy could clearly gaze upon this ineffable sign of heavenly glory: thus did God glorify His servant.

And the saint performed many miracles by the grace of Christ: he healed the sick, cast demons out of men, and foretold the future. Fourteen years before his death his feet were struck by a grievous sickness, so that for all this time he could not stand, and until his very repose he lay on one side. When the saint's disciples wished to turn him onto the other side, he did not permit them, but endured everything, like a second Job, giving thanks to God, to Whom he departed with joy.[5] And after his repose many healings were granted to the sick from his holy relics, to the glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.

5. Venerable Alypius died in the reign of Emperor Heraclius (610–641) near Adrianople of Paphlagonia. His precious head is at present on Athos, in the monastery of Koutloumousiou.

Troparion, Tone 1:

Thou wast a pillar of patience, zealous to imitate the forefathers, Job in afflictions and Joseph in temptations; and though dwelling in the flesh, thou didst live as the incorporeal. O Venerable Alypius, our father, pray Christ God that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As the cause of virtues and the adornment of fasters, the Church glorifies thee today and sings to thee, O Alypius: by thy prayers grant those who honor with love thy valor and struggles deliverance from grievous sins, as one who bears thy name.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable James the Recluse

Память преподобного Иакова Отшельника

Our Venerable Father James labored on a mountain, having neither bed, nor cell, nor coverings to protect himself from the inclemency of the weather. A severe sickness of the stomach befell him when he withdrew from all men. When anyone came to him, he, despite the strong pain, would go out and teach those who came about piety. He wore iron chains and over them a hair shirt. His food was boiled lentils, which he ate in the evening. By such labors and sufferings he received such a gift of divine grace that he could raise the dead. Once there came to him the father of a dead youth, who, weeping, began to say to the saint:

"I know, servant of God, that for thee all things are possible, if only thou wilt pray."

The holy James, seeing the father's tears, bent his knees, and calling upon God, raised the youth, whom he gave back to his father. The Venerable performed many other wondrous miracles.

The holy James endured many temptations from the demons, and drove them away only by prayer. A certain man brought water to the saint from afar twice a week. The devil, thinking to kill the saint by thirst, transformed himself into his likeness and began to meet the man

with the water on the way, taking the water from him and making him return. However, this man once succeeded, secretly from the evil one, in bringing water to the holy elder. The saint, seeing him and the water brought, said:

"Why, child, didst thou so long not bring me water, so that I had to suffer much from thirst?"

"Father," he answered, "I always brought the water on the appointed day and hour. But someone met me when I was on the way, not allowing me to come to this place."

"From now on," said the saint, "if anyone meets thee and forbids thee to go further, do not give him the vessel until thou comest here."

Thus laboring, he became a great wonderworker, and departed with joy to the Lord.[6]

* * *

Commemoration of the Consecration of the Church of the Great Martyr George

Воспоминание освящения храма великомученика Георгия

The blessed and ever-memorable Prince of the Russian land, Yaroslav, son of the Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince Vladimir, desired to build a church in honor of the Great Martyr George,[7] that is, in the name of his Angel, since Yaroslav received the name George in holy baptism. He chose for this church a place not far from the Cathedral of St. Sophia, namely to the west of it, in the direction of the Golden Gates.

When they began to build this church, there were few workers.

Seeing this, Yaroslav summoned the tiun[8] and asked him:

"Why are there so few laborers at the church of God?"

The tiun answered:

6. Venerable James the Recluse lived in asceticism near Cyrrhus in Syria, in the fifth century. His repose is dated to 457.

7. No remains of the church of St. George have survived to the present time.

8. *Tiun*: a steward appointed by the prince, a lower judge; here, as an overseer of the prince's construction work.

"Since it is a matter of the prince's authority (that is, the church is being built at the prince's own expense), the people fear that they will be deprived of payment for their labor."

The prince then gave orders for his treasures to be carried in wagons beneath the vaults of the golden gates, and for it to be proclaimed in the marketplace that each person might receive a *nogata*[9] a day from the prince for his labor. And a multitude of workers appeared, the work went forward more successfully, and the church was soon finished.

Its consecration was performed on 26 November 1051 by the Metropolitan Hilarion[10]. The prince ordained that the day of the consecration be celebrated each year throughout all Russia in honor of the holy Great Martyr George[11].

Troparion, Tone 4:

Now the ends of the earth bless thee, being filled with thy divine wonders, and the land rejoices, having drunk of thy blood; and the Christ-named people of the city of Kiev, rejoicing at the consecration of thy divine church, make merry with gladness, O Passion-bearer George, chosen vessel of the Holy Spirit, servant of Christ: Entreat Him for those who come to thy holy church with faith and supplication, that He grant them the cleansing of their sins, give peace to the world, and save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Let us who have gathered in faith within the consecrated church praise the divine and crowned Great Martyr of Christ George, who won victory over his foes. God was pleased that the church be built in his name, He who alone rests among the saints.

9. *Nogata*: a kind of Old Russian coin equal to half a quarter-ruble, that is, 12.5 kopecks.
10. Hilarion: the first metropolitan of Rus' drawn from native Russians. He was chosen by the prince himself and a council of bishops, and was honored with the rank of metropolitan for his ascetic life and his teaching; he governed the Russian Church from 1051 to 1054. He wrote the "Sermon on Law and Grace" and the "Confession of Faith," and other instructive epistles and discourses of his have also been preserved.
11. This feast of St. George on 26 November existed, and still exists, in Greece as well, likewise on account of the consecration of a Greek church in honor of this saint.

* * *



THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 27

27 ноября

New Calendar November 27 · Old Calendar December 10 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Martyr James the Persian

Страдание святого мученика Иакова Персянина

The Holy Martyr James was born in Persia to Christian parents, who brought him up in piety. Having married a Christian woman, he lived in wealth and honor, for he enjoyed the love of the Persian king Izdigerd and of his successor Varahran[1], who appointed him steward of his palace. Favored by the Persian kings, he was seduced by earthly honors, fell away from the Christian faith, and, together with the king, offered sacrifice to the idols and bowed down before them. When his mother and wife learned of this, they sent him a letter in which they addressed him in these words:

"Unhappy one, why for the sake of human glory have you forsaken God, the Heavenly King? In pleasing a temporal king you have become a stranger to the immortal life. In serving the corruptible you have turned away from the incorruptible. You have preferred falsehood to truth, for in abandoning the faith of Christ you have fallen into the delusion of the devil. In obeying a mortal king you have despised the Judge of the living and the dead, and in seeking human love you have become unworthy of the love of God and have lost the heavenly blessings. We weep and lament over you, for having once been a son of light, you have now become a son of darkness and of Gehenna. Know, then, that if you do not turn away from the diabolical delusion, you will have no fellowship with us, for we do not wish even to see you as an idolater. And we entreat you with tears: turn to Christ, that you may escape the wrath of God. Fulfill our request quickly and do not delay, lest it be too

1. Yazdegerd I reigned from 399 to 420; his son Varahran reigned from 420 to 438.

late. For when the wrath of God overtakes you together with the king and his friends, there will be no returning, and you will weep bitterly, seeing yourself in the fire of Gehenna."

This letter from James's mother and wife was delivered to him at the time when he was with the king outside the city. Having read the letter, James was moved and thought:

"If even my mother and wife renounce me because I have rejected Christ and do not wish to see me, what will become of me in the age to come, when God comes to judge the living and the dead and renders to each according to his deeds?"

And reading the letter again with attention, he wept bitterly and began to repent of his sin. Then he said to himself:

"This is what I will do, so as not to perish utterly. I will knock unceasingly at the doors of the mercy of God until they are opened to me. And I believe that they will be opened, for God is compassionate and merciful: He does not desire the death of the sinner, but "that the sinner turn from his way and live" (Ezek. 33:11).

While he was speaking such words with bitter weeping, some of the pagans, seeing that he was a Christian, went and reported it to King Varahran. The king summoned James and said to him:

"Tell us the whole truth: are you a Nazarene?"

James answered:

"Yes, I am a Nazarene."

"Then you are a magician?" the king asked again.

"No, I am not a magician," James replied, "but a Christian."

Then the king said:

"Ungrateful man! Have you not received many gifts from me and from my father, and have you not enjoyed honor among us?"

James answered:

"Where is your father now? In body he is decaying in the tomb, and his soul has been cast into hell."

"For the righteous," the saint replied, "death is repose, but for you unbelievers and sinners it is the beginning of eternal torments."

Then the king summoned his counselors and friends and began to deliberate with them about what torments to inflict upon James. To de-

ter the other Persians, lest they too, like James, turn aside from their faith, he devised for the saint such a death: he commanded that each member of his body be cut off and dismembered separately. And so the executioners, by the king's command, seized James and led him to the place of execution, to cut him into pieces according to the number of the members of his body. Following Saint James to the place of execution went many who knew him, among them not a few soldiers and dignitaries; all of them went to see the sufferings of the saint.

Arriving at the place of execution, the saint begged his executioners to wait a little and to allow him the opportunity to pray. Then, lifting his eyes to heaven, he began to pray thus.

"O Lord my God! Hear me, Thy servant, look down from the heavenly height, and grant me strength and power in this hour, that I may endure the sufferings before me and by my blood atone for my sin, for I have renounced Thee, my Creator and Master. Now I grieve over this, and I turn to Thee, my God, confessing Thy holy name, and I lay down my soul for Thee. Do Thou, O Lord, send me Thy help in my sufferings, that my enemies may see Thy power and be put to shame, 'because Thou, O Lord, hast helped me and comforted me' (Ps. 85:17)."

While the saint was praying thus, the executioners approached him, stripped him, and stretched out his hands and feet, saying:

"What will you do now, James? There is no mercy for you; your body is ordered to be torn into pieces. We must cut your fingers of hands and feet and your whole body from the neck to the heels, and after all this we will cut off your head. Consider what is better for you: to submit to the royal will and be unharmed and whole, or to die amid cruel tortures?"

Some of his friends also said to him with weeping:

"Why do you needlessly destroy your soul? Have pity on yourself, and do not waste your youth. Fulfill the king's will, bow down to our gods, that you may remain alive; and to your own God, if you wish, serve in secret."

Hearing such words, spoken with much weeping, the saint opened his mouth and said:

"Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and your children. I go to eternal rest, while you will all go to eternal torment. In dismembering my limbs, you thereby prepare for me an ineffable blessedness in heaven, but for yourselves terrible torments in hell, where you will burn in unquenchable fire together with the demons whom you now worship."

At these words of the saint, one of the royal attendants began to strike the guards[2], saying:

"Why do you stand gazing at him? Begin doing what you have been commanded."

And at once one of the executioners, seizing the saint's hand, cut off his thumb. The blessed one, lifting his gaze to heaven, said:

"My help and my hope, O Lord God! Thou drivest out demons with Thy single divine finger; receive, then, as a branch from a tree, this finger of mine, cut off by demonic force, and be merciful to me, a sinner; for branches are also cut from the vine, so that the vine may grow greener and flourish and bring forth much fruit."

Then the royal attendant, pitying the saint, said to him:

"Spare yourself, James, and obey the king's command; bow down to our gods. You see that we all pity you. And do not grieve over the severed finger: the physicians will heal you. Only do not destroy your health and your beauty any further."

The blessed one answered him:

"Do you not know that if the branches of a vine are cut off, then when the sun begins to warm it, it sprouts at the cut places and afterward begins to grow and bear fruit? So it is also with the faithful sons of God: planted in the vineyard of God and grafted onto the true Vine, the Lord Jesus, who said: 'I am the vine, you are the branches' (Jn. 15:5)."

2. In the Roman Empire, “speculators” was the name given to an elite detachment of praetorians charged with serving the emperor himself. Here the term “speculators” is to be understood as referring to soldiers attached to the Persian king. Having condemned St. James to have all his limbs cut off, Varahran naturally entrusted the execution of this sentence to the soldiers in his personal service.

They are cut off through temporal death, and they rise again in the age to come, where they flourish and are adorned with incorruptible glory and receive the fruits of eternal recompense.

As soon as the saint finished his speech, the executioner again approached him and cut off his second finger. But the saint, patiently enduring the torments, cried out:

"Receive, O Lord, also the second branch from Thy garden, which Thy right hand has planted."

His face was bright and full of joy, as if he were experiencing not great torments but the highest delight. Then they cut off his third finger too, but he continued to sing praises to the Triune God.

"Delivered from three temptations (that is, from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life), I glorify the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and with the three youths who were saved from the fire I confess Thee, O Lord, and together with the choir of martyrs I sing Thy name, O Christ."

When they cut off his fourth finger, he cried out:

"Thou who receivest praise from the four living creatures, accept as a sacrifice to Thyself also the suffering of my fourth finger, cut off for the confession of Thy holy name."

After they cut off James's fifth finger, he cried out loudly:

"Joy is coming for me, as at the wedding of the Divine Bridegroom for the five wise virgins[3]." Then his tormentors, before cutting off the fingers of his left hand, began to exhort him:

"James, spare your soul now, do not destroy yourself, but fulfill the royal will, and then you will be whole. Is it not better for you to remain unharmed and live, than to endure such torments and die? Do not grieve over the injury to your hand, for many live in peace with only one hand, and yet enjoy great riches and honors and delight in prosperity and every good thing."

The saint answered this:

"When shepherds shear sheep, having sheared the right side, do they not leave the left side unshorn? I am a sheep of the flock of Christ,

3. The reference is to Christ's parable of the 5 wise and 5 foolish virgins. (Mt. 25:1–13)

who have given myself into your hands for my Lord, that you may cut off my members as wool is sheared; and when my right hand is cut off, shall I spare my left? No, I shall not spare even all my members and my whole corruptible body, so that I may be clothed in incorruption."

Then, fixing his eyes on heaven, the saint cried out:

"I am small and of humble birth before Thee, O Lord! Thou, the great God, didst humble Thyself, taking on the human form, and didst endure crucifixion and slaughter for us; and I, my Master, cannot imitate Thy sufferings, but nevertheless I give myself over to torments and death, that Thou, at the general resurrection, mayest restore me to life whole and unharmed."

When the saint had finished his speech, the tormentors again came upon him and cut off the first finger of his left hand.

He said:

"Most praiseworthy Lord! I thank Thee that Thou hast deemed me worthy to offer up in sacrifice to Thee also the sixth finger, Thou who didst stretch forth Thy most pure hands upon the Cross on the sixth day and at the sixth hour.[4]"

Then they cut off the saint's seventh finger, and he cried out:

"Formerly, during each of the seven days of the week, my lips, together with the Prophet David, praised Thee for Thy righteous judgments; today I glorify Thy mercy with seven fingers cut off for the confession of Thee."

And they cut off James's eighth finger; he called out to God:

"O Lord! Thou Thyself didst receive circumcision on the eighth day according to the Law, and I bear the cutting off of eight fingers, so that, withdrawn from lawless men, I may be united with Thee, my Savior, and, stripped of the body, behold Thy Most Pure Face, which my soul desires to see as strongly as the thirsting hart longs for the springs of water (cf. Ps. 41:2)."

After this they cut off the saint's ninth finger; then the saint cried out:

"My Christ, Thou didst at the ninth hour deliver up Thy Spirit upon the Cross into the hands of Thy Father, and I, after the loss of my

ninth finger, amid sufferings, offer Thee thanks that Thou hast deemed me worthy to be stretched out for the cutting off of my members for Thy holy Name."

When they cut off James's tenth finger, he, glorifying the Lord, cried out aloud:

"On the ten-stringed psaltery I sing to Thee, O God, and I thank Thee, who hast helped me to endure, for the ten commandments of Thy Covenant, written on two tables, the cutting off of the fingers of both my hands."

Then some of those present, the royal nobles and friends of the saint, weeping bitterly, began to exhort him:

"Our beloved friend, we beg you, listen to us and carry out the royal will, that you not die amid cruel torments. Do not grieve over your fingers, for skilled physicians can heal you; only spare yourself, that you not lose the blessings of this present world, filled with joys and delights. You have abundant possessions, and therefore you can enjoy rest. Were you a beggar, you might still think: What hope have I in this life, what advantages can I expect, when I can do nothing and therefore cannot earn my sustenance? But you are rich, you have much gold, and if you only wish, you can live excellently, enjoying all the pleasures of this present world and making merry with your wife, your mother, and your dear friends. Why do you want to destroy your soul in vain? Therefore, submitting to the royal will, say only one word, and at once you will be freed from torments."

The Blessed One, looking at them, answered:

"'No one can serve two masters' (Mt. 6:24), and 'no one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God' (Lk. 9:62), for the Lord has said: 'He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me' (Mt. 10:37–38), 'and whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple' (Lk. 14:27). Therefore I will not heed your counsel, since your words lead me to perdition; I only beg you, do not spare me, but do as you have been commanded."

4. The Lord Jesus Christ was nailed to the tree on the sixth day of the week, counting from Sunday, and at the sixth hour of the day (the second hour according to our reckoning).

Then the tormentors of the saint were inflamed with wrath and, coming upon him, cut off his big toe on the right foot. Holy James cried out:

"I glorify Thee, my Christ, whose hands and feet were pierced, and I beseech Thee: deem me worthy that this my right foot, which endured the cutting off of its first toe, may afterwards stand at Thy right side."

And they cut off the second toe of the same foot. The saint continued to glorify God:

"On this day Thy goodness and mercy toward me, O Lord, have been doubled, for, having endured the cutting off of this second toe as well, I shall go to Thee, my Almighty and Life-giving God, who delivers me from the second eternal death."

They cut off the blessed one's third toe too, and they threw it down beside him. The Blessed One, looking at it, cried out, smiling joyfully:

"Go, O third toe, as a sign of the Holy Trinity, to your brethren; accepting temporal death for the sake of Christ, who rose after a death of three days, you, like a grain of wheat cast into the earth, shall receive together with the other members of my body a great reward on the day of the general resurrection."

After this they cut off the saint's fourth toe. Then the blessed one cried out aloud: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted? Hope in God" (Ps. 41:6), who saves by the power of the four-armed Cross, for I confess His holy Name.

They cut off James's fifth toe as well, and the saint continued to praise the Lord God, crying out:

"Lord, now I shall give thanks to Thee, who didst suffer on the Cross the five wounds,[5] I shall glorify Thy help, for Thou dost make me worthy of the lot of Thy faithful servants, who suffered for Thee and multiplied the five talents given to them.[6]"

After this, the tormentors began to cut off the toes of his left foot. When they cut off the little toe, Saint James cried out:

5. When our Lord Jesus Christ was raised up on the Cross, He was pinned with four nails, driven into the two hands and the two feet. Thus He received four wounds, or sores; the fifth was inflicted by a soldier after His death on the Cross, when the soldier pierced His side with a spear.
6. The parable of the talents is meant, under whose image are understood the spiritual gifts of men. (Mt. 25:14–30).

"Be strong also, little toe, sixth in order of those being cut off; for I trust in the great God, who mercifully strengthens me, who created you on the sixth day together with the large ones, and who will raise you, the little one, just as He will raise the large ones. For if not one hair of a man's head perishes without the will of God, how much more shalt thou, little toe, be not separated from the other toes, but shalt be glorified equally with them, since thou sufferest equally with them."

And they cut off Saint James's seventh toe, and he cried out aloud:

"Tear down this old temple, in which the seven-headed serpent[7] takes shelter, for the Creator, who rested on the seventh day from His works, is preparing for me in heaven another temple, not made with hands and eternal."

When they cut off Saint James's eighth toe, he cried out:

"He who saved eight souls from the water in Noah's ark (1 Pet. 3:20) will save me too, who pour out my blood like water. Behold, they have cut off my eighth toe, but I am like an anvil under the blows, which feels no pain but only becomes harder and firmer; for I feel no suffering in the cutting off of my members, since the good Physician, my own Creator, strengthens me and eases my sufferings. After all the weeks of my earthly life, when the all-blessed eighth day of eternity arrives, He will wholly restore me."

Then they cut off James's ninth toe, but the saint prayed bravely:

"I beseech Thee, O God, strengthen me in patience! My soul hopes in Thee, who by Thy grace hast established me in the purity of the nine orders of Angels. Therefore grant that I, who have endured the cutting off of these nine toes of the foot, may dwell with Thee, just as all nine orders of Angels dwell with Thee."

And they cut off his tenth toe; the saint cried out aloud:

"Jesus Christ, perfect God and perfect Man, behold, I offer Thee in sacrifice the double ten of my digits;" and he added: "Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an unholy nation" (Ps. 42:1), for the wicked did not spare Thy creature, but, like evil wolves, tore to pieces all my members.

7. The devil is meant, who corrupted human nature through sin.

A multitude of men and women, old men and youths, standing around, looking at the saint's torments, marvelled at his patience. The sufferer for Christ, looking at his tormentors, said to them:

"Why do you stand idle? Cut down the tree, from which the branches have already been severed."

And the tormentors, coming up to him, cut off his right leg; the saint cried out:

"Now I offer to the Heavenly King the instrument of my standing before Him, and I endure these torments out of love for Him, so that my severed right leg may stand in His Kingdom."

They also cut off his left leg; and he, raising his eyes to heaven, cried out:

"Lord, Thou hast heard me, for great is Thy mercy: Thou, God who workest wonders, hast delivered me from standing on the left leg, giving thereby a good omen, for the left side signifies eternal perdition.[8]"

After this they cut off the saint's right arm; he cried out:

"Lord, I shall sing Thy mercy forever, from generation to generation I shall proclaim Thy truth, for in me there has been manifestly fulfilled Thy word: 'And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee' (Mt. 5:30)."

