



# Sunday of the Dread Judgement (Meatfare)

22 February / 6 March 2016

**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.

**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 to Meat-fare Sunday, Tone 1:** When Thou, O God, shalt come to earth with glory, and all things tremble, and the river of fire floweth before the Judgement Seat and the books are opened, and the hidden things made public, then deliver me from the unquenchable fire and deem me worthy to stand at Thy right hand.

## Matins Gospel VII

**Epistle: I Corinthians 8: 8 — 9: 2**

8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. 9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? 11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

Chapter 9: 1 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? 2 If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

## SHALL THE WEAK BROTHER PERISH, FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED?

If one of you sees something unedifying and so much as goes on to pass it on and put it into the heart of another brother, in doing so you not only harm yourself but you harm your brother by putting one more little bit of knavery into his heart. Even if that brother has his mind set on prayer or some other noble activity, and the first arrives and furnishes him with something to prate about, he not only impedes what he ought to be doing, but brings a temptation to him.

*St. Dorotheos of Gaza. Discourses: On the Fear of God. B#45, pp. 114, 115.*

## Gospel: St. Matthew 25: 31-46

The Lord said: 31 When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory. 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was ahungered and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in; 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee ahungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was ahungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee ahungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Dearly beloved, in today's Gospel, our Lord tells the multitudes gathered to hear Him, a surprising story about a group of people very similar to themselves. He tells them of the whole race of humanity gathered before Him in that final day of Judgment. He tells them of the surprised reactions of many of those gathered there, when they are finally assigned either to the right or to the left hand of God; either to eternal salvation or to eternal damnation. They are judged either for their willingness or unwillingness to help our Lord Jesus Christ in a variety of needy situations: in times of hunger, thirst, nakedness, imprisonment, etc. And we hear, beloved, that neither group is able to comprehend when they had ever encountered and either helped or refused to help the Lord.

And it really matters little that they find it hard to comprehend this message, because God is able to discern a good and dedicated heart even if they themselves cannot. Before our Lord came, those righteous people may have performed their works of mercy out of a sort of second sense; a kind of innate feeling that they were doing what was pleasing to God. Possibly their sacrifices may have been even more meaningful because they had never heard the life-giving counsels of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In the age of "an eye for an eye" they had the foresight to anticipate the teachings of "love your enemy", "turn the other cheek" etc.

Consider the awesome responsibility, beloved, that we bear—to provide suitable dwelling places for Him to dwell in. Christ makes His abode in us and we must be certain that just as the ideal home today is one where peace, love and devotion to one another reign, the spiritual home we provide for Him is the same.

What, then, must we do to make those homes exemplary dwellings for our Lord? We must follow the very counsels He set down for us. We must follow to the letter His perfect example. He was compassionate to the sick, the crippled, the poor, the sinner. So too, if we wish to have a suitable repository for our Lord, we must open it to admit all those other children of His with whom He concerns Himself.

If Christ comes to our hearts and sees that we hold them exclusively for Him and cannot bring ourselves to admit His needy children. He will know that He could not dwell in peace there. He came to serve and if we provide Him with a dwelling place which stifles His activity. He will pass by our spiritual homes.

What He wishes to see are spiritual hospitals, old-age homes, orphanages, etc., within us, where He knows that He can dwell and dispense His love to all in need of it. If we close the doors of our hearts to our brothers in Christ, He will pass by our door and our splendour will fall into decay. Remember, then, beloved, that it is not poverty, disease or any other earthly, human infirmity that will prevent our Lord from dwelling in a man, but rather sin. But, even in the case of sin, our Lord continues to knock and hope that we will expel it and accept Him back.

Beloved, all of mankind was created in the Image and Likeness of God and all share in Christ's humanity. Therefore it is not possible for us to call ourselves His followers and not recognize Him in our neighbour. And for this reason our Lord tells us in today's Gospel lesson, *inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to me* (Matt. 25:40). Amen.

*Anon. The Living Word*

*The two past Sundays spoke to us of God's patience and limitless compassion, of His readiness to accept every sinner who returns to Him. On this third Sunday, we are powerfully reminded of a complementary truth: no one is so patient and so merciful as God, but even He does not forgive those who do not repent. The God of love is also a God of righteousness, and when Christ comes again in glory, He will come as our judge. 'Behold the goodness and severity of God' (Rom. 11:22). Such is the message of Lent to each of us: turn back while there is still time, repent before the end comes. In the words of the Great Canon: The end draws near, my soul, the end draws near; Yet thou dost not care or make ready. The times grows short, rise up: the judge is at the door. The days of our life pass swiftly, as a dream, as a flower. (Canticle Four, Tropar 2). This Sunday sets before us the 'eschatological' dimension of Lent: the Great fast is a preparation for the Second Coming of the Saviour, for the eternal Passover in the Age to Come. (This is a theme that will be taken up in the first three days of Holy Week.) Nor is the judgement merely in the future. Here and now, each day and each hour, in hardening our hearts towards others and in failing to respond to the opportunities we are given of helping them, we are already passing judgement upon ourselves.*

Lenten Triodion

### Saints of the Week

**Cheesefare Week** during which all foods except meat may be eaten.

**22 February / 6 March — Blessed Theoktista the Fool for Christ** - when Archbishop Peter (Zverev) & Bishop Alexis (Bui) were in Voronezh, a remarkable holy woman lived there, a fool for Christ, the blessed Theoktista Michaelovna. Who she was or where she came from - no one knew. It was said that she had been the wife of a high-ranking naval officer who had died during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), and that after this tragedy, becoming disillusioned with the solidity of earthly life, she directed the gaze of her heart on high and took upon herself the exploit of foolishness for the sake of Christ. God rewarded

her with a gift of clairvoyance with which she helped her suffering neighbours. She was small of stature, skinny, worn out, with noble features in her face. She lived in the Voronezh Monastery until it closed in 1931 and then took shelter with various people. She had literally "nowhere to lay her head". She did not sleep at nights, but would spend them in prayer and vigil. She had a remarkable mind and a refined way of expressing her thoughts and feelings. It was apparent that she was well bred. The righteous Theoktista saw the rapid liquidation of the Orthodox Churches and monuments of Voronezh in the 1930's, which was only a part of the satanic program that was conducted all over the much suffering Russian land, to the appalled outrage of almost the whole Russian people.. By the mid-1930's all the churches were closed, levelled by dynamite, or turned in to factory storehouses. The heart of the blessed one, which inspired so many good deeds for her neighbours, could not endure any longer. One day blood rushed to her throat, and on February 22, 1936 (OS), she died. It was said that before her death she dressed all in white to meet her bridegroom, Christ. She was buried in the cemetery outside the city and her memory was erased from Voronezh. But the Christian conscience bears her image in loving hearts throughout the world, wherever there is knowledge and understanding of Russia's Catacomb Saints.

**The Holy Martyr Maurice and the Seventy Soldiers with him** - During the reign of Emperor Maximian there was a great persecution of Christians. In the Syrian town of Apamsea, Maurice was superior of the local army. The pagans reported him to the emperor as being a Christian and a sower of the Christian Faith among the soldiers. The emperor himself came and conducted an investigation. Along with Maurice seventy Christian soldiers were also brought before the emperor among whom was Photinus, the son of Maurice. Neither the emperor's flattery nor threats could sway these heroes. To the threats of the emperor, they replied: "O Emperor, there is no fear in the sound and powerful souls of those who love the Lord!" When the emperor ordered and removed their military belts and garments, they said to him: "Our God will clothe us with incorruptible garments and belts and eternal glory!" When the emperor rebuked them because they despised the military honor given to them by him, they replied: "Your honor is without honor, for you have forgotten God Who gave you imperial authority!" Then the emperor commanded and the executioner beheaded Maurice's son Photinus before his eyes to instil fear in the father and in the others. But, Maurice said: "You have fulfilled our wish O torturer and have sent Photinus, the soldier of Christ before us." Then the emperor sentenced them to a most inhuman death: they were brought to a muddy place, stripped, bound to trees and rubbed them with honey, in order to be bitten by mosquitoes, wasps and hornets. After ten days under the most painful sufferings, they gave up their souls to God and departed to rejoice eternally with the holy angels in heaven. Christians secretly removed their bodies and honourably buried them. These courageous soldiers of Christ suffered about the year 305 A.D.;

**The Many Martyrs of Eugenius** - During the reign of Emperor Arcadius, the relics of many martyrs of Christ were unearthed, among whom was the Apostle Andronicus and his female assistant Junia. "Great Andronicus and Junia, my relatives and my fellow prisoners; they are prominent among the apostles and they were in Christ before me." (Romans 16:7). These relics were discovered according to a revelation from God to a cleric Nicholas Calligraphus. "Their names are known only to God Who has written their names in the Book of Life in the heavens." In the twelfth century, Emperor Andronicus II built a beautiful church over the relics of the Apostle Andronicus;

**Our Holy Fathers Thalassius and Limnaeus** - Both Thalassius and Limnaeus were Syrian ascetics. One of their unique forms of asceticism was "silence." Following the death of St. Thalassius in 440 A.D., Limnaeus joined St. Maron (February 14) and with him lived a life of mortification on top of a mountain under the open sky.;

**St Papias of Hierapolis** - a disciple of the holy apostles and a patristic author. From Papius we have testimony of the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, the four Marys and the brothers of our Lord as well as an incomplete but preserved manuscript: "An Interpretation of the Words of our Lord."

**23 February / 72 March — The Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna** - born a pagan. St John the Theologian brought him to the Christian faith and baptised him. Polycarp was left an orphan in early childhood and a noble widow, Callista, after a vision in a dream, took him in, rearing and educating him as her own son. Polycarp was God-fearing and compassionate from his early years. He made great efforts to emulate the life of St Bucolus, the then Bishop of Smyrna, and of the Holy Apostles John and Paul, whom he had met and heard. St Bucolus ordained him priest and, at the time of his death, proclaimed him his heir in Smyrna. The apostolic bishops, who had gathered for Bucolus's funeral, consecrated Polycarp bishop. From the very beginning he was endued with the power of wonder-working. He cast out the evil spirit from a servant of some prince and put out a great conflagration in Smyrna by his prayers. Seeing these things, many pagans regarded him as one of the gods. He brought rain in a drought, healed sickness, had the gifts of insight and prophecy, and so forth. He suffered in the time of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Three days before his death, he prophesied: 'In three days I shall be consumed by fire for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ!' When, on the third day, the soldiers arrested him and took him for trial, he cried out: 'May this be the will of the Lord my God!' When the judge urged him to deny Christ and recognise the Roman gods, Polycarp said: 'I cannot exchange the better for the worse.' The Jews especially hated Polycarp and endeavoured to have him burned. When they placed him, bound, on the pyre, he prayed long to God. He was very old and grey, and he shone like an angel of God. All the people saw how the flames licked around him but did not touch him. Frightened by such a phenomenon, the pagan judge ordered the executioner to stab him with a lance through the flames. When this was done, a vast flow of blood gushed out and extinguished the whole fire, and his body remained whole and unburned. At the Jews' persuasion, the judge ordered that Polycarp's dead body be burned according to the Greek custom, and so they dishonourably burned dead him whom they had failed to burn alive, St. Polycarp suffered in the year 167, on Holy Saturday;

**Our Holy Father Damian** - a monk of the Monastery of Esphigmenou on Mt. Athos, was a contemporary and companion of the great Cosmos of Zographou. He lived a life of asceticism on Mount Samareia between Esphigmenou and Hilendar. He died peacefully in the year 1280 A.D. When he died, a pleasant and sweet-smelling aroma emitted from his body for forty days; St. Mildburga (Mildred), abbess of Much Wenlock; St. Jurmin, prince of East Anglia.

**24 February / 8 March — The Finding of the Head of St John the Forerunner** - The great and glorious Forerunner was beheaded at the wish and request of the wicked Herodias, wife of Herod. When John had been beheaded, Herodias ordered that his head should not be buried with his body, for she feared that the terrible prophet would somehow rise from the dead. So she took his head and buried it in some hidden and unworthy place, deep in the earth. Her lady-in-waiting was Joanna the wife of Chuza, a courtier of Herod's. This good and God-fearing Joanna could not bear that the head of the godly man should remain in an unworthy place, so she disinterred it secretly, took it to Jerusalem and buried it on the Mount of Olives. Not knowing about all this, King Herod, when he heard about Christ and His great miracles, was afraid and said: 'It is John, whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead !' (Mk . 6:16) . After a considerable time, an eminent government official came to believe in Christ, left his position in the world and became a monk. Under the name Innocent, he settled on the Mount of Olives, in precisely the place where the Baptist's head had been buried. Deciding to build himself a cell, he dug deep and found an earthen pot containing a head which, it was revealed to him secretly, was that of the Baptist. He venerated it and re-buried it in the same place. By God's providence, that wonder-working head went from hand to hand, disappearing into the darkness of forgetfulness and then being once more revealed, until it was finally taken to Constantinople in the middle of the 9th century, in the time of Patriarch Ignatius and the God-fearing Empress Theodora, mother of Michael and wife of Theophilus. Many miracles were performed by the head of the Forerunner. It is important and interesting to note that, while he was alive, John did not work a single miracle (Jn. 10:41), but to his relics was given the blessed power of working miracles;

**Our Holy Father Erasmus** - a monk in the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev. He inherited great wealth from his parents and spent all on adoring churches, especially on silver-plating and gilding icons. When he had become impoverished and remained without anything, he was despised by all. The devil whispered to him that he squandered his estate in vain; instead of distributing his wealth among the poor, he gave it for the adornment of churches. Erasmus succumbed to this temptation and believed it for which he despised himself and fell into a state of despair and began to live aimlessly and lawlessly. When the hour of his death approached the brethren assembled around him and discussed his sins which he himself was not conscious of. All at once, he straightened up in bed and said: "Fathers and brothers, it is as you say; I am sinful and unrepentant, but behold St. Anthony and St. Theodosius appeared to me and after that, the All-Holy Mother of God told me that the Lord gave me more time for repentance." The Mother of God also spoke these encouraging words to him: "The poor you have with you in every place and my churches you do not." Erasmus lived for three more days, repented and fell asleep in the Lord. This teaches us that zeal for the Church and adornment of the churches is a task pleasing to God. St. Erasmus died in the year 1160 A.D.; St. Ethelbert, king of Kent (616).

**25 February / 9 March — St Tarasius, Patriarch of Constantinople** - His predecessor, Patriarch Paul, secretly left the patriarchal throne, retired to a monastery and received the Great Habit. This was during the reign of Irene and Constantine. By Paul's advice, Tarasius, a senator and advisor to the Emperor, was chosen as Patriarch in 784. He quickly passed through all the stages of ordination and became Patriarch. A man of great physical stature and great zeal for Orthodoxy, Tarasius accepted this undesired state in order to help in the struggle of Orthodoxy against heresy, especially that of Iconoclasm. He was responsible for the summoning of the 7th Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 787, where the iconoclasts were condemned and the veneration of the holy icons was restored and confirmed. Tarasius was very compassionate to the poor and indigent, building them shelters and feeding them, but he was decisive with those in power in the defence of faith and morals. When the Emperor Constantine divorced his lawful wife, Maria, and took a kinswoman to live with him, seeking the Patriarch's blessing to remarry, Tarasius not only withheld his blessing, but first counselled and then reproached him, and finally excommunicated him. As death approached, those round him saw him answering the demons: 'I am not guilty of that sin, nor of that one', until he was incapable of speech. He then began defending himself with his arms, driving them away from him. As he breathed his last, his face shone as with the light of the sun. This truly great hierarch entered into rest in 806. He had governed the Church for 22 years and four months; Our Holy Father Paphnutius of Kephala; St. Walburga, abbess of Heidenheim.

