

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

### Heiromartyr Eusebius, Bishop of Samosata

22 June / 5 July 2015



**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 4:** When the women disciples of the Lord / learned from the Angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection / they cast away the ancestral curse / and elatedly told the Apostles / death is overcome / Christ God is risen / granting the world great mercy.

**Troparion of St Eusebius tone 4:** Illumined by the Spirit's wisdom,/ thou didst reveal God's word, O glorious Eusebius;/ for as a Hierarch of the Trinity,/ in thy holy contest thou didst destroy errors./ Holy Father pray that we all may be saved.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 4:** My Saviour and Redeemer / as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains / He has shattered the gates of hell, / and as Master, / He has risen on the third day.

**Kontakion of St Eusebius tone 8:** Thou didst sow godly teachings and uproot the tares of Arius/ and wast adorned with the martyr's crown;/ thou didst proclaim God the Word to be of one Essence with the Father and the Spirit:/ wherefore we cry to thee: Rejoice, O Father Eusebius.

#### Matins Gospel V

#### EPISTLE: ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS 10:1-10

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down from above) Or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

#### SEEKING TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, THEY HAVE NOT SUBMITTED TO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Observe how adroitly he favours them in the word, and yet shows their unseasonable obstinacy ...These things he says to show that it was from a petulancy and love of power that they erred, rather than from ignorance ...For if Christ be 'the end of the Law,' he who does not have Christ, even if he seems to have righteousness, does not have it. But he who has Christ, even though he may not have properly fulfilled the Law, has received the whole. For the end of the physician's art is health ...He who does not know how to heal, though he may seem to be a follower of the art, comes short of everything: so is it in the case of the Law and of faith ...For what was the object of the Law? To make man righteous. But it did not have the power, for no one fulfilled it ...But to this end Christ gave a fuller accomplishment through faith. Be not then afraid, he says, as if you are transgressing the Law by having come over to the faith. For only then do you transgress it, when for the sake of the Law you do not believe in Christ.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XVII on Romans X. B#54, pp. 472- 473.*

#### GOSPEL: ST. MATTHEW 8:28 - 9:1

When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine." And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water. Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region. So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.

## THE DEMONIACS

The Gospel reading for last Sunday taught us a lesson on the deep humility of the Roman Centurion, who came to ask Christ for the healing of his servant. But today's Gospel does not give us a lesson of what we should do, but rather shows us what we should avoid, what we should not do. This shows us the striking reality of the existence of the power of evil. In our time such a reality doesn't even require proof. Every day, every newspaper tells about a whole list of crimes which simply cannot be explained without recognising that the person is possessed by an external, evil power.

Today's Gospel draws a terrible picture for us: two demoniacs came out from the tombs, "exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way" (Mt. 8:28). Christ permitted the demons to enter into a huge herd of swine. The possessed ones were healed, but the whole herd of swine jumped from the precipice into the sea. What a terrible force! A real, overt force of evil!

But here is the last verse of the Gospel: "And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus" (Mt. 8:34). And now you expect to find something gladdening: the whole town has united in order to meet the Lord. You want to think that it was faith that united them, that they, as once did the Samaritans, would ask the Lord to remain with them, would thank Him for His healing, for the salvation of two of their townspeople, and also for freeing them from the danger present when passing that way. And what happened? Yes, they asked the Lord, but not to stay with them, but rather to "depart out of their coasts!" (Mt. 8:34).

Here is the most terrible passage in this Gospel. First the demons were in two possessed men. Later, we saw them in an entire herd of swine. And then, a whole town — possessed. With what? With the passion for profit. According to Jewish law, raising pigs was unlawful, sinful. But it made money, and huge amounts of money. And here an entire herd perished. And the people seemed to be saying to the Lord: "You have only set foot on our land and have caused us such a terrible loss. What will happen next if you stay here any longer? You will ruin us completely! We see, we understand your greatness: even the devils are obedient to you! But what does that do for us? What do the two healed men matter to us? We don't need your miracles. We need thousands, millions of dollars. You are not for us. Go away, go away at once."

Brothers and sisters, let us examine our soul. Doesn't the same thing happen with us? Some kind of passion takes possession of us, but Christ becomes an obstacle. And in our soul, we whisper the same terrible words: "Go away from us." May the Lord keep us from this! May our words directed to Him always be: "Come to us and never leave us."

*The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei*

## Saints of the Week

**22 June / 5 July — Apostles' Fast - The Hieromartyr Eusebius of Samosata** - he was a major opponent of Arianism. When the patriarchal throne of Antioch became vacant, Meletius was elected Patriarch. This Meletius was a shining light in the Church, and deserved the great eulogy given by St John Chrysostom at his death. But the Arians soon drove Meletius from Antioch. When Constantius, Constantine's evil son, died, he was followed by Julian the Apostate, a man even worse than he, as ruler of the Empire. During Julian's persecution of Christians, St Eusebius took off his cassock, clad himself in soldier's garb and travelled around the persecuted churches of Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine, strengthening the Orthodox faith everywhere and creating the necessary priests, deacons and other clergy and raising some to the episcopate. After the news of Julian's death, St Eusebius advised Meletius to summon a Council of the Church in Antioch. This took place in 363, and the twenty-seven hierarchs present denounced Arianism once again and proclaimed the Orthodox faith as it was expressed at the First Ecumenical Council. Besides Meletius and Eusebius, St Pelagius of Laodicea, a man of great asceticism and chastity, made a great impact at this Council, which took place during the reign of the devout Emperor Jovian. But he died soon after, and the evil Valens took the throne, and the persecution of Orthodoxy began afresh. St Meletius was banished to Armenia, Eusebius to Thrace and Pelagius to Arabia. After Valens, the Emperor Gratian came to the throne and restored freedom to the Church, returning the exiled bishops to their rightful places: Meletius to Antioch, Eusebius to Samosata and Pelagius to Laodicea. Many dioceses were vacant at that time and Eusebius was quick to find canonical pastors for the people. But when he arrived at the city of Doliche with the newly-chosen bishop, Marinus, to install him as bishop and denounce the Arian heresy (which was strong in that city), a certain fanatical heretic threw a tile from the roof and gave him a mortal wound. This great zealot for Orthodoxy, this saint and martyr, died and entered into eternal life in the blessedness of Paradise in the year 379. The Holy Martyrs Xeno and Xenas;

**St. Alban, protomartyr of Britain (c.305)** - when the people of Britain began to follow our Saviour, Jesus Christ, many of them were killed by those who worshipped Satan. The first British Christian to be martyred was St. Alban. Alban lived in the city of Verulamium, which today is called Saint Albans. We do not know who his parents were, or what kind of work he did. But we do know that he was a very kind man. When the soldiers were looking for the local presbyter in order to kill him, Alban hid God's servant in his own house. Alban was not yet a Christian, but as he watched and spoke with the presbyter, and heard his prayers, he began to believe in Christ. The presbyter taught St. Alban about our Saviour and about the Christian Faith, and the saint believed with all his heart, and asked to be baptised. One day, the soldiers heard that the presbyter was hiding in Alban's house. They came to search the house and arrest God's servant. St. Alban, however, put on the presbyter's robes and the soldiers, thinking that he was the presbyter, arrested him and took him before the judge. The judge was very angry with Alban. "Why did you hide this presbyter?" he shouted. "Turn him over to my soldiers, or else you will be punished." at this, Saint Alban declared, "I am also a Christian and I adore the true, living God." The judge was furious. He cried out, "Renounce Christ and worship our idols, or I will have your head cut off!" The saint, however, gave glory to God. The judge ordered, "Take him to the hill and cut off his head." The holy martyr was very happy. He was joyful that he was going to give up his life for Christ. As the saint was being led to Holmhurst Hill to be killed, they came to the River Ver. The bridge over the river was crowded with people who had come to watch his martyrdom, and so the saint walked to the river, signed it with the Cross, and the river opened and left a path for the saint and the soldiers. When the executioner saw this, he fell at the saint's

feet and confessed Christ. The soldiers quickly arrested this new Christian also. The two were taken to the top of the hill, where their heads were cut off, and they received the Martyr's Crown from Christ.

**23 June / 6 July — Apostles' Fast - The Holy Martyr Agrippina** - born and brought up in Rome. She trained herself from childhood to live by the Gospel, expelling the stench of the passions from her heart with the sweet-smelling perfume of purity and chastity. She was betrothed to Christ the Lord, and suffered as a bride of Christ in the reign of the Emperor Valerian. She endured beating with staves until her bones were crushed. An angel of the Lord appeared to her to strengthen her, until she surrendered her soul to God under fresh tortures. Her friends, Vassa, Paula and Agathonica, took her relics to the island of Sicily and buried them there. A church was later built there in her name, where countless miracles were wrought over her relics. She entered into eternal rest and was crowned with glory in the year 275. The Holy Martyrs Eustochius, Gaius and those with them; The Vladimir Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God; The Tale of Theophilus' Repentance ;

**St. Etheldreda of Ely, England, (679)** - Twice Saint Etheldreda (who is also called Saint Audrey) married. released from these unwelcome ties first by the death of her husband after five years and secondly after she managed to persuade her second husband that they should live as brother and sister a relationship that led him to release the saint after twelve years. At last she was able to fulfil her life's desire. In between her two marriages she had lived in solitude for five years on the island of Ely. Now she founded a nunnery and a monastery about the year 672, ruling this double house as abbess. Etheldreda was a woman of noble birth, the daughter of King Anna of East Anglia. But from now on she ceased to wear clothing of fine linen and dressed only in woollen garments. Except at Easter, Pentecost and Epiphany, she washed only in cold water. Only when she was ill or on great church festivals did she eat more than one meal a day. Seven years after the foundation of the double monastery, she died of a plague. The year was 679. The Venerable Bede tells how the body of the saint was exhumed. When she died, she had a tumour on her neck. She attributed this to divine punishment because she was once vain enough to wear a costly necklace. When her coffin was opened sixteen years later, the tumour had healed. Thus Etheldreda became the patron saint of those suffering throat and neck ailments. He also wrote, "Now Etheldreda shines upon our days, Shedding the light of grace on all our ways. Born of a noble and a royal line, She brings to Christ her King a life more fine."

**24 June / 7 July — Apostles Fast - The Nativity of St John the Forerunner** - six months before his appearing to the most holy Virgin Mary in Nazareth, the great Gabriel, archangel of the Lord, appeared to Zacharias the High Priest in the Temple in Jerusalem. Before he revealed the miraculous conception by a virgin who had not known a man, the archangel revealed the wondrous conceiving by an old and barren woman. Zacharias was unable at once to believe the words of God's herald, and for this his tongue was bound in dumbness and remained thus until the eighth day after John's birth. The kinsfolk of Zacharias and Elisabeth gathered together on that day for the infant's circumcision and naming. When they enquired of the father how he wished the child to be called, he, being still dumb, wrote on a slate: 'John'. At that moment his tongue was loosed and he began to speak. Zacharias's house was on the heights between Bethlehem and Hebron. The news of the angel's appearing to Zacharias, of his dumbness and of the loosening of his tongue at the exact moment that he wrote 'John', was carried throughout all Israel, coming to Herod's ears. So, when he sent men to kill all the infants around Bethlehem, he sent men off to Zacharias's family house in the hills, to slay John also. But Elisabeth hid the child in good time. The king was enraged at this, and sent an executioner to the Temple to kill Zacharias (for it was then his turn to serve in the Temple again). Zacharias was killed between the court and the Temple, and his blood clotted and solidified on the paving slabs, and remained as an enduring witness against Herod. Elisabeth hid herself and the child in a cave, where she soon died. The young John remained in the wilderness alone, in the care of God and His angels. St Nikita, Bishop of Remesiana;

**The Holy Martyrs Orentius, Pharnacius, Eros, Firmus, Ferminus, Cyriacus and Longinus** - During the reign of Maximian (284-305) the Scythians attacked the Greeks. St Orentius was ordered to fight against the Scythian champion Marothom, who was distinguished for his special strength of body. He was also a strong and brave warrior. Orentius was a Christian, as were his six brothers, who were also serving in the imperial army. Calling on the Lord for help, St Orentius defeated Marothom and so stopped the invasion of the Scythians. The emperor intended to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods for this victory and he invited the victor, St Orentius, to participate. The saint refused, explaining that he was a Christian, and said that he vanquished the enemy by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Neither the promise of honors and riches, nor threats of punishment could induce the saint to renounce Christ. The fierce and ungrateful emperor gave orders to banish both the saint and his six brothers to the Caucasus. During the journey all seven brothers died from hunger or torture. The first to die was St Eros on June 22 at Parembol; after him St Orentius suffered martyrdom. They tied a stone around his neck and cast him into the sea. The Archangel Raphael took him from the water to dry land at Riza, on the south shore of the Black Sea, where the holy martyr surrendered his soul to God. St Pharnacius went to the Lord on July 3 at Kordila. Sts Firmus and Firminus died on July 7 at Aspara, on the eastern shore of the Black Sea. St Cyriacus departed this transitory life at Ziganeia on July 14, and St Longinus died on the ship on July 28. Battered by a storm, the ship went aground at Pitindeia (Pitsunda), where the body of the holy martyr was buried.