Then they cut off the left arm of Saint James; he began to say:

"Lord, it is not the dead who will praise Thee, nor those who go down into hell and keep to the path of life on the left side, that is, of unrighteous deeds; but we, the living, who reject the left side (that is, unrighteousness), shall bless Thee forever, O Lord!"

After this they cut off the saint's right shoulder, and then he said:

"Praise the Lord, O my soul. I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing to my God while I have being" (Ps. 145:1–2), for He who laid upon His shoulder the lost sheep He had found and set it at His right hand (Lk. 15:4–7; Mt. 27:23), will remember my right shoulder too, and finding it cut off, will set it at His right hand.

And they cut off his left shoulder, and the saint said:

"On every side my enemies have surrounded me. But the Lord is my Helper and my Praise, upon whose shoulder rest the destinies of all; He

is my Savior: He will not permit me, who have endured the cutting off of my left shoulder, to turn to the left into the power of darkness."

Then they began to cut the shins of Saint James down to the knees. The saint, enduring grievous sufferings, cried out:

O Lord my God, who helpest those who fear Thee and put their hope in Thee, help me also, Thy servant, for I am tormented by a mortal illness.

Hearing this, the torturers said to him:

Did we not tell you that you would have to endure cruel torments and terrible pains? You did not believe us.

But the valiant sufferer answered them:

Do you know why I suffered? That it might be clear that I am fleshly; until now, by the help of God, I have despised all torments as one without a body; but now, in suffering, I show that I am fleshly. Yet soon the Lord will clothe me in a new body, which your instruments will no longer be able to torment and torture.

All these torments continued from early morning until the ninth hour, and throughout all this time a strong fragrance issued from the holy one's tortured body. When at last the torturers ceased tormenting the saint, the warrior of Christ, who by his sufferings had conquered the devil, cried out to God:

Holy, holy, holy art Thou, O God Almighty, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, praised by the Cherubim and glorified by the Seraphim, and magnified by all the heavenly host and every creature, God of the living and the dead. Help me, who am scarcely alive, for all my limbs have been cut off, and my body lies as though dead, with only the faintest spark of life still within me. I have no feet on which to stand before Thee, O Lord; no hands to lift up in prayer to Thee, my Master; no knees on which I might fall down and worship Thee, my Creator. My hands, feet, shoulders, and shins have been cut off, and I lie before Thee, O Master, like a ruined temple or a tree without branches. Therefore I beseech Thee, O Lover of mankind: do not abandon me utterly, but deliver my soul from prison.

8. The left side signifies everlasting perdition, because the Lord Himself, in His depiction of the Last Judgment, says that the Son of Man will set the sinners on His left side.

While he was praying thus, one of those present at the saint's execution took a knife and cut off his honorable head; and thus, having completed his struggles in martyrdom, the saint delivered his holy soul into the hands of God. His honorable body, however, cut into pieces, lay upon the ground until night. At night the faithful gathered all his limbs and buried them together with his body, glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit[9]. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

By strange and fearful torments, and by the valor of thy endurance, thou didst greatly amaze all, O much-suffering one; over each joint of thy limbs, as they were cut, thou didst utter wondrous prayers of thanksgiving unto the Lord. Therefore, receiving a crown in thy sufferings, thou didst ascend to the throne of the heavenly King, Christ God, O James: beseech Him to save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Encouraged by thy good wife, O patient-hearted one, and fearing the dread judgment, thou didst spit upon the command and terror of the Persians, O James, and didst appear as an honorable martyr, thy body cut like a branch.

* * *

Memory of Venerable Roman

Память преподобного Романа

Blessed Romanus was born in the city of Rhosus[10], near Antioch. Having reached mature age, he settled in Antioch. There he shut

9. St. James the martyr died in 421. When a decree was afterwards issued in Persia to burn the holy relics of the martyrs, Christians sent the relics of James to Jerusalem, whence in the reign of the emperor Marcian (in the middle of the 5th century) they were transferred by Peter, bishop of Edessa, to Tavenna in Egypt. According to another account, they were transferred from Persia to Italy, where the head of the holy martyr is kept to this day in the Vatican Basilica. There are also relics of him in Braga, in Portugal, where the translation of his relics is celebrated on 22 May.

10. Rhos: a city in Syria, not far from Antioch.

himself away outside the city in a small cell, where he remained until old age, having no fire. His food was bread, salt, and water, and that in such small quantities as were just enough to sustain his life. He wore a hair shirt, beneath which he bore heavy iron chains. For all this, St. Romanus was granted such divine grace that he healed various illnesses, and through his prayers many women who had no children were delivered from barrenness. By his exhortations, St. Romanus brought many who had gone astray back to the right path leading to the Kingdom of God. Having thus lived, he attained a venerable old age and departed peacefully to the Lord[11].

* * *

Memory of St. James, Bishop of Rostov[12]

Память святого Иакова, епископа Ростовского

St. James was from the region of Rostov. At an early age he embraced monastic life, and for his pious way of life was deemed worthy to be appointed Bishop of Rostov under Metropolitan Pimen and Grand Prince Demetrius Ioannovich Donskoy[13]. But he was Bishop of Rostov only briefly, and left his see on the following occasion.

A woman was convicted of iniquities and condemned to death by the Prince of Rostov and the boyars of Rostov. In her misfortune she fled to the feet of St. James, the hierarch of Rostov, and begged him to deliver her from death. St. James had compassion on her and, imitating Christ, who did not condemn the adulterous woman brought before Him, did not surrender the condemned woman to execution, but appointed a special place for her to repent for the rest of her life. Because of

11. The time of the life and labors of Venerable Romanus belongs to the 5th century.

12. No ancient Life of St. James has survived. In the Rostov Monastery of St. James, as late as the 1840s, there was an old Life, from which the particulars of the Hierarch's life have been drawn in the book "Description of the Rostov Monastery of the Savior and St. James–Demetrius" (St. Petersburg, 1849); these particulars are repeated here. A service to St. James is found in ancient manuscripts, none later than the 16th century, and is contained in the printed service Menaia under 28 October. The content of the service to St. James and the images with inscriptions on ancient icons agree with the accounts of the old Life.

13. This was in 1386; St. James was appointed Bishop of Rostov after Bishop Matthew, a Greek.

this action, the Prince of Rostov and the citizens grew angry with St. James and drove their good shepherd from his see.

As he departed from the city, St. James came to the shore of Lake Rostov and, taking off his hierarchal mantle, laid it upon the water. Making the sign of the Cross over himself, he stood upon it and sailed across the lake. Having gone about a verst and a half beyond the city, he again came ashore at the place where the Yakovlevsky Monastery now stands.

This extraordinary miracle amazed the prince and the people. All understood that they had acted unjustly and cruelly toward their hierarch, and begged forgiveness for their sin, beseeching him with tears to return to his hierarchal see. In his guilelessness and meekness, the hierarch forgave them their grave sin; he could never be angry with anyone, but resolutely refused to return to his see.

At that very place, a verst and a half from the city, where St. James had come ashore[14], he built himself a solitary hut and began to live there.

The hierarch had many admirers, and many of them began to come to live with him. Then he built cells for the brethren, and afterward a church in the name of the Conception of St. Anna. St. James also ended his days in this monastery[15].

During James's episcopacy in Rostov, a heretic named Marcian appeared. He taught that the holy icons should not be venerated, calling them idols, and spread other impious ideas. By his eloquence and learning in books he attracted the attention of the Prince of Rostov, the boyars, and the people. But James, the hierarch of Rostov, held a disputation with the heretic in the presence of the prince and the people, and refuted his false teaching, so that the heretic departed from Rostov in disgrace.

The relics of St. James rest in the monastery he founded, called Yakovlevsky in honor of its founder.

14. To this same place, more than three hundred years earlier, St. Leontius withdrew from the city of Rostov, having been expelled by the pagans. The church of the Archangel Michael founded by St. Leontius now stands 30 sazhens from the enclosure of the St. James Monastery.
15. St. James reposed in 1392.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Chosen for God from thy youth, O Hierarch James, thou wast therefore honored with the rank of bishop, and didst shepherd the people entrusted to thee by God. Wherefore, after thy repose, thou didst also receive from God the gift of working miracles, to heal various illnesses. Pray for us who celebrate thy honorable memory, that we may continually magnify thee.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As a fellow-throned bishop and a distinguished champion among hierarchs, O Hierarch James, continually preserve thy fatherland, the city, and the people who honor thee with faith and worship thy honorable relics, that with a loud voice we may cry to thee: Rejoice, O James, wise in God.

* * *

Memory of St. Palladius, Bishop of Helenopolis

Память святого Палладия, епископа Еленопольского

St. Palladius was from Galatia[16]. In the twentieth year of his life he came to Alexandria[17], where he devoted himself to the struggles of monastic life, first in the environs of that city, and then, three years later, in the desert of Nitria[18] and Scetis[19], where he dwelt in strict stillness for nine years. But illness compelled him to leave the desert he loved, and for a change of air he moved to Bethlehem in Palestine, and a year later to Bithynia[20], where the citizens of the city of Helenopolis soon chose him for their episcopal throne.

St. Palladius enjoyed the special confidence of St. John Chrysostom and was himself a fervent adherent and admirer of the great universal

16. Galatia: a small, mountainous but fertile region of Asia Minor.
17. This was in 388.
18. The Nitrian Desert: a favorite place of ascetic labor of the early Christian hermits, in Lower Egypt, 70 miles from Alexandria.

teacher. Therefore, when St. John Chrysostom fell victim to unjust persecution[21], Palladius too, known for his devotion to God's hierarch, was forced to hide in various places until at last he arrived in Rome[22]. Honorius, Emperor of the Western Roman Empire, added Palladius to the embassy charged with pleading John Chrysostom's cause before the Eastern Emperor Arcadius. But the Roman envoys returned without success, while Palladius was detained and exiled to Siena[23], whence, after the death of Arcadius, he was transferred to Antinoë[24]. Finally, after another four years had passed, he returned to his see, where, at the request of a pious and distinguished court official named Lausus, he composed a book in honor of the latter, called the *Lausiac History*. In this book he described the ascetic struggles and miracles of the Venerable men and women of Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Rome, who lived in the IV and early V century[25]. Toward the end of his life, St. Palladius was transferred to the episcopal see in the city of Aspuka, in Galatia, where, having governed well the flock entrusted to him, he peacefully reposed in the Lord[26].

* * *

19. The Desert of Scete lay a day's journey (25–30 versts) from Mount Nitria, in the northwestern part of Egypt. It was a waterless, stony desert, a favorite place of the Egyptian desert-dwellers, renowned for the ascetic feats of the monks who lived there. From this locality the desert monasteries in which the most zealous monks settled for the strictest solitude and unbroken silence, for the sake of abiding in the One God, afterwards received the name of "skete."
20. Bithynia: a northern region of Asia Minor.
21. From April 404.
22. In 405.
23. Syene: a city in Upper (Northern) Egypt, on the border with Ethiopia, lying on the north side of the first Nile cataract, on the eastern bank of the Nile, at its rapids; it still exists under the name Aswan.
24. Antinoë: a fairly important city of antiquity in Middle Egypt.
25. The Lausiac History was compiled in 420. In view of the edifying and instructive character of this collection, the church typikon prescribes that readings from it be made at Matins during the Holy Great Lent.
26. St. Palladius of Helenopolis reposed in 430.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 28

28 ноября

New Calendar November 28 · Old Calendar December 11 (civil dates)

Sufferings of the Holy Venerable Martyr Stephen the New

Страдание святого преподобномученика Стефана Нового

Venerable Stephen was born in the capital of the Greek kingdom, Constantinople. His parents were distinguished by piety and by love for the poor. Having two daughters, they grieved that God did not give them a son, for they desired a male heir. Seeking to win the mercy of God, they showed kindness to the poor and fervently prayed to the Lord, asking Him for the birth of a boy. The mother of Venerable Stephen, named Anna, poured out her heart with particular zeal in tearful prayers before God, imitating in this zeal the mother of the Prophet Samuel, who bore the same name.

On one Friday, while standing in prayer in the Blachernae church,[1] she turned her gaze to the icon of the Most Pure Lady and with tears besought Her to grant her a son; at the same time she vowed to the Mother of God that, if her prayer were fulfilled, she would offer the child as a gift to the Only-begotten Son and Word of God, incarnate of the Most Pure One. Weary from long prayer and tears, she fell asleep in the church, and during her sleep she saw our Lady, the Most Holy Theotokos, shining with ineffable beauty. The Queen of Heaven addressed her with these words:

1. The famous Church of the Blachernae stood in Blachernae, a district of Constantinople, almost on the very shore of the Sea of Marmara. Here was the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, and her robe, kept in a special reliquary, which had been brought to Nizania in the fifth century.

"Go in peace, woman, for you have a son in your womb, according to your petition."

Having said this, the Lady became invisible. Anna, first coming to herself as if from terror, then came into great joy, and on returning home she indeed felt that she had conceived in her womb.

At that time, under the pious Greek emperor Anastasius (not the one who succeeded to the throne after Zeno and was a heretic,[2] but another, who came to the throne later[3]), Saint Germanus was chosen and raised to the patriarchate in Constantinople.[4] On the day of the new patriarch's installation, crowds of people flocked into the church of Saint Sophia to see the newly elected hierarch. Among the people were Anna and her husband, she already with child. While she was standing in the church, it happened that the patriarch passed by her. Anna cried out, addressing the hierarch:

"Bless, Father, what has been conceived in my womb!"

Looking at her and, with his inner eyes, foreseeing the future, the patriarch said:

"May the Lord bless that (which has been conceived) through the prayers of the holy protomartyr!"

By these words he foretold that from Anna a male child would be born, who would be named Stephen in honor of the protomartyr Stephen. The prophecy of the holy patriarch was accompanied, and as it were confirmed, by a miraculous sign: during the utterance of the prophecy, a fiery flame issued from his mouth together with the words, as Anna clearly saw (and as she later said, confirming her words with an oath).

When the appointed number of days had passed, Anna gave birth to a male infant; and he was given the name Stephen, in accordance with the prophecy of the holy Patriarch Germanus.[5] On the evening of Great Saturday the newborn infant was baptized by the patriarch himself.

On the day of her purification, the happy mother, taking the infant, brought him to the church of the Most Holy Theotokos at Blachernae,

2. The Byzantine Emperor Zeno reigned in 474–491. He was succeeded on the throne by Anastasius I, who reigned in 491–518.
3. The reference here is to Emperor Anastasius II (713–715).
4. Patriarch Germanus I governed the Byzantine Church from 715 to 730.
5. This was in 715.

and, holding him in her arms, stood before the honored icon of the Queen of Heaven, before which she had previously prayed for the gift of a son. Gazing upon the icon, she said:

"Accept, O Most Pure One, this beloved son of mine, whom You have granted me; accept him whom, even before his conception, I promised to dedicate to You and to Your Only-begotten Son. To You, after God, I entrust him. Be to him both Mother and Nurse, and his Providence."

Having said this and much else, and having prayed before the holy icon, she returned to her house and nurtured her son with all diligence.

Meanwhile, after Anastasius, Theodosius ascended the imperial throne,[6] and after Theodosius, Leo the Isaurian.[7] During all this time the blessed youth Stephen grew in body and was strengthened in spirit, studying the Divine Scriptures. By the grace of the Lord he advanced in understanding and in the wisdom of God, for he showed great zeal in reading the holy books, instructing himself in the law of God day and night; he especially loved to read the works of Saint John Chrysostom.

Great disturbances arose in the Church of God on account of the iconoclastic heresy, whose most zealous adherent was the emperor himself, Leo the Isaurian. The latter became an iconoclast under the influence of Jewish sorcerers, concerning which there is the following account.

Some years before the reign of Leo the Isaurian, certain Jews who had come from Laodicea in Phoenicia[8] came to Isiph, one of the Arab princes.[9] Falsely prophesying and practicing sorcery, they promised him forty years of life and dominion over the Arabs, if he would command that throughout his whole domain the holy icons be thrown out of

6. The reference is to Theodosius III of Adramyttium, who reigned in 715–716.

7. Emperor Leo III the Isaurian reigned in 716–741. He was called "the Isaurian" because he was a native of Isauria, a province situated in the south of Asia Minor.

8. Laodicea of Phoenicia was situated on the very shore of the Mediterranean Sea, somewhat south of Syrian Antioch.

9. Arabia is a fairly large peninsula in the south of Asia, between the Red or Black Sea and the Persian Gulf. The population of Arabia is of Semitic origin and leads chiefly a nomadic way of life. Arabia is divided into many small principalities, each headed by a sheikh. Christianity penetrated into Arabia very early (as may be concluded from Acts 2:11; Gal. 1:17), and tradition says that the Apostle Bartholomew preached Christianity there.

the churches and destroyed. Isiph believed them and issued an order that the venerable icons be thrown out of the churches everywhere and given over to the fire. But the Lord, the Avenger of wrongs, struck him, so that he died having lived not even one year. His son, succeeding his father in the principality, wished to subject those Jews to a cruel execution as false prophets and sorcerers; but they, escaping the prince's wrath, left Arabia and fled to Isauria.

Once, they were resting there beside a spring. And behold, a youth of Isaurian birth, named Leo, a man of great stature and very handsome, passed by. He wished to rest at the same spring where the Jewish sorcerers were sitting, and, leaving the road, he sat down with them. Looking at the youth, the sorcerers began to foretell that he would be emperor in Greece. Being of humble origin and moreover poor, barely earning his livelihood by a simple handicraft, Leo did not believe the Jews. But they insistently repeated their prophecy, saying that he would certainly be emperor, if he swore that, when he had obtained the kingdom, he would do whatever they asked of him then. And he swore to them, in the church of Saint Theodore, which was not far from that place, to fulfill their request; after this oath they parted.

Soon after this, that youth was enrolled in the army by the patrician Sesinius,[10] and here he quickly rose and became a spatharius.[11] Later the emperor Anastasius II gave him the title of patrician and appointed him governor of a province in Asia Minor. After Anastasius's death, Theodosius was proclaimed emperor, but Leo did not acknowledge him and raised a rebellion. By the permission of God, he succeeded in overthrowing Theodosius and seizing the imperial throne himself. At first he was a pious and orthodox emperor, but afterward he fell into impiety, for soon those Jews who had foretold his reign by sorcery came to him. They reminded Leo of his promise, confirmed by an oath, and said

10. The title of patrician originally belonged only to the children of senators, who were called *patres* in Latin. Later this name came to be applied to all persons of noble Roman descent. But Emperor Constantine made the title of patrician a personal dignity, bestowed upon the highest officials, which was not passed on by inheritance.

11. *Spatharios* was a sword-bearer, a royal bodyguard. Subsequently the designation *spatharios* became merely an honorary title given to military persons, and it no longer carried with it the duty of guarding the emperor.

that now the time had come to fulfill whatever they asked of him. The emperor asked them:

"What do you want from me?"

They, being enemies of Christ and of the Christian faith, asked him for no gold, no silver, nor any other treasures, but demanded that he cast the holy icons out of the churches of God.

"O King!" they said, "if you do this, God will preserve your reign for many years; but if you do not, you will soon lose both kingdom and life."

Remembering that the first prophecy of those sorcerers, concerning his obtaining the kingdom, had been fulfilled, Leo feared that this prophecy too, concerning his loss of the kingdom together with his life if he did not obey them, would be fulfilled. Therefore he issued a decree commanding that the holy icons be cast out of churches and houses and trampled underfoot; at the same time, the impious emperor called the icons idols and those who venerated them idolaters.

And there was a great disturbance in the Church of Christ: some obeyed the imperial command, threw out the venerable icons and trampled them, while others resisted the emperor and suffered many torments for the veneration of icons. Saint Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, likewise did not partake of the emperor's heresy and strongly opposed Leo's impious command. For this the emperor dismissed the saint from the patriarchate in disgrace, and in his place installed one of his own like-minded men, a certain heretic Anastasius.[12] Many bishops and clergy then suffered various torments for venerating the holy icons.

In Constantinople, by the church of Saint Sophia, there stood a huge building called the garden of learning. From ancient times a great multitude of books had been gathered in it, numbering more than three hundred thousand. For the sake of these books, many most learned and wise men dwelt in the building, whom the emperor repeatedly tried to draw into his impious heresy, but each time without success. Then he commanded that this building be surrounded with brushwood and set

12. The Patriarch of Constantinople Anastasius governed the Church from 730 to 753.

on fire, and thus burned it together with the books and the learned men who were there. The newly installed patriarch Anastasius, seeking to please the emperor, ordered that the image of the Savior, which was on the bronze gates of that building, be taken down and cast to the ground.

Carrying out the Patriarch's command, one soldier set a ladder in place and began climbing it toward the icon, intending to throw it down. But the pious women who happened to be there, burning with zeal for piety, pulled the ladder out from under him and cast it to the ground; the soldier fell, was broken, and died. The women hastened to hide themselves in the church, where the Patriarch then was, standing in the holy place as an abomination of desolation[13], installed in place of the most holy Germanus. Seeing the Patriarch, the women began to call him loudly a destroyer of the holy dogmas, a hireling and a wolf who had seized the sheep, and not the true shepherd of Christ's flock; then they began to throw stones at him. The Patriarch, frightened, at once went to the Emperor and reported to him the outrage the women had done to him (the Patriarch). The enraged Emperor sent soldiers with drawn swords to punish the women who had done the Patriarch this dishonor, and all those holy women were cut down by the swords for the zeal for piety they had shown. Then a great sorrow came upon the Orthodox. Many of them were cast into prison and held in chains; others were subjected to merciless tortures and were put to death; and some left their homes, villages and estates and, hiding from the hands of the tormentors, fled into the wilderness.