**26 February / 10 March — Commemoration of Great Martyr Theodore the Recruit — First Saturday of Great Lent** - On this day we celebrate the most glorious miracle which was performed by the holy and glorious Great-martyr Theodore the Tyro, through the boiled wheat - according to tradition recorded in the Synaxarion the Emperor Julian the Apostate (reigned 361-3), as part of his campaign against the Christians, attempted to defile their observance of the first week of Lent by ordering all the food for sale in the market of Constantinople to be sprinkled with blood from pagan sacrifices. St. Theodore then appeared in a dream to Eudoxios, Archbishop of the city, ordering him to warn his flock against buying anything from the market, instead the Saint told him, they should boil wheat (kolyva) and eat this alone.

**St Porphyrius, Bishop of Gaza** - This great bishop and pastor was born in Salonica of wealthy parents. He spent his youth to the age of 25 in his home town, then left his parents' home and worldly life and went off into the Egyptian desert. Under the guidance of an experienced spiritual father, the young Porphyrius became a monk and remained for five years. He then paid a visit to the Holy Land in company with his friend, the monk Mark. He lived another five years in asceticism in a cave near Jerusalem. But then his legs became weak and he was no longer able to walk. But he was always able, crawling on his knees, to be present at Divine Service. One night the Lord Himself appeared to him in a vision and healed him of the weakness in his legs, and he became completely well. When he was chosen as bishop of Gaza, Porphyrius accepted this obligation with a heavy heart. He found only 280 Christians in Gaza; the rest of the inhabitants being fanatical idol-worshippers. Only by his great faith and patience did Porphyrius succeed in bringing the people of Gaza to the Christian faith. He had to travel in person to Constantinople, to the Emperor Arcadius and the Patriarch, John Chrysostom, to beg for help in the unequal struggle against the idolators. Seeking support, he received it. The temples of the idol-worshippers were closed, the idols demolished and a fine church built with thirty marble pillars. There was especial help forthcoming from the Empress Eudoxia. Porphyrius lived long enough to see the whole city brought to the Christian faith, but only after great toil, suffering and tearful prayer on his

part. He entered peacefully into rest in 421. He was a wonder-worker during his lifetime and after his death. His relics are preserved in Gaza to this day; The Holy Martyr John Calpha.

**27 February / 11 March — Our Holy Father Procopius of Decapolis** - This saint came from Decapolis by the Sea of Galilee; hence his name. In youth, he gave himself to the monastic life and passed through all those prescribed labours that purify the heart and uplift the soul to God. When a persecution on the part of the wicked Emperor Leo the Isaurian broke out over icons, Procopius stood up and defended icons, showing that their veneration is not idolatry, for Christians know that to prostrate themselves before icons is not to prostrate before dead matter but before the living saints depicted on the icons. Procopius was bestially tortured, imprisoned, beaten and flogged with iron flails. When the wicked Emperor was murdered, being already a lost soul, the icons were returned to the churches and Procopius returned to his monastery, where he spent his remaining days in peace. In old age, he entered into God's Kingdom, where he beheld with joy the living angels and saints whose images were on the honoured icons on earth. He departed this life peacefully in the 9th century; Our Holy Father Thaleleus; Our Holy Father Titus of the Kiev Caves; Our Holy Father Stephen; The Holy Martyr Julian the Gout-Sufferer.

**28 February / 12 March — The Hieromartyr Proterius** - This saint was a priest in Alexandria at the time that the Patriarch there was the heretic Dioscorus, one of the founders of the Monophysite heresy which holds that in Christ there are not two natures but one. At that time, Marcian and Pulcheria were on the imperial throne. Proterius, a holy and devout man, stood up against Dioscorus, as a result of which he endured much misery. Then the 4th Ecumenical Council was summoned at Chalcedon, at which the Monophysite heresy was condemned. Dioscorus was cast down from the patriarchal throne and sent into exile, and in his place the orthodox Proterius was chosen, He governed the Church with zeal and love, a true follower of Christ. But the followers of Dioscorus did not stop creating confusion in Alexandria. In the face of such bloody chaos, Proterius left the town with the intention of going away for a time, but the Prophet Isaiah appeared to him on the road and said: 'Return to the town; I am waiting to take you.' Proterius returned and went into the church. Hearing of this, the insolent heretics rushed into the church, seized the Patriarch and stabbed him. About six of the faithful perished along with Proterius. Thus this wonderful pastor of Christ's flock received the crown of martyrdom for the truth of Orthodoxy, in 457; St Basil the Confessor; The Hieromartyr Nestor, Bishop of Magydos; Blessed Nicolas the Fool for Christ of Pskov; Our Holy Father John Cassian; Our Holy Father Barsanuphius; St. Oswald, archbishop of York (992).

## Icon Of The Feast

The icon of the Sunday of the Last Judgment incorporates all of the elements of the parable from Matthew 25:31-46. Christ sits on the throne and before him the Last Judgment takes place. He is extending his hands in blessing upon the Theotokos on his right, and John the Baptist on his left. Seated on smaller thrones are the Apostles, represented by Peter and Paul, a depiction of the words of Christ in Matthew 19:28. (1.)



1. Christ is seated on the throne between the Theotokos (left) and Saint John the Baptist (right). Seated on smaller thrones are the Apostles, represented here by Saint Peter (left) and Saint Paul (right).

Proceeding from the throne are the scrolls pronouncing the judgment upon the sheep and the goats. (2.) The faithful are received with the words that are written on the scroll to the right of Christ the Judge, "Come, you blessed of My Father, and inherit the kingdom" (v. 34). The scroll on the left condemns the unfaithful with the words, "Depart from me you cursed, into the everlasting fire" (v. 41).



2. The scrolls pronouncing the judgement can be seen at Christ's feet and below them, Adam and Eve bow before Christ.

3. Below Adam and Eve is the Archangel Michael surrounded by the books which contain the works of each person.

Before the throne, the progenitors of the human race, Adam and Eve, bow before Christ. (2.) In the center of the icon is the Archangel Michael. He is holding the scales of judgment and is surrounded by the books that contain the works of each person (Revelation 20:11-13). (3.) Also shown are the angels with trumpets announcing the return of Christ and signaling the resurrection of the dead and the commencement of the Last Judgment (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). (4.)



4. To the left and right of the Archangel Michael are angels with trumpets announcing to the world the return of Jesus Christ, the start of the Last Judgements, and signaling the resurrection of the dead.

To the left of the Archangel are both the living and the dead who are approaching the throne and Christ the judge. Whereas Adam and Eve are representative of all of humanity, this part of the icon shows that both the living and the dead will stand before Christ. (5.)



5. Pictured to the bottom-left of the Archangel Michael are the living and dead coming before the throne of Christ the judge.

6. To the bottom-right of the Archangel Michael is the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil, his demons, and those who are not worthy of inheriting the Kingdom of God.

At the bottom right of the icon is the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and the demons, and also for those who are not found worthy to inherit the Kingdom of God. (6.)

The icon offers a clear image of the theme of judgment with Christ on His throne, the Archangel with the scales and books, and the anticipation of the sentence of everlasting punishment for the unrighteous and the reward of eternal life for the righteous.

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*Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, and event that shows us how far we have fallen in sin and separated ourselves from God. At the onset of Great Lent and a period of intense fasting, this Sunday reminds us of our need for God's forgiveness and guides our hearts, minds, and spiritual efforts on returning to Him in repentance.*

## Forgiveness Sunday / Commemoration of the exile of Adam from Paradise (Cheesefare Sunday)

**29 February / 13 March 2016**

*The Sunday of Forgiveness is the last Sunday prior to the commencement of Great Lent. During the pre-Lenten period, the services of the Church include hymns from the Triodion, a liturgical book that contains the services from the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, the tenth before Pascha, through Great and Holy Saturday. On the Sunday of Forgiveness focus is placed on the exile of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, and event that shows us how far we have fallen in sin and separated ourselves from God. At the onset of Great Lent and a period of intense fasting, this Sunday reminds us of our need for God's forgiveness and guides our hearts, minds, and spiritual efforts on returning to Him in repentance.*

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 8:** Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! / Thou didst endure the three-day burial / to free us from our sufferings! / O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 8:** By rising from the tomb Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam/ Eve exults in Thy Resurrection, / and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead, O Greatly Merciful One.

**Kondak to Cheese-fare Sunday, Tone 6:** O Thou guide unto wisdom, bestower of prudence, instructor of the foolish and defender of the poor: Establish and grant understanding unto my heart, O Master. Grant me speech, O Word of the Father; for behold, I shall not keep my lips from crying unto Thee: O Merciful One, have mercy on me who have fallen.

### Matins Gospel VIII

**Epistle: St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans 13: 11 — 14: 4**

11. And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts.

**Romans 14:** 1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. 2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. 3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. 4 Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

### WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE ANOTHER'S SERVANT?

Why do we usurp God's right to judge? ...It is for God alone to judge, to justify or to condemn. He knows the state of each one of us and our capacities, our deviations and our gifts, our constitution, and our preparedness ...according to the knowledge that He alone has ...And how do you know what tears he has shed about it before God? You may well know about the sin, but you do not know about the repentance.

*St. Dorotheos of Gaza. Discourse on Refusal to Judge our Neighbour. B#45, pp. 133,135.*

### The Gospel According To St. Matthew 6: 14 -21

14 The Lord said: if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. 16 Moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward. 17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face, 18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father, which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. 19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

## FORGIVENESS SUNDAY

This is the very beginning of Great Lent. For whatever we begin in life, we always compose some kind of plan of action, a program of what we have to accomplish and in what order. But here we don't have to do this; today's Gospel gives us this program. Earlier, the Holy Church was more often teaching us, but now she is requiring actions from us. Just let us examine the present Gospel attentively, and we will see how simple, how accessible for each of us, and at the same time, how comprehensive these rules are.

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Mt. 6:14-15). Therefore, what is the real purpose of Great Lent? Here it is: so that our Heavenly Father will forgive us our sins. And how do we achieve this? Forgive people their sins. Let us start here with this. This is the very first thing.

Secondly, "moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast.... But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret" (Mt. 6:16-18). And so let us fast, but not for the sake of people, but before God, and not despondently, but in spiritual happiness.

And thirdly, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Mt. 6:19-20). This determines all our activities, gives direction to our whole life.

And finally, the last thing: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt. 6:21). Here is the purpose of our life! That our heart be in God, filled with God, so that God will become our treasure. But to learn this is possible only in the Church. And this is so important for us that it is worth the labour, and the fasting, and standing longer in church, and praying more at home. For only then will we be able to cry out with joy: "Christ is Risen!" and to answer those greeting us: "In Truth He is Risen!"

### THE RITE OF FORGIVENESS

Brothers and sisters! What the Holy Church asks us to perform right now is no longer a thought or a feeling, but an action, a deed. Thoughts and feelings have been cultivated in us for the past weeks. In fact this is the way it always happens: thought gives birth to feeling, and feeling gives birth to action. And this action is of special importance. Listen: "If ye forgive not men...neither will your [Heavenly] Father forgive you" (Mt. 6:15). This means that our fasting and going to church and prostrations, in fact all our devotions, will be in vain.

That's how important this first step is. But it is not easy. To do it in words only, just for the sake of decency, for the sake of formality, might not be difficult. But what is the good of that? However, really to make this step, to recognise that we are worse than others, worse than everyone, truly guilty before everyone (and after all, this is how it is: each of us is guilty before everyone, in everything, and for everything), to come to this realisation is very, very difficult. And to consider the guilt of another before us as nothing, as if it did not exist, and maybe was even provoked by us—this is still more difficult. Even in the Lives of the

Saints we read examples of how great strivers and confessors were not able to do this, and thereby ruined everything. And even more for us sinners is the special help of God needed to forgive and to ask forgiveness sincerely, from our whole heart, to draw out of it our self-love, our self-justifying "I." But we have to do this, the Lord requires it of us, the Lord is waiting. Without this effort within ourselves we cannot begin Lent. So let us ask for forgiveness and forgive from our whole heart. And here, as the first one, I ask you: Forgive me!

*The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei.*

*For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you* (Matt. 6:14)

Dear brothers and sisters, in the Gospel read on the last Sunday before Great Lent, the Holy Church reminds us all of the great and saving command of Christ that we be reconciled with our neighbor and repent before God. Each of us knows from his own experience and accepts humbly, together with St. James that *we all stumble in many things* (James 3:2). We all offend God, break His holy commandments, and it often happens in our lives that we make these saving commandments a reason for sin and transgression against God's commandments.

Our first parents, Adam and Eve, once found in God's commandment not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a cause to heed the devil's temptation; they broke this commandment and, since they did not repent sincerely before God, they were driven out of the beautiful Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:17; 3:6,23).

What do we see in the lives of men on earth and in our own life? Just like our first parents, we all reach out fearlessly to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil forbidden to us by God, that is to say, to sin, thereby breaking Christ's saving commandments. And through our sin we become, just like our first parents, the adversaries of God's commandments, unworthy of the heavenly paradise. Only God's mercy can turn us back again from the way of sin onto the way of saving faith and virtue.

However, our return to the way of salvation can only come about through our sincere and heartfelt repentance before God. For this reason, the first commandment made by Christ our Savior was on penitence: *Repent, and believe in the Gospel* (Mark 1:15). Repenting sincerely for our sins before God, we must strive with all our will always to act in the future according to the commandments of the Gospel of Christ.

Brothers and sisters, just as we often sin against God, so we often sin against other people—our neighbors. Love for one's neighbor is the second commandment of God. The Lord saw fit to link these two commandments—love of God and love of our neighbor—so closely, that breaking one of them makes a man break the other as well. *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen* (1 John 4:20)?

Without love of our neighbor we can never love God and live a beneficial life, pleasing to God on earth. *And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also* (1 John 4:21).

Before Great Lent, brothers and sisters, the Holy Orthodox Church commands us to restore peaceful relations with those of our neighbors whom we have offended or saddened in any way, in thought, word or deed. Christian humility demands that we make our peace not only with those whom we have offended, but also with those who have offended us in any way, and forgive them. And only through reconciliation with our neighbor and forgiving him when he has offended or saddened us can we with a clear conscience fast successfully, praying and sincerely repenting before God, throughout the holy days of Great Lent. And only through completely forgiving others can we, according to Christ's commandment, expect in faith the forgiveness of our sins. *For if you forgive men their trespasses, says the Lord, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses* (Matt. 6:14-15).

Let us forgive, dear brothers and sisters, all sorrow that others have caused us; let us put out of our minds all thought of who was right and who was wrong in any quarrel or offence, and forget it completely. Let us sincerely and wholeheartedly forgive one another our sins and in peace with our neighbor search the inner recesses of our souls to wash clean our hearts with tears of repentance before God.