**25 June / 8 July — Apostles' Fast - Our Holy Mother, the Martyr Fevronia** - the daughter of Prosporus, a Roman senator. In order to escape marriage with a mortal man, she betrothed herself to Christ and became a nun in the East, in Assyria, in a monastery where her aunt, Bryaena, was abbess. Lysimachus, a nobleman's son, was desirous of entering into marriage with Fevronia, but the Emperor Diocletian, suspecting him of being a secret Christian, sent him to the East with his uncle, Silenus, to seize and kill the Christians. Silenus was as ferocious as a wild beast and mercilessly exterminated the Christians wherever he could. Lysimachus, on the contrary, protected the Christians whenever possible and hid them from his bestial uncle. Having emptied Palmyra of Christians, Silenus came to the city of Nisibis, close to which there was the monastery of fifty ascetic virgins in which Fevronia was a nun. Although she was barely twenty years old, Fevronia was held in respect both in the monastery and in the city for her meekness, wisdom and restraint. The monastery followed the rule of a former abbess, Blessed Platonida, and every Friday the nuns would spend their time in prayer and reading sacred books, with no other work.

Bryaena had appointed Fevronia to read to the other sisters while standing behind a curtain, so that no-one would be distracted or captivated by the beauty of her face. When Silenus heard about Fevronia, he ordered that she be brought before him. When the holy maiden refused to renounce Christ and enter into marriage with a mortal man, he ordered them to whip her and then cut off her hands, breasts and feet and finally to slay her with the sword. But a fearful divine punishment came upon her tormentor that very day. A demon entered into him, and a fearful terror took hold of him. In his terror, he struck his head on a marble pillar and fell down dead. Lysimachus ordered that Fevronia's body be gathered together and brought to the monastery for solemn burial, and he, together with many of the soldiers, was baptised. Many healings were wrought through Fevronia's holy relics, and she herself appeared on the day of her Feast, standing in her usual place among the sisters. They beheld her with both fear and joy. St Fevronia suffered and went to eternal blessedness in the year 310, and her relics were translated to Constantinople in 363. Our Holy Father Dionysius.

**26 June / 9 July — Apostles' Fast – Our Holy Father David** - born in Salonica, where he at first lived the ascetic life in a shelter he had built in an almond tree, he later continued his asceticism in Thessaly. He purified himself so greatly by fasting, prayer and vigils that he was made worthy to receive great grace from God. Once he took a live coal in his hand, placed incense on it and censured the Emperor with no sort of protection for his hand. The Emperor, when he saw this, bowed down to the ground before David, who amazed the people by his countless miracles. He entered peacefully into rest in the blessedness of eternity in 540; The Tikhvin Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God; The Hodogitria Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God; The Icon of the Mother of God of Lydda or Rome; Translation of the relics of St. Brannock (Brynach) of Braunton, England.

**27 June / 10 July — Apostles Fast - St Sampson the Hospitable** - born of rich and eminent parents in ancient Rome, where he studied all the secular wisdom of that time, devoting himself in particular to the study of medicine. Sampson was a compassionate and liberal physician, and gave the sick medicine for both soul and body, counselling each man to fulfil the requirements of the Christian faith. He moved to Constantinople, where he lived in a tiny house from which he distributed alms, comfort, advice, hope, medicine and all possible aid to those suffering in spirit and in body. The Patriarch heard of Sampson's great virtue and ordained him priest. At that time the Emperor Justinian the Great became ill with what his doctors believed to be an incurable disease. The Emperor prayed with great fervour, and God revealed to him in his sleep that Sampson would heal him. When the Emperor summoned Sampson to court, the old man had only to put his hand on the diseased place and the Emperor was healed. When Justinian offered him an immense sum of money, Sampson thanked him but would accept nothing, saying to the Emperor: 'O Emperor, I had silver and gold and other riches, but I left it all for the sake of Christ, that I might gain heavenly and eternal wealth.' When the Emperor insisted on doing something for him, Sampson asked him to build a home for the poor. In that home, Sampson cared for the poor as a father cares for his children. His compassion for the poor and weak was second nature to him. This holy man, filled with heavenly power and goodness, entered peacefully into rest on June 27th, 530. He was buried in the Church of the Holy Martyr Mocius, his kinsman. After his death, Sampson appeared many times to those who called upon him for aid; St Severus the Priest; St Joanna the Myrrh-Bearer.

**28 June / 11 July — Apostles Fast - The Holy Martyrs Cyrus and John** - these holy martyrs are commemorated on January 31st, and their lives and sufferings are described under that date. Today we commemorate the translation of their relics from Canopus to Menuthis, and the numerous miracles associated with them. St Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria, prayed fervently for the extermination of the abominable idolatrous practices at Menuthis, where there was a temple and where the demonic powers held sway. An angel of God appeared to the Patriarch and told him that Menuthis would be cleansed of its impurity if he brought the relics of Ss Cyrus and John to the town. The Patriarch did this at once. He brought the relics of the holy martyrs to Menuthis and had a church built there in their honour. Ammonius, the son of the governor of Alexandria, Julian, was healed of scrofula through the martyrs' relics, and a certain Theodore was healed of blindness. Isidore of Maium was healed of a wasting disease of the liver, Theodore's wife of the effects of poison, a certain Eugenia of dropsy and a great many others of various diseases and torments. All this took place in the year 412.

**Our Holy Father Sennuphius the Standard-Bearer** - Sennuphius was a great ascetic and miracle-worker of the Egyptian desert. He was a contemporary of Patriarch Theophilus and Emperor Theodosius the Great. He is called the "Standard-bearer" because by his prayers he once helped Emperor Theodosius to gain a victory over the army of his adversaries. When the emperor summoned Sennuphius to Constantinople, Sennuphius replied that he was unable to do so but sent him his tattered monastic habit and staff. Setting out to battle the emperor donned Sennuphius' monastic habit and carried the staff and returned victorious from battle;

**Our Holy Father Paul the Physician** - a Corinthian by birth. Completing his schooling, Paul withdrew to a monastery and was tonsured a monk. He had a difficult struggle with the impure spirit of fornication. However, when with the power of the cross he drove the impure spirit of fornication away from himself, that spirit created a malicious falsehood, i.e., [the spirit] gave approval to a depraved woman to say that she had given birth to a child by Paul. The heretics then dragged him from the monastery, placed the child in his arms and forced him to walk throughout the town for the people to spit on him. The baby was only a few days old. St. Paul prayed fervently to God and said to the people: "Behold, let the child himself say who is his father." The child stretched out its hand from the swaddling clothes and pointed to a blacksmith and said: "That man is my father and not Paul the monk!" The adversaries of Paul became ashamed and God granted great healing powers to Paul so that when he placed his hand on the sick, they became whole. Paul reposed peacefully in old age pleasing God by his life on earth. He lived in the seventh century;

**St. Austol of Cornwall (6th c.)** - Tropar of St Austol, Tone 7: Light of Cornwall and pillar of the Faith,/ holy Austol, disciple of Samson:/ thou wast a fellow-labourer with Saint Mewan,/ in such companionship that thou didst die with him and share his grave./ Pray to Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.

# 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

## The Holy, Glorious, and All-Praised Leaders of the Apostles, Peter and Paul

29 June / 12 July 2015

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 5:** Let us, the faithful; praise and worship the Word, / Co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, / born for our salvation from the Virgin; / for He willed to be lifted up on the cross in the flesh, / to endure death, / and to raise the dead / by His glorious Resurrection!

**Troparion tone 4:** Leaders of the Apostles and teachers of the world, / pray to the Master of all to grant peace to the world / and great mercy to our souls.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 5:** Thou didst descend into hell, O my Saviour, / shattering its gates as Almighty, / resurrecting the dead as Creator, / and destroying the sting of death. / Thou hadst delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of Man, / and we cry to Thee, O Lord, save us.

**Kontakion tone 2:** Thou hast taken the firm and divinely inspired Preachers, O Lord, / the leading Apostles, for the enjoyment of Thy blessings and for repose. / For Thou hast accepted their labours and death as above every burnt offering, / O Thou Who alone knowest the secrets of our hearts.



**Vespers:** 1 Pet. 1:3-9; 1 Pet. 1:13-19; 1 Pet. 2:11-24

### Matins Gospel VI

#### EPISTLE: ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS 12: 6-14

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; Or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; He who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; Distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

#### HAVING GIFTS THAT DIFFER ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO US, LET US USE THEM

He wants to make them vie with each other, and to labour more earnestly by showing that it is they themselves who give the grounds for their receiving more or less. For he says indeed that it is given by God ...But he also says that the beginnings lie with themselves in order to rouse the listless. This he does in the Epistle to the Corinthians as well, to produce these emotions. For when he says, 'covet the gifts earnestly,' (I Cor. 12:31), he shows that they were themselves the cause of the differences in what was given ...For though it is a grace, yet it is not poured forth at random, but framing its measure according to the recipients, it lets as much flow as it may find the vessel of faith that is brought to be capable of holding...

#### CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEEDS OF SAINTS, PRACTICE HOSPITALITY

Even the Apostleship is called a ministry, and every spiritual work is a ministry ... It is not enough to give, but we must also do it with munificence, for this always answers to the name of simplicity ...It is not enough to show mercy, but it behooves us to do it with largesse and an ungrudging spirit ... even with a cheerful and rejoicing one ...He said, 'He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully' (II Cor. 9:6) ... In this way the widow outweighed many talents by the two mites, for her spirit was large.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXI on Romans XII. B#55, pp. 501, 502.*

Second Epistle: Corinthians 11:21 – 12:9



## GOSPEL: ST. MATTHEW 9: 1-8

So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

### JESUS HEALS THE PARALYTIC

The Gospel reading of last Sunday told us how the Gadarenes went out to meet Jesus and how they asked Him to "depart out of their coasts." And this happened because all of them were infected with one sin, the passion for profit, the love of money. This was an insatiable thirst for wealth, more and more of it. And wealth came to them through large herds of swine which were grazing in their pastures. But according to Jewish Law, they had no right to keep them. In this was their sin, and they lived in sin, to satisfy only this passion, this idol of getting rich. And this passion seemed to unite them all. See how the Gospel says: "And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus and...besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts" (Mt. 8:34).

Yet not all inhabitants of this town were bad people. Undoubtedly, among them were those who wanted to see Jesus, who wanted to listen to His teaching, and maybe were ready to believe in Him. Salvation was so close, so very close. But this idol, this passion for profit enslaved them; and instead of asking the Lord to remain in their town, they asked Him to go away. They were already deprived of their freedom of will; through sin they were enslaved, a spiritual paralysis possessed them. The Gospel continues, "And He entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into His own city. And, behold, they brought to Him a paralytic, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the paralytic; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mt. 9:1-2).

There is physical paralysis, but there is also spiritual paralysis. Being paralysed physically we want to do something, but either our hand or our foot does not move. But being spiritually paralysed even to think is difficult, and we don't want to do anything—we lose heart. There is a desire to fulfill a commandment of Christ, and yet we cannot; something is interfering, something is holding us back. And instead of Christ abiding in our heart—there is a storm, and Christ goes away.

What motivated the Gadarenes to ask Christ to leave their land? Sin—the passion for profit. And this sin brought them into spiritual paralysis, and they did not have enough spiritual fortitude to detain Christ with them.

So it happens to us. The only reason is sin. And sin is not only love of money. There is a whole variety of rays from this "black diamond." This means laziness, pride, vain talking, lying, condemnation, gluttony, anger, irritability, cruelty, any kind of impurity, despondency and still more and more. And we all suffer from these sins: whoever has any of these, this is sin. And this is what brings us to spiritual weakness, to spiritual paralysis. Let us look within ourselves and let us honestly recognise that, like the Gadarenes, we all live in spiritual weakness, in spiritual paralysis. But let us not despond. The Gospel today gives us great comfort. With what words does Christ heal the paralytic? "Thy sins be forgiven thee." This means that in bodily paralysis, also, the reason is often sin. And in spiritual paralysis, sin is always the reason. All you have to do is find this sin, this passion which stands between us and Christ; take it to the Lord and say: "Lord, heal me!" Then the Lord will tell us as He did the paralytic: "Thy sins be forgiven thee.... Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house" (Mt. 9:5-6).

And the storm will calm down, will go away from the heart, and Christ will fill it with quiet joy. The weakness will disappear and a new energy will appear in us, a new life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei*

### Second Gospel: Matthew 16:13-19

#### Saints of the Week

**29 June / 12 July — The Holy Apostle Peter** - the son of Jonah and brother of Andrew the First-Called, of the tribe of Simeon and the town of Bethsaida, he was a fisherman and was at first called Simon, but the Lord was pleased to call him Cephas, or Peter (Jn 1:42). He was the first of the disciples to give clear expression to his faith in the Lord Jesus, saying: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God' (Mt. 16:16). His love for the Lord was very strong, and his faith in Him went from strength to strength. When the Lord was put on trial, Peter denied Him three times, but it needed only one look into the face of the Lord, and Peter's soul was filled with shame and repentance. After the descent of the Holy Spirit, Peter became a fearless and powerful preacher of the Gospel. After his first sermon in Jerusalem, about 3,000 souls were converted to the Faith. He preached the Gospel throughout Palestine and Asia Minor, in Italy and in Illyria. He performed many wonders, healing the sick and raising the dead, and even his shadow had the power of healing the sick. He had a major struggle with Simon the Magician, who declared himself to be from God but was actually a servant of the devil. He finally put him to shame and overcame him.