The parents of Stephen, blessed from his mother's womb, also wished to escape the cruel persecution of the Orthodox, so as to keep their piety undefiled. They waited only for their son to grow up, in order to dedicate him to the service of God in the monastic rank, as they had promised the Mother of God. But they did not wish to give Stephen to any of the Byzantine monasteries, which were crowded with those who had fled there from the persecutors. They preferred to dedicate

13. The expression "abomination of desolation" is taken from the book of Daniel (Dan. 9:27; cf. Mt. 24:15). It is applied to Anastasius to indicate his unworthiness to be the successor of St. Germanus.

their son to God on Mount Auxentius, which lay in Bithynia[14] and received its name from the Venerable Father Auxentius, who was the first to settle there, seeking silence. The place was secluded and removed from all worldly commotion. After Auxentius, here labored Sergius, the disciple and imitator of Auxentius' holy life; after Sergius, Vendian, who had been tested in the virtues; then the blessed Gregory; and after him the Venerable John. To him the parents of Stephen brought their sixteen-year-old son and, entrusting the youth to the holy elder, begged him to clothe their son in the angelic habit and teach him to serve God. Looking at Stephen, and with prophetic eyes foreseeing in him the grace of God, the elder said:

"Truly the Spirit of God rests upon this youth."

And he received the blessed youth with love, tonsured him into the monastic rank, and began to instruct him in the labors of the silent life.

Having received the angelic habit, the blessed youth Stephen also lived the angelic life, appearing as a perfect monk. He did not grow slack in fasting and prayer; he had a meek disposition, a humble heart, a spirit of tender compunction; he constantly remained in silence, kept the purity of his body and the integrity of virginity, and showed in his life a pattern of true poverty and of hermit's non-possession. He bore without murmuring the labor of monastic obedience and carefully fulfilled whatever was laid upon him, showing zeal in everything and distinguishing himself by diligence. Among other things, the water needed for drinking was obtained from a place very far from the cave where Stephen labored. But the saint brought the required amount of it every day, making a considerable journey and climbing the mountain with the water with difficulty. And not only water, but everything needful he brought from distant places, wearing himself out with unbearable toil. Yet the blessed Stephen never complained of the burden of his labors, never once murmured, and, alongside obedience, showed to his venerable instructor a love that was neither flattering nor hypocritical. Who could tell of his other virtues, labors and struggles, in which he had exercised himself from youth?

14. Mount Auxentius was situated opposite Constantinople, by the Gulf of Nicomedia.

The instructor of the blessed Stephen, the Venerable John, seeing the zeal of his disciple in the labors of the monastic life, rejoiced in spirit, and, like the wind kindling a flame in a smoldering coal, with his God-inspired words and instructions he kindled in the blessed one a desire for still greater labors for the glory of the Lord, a still warmer love for Him, and the fear of God. He himself was a man perfect in the virtues, filled with the grace of God, and was rewarded by God with the gift of prophetic foresight.

Once the blessed Stephen, having performed a certain obedience and returning to his instructor, saw that the elder, having laid his head at the window of the cave, was weeping bitterly. Stephen stopped at the window and waited for the holy elder to give him his customary blessing. And for a long time he stood in silence, marveling at the elder's bitter sobbing and not daring to ask him the cause of his weeping. But the elder himself said to him:

"Beloved son, you are the cause of my sorrow; it is for you that I weep so bitterly. For the Lord has revealed to me that this place will flourish and be glorified through you, but the iconoclasts will ruin and lay it waste."

Hearing this from his teacher, the blessed Stephen heaved a heavy sigh and said:

"Tell me, holy father, all that the Lord has revealed to you concerning me: what will befall me? Shall I not perish, being corrupted by the heretical teaching of the iconoclasts?"

The elder answered:

"No, my child, this will never happen to you; but I forewarn you in the words of the Apostle: Eph. 5, ‘See then that you walk circumspectly,’ Mt. 24, ‘He who endures to the end will be saved.’"

This and much else he said to Stephen, and told him everything that was to befall him in the future.

Meanwhile the father of the Venerable Stephen died. Learning of this, the Venerable one, taking his spiritual father's blessing, set off for Byzantium and there honored his fleshly parent with a fitting burial; then he sold all the property left after him and distributed the money to the poor. Having settled these affairs, he took with him his mother and

one of his sisters (the other sister had already been tonsured into the monastic life in one of the Byzantine convents for women) and placed them in a women's monastery founded and consecrated by the aforementioned Venerable Auxentius, who named it "Trichinaria," that is, "of hair shirts." This name was given to the monastery partly because of the difficulty and inconvenience of the road leading to it, and partly because of the hardships of monastic life there, for the monastery was marked by the strictness of its rule, and the nuns who dwelt in it were required to wear hair shirts. In this monastery Saint Stephen tonsured his mother and sister into the monastic life; he himself returned to his venerable instructor and, living with him, exercised himself in the customary monastic labors and struggles.

After some time, the spiritual father and teacher of the blessed Stephen, the Venerable John, departed in peace to the Lord; having wept over him, the saint went to announce his death to the hermits living nearby, and all of them, gathering together, with weeping and sobbing and with fitting chanting, committed the honorable body of the Venerable John to burial. The blessed Stephen then remained to labor alone in the cave, being a little more than thirty years old.

Having inherited the cave of his teacher, the holy man who had gone to the Lord, and of the other venerable fathers who had lived in it before him, Blessed Stephen also became the heir of their perfect and virtuous life. For this reason hermits from the surrounding places began to come to him, desiring to live together with him and to have in him a guide and teacher. Among such were Marinus, a good and well-mannered man; John and Christopher; Zacharias, a devout man; and finally two evil men, Sergius and Stephen, of whom we shall speak below. There came to the Venerable Stephen also six other men, whose names are written in the book of those who labor for the Lord Christ. Thus a monastery was formed, whose brethren devoted themselves unceasingly to the monastic exploits, having St. Stephen as their hegumen. All obtained their food by the sweat of their brow and the labor of their hands; and the Venerable Stephen, for his part, had the skill of copying books well, and by copying and selling them he supported himself and the others. And God, who fed Israel in the wilderness, sent

what was needful also to these servants of His, so that the words of the Gospel were fulfilled in them: Mt. 6, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." As the disciples of Blessed Stephen increased, he saw that his silence, for which he had so longed, was broken. Then the saint called to himself the aforementioned Marinus and entrusted to him the leadership of the monastery and the care of it. He himself withdrew to another place on that mountain and built for himself a small cell, in which he shut himself up, being forty-two years of age from his birth[15]. This cell had no roof at all. Dwelling in it for some time in complete solitude and stillness, the saint unceasingly conversed with God, given over to prayer. Yet even in his new place of ascetic labor, Blessed Stephen could not escape those who desired to receive benefit for their souls from him. As a city set upon a hill cannot remain unseen, and as a man bearing fragrances cannot be hidden, so too a virtuous man, who has ascended to the height of perfection as to a mountain, and who by his good deeds is fragrant as with aromas, cannot conceal himself from people. This was the case with Blessed Stephen. The report of his ascetic life spread far, and just as bees swarm to honey, so to the Venerable came those seeking salvation from every quarter, wishing to receive edification for themselves from his teaching words and from his very life. Among those who came to the Venerable were not only pious men but also women. Of these one noble widow named Anna deserves particular notice. Having been left, on the death of her husband, very young and without children, she sold all her property and distributed it to the poor; then, coming to the Venerable Stephen, she was tonsured by him into the monastic habit and sent to the women's monastery of Trichinarion.

At this time Emperor Leo the Isaurian died. He was succeeded by his son Constantine Copronymus[16], who rose against the Church of God even more strongly than his father, casting the holy icons out of the churches and burning them with fire. Opponents of his impiety appeared in many of the most famous and wise men of the monastic order, who demonstrated to him his wrong and convicted him of heresy.

15. This was in 756 A.D.
16. Emperor Constantine V Copronymus reigned from 741 to 775.

Then Copronymus flamed with unbridled malice against the monks, subjecting them to cruel persecutions and reviling them in every way. He called the monastic habit a garment of darkness, and the monks themselves he named idolaters because they stood with great zeal for the veneration of the holy icons. At the same time the lawless emperor gathered a great multitude of unreasoning people who heeded his commands, and ordered them to swear with an oath that they would not venerate the holy icons but would call them idols, would have no fellowship with the monks, nor receive the Most Pure Mysteries from their hands; and whoever chanced to meet a monk should throw stones at him, calling him benighted, a son of darkness and an idolater.

While all this was taking place, the impious Patriarch of Constantinople Anastasius died, whom Leo the Isaurian had raised to the patriarchate after St. Germanus. In Anastasius's place Copronymus raised to the patriarchate a monk of the same name, Constantine, who was of one mind with him[17]. In doing so, the impious emperor raised him to the patriarchal throne by his own power alone, without a conciliar election: he himself led him up to the ambo and himself placed the omophorion upon him, proclaiming that he was worthy of the patriarchal rank. After this the two of them, the emperor and the new patriarch, consulted together and sent letters to all the cities, summoning all the bishops to a council in the imperial city for the condemnation and abolition of the veneration of icons. And great lawlessness was then perpetrated in Constantinople. Even the sacred vessels in which the Divine Mysteries were celebrated were trampled underfoot, since sacred images were upon them. The holy icons were thrown, some into the marsh, others into the sea, others into the fire, and some were cut and broken to pieces with axes. And those icons which were on the church walls were some scraped off with iron, others were smeared over with paint. The lawless ones did not spare even the most beautiful church in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos at the Blachernae, which had been richly adorned with depictions of all the events of the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ, from His Incarnation to His Crucifixion and

17. The reference is to the Patriarch of Constantinople Constantine II, who governed the Byzantine Church from 754 to 766.

Resurrection. In this church the lawless emperor Copronymus commanded that all its painted ornaments, gleaming with gold and precious stones, be destroyed, and, as it were, stripped her bare, depriving her as a queen of her purple; in place of all this he ordered its walls to be painted with depictions of trees, beasts and birds. And the words of David were fulfilled in that time: Ps. 78:1–2, "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth."

For then the iconoclasts also cast out the relics of the saints from the churches and threw them either into the fire or into the sea, or dragged them outside the city and cast them down from the mountains into the abysses and marshes. Those who boldly stood up for the honor of the holy icons and relics the wicked heretics tormented without mercy and delivered to a bitter death, pouring out their blood like water; and the bodies of those tormented for the icons they left unburied and cast to be eaten by birds of prey and beasts. Then came a great sorrow for all the Orthodox, such as had not been from the very beginning of the world.

Fleeing the persecutions raised against the Orthodox, many monks left Constantinople and fled to the Venerable Stephen, hoping to find from him good counsel and salutary instruction. The saint for a long time comforted them with his God-wise words and taught them to stand firm in piety, not fearing to shed even their own blood for the holy icons; to those who lacked sufficient courage and feared torments he advised fleeing to other lands where there was no persecution by the iconoclasts. Then all the Byzantine monasteries were emptied, and one could no longer see any monk in the royal city. For some of the monks, standing firmly for Orthodoxy, laid down their souls, being slain; others, wishing to save their life together with the right faith, fled to other lands and were scattered over the whole face of the earth. In the year 754 after the Nativity of Christ an iconoclastic council was convened at Constantinople, at which 838 Eastern bishops were present, but there was not a single patriarch except only the Constantinopolitan false pat-

riarch Constantine, the heretic and like-minded with the emperor. The Blachernae church of the Most Holy Theotokos was appointed as the place for the council, which church, having been deprived of its painted ornaments, presented the appearance of a wilderness and a den of robbers. In this church all the bishops who had arrived gathered together with the lawless emperor and the false patriarch. And after long deliberations and disputes, the emperor persuaded all the bishops to agree with him and to join his godless blasphemy. Many of the bishops clearly saw the error of the emperor and the patriarch, but, fearing the wrath of the emperor and the patriarch, and fearing lest new calamities should come upon the Orthodox, they did not dare to say anything against the emperor and joined in the impious heresy. Afterwards, at the true Seventh Ecumenical Council, held in the reign of Constantine the Younger and his mother Irene[18], they renounced the iconoclastic heresy and with repentance turned back to right belief; but now they followed the impious emperor and patriarch, agreeing with their heretical opinions. And there were drawn up there such impious and abominable false dogmas:

1) The holy icons were commanded to be honored as idols.

2) All who venerated the holy icons were given over to anathema, and the anathema was proclaimed also upon St. Germanus, who had been Patriarch of Constantinople before the heretic Anastasius (the lawless heretics, themselves being accursed, cursed a holy and righteous man, but God blessed him, so that the Scripture was fulfilled: Ps. 108, "Let them curse, but bless thou").

3) It was commanded to confess that not only the saints, after their death, cannot help us by their intercession, but that not even the Mother of God Herself can.

4) It was forbidden to call the Apostles, martyrs, confessors, venerable ones, and all who were well-pleasing to God, saints.

5) This impious council, having made such definitions, was reckoned among the first six Ecumenical Councils, and it was commanded that it

18. The reference is to Constantine VI Porphyrogenitus, who reigned from 780 to 797. The Empress Irene, his mother and companion of 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.

be called the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Whoever did not acknowledge that council was subjected to anathema, like Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, and Dioscorus[19].

At this council, the most important bishops after the patriarch were Theodosius, Bishop of Ephesus; Constantine, Bishop of Nicomedia; Nacolius, Bishop of Nacolia; and also Sisinius and Basil.

Having accomplished their lawless deed, the bishops signed the definitions they had drawn up, so that the words of Scripture were fulfilled in them: "Iniquity came forth from Babylon, from elders who seemed to govern the people" (Dan. 13:5); and again: "Many shepherds have corrupted My vineyard; they have trampled My portion under foot; they have made My beloved portion a desolate wilderness" (Jer. 12:10).

At the end of the council's deliberations, the bishops who had taken part in it taught the people to proclaim solemnly with joy: "Today salvation has come to the world, for through your care, O emperor, we have been delivered from idols."

Meanwhile, the lawless emperor Constantine Copronymus heard of the Venerable Stephen, who was struggling in ascetic labors on Mount Auxentius. The emperor learned of his piety and virtuous life, of his wisdom in Holy Scripture, and that his fame had spread far and wide, so that all ranked him with the holy fathers of old; and, finally, he learned that Stephen was a zealous venerator of icons, teaching others also to venerate the holy icons. Having learned all this, Copronymus devised a plan to seduce the blessed Stephen and bring him to agreement with himself, hoping that if he won him over to his side, he would thereby lend particular firmness and strength to his impious belief. So he summoned one of his patricians, named Callistus, who held the foremost place in the imperial council. Callistus was a skilled and eloquent

19. Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches and Dioscorus were heresiarchs. Arius taught that the Son of God is a created being, not of the same dignity as God the Father. Nestorius taught that Jesus Christ is not true God but a man, who for the holiness of his life was granted a special grace of God. Eutyches and Dioscorus were representatives of the Monophysite heresy, which taught of one divine nature in Jesus Christ, which absorbed in him the human nature. The first to express this idea was Eutyches, archimandrite of one of the Constantinopolitan monasteries. Dioscorus (Patriarch of Alexandria, 444–451) became a zealous champion of this idea.

orator, and the impious emperor put his trust in his persuasive art. He commanded him to go to the Venerable Stephen and deliver the imperial order that the Venerable should renounce the veneration of icons and sign the definitions drawn up at the lawless iconoclast council. The emperor also sent the Venerable, through Callistus, various gifts—not gold or silver, however, for he knew the Venerable had no need of these, but various fruits on which the Venerable usually lived: dates, almonds, and figs[20].

When Callistus came to the Venerable Stephen[21], he offered him the gifts and then addressed him with a skillfully composed speech, in which he urged the Venerable at length to obey the emperor and sign the definitions of the iconoclast council. Callistus sought to support his words with sayings from the holy books, interpreting certain passages of Scripture in his own way. But the saint found wise answers to all Callistus's words and at last said to him boldly:

"I will not sign the definitions of your council, which is full of lies and injustice, for I do not wish to call 'bitter sweet, and darkness light,' lest I bring upon my head the prophetic curse[22]. I fear not the emperor's threats, and am ready even to suffer death for the holy icons."

Then he stretched out his hand, closed his fingers into a hollow, and said:

"Even if there were no more blood in me than this handful could contain, I would not fear to shed it for the image of my Christ. As for the gifts you have brought me from your emperor, take them back; for I wish to act according to the Holy Scripture, which says: 'Let the oil of a sinner not anoint my head, and let heretical food not delight my throat' (cf. Ps. 140:5)."

20. *Dates* are the fruit of palm trees, having a berry-like form; their size varies: with some palms the fruit is the size of a pea, with others it is larger than a human head. When the fruit of the palm trees ripens, it is either plucked by hand, or the tree is shaken so that the fruit falls onto spread mats. Dates are eaten both fresh and dried. *Figs* are the fruit of the fig tree, a tree well known from the Holy Scripture. In their natural state these fruits resemble a pear. *Almonds* are the nuts of the almond tree (in Slavonic, *amigdal*).

21. In 763.

22. The reference is to the following words of the prophet Isaiah (Is. 5:20): "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

Having achieved nothing, Callistus returned and told the emperor everything he had heard from Stephen. When the emperor heard this, he fell into a great rage and immediately sent Callistus again, together with soldiers, to Mount Auxentius, commanding them to seize the Venerable, take him to the Trichinarion Monastery below the mountain, and imprison him there. Callistus and the soldiers sent with him did as they were commanded: they attacked the saint's cell, kicked down the door, and, without the least mercy, dragged out the Venerable and took him to the Trichinarion Monastery, where they shut him in prison. All the disciples of St. Stephen were also seized and taken to the same prison. The soldiers stationed themselves at the prison doors and guarded all the prisoners, awaiting further orders from the emperor.

While in prison, blessed Stephen and all his disciples boldly sang: "We venerate Thine all-pure image, O Good One"[23].

They remained in prison for six days, eating no food at all throughout that time. On the seventh day, an order came from the emperor to return Stephen to his cell, for the emperor had then received news that the Scythians had invaded his empire[24]. Intending to repel the Scythian invasion, the emperor set aside, for a time, his persecution of the Venerable.

But Callistus, sharing the emperor's hatred of him, secretly summoned one of the blessed man's disciples, namely Sergius, of whom we wished to tell. Callistus summoned him and seduced him with flattering words and a great quantity of gold and silver, persuading him to invent various slanders against the Venerable. Callistus acted thus in the hope that people would more readily believe slanders devised by the Venerable's own disciple, thinking that a man who knew Stephen's life was bearing witness against him. But Sergius, a second Judas, loving silver and gold, betrayed his teacher and began to devise every means of weaving a net of false accusations against the saint, that blameless and innocent father. Yet in all his spotless life he could find, as in the

23. A stichera for the feast of the translation of the Image of Christ the Savior not made by hands.

24. The Scythians were a savage people who dwelt to the north of the Black Sea, within the bounds of present-day southern Russia, and in the lower reaches of the Danube.

sun, not one stain; therefore, he left the monastery of St. Stephen like a lost sheep that has forsaken the flock, and made friends with a certain imperial official named Avlikalam, who collected taxes for the emperor in Nicomedia. He made him an accomplice in his malice, and the two sought false charges against the saint. Having agreed together, they drew up a lengthy written statement, alleging that Stephen reviled and despised the emperor as a heretic, and that he stirred up the people and incited all who came to him to rebel against the emperor. They devised many other slanders against the Venerable, which we shall not recount, lest we be tedious and offend the ears of our readers, for the impious slanderers said many shameful things. These lawless men also wrote against blessed Anna, who had left the vain world, been tonsured into the angelic habit by the hand of the Venerable Stephen, and led the monastic life in the Trichinarion Monastery. The slanderers falsely accused her of meeting Stephen by night and joining him in an impure sin. They drew into this slander one of blessed Anna's bondwomen, persuading her to bear witness to the same; as a reward, they promised her not only freedom and a great quantity of gold, but also that they would give her in marriage to a distinguished man serving at the imperial court. Having drawn up this statement, filled with slanders against the Venerable, and attached to it the bondwoman Anna's false testimony, Sergius and Avlikalam sent it all to the emperor, together with a soldier, while the emperor was in the land of Scythia.

When the emperor read the statements sent to him, he was greatly pleased and immediately sent a letter to his governor in Constantinople, Anthites, commanding him to go to the women's monastery beside Mount Auxentius, take the nun Anna from there, and send her to him. Having received this imperial command, the governor at once set out for the Trichinarion Monastery, taking with him, as though going to war, a multitude of armed soldiers. When they came to the monastery, they attacked it with drawn swords. At that time all the nuns had gathered in the church and were singing the Third Hour; when they saw the soldiers attacking the monastery, they were seized with great terror. Some hid in the sanctuary beneath the Holy Table, while others tried to flee into the mountains; but the soldiers caught them all. Then

the aged abbess of the monastery came out to the soldiers and said boldly:

"What are you doing, calling yourselves Christians? Why have you attacked the brides of Christ, who are consecrated to God and have done you no harm?"

They answered:

"Give us Anna, Stephen's harlot; the emperor demands her of you."

Then the abbess summoned Anna and another nun, Theophanna, and exhorted them to guard themselves against the enemy's temptation and to stand fearlessly for the innocence of their saintly and Venerable father and teacher, Stephen. Then, commending them to God's protection, she sent them away with the soldiers.