Having made our peace with our neighbor and having wept sincerely for our sins before God, through sincere repentance we will become worthy to partake, without condemnation, of the saving and Holy Gifts of Christ—His Most-pure Body and Blood. And on the day of the Last Judgment, may we all be found worthy, brothers and sisters, to hear from our God and Savior, the joyful words: "Your Heavenly Father forgives you your sins!" Amen.

F.I.S.

### **Saints of the Week Beginning of Great Lent**

**29 February / 13 March — The Hieromartyr Proterius** - This saint was a priest in Alexandria at the time that the Patriarch there was the heretic Dioscorus, one of the founders of the Monophysite heresy which holds that in Christ there are not two natures but one. At that time, Marcian and Pulcheria were on the imperial throne. Proterius, a holy and devout man, stood up against Dioscorus, as a result of which he endured much misery. Then the 4th Ecumenical Council was summoned at Chalcedon, at which the Monophysite heresy was condemned. Dioscorus was cast down from the patriarchal throne and sent into exile, and in his place the orthodox Proterius was chosen, He governed the Church with zeal and love, a true follower of Christ. But the followers of Dioscorus did not stop creating confusion in Alexandria. In the face of such bloody chaos, Proterius left the town with the intention of going away for a time, but the Prophet Isaiah appeared to him on the road and said: 'Return to the town; I am waiting to take you.' Proterius returned and went into the church. Hearing of this, the insolent heretics rushed into the church, seized the Patriarch and stabbed him. About six of the faithful perished along with Proterius. Thus this wonderful pastor of Christ's flock received the crown of martyrdom for the truth of Orthodoxy, in 457; St Basil the Confessor; The Hieromartyr Nestor, Bishop of Magydos; Blessed Nicolas the Fool for Christ of Pskov; Our Holy Father John Cassian; Our Holy Father Barsanuphius; St. Oswald, archbishop of York (992).

**1 / 14 March — Our Holy Mother, the Martyr Eudocia** - Living in Heliopolis, a city of Phoenicia, during the reign of Trajan, she was at first a great harlot, then a penitent, a nun and finally a martyr. She gained great wealth from her harlotry. The reversal of her life was brought about, through the providence of God, by an elderly monk, Germanus, and that unintentionally. Coming to Heliopolis in the course of his work, he stayed at the house of a Christian woman whose home abutted onto Eudocia's. When at night he began, as was his monastic custom, to read the Psalter and a book on the Dreadful Judgement, Eudocia heard him and stood listening attentively to his every word until the end. Fear and dread took such hold on her that she remained awake until daybreak. As soon as it was dawn, she sent a servant to beg that monk to come to her. Germanus came, and they began a long conversation on that which the old monk had been reading the previous night, and especially on faith and salvation. The result of these discussions was that Eudocia asked the local bishop to baptise her. After her baptism, she gave all her goods to the church, to be distributed to the poor, dismissed her servants and slaves and retired to a women's monastery. She so devoted herself to the monastic life—to obedience, patience, vigils, prayer and fasting—that after thirteen months she was chosen as abbess. She lived fifty-six years in the monastery and was worthy in the eyes of God to be given the gift of raising the dead. When a persecution of Christians arose under the governor, Vincent, holy Eudocia was beheaded. Here is a wonderful example of how a vessel of uncleanness can be purified, sanctified and filled with a precious, heavenly fragrance by the grace of the Holy Spirit; Our Holy Father Agapius; The Holy Martyr Antonina;

**St. David of Wales, bishop (542 - 601)** – of Welsh royalty. Son of King Sant of South Wales and Saint Non. Grandson of Ceredig, Prince of Cardigan. Uncle of King Arthur. Priest. Studied under Saint Paulinus. Collaborated with Saint Columba, Saint Gildas, and Saint Finnigan. Missionary and founder of monasteries. Following his contribution to the synod of Brevi in Cardiganshire, he was chosen primate of the Cambrian Church. Archbishop of Caerleon on Usk; moved the see to Menevia. Presided at the Synod of Brefi which condemned the Pelagian heresy. Encouraged and founded monasteries. First to build a chancel to Saint Joseph of Arimathea's wattle church at Glastonbury. After a vision in his monastery in the Rhos Valley, he set out next day with two monks to Jerusalem to aid the Patriarch. While there his preaching converted anti-Christians. It is said that once while he was preaching, a dove descended to his shoulder to show he had the blessings of the Spirit, and that the earth rose to lift him high above the people so that he could be heard by them all. Born at Menevia (now Saint David's), Wales. Died 601 at Mynyw, Wales. Name means beloved one.

**2 / 15 March — The Hieromartyr Theodosius, Bishop of Cyrenia** - He was chosen for his wisdom and virtue as bishop, and governed the Church of God with love and zeal. When a persecution of Christians arose in the time of the wicked Emperor Licinius, this man of God was taken before the judge and put to various tortures. When the torturer, Sabinus, urged him to deny Christ and worship pagan idols, Theodosius replied: 'If you knew the goodness of my God, who, it is my hope, will by these brief tortures make me worthy of eternal life, you would wish to suffer for Him as I do!' They hammered nails into his body, and he thanked God; then, believing that the end was near, he counselled and instructed the Christians that were around him. But, by the providence of God, there came at that moment an order from the Emperor Constantine to free all Christians who had been brought to trial for the sake of Christ. Then this saint also was freed, returned thus tortured to his see in Cyrenia and lived for a further two years. He then entered into rest in the Lord whom he had served faithfully and for whom he had suffered greatly. He finished his earthly course in 302, and went to the courts of the Lord; The Holy Martyr Troadius; The Four Hundred and Forty Martyrs of Lombardy; Our Holy Father Agathon; The Holy Martyr Euthalia.

**St. Chad of Mercia (672)** - Our holy father Chad was tonsured in Ireland while still in his teens. When he came to Great Britain, we do not know, but in about 655, he became abbot of a monastery in Yorkshire where he was known as a great struggler. St Aiden had been his elder, and St Chad followed his example in everything. St Chad became well known throughout Britain for his holiness, meekness and patient love. In 664, the Bishop of York reposed in the Lord, and Saint Chad was chosen as the new bishop. The saint was filled with love for his flock, and he wanted to teach them all about Christ. The holy bishop began to walk through the whole diocese, teaching the Gospel everywhere. He celebrated the Divine Liturgy in every village and town, and preached from the town squares, where he set up crosses. Moreover, St Chad stopped to teach at every cottage, farm, castle and cross-road, and his diocese became one of the most enlightened in Britain. When blessed Theodore of Tarsus, a Greek bishop, was made Archbishop of Britain in 669, he soon heard of St Chad. When the blessed Theodore visited York, he commanded the holy bishop to travel by horse, rather than on foot, for he saw that St Chad was already old and frail. The saint did not want to fulfil this, for he wanted to come to his people as a minister and servant, as Christ had done, and not like a lord on horseback. Nevertheless, the meek saint obeyed. In this same year, 669, St Chad was appointed as bishop of the Kingdom of Mercia. At that time, Mercia was ruled by King Wulfer. Wulfer had been baptised many years before, but later, he supported the worship of demons in his land, and his chief adviser was a cruel pagan. The king's wife, Erminhilda, was a fervent Christian, however, and tried to teach her children about Christ and His Holy church. St Chad began his long, hard work of teaching the people of Mercia the way of salvation. Again, the holy bishop travelled from town to town, preaching, baptising and celebrating the Divine Liturgy. The saint often preached standing near one of the great stone crosses left behind by the Celtic Christians who had long before been driven out of the country by the invading Angles and Saxons. More than anything else, St Chad liked to go alone into the forest, and pray to God for his flock, and for his own soul. He built a small cell and chapel in the woods, and went there to pray and struggle as often as he could. Once, while St Chad was in his cell praying, he heard a loud crashing sound outside. He went out and saw a large stag, collapsed from exhaustion, by the side of the pool, drinking. Making the sign of the Cross, the saint went to the poor animal and stroked it. He knew that hunters must be chasing the stag to kill it, so the saint hid the animal. Soon, the sound of a hunter's horn was heard, and a richly dressed young man on horseback came galloping into the clearing. He reverently greeted the bishop, and asked if he had seen the deer. "I do not tend the deers, nor the beasts of the forest, nor the birds of the air, but this deer, perhaps, has led you to salvation," the bishop replied. The young man was Prince Wulfade, the eldest son of the King. The saint's words opened the heart of the young prince, and he asked the holy bishop to explain the path of salvation to him. St Chad began to tell the prince about how the world was created by Christ our God and how Christ died on the Cross and rose again to save us. He explained about the Church and how everyone who wants to be saved must be born again in Holy Baptism and be united to Christ's Holy Church. The young prince heard all this, and then begged St Chad to baptise him. The saint took Prince Wulfade to the pond, and entering the deep water, baptised him in the name the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. He then taught the prince many more things. Later, Prince Wulfade brought his younger brother Rufine to the saint to be taught and baptised. After this time, the young princes came often to the holy bishop to be taught how to struggle and pray. The evil pagan counsellor of the king found out about the new, holy life of the two young princes, and he feared that he might lose his power because of them. For this reason, and because he hated the two princes, he began to slander them to the king. "Your two sons have disobeyed you. They have become Christians, even though you forbade it. They no longer obey your law, and they are now plotting against you to take over your throne." The evil counsellor convinced the king that he had to kill the two princes before they killed him. One day, the king and the counsellor followed the two princes into the forest, to the cell of St Chad. The holy bishop was away, and the two young men stood alone in prayer. Suddenly, the king burst through the door and cried out: "Why do you disobey my commands and follow this religion of Christ. You know my law, that the old gods must be worshipped by my sons and nobles. I command you to renounce Christ and give honour to the old gods." "We belong to Christ's Holy Church, and we will never turn from Him. But you yourself were once a Christian. We beg you, father, to return to the Holy Church and save your soul." At these words, the king became enraged, and, drawing his sword, furiously cut the two princes to pieces. Thus, the two holy princes received the crown of martyrdom. When the queen learned of this evil deed, she and her daughter immediately

went and buried the relics of the two martyrs, and then went to live in the women's monastery at Sheppey. Soon after this, the king's evil counsellor fell ill and died. Suddenly, the king was left all alone: he had killed his two sons; his wife and daughter had fled from him and become nuns, and his counsellor was dead. Now, the king began to feel sorrow for his evil deed. He realised that his sons were innocent, and he remembered his own baptism, and the last words of his sons, begging him to return to Christ's Holy Church. Finally, overcome by sorrow and repentance, the king set out at dawn to the cell of Saint Chad, to ask his help and prayers. As King Wulfer entered the chapel, the holy bishop was celebrating the Divine Liturgy. The king, feeling his guilt, stood at the door and watched. When the bishop reached that part of the Liturgy in which the great mystery takes place, the sanctuary was suddenly filled with a great light. The king was amazed, and fell to the floor in prostration, looking up with fear. He saw that the great light stayed around the Holy Table and filled the sanctuary until the saint had finished communion. The king remained on the floor until the Liturgy ended, and the saint came to him. After this, the king listened to everything Saint Chad taught him, and then he confessed his faith in Christ, and returned to His Holy Orthodox Church King Wulfer struggled to completely change his life. He helped Saint Chad and his presbyters to lead the people of the kingdom to Christ's Church, and he became merciful and gentle. St Chad chose the town of Lichfield for his cathedral, as in earlier days, St Arnphibale and nearly a thousand other Christians had been martyred there. King Wulfer helped to build the new Church. St Chad continued his life of holy struggle, teaching the Gospel of Christ's Church everywhere in the Kingdom of Mercia. At length, God called the holy bishop to Himself, and Saint Chad gave up his holy soul to the Saviour on 2 March, 672. Through the prayers of our God-bearing father, St Chad, may we find repentance, and save our souls, glorifying the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

**3 / 16 March —The Holy Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus and Basiliscus** - They were comrades of St Theodore the Tyro. When glorious Theodore gloriously laid down his life, they remained behind in prison, and were not condemned for a long time because of the courage of the imperial governor of the town of Amasea. When a new governor arrived, more inhuman than his predecessor, he ordered these three to be brought before him . All three were young men; Eutropius and Cleonicus were brothers and Basiliscus a kinsman of Theodore's. But all three were, through their brotherly love, as blood-brothers. And they therefore said to the governor: 'As the Holy Trinity is indivisible, so are we indivisible in faith and inseparable in love .' All flattery on the governor's part was in vain, as were all his efforts to bribe Eutropius. He first invited him to dine with him, which Eutropius refused with a quotation from the Psalms: 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsels of the ungodly', after which he offered him vast wealth—150 litres of silver—which Eutropius likewise refused, reminding the governor that Judas lost his soul for silver. After all these attempts, followed by interrogation and torture, the first two were condemned to be crucified, for which they gave thanks to Christ that He had counted them worthy to die the death He had died; and the third, Basilicus, was beheaded. They all entered into the Kingdom of joy, where their commander, Theodore, was waiting for them, glorified before Christ the Lord and Victor. They suffered with honour in 308. St Piama of Egypt; An Unknown Girl in Alexandria;

St. Non – also known as Nonna; Nonnita - Nobility, possibly of a royal house. A widow, it is said she was the unwed mother of Saint David of Wales. Lived in convents in Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany.

**4 / 17 March — St James the Faster** - lived in the sixth century. He was so perfected in godliness that he was able to heal the gravest illnesses by his prayers. But the enemy of the human race brought a heavy temptation on him. There was once sent to him a woman who had been corrupted by some mockers. She pretended to weep before him, but enticed him to sin. Seeing that he would fall into sin, James put his left hand into the fire and held it there until it was completely burned. Seeing this, the woman was filled with fear and horror, repented and reformed her life. But on a second occasion he did not resist and fell with a young girl whom her parents had brought to him to be healed of her madness. He indeed healed her, but then sinned with her and, in order to conceal the sin, killed her and threw her into a river. As always, the path from lust to murder was not very long. James spent ten years after that as a penitent, living in a grave. He learned after that that God had forgiven him, because, when he at one time prayed for rain in a time of great drought from which both men and cattle were suffering, it fell. Here is an example, similar to that of David, of how wicked the evil demon is; how, by the permission of God, the greatest spiritual giants can topple, and how again, by sincere repentance, God in His compassion will forgive the greatest sins and does not punish those who punish themselves.; Our Holy Father Gerasim.