Peter was condemned to death on the order of the wicked Emperor Nero, a friend of Simon's. After installing Linus as Bishop of Rome and exhorting and encouraging the flock of Christ there, Peter went to his death with joy. When he saw the cross before him, he asked the executioner to crucify him upside-down, because he felt himself to be unworthy to die in the same way as his Lord. And so this great servant of the greatest Master went to his rest and received a crown of eternal glory.

**The Holy Apostle Paul** - born in Tarsus and of the tribe of Benjamin, he was formerly called Saul and studied under Gamaliel. He was a Pharisee and a persecutor of Christians. He was wondrously converted to the Christian faith by the Lord Himself, who appeared to him on the road to Damascus. He was baptised by the Apostle Ananias, named Paul and enrolled in the work of the Great Apostles. He preached the Gospel everywhere with burning zeal, from the borders of Arabia to the land of Spain, among both the Jews and the heathen, and receiving the title of 'the Apostle to the Gentiles'. His fearful sufferings were matched only by his superhuman endurance. Through all the years of his preaching, he hung from day to day like a thread between life and death. Filling his days and nights with toil and suffering for Christ, organising the Church in many places and reaching a high level of perfection, he was able to say: 'I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. 2:20). He was beheaded in Rome in the reign of Nero, at the same time as St Peter. The repose of Archbishop Andrei of Neo Diveyevo (1979).

**30 June / 13 July — Synaxis of the Holy, Glorious and All-praised Twelve Apostles** - although each of the Twelve Apostles has his own Feast Day during the year, the Church has set aside this day for a general Feast of all of them together, including St Paul. The names, their Feast Day(s) and how these most holy and selfless men in the history of the world died and finished their earthly course:

- Peter—June 29th and January 16th - crucified upside-down.
- Andrew—November 30th - crucified.
- James the Son of Zebedee—April 30th - beheaded.
- John the Theologian—September 26th and May 8th - died in a wondrous way.
- Philip—November 14th - crucified.
- Bartholomew—June 11th and August 25th - crucified, then flayed and beheaded.
- Thomas—October 6th - pierced with five spears.
- Matthew the Evangelist—November 16th - burned by fire.
- James the Son of Alphaeus—October 9th - crucified.
- Thaddeus (or Jude the brother of James)—June 19th - crucified.
- Simon the Zealot—May 10th - crucified.
- Matthias—August 9th stoned, then beheaded with an axe when dead.
- Paul—June 29th - beheaded.

**THE HOLY APOSTLES** - As a dry desert, the whole world was; / Across it [the world] the chariot of the Spirit flew / A fiery vision, the Holy Apostles; / The All-holy Spirit, through them, the universe rebuilt. / The rivers of wondrous grace flowed, . The dead desert, to life converted. / Wonderful Apostles, watery clouds, / Simple ones, wise ones, fishermen, heroes! / From the Ganges to the Thames, they carried the torch, / From the Nile to Pontus, holiness they proclaimed, / From variegated Persia to bronze Gaul, / Where the feet walk or the galleys sail / Everywhere, the miracle of the Incarnate God, brought, / Everywhere, the Name of the Resurrected Christ proclaimed, / Without complaint and fear, without any confusion: / Mountains and seas, to them were not obstacles, / The sword did not frighten them, nor persecution prevent them, / Neither all the fires of Hades which, against them, erupted. / Truth guided them and not a false fable: / Our life is Christ, and death a beautiful gain! / Thus, they spoke. To such as these, what could be done? / Crucify their bodies? Scrape their skins? / That, the world did, but what kind of harm did it do them? / To reign eternally! Thus, God judged.

**Blessed Peter the Heir** - by descent, was a Tartar and the nephew of the Tartar King Berkai. He heard the words of salvation from Bishop Cyril of Rostov and those words adhered to his heart. And yet when he witnessed the miraculous healing of Berkai's son, by the help of Bishop Cyril's prayer, he secretly left the Golden Horde and fled to Rostov where he was baptized and where, with all his soul and mind, dedicated himself to asceticism and the study of the honourable Faith. Once at night, Saints Peter and Paul appeared to him in a dream on the shores of the lake and commanded him to build a church in their name on that same place and along with that, Blessed Peter received from the saints the necessary amount of money for that purpose. Indeed, Blessed Peter built a most beautiful church there in which he in old age, following the death of his wife, was tonsured a monk. Blessed Peter died peacefully in ripe old age on June 29, 1290 A.D. and his church became and remains a monastery called the Petrovski Monastery.;

**Our Holy Father George the Georgian** - George was born in Iberia [Georgia] in 1014 A.D. and was a relative of the Georgian kings. George received a good classical education in his childhood but his heart drew him to the spiritual life. He lived a life of asceticism with the famous spiritual father George in the Black Mountain. He fled to Holy Mount Athos and continued his asceticism in the monastery Iveron. George became the abbot of Iveron. With the help of Emperor Constantine Monomachus he restored Iveron and covered the monastery church with lead. That lead roof remains even today. He translated the Holy Scriptures, the Prologue and books of the Divine Services into the Georgian language. King Bagrat invited him to Georgia to teach the people. George was royally welcomed in his homeland. He travelled everywhere and taught both the clergy and people. In his old age, he desired to die on Mt. Athos where he set out for but death overtook him in Constantinople in the year 1067 A.D. His relics were translated to Iveron. Even though he died on May 24, the monks of Iveron commemorate his memory on June 30 considering him to be as "equal to the apostles."; Synaxis of All Saints of Tver.

**1 / 14 July — The Holy Martyrs Cosmas and Damian** - unmercenary doctors and wonderworkers, these two saints were brothers. Born in Rome, baptised as children and given a Christian education, they were endowed by God with the gift of healing, generally by the laying-on of their hands, of both men and animals. They sought no reward for their work, only urging the sick to faith in Christ the Lord. Inheriting great wealth, they compassionately divided it among the poor and needy. The

Emperor Galerius was on the throne in Rome at that time. Persecutors of the Christian faith brought these two holy brothers, bound in chains, before him. After prolonged interrogation, the Emperor charged them to deny Christ and offer sacrifice to idols. Cosmas and Damian not only refused to obey the Emperor; they urged him to forsake dead idols and come to the knowledge of the one, true God. 'Our God is not created, but is the Creator of all, and your gods come of the imaginings of men and the hands of artists. If there were no artists to make your gods, you would have nothing to worship.' After a miracle performed on the Emperor himself—healing him of a grave infirmity—the Emperor declared his faith in Christ and let the holy brothers go in peace. They continued to glorify Christ our God and to heal the sick, and were themselves glorified on all sides by the people. A doctor, a former teacher of theirs, envying their fame, lured them into the hills on the pretext of collecting herbs and stoned them to death. They suffered with honour for the Christian faith in 284. Their memory endures in the Church on earth, and their souls went to the Kingdom of the Lord, to live eternally in glory and joy.

**Our Holy Father Peter the Patrician** - a nobleman from Constantinople and a commander during the reign of Emperor Nicephorus. In a war with the Bulgarians, Emperor Nicephorus was slain and Peter, with fifty Greek commanders and princes, was captured and cast into prison. St. John the Theologian miraculously freed Peter from prison. Peter then despised all earthly glory, left his wife and son, and withdrew to Mount Olympia where, as a monk and as a disciple of St. Joannicius the Great, lived a life of mortification for thirty-four years. Following the death of his wife and son, he settled in Constantinople where he spent eight more years in fasting and prayer and fell asleep in the Lord in the year 865 A.D. in the seventy-seventh year of his life;

**The Holy Martyr Potitus** - a thirteen-year-old child who was born in Sardinia. He endured much suffering for Christ both from his father and from the civil persecutors of Christianity. Potitus was beheaded during the reign of Emperor Antoninus (138-161 A.D.) but, before this, Potitus cured and baptized Agnes, the daughter of the emperor; Holy Julius and Aaron, protomartyrs of Wales (c.304); St. Servanus, Apostle of the Western Fife of East Scotland (6th c.).

**2 / 15 July — Deposition of the Vesture of the Most Holy Mother of God in the Blachernae Church in Constantinople** - in the time of the Emperor Leo the Great (457-474) and the Empress Verina and Patriarch Gennadius, two Constantinopolitan nobles, Galbius and Candidus, were travelling in the Holy Land to venerate the holy places there. In Nazareth, they stayed in the house of a Jewish girl who had the vesture of the Mother of God kept in a secret place. Many of the sick and wretched had received healing through prayer and the touching of this vesture. Galbius and Candidus took this holy relic to Constantinople and informed the Emperor and the Patriarch of its existence. It was the cause of great rejoicing in the imperial city. The vesture was ceremonially placed in the Blachernae church (a church built by the Emperor Marcian and Empress Pulcheria on the shore of a bay, and named 'Blachernae' after a General Blacheran from Scetis, who was killed there), and this commemorative feast was instituted;

**St Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem** – a contemporary of the great illuminators of the Orthodox Church: Euthymius, Theodosius, Gerasimus, Simeon the Stylite and others. He participated in two Ecumenical Councils: the Third Council in Ephesus [431 A.D.] and the Fourth Council in Chalcedon [451 A.D.]. With great power and zeal, he fought against the blasphemous heresies: in Ephesus against Nestorius who called the Birth-giver of God the Birth-giver of Christ and in Chalcedon against Eutyches and Dioscorus who taught that there was only one nature in Christ, i.e., only a divine nature without a human nature. Following the victory of Orthodoxy at both councils, Juvenal returned to his throne in Jerusalem. Even though the heresies were condemned, the heretics were not eliminated. Through the intrigue and violence of Theodosius, a friend of Dioscorus, Juvenal was banished from the patriarchal throne and Theodosius, on his own, elevated himself in Juvenal's place. In the beginning, this heretic Theodosius was supported by Empress Eudocia, the widow of Theodosius the Younger who, at that time, took up residence in Jerusalem. Hesitant and indiscreet, Eudocia finally went to see St. Simeon the Stylite in order to ask him wherein lies the truth. The saint of God unmasked all the heretical teachings and instructed the empress to adhere to the teachings of Orthodoxy as confirmed at the councils. The empress heeded, repented and she herself became embittered against the false Patriarch Theodosius. During that time Marcian and Pulcheria reigned in Constantinople. A letter from the emperor was sent to Commander Athanasius ordering him to banish Theodosius and to return and reinstate Juvenal to his throne which the commander quickly did. Juvenal governed the Church in Jerusalem for thirty-eight years as its hierarch and at a ripe old age presented himself to the Lord in the year 458 A.D. to receive from Him the reward for great suffering and misery which he had endured for the truth. During the reign of St. Juvenal, the celebration of Christmas was established on December 25;

**St Photius, Metropolitan of Moscow** - of Greek descent. He prudently governed the Russian Church for twenty years. Photius died in the year 1430A.D. A week before his death an angel of God appeared to him and informed him of the exact time of his departure from this world.

**3 / 16 July — The Holy Martyr Hyacinthus** - a young man, a courtier at the court of the Emperor Trajan, he was a secret Christian. Once, when the Emperor and all his court were offering sacrifice to idols, Hyacinthus stood apart from these abominable ceremonies. He was therefore denounced and brought to trial before the Emperor. The Emperor urged him to deny Christ and sacrifice to idols, but Hyacinthus remained firm as diamond and said to the Emperor: 'I am a Christian. I revere Christ and worship Him, and I bring my living self to Him as a sacrifice.' Whipped, spat upon and flayed, this holy martyr was flung into prison. By order of the Emperor, he was given nothing to eat but food that had been sacrificed to idols. Hyacinthus would not eat this, and died in prison after eight days. The warder saw two shining angels in the prison, one covering the martyr's body with his own glorious vesture and the other placing a wreath of glory on his head; and the whole prison was filled with light and radiance. The young Hyacinthus suffered with honour and was crowned with a wreath of glory in the year 108.



**St Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople** - At first, Anatolius was a presbyter in the Church at Alexandria and following the death of Patriarch Flavian, he was elevated to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople in the year 449 A.D. During his reign, the throne of Constantinople was recognized as equal to the throne of Rome by the Ecumenical Council held at Chalcedon in 451 A.D. He struggled greatly for the purity of the Orthodox Faith, suffered much at the hands of the heretics and finally was slain by them in the year 458 A.D. during the reign of Pope Leo the Great. Anatolius governed the church for nearly nine years and took up his habitation among the holy hierarchs in the Kingdom of God;

**Our Holy Father Alexander** - born in Asia, educated in Constantinople and after the completion of his schooling he devoted himself to military service and attained the rank of an officer. Reading Holy Scripture, he came across the words of the Savior: "If you seek perfection, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor. You will then have treasure in heaven. Afterward come back and follow me" (St. Matthew 19:21). These words had such an effect on Alexander that he immediately sold and distributed all that he had and withdrew into the wilderness. After many mortifications and labours in purifying himself, he established a monastery of the Sleepless Ones with a special constitution according to this rule: the divine services [offices] were carried on night and day without interruption in his community. The brotherhood was divided into twenty-four relays [cursus]. Each relay knew their hour of the day and night and went to church to continue the reading and singing of the preceding relay. Carrying nothing with him, Alexander traveled much throughout the eastern regions enlightening men with the Faith of Christ. Alexander disputed with heretics, worked miracles by the Grace of God, grew old serving the Lord and finally ended his earthly life in Constantinople in the year 430 A.D. where his relics manifested miraculous power and glory through which God glorifies His holy servants; Our Holy Father Isaiah the Solitary.