The soldiers took the nuns into custody and immediately brought them to the emperor, who ordered them to be separated and each guarded apart. Then, summoning Anna, the emperor began to speak to her thus:

"I have no doubt that what they told me about you is true. Therefore I summoned you, so that you yourself might tell me freely and without concealment how that sorcerer and lawless man seduced you, inducing you to abandon your estates, count your noble birth as nothing, and put on the monastic habit. He did all this, as I have heard, so that you might be his harlot. And what good did you find in him, that you were seduced by him and unlawfully fornicated with that impious man?"

Hearing such vile words from the emperor, blessed and chaste Anna said:

"No, Emperor! I did not leave the inheritance that came to me from my parents, nor did I leave my kin and all the charms of this world, in order to enslave my soul to fleshly passions and fornication. Those who have slandered me in this, as David says, 'have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; the venom of asps is under their lips' (Ps. 139:4). My body is before you, and whatever tortures you subject it to, I shall not depart from the truth. As long as my spirit is in my body, you will hear nothing from me but this: that Stephen is a holy and righteous man and the author of my salvation."

When the emperor heard these words, he was greatly astonished and remained silent for a whole hour. Then he ordered that Anna be taken into custody, and Theophania sent back to the monastery. Returning, she related to the abbess and to Venerable Stephen all that had taken place.

After some time, Copronymus returned from war to Constantinople. Here he ordered the nun Anna to be shut up in a gloomy and terrible dungeon, and then sent his chamberlain[25] to her. The latter, coming to Anna, began to speak to her:

"Take pity on yourself, woman, and, laying aside your black habit, choose an honorable life; then you will live with the Empress in the palace, provided that tomorrow, before everyone at the interrogation, you confess the truth about yourself and about Stephen. There is a certain slave here who knows everything and is ready to speak to your face of your deeds. And if you wish to conceal anything, she will expose you. Then I, as judge and defender of justice, shall cut your body into pieces and make you know what the emperor can do, and what Stephen, who beguiled you, can do. But if you heed my good counsel and reveal Stephen's lewd deeds, you will be granted great honors by us."

Hearing such words, St. Anna, heaving a heavy sigh, shed tears, and then answered:

"Let the emperor do what he wills. But I do not wish to speak falsehood against the holy and venerable father. Let the will of the Lord be done!"

On the following day, in the morning, the emperor went out from his palace and, standing on an elevation before the assembled people, ordered the chaste Anna to be brought out of the dungeon and stripped naked for all to see her shame. Before the saint they laid a whole bundle of rods and set before her her slave, the false witness. The innocent woman stood before everyone naked, guarding herself from the impious only by the shame which she had in place of clothing. When they asked her about what she had been slandered for, she remained silent, imitating her Lord, Who to His unjust judges "*gave no answer*"[26].

25. A *kubikularios* was an imperial chamberlain, usually one of the persons most intimate with the emperor.

Meanwhile the shameless slave bore false witness against her, confirming the lie and passing it off as truth. Then they again began to compel the blessed Anna to say that Stephen had entered into a sinful union with her, but the saint, like "a lamb before its shearer," was mute and did not open her mouth[27].

The tormentor then became enraged and fell into a violent fury. Calling Anna a harlot, he ordered her to be stretched upon the ground and beaten with rods. And Anna was stretched upon the ground by four strong soldiers and was long beaten on the back and on the belly. Enduring such torments, the blessed woman said nothing except the following words:

"I have not known a man, as you say – no! I have not known one" – and then she added: "Lord, have mercy!"

Meanwhile the torturers beat her so severely that she was nearly at the point of expiring. Then the emperor, seeing that she was barely breathing, yet still saying nothing against Stephen, rose from the throne and hastily withdrew into the palace, filled with shame. Then he ordered Anna to be taken to one of the city monasteries which stood empty, and shut up there. Here, after some time, St. Anna reposed in the Lord.

In the meantime the emperor long pondered how he might accuse Stephen of something so that he would have the means to punish him as a criminal. At last he devised such a scheme.

Summoning a young man beloved by him, by the name of George, who served faithfully at the palace, Copronymus asked him:

"George! How great is your love for me?"

"It is boundless," answered he.

"But are you able, out of love for me, to go to death for my sake?"

"I am ready with zeal to die for you," answered the youth. Then the emperor, joyfully and tenderly kissing him, said:

"Behold a new Isaac."

Then he said to George:

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26. Jn. 19:9; cf. Mt. 26:63, 27:12–14; Mk. 14:61, 15:5; Lk. 23:9.

27. The expression is taken from the book of the prophet Isaiah, where it is applied to the Messiah-Deliverer (Is. 53:7).

"But I am not sending you to die for me, nor do I even wish you to suffer for my sake. I ask you only one thing. Go to the Mount of Auxentius, to Stephen, who is not worthy even to be mentioned, and beseech him to tonsure you into the monastic order and receive you among his disciples. And when he does this, return to us at once."

The youth promised to carry out exactly everything the emperor had asked. Then Copronymus began to instruct him how he might more conveniently fulfill the task entrusted to him; and after these instructions the youth set out for the Mount of Auxentius.

At night he approached the monastery of the blessed Stephen and began to cry out loudly:

"Have mercy on me, Christians who dwell here, have mercy! I have lost my way and do not know where to go, lest I fall into some abyss or fall into the teeth of a beast."

The blessed Stephen heard these cries and, in his love for mankind, had compassion on the one who had lost his way. Summoning the monk Marinus, he sent him to find the lost man and bring him to the monastery. When Marinus brought George, the latter fell at the feet of the venerable one and began to beg his blessing. The venerable one understood that before him stood no ordinary man, and began to question George:

"Who are you and whence?"

George did not conceal that he had been in the imperial palace, and said that he had left the service of the emperor on account of this: that the emperor had turned from the right path and was drawing everyone after him to perdition.

"Here I am," said the youth, "and I have hastened to you, that you may clothe me in the angelic order, to which I greatly aspire. I beseech you, honorable father, do not reject me as unworthy."

Fearing lest some unpleasantness might come from the emperor, the blessed Stephen at first did not consent to receive the youth among the monks. But the youth reassured him, saying that the emperor would not be angry on his account, and at the same time zealously implored the saint to count him among the ranks of his disciples and tonsure him into the monastic life.

"You will give an answer to God for my soul if you do not tonsure me now."

The venerable one was moved by such words and, not perceiving the devil's guile, said to George:

"Since I see that you have come here impelled by zeal for salvation, I do not wish to go against the commandment of the Lord, and I shall not drive out you who have come to us."

Having said this, he at once began to instruct him with God-wise and soul-profitable words, and then, taking off his worldly clothing, clothed him in the novitiate, commanding him to prepare himself for receiving the perfect monastic form[28]. After three days, the venerable one clothed George also in this habit. Immediately after receiving the angelic order, this deceitful man hastened to the emperor, in Constantinople.

Seeing the monastic garb on George, the emperor rejoiced, not because he loved monasticism, but because he had found a pretext for accusing Stephen of drawing away his servants.

Going out into the square the next morning, the emperor brought forward the newly tonsured monk and began, before the assembled people, to complain of all the monks, but chiefly of Stephen, accusing him of seducing people by his teaching, as he had done, for example, with this beloved servant of the emperor. The people began to shout:

"Death to the loathsome seducer!"

Then the emperor ordered the monastic garment to be stripped from George and thrown on the ground. As soon as this was done, the people began to trample the angelic garment underfoot with their feet, heaping insults upon the monks and reviling monasticism. After this the emperor ordered water to be brought and George to be washed, as if washing away from him the monastic order; finally he clothed him in military garb, placed a helmet on his head, and gave him the rank of hippocomus[29]. After all this he sent soldiers to the Mount of Auxentius with orders to lay waste the monastery of Stephen.

28. *Novonachalie* was the prepared probation without which one was not tonsured into the monastic life; persons in this condition are known by the name of novices.
29. *Hippokomos* was an imperial stable-master, one of the court offices.

The soldiers fell upon the monastery like wolves upon a flock. Having scattered all the monks, they set fire to the monastery church, and the Venerable Stephen himself they violently dragged out of his cell and, with dishonor, hauled off to the Chalcedonian suburb of Constantinople. On the way they inflicted no small insults upon him and pitilessly tormented him: some dragged him harshly along the ground, others spat in his eyes, and still others committed other indescribable outrages. When they reached the seashore, the soldiers put the saint into a boat and carried him to the monastery of Philippicus, located at Chrysopolis[30], not far from Byzantium. Here the saint was kept under guard, in chains and iron fetters, for 70 days, and during all this time he did not partake of food. Although the emperor sent him a multitude of provisions, the saint accepted nothing and sent everything back.

After 70 days, the emperor and the patriarch sent to the saint the most influential heretics, namely: Theodosius, Bishop of Ephesus, Constantine of Nicomedia, Naukolius, Sisinnius, and Basil, together with Callistus and other most skillful orators, so that they might contend with Stephen about the faith and persuade him to iconoclasm. The latter, arriving at the monastery of Philippicus, ordered the blessed Stephen to be brought before them. He appeared before them, bound with iron chains, unable from the weight to stand or move without outside help: he walked between two men, upon whom he leaned.

Before all others, Theodosius, Bishop of Ephesus, began to speak. Turning to the blessed Stephen, he said:

"On what grounds, man of God, do you call us heretics and set yourself above emperors, patriarchs, bishops and all other Christians? Can it be that we are all in error and heading for perdition?"

To this the Saint answered meekly:

"Listen to what the Divine Scripture says of the Prophet Elijah. He once said to King Ahab: 'I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house' (3 Kgdms. 18:18). So it is now: it is not I who am disturbing the Church of God, but those who, having violated the traditions of the holy Fathers of old, introduce into the Church new dogmas.

30. Chrysopolis was a suburb of Constantinople, on the opposite shore of the Bosphorus, in Bithynia; now Scutari.

For Basil the Great said: 'Whatever has been handed down from of old by the holy Fathers is worthy of honor; but whatever is newly devised is out of place and cannot have validity.' Such are also your decrees against the veneration of the holy icons, decrees composed not by sons of the Catholic Church but by impious adulterers. Therefore there comes to my mind most fittingly the prophetic utterance (Ps. 2:2): 'The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord,' and against His honorable icon."

Hearing such words, Constantine, Bishop of Nicomedia, leapt quickly from his seat, went up to the Venerable Father, who was sitting on the ground, and kicked him in the face. In the same way one of the attendants present struck the Saint in the belly; the Blessed One fell to the ground, and the attendant began to trample upon his chest.

Callistus was indignant at such shameless and lawless conduct and commanded everyone to be silent. Then he addressed Stephen with the following words:

"Two outcomes lie before you: either sign the decrees of the recently held council, or die as one who rejects the decisions of the Fathers, taught by God. Choose for yourself quickly one or the other."

The God-inspired Stephen cried out in reply:

"Hear my words, Lord Patrician! This I proclaim with the great Apostle Paul: 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die' for His honorable icon 'is gain' (Phil. 1:23). I have already told you once and I will say it again: if I had but a handful of blood, I would not spare to shed it for the holy icons of Christ. Nevertheless, command the decrees of your council to be read, that I may know for what reason you reject the veneration of the Divine icons."

At once Constantine of Nicomedia took a book and began to read it. The book bore the title: "Tradition of the Holy Seventh Ecumenical Council." As soon as this title had been read, the Saint made a sign with his hand, calling for silence, and then cried out loudly:

"On a feeble foundation indeed have you built your shaky edifice! Why do you call your council holy? You have taken the name 'holy' away from all the saints, and you command that neither Apostles, nor martyrs, nor prophets, nor other men well-pleasing to God be so called.

How can your council be holy, when it tramples upon and defiles everything holy? You call your council ecumenical; but how can it be ecumenical, when not one of the patriarchs was present at it, nor their representatives, nor even letters in which they declared their consent to the convening of the council? Your council cannot be called ecumenical, for it is false. Further, you call it the seventh. But in what way is it the seventh, when it disagrees with the first six councils? If it were the seventh, it would have had to follow in everything the sixth, the fifth and the others that came before. For without the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth there cannot be a seventh. Thus your council is not the seventh at all, since it has rejected the traditions of the six councils that preceded it."

To these words the bishops objected:

"Then do we reject what was handed down by the six councils? No, we do not reject the earlier councils or what was handed down by them, but we accept all of this."

Then the Saint answered:

"Did not the earlier councils take place in holy churches, I mean those churches which were adorned with icons? The first council was held in Nicaea, in the spacious church of that city. The second at Constantinople, in the church of Saint Irene. The third at Ephesus, in the church of Saint John the Theologian. The fourth at Chalcedon, in the metropolitan cathedral church. The fifth and sixth again at Constantinople, the first in the church of Saint Sophia, the second in the palace church called the Trullo. Were not all those churches adorned with honorable icons? And not one of the earlier councils rejected them, as your council does. What have you to say to me in reply?"

They marveled at the wisdom of Saint Stephen and remained silent, having nothing with which to answer him. Only one of those sitting with them said:

"Truly, what Stephen said is just!"

The Venerable Father raised his eyes to heaven; then, lifting up his hands and breathing a sigh from the depths of his heart, he cried out loudly:

"If anyone does not honor the Lord Jesus Christ, depicted on the icons according to His human nature, let him be anathema, and let him have a part with those who cried out: 'Take Him, take Him, crucify Him!' (Jn. 19:15) [31]."

Then the impious heretics, seeing that they could not overcome the Saint in debate, ordered him taken to prison, while they themselves, filled with shame, returned to those who had sent them.

When they came to the emperor, the emperor asked:

"What have you accomplished?"

The bishops wished to conceal their humiliation, but Callistus anticipated them and told the emperor the whole truth.

"O Emperor!" he said, "we have been defeated in debate by Stephen. He is a wise man, and in his words there is an inexpressible power. Moreover he is courageous and fearless, and fears not only prohibitions but even death itself."

Then the angered emperor commanded that the Venerable Stephen be sent into exile in the Hellespontine lands, to the island of Proconnesus [32].

Before setting out there, the Saint rendered help to the abbot of the monastery of Philippicus, who was ill and already at the point of death. Praying over him and laying his hand upon him, the Blessed One healed him and raised him from his sickbed. Then, boarding the ship prepared for him, he sailed to the place of his exile. Upon reaching the island of Proconnesus, he first began to walk around all its desert places, and at last found a beautiful cave, which the inhabitants of that land called Kissud. In it there was a small church in the name of Saint Anna, the foremother of the Lord according to the flesh, the mother of the Most Holy Theotokos. The Saint greatly rejoiced and set up a cell near the cave. Here, living to the glory of God, he nourished himself on the roots of local plants.

Meanwhile the disciples of the Venerable Stephen, driven out of his monastery on Mount Auxentius, scattered to various lands like sheep

31. This was at the time when the Lord stood before the judgment of Pilate (Jn. 19:15).
32. Proconnesus is an island in the Sea of Marmara, now Marmara. The Hellespontine lands are the lands lying in the middle of the Sea of Marmara, which in antiquity was called the Hellespont.

without a shepherd. But on hearing that their teacher was dwelling in exile on the island of Proconnesus, they all gathered to him, except two who had fallen away from the holy shepherd, as Judas from Christ, or Demas and Hermogenes from Paul (2 Tim. 1:15; 4:10). These were Sergius, who had drawn up the written record of slanderous accusations against the Venerable Father, and Stephen, who had at first been a secular priest and then had received tonsure from the hand of the Saint into the monastic order.

Having again rejected the monastic order, and with it God, and clothed himself in worldly garments, he came to the emperor and said to him:

"Pious Emperor! Through your care I have been delivered from the satanic bonds, and, having cast off the dark garments, I have now clothed myself in bright ones."

The emperor rejoiced greatly and loved him, then made him administrator of the palace of Sophia, where he often went himself. In this, Copronymus called him "father of merriment," although this son of perdition could only inspire weeping over himself. Thus those two, Sergius and Stephen, separated themselves from the company of the Venerable Father's disciples; the rest, as has been said, all gathered to the Venerable Stephen and established a monastery. His mother came to the Blessed One together with her daughter, his sister Theodotia, and near his cave they set up a dwelling in which they lived virtuously, from time to time delighting in the honeyed words of their teacher, the Venerable Stephen. The Venerable Father himself built for himself a pillar, and on it a narrow hut. Ascending the pillar, he shut himself up in that hut; at that time he was 49 years old. For his great ascetic labors God glorified the Saint and gave him the gift of working miracles. Thus the Blessed Stephen opened the eyes of a blind man, freed a possessed youth from an evil spirit, healed a woman with an issue of blood by praying over her, many times calmed the raging sea and saved from sinking a multitude of ships; moreover, seafarers on several occasions saw him walking upon the waters, or steering a ship, or spreading the sails.

While the Saint was becoming famous on the island of Proconnesus for his miracles, his mother died. This was in the second year of the

Venerable Father's exile. As she was departing to the Lord, her daughter Theodotia wept bitterly over her. But the mother of Stephen, the Blessed Anna, said to her:

"You have no sufficient cause for weeping, for you too shall go with me to the Lord Christ our Master."

And so it came to pass: on the seventh day after the death of the Blessed Anna, the mother of the Venerable Stephen, Theodotia departed this life.

At this time there was on the island of Proconnesus a certain soldier who bore the same name as the Venerable Stephen (he was called Stephen as well). He was an Armenian by birth and was traveling from the European lands. On the road he fell ill with a terrible sickness, so that the left half of his body dried up. Having heard that the Venerable Stephen healed all manner of diseases, he came to him with great effort, fell prostrate on the ground before him, and with tears entreated him for healing. The Venerable bade him bow down before the icons of Christ and of the Most Holy Theotokos, and when he did so with zeal, he was at once completely healed. When the soldier returned to his friends, they began to question him: how had he recovered? The soldier, concealing nothing of the mercy of God made manifest over him, related:

"When I bowed down before the icons of Christ and of the Most Holy Theotokos, as the monk Stephen, who dwells in Proconnesus, bade me do, then I received healing from my sickness."

The soldiers reported this to their commander, who governed Thrace. The commander summoned the healed soldier, and having questioned him as to how he had recovered, at once sent him on to the emperor. The emperor too began to question the soldier about his recovery, and when he learned that the man had been healed after bowing down before the holy icons, he began to call him an idolater, reproaching him with fury, as though he had committed an impious deed. Then the healed man, ashamed before the emperor, repented of having bowed down to the icons and publicly renounced their veneration, vowing never again to bow down before them. For this the impious emperor came to love him and honored him with the rank of centurion. But when that

godless soldier, coming out of the imperial palace, wished to mount his horse, the horse suddenly went mad, threw him from its back, and began to trample the unhappy man with its hooves, trampling him until he breathed his last. Such was the punishment suffered by this ungrateful apostate.

This miracle, together with the other miracles wrought by the Blessed Stephen, aroused in the emperor a violent wrath and fury; for the emperor knew that the Venerable, dwelling in Proconnesus, was glorified by wonder-workings and taught all to venerate the holy icons. He therefore resolved to deprive the saint of life, and to this end commanded that he be brought from his confinement. When the saint had been brought before Copronymus, the impious emperor first ordered him bound with iron chains, his feet fastened in the stocks, and that he be shut up in a dark dungeon known as the Phialian[33]. After some days had passed, Copronymus, being in one of his suburban palaces together with two of his chief courtiers, ordered the Blessed Stephen to be brought before him.

Being led to the emperor, the Venerable on the way begged a coin from a certain God-loving man, a coin bearing the emperor's likeness, and secretly placed it in his klobuk.

No sooner had the emperor seen the saint than he began to cry out loudly:

"Woe, woe! And what am I enduring? This man reviles my power, dishonors me and holds me as nothing!"

And he spoke many reproachful and insulting words to the saint. But the Blessed One stood silent, his head bowed down. Then the emperor said:

"Why do you say nothing to me, impious one?"

In answer to this the Blessed Stephen began to speak meekly:

"If you, O emperor, have resolved to kill me, then kill me now. But if you have summoned me in order to question me about something, then you should restrain your wrath and speak with me calmly."

Hearing such words, the emperor asked the saint:

33. This prison was located within the city itself.

"Tell me, why do you call us heretics? Which of the traditions of the Church do we violate?"

The Venerable answered:

"You reject the veneration of the holy icons, which has been handed down to us from of old by the God-bearing Fathers."

The tormentor replied to this:

"Do not call them holy icons: they are not holy icons, but images of idols; and what fellowship have the saints with idols?"

To this the holy man answered:

"He who worships an icon offers worship not to the material itself; for the worship offered to the image passes over to the Prototype, as St. Basil the Great says."

The tormentor said to the saint:

"Can one depict with material colors that of which much is dark and incomprehensible to the mind? And is it right to worship under a sensible image those whose nature is unknown to anyone?"

The Venerable answered:

"Who among those who have reason would say that the immaterial nature of God can be depicted with material colors? The being of God the mind itself cannot describe; how much less can it be portrayed with colors. But when we depict Christ on an icon, we depict not His divine nature but His human form, like ours, which the Apostles saw and touched, as St. John the Theologian said: 'that which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled' (1 Jn. 1:1). And if you point me to the words of Moses: 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth' (Ex. 20), then I will tell you that Moses himself made images of two golden Cherubim, of which the Divine Apostle relates: 'cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat' (Heb. 9). But the altar itself, and the tabernacle, and the Holy of Holies also represented the heavenly pattern, as the same Apostle says: 'who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things' (Heb. 8)."