**5 / 18 March — Saint Nikolai, (Velimirovic) of Ochrid** - Saint Nikolai was internationally known in the religious literary world. He was born to very religious parents in 1880 in Lelic, Yugoslavia. After finishing high school, he applied to a military academy and was rejected because he did not possess the physical requirements. Small in body but high in spirit, he decided to be a soldier for the Kingdom of Heaven. He applied to a theological seminary in Belgrade, where he was accepted. He graduated from theology in 1902. For a while he was teaching, but as he was an outstanding student, he was sent to enrich his education in France, Switzerland, Germany, England, and sometime later in Russia. He was fascinated by the firm beliefs of the Russian Orthodox people. In 1908, he received his doctorate of theology in Bern. The school year of 1908-09, he spent at Oxford University and earned his doctorate in philosophy. After a serious illness, he decided to serve the Lord who had spared his life. On December 20, 1909, he became a hieromonk in the Rakovica Monastery and put to work his knowledge and ability to serve God and the Serbian people. He lived and worked for God and the Serbian people as well as working in and for the Church, but it was not without serious criticism. From 1915-1919, he lived in America and England where he worked for his church and his government. In 1919, he returned to Serbia and was ordained Bishop of Zica. He worked very hard teaching religion, helping the poor, and opening orphanages. He earned the nickname "Grandpa". He was a zealous reader of the Holy Fathers. In 1941, the Germans arrested him. He was in confinement with Serbian Patriarch Gavrilo in the Ljubosir Vojlovica Monastery for the greater part of the second world war where he wrote his "Prayer Canon" and a prayer to the Holy Mother of God of Vojlovica. In January 1945, he wrote three prayers which are on the cover of the Gospel in the Serbian Church in Vienna. In September of 1944, Saint Nikolai and Patriarch Gavrilo were taken from Vojlovica to the concentration camp Daxay,

where they were subjected to abuse and torture until May 8, 1945, when they were rescued by Americans. Some time later Patriarch Gavrilo returned to Serbia but Nikolai decided to emigrate with one wish: to be buried in his fatherland. He came to America in 1946. Poor in health, he still had a lot of strength for his missionary and church work. He travelled extensively through America and Canada. He was a zealous writer and good teacher, often being referred to as the "New Chrysostom" because of his eloquence. He left a legacy of work both in English and in Serbian. One of these works is Missionary Letters. He died on the eighteenth of May in 1956 in the Monastery of Saint Tikhon in Pennsylvania and was buried in the Monastery of Saint Sava in Libertyville, Illinois. However his relics has since been translated to his homeland.

**Tropar of Saint Nikolai (Tone 4):** Thy righteous acts have revealed thee to thy flock as a model of faith, a reflection of humility and a teacher of abstinence, O Holy Father Nikolai; therefore, through humility thou hast obtained exaltation and through poverty, riches; pray to Christ God to save our souls; The Holy Martyr Conon of Isauria; The Holy Martyr Conon the Gardener; Our Holy Father Hesychius the Faster; Our Holy Father Mark the Ascetic; St. Kieran of Saigher, Munster, Ireland (5th-6th c.)

**6 / 19 March — The Forty Two Holy Martyrs of Ammoria** - these were all generals under the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus. When the Emperor lost the struggle against the Saracens around the town of Ammoria, the Saracens took the town and enslaved many Christians, with these generals among them. The remaining Christians they either killed or sold into slavery, but threw these generals into prison, where they remained for seven years. Moslem leaders came many times, urging them to accept the Mohammedan faith, but the generals refused to do so. When the Saracens told the generals that Mahomet was a true prophet and Christ was not, the generals asked them: 'If two men were to quarrel about a field, with one saying: "It's mine!", and the other saying: "No; it's mine!", and one had many witnesses that it was his field and the other had not a single witness but himself, what would you say—whose field was it?' The Saracens replied: 'His, of course, who had the many witnesses.' 'You have judged right', the generals answered them. 'So it is with Christ and Mahomet. Christ has many witnesses: the ancient prophets, whom you also recognise, from Moses to John the Baptist, witnessed to Him, But Mahomet only witnesses to himself that he is a prophet, and has no other witness.' The Saracens were confounded, but attempted then to defend their faith thus: 'That our faith is better than Christianity is seen in this: that God has given us victory over you, that He gives us the best lands on earth and an empire much greater than the Christian.' To this the generals replied: 'If that were so, then the idol-worship of Egypt and Babylon, and of Greece and Rome, and the fire-worship of Persia, would have been true faiths, for at some time each of these peoples has conquered others and governed them. It is obvious that your victory and power and wealth do not prove the truth of your faith. We know that God sometimes gives victory to Christians, and sometimes leaves them in torture and suffering to correct them and bring them to repentance and cleansing from sin.' After seven years they were beheaded, in 845. Their bodies were cast into the Euphrates, but they floated to the other bank where Christians collected them and gave them burial. Blessed Job; The Holy Martyrs Conon, Father and Son;

**St. Fridolin, enlightener of the Upper Rhine** - c 540. Born in Ireland, he became a monk at Luxeuil in France. Later he founded the monastery of Sackingen and is venerated as the Apostle of the Upper Rhine in Germany.

**Translation of the relics of Saints Cyneswitha and Cyneburga, abbesses of Caistor** (Daughter of Pendra of Mercia, a fierce opponent of Christianity. Sister of Saint Cyneburga. Relative of Saint Tibba. Benedictine nun. Abbess at Dormancaster (now Castor) abbey in Northamptonshire, England) and Saint Tibba (Benedictine nun at Dormancaster abbey, Northamptonshire, England), nun of Rynall.

### Some Reflections on Fasting for Great Lent

By Dr. John L. Boojamra

FASTING — OR MORE CORRECTLY, the practice of abstinence for certain days and certain periods of the year — has long caused difficulty in the minds of many Orthodox Christians in North America. Every year, as the Easter Lent approaches, Orthodox Christians begin to wonder what, if anything, to do in preparation for the feast. In general, I think it is safe to say that the practice and idea of fasting is largely ignored in this regard. Many people generally dismiss fasting with the rather simple and naive belief that "This is the twentieth century; fasting is an arcane practice that was made for the past and simpler days," or worse, they dismiss fasting because "fasting is a man made discipline" - as if being "man made" by definition makes something worthless.

Nonetheless, in spite its neglect by most people, we must take the practice of fasting seriously, if for no other reason than the fact that other people, throughout Christian history, have taken it seriously. It is valuable here to consider not so much "how" we must fast as "why" we must fast. A deeper understanding of the significance of this practice in Christianity will help us in determine our own fasting practices.

We must first admit that fasting has a firm foundation in the Scriptures and Tradition of the Church, as well as in the practice of the Jewish community which gave birth to the Church. We know, for instance, that Jesus fasted, that the disciples of John the Baptist fasted, and that Jesus said that prayer and fasting were necessary for casting out certain evils. We know also that the early Church picked up its Wednesday and Friday abstinence from the Jewish Monday and Thursday weekly fast.

### Fasting and this World

TO THIS EMPHASIS we must add a certain otherworldly emphasis in Jesus' teaching. Perhaps the most realistic treatment of this is in Matthew (6:19-21): Do not lay up for yourselves treasure on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be.

In order to understand the significance of fasting in Christianity, we must look at it in the context of the Christian view of the world. In spite of the great love which Jesus and His Church have demonstrated for the world and for life in it, there is in Christianity a reservation about the world and human life as it is now. The Church calls this a "fallen world," a world which in all its aspects is in some way separated voluntarily from the love and life of God, its Creator. How does this perspective reflect on the practice of fasting? As it turns out, fasting cannot be separated from this realistic appraisal of the world, and from the struggle to find the Kingdom of God. There is something about fasting, something about refusing to make a total investment in the world as it is, that is associated with the struggle to build the Kingdom of God; for insofar as we are occupied with the delusions of this fallen world, we are impeded in our struggle to find the Kingdom. Fasting, therefore, must be seen as a means of turning away from the fallenness of the world so that we can discover another, better world - i.e. the Kingdom. "Seek first the kingdom of God and all else will be added" we are told. As finding the Kingdom of God is a matter of priority, the importance of fasting as a means of helping ourselves in this endeavor cannot be overstated.

Before discussing what fasting is, perhaps it would be beneficial to say a few words about what it is not. This is a valuable approach since there is a great deal of misunderstanding regarding the nature and function of fasting, both as an idea and as a practice.

God, we must admit first, is not simple-minded. He has no need for our fasting. Our efforts do not affect Him in any way. We cannot buy His love or His grace. This immediately takes fasting out of any legalistic framework and puts it on the level of personal spiritual growth and struggle. For instance, because one person fasts more strictly than another does not mean that God loves the first more or gives him more grace. It is as unimaginable that you could get more grace from a greater effort as getting more grace from a larger portion of the Eucharist. Yet, many people think of grace in strictly legalistic terms. God's love is always given freely and the degree of participation in that love is conditioned by our ability to receive it and be changed by it. This is the Orthodox idea of cooperation or synergy—we must open ourselves to the love and strength that God offers freely. Fasting is a way of achieving this openness.

Another view of fasting, which, like the previous one contains an element of distortion, is that which sees it as a means of voluntary suffering, a way of atoning for sins. Indeed, there may very well be an element of this in fasting, but this is not the most important aspect of fasting. If fasting was to be seen primarily as a means of atonement, this would bring the practice to the level of individual pathology. Again, we cannot pay God back for our sins, and fasting as a means of atoning for sins must be seen in the light of trying to direct our spiritual lives in a more positive direction.

A third view of fasting is common among both Christians and non-Christians. This view mistakenly sees fasting in the history of the Church as an expression of a pathological morbidity with regard to the world, which is based on a docetic view—i.e. the idea that the world, the body, sex, and all created and material things are essentially evil, whereas all spiritual things are good. In this context, fasting becomes an effort to disconnect the self from any connection with matter—i.e. from food, sex, bodily functions, etc. There has indeed been a tendency towards this view on a number of occasions throughout Christian history, but whenever it has expressed itself, it has consistently been condemned by the Church. The Church has always affirmed that the created world is essentially good, though suffering from profound distortion and misdirection.

### Fasting as Preparation

WHAT FASTING IS will necessarily involve us in a discussion of the nature of man and the nature of the world. Fasting is, as the Church uses it, a preparation. Every time we encounter a fast it is prior to a feast. We all know the fast before the Eucharist as preparation for the Eucharist and the fast before Pascha as preparation for the great feast. Nothing in life just happens; that is obvious. All major events require a variety of preparations. The Church recognizes the fact that part of getting somewhere is the journey, and just as important as the journey is the anticipation. This is a basic human psychological quality. Perhaps children understand this expectation and anticipation best of all. Full participation demands this kind of expectation and preparation. In this context, the nature of Orthodox preparations is no mystery.

The Church has taught that man is a unity - he is not a being which has a body and which has a soul; rather, he is a body and he is a soul. The Christian vision is that of a total and unified personality—body and soul. Hence, the Church calls on the entire being to share in the fast and the feast. As a season changes in Church, as the colors change, the music changes, the services get longer, the icon changes, and so forth. How does our body share in this except through fasting, except through imitating a change in its normal routine? Now this description keeps the nature and degree of fasting open, and this "openness" is important in our personal spiritual direction. It can involve food, entertainment, sex - in fact, any aspect of our daily and routine lives. It is clear that we Orthodox Christians are not spiritualists or intellectualists; we are Christian "materialists." The Church's emphasis on fasting is precisely a reflection of this materialism.

Our Lord says, "lay not up treasures on earth," and fasting is in effect the reminder that our heart cannot be invested like our money in the world. We all know the feeling we have for something when we have made an investment in it. People always try to protect their investment. This is natural. That is what our Lord meant! Here we find a rejection of the world, not in an absolute sense, but in a relative sense. The world in itself is valuable only when it is seen in its relationship to God. Since the world is in effect separated from God, freely, then it cannot be fully normal, and the Church says limit your participation in the life of the world—not because it is evil, but because it in itself is limited.

Food is the most obvious example. Everyone agrees that eating, after breathing, is the most necessary and normal activity of our life. It is in this area which is regarded in a worldly sense as normal that the Church says "Stop! Think! Question everything which the world calls normal and necessary, because the world itself is 'abnormal' - that is, it is abnormal as it now exists, separated from God's love." But fasting is only a beginning, and this questioning must be our approach to all the values

that the world regards as necessary and even virtuous—victory, self defense, getting ahead, accumulating wealth and property, competition, popularity, self-aggrandizement, etc. All of these are to be followed with a question mark.

### Fasting and a Clear Image of the World

MIND YOU, this is not a rejection of the world; it is a questioning of those values which the world as it now exists -and human societies which inhabit it - hold as valuable. Insofar as the world is treated as normal - because this is in fact the only world we know - whereas in fact it is not normal or truly worldly in the Christian sense, then it is a deception and a lie, and we must recognize it for what it is. In a real sense, the Church, in asking her people to fast, is declaring a moratorium on the world. A moratorium, whether in the context of war or in the context of spiritual discipline, means the same thing - it means "time out." Those of us who remember the war in Vietnam remember the various moratoria that were declared to stop the fighting. Before a final, lasting moratorium was called, the war had dragged on for almost ten years on an incredibly brutal level, characterized by My Lai; in the meantime, everyone here went about his business, and apart from inflation, no one's life was really affected - we bought our food and celebrated all those little occasions; there was no shortage of butter or meat or autos; and yet, the very normalcy of life here at home, at the same time that wholesale death swept Southeast Asia, was a deception - a deception that was recognized only after a final "time out" was declared, allowing us to come out of the delusional mindset that kept us from questioning the war's necessity. In the same way, calling moratorium or "time out" on our "normal" worldly routines allows us to recognize the deception inherent in our preoccupation with this fallen world, and allows us to free ourselves from the delusional mindset that keeps us fettered to its routines.

On a cosmic level, the fast is this effort to put the world and life in the world in its proper perspective. To accept the present state of the world as normal is a deception! There is no hate for the world in this, but there is a recognition that something has happened to the "worldliness" which God created and declared "good."

I think we must then see fasting never as a rejection of food or the world, but as a search for true worldliness - a search which must necessarily pass through the stage of preferring something else to the world. "Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all else will be given to you." In the same way, we fast from all food before liturgy so that we might receive the one true food in the Eucharist. It is in the Eucharist that we can get a glimpse of the true nature of food. There is no judgment on food as such. The same is true of the world. As food completes itself in the Eucharist, so the entire created world completes itself in the Kingdom of God.

The world is ours; it belongs to us and, needless to say, we were not meant to be slaves to its pleasures, its categories, and its values. Fasting, then, is a declaration of independence from the world and a proclamation of victory over its limitations and evil. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). This does not mean that we cannot take pleasure in the world.

It is a recognition that the values of the world are limited and often perverted. Here we are freed, liberated in a real sense, not only from sin but from the fears that characterize life - free to act without fear of criticism, as God wants us to act in our everyday life in politics, business, school, family, and social affairs. Nothing in human society, the first declares, is sacred in itself and can demand our loyalty - no form of government, regime, ideology, or community. We are freed to conform to the patterns of the Kingdom of God here and now— free to practice sacrifice, love, charity, justice, and faith. To those for whom the world is the ultimate reality and the ultimate gain, it is essential to buy the love of the world, and the world will only love those who accept its values. Our Lord assures us that the world will hate us; it has to, because the Christian is the on-going judgment on an on-going corruption that infects human relations and human societies.

For us Christians who live in the world, there a choice: we can consume the world or allow the world to consume us. The first is the only creative approach. The second is psychological and personal disintegration. The fast is what gives us the opportunity to make the better choice.