**St. Germanus, bishop of Isle of Man and enlightener of Peel, (5th c.)** - a nephew of Saint Patrick; when Saint Germanus of Auxerre (July 31)

visited Britain in 448 AD to refute the Pelagians, he met an Irish colonist whose son became his disciple and chose his master's name for himself. Germanus of Man was born in Brittany and went to Ireland to work with Saint Patrick. He was a missionary monk in Ireland, in Wales under Saints Brioc (May 1) and Illtyd (November 6), and Brittany. Germanus left Brittany to meet Patrick in Britain about 462. There he engaged in a

magic contest with Gwrtheyrn. After that he returned to Ireland (c. 466) eventually to become the bishop of the Isle of Man during the lifetime of Patrick. After evangelising in Wales, his name is traced in Spain and Gaul. His martyrdom is recorded in Normandy. His memory is preserved in place names, such as Jarman and Gremain, in areas such as Caernavonshire, Denbighshire, Montgomeryshire, and Radnorshire. His name is also found in the Acts of Kieran and those of other early Irish saints. Leland mentions a pilgrimage to Garmon ("Armon") at Llanarmonyn.

Tropar of St German, Tone 2: Nephew of Patrick and missionary in Ireland,/ thou didst spread the Faith in many lands./ From Wales to Brittany, and thence to the Isle of Man,/ thou didst glorify Christ wherever thou didst tread./ Pray to Christ to save our souls.

**4 / 17 July — The Royal Martyrs** - In April of 1918, Tsar Nicholas and his family and faithful servants were transferred to Ekaterinburg by the now victorious Bolsheviks. There they spent three hellish months of psychological torture? and yet they all retained their inward calm and state of prayer, so that not a small number of their tormentors were softened by these valiant Christian strugglers. As Pierre Gilliard, the French tutor to the Tsarevich Alexis recalled: "The courage of the prisoners was sustained in a remarkable way by religion. They had kept that wonderful faith which at Tobolsk had been the admiration of their entourage and which had given them such strength, such serenity in suffering. They were already almost entirely detached from this world The Tsaritsa and Grand Duchesses could often be heard singing religious airs, which affected their guards in spite of themselves." Gradually these guards were humanized by contact with their prisoners. They were astonished at their simplicity, attracted by their gentleness, subdued by their serene dignity, and soon found themselves dominated by those whom they thought they held in their power. The drunken Avdiev found himself disarmed by such greatness of soul; he grew conscious of his own infamy. The early ferocity of these men was succeeded by profound pity." When this would happen, the inhuman Bolsheviks would replace the guards who had been so touched with crueller and more animalistic ones. Seldom being allowed to go to church, they nevertheless nourished their souls with home prayers and greatly rejoiced at every opportunity to receive the Divine Sacraments. Three days before their martyrdom, in the very house in which they were imprisoned, there took place the last church service of their suffering lives. As the officiating priest, Fr. John Storozhev, related: "' It appeared to me that the Emperor, and all his daughters too, were very tired. During such a service it is customary to read a prayer for the deceased. For some reason, the Deacon began to sing it, and I joined him? As soon as we started to sing, we heard the Imperial Family behind us drop to their knees' (as is done during funeral services)? Thus they prepared themselves without suspecting it, for their own death?in accepting the funeral viaticum. Contrary to their custom none of the family sang during the service, and upon leaving the house the clergymen expressed the opinion that they 'appeared different' as if something had happened to them." Finally, after midnight on July 4, 1918, the entire family, with their doctor and two faithful servants, was brought to the basement of the house of their confinement under the pretext of moving them once again. There they were brutally and mercilessly murdered, the children as well as the adults, under the cover of darkness? for "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). The Tsar was shot as he stood forward to defend his family. Tsaritsa Alexandra was able to make the sign of the Cross before she, too, fell. Amid screams, the children were shot, clubbed and bayoneted, in an act of indescribably brutality. There is evidence that the murders were ritualistic; strange symbols (CANABALISTIC) were found on the walls of the room where the crime took place. Thus ended the life of the gentle, Christ-like Tsar, as a sacrifice for the Orthodox Faith and for the Russian people, both of whom he so fervently loved and believed in. This crime was the beginning of an inhuman bloodbath which left tens of millions dead, the Church in the grip of atheists and Holy Russia entirely unrecognizable. Now it is up to us to pray to the twice-crowned Tsar-Martyr Nicholas and his family to intercede before the throne of God that the sins of the Orthodox might be forgiven. And may our Lord Jesus Christ grant us the strength of faith to follow the example of these true servants of His;

**St. Andrew of Crete** - born in Damascus of Christian parents. He was a mute from birth until the age of seven. When his parents brought him to church and he received Holy Communion, he began to speak. So great is the power of the Divine and Holy Communion. At age fourteen, Andrew went to Jerusalem and was tonsured in the Lavra of St. Sabas the Sanctified. By virtue of his understanding and asceticism, he surpassed many of the older monks and was an example to them. After a while, the patriarch took him as his personal secretary. When the Monothelite heresy began to rage the heresy which taught that the Lord Jesus did not possess a human will but only a divine will the Sixth Ecumenical Council convened in Constantinople in the year 681 A.D. during the reign of Constantine IV [Bearded One]. Theodore, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, was unable to attend the council but sent Andrew as his representative who, at that time, was an Archdeacon. At the council, Andrew displayed his wonderful gift of oratory, his zeal for the Faith and rare prudence. Having assisted in strengthening the Orthodox Faith, Andrew returned to his duties in Jerusalem. Later, he was elected and installed as the Archbishop of the Island of Crete. As an archbishop, he was greatly loved by the people. Andrew was very zealous for Orthodoxy and vehemently eradicated all heresies. Through his prayers he worked miracles. By his prayers, he drove the Saracens from the Island of Crete. Andrew wrote many books of instruction, hymns and canons of which the most renown is the Great Canon to the Birth-giver of God read on Thursday of the Fifth Sunday of the Great Lenten Season. His outward appearance was such that "seeing his face and hearing his words flowing like honey, everyone found pleasure and amended their ways." On one occasion, returning from Constantinople, Andrew foretold his death before he arrived in Crete. And so it happened. When the boat in which he traveled sailed near the island of Mitylene, this beacon of the Church ended his earthly life and with his soul, took up habitation in the Kingdom of Christ in the year 721 A.D., St Martha - the mother of St. Simeon of the Wonderful Mountain;

**St. Finbar of Wexford** - Founded a monastery on the Innis Doimhle (Isle of Crimlen), Wexford, Ireland in the sixth century, and served as its first abbot. His name means white head (Fionnbharr) .

Tropar of St Finbar tone 3: O holy Finbar, thou didst labour faithfully/ and gain many disciples who followed thee to Christ./ As thou didst guide souls in thine Irish monastery,/ pray to Christ our God/ to grant us His great mercy.

**5 / 18 July — Our Holy Father Athanasius the Athonite** - born in Trebizond of God-fearing parents, he was early left destitute, but, by the providence of God, a high-ranking army officer took him, removed him to Constantinople and had him educated there. He was beloved by all his contemporaries for his meekness and humility. In their childish games, they appointed one of themselves to be Emperor, another Commander and so forth. Athanasius was always chosen Abbot, as if in prophecy. Finishing his schooling, Athanasius (called Abraham until his tonsuring) retired to Mount Kyminas in Bithynia, where he lived in asceticism as a disciple of the famous Michael Maleinos. Desiring yet stricter asceticism, he moved to the Holy Mountain, to live in silence. Many, desirous of the ascetic life, began to gather round him and he was constrained to build the famous Lavra. The Byzantine Emperors gave him generous help in this, especially Nicephorus Phocas, who himself had the intention of retiring and becoming a monk. Later, John Tzimiskes also gave him great help. Manifold temptations were visited upon Athanasius, from demons and from men, but he, as a valiant soldier of Christ, resisted and overcame them all by his immense humility and unceasing prayer to the living God. Filled with the grace of God, he was found worthy to behold the most holy Mother of God, who miraculously brought forth water from a rock and promised him that she would evermore be the abbess of his monastery. Athanasius surpassed his brethren in work and in prayer, and loved them all with the love of a spiritual father and shepherd. Death came to him suddenly. He, together with six of his monks, had climbed up onto a newly-constructed part of the church to inspect a wall that was in building when the wall fell in and buried them all. So died this great light of monasticism in 1003. He appeared a number of times to his brethren after his death, to console or rebuke them; Our Holy Father, the Martyr Cyprian the New; Our Holy Father Lampadus; Uncovering of the relics of Sergius of Radonezh; **St. Fragan and St. Gwen (Blanche)** - 5th century. During the troubled times following the Roman departure from Britain, Saints Fragan and Gwen became refugees in Brittany, when many churches are dedicated to each of them. They are the parents of Saints Winwaloe, Jacut, Guethenoc, and Gunthiern.

Tropar of Ss Fragan and Gwen tone 4: O noble exiles Fragan and Gwen/ who fled to Brittany in troubled times:/ you established churches to God's praise and glory;/ your children brought joy and gladness to the Breton people./ We praise you, glorious Saints.

**St. Morwenna, patron of Morewenstow, England (6th c.)** – her name means ‘maiden’ in Cornish.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

### Venerable Sisoës the Great

7 / 19 July 2015



**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 6:** The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; / the guards became as dead men. / Mary stood by Thy grave, / seeking Thy most pure Body. / Thou didst capture hell, not being tempted by it. / Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. / O Lord who didst rise from the Dead, / Glory to Thee!

**Troparion of St Sisoës tone 5:** From thy childhood/ thou didst follow the angelic life/ and wast therefore filled with many godly gifts./ O Sisoës, emulator of Angels,/ thou didst shine resplendently like a sun/ in the hour of thy going forth,/ and so didst reveal thy glory and illuminate our souls.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 6:** When Christ God the Giver of Life, / raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His Mighty Hand, / He bestowed resurrection on the human race. / He is the Saviour of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of All.

**Kontakion of St Sisoës tone 4:** Thou wast an earthly angel in asceticism/ and didst divinely illumine the thoughts of the faithful./ Wherefore we acclaim thee with faith, O righteous Father Sisoës.

#### EPISTLE: ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS 15: 1-7

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, That you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

#### HAVING GIFTS THAT DIFFER ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO US, LET US USE THEM

He wants to make them vie with each other, and to labour more earnestly by showing that it is they themselves who give the grounds for their receiving more or less. For he says indeed that it is given by God ...But he also says that the beginnings lie with themselves in order to rouse the listless. This he does in the Epistle to the Corinthians as well, to produce these emotions. For when he says, 'covet the gifts earnestly,' (I Cor. 12:31), he shows that they were themselves the cause of the differences in what was given ...For though it is a grace, yet it is not poured forth at random, but framing its measure according to the recipients, it lets as much flow as it may find the vessel of faith that is brought to be capable of holding...

#### CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEEDS OF SAINTS, PRACTICE HOSPITALITY

Even the Apostleship is called a ministry, and every spiritual work is a ministry ... It is not enough to give, but we must also do it with munificence, for this always answers to the name of simplicity ...It is not enough to show mercy, but it behooves us to do it with largesse and an ungrudging spirit ... even with a cheerful and rejoicing one ...He said, 'He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully' (II Cor. 9:6) ... In this way the widow outweighed many talents by the two mites, for her spirit was large.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXI on Romans XII. B#55, pp. 501, 502.*

#### GOSPEL: ST. MATTHEW 9: 27-35

When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it." But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country. As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!" But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