What lawless thing do we do when, depicting on an icon the human image of Christ, visible to men, we worship Him? Or when we worship

a cross made of some material, do we then worship the material? In the same way, when we honor sacred vessels, no sin can lie upon our conscience, since we know that the vessels are sanctified by the invocation of Christ's name. Why then do you rise up against all this? After this you will wish to reject also the holy Body and Blood of Christ, mystically offered under the appearance of bread and wine, which represent that Body of Christ which suffered on the Cross and now abides in heaven, and which we worship, and by partaking of which we receive the inheritance of eternal good things. You, however, making no distinction between the holy and the unholy, regard as idols the icon of Christ, placing it on a level with a representation of Apollo, and the icon of the Theotokos, alongside an image of Artemis; you trample them under foot and burn them in the fire."

To this the emperor answered:

"Do you, foolish impious one, really think that by trampling these icons we trample Christ?"

Then the God-wise Stephen, wishing, after the manner of skilled wrestlers, to conquer the enemy with his own weapon, drew from his klobuk the coin which bore the image of the impious emperor Copronymus, which he had begged, on his way to the interrogation, from a certain pious man. Showing this coin, the Venerable asked the emperor in the same words with which Christ once questioned the Pharisees:

"Whose image and superscription is this?" (Mt. 22:20).

The emperor answered, full of astonishment:

"No one's but the emperor's."

The saint asked again:

"What would happen if someone were to throw down the image of the emperor on the ground and begin to trample it with his feet? Would he not suffer punishment for this?"

Those present at the contest answered:

"Yes! Such a man would suffer a great punishment, for he would dishonor the imperial image."

Then the Venerable, sighing heavily, said:

"How great is your blindness and how immense your madness! If for dishonoring the image of an earthly and mortal emperor you inflict a

terrible punishment, what punishment do you deserve for trampling the image of the Son of God and of His Mother and consigning them to the fire?"

Having said this, the saint spat upon the coin, threw it on the ground, and began to trample it with his feet. Seeing this, those present rushed upon the saint in fury, intending to cast him down from the hall into the sea, for the hall where the disputation with the Venerable took place rose above the sea. But the emperor, feigning meekness, though a terrible wrath boiled within him, forbade them to do this, but ordered that the saint be taken to the public prison and shut up there.

Entering this prison, the saint said:

"This prison will be my refuge during the present life; here I am to remain until my last breath, and I shall regard this place of my abode as a reward for my faithfulness to the honorable icons."

Being confined in the most remote chamber of the prison, the saint found sitting there three hundred and forty-two monks, who had labored in various lands and monasteries and had been cast into prison for venerating the holy icons. Some of them had had their noses cut off, others their ears cut off, others their hands: the last cruelty had been inflicted upon those who had composed books in defense of the veneration of icons. Some bore on their bodies wounds that had not yet fully healed; some had faces scorched and smeared with pitch; the heads of others had been shorn for mockery. Seeing all who had endured these torments, the Venerable glorified their patience and their ascetic labors, and began to grieve greatly that he himself had not been counted worthy to suffer such torments for the holy icons. Those holy fathers, however, received the Blessed Stephen with love, and chose him as their superior and teacher. And that prison became as it were a monastery, and in it the customary chants and prayers were performed according to the order and rule of the monastery.

While he was in prison, the Venerable received food from a certain God-loving woman, the wife of one of the guards. Every Saturday and Sunday she brought bread and water to the prison and gave them secretly to the Saint. At first the Blessed One did not wish to accept food from her hands, for he did not know whether she was pious and

venerated the icons; for he abhorred heretics and would take nothing from their hands. But the woman, to demonstrate her piety, brought him, secretly kept by her, icons of the Most Pure Mother of God and of the first-enthroned Apostles Peter and Paul. Having bowed down before these holy icons in the presence of the Venerable, she kissed them, and then gave them to him, so that the Blessed Stephen, keeping those honorable icons, might remember her in his holy prayers.

One day St. Stephen was conversing with the other Venerable Fathers about the many and varied tortures inflicted on the pious by the emperor's governors, *anthypatoi* and *hegemones*[34]. Among other things, one of the prisoners, Antony of Cyprus, recalled the martyr's death of the Cypriot monk Paul. Theophanes, Eparch of Crete, surnamed Lardotir, placed before him on the ground, on one side an image of the Crucifixion of Christ, and on the other the instruments of torture, and said to him:

"Choose for yourself, Paul, one of two things: either consent to trample the icon of Christ underfoot, and you will live; or you will suffer a cruel death, tortured by the instruments lying before you, unless you are willing to do what you are commanded."

But the valiant Paul cried out loudly:

"I will not, O Lord Jesus Christ, Only-begotten Son of God, consent to trample Thy holy icon underfoot."

Having said this, Paul knelt down and reverently kissed the holy icon, thereby showing that he did not fear the threats of the tormentor and was ready to die for the icon of Christ. Then the tormentor flew into a great rage and burned with fury. First he commanded that the body of the confessor be tightly bound with two iron plates; then, hanging Paul head downward, he tore his body with an iron implement, and finally laid a fire beneath him and set it alight. In this suffering Paul died, burned by the fire, becoming a fragrant sacrifice to the Lord.

When Antony told this, all the fathers shed warm tears. After that another prisoner began to speak, named Theostriktos, an old man of venerable presbyteral rank, whose nose had been cut off for his fidelity

34. An *anthypatos* was the governor of a region, which comprised several provinces; a *hegemon* was the governor of a province.

to the veneration of icons, and whose whole face had been scorched with boiling pitch.

"Once in our monastery, called Pelekete," he said, "on the holy and Great Thursday of Holy Week, the bloodless sacrifice was being celebrated. Suddenly the tormentor Lakhanodrakon fell upon the monastery with a multitude of soldiers. Boldly entering the sanctuary, he commanded the singing to cease and cast the holy and life-giving Mysteries of Christ to the ground."

"Then, seizing forty-two chosen monks, he bound them in iron chains; some of the rest he wounded cruelly, tearing their bodies; others he scorched in the beard and face, having first smeared them with pitch; and some, among whom was I, he deprived of their noses. After that he set fire to the church and burned it together with the whole monastery. As for those chosen forty-two monks who had been bound in chains, the tormentor imprisoned them in the district of Ephesus, shutting them all up in one old bath-house whose entrance he had nailed shut. There they were all starved to death."

The Venerable Stephen, hearing such accounts, urged the brethren to a like courage and patience. Then he himself recalled a certain Peter, who lived in the Blachernae. Brought up for interrogation before the emperor, this Peter, for his fidelity to the veneration of icons, was mercilessly beaten with ox sinews, yet showed such patience that he did not groan or cry out at all, as though he felt no pain. Moreover, he did not hesitate to rebuke the emperor himself with reproving words, as with some sharp point, calling him a new Julian the Apostate[35]. The Blessed Stephen also recalled a certain John, whom the emperor could not compel to trample underfoot the icons of Christ and the Most Holy Theotokos. After many fruitless attempts the tormentor commanded that he be sewn into a sack, a stone tied to it, and that he be cast into the sea and drowned.

Recounting such tales to one another, all the most blessed fathers and prisoners for Christ were kindled with zealous desire to suffer for the holy icons, and they strengthened one another, saying:

35. Julian the Apostate was a Roman emperor who reigned from 361 to 363. Born and brought up in Christianity, he renounced Christ and became a zealous pagan.

"Endure, brethren, for the Lord's sake, and suffer for Him to the last breath. 'If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together' (Rom. 8:17)."

All the good things of this world are nothing before that glory which is prepared for us.

The Blessed Stephen remained in the public prison for eleven months. Here God revealed to him in a vision the time of his death, forty days hence. When, after the revelation, the guard's wife came to him bringing the Venerable food, he said to her:

"May the Lord reward you for the kindness you have shown me. You have served me enough. Now do not bring me any more of that perishable food and drink which you brought before."

Hearing such words, the woman grieved, for she thought the Saint was disdaining her offerings. Seeing her sorrow, the Venerable said to her:

"The time of my departure draws near, for after forty days I shall die. And during these days I wish to increase my monastic labors, and to remain entirely without food and drink, so as to prepare myself for death."

Then, dismissing the guard's wife, the Venerable devoted himself to ascetic prayer and remained in prayer day and night. Some of the citizens who at that time kept the true faith came to him to receive his blessing. For this purpose they changed their garments, clothed themselves in poor rags, and, coming to the Saint, delighted in his most profitable and God-wise words.

When the appointed forty days drew to their end and the thirty-eighth day had already arrived, the Venerable again summoned the woman mentioned above and said to her, in the presence of all the holy fathers who were in the prison:

"May God repay you a hundredfold for the mercies you have shown me, and look upon you with a merciful eye from His height. For you have proved yourself a true disciple of Him who said: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me' (Mt. 25:40); and again: 'He that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward'

(Mt. 10:41); and in a third place: 'For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward' (Mk. 9:41). All this you have fulfilled by serving me, and therefore you shall not lose your reward."

Then the Saint gave her back the holy icons which she had brought him earlier, and said to her:

"Take your precious treasure. It will serve you as a protection from every evil and will be a witness to your orthodoxy in this age and the age to come."

Having uttered these words, the Saint heaved a heavy sigh and said:

"In one day I shall leave earthly life and pass over to the other world, where I shall stand before the Heavenly King."

At these words of the Venerable, the woman wept bitterly. Then, taking the icons and receiving St. Stephen's blessing, she wrapped the icons in a cloth and went to her house, grieving at the parting from her great father and teacher. The Venerable, for the remaining time until the day of his death, spent the time with his fellow prisoners in singing sacred hymns, glorifying the Lord God.

When the thirty-ninth day came, the emperor with his third wife, named Eudoxia, began to celebrate a pagan festival called the Brumalia[36]; for the godless heretic, amid his many God-hating crimes, did not abstain from pagan celebrations either. During this festival some of the heretics of false faith accused the Blessed Stephen before the emperor of having turned the prison into a monastery and of enticing by his words the many who came to him, leading them into idolatry (so they called the veneration of icons). The emperor, enraged, at once sent a *speculator* to lead Stephen outside the city and execute him with the sword. But when Stephen was led bound to the execution, the emperor began to regret that he had sentenced the Blessed One to so swift a death.

36. The *Vrumalia* or *Brumalia* was a pagan festival held on the day of the winter solstice (in Latin, *bruma*). In ancient Rome this festival began with a sacrifice before the temple of Saturn (the Roman god of agriculture and sowing), whence it was also called the Saturnalia; then a feast was held, in which senators and all dignitaries took part.

"What could be more desirable for Stephen than to end his life quickly by the sword?" he said; and wishing to put the Venerable to death by a more cruel death, he commanded that he be returned to the prison. He himself that day prepared a great feast for his courtiers and like-minded men, and they rejoiced and made merry, to the playing of musical instruments and the loud sound of trumpets. In the midst of the feast the emperor remembered the Blessed Stephen and said to two young men who were with him, handsome of face, valiant, and his maternal half-brothers:

"Go to the public prison and say this to Stephen of Mount Auxentius. Thus says the emperor: do you see what care he has for you? Behold, he has brought you back from the very gates of death and given you life. How long, then, will you refuse to obey the emperor's will? Tell him all this. I know that he will not submit to me, but will begin to revile me even more; and then you are to seize him and beat him as hard as you can, until you kill him."

Having heard the emperor's command, those young men went to the prison; but when they saw the face of Stephen, like the face of an Angel, they were struck with awe at his holiness, and falling at the feet of the Blessed One they asked his blessing and prayers. Then, returning to the emperor, they said to him:

"We found the monk to be disobedient, and for that we beat him without mercy and left him barely alive. We do not think he could survive until morning, so hard did we beat him."

Hearing this, the emperor was comforted, and he cheerfully continued his feast with his like-minded companions.

Meanwhile the Venerable Stephen stood in prayer through the whole night, preparing for death. When the morning star rose, he gathered together all the venerable fathers imprisoned with him and addressed them with these words:

"I give you my last wish of peace and my last kiss, fathers and brethren. The hour of my departure has already drawn near, and the crown of martyrdom awaits me. As for you, remain steadfast in Orthodoxy to the end, and be firm."

Hearing such words, the venerable fathers wept bitterly, bathing their faces with warm tears. Then St. Stephen began to strip off his garments. The other venerable fathers said to him:

"It would be better, Father, if you met death in the holy monastic habit that is yours."

But the God-inspired Stephen answered:

"It befits a wrestler to enter the contest naked. Besides, what good would it be if the monastic rank were trampled underfoot by lawless men?"

Having said this, the blessed one stripped off all his garments, and, covering himself with only a leather mantle, sat down together with the holy fathers to await his hour of death.

That same night, after the feast, when the emperor was resting on his bed, the demon who always attended him informed him that the men he had sent had done Stephen no harm, but had only bowed to him and received his blessing. Then the emperor rose from his sleep, went out of the inner chambers of his palace, and, like a roaring lion, began to cry out:

"Oh, the calamity, the great humiliation! I have no helper, no faithful servant. Everyone holds me in contempt, and I do not know what to do with these men, unworthy even of being remembered" (so he usually called the monks).

Hearing the emperor's cries, all who were in the imperial palace were thrown into confusion, began to stir, and hurried to him. Looking at those running up, the emperor said:

"Where are you going, and whom are you seeking?"

They said humbly:

"We have come to you, our good lord and emperor."

Then the emperor cried out in a loud voice:

"I am not your lord, nor your emperor. You have another emperor and another lord, at whose feet you fall, whose prayers and blessing you seek. And there is no one who listens to me and serves me faithfully, so that I might destroy my enemy and my spirit might be comforted."

Those around Copronymus began to ask who this enemy was, whom they honored more than the emperor himself. Then Copronymus answered:

"I am not the emperor; Stephen of Mount Auxentius is."

No sooner had he uttered these words than all of them, with a loud cry, rushed quickly into the common prison and, addressing the guards, shouted:

"Give us Stephen the Auxentian!"

But the Venerable Stephen himself came out to them from the prison with a joyful face and a gladdened soul.

"I am the one you seek," he said to those who had come running. Then they seized the saint like wolves seizing a sheep, threw him to the ground, and, breaking all the fetters on him, dragged him pitilessly into the square, trampling him with their feet and striking him with clubs. When the blessed one had been dragged out through the gate of the prison and was opposite the church of the holy Great Martyr Theodore, he propped himself up on his hands against the ground, raised his head as high as he could, and made a last prostration before the holy martyr at his church, thus performing, amid cruel torments, a pious deed. Seeing this, one of the bloodsuckers who were dragging the saint, named Philommatius, seized a large piece of wood and, striking the saint's head with great force, shattered it. And at once the Venerable Stephen yielded up his spirit into the hands of God. But upon his murderer, on that very spot, a demon suddenly fell, so that the wretch, crying out in a terrible voice, fell to the ground and screamed dreadfully, writhing with his whole body and gnashing his teeth, while foam poured from his mouth. And that wretched man was tormented by the demon until, amid grievous sufferings, he gave up his soul.

Despite this, the crowd of enraged bloodsuckers who were dragging Stephen did not cease their mockery of his body, but displayed their savage cruelty over the dead man, dragging the venerable one's body through the streets and stoning it. Individual members of the venerable one's body were torn from the holy body along the way and remained lying in the streets: this happened to the venerable one's fingers, to his hands, and also to his entrails. Among others, one of the lawless men

lifted a huge stone with both hands and struck the venerable one's belly with it, and at once his belly burst open and his entrails spilled out; so that the streets of the city were stained with the saint's blood, which flowed like water. And not only men but also women, and small children coming out of their schools, hurled stones at the dead body of the venerable one. For such a command had gone out from the emperor: whoever would not cast a stone at Stephen the Auxentian was an opponent of the emperor and subject to execution. Therefore the whole crowd of heretics of false faith, young and old, pelted the slain man. When the saint's body was dragged to the ox-market, one tavern-keeper, who was cooking fish at that time, seeing the body being dragged and thinking the saint was still alive, seized a burning brand and struck the saint on the head with it, and at once the brain flowed out from it.

Following the rebellious crowd, which committed various outrages over the body of the venerable one, walked an Orthodox man named Theodore, who wished to know where the saint's body would be thrown. Seeing the brain that had flowed from his head, he pretended to stumble, fell to the ground, and, secretly gathering the venerable one's brain into a clean cloth, hid it in his clothing and again went on after those who were mocking the saint's body.

At this time the elder sister of the Venerable Stephen was still alive; she had been tonsured into the monastic rank in one of the Byzantine convents for women. To this convent they dragged the saint's body, so that the Venerable One's sister, in accordance with the imperial command, might cast a stone at it. But she, learning of this, left her cell and hid in a coffin; they searched for her everywhere but could not find her. Then they dragged the body of the Venerable Stephen from there to the place called Pelagia's Cemetery. There formerly stood the church of the holy Martyr Pelagia, which had fallen into ruin from age; the impious emperor ordered its very foundations to be scattered, and in their place a deep pit was dug, into which they began to throw the corpses of the slain unbelievers. To this pit they dragged the body of the Venerable Stephen and cast him into it, reckoning the righteous man together with the lawless.

Thus our Venerable Father Stephen completed his earthly course on the 28th day of the month of November, in the 53rd year of his life.[37]

This day from morning was very clear, and the sun poured bright light upon the earth; but at the third hour of this day, from the eastern side, where Mount Auxentius was located, a fiery cloud appeared, the air above the city instantly darkened, and day was turned into night. Then a storm arose, and violent hail began to fall, which struck many to death.

But all these visible signs of God's wrath, which fell upon Constantinople as punishment for the torments inflicted upon the Venerable One and the insults done to his honorable body, did not bring the impious emperor to his senses. He ordered his two brothers, whom he had earlier sent to kill the Venerable Stephen, to be put to death as disobeyers of the imperial will. Then he put to death the other holy fathers who had remained in prison together with the Venerable Stephen.

Meanwhile Theodore, who had gathered up the flowing brain of the Venerable Stephen, went to the monastery of St. Dius and told the abbot everything he knew about Stephen's death. The abbot, having listened to Theodore's account with tears, pronounced the emperor a heretic and apostate, under anathema; the brain of the saint he received as a most precious treasure, placed it in a clean vessel, and hid it in the church of the holy Protomartyr Stephen. But this did not remain hidden from the malicious emperor. It happened in this way.

When the abbot had placed the honorable brain of St. Stephen in a vessel and hidden it in the church, one young man living in the monastery of St. Dius was present. After some time, this young man began to beg the abbot to grant him the rank of deacon. But the abbot, not considering him worthy of this rank, did not fulfill his request. Then the young man became angry with the abbot and, going to the emperor, told him everything he knew about the brain of St. Stephen. The emperor at once commanded that the vessel in which the honorable brain of the venerable one had been placed be brought and opened before him.

When the vessel was opened, it was found to be completely empty, for the brain of Stephen had been invisibly taken and hidden by Divine

providence in a place unknown to anyone until now. The emperor was angered, and that young man, as a slanderer, was sent into exile.

Here we must also recall the wondrous judgment of God that befell the woman who, being a slave of the blessed nun Anna, slandered her and the blessed Stephen, claiming that they were secretly meeting at night and falling into lawless sin. She was given in marriage to an official who collected taxes for the Emperor in Bithynia, and she bore twin children. Once, when she was sleeping at night on her bed together with her children, they suddenly became agitated, and receiving some strange power, they fiercely seized their mother's breasts and began to suck them not as children do, but as lion cubs or bear cubs would, so that the unfortunate woman could not tear them from her breast. Thus savagely tormenting their mother's breasts, they killed her; and then they themselves died together with her, like offspring of a viper. Such was the punishment that befell the wicked false witness. But the blessed Venerable Martyr Stephen, being innocent and pure in heart, beholds God, one in the Trinity: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Having first contended ascetically upon the mountain, thou didst, most blessed one, destroy the spiritual armies of the enemy with the full armour of the Cross; and again thou didst arm thyself manfully for suffering, slaying Copronymus with the sword of faith. For both thou wast crowned by God, O Venerable Martyr Stephen, ever-memorable in praise.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Let us faithfully praise in hymns, from our hearts, we who love the feast, Stephen, the zealous lover of the Trinity, for he honoured the beautiful image of the Master and of His Mother; and now let us cry out to him together in love, rejoicing: Rejoice, Father of ever-glorious name.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

37. This was in 768 A.D.

From a barren root, Venerable Father, thou didst grow up as a branch; the namesake of the First Martyr, thou didst appear as a great teacher of monks, and, fearing not the wrath of the Emperor, who wished not to venerate the image of Christ, thou didst receive the crown of martyrdom at thy end, O Stephen.