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# The First Sunday of Great Lent,

## The Sunday of Orthodoxy

7 / 20 March 2016

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 1:** When the stone had been sealed by the Jews; / while the soldiers were guarding Thy Most Pure Body; / Thou didst rise on the third day, O Saviour, / granting life to the world. / The Powers of Heaven therefore cried to Thee O Giver of Life: / glory to Thy Resurrection O Christ! / Glory to Thy Kingdom; / Glory to Thy Dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

**The First Sunday of Great Lent, Troparion, Tone II :** We worship Thy immaculate Image, O Good One, and ask forgiveness of our sins, O Christ God; for of Thy own will Thou wast pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh, to deliver from slavery to the enemy those whom Thou hadst created. Therefore we thankfully cry to Thee: Thou hast filled all things with joy, O our Saviour, by coming to save the world.

**Kondak First Sunday of Great Lent, Tone 8:** The Uncircumscribable Word of the Father was circumscribed when he took flesh of thee, O Theotokos; and when He had restored the defiled image to its ancient state, He suffused it with divine beauty. As for us, confessing our salvation, we record it in deed and word.



### Matins Gospel IX

**Epistle: St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews 11: 24-26, 32 - 12:2**

24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. ... 32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

**Hebrews 12:1** Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

### WE ARE SURROUNDED BY SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

At all times, indeed, but specially then, when I reflect upon the achievements of the saints, it comes over me to feel despondency concerning my own condition, because we have not even in dreams experienced the things among which those men spent their whole lives, not paying the penalty of sins, but always doing rightly and yet always afflicted .. And having spoken of what befell the apostles (Cf. I Cor. 4:11, II Cor. 11:23-28,12:7, Phil. 1:12, II Tim. 3:11) ...Elijah suffered the same thing with them (II Kings 1:8) and the Son of Man (Matt. 8:20) ...For God 'has provided some better thing for us.' In order that they might not seem to have the advantage of us from being crowned before us, He appointed one time for crowning for all ...Do you see His tender carefulness?

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXVIII on Hebrews XI, 1, 2. B#58, pp. 491, 492.*

## The Gospel According To St. John 1: 43-51

43 At that time, Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. 46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. 49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, 'Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel. 50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. 51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

### THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

"The day following, Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow Me" (Jn. 1:43). So the Holy Gospel begins this Sunday, recounting the calling of the Holy Apostles. Centuries have passed, and the same call is audible today, but now refers directly to us, "Follow Me." And we ask the Lord, "Where?" And the Church answers us by the very name of this Sunday, "into Orthodoxy!"

Just be attentive. Tonight, when this week comes to a close and a new week of Great Lent begins, the Holy Church will say for our edification: "Lord, Thou hast given abundant gifts to those who fear Thee!" And we cannot say that we did not receive these gifts. We received the Sacrament of Confession, the Sacrament of the Eucharist —the Body and Blood of Christ, the Tree of Life. Yes, we undoubtedly received them. But do we have the state of mind which is expressed in the second part of the prayer: "Lord, Thou hast given abundant gifts to those who fear Thee." The gifts have been given, but are we those who fear God ? Yet the fear of God is not an ordinary fear as before someone or something. No. This is the fear of losing what the Lord has given to our heart.

And at the same time, the Holy Church, while telling us that we have received the Grace and Gifts of God, reveals to us through the Apostle reading the states of mind we should possess. These are the states which should be possessed by those who have achieved everything which Christ gives. We know what these achievers have gone through: sufferings, beatings, bonds, prison; they were stoned, sawn asunder, exiled, died by the sword, wandered in the mountains. Those of whom the whole world was not worthy hid in ravines, in caves—they all bore witness to their faith, but they did not receive what had been promised. And this is because God provided for them something better, something worthy of them (Heb. 11:37-40).

Yes, as we see, God calls: "Follow Me! I will give you everything." But at the same time, such sufferings, such experiences, such horrible things! Look around you, at our walls which are painted with the pictures of saints. All of them are now in the heavenly dwellings, and yet all of them experienced, as every one of us experiences, the way of our earthly existence. Look, among them were archbishops, bishops, priests, monks; there were farmers, nobles and princes, workers of all kinds; there were labourers, people of simple background; there were great scholars, there were illiterate people. And all of them experienced on earth every kind of suffering, grief, and horror. But they kept that which the Church requires. When the Church says through the words of Christ, "Follow Me," she is showing us where to go: into Orthodoxy. In the Russian language, Orthodoxy means the Right Word, that word which is true, which we should not betray; the word which we too have given and are again giving every year.

After the Nativity of Christ (on the day of Circumcision), when the circumcision of our heart is accomplished, then we say, "We belong to Christ, we are Christian. Our will is His Will. Christ is our Life; Christ is our Goal; Christ is our Way." And this way leads us into the Church. Bishop Theophan the Recluse shows us what to do in order to go the way of the Church. He addressed his flock (this was in the 1870's) with the following words: "We know what technology teaches us, what mechanics teaches us, law, economics. But the Church teaches us about the movement of our heart. Learn and keep in your heart everything the Holy Church teaches, and receiving Godly forces through the sacraments, and quickening them through the holy services and prayers of the Church, go unswervingly the Way of Christ's commandments under the guidance of lawful shepherds, and you will undoubtedly reach the Kingdom of Heaven and will be saved."

And so, being zealous for salvation, all our attention should be directed to our heart, to inscribe on it Christian feelings and dispositions. Bishop Theophan reveals to us that the most important thing is in our heart, dispositions, those feelings which appear in the heart. External things are needed, but only in so far as they bear the spirit which spiritualises them. And social life will become true life only if into social relationships you bring spirit, which means heart, the heart of a true Christian. And family life will be true family life only if into all traditions of the external temporal family life we bring those relationships of the heart which God gives us in His Beatitudes: poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, peaceableness—out of this will come real family life. And this way, and only this way, into all phases of our life will come the Triumph of Orthodoxy.

*The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei*

On this day the Church commemorates the final ending of the Iconoclast controversy and the definitive restoration of the holy icons to the churches by the Empress Theodora, acting as Regent for her young son Michael III. This took place on the first Sunday in Lent, 11 March 843. There is, however, not only an historical link between the first Sunday and the restoration of the icons but also a spiritual affinity. If Orthodoxy triumphed in the epoch of the Iconoclast controversy, this was because so many of the faithful were prepared to undergo exile, torture, and even death, for the sake of the truth. The Feast of Orthodoxy is above all a celebration in honour of the martyrs and confessors who struggled and suffered for the faith: hence its appropriateness for the season of Lent, when we are striving to imitate the martyrs by means of our ascetic self-denial. The fixing of the Triumph of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday is therefore much more than the result of some chance historical conjunction.

The Triodion gives the text of a special 'Office of the Triumph of Orthodoxy', which is held at the end of Matins or, more commonly, at the end of the Divine Liturgy on this Sunday. The Office celebrates not only the restoration of the holy icons but, more generally, the victory of the true faith over all heresies and errors. A procession is made with the holy icons, and after this extracts are read from the synodical decree of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787). Then sixty anathemas are pronounced against various heretics dating from the third to the fourteenth century; 'Eternal Memory' is sung in honour of the emperors, patriarchs and fathers who defended the Orthodox faith; and 'Many Years' is proclaimed in honour of our present rulers and bishops. Unfortunately in many parts of the Orthodox Church today this impressive service has fallen into disuse; elsewhere it is performed in a greatly abbreviated form. Before the Triumph of Orthodoxy came to be celebrated on the first Sunday, there was on this day a commemoration of Moses, Aaron, Samuel, and the prophets. Traces of this more ancient observance can still be seen in the choice of Epistle reading at the Liturgy (Hebrews 11: 24-6, 32-40), and in the Alleluia verse appointed before the Gospel: 'Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His Name'.

### Saints of the Week

**7 / 20 March — The Seven Hieromartyrs of Cherson** - Basil, Ephraim, Eugene, Elpidius, Agathodorus, Aetherius and Capito. They were all bishops in Cherson at different times, and all suffered from unbelievers (only Aetherius died peacefully), either Jews or Greeks from Scythia. They had all gone to that savage land as missionaries, sent by the Patriarch of Jerusalem to bring the light of the Gospel there. They were all tortured and suffered for the sake of their Lord. Basil raised the son of a prince of Cherson to life, which embittered the Jews and they brought charges against him. He was bound by the feet and dragged through the streets of the town until he gave up the ghost. Ephraim was beheaded. Eugene, Elpidius and Agathodorus were beaten with rods and stones until they gave their souls into God's hands. Aetherius lived in the time of Constantine the Great, and so he governed the Church in freedom and peace, built a great church in Cherson and died peacefully. When the last of them, Capito, was sent as bishop, the savage Scythians sought a sign of him, that they might believe. And they suggested to him that he go into a burning furnace, and, if he were not burned up, they would believe. With fervent prayer and hope in God, Capito put on his episcopal pallium and, crossing himself, entered the burning furnace, holding his heart and thoughts directed towards God. He stood in the flames for about an hour, and came out untouched, with no scorch-mark either on his body or his clothing. Then all cried out: 'There is one God, the great and powerful God of the Christians, who keeps His servant safe in the burning furnace!', and the whole town and surroundings were baptised. Many spoke of this wonder at the Council of Nicaea (325), and all glorified God and praised the firm faith of St Capito. But Scythian unbelievers caught Capito by the River Dnieper and drowned him. They all suffered around the beginning of the fourth century; Our Holy Father Emilianus;

**Saint Eosterwine** - 688. A Northumbrian noble, he entered the monastery of Wearmouth with his relative St Benedict. He succeeded St Benedict as abbot. He was celebrated for his gentleness.

**8 / 21 March — St Theophylactus, Bishop of Nicomedia** - When the emperor's advisor Tarasius, as a layman, was elected Patriarch of Constantinople, then with him and from him, many of his friends, admirers, and others of the laity received the monastic tonsure. Among them was Theophylactus. Tarasius appointed him Bishop of Nicomedia. As a bishop, Theophylactus was a good shepherd to his entrusted flock and proved to be exceptionally filled with compassion toward the less fortunate and indigent. After the death of St. Tarasius, the Patriarchal Throne was occupied by Nicephorus and shortly after that, the Imperial Throne was occupied by Leo the Armenian, who was an Iconoclast and, as such, raised up a absolute storm in the Church of Christ. Even though Iconoclasm had been anathematized by the Seventh Ecumenical Council [Nicæa, 783 A.D.], nevertheless, Emperor Leo re-instated it and by this wanted to supplant Orthodoxy. Saint Theophylactus opposed the emperor to his face and, when the emperor would not yield, Theophylactus said to him, "O emperor, violent injury will unexpectedly befall you, and you will not find anyone who will save you from it." Because of these words and by the order of the emperor, Theophylactus was ousted from his position and banished into exile, where he spent thirty years undergoing many hardships and insults and, where, in the end, he rendered his soul to the Lord about the year 845 A.D.; The Hieromartyr Theodoreetus;

**St. Felix of Burgundy, bishop of Dunwich, and enlightener of East Anglia (c.648)** - Monk. Priest, In Burgundy he met befriended, converted and baptised King Sigebert who was in exile from East Anglia. England. When Sigebert returned to East Anglia in 630, he invited Felix to bring Christianity to his people. Felix was ordained bishop by Saint Honoratus of Canterbury, and then sailed up the River Kent, apparently starting his work in the area now known as Felixstowe. Evangelized throughout East Anglia, building a cathedral and school at Dunwich, stone churches throughout the region, and the college that became the University of Cambridge. With Saint Sigebert he founded the Bury Saint Edmunds abbey c.637. Worked with Saint Fursey. Spiritual teacher of Saint Audrey.

**The anniversary of the repose of Archbishop Vitaly (Maximenko) of Jordanville (1960)** - the young Archmandrite Vitaly was assigned by his bishop to the Pochaev Monastery in 1902 as a printer and preacher. He turned the Pochaev print-shop into one of the biggest church printing operations in Russia, having St. Job of Pochaev - a champion of Orthodoxy against the

Uniates - as his heavenly patron. His efforts were interrupted by the First World War and the Russian Revolution, however, as the print-shop was plundered by Ukrainian nationalists and the Bolsheviks. In 1924 Vladika Vitaly managed to re-establish the print-shop in Ladomirovo, situated just inside the Czechoslovakian border. In 1944 the brotherhood was forced to move again, this time because of the Second World War. Once again everything was lost, this time to advancing Soviet troops.

Archimandrite Vitaly was ordained Bishop and appointed to North America. He asked the monks at the Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville to accept him as one of the brethren which they did. He moved the print-shop of St. Job of Pochaev there in 1947, where it operates to this day. He was Abbot of the monastery from 1948 until his repose in 1960. One of the great figures of the Russian Diaspora, Vladika Vitaly was a great printer-missionary and stalwart of Orthodoxy in these times. May his memory be eternal!

**New Martyr Archpriest Michael Edlklinsky** - little is known of Father Michael. He was the parish priest of the Church of Sts. Boris & Gleb at Podol in Kiev from at least 1889 until the Revolution. He worked tirelessly for his parishioners. He was especially attentive to the problem of drunkenness, considering it to be the foremost reason for human depravation and spiritual fall. Through his prayers, many were healed from this terrible weakness. He was given much money by others for charitable purposes. He established a parish cafeteria which distributed food for the poor and also an orphanage and a day school for the children of working women. He, his Matushka, and their daughters dressed poorly so as to give everything they could to the poor. Once, when the people began to attack the local Jewish population, he proceeded together with his clergy in full vestments and admonished the rioters, who began to disperse. He had great faith, and prayed fervently with tears. His sermons greatly profited those who heard him, and all who confessed in his presence experienced spiritual joy and peace. He died in a Kiev prison in 1938. There have been many miracles worked through his prayers, both during his life and after his martyrdom. Holy New Hieromartyr Michael, pray for us!

**9 / 22 March — The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste** - These were all soldiers in the Roman army, but believed firmly in the Lord Jesus. When a persecution arose in the time of Licinius, they were all taken for trial before the commander, who threatened to strip them of their military status. To this one of them, St Candidus, replied: 'Do not take only our military status, but also our bodies; nothing is dearer or of greater honour to us than Christ our God.' Then the commander ordered his servants to stone the holy martyrs to death. But when the servants threw the stones at the Christians, the stones turned back and fell on them themselves, causing them grievous injuries. One stone fell on the commander's face and smashed his teeth. The torturers, in bestial fury, bound the holy martyrs and threw them into a lake, setting a watch all round it to prevent any of them escaping. There was a terrible frost, and the lake froze around the bodies of the martyrs. To make the torture worse, the torturers built and lit baths by the lake, in the sight of the freezing sufferers, with the idea that one of them might deny Christ and acknowledge the idols of Rome. In fact, one of them did abjure, came out of the water and went into the baths. But lo, during the night a strange light appeared from heaven, which heated the water in the lake and the bodies of the martyrs, and with that light there descended from heaven thirty-nine wreaths for their heads. One of the sentries on the shore saw this, confessed the name of Christ and went into the lake to be worthy of the fortieth wreath in place of the traitor. And the fortieth wreath was seen to descend upon him. The next day, the whole town was amazed to see the martyrs still alive. Then the wicked judges commanded that their legs be broken and their bodies thrown into the water, so that the Christians should not be able to find them. On the third day the martyrs appeared to the local bishop, Peter, and told him to search beneath the water and bring out their relics. The bishop went out on a dark night with his clergy, and saw where the martyrs' relics were glowing in the water. Every bone that had been broken off from their bodies rose to the surface and burned there like a candle. They gathered them, and gave them burial, and the souls of these martyrs went to Him who was martyred for us all and rose with glory, the Lord Jesus. They suffered with honour and were crowned with unfading glory in 320. On this day it was a tradition in Russia to make cookies in the shape of swallows which were then arriving with the approaching spring. In our own times Blessed Father Seraphim (Rose), who always baked swallow cookies for the feast, would also make lizard cookies as spring in Platina, where his Monastery of St. Herman of Alaska was situated, brought lizards, and not swallows. Our Holy Father Philoromus the Confessor; St. Caesarius;

**St. Bosa, bishop of York** - Died 686. Saint Bosa was a Benedictine monk at Whitby, England, under Saint Hilda. In 678, he was consecrated bishop of Deira (the southern half of Northumbria, now Yorkshire) by Saint Theodore, with his see at York, when Saint Wilfrid was driven out by King Egfrid for refusing to accept the division of his see. Wilfrid returned in 686, but Bosa took over the diocese in 691 when Wilfrid was again exiled following a quarrel with King Aldfrid; Bosa ruled it with great holiness and ability until his death. Saint Bede praises Bosa as "a man beloved by God . . . of most unusual merit and sanctity." One of his disciples was Saint Acca, who later followed and succeeded Wilfrid at Hexham.