## JESUS HEALS THE BLIND AND THE DUMB

The first Sunday readings after Pentecost showed us the Commandments of God according to which all the saints of the universal Church and our Russian Church lived. These commandments were like steps into the Kingdom of Heaven. And the Kingdom of Heaven the Merciful God has prepared for all. This means that these steps are leading there; these commandments of God are a must for every one of us. So with such a purpose the Holy Church presented them to us. But now for the last several weeks the Holy Church has begun to show us not what we should cultivate in ourselves, but things which we should avoid, against which we should fight. These readings told about the power of evil, about being possessed by it, about passions, sins, slavery to sin, bodily paralysis which is the result of sin; and this pointed out to us our spiritual paralysis, which is always the result of sin. In the same way, today's Gospel tells us: "When Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed Him.... As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil" (Mt. 9:27,32). And Christ healed all of them. Yes, there is physical blindness, but there is also spiritual blindness. This is our unbelief, our stoniness of heart. Such a state may be temporary, as a storm cloud rushes in and goes away, with God's help. This is a terrible feeling of being forsaken by God, a horrible loneliness. And there is another condition: this is when we can talk about anything, but not about spiritual things, Godly things. Or when before us a brother is suffering, is living through some terrible grief, and we don't have even one word of comfort. Or again, a state of mind when we cannot even pray. Are these not states of spiritual dumbness? And Christ alone can heal us, heal our blind and dumb soul. But how does it happen? Well, in order to answer this question I would like to relate one example, one experience from my personal life. Here it is: I will tell just how this experience was inscribed on my heart. This was a very difficult period of my life. It seemed there was no way out. My church in the town of Romni was closed, I was exiled from Romni, my family was left to the mercy of fate. To be registered in any church in Kiev was impossible. I had to live from day to day, hiding out with friends, knowing that by doing this I could harm them. At church services I could only be present secretly, hiding somewhere in a corner of the altar. And not even in every church would they let in an unregistered priest. Before me there seemed to be impenetrable darkness. I was losing heart. I felt both blind and dumb, in a spiritual sense. Then came a bright thought: go to Lavra, to the cave Church of St. Anthony, to the early Liturgy. I wanted to believe that maybe there at the relics of the saints the veil would fall from my eyes and I would be able to see the Providence of God for me. I stopped for the night in Lavra and stayed with a close friend of mine. At three in the morning the gong was struck. We dressed quickly and went out. It was absolutely dark. But from all sides stretched lines of little lights; these were monks with lanterns going to the service in the caves. Everything was quiet, reverent, mysterious. And the two of us proceeded. Now we started to go down into the cave. And as we descended I grew more and more oppressed. The Liturgy started. I saw how everyone was praying. And I.. .I could not pray. Something terrible was happening to me; the ceiling of the cave pressed down on me. I was suffocating. And not so much physically, as spiritually. Anguish was simply tearing my chest apart. If I could have run away, I would have. But with an unbelievable effort of will I forced myself, at least outwardly, to remain at the service, which came over to me only automatically. I was both blind and dumb. Minutes seemed like hours. I felt that I was perishing, and as one who was dumb, without words. I cried out in my heart: "Lord have mercy!" not even understanding the meaning of these words. If the service had lasted for one more minute, I could not have stood it. But here was the end. I simply ran out onto the surface of the ground. And then a miracle happened to me. The sun was high already, the grass, the leaves, the trees, covered with morning dew, seemed to be strewn with diamonds. In the distance I could see the blue Dnieper River, and this blue was broken up by the bright reflection of the rising sun. This reflection was like gold which had fallen from heaven; and beyond the Dnieper were fields, forests — the world of God! I breathed deeply. Before me was hope. God had taken the stone away from my heart. I had been blind, but suddenly I recovered my sight: all these earthly beauties were now just symbols for me — symbols of unearthly beauty and Eternal Life. I wanted to live for eternity, and I wanted to share this joy with those around me. The dumbness passed and I began talking to people again who were all now near and dear to me. See how God heals our spiritual blindness and dumbness! So let us go in His Way. Let us endure. Let us imitate the blind men. After all, they did not see Christ. And what is more, they had never seen the image of a human being; but they knew that Christ was there, nearby, and believed that He could heal them. This is the classic image of prayer. The Orthodox Faith never forms any images, but only knows that Christ is, and He is near and can do anything. But let us be attentive, because He will ask us too: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" (Mt. 10:28). Then let our answer to Him be: "Yes, Lord! We believe."

### Saints of the Week

**6 / 19 July — Our Holy Father Sisoës the Great** - an Egyptian by birth, he lived at first in Scetis then, after St Antony's death, settled on the desert mountain on which Antony had earlier lived in asceticism and which was named after him. He learned humility through great struggles with himself, becoming meek and guileless as a lamb. Therefore God gave him the great gifts of healing the sick, driving out unclean spirits and raising the dead. Sisoës lived in the desert for sixty years, and was a fount of living wisdom for all the monks and lay folk who came to him for advice. At the time of his death, his face shone like the sun. The monks stood around him and marvelled at this sight and, when the saint gave up his soul, the whole chamber was filled with a wonderful fragrance. He entered into rest in great old age, in about 429. St Sisoës taught his monks: 'When temptation comes to a man, that man must give himself over to the will of God, and acknowledge that the temptation comes upon him because of his sins. If something good comes to pass, he must acknowledge that it comes about by the providence of God.' A monk asked him: 'How can I please God and be saved?' The saint replied: 'If you desire to please God, withdraw from the world, separate yourself from the earth, leave aside creation and draw near to the Creator, unite yourself to God with prayers and tears, and you will find rest in this world and in the next.' A monk asked Sisoës: 'How can I acquire humility?' The saint replied: 'When a man learns to regard every man as better than himself, he thus acquires humility.' Ammon complained to Sisoës that he could not memorise the wise sayings that he had read, to be able to quote them in conversation with others. The saint replied: 'It is not necessary. That which is necessary is to acquire purity of mind and to speak from this purity, placing one's hope in God.' The Holy Martyrs Marinus and Martha, with their sons, Audifax and Habakkuk, the Priest Valentine,

Cyrinus, Asterius and many others; The Finding of the Relics of St Juliana the Virgin; The Holy Martyr Lucy; St. Monenna, foundress of Killeevy Monastery, Ireland (c.518).

**7 / 20 July — Our Holy Father Thomas of Mt. Maleon** - was a general, famed for his courage and wealth. He was massive of body and a source of fear to his enemies. But, when he came to love Christ more than the world or anything in the world, he left everything and retired to the desert, where he became a monk and gave himself to asceticism. St Elias the Prophet appeared to him, and led him to the mountain called Malea, near the Holy Mountain. There he lived in solitude, alone with God, in unceasing prayer day and night. Although he hid from the world, he could not succeed in concealing himself. Learning of the holiness of his life, people began to go to him, bringing their sick. St Thomas healed them of all ills and weaknesses. When he went to God (in the tenth century), his relics continued to give aid to all who drew near to them in faith; St. Acacius of Sinai, who is mentioned in The Ladder;

**Our Holy Fathers, the Martyrs Epictetus and Astius** - Astius, the only son of his parents, was persuaded to love the Faith of Christ by Epictetus the priest who baptized him and tonsured him a monk. After that they moved from somewhere in the eastern regions of Scythia and settled in the Scythian town of Almirida (now Ramzina) on the mouth of the Danube on the Black Sea. They were tortured and beheaded for the Faith of Christ about 290 A.D. After their deaths, they both appeared in great radiance to the parents of St. Astius, Alexander and Marcellina, who were converted to Christ and who were baptized by Bishop Evangelus who himself, then was beheaded for Christ: "Evangelus, another angel" as is sung about him

**St. Illtyd, founder of the Llantwit abbey in Wales** - (c. 425 to c. 505), the founder of the great school/seminary/abbey of Llan Illtyd Fawr (English, "Llantwit Major") in the west of South Glamorgan. Illtyd was considered the most learned person in Britain, expert alike in Maths, Grammar, Philosophy, Rhetoric and Scripture. One of the *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, or Welsh Triads, refers to him as one of the "three knights of the Court of Arthur who kept the Holy Grail". In an age when any schooling was available only to a very few privileged people, perhaps Illtud's seminary was the closest approximation in existence to an institution of higher education. Among Illtyd's pupils were Saints Pol Aurelian (in Latin, *Paulinus Aurelianus*), Samson, Gildas and Dewi (English, *David*).

**8 / 21 July — Appearance of the "Kazan" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos** - The celebration of the Most-holy Theotokos, in honour of her Icon known as the Kazan Icon, was established in thanks for the saving of Moscow and all Russia from the attack of the Poles in 1612. The late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries are known in Russian history as the Time of Troubles. The nation was attacked by Polish armies, who mocked the Orthodox Faith, and who looted and burned churches, towns and villages. By means of deceit, they succeeded in seizing Moscow. In response to the appeal of His Holiness Patriarch Hermogenes (commemorated on May 12) the Russian people rose up in defence of the homeland. The miraculous Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos was sent from Kazan to join the militia led by Prince Dimitry Mikhailovitch Pozharsky. In his "Homily on the day of the appearance of the Icon of the Mother of God in Kazan" (celebrated July 8), Holy Hierarch Dimitry of Rostov (commemorated September 21) said: The Mother of God saves from great misfortunes and evils not only the righteous, but also the sinful, but what manner of sinners? Those, who like the prodigal son, return to their Heavenly Father; who lament [over their sins]; who, like the publican, beat their breasts; who are like the sinful woman that wept at the feet of Christ and washed His feet with her tears; those who, like the thief on the cross, confess Him. The Mother of God looks after such sinners and rushes to help them, and saves them from great misfortunes and evils. Recognizing that the misfortune had been permitted because of their sins, the entire people and militia observed 3-day fast, and turned to the Lord and His most-pure mother for divine help. Their prayers were heeded. Holy Hierarch Arseny (later to become bishop of Suzdal), who was a prisoner of the Poles, sent word that he had had a vision revealing by the intercession of the Most-holy Virgin, God's judgment been had turned to mercy. Inspired by this news, the armies on October 22, 1612 liberated Moscow from the Polish occupiers. The celebration in honour of the Kazan Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos was established in 1649. To this day, that Icon is highly venerated by the Russian Orthodox people;

**The Holy and Great Martyr Procopius** - born in Jerusalem of a Christian father and a pagan mother, at first bearing the name Neanias. After his father's death, his mother brought him up entirely in the spirit of Roman idolatry. When he had grown up, the Emperor Diocletian saw him at sometime and was so pleased with him that he took him to court to serve in the army. When this wicked Emperor launched a persecution of Christians, he ordered Neanias to go with a detachment of soldiers to Alexandria and exterminate the Christians there. But, on the road, there happened to Neanias something similar to that which happened to Saul. At three o'clock in the morning there was a violent earthquake, the Lord Jesus appearing to him and saying: 'Neanias, where are you going, and against whom are you rebelling?' In great fear, Neanias replied: 'Who are you, Lord? I cannot recognise You.' Then a brilliant Cross, as of crystal, appeared in the sky and a voice came from the Cross: 'I am Jesus, the crucified Son of God.' The Lord went on: 'By this sign that you have seen, overcome your enemies, and My peace will be with you.' This event utterly changed Neanias's life. He caused a cross such as he had seen to be made, and, instead of moving against the Christians, set off with his soldiers against the Agarians, who were attacking Jerusalem. He entered Jerusalem victorious and told his mother that he was a Christian. Brought to trial, he took off his army belt and sword and cast them before the judge, demonstrating by this that he was a soldier only of Christ the King. After harsh torture, he was thrown into prison. There Christ the Lord appeared to him again, baptising him and giving him the name Procopius. One day twelve women came to the window of his cell and said to him: 'We also are the servants of Christ.' Arrested for this, they were thrown into the same prison, where St Procopius instructed them in the Christian faith and carefully prepared them to receive the crown of martyrdom. (\*) These twelve women were then harshly tortured. Beholding their sufferings and courage, Procopius's mother also came to faith in Christ, and then all thirteen were put to death. When St Procopius was led to the scaffold, he raised his hands towards the East and prayed to God for all the poor and needy, the destitute and the widowed, and especially for the holy Church, that it might grow and spread and that Orthodoxy might shine to the end of time. He was assured from heaven that his prayer was heard, after which he joyfully laid his head under the sword and went to his Lord, to eternal joy. St Procopius suffered with honour in Palestinian Caesarea, and was crowned with an eternal wreath of glory, on



July 8th, 303. \*Author's note: Therefore those in the married state ('crowned'), invoke St Procopius, together with the God-crowned Constantine and Helena; St Procopius the Fool for Christ; Our Holy Father Theophilus the Outpourer of Myrrh; Blessed King Edgar the Peaceable (975).

**9 / 22 July — Fast Day - The Hieromartyr Pancratius, Bishop of Taormina.** - this holy hierarch was born in Antioch at the time that the Lord Jesus walked as a man among men on earth. Hearing of Christ's miracles, Pancratius's parents desired to see the Lord, the wonderworker. They came to Jerusalem, bringing Pancratius, where they saw Jesus, heard His words and witnessed His miracles. There Pancratius met the Apostle Peter. After the Lord's Ascension, both parents and their son were baptised in Antioch. Pancratius retired to a cave in Pontus, where the Apostle Peter found him and, in consultation with the Apostle Paul, installed him as bishop of Taormina in Sicily. St Pancratius worked great wonders in that town. He destroyed idols, baptised the unbaptised and instructed the baptised, and governed the Church of God. A pagan general, Aquilinus, hearing that the whole town of Taormina had become Christian, set out with an army to the town to destroy it. Holy Pancratius encouraged the faithful to be fearless, and he himself went out from the city with the clergy, carrying in his hands the unconquerable sign of the precious Cross. When the soldiers drew near to the town, a darkness fell on them and they were seized with great terror. A great confusion arose, so that they fell over one another and were stabbed and cut about by their own swords. Thus that godly man, Pancratius, saved his city and his flock by the power of his prayers before God. He was finally stoned to death by some envious and wicked pagans, and entered into rest in the Lord. His holy relics are preserved in Rome.

**The Hieromartyr Cyril, Bishop of Gortyna** - as an old man of eighty-four, he was tortured for Christ during Decius' reign. Cast into the flames, he was saved by the providence of God. Then the judge pronounced this sentence: 'Just judgement cannot tolerate that Cyril, having been delivered from fire, remain among the living. I therefore command that he be killed with the sword.' The old man joyfully laid his head under the sword and was beheaded, to live eternally in the Kingdom of Christ; The Holy Martyrs Theodore and John; Our Holy Fathers, the Martyrs Paternuthius and Copres; Our Holy Fathers Paternuthius and Copres; St Theodore, Bishop of Edessa; St. Everild, nun of England (c.700).