* * *

Life of Our Holy Father Theodore, Archbishop of Rostov[38]

Житие святого отца нашего Феодора, архиепископа Ростовского

St. Theodore, the first Archbishop of Rostov, came from that family renowned for its piety to which belonged the great ascetic and intercessor of the Russian land, St. Sergius of Radonezh. The Hierarch Theodore of Rostov was the own nephew of St. Sergius, the son of his elder brother Stephen. This Stephen, having removed, like St. Sergius, together with his father, the boyar Cyril, from the Rostov region to the Radonezh district near Moscow, spent the first half of his life in the service of Prince Andrew Ivanovich of Radonezh, son of the Moscow prince Ivan Danilovich Kalita. He was among the principal nobles of the Radonezh prince, and was celebrated for his military merits, but was especially distinguished by his piety. He was married, and by his wife Anna had two children, Clement and John. The pious wife of Stephen soon died, and Stephen then resolved to renounce the world and take the monastic life. He was tonsured in the monastery of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos at Khotkov and devoted himself zealously to monastic labours, fasting and prayer. Having soon left the Khotkov monastery, he went to Moscow, settled in the monastery of St. Epiphany in a separate cell, and led a strict and austere manner of life

38. The celebrated Epiphanius the Wise intended to compose a life of St. Theodore, he who wrote the lives of St. Sergius of Radonezh and St. Stephen, Bishop of Perm; but this intention of Epiphanius was not carried out. No ancient life of St. Theodore has been found. There exists in manuscript an extended life of Theodore, compiled in the seventeenth century from various sources (according to the synodal manuscript indicated, this life was published in 1877 at Yaroslavl as a separate booklet under the title: *Life of our Holy Father Theodore, Archbishop of Rostov, Wonderworker and Founder of the Simonov Monastery*). This life has been taken as the basis of the present account, checked against the chronicles and documents.

in fasting and prayer, abstaining from wine and beer and clothing himself in poor garments. At that time there were also other renowned ascetics in that monastery, such as St. Alexis, afterwards metropolitan, the elder Gerontius and others. They were beloved by the most reverend Theognostus, then Metropolitan of All Russia,[39] who often summoned them to himself and showed them honour.

Having learned of Stephen's pious ascetic life, Grand Prince Simeon Ivanovich,[40] son of Ivan Danilovich, commanded Metropolitan Theognostus to ordain him to the priesthood, and then to appoint him abbot of the Epiphany monastery, and chose him as his confessor. Many boyars and nobles also desired to become Stephen's spiritual children. Grand Prince Simeon loved Stephen, honoured him, and often conversed with him.

Such was the father of St. Theodore, who in the world was called John. Upon reaching the age of seven, John was given by his pious parents to be taught letters, and soon learned all that was taught him.

After the death of his mother, the young John remained with his father, who had taken the monastic habit. Hearing of the life of his uncle, the great Radonezh ascetic Sergius, who was then establishing his new monastery, to which people of every rank and station were gathering from everywhere for spiritual labours, John burned with desire to see Sergius and to follow him. By God's providence, John's father, Stephen, set out from Moscow into the Radonezh region to the monastery of the Life-Originating Trinity, and brought his son John with him. He led his son directly into the church, and taking him by the right hand, himself handed him over into the hands of the abbot Sergius, his own brother.

Despite John's tender years, for he was only twelve, St. Sergius, foreseeing in him a true ascetic, then and there tonsured him into the monastic order, on 20 April, the memory of St. Theodore Trichinas, in whose honour John was renamed Theodore: at that time it was the custom to give at tonsure the name of the saint whose memory was celebrated on the day of the tonsure.

39. St. Theognostus held the metropolitan see from 1328 to 1353.
40. Simeon Ivanovich the Proud reigned from 1340 to 1353.

The newly tonsured monk Theodore remained in the monastic life in the Trinity monastery under the guidance of its great founder. He began to lead a temperate, chaste and pure life, zealously attended the church services, listened attentively to Holy Scripture, and himself often read the Divine books. He obeyed his teacher, St. Sergius, in everything with humility, meekness and silence. The zeal for church and cell prayer, fasting and vigil, the fervent chanting of the Psalter and the tears of compunction of the young monk excited the wonder of those around him. Especially remarkable was the fact that he concealed nothing from St. Sergius, opening to him all his thoughts by day and by night.

When he reached the proper age, Theodore was ordained to the priesthood and continued to advance in monastic labours and spiritual life. When he served the Divine Liturgy together with St. Sergius and his father Stephen, some monks, granted a special grace of God, saw an Angel of God serving at the Holy Table together with these holy ministers.

At this time the thought of founding a new monastery of his own came to Theodore: of finding a suitable place and establishing a common monastic life. He confided this thought to his teacher, St. Sergius, and repeated it more than once. The Venerable, seeing that this thought had firmly taken hold of Theodore, perceived in it the action of God's providence.

Theodore unceasingly devoted himself, as was his custom, to nightly prayer. And so once, standing in prayer, he heard a voice: "Theodore, go into the wilderness; thou shalt establish a monastery, gather in it many ascetics, men of spiritual desires, and shalt receive a great reward in heaven." Taking these words **as a revelation from above**, the blessed one revealed what had happened to no one. But after a considerable time the great seer Sergius said to his nephew:

"I hoped, child, that thou wouldst lay my bones in the grave and become abbot in this place after me; but if thou wishest now to begin the work thou hast conceived, may God and the Most Holy Theotokos help thee."

Blessing his nephew and disciple, he sent him off together with those of the brethren who wished to go with him.

The Venerable Theodore went out of the monastery with his companions and set out to seek a place suitable for the monastery he needed. And he found a fine place for building a monastery, called Simonov, not far from the city of Moscow, on the left bank of the Moskva River.

Having received word, the Venerable Sergius himself came to see this place, found it suitable for building a monastery, and blessed Theodore to proceed with the undertaking he had planned.

Having received the proper episcopal permission, the Venerable Theodore built on the chosen site a church in the name of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos, of her Honourable Nativity, erected the necessary substantial buildings for the monastery, gathered a numerous monastic brotherhood from all around, and organized the monastery according to the strict rule of common-life monasteries.

The founder of the monastery himself set an example of strict ascetic life, and shone both with inner virtues and with outward comeliness and bodily beauty, being at the same time distinguished by wisdom and understanding. All these qualities inspired respect and reverence for him in everyone, and his fame grew more and more, so that his uncle, the Venerable Sergius, feared lest his nephew be seduced by this honour and glory, and unceasingly prayed that the Lord God would help Theodore to complete the course of his life without stumbling.

When the newly founded monastery began to attract many visitors, Theodore, avoiding the noisy life, resolved to find for himself a more secluded and solitary place. Such a place he discerned near the monastery, at a distance of two bowshots, in a dense forest close by the river Moskva, five versts from the Moscow Kremlin. Here he built for himself a solitary cell and began to labour with new zeal and in new toils.

But here too disciples began to gather to him, desiring to labour together with him. And here the Venerable Sergius visited him and found the new place suitable for ascetic labours and for the building of a monastery. Metropolitan Alexis gave his blessing for the founding of a

church in the new Simonov, and to the church of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos there remained the name "At Old Simonov."

The foundation of the magnificent and spacious stone church in the name of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos was laid by Venerable Theodore in 1379; the construction was completed only twenty-six years later, in 1405, after the death of the founder. The consecration of the newly built church was performed by Metropolitan Cyprian.

Together with the church, other new and extensive monastery buildings were erected: a refectory and cells. The newly founded monastery found many benefactors: princes and boyars, and Grand Prince Dimitry Ioannovich[41] himself, and afterwards his son and successor, Grand Prince Basil Dimitrievich[42], generously gave from the treasury and by various offerings toward the building of the monastery.

Thus the New Simonov Monastery was established, while the Old Simonov remained as the burial place of the monks.

Already in the time of Metropolitan Alexis, Theodore had been appointed hegumen of the Simonov Monastery; Venerable Sergius was opposed to this: he wished Theodore to lead the solitary life toward which he aspired; but he was obliged to yield to the insistence of Grand Prince Dimitry Ioannovich and Metropolitan Alexis.

Grand Prince Dimitry Ioannovich chose Hegumen Theodore as his spiritual father; many boyars and nobles also desired to become his spiritual children.

As the confessor of the Grand Prince and of many boyars, and as the nephew of the renowned ascetic Sergius, well known also to the ecclesiastical authorities, the Simonov hegumen Theodore was obliged to take a lively part in the affairs of the Church.

After the death of Metropolitan Alexis, confusion arose in the Russian metropolis. In Kiev was Cyprian, who had been appointed Metropolitan of Kiev already during the lifetime of St. Alexis and who sought to extend his authority also over the Moscow Church; and in Constantinople, in 1380, without the knowledge and consent of the Grand Prince of Moscow, Pimen was appointed Metropolitan of Kiev and all

41. Dimitry Ivanovich Donskoy reigned from 1363 to 1389.
42. Vasily Dimitrievich reigned from 1389 to 1425.

Russia. The Grand Prince wished to have Cyprian as metropolitan and sent his confessor, Hegumen Theodore of Simonov, to summon him to Moscow, which commission he discharged successfully. Afterwards Theodore carried out similar commissions several times. Thus in 1384, by the will of the Grand Prince, he travelled to Constantinople together with Dionysius, Archbishop of Suzdal, on affairs of the Russian metropolis, since the disorder still continued: at Moscow the metropolitan see was occupied now by Cyprian, now by Pimen.

On this journey to Constantinople, Hegumen Theodore received from Patriarch Neilos[43] the rank of archimandrite, and the Simonov Monastery was made a patriarchal stauropegion. In 1387 Archimandrite Theodore again travelled to Constantinople on affairs of the metropolis, when both metropolitans, Pimen and Cyprian, also went there. From this journey Theodore returned in the rank of Archbishop of Rostov, together with Metropolitan Pimen.

After his appointment to the archiepiscopal see of Rostov, which had remained vacant since the withdrawal of St. James[44], Theodore continued to take an active part in Church affairs. Thus in 1389 he, together with other bishops, escorted Pimen from Moscow as far as Ryazan on his third and last journey to Constantinople.

On 19 May 1389 Grand Prince Dimitry Ioannovich died. His son and successor, Grand Prince Basil Dimitrievich, showed the same respect and attention to Archbishop Theodore as his father had, and made use of his services in Church affairs.

Pimen was finally deposed by the new Patriarch Antony[45] and soon died[46]. Grand Prince Basil Dimitrievich resolved to bring Metropolitan Cyprian, who was in Constantinople, to Moscow, and to invite him he sent Archbishop Theodore of Rostov, an experienced man who had already been there more than once.

On 1 October 1389 Metropolitan Cyprian, together with Theodore, who had come for him, set out from Constantinople by way of Kiev,

43. Nilus was Patriarch from 1378 to 1388.
44. The memory of St. James is celebrated on 27 November.
45. Antony was Patriarch from 1388 to 1395.
46. Metropolitan Pimen reposed on 11 September 1389 in the Asia Minor city of Chalcedon, which lies almost opposite Constantinople, and was buried there.

where they remained until February 1390, and in the middle week of the Great Lent of that year they set out for Moscow.

Thus ended the confusion in the Russian metropolis, and with it the wanderings of Archbishop Theodore. He had to endure during this time many labors, dangers on land and sea, sorrows and vexations, but from his youth he had trained himself to labors and exploits and did not seek rest. The Lord God strengthened his spirit and body.

While hegumen and archimandrite of the Simonov Monastery, Theodore, although diverted by the general affairs of the Church, nevertheless constantly and unremittingly directed the monastic life, and in his disciples he trained many great and glorious ascetics. To him was brought by the blessed Stephen of Makhrishche[47] a youth of noble birth, named Kosma, who had been brought up in Moscow in the house of the boyar Velyaminov, and he was tonsured in the Simonov Monastery under the name of Cyril. This was the one who afterwards became famous as the founder of the Kirillo-Belozersky Monastery. By his first monastic obediences he drew general attention to himself in the Simonov Monastery, labouring in the bakery, the kitchen and other obediences. Here Venerable Sergius, who often visited the monastery, noticed him and liked to converse with him. When Archimandrite Theodore was raised to the rank of Archbishop of Rostov, the brethren of the Simonov Monastery elected Cyril as their superior. But Cyril, who thirsted for solitary exploits, found this position burdensome, declined the office of superior and shut himself up in his cell. Nevertheless the fame of his exploits drew admirers and visitors even there, and he resolved to withdraw to the north, where he founded his monastery, which became famous afterwards.

Here too, in the Simonov Monastery, under Archimandrite Theodore, the young nobleman Theodore Poskochin of Volokolamsk received the tonsure, named in monasticism Ferapont. Like Cyril, he became famous for his asceticism and was known to Sergius of Radonezh. Together with his friend Cyril he withdrew to the Belozersk region and founded there a monastery which became known by the name of Fera-

47. His memory is celebrated on 14 July.

pontov. Summoned by Prince Andrew Dimitrievich of Mozhaisk, to whom Beloozero also belonged, Ferapont founded in Mozhaisk a new monastery, Luzhetsky, in which he died as archimandrite of his own monastery[48].

Many other persons also labored in the Simonov Monastery under the guidance of Archimandrite Theodore. The strict common life established in the Simonov Monastery served as a model for other cenobitic monasteries, whose founders had previously lived in the monastery or visited it.

At the conclusion of his labors on the affairs of the Russian metropolis, Archbishop Theodore arrived at Rostov and, after venerating the icon of the Mother of God and the relics of Hierarch Leontius, zealously took up his new pastoral ministry. In peace and love he dwelt with the princely family of Rostov and guided it on the path of piety. The son of the then Prince of Rostov, Alexander Konstantinovich, John, had sore eyes and lost his sight. The father turned to Hierarch Theodore and asked him to pray for the sick one. Theodore directed the princes to the relics of St. Leontius in the cathedral church of Rostov, and after a moleben had been served, the sick prince was healed and regained his sight. Afterwards, already after the death of Hierarch Theodore, Prince John, taught by this pastor, when he again fell ill with an affliction of the eyes, once more turned with fervent prayer to the wonderworker Leontius and again received healing[49].

Archbishop Theodore also left behind a memorial in the founding at Rostov of the Nativity women's monastery, which exists to this day.

It is also known of Hierarch Theodore that, while he was superior of the Simonov Monastery, he practised iconography and adorned various Moscow churches with icons of his painting[50].

Of all the Rostov hierarchs, Theodore was the first to be appointed to the rank of archbishop, a rank which in Russia had until then belonged only to the bishop of ancient Great Novgorod. Hierarch

48. The Venerable Ferapont reposed in deep old age in 1420, on 27 May; his life is under that date.

49. This is related in the life of St. Leontius, Wonderworker of Rostov.

50. The occupations of St. Theodore with icon-painting are spoken of in the *Tale of the Holy Icon-Painters* (Buslaev, *Historical Essays* II, 379).

Theodore governed the flock of Rostov for a short time. His blessed repose followed on 28 November 1395. His relics rest beneath the floor in the south-western corner of the Rostov Dormition Cathedral. Over him is erected a richly adorned tomb under a golden canopy[51].

* * *

Memory of Holy Martyr Irinarchus

Память святого мученика Иринарха

St. Irinarchus was from the city of Sebaste[52]. In his youth he was an executioner at the tortures of the holy martyrs. During the torturing by the governor Maximian, under Diocletian, of the seven holy women, Irinarchus was enlightened by the grace of God: seeing women tortured for Christ's sake and putting the tormentor to shame, he boldly confessed Christ and declared himself a Christian. Then, by order of the governor, he was cast into a swamp, from which he came out unharmed, and afterwards into a fiery furnace, but it did him no harm either. After this he was beheaded with the sword, in 303.

* * *

Memory of the holy martyrs, together with St. Stephen the New, who suffered for the holy icons

Память святых мучеников, со святым Стефаном Новым за святые иконы пострадавших

In the time of Constantine Copronymus[53], many Orthodox soldiers, having left military service, took monastic vows. Many of them the

51. St. Theodore appears among the ranks of the saints in hagiographical monuments from the fifteenth century. In manuscripts there occur a troparion and a kontakion composed in his honor.

52. The reference here is to Sebastia in Armenia, called Armenian Sebastia, in distinction from Cappadocian Sebastia.

53. Constantine Copronymus reigned from 741 to 776. He was one of the cruel iconoclast emperors. Since during the persecutions of the holy icons the chief defenders of them were monks, Constantine Copronymus ordered the monasteries to be burned, and Orthodox monks to have their heads broken with the very icons in whose defense they stood, or he subjected them to other cruel executions. Soldiers who carried out the will of the impious emperor, seeing the steadfastness of the Orthodox and many signs from the reviled icons, often turned from persecutors into Orthodox believers and became zealous venerators of the holy icons. For this the fury of the tormentor turned upon them, and they had to endure cruel executions, tortures, and death itself.

lawless emperor, after torments, ordered to be deprived of life. One, named Basil, he first blinded. When St. Basil, even after the blinding, continued to offer veneration to the holy icons, the tormentor thrust a sword into Basil's belly, so that all his entrails were exposed. At the same time St. Stephen in Constantinople also received the crown of martyrdom for the holy icons. Besides these, two Gregorys with some others were sent into exile and imprisonment, where they died. Finally St. John was banished to Daphne[54], where, by the emperor's command, he was often beaten, of which he died.

* * *

54. Daphne was a suburb of Constantinople.

THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 29

29 ноября

New Calendar November 29 · Old Calendar December 12 (civil dates)

Memory of Our Venerable Father Acacius of Sinai

Память преподобного отца нашего Акакия Синайского

The Blessed John Climacus[1] writes in his book concerning the Venerable Acacius as follows: "The great John the Savaite related to me an event that is true and worthy of narration."

"There was an elder, very slothful and evil of disposition; I speak without condemning him, but in order to show the patience of the saint, and I will tell you what happened. That elder had a young disciple named Acacius, simple of nature and chaste of mind, who endured so much evil from the elder that it will seem incredible to many, for the elder not only afflicted him with reproaches and dishonor, but every day tormented him with bodily chastisements. Yet his patience was not in vain: for Acacius, by his uncomplaining endurance and his meek suffering, obtained for himself the grace of God, which delivered him from eternal torment. As for me (says John the Savaite to John Climacus), seeing him each day as though he were a purchased slave or a captive, and enduring extreme affliction, I deliberately met him and asked:

"'What is it, Brother Acacius? How do you spend this day?'

"And he answered:

"'As before the Lord God, so am I well.' And he showed me at times his bruised eyes, at times his neck, and at other times his head covered with wounds. Knowing that he was acting virtuously, I said to him:

1. John Climacus – of unknown origin; he took the monastic habit at the age of twenty, and during the last four years of his life was abbot of the Sinai monastery; he died as an elder of eighty at the end of the sixth century; his memory is celebrated on March 30.

"'Good, good, endure, brother, that you may attain to salvation.'

"In this condition the blessed Acacius remained with that stern elder for nine years, and, having fallen ill for a little while before his death, he departed to the Lord[2]. When he had been buried in the family tomb, then, five days later, the elder went to a great father who lived there and said to him:

"'Father, Brother Acacius, my disciple, has died.'

"The Father, hearing this, said:

"'I do not believe you, elder, for Acacius has not died.'

"The elder said:

"'Father, if you do not believe me, then go yourself and look into his coffin.'

"Then the Venerable Father hastily rose, went with the elder into the tomb of the blessed sufferer, and cried out loudly over the coffin of Acacius, addressing him as one living:

"'Brother Acacius, have you died?'

"The prudent novice, showing his obedience even after death, answered:

"'I have not died, Father, for it is impossible for one who has bound himself to perform obedience to die.'

"When the elder with whom Acacius had lived heard this, he was afraid and fell to the ground in tears; then he asked the abbot for a cell beside his tomb, and, shut up in it, he lived on piously, caring for the salvation of his soul, and after many labors he departed to the Lord God, to Whom be glory forever. Amen."

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Paramon

Память святого мученика Парамона

In the reign of the impious emperor Decius[3], there was in the East a prince Aquilinus, who severely persecuted the Christians. Once he gathered into prison Christians, to the number of three hundred and

2. He died in the first half of the sixth century.
3. Decius – Roman emperor from 249 to 251.

seventy, and, setting out for the warm waters of Valsaytia[4], he commanded that the martyrs be led with him; intending to pass by the idol-temple of Poseidon[5], he wished to compel them to offer sacrifice to the idol. Reaching the shrine, he long tried to force the saints to bring sacrifice to the idol of the false god Poseidon, but could not persuade them either by flattery or by threats. At that time it happened that a certain pious man, named Paramon, a Christian in faith, was passing by. Seeing so great a multitude of holy martyrs condemned to death, he stood before the shrine of the idol and cried out with a loud voice:

"O how many righteous men the impious prince kills without cause, because they do not bow down to lifeless and mute idols!"

Having said this openly, he went on his way. The prince, hearing those words of Paramon, flamed with fury and commanded his servants to overtake him at once and kill him. The impious servants of the most impious prince overtook the blessed Paramon, who did not know of this order and was going his way, and seized him. First they drew out his tongue from his mouth, which had exposed and reproached the tormentor, and pierced it; then they wounded all his members, and at last pierced his body with spears. Thus the holy martyr Paramon yielded his pious soul into the hands of God.

In that same hour the aforesaid holy martyrs, to the number of three hundred and seventy, were slain with swords before the shrine of Poseidon for the faith of Christ.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Philumenus

Память святого мученика Филумена

The holy martyr Philumenus lived in the reign of the emperor Aurelian[6], in Lycaonia[7], engaged in selling grain in Galatia, in the

4. The Valsativian waters, at the mouth of the river Tiber, are located in the province of Bithynia.

5. Poseidon, among the Romans Neptune, was the pagan god of the seas and water springs.

6. Aurelian Domitius reigned from 270 to 275.

7. Lycaonia – an ancient land of Asia Minor. From 25 B.C. this land became part of the Roman province of Galatia. Its capital was originally the Phrygian city of Iconium (now Konya).

city of Ancyra[8]. The holy Philumenus was slandered before the governor of the province, Felix, before whom he confessed himself a Christian; for this he was hanged, scraped, and then cast into the fire, from which, by the grace of God, he came out unharmed. After this, nails were driven into his head, hands, and feet, and he was dragged thirty stadia[9], from which the saint, exhausted, yielded up his spirit to God[10].