**10 /23 March — The Holy Martyr Codratus of Corinth, and others with him** - In a time of persecution of Christians, many of the faithful fled to the mountains and caves. The mother of this Codratus did so. She was pregnant just at that time, and gave birth to Codratus in a forest, dying almost at once. He was kept safe and fed by the providence of God and his guardian angel. Codratus grew up in solitude with nature. He who gave manna from heaven to the Israelites in the wilderness released a sweet dew from a cloud onto the mouth of the child Codratus. When he was twelve years old, he went down to the town, and there some good people took a fancy to him and educated him. He studied medicine and then began to heal the sick, using both natural medicines and, more importantly, the spiritual power and prayer which had been with him from childhood. When a new persecution arose under Decius, Codratus was taken for trial and thrown into prison. Five of his friends stood beside him and confessed the name of Christ. They were: Cyprian, Dionysius, Anectus, Paul and Crescens. They were all dragged through the streets and struck with sticks and stones by the unbelievers, especially by the children, until they arrived at the scaffold. Here the martyrs prayed to God and were beheaded with the sword. A spring of water gushed out onto the earth at the spot, which to this day is called by Codratus's name and commemorates the heroic death for Christ of the holy six. They suffered with honour for the truth in Corinth in the year 250, in the time of the Emperor Decius and his governor Jason. Martyr Codratus of Nicomedia; St. Anastasia, Patrician of Alexandria.

**11 / 24 March — St Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem** - born in Damascus of eminent parents. Having acquired worldly wisdom, he was not content with this, and began also to acquire pure, spiritual wisdom. In the monastery of St Theodosius he found himself with the monk John Moschus, whom he took as his teacher; then, together with him, set out to visit the monasteries and ascetics of Egypt. Their motto was to glean more spiritual wisdom each day. They wrote down all that they discovered, and later published it in two books entitled 'The Spiritual Meadow'. They later went to Rome, where Moschus died, leaving Sophronius with the pledge to take him either to Sinai or to the Monastery of St Theodosius. Sophronius fulfilled the desire of his teacher and took his body to the monastery, after which he was delayed in Jerusalem, which by that time had been freed from the Persians. He witnessed the return of the Precious Cross from Persia, which the Emperor Heraclius carried into the Holy City on his back. The old Patriarch, Zacharias, who also returned from slavery, did not live long and, when he went to the other world, was followed first by Modestus, who died in 634, and then by blessed Sophronius. He governed the Church with outstanding wisdom and zeal for four years, standing in defence of Orthodoxy against the Monothelite heresy, which he condemned at his Council in Jerusalem before it was condemned at the 6th Ecumenical Council. He wrote the life of St Mary of Egypt, compiled the rite of the Great Blessing of Water and introduced various new hymns and songs into different services. When the Arabian Caliph Omar captured Jerusalem, Sophronius begged him to spare the Christians, which Omar hypocritically promised. When Omar quickly began to plunder and ill-treat the Christians in Jerusalem, Sophronius, with many lamentations, begged God to take him from among the living upon earth, that he should not see the desecration of the holy places. And God heard his prayer, and took him to Himself in His heavenly courts in 644. St. Pionius; St. George the Sinaite;

**St. Angus (Oengus) of Culdees, compiler of first Irish martyrology** - Born in Ireland; died c. 830. The appellation "Culdee," Ceile De, or Kele-De means "worship of God," which became the name of a monastic movement otherwise known as the "Companions of God." Oengus was of the race of the Dalaradians, kings of Ulster. In his youth, renouncing all earthly pretensions, he chose Christ for his inheritance by embracing the religious life in the monastery of Cluain-Edneach (Clonenagh) in East Meath (County Laois). Here he became so great a proficient both in learning and sanctity, that no one in his time could be found in Ireland that equalled him in reputation for every kind of virtue, and for sacred knowledge. To shun the esteem of the world, he disguised himself and entered the monastery of Tamlacht (Tallaght Hill), three miles from Dublin, where he lived for seven years as an anonymous lay brother. There he performed all the drudgery of the house, appearing fit for nothing but the vilest tasks, while interiorly he was being perfected in love and contemplation absorbed in God. After his identity was discovered when he tried to coach an unsuccessful student, he returned to Cluain-Edneach, where the continual austerity of his life, and his constant application to God in prayer, may be more easily admired than imitated. For example, he would daily recite one-third of the psalter (50 Psalms) while immersed in cold water. He was chosen abbot, and at length raised to the episcopal dignity: for it was usual then in Ireland for eminent abbots in the chief monasteries to be bishops. He was known for his devotion to the saints. He left both a longer and a shorter Irish Martyrology, and five other books concerning the saints of his country, contained in what the Irish call *Saltair-na-Rann*. The short martyrology was a celebrated metrical hymn called *Felire* or *Festilogium*. The longer, *Martyrology of Tallaght* was composed in collaboration with Saint Maelruain of Tallaght. He died at Disertbeagh (now Desert Aenguis or Dysert Enos), which became also a famous monastery, and took its name from him.

**12 / 25 March - St Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome** - son of the senator Gordianus, he himself became a senator and governor of the city of Rome, but, as soon as his father died, he gave himself to the spiritual life. He built six monasteries in Sicily and a seventh in Rome itself, out of his great wealth, being tonsured in this last, which he dedicated to the Apostle Andrew. His mother, Sylvia, also received the monastic habit in a women's monastery. After the death of Pope Pelagius, Gregory was chosen as Pope. He fled from this honour and power and hid himself in the mountains and ravines, but God showed people where to find him by making a fiery column, reaching from earth to heaven, appear at the place where Gregory was hiding. He had a rare compassion, using all his income for the housing of the poor and on hospitality. He frequently brought the poor in and fed them from his own table. He occupied himself with the writing of instructive books. 'The Dialogist', or 'the one who converses' was the name he was known by, having written a book entitled 'The Dialogues' in which he brought to light the virtues and miracles of the Italian saints. He also compiled the service of the Presanctified Gifts that is used on Wednesdays and Fridays in the Great Fast. His archdeacon, Peter, often saw a dove hovering over his head when he was writing. He went to the Lord in 604. St. Theophanes the Confessor; Our St. Simeon the New Theologian;

**St. Alphege the Bald, bishop of Winchester, England (951)** - (also known as Elphege the Elder or Elphege the Bald) Before he was raised to the dignity of bishop of Winchester in 935, Alphege was a monk or hermit. He persuaded many others to enter monastic life, including his kinsman Saint Dunstan and Saint Ethelwold, both of whom he ordained to the priesthood on the same day. His feast is still kept at Winchester and Saint Albans

**13 / 26 March — St Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople. (c. 758-829)** - he governed the holy Church with wisdom and zeal as the greatest arch-pastor of Constantinople. When Leo the Armenian made his stand against icons, he opposed the Emperor; first counselling him and then denouncing him. For this the accursed Emperor exiled him to the island of Prochonis. There was a monastery on that island, which Nicephorus himself had built in honour of St Theodore. And this confessor of the Orthodox faith spent thirteen years there, then died and went to the Lord in 827. Then all the iconoclast Emperors perished, and Michael, with his mother Theodora, came to the imperial throne in 842, and Methodius became Patriarch. Then, in 846, the relics of St Nicephorus were translated from Prochonnesus to Constantinople and placed first in the Church of St Sophia, from which he had been driven in his lifetime, and then in the Church of the Holy Apostles. The main commemoration of this great hierarch is on June 2nd, but on March 13th is commemorated the finding and translation of his uncorrupt relics. St Nicephorus was driven from Constantinople on March 13th, and on March 13th, nineteen years later, his relics were brought back to his patriarchal seat.

**Martyr Christina of Persia** - For her unwavering confession of faith in Christ, she was cruelly tortured in Persia in the fourth century. So much did they torture her, flogging her with a whip, that she became weak and died. Her soul then departed from her tortured body and entered into the joy of Christ, the King and Lord;:

**Hieromartyr Publius** - This priestly-martyr was successor to the episcopal throne of the glorious Dionysius the Areopagite in Athens. As a bishop, he was tortured by the pagans and beheaded in the second century. After a brief period of torture, he inherited life eternal.

*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt. 3:2)*

With these words, St. John the Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of our Lord began his sermons in the wilderness about the Jordan; with these words our Savior Jesus Christ began His preaching (Matt. 4:17). Without repenting it is impossible to enter the Kingdom of God; to be with Christ and feel Christ Himself within you, you must first purify yourself of all foulness of flesh and spirit, that is, free yourself of your sins. For if there can be no contact between darkness and light, it is all the more impossible between the Devil and Christ! Our Savior abides only in those souls where all is pure and nothing is foul! Thus we must all *repent* at all times and in all places—above all during these days of Great Lent, which the Holy Church recommends to all of us as days established especially for repentance.

How should we repent? To repent does not mean, as some suppose, to refrain from forbidden foods for a few days, to go to church, to make bows and prostrations more than usual, and then to stand before the Priest and answer his questions with a barely audible "yes" or "no". To repent in this way is hardly to repent at all.

No one can deny that fasting, prayer, bowing and the like are all needed if we are to repent, that these are good exercises; but we cannot, on the other hand, claim that these alone are sufficient for repentance. No, along with these things, something else is required—that which the Holy Fathers call *spiritual endeavors*. Repentance requires, not a part, but the entire power of our soul; it lies, not in one action of the soul, but in many. Above all, meditation is required for repentance; we must reveal our thoughts to our spiritual eyes, leaving nothing hidden. This is known as *self-examination*. Having recalled all our sins, we must feel revulsion toward them, suffer heartaches and pangs of conscience. This is one of the truest conditions for repentance. And yet this is not enough. For we must be *determined* not to sin again and resolve that should the Devil and our own flesh strike, we will fight against these temptations with all our might. This is all the inner side of repentance.

But we should not stop here. Every sinner is obliged in addition, *to confess his sins before a Priest*. This is very difficult for many people. *Self-love* and consequently *false modesty* often lead to a partial confession of sins, or to a confession improperly formulated, or simply to the concealment of sins from the Priest. Others, instead of condemning their sins, justify them; and some condemn others to relieve their own sense of guilt, which is even worse. This is not true repentance, for it contains *an admixture of falsehood*, and as a result does not lead to what is expected, that is, to a man leaving the spiritual meal *with peace and joy in his soul*; in such cases he leaves with the same emptiness in his heart as he felt when he came.

The confession of one who is truly repentant should be *sincere and unhypocritical*, absolutely *free*, with condemnation of oneself and justification of others. One who is sincerely repentant confesses his sins without waiting for questions from the Priest, himself pouring out his soul before the Priest as before Christ the Savior. That which a man does during Confession resembles *washing* which is performed daily by each of us. Just as the face and hands are cleansed by washing, the soul brightens and is refreshed by confession. Herein lies the victory, when we root out the weed—*self-love*—from our hearts; if we leave it in our hearts, all things connected with it also will remain—pride, envy, rage.

The soul of the repentant sinner suffers many states, but, in our opinion, one of the most perilous is *painful mistrustfulness*; because of such mistrustfulness some people cannot bring themselves to approach the Lord's Supper, believing themselves unworthy of such divine mercy. What can we say in this regard? To be brief, in such cases there is often a *temptation from the Devil* who strives to draw man away from the Lord's Supper and thus to deprive him of the eternal life promised him. So instead of resolving such questions by oneself, it is better to ask one's confessor for counsel and act according to his advice. Here obedience is better than one's own decision and will lead to *moral perfection far sooner than willfulness*.

If repentance is to be alive and effective, we must never lose *hope* in God's mercy remembering that "no sin can overcome God's love of man," and that He accepted the last sighs of the repentant thief on the Cross as his justification and salvation; if adulteresses and other sinners received the Lord's mercy, how much more will He receive the repentance of those enlightened by Holy Baptism and sealed with the gifts of Holy Spirit?!

To lose hope of forgiveness is to approach despair and perdition. Judas the traitor repented. But alas this did not save him. Why? Because he despaired and lost hope in divine mercy. Had he not lost hope, he would have been forgiven just as another Apostle, St. Peter was forgiven. The Apostle Peter denied Christ, but did not give up hope of forgiveness; he went out and *wept bitterly* (Luke 22:62). And what happened? The Lord heard his laments and forgave him everything. We, too, must act in this way; we must always remember that the Lord came down to earth, not to save the righteous, but to save sinners, that He is good, meek, long-suffering and abundant in mercy!

In such cases, that is, when we *succumb to sin*, we must act like a small child who falls down. He cries loudly, calling people to help him. What happens? No matter where the mother might be, when she hears her child's cry,

she runs to help him; she takes his hand, lifts him up and helps him take a few steps until he stands firmly on his feet. You, too, must cry when you fall down in sin; you, too, must summon our common Mother, the Most-holy Virgin Mary; call the Guardian Angel and all the saints; and know that She, the Most-blessed, Intercessor for the Christian race, will extend a helping hand to you and all others; that your Guardian Angel will appear; that all God's saints will surround you; and that the Bestower of all blessings Himself, Christ the Savior, will come!

In concluding this word with you, let us pray, brothers and sisters, to St. John the Baptist, first preacher of repentance; let us pray that he guide our footsteps along the path of repentance and salvation, as he guided his contemporaries before the Coming of the Lord. Amen.

*N.T.S.*

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# The Second Sunday of Great Lent,

## St Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica

23 February / 8 March 2015

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 2:** When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendour of Thy Godhead! And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of Heaven cried out: O Giver of Life, Christ our God, Glory to Thee!