**10 / 23 July — Saint Anthony of the Kiev Caves** -born in the year 983 at Liubech, not far from Chernigov, and was named Antipas in Baptism. Possessing the fear of God from his youth, he desired to be clothed in the monastic schema. When he reached a mature age, he wandered until he arrived on Mt. Athos, burning with the desire to emulate the deeds of its holy inhabitants. Here he received monastic tonsure, and the young monk pleased God in every aspect of his spiritual struggles on the path of virtue. He particularly excelled in humility and obedience, so that all the monks rejoiced to see his holy life. The igumen saw in St Anthony the great future ascetic, and inspired by God, he sent him back to his native land, saying, "Anthony, it is time for you to guide others in holiness. Return to your own Russian land, and be an example for others. May the blessing of the Holy Mountain be with you. Returning to the land of Rus, Anthony began to make the rounds of the monasteries about Kiev, but nowhere did he find that strict life which had drawn him to Mt. Athos. Through the Providence of God, Anthony came to the hills of Kiev by the banks of the River Dniepr. The forested area near the village of Berestovo reminded him of his beloved Athos. There he found a cave which had been dug out by the Priest Hilarion, who later became Metropolitan of Kiev (October 21). Since he liked the spot, Anthony prayed with tears, "Lord, let the blessing of Mt. Athos be upon this spot, and strengthen me to remain here." He began to struggle in prayer, fasting, vigil and physical labor. Every other day, or every third day, he would eat only dry bread and a little water. Sometimes he did not eat for a week. People began to come to the ascetic for his blessing and counsel, and some decided to remain with the saint. Among Anthony's first disciples was St Nikon (March 23), who tonsured St Theodosius of the Caves (May 3) at the monastery in the year 1032. The virtuous life of St Anthony illuminated the Russian land with the beauty of monasticism. St Anthony lovingly received those who yearned for the monastic life. After instructing them how to follow Christ, he asked St Nikon to tonsure them. When twelve disciples had gathered about St Anthony, the brethren dug a large cave and built a church and cells for the monks within it. After he appointed Abbot Barlaam to guide the brethren, St Anthony withdrew from the monastery. He dug a new cave for himself, then hid himself within it. There too, monks began to settle around him. Afterwards, the saint built a small wooden church in honor of the Dormition of the Mother of God over the Far Caves. At the insistence of Prince Izyaslav, the igumen Barlaam withdrew to the Dimitriev monastery. With the blessing of St Anthony and with the general agreement of the brethren, the meek and humble Theodosius was chosen as igumen. By this time, the number of brethren had already reached a hundred men. The Kiev Great Prince Izyaslav (+ 1078) gave the monks the hill on which the large church and cells were built, with a palisade all around. Thus, the renowned monastery over the caves was established. Describing this, the chronicler remarks that while many monasteries were built by emperors and nobles, they could not compare with those which are built with holy prayers and tears, and by fasting and vigil. Although St Anthony had no gold, he built a monastery which became the first spiritual center of Rus. For his holiness of life, God glorified St Anthony with the gift of clairvoyance and wonderworking. One example of this occurred during the construction of the Great Caves church. The Most Holy Theotokos Herself stood before him and St Theodosius in the Blachernae church in Constantinople, where they had been miraculously transported without leaving their own monastery. Actually, two angels appeared in Constantinople in their forms (See May 3, the account of the Kiev Caves Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos). Having received gold from the Mother of God, the saints commissioned master architects, who came from Constantinople to the Russian land on the command of the Queen of Heaven to build the church at the Monastery of the Caves. During this appearance, the Mother of God foretold

**The 45 Holy Martyrs: Leontius, Maurice, Alexander, Sisinius and the rest** - in the time of the wicked Emperor Licinius, who ruled over the eastern half of the Byzantine Empire, there was a great persecution of Christians. In Armenian Nicopolis, Leontius came before the imperial governor, Lysius, together with several of his friends, and told him that he was a Christian. 'And where is your Christ?', asked Lysius. 'Was he not crucified and did he not die?' To this, St Leontius replied: 'If you know that our Christ died, know that He also rose from the dead and ascended into heaven.' After much harassment for their faith, Lysius had them whipped and thrown into prison, where they were given neither food nor drink. A noble Christian woman,



Vlassiana, brought them water and gave it to them through the window of the prison, and an angel of God appeared to them there, to comfort and encourage them. When their trial was held, two of their warders came before Lysius as Christian converts, and many others, numbering forty-five in all. The judge condemned them all to death, ordering that their arms and legs be hacked off and that they then be thrown into the flames. This vicious punishment was carried out, and the souls of the holy martyrs flew off to their Lord, to eternal life. They suffered with honour and inherited the Kingdom in the year 319; **The Translation of the Precious Vesture of our Lord Jesus Christ** - at the time of our Lord's suffering for the human race, there was to be found in the ranks of the Roman army in Jerusalem a Georgian, Elias, from the town of Mtskheth. His mother had heard of Christ, and believed in Him in her heart. Sending her son into the army in Palestine, she exhorted him to do nothing against Christ. When the Lord was nailed to the Cross, the sound of the hammering on Golgotha came to the ears of Elias's mother in Mtskheth. Hearing this sound, she cried out: 'Woe is me that I did not die before this hour, that death might deliver me from this terrible sound!' And, thus saying, she fell dead. Elias was at that time underneath the Cross, and, with the other soldiers, was casting lots for Christ's vesture. The vesture fell to him, and he took it to Mtskheth, making a gift of it to his sister Sidonia. She, hearing of the Lord's death and learning that her brother had a hand in the shedding of innocent blood, fell dead with the Lord's vesture in her hands, in such a way that no-one could take it from her and they were constrained to bury it with her. A cedar grew up over her grave, from which flowed a healing myrrh. In time, the cedar fell and the place was forgotten. St Nina found it by the aid of a pillar of fire on that spot, in response to her prayers. King Mirian, when he had been baptised, built a church there to the Holy Apostles. In 1625, Shah Abbas took this vesture and sent it to Moscow as a gift to Prince Michael Feodorovitch and Patriarch Philaret. The vesture was then placed in the Cathedral of the Dormition in Moscow.

**11 / 24 July — Fast Day - The Holy and Great Martyr Euphemia** - this saint is commemorated on September 16th, the day on which she suffered. On this day is commemorated the miracle wrought by her precious relics, revealed at the time of the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon. This Council was called together in the reign of the Emperor Marcian and the Empress Pulcheria, in 451, after the death of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger, and was summoned because of the heresy of Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria, and Eutyches, an archimandrite in Constantinople, who had disseminated the false teaching that there were in Christ not two natures, divine and human, but only one, a divine nature. At this Council, the chief role was played by Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople and Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem. Because, through the quarrels and evidence on both sides, no decision could be reached, Patriarch Anatolius suggested that the Orthodox and the heretics each write down their confession of faith, and that they be put into the coffin that contained the relics of St Euphemia. All agreed to this. Two confessions of faith, then, were written and placed in the hands of the great martyr. The coffin was closed and sealed with the imperial seal, a watch then being set over it. They then all spent three days in fasting and prayer. On the fourth day, when the tomb was opened, they saw the Orthodox confession of faith in the saint's right hand and the heretical one beneath her feet. Thus was the conflict resolved by God's power, on the side of Orthodoxy. In the time of the Emperor Heraclius, the relics of St Euphemia were translated from Chalcedon to Constantinople, to the church dedicated to her near the Hippodrome. The iconoclast Emperor Leo the Isaurian ordered that her relics be thrown into the sea; but, by a wonderful act, the coffin was brought to the island of Lemnos and placed in the church of the holy martyr Glykeria. Then, in the time of the Empress Irene, the coffin with its relics was again taken to Constantinople, to its former place. Blood has flowed from these relics from time to time, to the succour of the sick and the feeble.

**Blessed Equal-to-the-Apostles St Olga, princess of Russia in baptism called Elena** - renowned for her wisdom and sobriety, in her youth became the wife of Igor, Great Prince of Kiev, who ruled during the tenth century. After her husband's death, she herself ruled capably, and was finally moved to accept the Faith of Christ. She traveled to Constantinople to receive Holy Baptism. The Emperor, seeing her outward beauty and inward greatness, asked her to marry him. She said she could not do this before she was baptized; she furthermore asked him to be her Godfather at the font, which he agreed to do. After she was baptized (receiving the name of Helen), the Emperor repeated his proposal of marriage. She answered that now he was her father, through holy Baptism, and that not even among the heathen was it heard of a man marrying his daughter. Gracefully accepting to be outwitted by her, he sent her back to her land with priests and sacred texts and holy icons. Although her son Svyatoslav remained a pagan, she planted the seed of faith in her grandson Vladimir (see July 15). She reposed in peace in 969.; Our Holy Father, the Martyr Nicodemus; Our Holy Father, the Martyr Nectarius.

**12 / 25 July — St Veronica** - this is the woman with the issue of blood, whom the Lord healed (Matt. 9:20). In gratitude to the Lord her healer, Veronica caused a statue of the Lord Jesus to be made, before which she prayed to God. By tradition, this statue was preserved up to the time of Julian the Apostate, when it was altered to become a statue of Zeus. This is one of the very rare occasions that a holy statue has been used in the Eastern Church. As is known, this later became a common custom in the Western Churches. St Veronica remained faithful to Christ till death, and entered peacefully into rest.

**The Holy Martyrs Proclus and Hilarius** - these martyrs were born in Kallippi in Asia, Proclus being Hilarius's uncle. They suffered in the time of Trajan. The judge asked Proclus: 'Of what race are you?' Proclus replied: 'I am of the race of Christ, and my hope is in my God.' When the judge threatened him with torture, he said: 'When you are afraid to transgress the Emperor's commands and risk falling into temporal punishment, how much more do we Christians fear to transgress against God's commands and fall into eternal torment!' While Proclus was being tortured, Hilarius came up to the judge and said: 'I too am a Christian!' After many tortures, the two of them were condemned to death, Proclus being crucified and Hilarius beheaded with the sword. They both entered into the joy of their Lord; Our Holy Father Michael Maleinos; The Holy Martyr Golinduc.



## 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

### Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils

13 / 26 July 2015

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 7:** By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death / to the Thief, Thou didst open Paradise / for the myrrh-bearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy! / and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God / to proclaim that Thou art risen / granting the world great mercy.

**Tropar of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils, Tone 8 Spec. Mel. ("Virgin Theotokos rejoice ..."):** Most glorious art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast established our fathers upon the earth as beacons, and hast thereby guided us all to the true Faith! O greatly Compassionate One, glory be to Thee!

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 7:** The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive, / for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers. / Hell is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry: / The Saviour has come to those in faith, / enter, you faithful to the Resurrection.

**Kondak of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils, Tone 8 Spec. Mel. ("As the firstfruits ..."):** The preaching of the apostles and the dogmas of the fathers sealed the one Faith of the Church; and clad in the robe of truth woven of theology from on high, it setteth aright and glorifieth the great mystery of piety.

**Vespers Gen. 14:14-20; Deut. 1:8-11; Deut. 10:14-21**

**Matins Gospel VIII**

**Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1: 10-18**

10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptised in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptised none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 lest anyone should say that I had baptised in my own name. 16 Yes, I also baptised the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptised any other. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

#### **IS CHRIST DIVIDED?**

The emphatic force of the word 'schism,' I mean the name itself, was a sufficient accusation. For it was not that they had become many parts, each entire within itself, but rather the One Body ...had perished ...'That each one of you says,' for the corruption did not pervade a part, but the whole of the Church ...By a kind of divine art he does away with their swelling pride on this point, not with the efficacy of baptism, but with the folly of those who were puffed up at having been baptisers: first, by showing that the Gift is not theirs, and secondly by thanking God for it. For Baptism truly is a great thing, but its greatness is not the work of the person baptising, but of Him who is invoked in the Baptism ...Great indeed is Baptism, and without baptism it is impossible to obtain the kingdom...But prove to me that Peter and Paul were eloquent. You cannot: for they were 'unlearned and ignorant men!'

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily III on 1 Corinthians I, 1, 3, 6, 8. B#56, pp. 10-14*

[Second Epistle Heb 13:7-16](#)

## The Gospel According To St. Matthew 14: 14-22

And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

### FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

"Give ye them to eat!" said Christ to His disciples. And He said this to them as if answering their advice: "This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals." But Christ insisted, "Give ye them to eat!" Then the disciples said to Him, "[Teacher], we have here but five loaves, and two fishes" (Mt. 14:15-17).

Let us put ourselves in their position: a tremendous crowd—the men alone were about five thousand, not counting women and children. With the approach of darkness, the places where bread was sold would be closed. So this crowd of many thousands faced a hungry night in the wilderness. With them were little children. While Christ spoke, all physical needs were silent; but now He fell silent and the people were already beginning to feel hungry. What would happen next? People would become weak, children would cry from hunger, and no one would be able to fall asleep. The result would be despondency, disillusionment, and maybe even murmuring. We believed Thee; we came in search of the Kingdom of God and its Truth. That's why we came to Thee here. Thou didst promise that everything else would be added to us. But here Thy promise has not been fulfilled. We don't even have the food necessary for our children; and night is approaching, a dark southern night.