* * *



8. Ancyra – one of the cities of the Galatian province.
9. Stadion (*poprishche*) – a measure of distance in the racecourse where races were run. One *poprishche* equaled 690 of our sazhens. Therefore, thirty *poprishche* were more than forty versts.
10. The repose of the holy martyr Philumenus took place about 274 A.D.

THE THIRTIETH DAY OF NOVEMBER

November 30

30 ноября

New Calendar November 30 · Old Calendar December 13 (civil dates)

Labors and Sufferings of the Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called

Подвиги и страдания святого Апостола Андрея Первозванного

St. Andrew, the First-Called Apostle of Christ, son of a Jew named Jonah and brother of St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles, was from the city of Bethsaida[1]. Despising the vanities of this world and preferring virginity to marriage, he did not wish to wed; but, hearing that St. John the Forerunner was preaching repentance on the Jordan[2], he left everything, went to him, and became his disciple. When the holy Forerunner, pointing to Jesus Christ as He passed by, said, "Behold the Lamb of God"[3], St. Andrew, together with another disciple of the Forerunner, whom it is believed was the Evangelist John, left the Baptist and followed Christ. He found his brother Simon (Peter) and said to him, "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ," and brought him to Jesus (Jn. 1:41–42). After this, when he was fishing with Peter on the shore of the Sea of Galilee[4], and Jesus called to them, saying, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt. 4:19), Andrew immediately left his nets at the Lord's call and fol-

1. Bethsaida: a city on the northwest shore of the Sea of Tiberias, the birthplace of the holy Apostles Peter, Andrew and Philip, and near its shore was performed the miracle of the feeding of five thousand with loaves (Lk. 9:10).
2. The Jordan: the principal river of the Holy Land, flowing through it from north to south; it takes its rise in the spurs of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains and empties into the Dead Sea.
3. Jn. 1: The naming of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God pointed to the fact that He became incarnate to offer Himself in sacrifice for the human race.
4. The Sea of Galilee, or lake, was also called the Gennesaret or Tiberias Sea; it is situated in the northern part of Palestine (in Galilee), is about 30 versts long and about 8 versts wide, and through it flows the river Jordan.

lowed Christ with his brother Peter (Mt. 4:20). Andrew was called the First-Called because, before all the Apostles, he became a follower and disciple of Jesus Christ. After the Lord's voluntary sufferings and His Resurrection, when St. Andrew, like the other Apostles, received the Holy Spirit, who descended upon him in the form of a tongue of fire (Acts 2:3), and the lands were divided among them, the lands of Bithynia[5] and the Propontis[6], with Chalcedon[7] and Byzantium[8], Thrace[9] and Macedonia[10], stretching as far as the Black Sea[11] and the Danube[12], fell to him by lot, as well as Thessaly[13], Hellas[14], Achaia[15], Amintin[16], Trapezus[17], Heraclea[18], and Amastris[19].

5. Bithynia: a country lying along the shores of the Black Sea, the Bosphorus and the Constantinople Strait. From 75 B.C. it became part of the Roman Empire and was divided into two provinces, with the chief cities of Prusa (in ancient times, Prusiada) and Nicomedia.
6. That is, the countries lying along the shores of the Sea of Marmara.
7. Chalcedon: a city on the Asian shore of the Constantinople strait, nearer to the Sea of Marmara.
8. Byzantium: near the entrance to the Constantinople strait, on the European shore. From 330 the emperor St. Constantine the Great made this city the capital of his kingdom and gave it his own name (Constantinople). Today it is the capital of Turkey.
9. Thrace was the name given to the part of the Balkan Peninsula north of Macedonia, the Aegean Sea (the Archipelago) and the Sea of Marmara, where today lie the following lands: the eastern part of Hungary, Transylvania, Bessarabia, Moldavia, Wallachia, Bulgaria, Serbia and the eastern parts of Rumelia.
10. A country southwest of Thrace, along the northwest shore of the Aegean Sea.
11. A part of the Mediterranean Sea, between the Balkan Peninsula and the Caucasus isthmus, the southern edge of Russia and the northern shore of the Asia Minor peninsula.
12. One of the greatest rivers in Europe; it rises in the central part of Europe, then flows through Austria and along the northern border of the Balkan Peninsula, from west to east, and empties into the Black Sea.
13. Thessaly: a country on the western shore of the Aegean Sea, separated on the north from Macedonia by the chain of the Olympian mountains.
14. Hellas was located in the southern part of the Balkan Peninsula, joined to it by the Isthmus of Corinth (today the Morea); on the west it bordered on the Ionian Sea, on the east on Achaea and Arcadia.
15. Achaea: a country along the southern shore of the Gulf of Corinth.
16. Considering the location of the cities named further on, one must think that what is meant here is Amisus or Amia, on the southern shore of the Black Sea, in the province of Pontus, between the mouths of the rivers Halys and Iris; today it is called Samsun.
17. A city in the province of Pontus, which lay along the southern shore of the Black Sea, between Paphlagonia and Armenia. Trebizond was situated by the sea, considerably east of Amisus.
18. There were several cities of this name in different places. Here one must understand Heraclea on the southern shore of the Black Sea, somewhat west of Amastris mentioned further on.
19. A city in Paphlagonia, which lay along the southern shore of the Black Sea, between Pontus and Bithynia; Amastrida, otherwise Amastris.

St. Andrew passed through these cities and lands, preaching the faith of Christ, and in every city endured many afflictions and sufferings; strengthened by the almighty help of God, he bore all hardships for Christ with gladness. Above all, he suffered tortures in the city called Sinope[20]: there they threw him to the ground and, taking him by the hands and feet, dragged him about, beat him with logs, stoned him, and tore out his fingers and teeth; but by the grace of his Savior and Teacher, he was again made whole and healed of his wounds. Departing from there, he passed through other lands: Neocaesarea[21], Samosata[22], the lands of the Alans[23], the Abasgians[24], the Zygii[25], and the Bosporans[26].

Then he sailed to the Thracian city of Byzantium[27], where he was the first to preach Christ; and having taught many, he appointed presbyters of the Church. He ordained Stachys bishop of Byzantium, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 16:9). As for himself, bearing the Apostolic afflictions and labors in the Gospel of Christ, he traversed Pontus[28], the coast of the Black Sea, Scythia[29], and the land of the Chersonites[30]. By God's providence, he came to the Dnieper River[31], in the Russian land[32], and, landing by the

20. A city which originally belonged to Paphlagonia, and later to Pontus; it lay on the southern shore of the Black Sea, on a narrow isthmus which joins to the shore the small peninsula formed here by the sea.

21. A city in Pontus, where St. Gregory the Wonderworker was born and, about 240, was the first bishop.

22. Samosata, otherwise Semisat, Simasat: a Syrian city on the river Euphrates, in its upper part.

23. The Alans: a country inhabited by the Sarmatian people of the same name, located in today's northern Caucasus, between the Black and Caspian Seas, nearer the latter.

24. The Abasci: a tribe living west of the Alans, nearer the Black Sea, which gave its name to today's Abkhazia.

25. The Zigi lived along the shore of the Black Sea, in immediate neighborhood with the Abasci, to their north.

26. Here one must understand the Bosphoran kingdom, on today's Tauric peninsula, near the Cimmerian Bosphorus (today the Kerch strait).

27. That is, he sailed across the Black Sea to the Thracian Bosphorus, where Byzantium was located.

28. Under Nero (in the 1st century) Pontus was converted into a Roman province and divided into three parts: Galatian, Polemonian and Cappadocian.

29. Scythia was the name given to lands lying partly in the south of present-day Russia, partly around the Caspian Sea. The exact northern and eastern borders of Scythia were unknown to the ancients.

Kiev hills[33], stopped there for the night. When he arose from sleep in the morning, he said to the disciples who were with him:

"Believe me: upon these hills the grace of God shall shine forth; a great city shall be here, and the Lord shall raise up many churches there and enlighten the whole Russian land with holy Baptism."

Having ascended the hills, the saint blessed them and set up a cross, foretelling that the people dwelling there would receive the faith from his Apostolic see, founded in Byzantium[34]. Having passed through the Russian cities farther to the north, where great Novgorod now stands[35], and having also visited Rome[36], he returned to the Greek land of Epirus[37], and came again to Thrace, confirming the Christians and appointing bishops and teachers for them. Passing through many lands, he reached the Peloponnese[38] and, entering the Achaean city of Patras[39], stayed with a respected man named Sosius. He raised him from his sickbed and thereafter converted the whole city of Patras to Christ. At the same time, the wife of the local ruler, the proconsul Aegeates, named Maximilla, believed in Christ; she was delivered from the grievous bonds of illness and quickly healed. The wise Stratocles, brother of the proconsul, and many others afflicted with various illnesses were also cured through the laying on of the Apostle's hands. Then Aegeates the proconsul flew into a rage and, seizing the holy Apostle, nailed him to a cross. Concerning this, the presbyters and deacons of Achaia wrote as follows:

30. The name Chersonesus was applied in antiquity to many places. Here one must understand the peoples inhabiting the Tauric Chersonesus (today's Crimea).
31. It flows through the south of present-day Russia and empties into the Black Sea.
32. This is a later name, derived from the Slavic tribe of Rus.
33. That is, he ascended the Dnieper to a certain hilly place, on which later the city of Kiev arose.
34. This prophecy was fulfilled: the Russians received baptism from the Greeks and were enlightened by church teachers sent from Constantinople.
35. One of the most ancient Russian cities, on the river Volkhov. It indicates the limit of the Apostle's movement northward from Kiev.
36. The capital of the ancient Roman kingdom and of today's Kingdom of Italy, on the river Tiber.
37. Epirus: a Greek region along the shore of the Ionian Sea, extending east from the Pindus mountain range.
38. Today's Morea, joined to the Balkan Peninsula by the Isthmus of Corinth.
39. Otherwise Patras, a city at the entrance to the Gulf of Corinth.

"We, all the presbyters and deacons of the churches of Achaia, write to all the churches in the east and in the west, in the south and in the north, concerning the suffering of the holy Apostle Andrew, which we saw with our own eyes. Peace be to you and to all who believe in the one God, perfect in the Trinity: the true Father, unbegotten; the true Son, begotten; and the true Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and resting upon the Son. This faith we learned from St. Andrew, the Apostle of Jesus Christ, whose suffering, seen by us with our own eyes, we now describe."

Aegeates the proconsul came to the city of Patras and began to compel those who believed in Christ to offer sacrifices to idols. St. Andrew came before him and said:

"You, who judge men, ought to know your Judge, who is in heaven, and, having come to know Him, worship Him; and having worshipped the true God, you ought to turn away from false gods."

Aegeates said to him:

"Are you that Andrew who destroys the temples of the gods and leads men astray into that magical faith which has appeared recently, and which the Roman emperors have commanded to be rooted out?"

St. Andrew the Apostle answered:

"The Roman emperors have not understood that the Son of God, having descended to earth for the salvation of the human race, clearly showed that these idols are not gods at all, but unclean demons, hostile to the human race. They teach men to provoke God to anger and turn Him away from themselves, so that He will not hear them. When God, being angered, turns away from men, the demons then take them captive into bondage to themselves and deceive them until their souls depart from their bodies naked[40], having nothing else with them but their sins."

Aegeates said:

"When your Jesus was preaching these womanish and empty words, the Jews nailed Him to a cross."

Andrew answered:

40. That is, those without good works to their credit.

"O, if only you would desire to know the mystery of the Cross: how the Creator of the human race, in His love for us, voluntarily suffered upon the Cross, for He knew beforehand the time of His sufferings and prophesied His Resurrection on the third day; and, as He sat with us at the Last Supper, He foretold His betrayer, speaking of what was to come as though it had already happened, and voluntarily went to the place where He was to be delivered into the hands of the Jews."

"I marvel at you," Aegeates retorted, "that, being a wise man, you follow Him whom you confess to have been crucified on a cross—whether in one way or another: voluntarily or involuntarily."[41]

The Apostle answered:

"Great is the mystery of the Cross; and if you wish to hear, I will tell you."

"This is no mystery, but the punishment of criminals," Aegeates retorted. St. Andrew answered:

"This punishment is the mystery of the renewal of mankind. Only deign to hear me patiently."

"I will hear you patiently," said the judge, "but if you do not do what I command, you will yourself bear that same mystery of the Cross."[42]

The Apostle answered him:

"If I feared the punishment of the Cross, I would never glorify the Cross."

Aegeates said:

"As you praise the Cross in your folly, so you fear not death in your arrogance."

The Apostle answered:

"I fear not death, not through arrogance, but through faith, for the death of the venerable is precious[43], whereas death is grievous for sinners. I wish you to hear what I shall say concerning the mystery of the

41. Execution by crucifixion was considered the most shameful; only slaves and generally the most despicable and criminal people were subjected to it.
42. That is, you will be crucified.
43. That is, righteous people who were pleasing to God.

Cross, and, having learned the truth, to believe; and, having believed, to find your soul.[44]"

Aegeates said:

"One finds[45] what has been lost.[46] Is my soul lost, then, that you command me to find it by faith, though I know not what kind?"

St. Andrew answered:

"This is what you could learn from me: I will show you how the souls of men were lost, so that you may know their salvation, accomplished through the Cross. The first man brought death in through the tree of transgression,[47] and it was necessary for the human race that death be destroyed through the tree of suffering.[48] And just as the first man, who brought death in through the tree of transgression, was made from pure earth, so it was fitting that Christ, a perfect Man, be born of a pure Virgin; He is also the Son of God, who created the first man, so that He might restore the eternal life lost by all men. And just as the first man sinned by stretching out his hands to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so, for the salvation of mankind, it was fitting that the Son of God stretch out His hands upon the Cross for the intemperance of human hands, and taste bitter gall for the sake of the sweet food from the forbidden tree."[49]

Aegeates answered him:

"Speak these words to those who will listen to you. But if you do not obey my command, and do not wish to sacrifice to the gods, I will have you beaten with rods and crucified upon the cross which you glorify."

Andrew answered:

Every day I offer to the One, True and Almighty God not the smoke of incense, not the flesh of oxen, not the blood of goats, but the spotless

44. That is, you will save the soul. The figure of speech is borrowed from Mt. 16:25–26.
45. Otherwise: find.
46. Otherwise: lost, perished.
47. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is meant (Gen. 2:16–17); it is so called because, having tasted of the fruit of this tree forbidden by God, man committed a transgression.
48. The tree of the Cross is meant, on which Christ suffered and died, trampling down death by (His own) death.
49. The juice of a plant, extremely bitter to the taste and producing a stupefying effect. Gall mixed with vinegar, in fulfillment of prophecy (Ps. 68:22), was given to the Lord to drink while He was crucified on the cross (Mt. 27:34–48).

Lamb, sacrificed on the altar of the Cross.[50] All the faithful partake of His most pure Body and drink His Blood; yet this Lamb remains whole and alive, though He is truly slain. Truly all eat His flesh and drink His blood, and yet, as I say, He always remains whole, spotless and living.

Aegeates said:

"How can this be?"

Andrew answered:

"If you wish to know, become a disciple, so that you may learn what you are asking about."

Egeas said:

"I will extract this teaching from you by torments."

The Apostle answered:

"I marvel that you, being a wise man, speak like a fool. For can you learn the mysteries of God from me by putting me to torment? You have heard of the mystery of the Cross; you have heard also of the mystery of the sacrifice. If you believe that Christ, the Son of God, crucified by the Jews, is the true God, I will reveal to you how He, though slain, lives, and how, though offered in sacrifice and partaken of, He remains whole in His Kingdom."

Aegeates said:

"If He was slain and, as you say, eaten by men, how can He be alive and whole?"

"If you believe with all your heart," answered the Apostle, "you can understand this mystery; but if you do not believe, you will never comprehend this mystery."

Then Aegeates, enraged, commanded that the Apostle be cast into prison. When the saint had been thrown into prison, many people gathered to him from all that country; they wished to kill Aegeates and to free Andrew from prison. But the holy Apostle restrained them, admonishing them and saying:

“Do not turn the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ into a diabolical uproar; for our Lord, having been delivered to death, showed all patience, did not contradict, did not cry out, and His voice was not heard in the

50. That is, on the altar founded by the power of the redemptive sufferings of the Lord on the Cross.

streets; therefore you too be silent and be calm. Not only do not hinder my martyrdom, but yourselves, as good ascetics and soldiers of Christ, prepare to bear patiently on your bodies every kind of torment and wound. If one must fear torments, it is only those which have no end;[51] human terrors and threats, however, are like smoke: appearing, they suddenly vanish. And if one must fear sufferings, it is those which begin and never have an end.[52] Temporal sufferings, if they are slight, are borne easily; if they are great, they soon end, the soul having been removed from the body. But grievous are those sufferings which are eternal. Therefore be ready to pass through temporal sorrows to eternal joy, where you will rejoice, always flourish, and always reign with Christ."

Thus teaching the people, Saint Andrew spent the whole night. In the morning Egeas the proconsul sat down on the judgment seat; he sent for the holy Andrew and said to him:

"Have you resolved to abandon your madness and not preach Christ, so that you may rejoice with us in this life? For it is great madness to go willingly to torments and fire."

The saint answered:

"I shall be able to rejoice with you when you believe in Christ and reject the idols, for Christ sent me into this country, in which I have won many people for Him."

Egeas said:

"I compel you to sacrifices, so that those whom you have seduced may abandon the vanity of your teaching and offer the sacrifices pleasing to the gods; for there is no city in Achaia in which the temples of the gods have not been emptied. Therefore now it is necessary that, through you, their honor be restored, so that those whom you have angered may be appeased by you, and that you yourself may remain with us in friendly love. But if not, then for the dishonor done to them you will receive various torments and will be hanged on the cross which you glorify."

Saint Andrew answered this:

51. That is, of condemnation at the Last Judgment.
52. That is, of the eternal torments of sinners in hell.

"Listen, son of death, doomed to eternal torments, listen to me, a servant of the Lord and Apostle of Jesus Christ! Until now I have spoken with you gently, desiring to teach you the holy faith, so that you, as one endowed with reason, might know the truth and, rejecting the idols, bow down to God who dwells in heaven. But since you persist in your shamelessness and think that I fear your torments, devise against me the most grievous torments that you know, for I shall be the more pleasing to my King the more grievous the sufferings I endure for Him."

Then Egeas commanded that he be stretched out and beaten. And when the beaters had changed, by threes, seven times, the saint was lifted up and brought before the judge.

The judge said to him:

"Listen to me, Andrew, and do not shed your blood in vain, for if you do not listen to me, I will crucify you on the cross."

Saint Andrew answered:

"I am a slave of the Cross of Christ, and I desire death on the cross. You, however, can escape eternal torment if, having tested my patience, you believe in Christ, for I grieve over your perdition more than over my own sufferings: my sufferings will end in one day, or at most two, but your torments, even after a thousand years, will have no end. Therefore do not multiply your torments and do not kindle for yourself the eternal fire."

Enraged, Egeas commanded that Saint Andrew be crucified on the cross, his hands and feet bound; for he did not want him nailed, lest he die quickly and, hanging bound, endure more torment.

When the servants of the tormentor were leading him to the crucifixion, the people gathered, crying out:

"What has this righteous man and friend of God done wrong, that he is being led to crucifixion?"

Andrew, however, begged the people not to hinder his suffering, and went to his torments with joy, not ceasing to teach. When he came to the place where he was to be crucified, seeing from afar the cross prepared for him, he cried out in a loud voice:

"Rejoice, O Cross, sanctified by the Flesh of Christ and adorned with His limbs as with pearls! While the Lord had not yet been crucified on you, you were terrible to men; now they love you and receive you with desire, for the faithful know what joy you contain within yourself, and what reward is prepared for you. With boldness and gladness I come to you; receive me with joy, for I am a disciple of Him who was hanged upon you. Receive me, since I have always loved and desired to embrace you, O honorable Cross, which received from the limbs of the Lord beauty and glorious adornment, long desired, ardently beloved, which I have unceasingly sought. Take me from the midst of men and give me to my Master, so that through you He who redeemed me by you may receive me."

Saying this, he took off his garments and gave them to the tormentors. They raised him on the cross, binding his hands and feet with cords, crucified and hanged him. Around him stood a multitude of people, about twenty thousand; among them was also Egeas' brother, named Stratocles, who cried out together with the people:

"Unjustly does such a holy man suffer."

But the holy Andrew strengthened those who believed in Christ and exhorted them to endure temporal torments, teaching that no torment is worth anything in comparison with the reward that is to follow for it.

Then all the people went to the house of Egeas, crying out and saying:

"It is not fitting that so holy, honorable, good teacher, virtuous, meek and wise a man should suffer thus; he must be taken down from the cross, for although he has been hanging on the cross for the second day, he does not cease to teach the truth."

Then Egeas, fearing the people, at once went with them to take Andrew down from the cross. Andrew, seeing Egeas, said:

"Why have you come, Egeas? If you wish to believe in Christ, the door of grace will be opened to you, as I promised. But if you have come only to take me down from the cross, then I do not desire, while I live, to be taken down from the cross, for I already see my King, already worship Him, already stand before Him, but I suffer for your sake, be-

cause eternal perdition awaits you. Take care of yourself while you can, lest you wish to begin when you are no longer able.[53]"

When the servants wished to untie him from the cross, they could not touch him; many other people, one after another, tried to untie him, but they could not, because their hands became numb. After this Saint Andrew cried out in a loud voice:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Do not permit me to be taken down from the cross on which I hang for Thy Name; but receive me, my Master, whom I have loved, whom I have known, whom I confess, whom I desire to see, through whom I have become what I am! Lord Jesus Christ, receive my spirit in peace, for the time has now come for me to come to Thee and behold Thee, so greatly desired by me! Receive me, Good Master, and do not command that I be taken down from the cross until Thou hast received my spirit!"