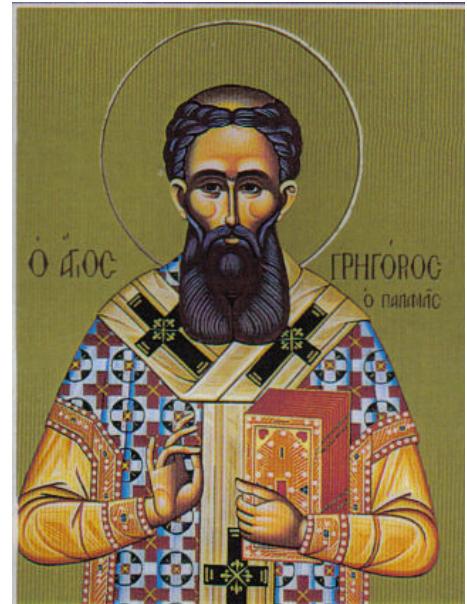
**Tropar of St. Gregory Palamas, Tone 8:** Light of Orthodoxy, pillar and teacher of the Church, adornment of monastics, invincible champion of theologians, O Gregory thou wonderworker, boast of Thessalonica, herald of grace, ever pray that our souls be saved.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 2:** Hell became afraid, O Almighty Saviour, seeing the miracle of Thy resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with Thee! And the world, O My Saviour, praises Thee forever.

**Kontakion of St Gregory Palamas, Tone 8:** O sacred and divine instrument of wisdom, joyful trumpet of theology / with one accord we sing thy praises, O Gregory inspired by God. / But since thou standest now in mind and spirit before the Original Mind // guide our minds to Him, O father, that we may cry to thee Hail, preacher of grace.

**Kontakion from the Triodion, Tone 4:** The season of the virtues hath now been revealed / and judgement is at the doors / therefore let us arise and keep the Fast / offering tears of compunction together with our alms / and let us cry: our sins are more than the sands of the sea / but do Thou pardon us, O Creator of all // that we may receive incorruptible crowns.

**St. Gregory Palamas** — Gregory's father was an eminent official at the court of the Emperor Andronicus II Palaeologus. The gifted Gregory, completing his secular studies, did not want to go into imperial service at court, but withdrew to the Holy Mountain and became a monk, living in asceticism at Vatopedi and the Great Lavra. He waged war against the heretic Barlaam, and finally overcame him. He was consecrated Metropolitan of Salonica in 1347, being glorified both as an ascetic and a theologian, both as a hierarch and a wonderworker.. He was the defender of the Hesychasts. He upheld the doctrine that the human body played an important part in prayer, and he argued that the Hesychasts did indeed experience the Divine and Uncreated Light of Tabor. To explain how this was possible, St. Gregory developed the distinction between the essence and the energies of God. He set Hesychasm on a firm dogmatic basis, by integrating it into Orthodox theology, and by showing how the Hesychast vision of Divine Light in no way undermined the doctrine that God can not be comprehended. His teachings were confirmed by the local councils held in Constantinople in 1341 and 1351. St. Gregory began by reaffirming the Biblical doctrine of man and of the Incarnation; i.e. the whole man, united in body and soul, was created in the image of God, and Christ, by taking a human body at the Incarnation, has 'made the flesh an inexhaustible source of sanctification'. The Hesychasts, so he argued, in placing emphasis on the body's part in prayer, are not guilty of a gross materialism but are simply remaining faithful to the Biblical doctrine of man as a unity. Christ took human flesh and saved the whole man; therefore it is the whole man that prays to God. How is it possible for man to know God and, at the same time, affirm that God is by nature unknowable? St. Gregory answered this question by quoting St. Basil the Great who said "We know our God from His energies, but we do not claim that we can draw near to His essence. For His energies come down to us, but His essence remains unapproachable". St. Gregory added "God is not a nature, for He is above all beings.... No single thing of all that is created has or ever will have even the slightest communion with the supreme nature, or nearness to it". Even though God's essence may be remote from us, He has revealed Himself through His energies (or grace). These energies do not exist apart from God, but are God Himself in His action and revelation to the world. It is through these energies that God enters into a direct and immediate relationship with us. When we say that the saints are 'deified' by the grace of God, we mean that they have a direct experience of God Himself through his energies (or grace), not in His essence. The vision of Light that Hesychasts receive is the same Light that surrounded Christ on Mount Tabor. It is a true vision of God in His divine energies.



### Matins Gospel X

**Epistle: St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews 1:10 - 2:3.**

10 And: "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands; 11 They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; 12 Like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail." 13 But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool?" 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

HEBREWS 2: 1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall

we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.

## WE MUST GROW AND CHANGE WHILE ON EARTH

The hereinafter provides no more opportunities for change. So this leaves our life on earth as the only time during which change is possible. St. Paul says 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation' (I Cor.6:12). Of this passage, St. John Chrysostom says: "Let us therefore strive for the mastery in the time of this gift. It is the day of grace, of grace divine, wherefore with ease even we will obtain the crown [of heaven]" (Homily XII on II Cor. 6.)

"If you approach now, you will receive both grace and mercy, for you approach 'in due season,' but if you approach then, i.e., at the Day of Judgement, no longer will you receive it...Even now it is hard for those to find repentance who sin after baptism of grace...Now is the time of the gift; let no man despair of himself. Then will be the time of despairing, when the bride chamber is shut...For still are the spectators assembled; still is the contest; still is the prize in suspense," (Ibid. Homily VII on Hebrews IV).

So how do we use this 'accepted time' to benefit us for all eternity? The Church, in her wisdom, has made available to us the sacraments for this purpose: Baptism, Confession, Communion, and Holy Unction. But none of these can help us in the depth of our being or effect the necessary essential change in us without our own contributing effort and without that crowning virtue: humility. A baptism casually buried in the mire of subsequent sin, a perfunctory confession, communion taken without the fear and devout love of God, and holy unction received without fervent belief in its power of healing - all these are useless to us. Indeed they are a mockery and a sacrilege.

The change that must take place in us must be in the heart, 'with much groaning and weeping' (Cf. Rom.8:23). It must be real. For only the real and the pure can enter heaven.

Second Reading: St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews 7:26 – 8:2

### The Gospel According To St. Mark 2: 1-12

1 At that time Jesus entered into Capernaum after some days, and it was noised that he was in the house. 2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door; and he preached the word unto them. 3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. 4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. 6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? 8 And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? 9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk? 10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) 11 I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. 12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

Brothers and sisters, we have lived this week in the light of last Sunday—the Triumph of Orthodoxy. A wonderful feature was pointed out to us in the Gospel which was then read: Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? (Jn. 1:45-46).

Both of them, Philip and Nathanael, wanted to believe in the right way, praise God rightly, that is, to be Orthodox. But for them it meant first of all to determine who was the true Messiah. With such an intention they approached Christ. Seeing Nathanael, Christ said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. Nathanael saith unto Him, whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee" (Jn. 1:47-48).

What happened under the figtree we do not know. But we do know that Christ hit on just the right point, got right to the heart of this man. Here is Nathanael's answer: "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God" (Jn. 1:49). Nathanael truly and rightly praised Christ, and in this way he became the first Orthodox man. And all because Christ touched his heart, touched something intimate lying deep, deep within Nathanael's heart.

The triumph of Orthodoxy always starts in a person's heart, and only afterwards is it expressed externally. True, sometimes there are cases when the external attracts the heart, as if waking it up. But for this to happen, there must be something in the heart which makes such an awakening possible. God demands our heart. To serve God without heart, Orthodoxy without heart—this is the same as a man without heart.

And here today's Gospel speaks about the same thing. A paralytic was brought to the Lord, carried by four people. Unable to get near Christ because of the multitude, they removed the roof of the house, broke through and lowered the bed on which the paralytic was lying. See how difficult it all was. This is the fulfilment of the commandment of love in external life. Yes, such is life in the triumph of Orthodoxy.

But where is its source? Let's listen further: 'When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee' (Mk. 2:5). These four had faith in their hearts, and this faith impelled them to make every effort to help; and seeing this faith, Jesus helped. The external happened as a result of the internal. God did not say at once to the paralytic: "Arise, take up thy bed," but said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." See, not the external first, but the internal. After all, sin was in the heart. A heart paralysed by sin could not sense God in Christ and could not rightly praise Him. And here Christ healed this heart, made it Orthodox. And then followed the external: "I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed and go thy way into thine house" (Mk. 2:11).

But what would have happened if the Lord had started with the second thing, with the external healing? The paralytic would have gotten up in the same way, would have taken his bed and gone, but only with a heart which was dead from sin. This would have been a living corpse. Here is what the Pharisees could not understand. 'Whether is it easier?' said Christ to them, "to say to the paralytic, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (He saith to the paralytic) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed and go thy way into thine house" (Mk. 2:9-11). To this paralytic the Lord gave both the internal and the external. And he walked home and brought there with him the quiet feeling of the triumph of Orthodoxy.

And here, St. Gregory Palamas, to whom this Sunday of Great Lent is dedicated, shows us so clearly by his whole life that Christian life, Orthodox life, always begins in our heart, and only then expresses itself in feats of asceticism.

#### Second Reading: St. John 10: 9-16

#### **Saints of the Week**

**14 / 27 March — St. Benedict** - born in Nursia in Italy in 480, of rich and eminent parents, he did not persevere long with his schooling, for he realised himself that he could, through book-learning, lose 'the great understanding of my soul'. And he left school 'an untaught sage and an understanding ignoramus'. He fled to a monastery where a monk, Romanus, gave him the habit, after which he withdrew to a craggy mountain, where he lived for more than three years in a cave in great struggles with his soul. Romanus brought him bread and dropped it over the wall of the crag on a rope to the mouth of the cave. When he became known in the neighbourhood, he, to flee the praise of men, moved away from that cave. He was very brutal with himself. Once, when an impure rage of fleshly lust fell on him, he stripped bare and rolled among nettles and thorns until he had driven out of himself every thought of a woman. God endowed him with many spiritual gifts: insight, healing and the driving out of evil spirits, the raising of the dead and the ability to appear to others from a distance in a dream or vision. He once discerned that he had been given a glass of poisoned wine. He made the sign of the Cross over the glass and it broke into pieces. He founded twelve monasteries, each having twelve monks at first. He later compiled the specifically 'Benedictine' rule, which is today followed in the Roman Church. On the sixth day before his death he commanded that his grave, already prepared as the saint had foreseen that his end was near, should be opened. He gathered all the monks together, gave them counsel and gave his soul to the Lord whom he had faithfully served in poverty and purity. His sister, Scholastica, lived in a women's monastery, where, guided by her brother and herself practising great asceticism, she came to great spiritual perfection. When St Benedict set his soul free, two monks, one on the road and one at prayer in a distant cell, had at the same moment the same vision: a path from earth to heaven, curtained with precious cloth and illuminated at the sides by ranks of people. At the top of that path stood a man of indescribable beauty and light, who told them that the path was prepared for Benedict, the beloved of God. After that vision, the two brethren discovered that their beloved abbot had gone from this world. He died peacefully in about 550 and went to the eternal Kingdom of Christ the King. St. Euschemon, Bishop of Lampsacus;

**St. Theognostus, Metropolitan of Kiev** - he was a Greek by origin and a successor to St. Peter of Kiev. He suffered much from the Mongol hordes, especially at the hands of Janibeg Khan. Theognostus was slandered by his own Russian people before the Mongolian emperor because he did not render the emperor any tribute for his episcopal rank. When the emperor summoned and questioned him concerning this, Theognostus replied: "Christ our God has redeemed this Church from paganism by His Precious Blood. For what and on what should I pay tribute to the pagans?" In the end he was released and returned home. He governed the Church for twenty-five years. He died to the Lord in the year 1353 A.D.

**15 / 28 March — The Holy Martyr Agapius and the seven with him: Publius, Timolaus, Romulus, Alexander, Alexander, Dionysius and Dionysius** - They all suffered in Palestinian Caesarea at the hand of Urban, the governor, in the time of the Emperor Diocletian. All of them, apart from Agapius, were very young men and were not yet Christians. They had never been baptised with water, but their baptism was of blood. One day these seven were watching how the Christians were being tortured: one in fire, another on the gallows, a third before wild beasts, and when they saw with what patience the Christians endured all these tortures, they were inflamed with zeal for Christ, bound their own hands behind their backs and, thus bound, came before Urban saying: 'We too are Christians!' Urban's flattery and threats were in vain. Agapius, a prominent inhabitant of that city, who had previously suffered somewhat for Christ, joined them, and they were inspired with an even greater faith in and love for the Lord. They were all beheaded in 303, and went to the courts of the King of heaven.

**Hieromartyr Alexander of Side, in Pamphylia** - a deputy of the Emperor Aurelius asked Alexander, "Who are you and what are you?" To that, Alexander replied that, he is a shepherd of the flock of Christ." "And where is this flock of Christ?", further inquired the wicked and suspicious governor. Alexander replied, "Throughout the entire world where men live whom Christ the God created, and among those who believe in Him, they are His sheep. But all who are fallen away from their Creator and are slaves to creation, to man-made things and to dead idols, such as you, are estranged from His flock. At the dreadful judgment of God, they will be placed on the left with the goats." The wicked judge then ordered that Alexander, first of all, be beaten with oxen straps and then thrown into a fiery furnace. But the fire did not harm him in any way. After that, he was skinned and was thrown to the wild beasts, but the beasts would not touch him. Finally, the deputy ordered that Alexander be

beheaded. Just as soon as the judge pronounced the sentence, he became possessed by an evil spirit and went insane. Howling, the judge was led before his god-idol and on the way, his evil soul was wrenched from him. St. Alexander suffered between the years 270 - 275 AD;

**Martyr Nicander of Egypt** - Nicander was skinned and then beheaded for his faith in Christ. As a physician, his crime was that he ministered to Christian martyrs and honourably buried their martyred bodies. He suffered honourable in the year 302 A.D.

**16 / 29 March — The Holy Apostle Aristobulus, one of the Seventy** - He was the brother of the Apostle Barnabas and was born in Cyprus. He was a follower of the Apostle Paul, who mentions him in his Epistle to the Romans (16:10). When the great Apostle Paul created many bishops for different parts of the world, he made this Aristobulus bishop of Britain (i. e. England). In Britain there was a wild people, pagan and wicked, and Aristobulus endured among them unmentionable torments, misfortunes and malice. They smote him without mercy, dragged him through the streets, mocked him and jeered at him. But in the end this holy man came to success by the power of the grace of God. He enlightened the people, baptised them in the name of Christ the Lord, built churches, ordained priests and deacons and finally died there in peace and went to the Kingdom of the Lord whom he had served so faithfully.

**The Holy Martyr Sabinas** - An Egyptian from the city of Hermopolis, he was the administrator of that city. In the time of a persecution of Christians he went off into a mountain with many other Christians and shut himself in a hut, where he spent the time in fasting and prayer. But a poor man who had brought him food and for whom Sabinas had done much betrayed him; as Judas did Christ, so this poor man for money (for two pieces of gold) betrayed his benefactor. Sabinas, with six others, was taken by soldiers, bound and brought to judgement. After harsh torture, he was thrown into the River Nile, where he gave his spirit to God in 287.

**The Holy Martyrs Trophimus and Thallus** - They were born in Syria and were brothers by birth. They openly and freely preached Christ and denounced the folly of the Hellenes [Greeks] and Romans. The enraged pagans decided to have them stoned to death, but when they began hurling stones upon these two holy brothers, the stones reverted and struck the assailants and the brothers remained unharmed. Afterward they were both crucified. From their crosses the brothers taught and encouraged those Christians who stood sorrowfully around. After much agony they presented their souls to the Lord to Whom they remained faithful to the end. They suffered honourably in the year 300 A.D., in the city of Bofor.