Yes, it's possible to understand the attitude of the disciples. Even their love for their Teacher may have prompted them to warn Him. And He, when they mentioned the inadequacy of their food supply—five loaves of bread and two fish—He commanded the people to sit down on the grass in groups, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, looked upon heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, gave them to His disciples, and His disciples to the people. And they all ate and were filled and gathered the remaining pieces into twelve full baskets (Mt. 14:18-20). A great, unprecedented miracle. And this miracle is historic!

But the power hidden in these five words of Christ, "Give ye them to eat!" many times exceeds both the physical filling of the crowd of many thousands and the two thousand years which separate us from that time.

"Give ye them to eat!" Did this mean physical food only? No. It meant everything that the God-Man has brought to earth: salvation of the human race, spiritual food, all the sacraments which were established by the Lord, the entire Church of Christ, Catholic and Apostolic. But the Apostles were mortal and the Church is eternal. The Apostles would need successors: deacons, priests, bishops. In such a way the Church will exist eternally and feed believers. She will give them that which no one and nothing on earth can give. With the words: "Give ye them to eat!" Christ makes His Church Apostolic. And at that moment, when Christ commanded the people to sit down on the grass in groups—this is the great moment of the organisation of the Church. Remember Holy Russia. It consisted of separate groups—parishes—and they all merged into one great whole—the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

In this way the Church of Christ now exists and will exist until the end of the ages. Let us always strive for Her. And if for some reason we cannot always abide in Her physically, then let us always live psychologically within the Church cycle. And we will find food which leads us into Eternal Life. Only in the Church do we find the greatest Sacrament of Christ, the Sacrament of His Body and Blood which contains Life Eternal.

*One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei*

### Second Gospel - John 17:1-13

### Saints of the Week

**13 / 26 July — Synaxis of the Holy Archangel Gabriel** - this great archangel of God is commemorated on March 26th. On this day his appearances and marvels through the whole history of the salvation of mankind are commemorated. It is reckoned that this observance was first instituted on the Holy Mountain in 982, during the patriarchate of Nicolas Chrysoverges (979-91), and was occasioned by the Archangel's appearing in a cell near Karyes, where, with his finger, he wrote the hymn to the Mother of God: 'It is meet ...'. As a result of this occurrence, the cell was named, and is called to this day, 'It is meet ...'. Linked with this, other appearances of the Archangel Gabriel are commemorated, such as his appearing to Moses when he was keeping Jethro's flocks, when he revealed to this great man, chosen by God, how the world was created and all the rest that Moses later wrote down in the Book of Genesis; his appearing to Daniel and the imparting of the mystery of the kingdoms to come and the coming of the Saviour; his appearing to St Anna and the promise of a daughter, the most blessed and pure Virgin Mary; his very brief appearing to the holy Virgin while she was living in the Temple in Jerusalem; his

appearing to Zacharias the high priest and the news of the birth of John the Forerunner, and the punishing of the same with dumbness because he did not believe the angel's words; his appearing once again to the holy Virgin in Nazareth, and the annunciation of the conception and birth of the Lord Jesus Christ; his appearing to righteous Joseph, to the shepherds near Bethlehem, to the Lord Himself in the Garden of Gethsemane when he strengthened the Lord, as man, before His Passion; his appearing to the myrrh-bearing women, and his other appearances; St Julian, Bishop of Cenomanis (Le Mans); Our Holy Father Stephen of St Sava's; Our Holy Mother Sarah the Egyptian.; St. Just, monk in Cornwall (5th cent.);

**St. Mildred, abbess of Minster in Thanet, England (c.700)** - A daughter of Merewald, king of Mercia, and St. Ermenburga, princess of Kent, she was educated at the convent of Chelles, near Paris, to which she had retired to avoid the attentions of an unwelcome suitor. She then returned to become a nun at Minster-in-Thanet. This abbey had been founded by Ermenburga on land provided by Egbert of Kent in compensation for the murder of her brothers Ss. Ethelred and Ethelbriht. She became abbess before 694, when she attended a council in Kent. Goscelin (late 11th century) attributed to her the conventional virtues of tranquillity of temper and generosity to the poor, especially widows and children. She died after a long illness; her tomb became a place of pilgrimage. In 1035 her relics were translated to St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, whence some of them were given to Deventer (Holland). However, a rival set of relics was given by Lanfranc to his hospital of St. Gregory, Canterbury. In modern times a Benedictine nunnery has been revived at Minster by the Benedictines of Eichstatt (Bavaria), founded by St. Walburga. Feast: 13 July; translation. 18 May; also 20 February.

**14 / 27 July - The Holy Apostle Aquila** - one of the Seventy, he was a Jew living in Italy with his wife Priscilla. When the Emperor Claudius decreed the exile of all Jews from Rome and Italy, Aquila moved to Corinth, where the Apostle Paul first made his acquaintance, staying eighteen months in his house and baptising him and his wife. Burning with zeal for the Christian faith, Aquila and Priscilla accompanied Paul to Ephesus and helped him in his apostolic work. From Ephesus, Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he says at the end: 'Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house' (16:19). After the death of Claudius, Jews were permitted to return to Italy, and Aquila and Priscilla went back to Rome. Writing the Epistle to the Romans from Corinth after this, the Apostle sends greetings to his old friends and fellow-workers: 'Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have for my life laid down their own necks, unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house' (16:3-5). We later see Aquila again in Ephesus, where he is working with St Timothy. In chains in Rome, Paul wrote to Timothy in Ephesus: 'Greet Priscilla and Aquila' (II Tim . 4:19). As a bishop, Aquila baptised many and consecrated them to the Faith, destroyed idols, built churches, made priests and spread among the people the glory of the incarnate Son of God. He was finally murdered by wicked pagans, and went to the Kingdom of Christ. Our Holy Father Hellius.

**15 / 28 July - Holy, Equal-to-the-Apostles, St Vladimir, Great Prince of Russia** - Centuries before it was officially called 'Russia,' the vast territory inhabited by the various tribes of Eastern Slavs was sown with seeds of Christianity. But little fruit sprouted in the land's open steppes which dominated its southern reaches and provided a highroad for nomadic intruders. For over a thousand years a succession of Huns, Avars, Magyars and Pechenegs swept in from the east to establish a hegemony over an area whose waterways provided a potentially valuable trade link between the Baltic and the Black Seas. The eastern Slavs, who spread out along the great rivers as far as Lake Ladoga to the north, were a heterogeneous group which lacked the unity necessary to repel these invading hordes. They welcomed the assistance of the Varangians, Scandinavian adventurers from the north, whom they readily assimilated. According to the earliest written history of the area, the 11th century *Chronicle*, in the year 862 one of these Norsemen by the name of Rurik established himself in Novgorod as a leader with the aim of organizing a defence against the Pechenegs. The strategically superior location of Kiev to the south induced Rurik's successor Ole~ to move the capital in 882 and enabled him to consolidate most of the Eastern Slav tribes under his rule. In 912 Oleg was succeeded by Rurik's son Igor who had married a simple young countrywoman whom he had met by chance while on a hunting expedition in the area of Pskov. The unlikely match turned out to be providential; the girl's beauty was rivalled by her lofty wisdom which belied her humble origin and earned her the title 'most wise.' Olga proved to be a capable ruler when, after the death of Igor in 945, she became regent for their son Sviatoslav. As a ruler she naturally had contact with the neighbouring Greeks; the proximity of Constantinople, capital of the Christian East, may well have inspired her to examine its religion which had already gained enough adherents in Kiev to have a church. Olga's wisdom proved itself in her decision to embrace the Christian faith, and in 957 she journeyed to Constantinople to be baptized and to be instructed in its precepts. Having received divine illumination, Olga returned to the land of Rus bringing, as it were, the dawn's rays. To her sorrow, her son Sviatoslav was not interested in changing his pagan beliefs, although he was tolerant of the Christian faith and did not interfere in his mother's active missionary work. Fortunately, his frequent absence from Kiev on various campaigns gave Olga greater influence not only in administrative matters but also in the upbringing of her three grandsons, even though Sviatoslav forbade her to raise them in the Christian faith. But her life of prayer and charity commended her new religion and bore fruit in the generations that followed her blessed repose in the year 969. Sviatoslav was not interested in staying in Kiev and soon divided his realm among his three sons--Yaropolk, Oleg and Vladimir--while he himself went to Bulgaria. When he died in battle in 972, his sons began to quarrel over primacy of rule. Eventually, the cunning of the youngest son, Vladimir, gained for him the Kievan throne which he secured by having his eldest brother Yaropolk put to death. Oleg had died earlier in battle, leaving Vladimir sole ruler over a loose federation of city states whose geographical territory was widespread and ill-defined. Vladimir began his rule in the full tradition of his pagan predecessors, indulging in a warring and passionate life. Once, after a successful campaign, Vladimir wished to render special thanks to the pagan gods by offering a human sacrifice. The lot fell upon a young Varangian boy by the name of John who was a Christian together with his father Theodore. Theodore refused to give up his son, explaining to those who had come to fetch the boy that the pagan gods were lifeless idols and that the people should turn to the one true God of the Christians. The crowd became enraged and killed them both there in their own home. Truly it has been said that the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christianity, for as accustomed as



Vladimir was to bloodshed, he was strangely affected by the martyrdom of this father and son. He began to think seriously about religion. Feeling less and less satisfied with the paganism of his forebears, Vladimir thirsted for a knowledge of truth. This news spread abroad and attracted to Kiev advocates of various faiths in hopes of winning the Grand Prince to their respective persuasions. There came Bulgar Moslems, papal envoys from Germany, Jews from Taurid and finally an Orthodox Greek--each praising their religion as the best. Vladimir was predisposed to favour the wise arguments of the Greek, a righteous philosopher who gave a thorough explanation of the Orthodox faith beginning with God's creation of the World, the fall of man and his banishment from paradise, the promise of the Messiah, His humble birth, His miracles and teaching of an everlasting Kingdom beyond this world, His sufferings and death on the Cross for man's salvation, and His glorious Resurrection. He then unrolled before the Prince a scroll on which was depicted the last and dread Judgment. Vladimir was struck with the fear of God and said: "How good it will be for those on the right, but woe to them who are wicked and are cast to the left!" The Greek urged Vladimir to accept the truth of holy Orthodoxy and be baptized, but Vladimir recognized the importance of the decision he was to make and was not to be rushed. He summoned together his retinue and the Kievan elders to take counsel, explaining what he had heard from the various ambassadors. "Every man," they replied, "will commend his own religion. But send out your own envoys to examine how the different religions are practiced and the manner of worship," This suggestion seemed most judicious and ten men were promptly dispatched on this mission. On their return they related to the Grand Prince what they had witnessed: the Moslem religion was grim and full of fear; the Germans lacked beauty; but the Greek worship no tongue can describe, 'for during the service in their temple we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. No man, having tasted what is sweet, has any desire for what is bitter. So too, having experienced the Greek faith, we want no other.' The elders supported the recommendation of the envoys: "If the Greek religion were not the best, your wise grandmother would not have adopted it." Vladimir needed no further persuading. Memories of his grandmother's righteous life and the witness of Kiev's Christian inhabitants settled his mind in favour of what he had heard. But it still remained for his heart to be converted. Pride hindered Vladimir from asking the Greeks outright for instruction and baptism. Applying a typically pagan solution, he went to war with the Greeks and captured their city of Kherson. As terms of peace, he demanded the hand of the Byzantine emperors' sister Anna in marriage. They agreed on condition that Vladimir accept the Christian faith. This accorded neatly with Vladimir's ultimate objective. But God was more interested in possessing his heart than his calculating mind. A few days before Princess Anna arrived in Kherson with her retinue of clergy and servants, Vladimir was struck with an eye disease which extinguished his sight. Fearing this to be a punishment from the pagan gods whom he was about to renounce, Vladimir wavered in his decision. Anna, upon hearing of this crisis, encouraged the Grand Prince to be baptized at once, and thereby to be healed not only of his physical blindness, but also of his spiritual blindness. Humbled by his helpless state, Vladimir sent immediately for the bishop of Kherson and, after a thorough preparation, the ceremony of baptism took place. No sooner had the bishop laid his hand on Vladimir's head and invoked the name of the All-holy Trinity than Vladimir's vision was restored, and he cried out: "Now have I come to know the true God!" This miracle confirmed the faith of the Grand Prince who became radically transformed. Returning to Kiev with his new Christian spouse and several priests, he set about cleansing the city from idolatry with orders to destroy the pagan statues and urging all to prepare for holy baptism. On August 1, 988, a countless multitude of young and old assembled in the waters of the Dneiper River. Vladimir stood on the bank and prayed for his people: "Creator of heaven and earth! bless these Thy new children, grant them to know Thee, the true God; strengthen them in the right faith! Be unto me a helper against evil temptation that I might worthily praise Thy holy name!" Vladimir's former passions were transformed into a zeal for good. From Constantinople he engaged skilled artisans to construct a magnificent church on the spot where, until so recently, the statue of Perun had stood. Another church, dedicated to the Theotokos, was built where the two Varangians, Theodore and John, had been martyred. The Prince shared the apostolic work of the Greek bishops and priests who went about the towns and villages spreading the true Faith which thousands willingly embraced, although many remained stuck in the mire of paganism. Vladimir grieved for them, but knew that enlightenment was not to be achieved with a sword. Instead, he established schools where even children of the poorest families could learn to read the Scripture and be trained as priests; The Holy Martyrs Cerycus and Julitta;

**Translation of the relics of St. Swithun, bishop and wonderworker of Winchester (862)** - St. Swithun had been Prior of the monastery attached to the cathedral, before he was made Bishop of Winchester in AD 852. He was, say the chroniclers, a diligent builder of churches in places where there were none before and a repairer of those that had been destroyed or ruined. He also built a bridge on the east side of the city and, during the work he made a practice of sitting there to watch the workmen, that his presence might stimulate their industry. One of his most edifying miracles is said to have been performed at this bridge where he restored an old woman's basket of eggs, which the workmen had maliciously broken. It is more certain that Swithun was one of the most learned men of his time and the tutor, successively, of King Aethelwulf of Wessex and of his son, the illustrious Alfred. He died on 2nd July AD 862 and was buried, according to his own desire, in the churchyard of the Old Minster (Cathedral) at Winchester, where "passers by might tread on his grave and where the rain from the eaves might fall on it." His reputation as a weather saint is said to have arisen from the translation of his body from this lowly grave to its golden shrine within the Cathedral, having been delayed by incessant rain. Hence the weather on the festival of his translation (15th July) indicated, according to the old rhyme, what it would be for the next forty days: "St. Swithun's day, if thou dost rain, For forty days it will remain; St. Swithun's day, if thou be fair, For forty days 'twill rain na mair."