As he was saying this, a light from heaven shone upon him like lightning, in the sight of all, and gleamed around him, so that it was impossible for mortal human eyes to look upon him. This heavenly light shone around him for about half an hour, and when the light withdrew, the holy Apostle breathed his last and departed in radiance of light to stand before the Lord. Maximilla, a woman of noble birth who believed in Christ and lived a chaste and holy life, on learning that St. Andrew had gone to the Lord, took his body with great honor and, anointing it with precious spices, laid it in her own tomb, in which she herself was to be buried. Egeas, enraged against the people, plotted to take revenge upon them and to publicly execute those who had risen against him; and he wished to slander Maximilla before the emperor. As he was devising this, a demon suddenly fell upon him, and, tormented by it, Egeas died in the midst of the city. When this was reported to his brother Stratocles, who believed in Christ, he commanded that Egeas be given burial, while himself seeking nothing of his estate, saying:

"Lord my Jesus Christ, suffer me not to touch anything of my brother's treasures, lest I be defiled by his sin; for he, loving vain possessions, dared to put to death the Apostle of the Lord."

53. That is, to turn to Christ; when you are no longer able, just before death, at the approach of death.

This took place on the last day of November, in Achaia, in the city of Patras, where to this day, through the prayers of the Apostle, many benefits are bestowed upon men. Fear was upon all, and there was no one who did not believe in our Savior God, who wills all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth[54], to Whom be glory unto ages of ages. Amen.

After many years, the relics of this holy Apostle Andrew were brought to Constantinople by the martyr Artemius, by command of the great emperor Constantine[55], and were laid together with St. Luke the Evangelist and St. Timothy, disciple of St. Paul the Apostle, in the radiant Church of the Apostles, within the holy altar.

By the prayers of Thine Apostle, O Christ God, establish Thy faithful in Orthodoxy, and save us. Amen.

Eulogy to the holy Apostle Andrew the First-called, by St. John Chrysostom

Strong is the net of the Apostolic fishing[56], wondrous is the memory of Andrew, and wondrous is the remembrance of the net which he used for catching and for drawing nations to the faith of Christ. For the seine which these immortal fishermen used can never be torn by oblivion. Those instruments of catching do not grow old with time, for they were made not by human skill but by the grace of God. Although the fishermen themselves have departed from us, yet the instruments they used, or the net with which they encircled the world itself, have never grown old. When they cast and draw in the net, they are invisible, yet their nets prove full. They did not take a reed[57] which decays with time, nor did they dip linen threads that rot with age into the water. They did not make a hook which rust consumes, nor did they place on the hook bait with which to catch fish[58]. They did not sit on a stone[59] which the waters wash against, nor did they sail in a boat which the waves

54. The expression is borrowed from 1 Tim. 2:4.
55. St. Constantine the Great (324–337) is meant, who first made Christianity the dominant faith in the Roman Empire.
56. By "catching" is meant the drawing of people to faith in Christ by the holy Apostles.
57. By "rod" is meant here a fishing rod.
58. The bait placed on the hook when fishing (a worm, an insect, a small piece of bread, etc.).
59. The angler with a rod usually sits on some stone, on the riverbank, near the water.

break apart. They did not catch irrational creatures, fish; but as wondrous as the art they practiced, so new and extraordinary were their instruments. For instead of a reed they used preaching, instead of a line—memory, instead of a hook—power[60], instead of bait—miracles, instead of a stone—heaven, from which they make such a catch; instead of a boat they have the sanctuary; instead of fish they catch even kings themselves; instead of a seine they spread the Gospel; instead of skill they apply divine grace; instead of the sea they govern human life; instead of a net they are accustomed to use the Cross as a kind of seine.

And who has ever seen dead fishermen catching living men as fish? O great power of the Crucified! O supreme beauty of divine dignity! Nothing in life can be like the height of Apostolic grace. Human life has seen many truly wondrous things that surpass reason; for it has seen blood shed crying out, and murder speaking without a tongue, and nature divided against itself through envy[61]; it has seen a brother causing death to his own brother of the same womb, and the door of death opened through the sore of envy. It has seen Noah's ark not sunk during the flood of the world and the destruction of the human race. It has seen an old man armed, through faith, against his own womb, that is, his son, and him who was not slain—offered as it were in sacrifice[62]. It has seen a blessing obtained through theft[63], and the wrestling of the Creator God with a servant[64]. It has seen envy arising between brothers[65], and slavery procuring a kingdom[66]. It has seen a throne prepared through dreams[67] and brothers betrayed, drawn by hunger[68]. It has

60. That is, grace-filled.
61. That is, that which has risen against itself (the figure of speech is borrowed from Mt. 12:25–26). Here is meant Cain's murder of his brother Abel out of envy (Gen. 4:1–12); in fratricide human nature committed a crime against itself.
62. The feat of faith of Abraham is meant: his offering, at God's word, of his son Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22:1–13).
63. The blessing of the firstborn is meant, which by birth belonged to Esau, but was obtained by Jacob through deceit (Gen. 27:1–40).
64. The appearance of God to the Patriarch Jacob in the form of a Mysterious Wrestler is meant, to strengthen him in view of the impending meeting with his brother Esau (Gen. 32:24–32).
65. The envy of Joseph's elder brothers toward him, because of the father's preferential love for him, is meant (Gen. 37 ff.).
66. Joseph's sojourn in Egyptian slavery is meant, at the end of which he rose to the rank of the highest courtier, the first person in the kingdom after Pharaoh (Gen. 39–41).

seen a rod working miracles[69], and a bush covered with fire as with dew[70]. It has seen the lawgiver Moses commanding the elements[71]. It has seen waters made firm like stone, the deep sea laid bare, the path suddenly prepared[72], and a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, given as a leader for a multitude of people[73]. It has seen a rod sprout without earth[74]. It has seen manna sent down from heaven instead of bread[75]. It has seen the sun stopped by human prayer, as if by some bridle[76], and the conception of a prophet obtained by the prayers of a barren woman[77]. It has seen a handful of flour that was greater than granaries, and a jar of oil that was more abundant than springs[78]. It has seen a chariot borne through the air, and a prophet carried up in it[79]. It has seen afterward that the bones of the dead became a remedy for life[80]. Human life has seen many such great and wondrous things; but these passed away like grass, and were extinguished like a lamp at the rising of the sun. Never was there anything like the Apostles. They, being ministers of the Word of God[81], had communion with Him Who was embodied, Who, as God, has no form[82]. They followed Him

67. Joseph rose in Egypt through his interpretation, by special divine revelation, of Pharaoh's dreams (Gen. 41:1–37).
68. Joseph's brothers came to Egypt from the land of Canaan to buy bread (Gen. 42, 43).
69. The staff of Moses, which, by a special divine power, at times turned into a serpent and at times returned to its former form (Ex. 4:1–5).
70. The bush: a thorn bush.
71. The plagues of Egypt are meant (Ex. 7–12).
72. The miraculous passage of the Hebrews through the Red Sea is meant (Ex. 14:1–31).
73. The pillar of fire and cloud, which went before the Hebrews during their wandering, showed them the way (Ex. 13:21–22).
74. The rod of Aaron, which miraculously budded in the tabernacle in one night, as a sign of the God-established priesthood of Aaron (Num. 17:1–13).
75. (Ex. 16:1–36).
76. By the prayer of Joshua, who desired to lengthen the day for the final defeat of the Canaanites (Josh. 10:12–13).
77. The conception of the Prophet Samuel (Samuel means "asked of God") through the prayers of his mother Hannah, who had previously been barren (1 Kgdms. 1:1–28).
78. At the widow of Zarephath, at the word of the Prophet Elijah (3 Kgdms. 17:10–16).
79. The taking up of the Prophet Elijah alive into heaven in a fiery chariot is meant (4 Kgdms. 2:8–12).
80. The raising of the dead man through contact with the bones of the Prophet Elisha, who had died earlier, is meant (4 Kgdms. 13:20–21).
81. So Jesus Christ is called in Holy Scripture (Jn. 1:1–14; Rev. 19:13; Jn. 5:7). The basis for this name lies chiefly in the fact that Jesus Christ declared the will of God to men (Jn. 15:16).
82. That is, with Jesus Christ, whose Divine nature is incomprehensible and beyond depiction.

Who walks and is everywhere present[83]. They reclined together with Him Who is contained by no place. They heard the voice of Him Who created all things by the word (cf. Jn. 1:3; Ps. 32:6). They embraced the whole world with their tongue, as it were with some net. In their journeys they went around the ends of the earthly circle. They uprooted errors—as tares[84], they hewed down idol-shrines[85] as some thorny brush, they destroyed idols as wild beasts, they drove out demons as wolves. They united the Church as a flock, they gathered the Orthodox as wheat. They cast out heresies as darnel, they dried up Judaism as grass, they burned Greek images with fire as some plants. They tilled human nature with the Cross as with a plow, and sowed the word of God as a seed. Finally, all their deeds shone like stars. Therefore the Lord plainly said to them: "You are the light of the world" (Mt. 5:14).

For the east for the Christian man is He Who was born of the Virgin. The morning for him is He Who instituted baptism. The radiance is the grace of the crucified Christ. The rays are those wondrous tongues[86]; the day is the age to come. The midday hour is that in which the Lord was upon the Cross itself. The west is the sojourn in the tomb. The evening is that brief death. The shining of the sun is the resurrection from the dead. "You are the light of the world," He said.

Look upon these stars, and be amazed at their radiance. Therefore Andrew, whom we commemorate today, when he had found the Lord of all as a treasure of light, cried out, turning to his brother Peter:

"We have found the Messiah."

O the surpassing excellence of brotherly love! O the reversal of the order! Andrew, born into life after Peter, was the first to bring Peter to the Gospel, and he caught him with the words: “We have found the Messiah,” he said. It was spoken in joy; it was glad tidings, joined with rejoicing, about a thing found. “We have found this treasure,” he said.

83. According to His Divinity.
84. A weed growing on the edges of fields and among the grain plants (Job 31:40).
85. *Idolatrous shrines* (*kapishcha*) properly meant pagan temples in which idols stood. But since the pagans liked to build them in shady groves and forests, the reference here is chiefly to these sacred groves.
86. That is, those who shone forth over the Apostles on the day of Holy Pentecost (Acts 2).

"Shun, Peter, the poverty of circumcision[87]; be freed from the tattered rags of the Law[88]; cast off the yoke of the letter[89]; count it as a thing of no account; disregard the present as a dream; and loathe Bethsaida as some evil and rejected place. Leave the net, as an instrument of poverty; the boat, as a dwelling in time of flood; fishing, as a trade subject to the surging of the sea; the fish, as merchandise for gluttony; the Jewish people, as pride before God; Caiaphas, as the father of a wicked assembly. We have found the Messiah, whom the prophets foretold, whom the Law proclaimed to us in its teaching as with a trumpet. We have found the treasure of the Law. Shun, Peter, the famine of the letter: we have found the Messiah, whom the signs prefigured from of old[90], whom Micah saw upon the throne of glory (Mic. 4:1–3), whom Isaiah beheld among the Seraphim (Is. 6:1–3), whom Ezekiel saw upon the Cherubim (Ezek. 1:1–28), whom Daniel beheld upon the clouds (Dan. 7:13–14), whom Nebuchadnezzar saw in that furnace (Dan. 3:92), whom Abraham received into his tent, whom Jacob would not let go until he had received a blessing from Him (Gen. 32:24–32), whose back Moses saw upon the rock[91]. Him we have found, born without beginning and made manifest in the last days[92]. O great treas-

87. That is: remember that the circumcision of the Old Testament, in itself, cannot bring salvation to a man.

88. *The rags of the law*: the Old Testament law, which grew old with the coming of Christ, that is, lost its former significance.

89. *The yoke of letters*: that is, the statutes and precepts of the law of Moses, which constituted a heavy yoke for man, especially because the law gave him no gracious powers for fulfilling them, whereas such powers are granted in Christianity (2 Pet. 1:3), which is therefore called "a good yoke and a light burden" (Mt. 11:30). Yet, however heavy the yoke of the written law, it gave man no joyful consciousness of salvation through it and did not satisfy the spiritual hunger of man (for which reason the text goes on to speak of the hunger of the letter).

90. This refers to the Old Testament types which, with greater or lesser clarity, pointed to Christ: for example, Abraham's offering of Isaac in sacrifice, the appearance to Moses of the burning bush that was not consumed, the Passover lamb, the pillar of cloud and of fire, the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, the brazen serpent, the three days of the Prophet Jonah in the belly of the whale, and so forth.

91. Moses desired to see the glory of God. But the Lord told him that he could not see the Face of God; then He placed him in a cleft of the rock, covering the prophet with His right hand, and when He had passed by, He withdrew it; and Moses saw the back parts of God, that is, he saw God under some external form or symbol (Ex. 33:18–23 and following).

92. The usual designation in the Old Testament for the time of the coming of Jesus Christ (Num. 24:14; Ex. 2:2; Mic. 4:1, and many others).

ure, whose fullness cannot be exhausted! These are riches not subject to the laws of matter, whose essence knows no beginning, and whose very finding is new. 'We have found the Messiah,' which means: Christ." There have been many christs[93], but all of them were mortal. Abraham was a christ, but he decayed in the grave; Isaac was also a christ, but his bones lie in the grave. Jacob was a christ, but he was mortal. And Moses was a christ, but he was buried, in a place we do not know. Likewise David was a christ, but all of them were the prey of death, all were prisoners of death. Christ alone is truly God by nature, who, in His mercy toward men, sealed the virgin womb by His coming forth as with a seal, and made these fishermen the fountains of His healings. His is the dominion, the Kingdom, the glory and the worship, with the immaculate and consubstantial Father, of the same essence, and the Holy Spirit, now and always, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

O Andrew, first-called of the Apostles and brother of the Chief, pray to the Lord of all to grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Let us praise the namesake of manly courage, the God-speaking one, the follower of the chief of the Church, the kinsman of Peter; for as of old he called him, so now he calls us: "Come, we have found the One we desired."

* * *

Commemoration of St. Frumentius, Archbishop of India

Память святого Фрументия, архиепископа индийского

At the end of the reign of Constantine the Great, a merchant who was a Christian, named Meropius, set out to travel to India[94] and

93. The word *Christ* is used here in the general sense of an anointed person, that is, one called by God to a special service.

other countries along the shores of the Red Sea. Meropius had two nephews, Frumentius and Edesius, whom he took with him, wishing to acquaint these youths also with unknown lands, with different nature, and with the customs and manners of other peoples.

As they sailed upon the sea, an unfavorable wind and a strong swell drove their ship onto the coast of Ethiopia, inhabited by savage barbarians, who seized the travelers as captives. Some of them they killed, others they drowned in the sea. Meropius himself was slain, and his nephews Frumentius and Edesius were spared and taken to the city of Auxum, as a gift to the Ethiopian king. The king took a liking to both youths and wished to keep them at his court. By royal command, special overseers and teachers were appointed to instruct the youths, so that after their training they might be given positions at court.

Enlightened from childhood by the Christian faith, Frumentius and Edesius quickly rose above all who surrounded the king in intelligence and education, and soon became men of power and influence at his court.

They were honored still more after the king's death, when his young son Aizan ascended the throne of Ethiopia. Frumentius was chosen as Aizan's tutor. Then Frumentius, together with his brother Edesius, having greater influence over the whole land, were able to confess their faith freely. At that time some Roman and Greek merchants, mostly Christians, established trade relations with Ethiopia. Edesius and Frumentius became acquainted with the merchants who came on business and arranged with them services of worship, for which they built a small church. Along with this, the Ethiopians little by little became acquainted, through Frumentius and Edesius, with the Christian faith, and gradually took in the truths of the Christian faith and morality.

Meanwhile Aizan grew up. Then Edesius and Frumentius began to ask the king to let them return to their homeland. Aizan, after some hesitation, permitted them to leave Ethiopia. Having received permis-

94. By *India* are meant here, in general, the countries lying along the shores of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. Under this general name were understood: Ethiopian, Arabian, and Brahmin India. For this reason, in the Prologue, St. Frumentius is called Archbishop of India, being the enlightener of India, properly Ethiopian India, situated south of Egypt. More precisely, this is now Nubia and Abyssinia.

sion, Frumentius and Edesius sailed for Greece on the first ship. Edesius, on arriving in Greece, went to his own homeland, to Tyre, seeking his parents, so as to be no more parted from them for the rest of their days. But Frumentius did not leave Ethiopia with the same intention. He had become attached to that country, which, by God's providence, had become his second homeland. He ardently desired that this land should become kindred to him also in faith. Therefore Frumentius preferred to the joys of a family reunion a higher spiritual joy, betrothing a new Abyssinian Church to Christ.

Inspired by such holy thoughts, Frumentius, instead of going to Tyre, set out for Alexandria, where at that time the holy Athanasius the Great, a zealous champion of the Church of Christ, was bishop. Coming to St. Athanasius, Frumentius related in detail everything that he and Edesius had experienced in the land of Abyssinia, beginning with the wondrous providence over them during their captivity among the barbarians, who cruelly destroyed Meropius and the other Christians with him. He explained to the great hierarch that these barbarians afterward no longer shunned the Christians, and even inquired into their life and teaching, and that now they could easily be enlightened by the light of Christian truth. The ground was already prepared for this, and the land thirsted for a sower to appear. Therefore Frumentius earnestly besought the hierarch to send a bishop and clergy to Ethiopia at once.

Having heard this account from Frumentius, St. Athanasius perceived in the fate of these brothers God's wondrous providence for the conversion of the Ethiopians to Christ. At the same time it dawned on him that it would be best to appoint Frumentius himself as bishop for Ethiopia, since he had closely studied the manners, customs, and language of the inhabitants of that land and had earned their respect and love there.

Then the blessed Athanasius said to Frumentius:

"Who among us could better than you dispel the darkness of paganism and bring there the dawn of the divine Gospel?"

After this, Frumentius was ordained bishop by St. Athanasius and with apostolic zeal set out again for Ethiopia to enlighten the pagans.

First of all he began to persuade King Aizan himself to accept holy baptism. The young king, accustomed to relying on the counsel of Frumentius and inwardly inclined to accept his teacher's faith, listened to his preaching about the Risen One with a believing heart, and was baptized in the Name of Christ. After him many of the king's courtiers were also baptized. The Lord granted this Equal-to-the-Apostles servant of His the gift of working miracles; by the power of the Name of Christ St. Frumentius healed the demoniacs and those afflicted with various infirmities. And those who, by their own reasonings, denied the teaching of Christ and would not believe the preaching of St. Frumentius, he delivered to the power of Satan, "that the spirit might be saved," according to the Apostle[95]; others of the obstinate he struck with wasting of the whole body, and on others he brought blindness of the eyes. Amid such sudden and awesome signs, which occurred at the word of the servant of God, even the obstinate among the pagans bowed before him, and, confessing Christ the Son of God, received healing from Frumentius and were baptized.

The people marveled at the power of the preacher's Gospel, and the king himself involuntarily exclaimed:

"For so many years you lived with us, and we saw no miracle from you! Whence then has such grace been given now, and in so short a time?"

The blessed Frumentius answered the king and all who stood around him and knew him closely:

"It is not my gift, honorable friends of Christ, but the gift of the priesthood from the Lord Christ Himself. I have long seen your good intention and disposition toward accepting Christ. Therefore, leaving my fatherland and disregarding kinship, I obeyed the voice of the Lord, went to Alexandria, and made known your spiritual thirst to the Great Athanasius himself, the chief hierarch of the Church of Alexandria. He deigned to ordain me, and having enlightened me with apostolic grace, sent me to you with prayer and blessing. It is this sacred gift of God

95. That is, to excommunication from the Church (1 Cor. 5:5).

that, through me, works among you, who have received the word of the Gospel with faith, the signs that you see."

Having thus laid the foundation of the Church of Christ in Ethiopia, St. Frumentius zealously cared for its outward and inward good order. He built churches throughout the land for the newly converted, and everywhere established the divine services.

Along with this, he took care to have the Holy Scripture translated into the Ethiopian language. After this, the preaching of the Gospel spread in Ethiopia still more successfully.

And so the God-pleasing St. Frumentius lived many years, confirming the faithful by his example and word in the observance of the commandments of God; after which he peacefully departed to the Lord, about the year 360, leaving the Ethiopian Church firmly established.[96] From the honorable relics of the Hierarch there were unceasingly bestowed various healings upon all who with faith and supplication came to him, to the glory of the true Christ our God. Amen.

* * *

96. Present-day Abyssinia, forming part of ancient Ethiopia, is thus the heir of the Christian faith brought there by St. Frumentius. The Abyssinian Church was in close connection with the Church of Alexandria, to whose patriarch the Abyssinian bishop was subject. Therefore, during the Arian disturbances and disputes, it remained Orthodox, faithful to the traditions of St. Athanasius the Great, although the Emperor Constantius, who was attached to the Arian teaching, used various means to spread Arianism among the Abyssinians. But, owing to the same connection with the Church of Alexandria, the Abyssinian Church, in the 5th century, together with it, deviated into the Monophysite heresy, while in everything else of its doctrine and worship it remained faithful to the Orthodox teaching.

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