**17/ 30 March — St. Alexis, the Man of God** - Varied are the paths along which God leads those who desire to be pleasing to Him and fulfil His Law. In the time of the Emperor Honorius (393-423), there lived in Rome a high imperial dignitary, Euphemianus, very eminent and very rich. Both he and his wife, Agalais, lived lives pleasing to God. Although he was rich, Euphemianus sat down to table only once a day, at sunset. They had an only son, this Alexis, who, when he was grown up, was compelled to marry. But, on the night of the wedding, he left not only his wife but also his father, took ship and went to the town of Edessa in Mesopotamia, where the wonderful Face of the Lord Himself, sent to King Abgar, was kept. Having venerated this Face, Alexis dressed himself in simple clothing and lived for seventeen years as a poor man in that town, constantly praying to God in the porch of the church of the Mother of God. When he became known as a holy man, he shunned the praise of men and so went off and took a ship that was going to Laodicea. By the providence of God, the ship went off course and took him right to Rome. Regarding this as a cross from God, Alexis decided to go to his father's house and there, unknown, continue his life of self-denial. His father did not recognise him, but from charity allowed him to live in his courtyard in a little shack. There Alexis spent seventeen further years, living only on bread and water. Molested by the servants in many ways, he persevered to the end. And when the end drew near, he wrote a few words on a single sheet of paper, held it in his hand, lay down and breathed his last, on March 17th, 411. Then a voice was heard in the Church of the Holy Apostles, saying to the Emperor, who was present, and the Patriarch: 'Look for the Man of God.' Shortly afterwards it was revealed that this Man of God was in Euphemianus's house. The Emperor, the Pope and their whole escort came to Euphemianus's house and, after lengthy questioning, discovered that the poor man was the Man of God. When they went into his shack, they found him dead with his face shining like the sun. His parents discovered from the paper that he was their son Alexis; and his bride, who had lived for thirty-four years without him, that this was her husband, and they were overcome by immeasurable sorrow and grief. But then they were comforted, seeing how God had glorified His chosen one. For, on touching his body, many of the sick were healed, and a sweet myrrh came forth from it. He was buried in a coffin of marble and emerald. His head is preserved in the Church of St Laurus in the Peloponnese.

**St. Patrick, enlightener of Ireland** - was born in Britain, of Roman stock, probably with the name Patricius Magonus Sucatus. When he was about fourteen, in the year 403, Irish raiders carried him to their own country as a slave, and there, near Ballymena in Antrim, he first learned to pray while looking after his master's herds. The saint escaped in a ship taking dogs to Gaul and there he became a disciple of Saint Germanus of Auxerre, studying also at the monastery of Lerins. For fifteen years or so he lived abroad, but then he dreamed of Ireland and determined to return to the land of his slavery as a missionary. Saint Germanus consecrated him bishop, and he returned to Ireland in the year 432. At Tara in Meath he confronted King Laoghaire with the Christian Gospel and confounded the druids. He converted the king's daughters. He threw down the idol of Crom Cruach in Leitrim. The saint wrote that he daily expected to be violently killed or enslaved again. But in 444 he established his bishopric at Armagh, and with this city as his base placed the organisation of the Irish church on a sure foundation. 'I arise today through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity, through belief in the Threeness, through confession of the Oneness, towards the Creator of Creation. I arise today through the strength of Christ with His Baptism, through the strength of His Crucifixion with His Burial, through the strength of His Resurrection with His Ascension, through the strength of His descent for the Judgment of Doom. I arise today through the strength of the love of Cherubim, in obedience of Angels, in the service of the Archangels, in hope of resurrection to meet with reward, in prayers of Patriarchs, in predictions of Prophets, in preachings of Apostles, in faiths of Confessors, in innocence of Holy Virgins, in deeds of righteous men. I arise today through the strength of Heaven: light of Sun, brilliance of Moon, splendour of Fire, speed of Lightning, swiftness of Wind, depth of Sea, stability of Earth, firmness of Rock. I arise today through God's strength to pilot me: God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom

to guide me, God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear me, God's word to speak for me, God's hand to guard me, God's way to lie before me, God's shield to protect me, God's host to secure me: against snares of devils, against temptations of vices, against inclinations of nature, against everyone who shall wish me ill, afar and anear, alone and in a crowd. I summon today all these powers between me (and these evils): against every cruel and merciless power that may oppose my body and my soul, against incantations of false prophets, against black laws of heathenry, against false laws of heretics, against craft of idolatry, against spells of witches and smiths and wizards, against every knowledge that endangers man's body and soul. Christ to protect me today against poison, against burning, against drowning, against wounding, so that there may come abundance of reward. Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ where I lie, Christ where I sit, Christ where I arise, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me. I arise today through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity, through belief in the Threeness, through confession of the Oneness towards the Creator of creation. Salvation is of the Lord. Salvation is of the Lord. Salvation is of Christ. May Thy Salvation, O Lord, be ever with us.' wrote Patrick in the hymn we call 'Saint Patrick's Breastplate'. The saint died in the year 461 at Saul on Strangford Lough, Downpatrick;

**The Holy Martyr Marinus** - a soldier. Not only did he not want to offer sacrifices to the idols, but if others made sacrifices, he scattered and trampled them under his feet. As a result of this, Marinus was tortured and beheaded in the third century. A certain Senator, Astyrius, clothed in a priceless white garment witnessed the suffering of St. Marinus. Astyrius was so overcome with enthusiasm for the Faith of Christ, Who gives to His followers so much courage, that he placed the martyred body on his shoulders, removed it and buried it with honor. Upon seeing this, the pagans murdered him also as a Christian; St. Withburga, solitary at Holkham and East Dereham (c.743)

**18 / 31 March — St. Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem** - Born in Jerusalem in the time of Constantine the Great, he died in 386, in the time of Theodosius the Great. He was ordained priest in 346, and in 350 succeeded the blessed Patriarch Maximus on the patriarchal throne of Jerusalem. He was three times deposed from his throne and sent into exile; until in the end, in the time of Theodosius, he did not return but lived a further eight years in peace and gave his soul to the Lord. He had two great struggles: one against the Arians, who became strong under Constans, Constantine's son, and the other in the time of Julian the Apostate, with this renegade and with the Jews. In a time of Arian domination, at Pentecost, the sign of the Cross, brighter than the sun, appeared stretching over Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives and remaining several hours from nine o'clock in the morning. A letter was sent to the Emperor Constans about this happening, which was seen by all living in Jerusalem, and this served for the strengthening of Orthodoxy against the heretics. In the time of the Apostate, another sign took place. In order to humiliate the Christians, Julian arranged with the Jews for them to rebuild the Temple of Solomon. Cyril prayed to God that this should not happen. And there was a terrible earthquake which destroyed all that had been newly-built. The Jews began again, but again there was an earthquake, that destroyed not only the new building but also the old stones that were still in place beneath the earth. And so the words of the Lord came true: 'Not one stone shall remain on another.' Of this saint's many writings there has been kept his 'Catecheses', a first-class work, which sets out the faith and practice of Orthodoxy to the present day. A rare arch-pastor and a great ascetic, he was meek, humble, worn out by fasting and pale of face. After a life of great labour and knightly battle for the Orthodox faith, he entered peacefully into rest and went to the eternal courts of the Lord.

**Aninus the Wonderworker** - born in Chalcedon. He was of short stature as was Zacchaeus of old but great in spirit and faith. He withdrew from the world in his fifteenth year and settled in a hut near the Euphrates river where he prayed to God and atoned for his sins, at first with his teacher Mayum and, after his death, alone. Through the power of his prayers, he replenished a dry well with water, healed the sick of various maladies and tamed wild beasts. A trained lion accompanied him and was at his service at all times. He discerned the future. When Pionius, a stylite, was attacked and badly beaten by robbers some distance away from Aninus, Pionius decided to descend from the pillar and proceed to complain to the judges. St. Aninus "discerned the soul" of this stylite and his intention. He sent a letter to Pionius, by his lion, counselling him to abandon his intention, to forgive his assailants and to continue in his asceticism. His charity was inexpressible. The bishop of Neo-Caesarea presented him with a donkey in order to ease the burden of carrying water from the river, but he gave the donkey to a needy man who had complained to him about his poverty. The bishop presented him with another donkey and he gave that one away. Finally, the bishop gave him a third donkey, not only to serve as a water-carrier but one that Aninus was to care for and to return. Before his death Aninus saw Moses, Aaron and Or [Egyptian Ascetic] approaching him, and they called out to him, "Aninus, the Lord is calling you, arise and come with us." He revealed this to his disciples and gave up his soul to the Lord, Whom he faithfully served. He was one-hundred ten years old when his earthly life was ended.

**St. Edward the Martyr, king of England (978)** - the eldest son of the first-crowned king of England, Edgar the Peaceable, and the only King of England formally recognised as a saint by the Orthodox Church. He was slain in 978 at the instigation of his step-mother and a party within the realm who wished to secularise the monastic properties and lands. The abundant miracles which took place at his tomb bore witness to the favour he had found with our Saviour, and he has been glorified by the Church for his righteous life and his defence of the monastics. His relics were uncovered in 1931 during an archaeological dig at the ruins of Shaftesbury Abbey in Dorset, which are privately owned. Mr John Wilson Claridge, the man who found the relics and whose family 'owned' them decided in the 1980's to hand them over to the care of a group of Russian Orthodox monks in England under the jurisdiction of the Russian Church Abroad. He made this decision as he wanted the relics to be kept in a place where they would be properly venerated. A small monastic brotherhood was formed and a church building was purchased to house the relics (now the Shrine Church of St. Edward). In 1982, the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad verified the correctness of the veneration of St. Edward. The significance for England of the martyred King Edward is akin to that of the martyred Tsar for the Russian people. Holy King-martyr Edward, pray for us!

**19 March / 1 April — The Holy Martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria** - Chrysanthus was the only son of a great noble, Polemon, who moved from Alexandria to Rome. As the son of rich parents, Chrysanthus studied all the secular disciplines, having the most learned men as his teachers. But worldly wisdom confused him, and he was left ignorant of the truth. And he grieved over this. But God, who provides for each and all, assuaged the grief of the young Chrysanthus by putting copies of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles into his hands. The truth was revealed to him in the reading of these. But he wanted a teacher, and found one in the person of Carpophorus, a priest, who instructed and baptised him. But this did not please his father, who did all in his power to turn him back from the Christian faith. Then, in no way succeeding, the wicked father tried to corrupt him by shutting him up alone with shameless girls, but Chrysanthus gained the victory over himself in that, and preserved his virginity. Then his father compelled him to marry the pagan Daria, but Chrysanthus persuaded Daria to receive the Christian faith and to live with him as his sister although appearing to be married. When his father died, Chrysanthus began openly to confess Christ and to live as a Christian, both he and his whole house. In the time of the Emperor Numerian, both he and Daria were terribly tortured for their faith. The torturer Claudius himself, though, seeing the endurance of these martyrs and the wonders that were revealed at their martyrdom, embraced the Christian faith with all his house. For this, Claudius was drowned, both his sons were beheaded and his wife died on the gallows with prayer on her lips. Daria showed such endurance under martyrdom that the pagans cried out: 'Daria is a goddess!' Finally it was decreed that Chrysanthus and Daria be buried in a deep pit and covered with stones. A church was later built on the site. Near this pit was a cave, in which some Christians at one time met together for prayer and communion in memory of the holy martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria. Discovering this, the pagans rolled a stone across the entrance to the cave, and thus by death drove those Christians from this world into that better world where Christ the Lord reigns in eternity. These glorious martyrs, Chrysanthus and Daria and the others with them, among whom are Diodorus the priest and Marianus the deacon, suffered for Christ in Rome in 283 and 284;

**The Holy Martyr Pancharius.**- born in Villach, Germany [present day Austria]. He was a high-ranking officer at the court of Diocletian and Maximian. At first, he denied Christ but, being counselled by his mother and sister, he returned to the Faith of Christ and died for it in the year 302 A.D.

**20 March / 2 April — Our Holy Father John and those martyred with him** - This glorious monastery, which still exists today, was visited by our own Serbian St. Sava and endowed by several Serbian rulers. Many times it was attacked by brutal Arabs, pillaged and laid waste. But, by the Divine Providence of God, it was always restored and is preserved until today. During the reign of Constantine and Irene, it was attacked and pillaged by the Arabs. The monks did not want to flee but, counselling with their abbot Thomas, they said, "We have fled from the world into this wilderness for the sake of our love for Christ and it would be shameful if we fled from the wilderness out of fear of men. If we are slain here, we will be slain because of our love for Christ for Whose cause we came to live here." Having decided, they awaited the armed Arabs, unarmed as lambs before wolves. Some of the monks the Arabs killed with arrows and some they sealed off in the cave of St. Sabbas. They lighted a fire at the entrance of the cave and all were suffocated by the smoke. Thus many of them died as martyrs for the sake of Christ and were translated into the Kingdom of Him Whom they loved and for Whose love they perished. They suffered honourably prior to the Feast of the Resurrection in 796 A.D., during the reign of Constantine and Irene and Elijah, the Patriarch of Jerusalem. A just punishment quickly befell these savage attackers. Returning to their tents, they began to quarrel among themselves and in mutual combat all were slain. This occurred in the year 796 A.D.;

**The Holy Martyr Photina** - This was the Samaritan woman who had the rare fortune to converse with the Lord Christ Himself at the Well of Jacob, near Sychar (St. John 4:4-31). Believing in the Lord, Photina afterwards went to preach His Gospel with Victor and Josiah her two sons, and with her five sisters, Anatolia, Phota, Photida, Parasceve and Cyriaca. They had gone to Carthage in Africa. There they were arrested and taken to Rome during the reign of Emperor Nero and were thrown into prison. By God's Divine Providence, Domnina, the daughter of Nero, came into contact with St. Photina and was converted to the Faith of Christ by her. After imprisonment they all suffered for the sake of Christ. Photina, who for the first time was enlightened with the light of truth at the well of Sychar, was now thrown into a well where she died and entered into the eternal kingdom of Christ;

**St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, bishop (687)** - one of the greatest English saints and missionaries, became a monk of Melrose abbey on the River Tweed 'then ruled by Abbot Eata, the gentlest and simplest of men,' as the Venerable Bede observed. The prior of Melrose, named Boisil, taught Cuthbert the Bible and the pattern of a devout life, and when Boisil died, Cuthbert became prior in his place. He would preach throughout the surrounding countryside, riding many miles on horseback to win the erring for Christ. 'Cuthbert was so great a speaker and had such a light in his angelic face,' wrote Bede, 'he had also such a love for proclaiming his good news, that none hid their innermost secrets from him.' But the saint preferred the life of a hermit and secured Eata's permission to live as one for eight years on the island of Farne. In the year 684 he was appointed, unwillingly, Bishop of Hexham. Cuthbert preferred Lindisfarne, where Eata was bishop, to Hexham and the two men exchanged bishoprics. He had two more years to live.