**16 / 29 July - Fast Day - The Hieromartyr Athenogenes, Bishop of Sebaste** - He lived in a monastery near the town with ten of his disciples. In the time of Diocletian, a fierce persecutor of Christians called Philomarchus came to Sebaste. He arrested and killed many of the Christians in the town. When he saw Athenogenes and his disciples, he told the elder to sacrifice to idols, that they should not perish as had the other Christians. Athenogenes replied: 'O Torturer, those whom you describe as having perished have not perished, but are in heaven and make merry with the angels!' There was a touching moment when a deer, which had been hand-fed by the compassionate Athenogenes, ran up to him, and, seeing him in such straits, shed tears. Wild animals of the hills had more pity on the martyrs than did the pagans! After harsh torture, during

which an angel of God comforted them, they were all beheaded, first the priests and fellow-workers of Athenogenes and then Athenogenes himself, and went to their heavenly home in the year 311. The Holy Martyr Julia the Virgin; The 15,000 Holy Martyrs in Persia; The Holy Martyr Athenogenes; Martyr Helier of Jersey (6th c.)

**17 / 30 July - The Holy Martyr Marina (Margaret)** - born in Pisidian Antioch of pagan parents, Marina only heard of the Lord Jesus at the age of twelve, of His incarnation of the most pure Virgin, His many miracles, His death by crucifixion and His glorious Resurrection. Her little heart was inflamed with love for the Lord, and she vowed never to marry and, further, desired in her soul to suffer for Christ and be baptised with the blood of martyrdom. Her father hated her for her faith, and would not regard her as his daughter. The imperial governor, Olymbrius, hearing of Marina and learning that she was a Christian, at first desired her for his wife. When Marina refused, he ordered her to sacrifice to idols. To this, Marina replied: 'I shall not worship nor offer sacrifice to dead idols, lacking the breath of life, which have no awareness of themselves and are not even aware of our honouring or dishonouring them. I will not give them that honour that belongs to my Creator alone.' Then Olymbrius put her to harsh torture, and threw her into prison all wounded and bleeding. Marina prayed to God in the prison, and, after she had prayed, there appeared to her first the devil in the form of a terrible serpent, which twined itself about her head. When she made the sign of the Cross, the serpent split asunder and disappeared. Then she was bathed in heavenly light; the walls and roof of the prison disappeared and a Cross was revealed, resplendent and lofty. On the top of the Cross was perched a white dove, from which there came a voice: 'Rejoice, Marina, thou dove of Christ, daughter of the Sion that is on high, for the day of thy joy is drawing near!', and Marina was healed by the power of God of all her wounds. The demented judge tortured her the next day by fire and water, but Marina endured it all as if not in her own body. She was finally sentenced to death by beheading. At the moment of her death, the Lord Jesus appeared to her, accompanied by angels. She was beheaded in the time of the Emperor Diocletian, but remains alive in soul and in power in heaven and on earth. One of her hands is preserved in the monastery of Vatopedi on the Holy Mountain. Even in Albania, in the Langa mountains overlooking Lake Ochrid, there is a monastery of St Marina with some of her wonderworking relics. Numerous miracles have been wrought in this monastery and still are, witnessed not only by Christians but also by Moslems. The Turks have such a veneration for this holy place that they have never laid hands on either the place or the monastery's possessions. At one time, a Turk was caretaker of the monastery; Our Holy Father Leonid;

**Child Martyr Prince Kenelm of Wales (c.821)** - Son of King Coenwulf of Mercia in England. By tradition he was murdered in the forest of Clent and buried in Winchcombe.

**18 / 31 July - Fast Day - The Holy Martyr Emilian** - in the time of Julian the Apostate, in the town of Dorostolon in Thrace, there lived the young Emilian, a servant of the governor. When the Emperor Julian began to persecute the Christians with fire and the sword throughout the Roman Empire, the imperial delegate arrived in Dorostolon to kill the Christians. But he did not find a single one there. Delighted by this, he gave a great feast for the citizens of Dorostolon and ordered the offering of sacrifices to the idols, and merrymaking day and night throughout the town. That night, holy Emilian went round the temples, squares and streets of the town and, with a hammer, smashed all the idols. On the following day, the whole town was in uproar; everyone was searching for the destroyer of their gods. A villager, who was seen passing near the temples that morning, was arrested and Emilian, seeing that an innocent man would suffer, said within himself: 'If I conceal my action, what sort of use has it been? Shall I not stand before God as the slayer of an innocent man?' He therefore presented himself before the imperial legate and confessed the whole. The legate, in a rage, questioned Emilian, asking him on whose instructions he had done such a thing. Christ's martyr replied: 'God and my soul commanded me to destroy those dead pillars that you call gods.' Then the judge ordered that he be flogged, and, after flogging and other tortures, be burned. Thus St Emilian finished his earthly course and moved to the heavenly life, on July 18th, 362. Our Holy Father Pambo; Our Holy Fathers Paisius and Isaiah; Our Holy Father John the Longsuffering.

**July / 1 August --Our Holy Mother Macrina** - The eldest sister of St Basil the Great and St Gregory of Nyssa, she was as a girl betrothed to a young nobleman and, when her betrothed died, Macrina vowed never to enter into marriage, saying: 'It is not right for a girl, having once been betrothed, to turn to another; according to natural law there must be one marriage, as there are one birth and one death.' She justified this by her belief in the resurrection of the dead, regarding her betrothed not as dead, but as alive in God. 'It is a sin and a shame', she said, 'if the spouse does not keep faith when the partner goes to distant climes.' Then, with her mother Emilia, she became a nun in a monastery of virgins, where she lived in asceticism with the other nuns. They lived by the work of their hands, devoting the greater part of their time to pondering on God, to prayer and to a ceaseless lifting-up of their minds to Him. After a time, her mother died, and then her brother Basil. In the ninth month after Basil's death, Gregory came to visit his sister and found her on her deathbed. At the time of her death, Macrina made this prayer to God: 'Thou, O Lord, givest rest to our bodies in the sleep of death for a little time, then Thou wilt waken them again with the Last Trump. Forgive me, and grant that, when my soul is parted from my body, it may be presented before Thee stainless and without sin, and that it may be as incense before Thee.' She then made the sign of the Cross on her brow, eyes, face and heart, and breathed her last. She entered into rest in the Lord in 379.

**New Martyr Bishop Victor of Glazov** - Victor (Ostovidov) was the son of a church chanter. He entered a monastery early in life and spent many years there. Nonetheless, he acquired also a good theological education and in 1912 published a detailed study on "The New Theologians," criticizing a new theological trend that had found expression particularly in the book of Metropolitan (later "Patriarch") Sergius, *The Doctrine of Salvation* (Kazan, 1898). After the Revolution of 1917 he was a vicar bishop of the Vyatka diocese, with the title of Glazov and Votkinsk, with his headquarters in Vyatka. In 1922 he was arrested and was in prison until 1925. When the "Declaration" of 1927 came out his was the first voice of protest, and his flock joined him in separating from Metr. Sergius, which led to his arrest and incarceration in the concentration camp of Solovki, where he was from 1928 to 1930, working as a bookkeeper at the rope factory a mile from the main Kremlin of the former monastery of



Solovki. The little house where he lived and worked was located in a clearing of the forest; deep within this forest he celebrated secret church services with other members of the Catacomb Church. In Solovki, despite the tragic state of Soviet Russia, Bishop Victor preserved an optimistic view of the future and even tried to infect with this the more realistic Bishop Maxim of Serpukhov. But within a few years this optimism apparently vanished, for a witness who saw him in the spring of 1931 at the concentration camp of Mai Guba in the Far North heard him say: "Ahead there is nothing but suffering." In the summer of the same year he was released from this camp and exiled for three years to the bank of the Onega River in the Archangelsk region, where, according to some reports, he was in contact with the catacomb hierarchs, Metropolitan Joseph and Bishop Damaskin. Late in 1933 he was sent to an even more remote exile in Siberia, and after this nothing more was ever heard of him. But if little is known of the life and sufferings of this new confessor, his courageous and uncompromising spirit is set forth in the documents which he has left behind, which accuse Sergianism as a profound error that denies the very nature of the Church of Christ. Our Holy Father Dius; St Milica (Militsa), Princess of Serbia; Commemoration of Stephen the Tall.

### REFLECTION

Hospitality is respected in other faiths but Christianity emphasized hospitality as an obligation and responsibility. On the other hand, gratitude for hospitality is no less an obligation and responsibility for Christians. He who learns to be grateful to men for hospitality will know how to be grateful even to God for hospitality. For what are we here on earth except as guests of God? What are angels in heaven except as guests of God. The story is told about Emperor Philip of Macedonia, how he severely punished one of his courtiers for ingratitude. The emperor sent his courtier overseas to fulfill a task for him. The courtier accomplished this task and returned by boat. A tempest destroyed the boat and the courtier found himself in the waves. Fortunately, it was not too far from the shore. A fisherman saw the man drowning, hurried to his assistance with his small boat and brought him ashore. After he recovered and rested, the courtier returned to the emperor and related the unfortunate incident about the tempest on the sea. The emperor wishing to reward the courtier asked him what does he wish the emperor to give him? The courtier mentioned that fisherman and said to the emperor that he would like most of all if he would grant him the property along the sea belonging to the fisherman. The emperor granted the courtier his wish. When the courtier settled on the estate of his greatest benefactor [the fisherman], then the fisherman in great despair went to the emperor, related all and complained. He said that he saved the life of the courtier and now he ousted him from his home. Upon hearing this, the emperor became furious with the ungrateful courtier and ordered that he be branded on his forehead with the words: "ungrateful guest."

### CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the miraculous blossoming of Aaron's rod (Numbers 17): 1. How God, in order to quiet the murmuring against Moses and Aaron, ordered that the rods of all the elders of the tribes be placed in the Meeting Tent; 2. How overnight only the withered rod of Aaron became green and blossomed and brought forth fruit; 3. How even the souls of men, dead to sin, God can enliven.

### HOMILY

#### About grace and peace

***"Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Peter 1:2).***

Brethren, grace and peace multiplies "through the knowledge of God." However, brethren, through the knowledge of creation outside of God, as cut off from God or contrary to God, sorrow and unrest multiplies. Sorrow and unrest is multiplied among those who are familiarizing themselves with things without the knowledge of God; does it not sufficiently witness to the multitude of suicides precisely among those who chose, as a trade for themselves, to study the nature and life of mankind without God? O how great a multitude among them are nervous, irritated, embittered, darkened and hysterical souls who are only separated by a day or a month from suicide. However, grace and peace multiplies "through the knowledge of God." That, the apostle personally experienced and his precious experience he passes on to others.

Neither grace nor peace are the gifts of the earth but rather are the gifts of heaven. God bestows these gifts to those who labor to multiply their knowledge about Him.

Brethren, what is the quickest path which leads to the knowledge of God? Without a doubt, through "Christ Jesus our Lord." He is the Revealer and He is the Revelation, He is the Wise and the Wisdom, He is the Teacher and the Knowledge. Grace is from Him. Peace is from Him. He who knows God through the knowledge of created beings in nature and through the laws of nature, as the heathens do, does nothing wrong but progresses along the path in a round about manner and proceeds on an indirect path upon which many go astray and are lost. But he who comes to the knowledge of God through conscience and destiny of men, as the moralists do, does nothing wrong but that one also goes by in a round about manner and difficult path and can go astray and become lost. But he who knows God by knowing the Lord Christ is on the shortest and surest path.

O Lord Jesus, help us on the path to You and to Your Father and the Holy Spirit.