



14th Sunday After Pentecost

Hiromartyr Eutyches

24 August / 6 September 2015

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

Tropar of St Eutyches tone 4: O disciple of the holy Apostles, thou wast a teacher of godliness/ and didst openly proclaim the incarnation of the Word./ Thou didst suffer as a martyr and confirm the word of Faith by thy miracles./ O Hieromartyr and Father Eutyches/ pray to Christ our God for our souls.

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

Kondak of Eutyches tone 3: Thou wast a successor of the Apostles and an example to bishops O Eutyches who didst die as a martyr./ Thou didst shine like the sun and illuminate all,/ dispelling the darkness of godlessness./ Wherefore we venerate thee as Christ's divine servant.

Matins Gospel III

Epistle: Corinthians 1:21 - 2:4

Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, Who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand. But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me? And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

WHO ALSO HAS SEALED US AND GIVEN US THE SPIRIT IN OUR HEARTS AS A DEPOSIT

Again, from the past He establishes the future. For it is He Who establishes us in Christ (that is, who does not suffer us to be shaken from the faith which is in Christ) and He Who anointed us and gave the Spirit in our hearts. How will He not give us the future things? For He gave the principles and the foundations, and the root and the fount (to wit the true knowledge of Him, the partaking of the Spirit) how will He not give the things that come of these? ...And what is 'anointed,' and 'sealed?' He gave the Spirit, by Whom He did both these things, making at the same time prophets and priests and king, for in old times these three ranks were anointed ...For we are both to enjoy a kingdom and to be made priests by offering our bodies for a sacrifice (for he says 'present your members a living sacrifice to God') and moreover we are constituted prophets too: for 'the things eye has not seen, nor ear heard,' (I Cor. 2:9) these have been revealed to us. And in another way, too, we become kings: if we have the mind to get dominion over our unruly thoughts, for such a one is a king and more than one who wears a diadem.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily III on II Corinthians I, 4, 5. B#56, pp. 289-290.

Gospel: St. Matthew 22: 1-14

The Lord said this parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, And sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding." ' But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

THE WEDDING FEAST

Such a Gospel the Holy Church offers today for our attention: the Gospel about the wedding feast. And in verses 10 to 13 is the section which refers to both the good and the evil ones who gathered at the meal. And when the lord entered, he found one man who was not dressed in a wedding garment. And just for this, that he was not wearing a wedding garment, such a terrible punishment followed. He was thrown out, bound, and was cast into a place of fire. For us this may even be incomprehensible. What is this actually? God is merciful, compassionate, and suddenly such a terrible punishment. Here is something we must understand. Let us look at it. If you remember, brothers, the Gospel which was read Sunday before last, you will recall also the pious young man who approached the Lord and asked Him what to do in order to enter the Kingdom of God. The Lord said, Fulfil the commandments. He said that he had fulfilled them. But seeing his heart, the Lord said: Give away everything you possess and follow me (Mt. 19:16-21).

The Lord called the young man to follow Him, but this young man was rich. And he trusted in these earthly riches, in the things that surround us. He somehow didn't understand that this very night his soul might be taken away and pass into eternal life. And what did he go away with? The Lord called him for renewal, to remove from his heart all the scabs, which are human passions. The Lord called. But he had riches which made him think that this earth is ours and is the purpose of our life. This is all we have: our houses, our villas, our cars, our relationships with each other. And we don't notice that one after another we depart. So this means that the Gospel of the Sunday before last is pointing out: do not trust, do not persist in your strivings for possession of earthly things, because this very night eternity may open for us. The earth is given to us only as a means of receiving those things which should be in a man's soul. And our soul should be suffused, as if saturated with the Beatitudes.

And this past Sunday. In the Gospel reading it told about the vineyard workers. The lord created the vineyard, gave them livelihood for their work. This livelihood consisted of everything that was needed for their life. But they, like the young man, accepted in their heart that this vineyard was their riches, that it belonged to them. This very vineyard, which was serving only as a means of acquiring goodness of heart, became for them an object of temptation. They decided to use it as their own. And therefore, they drove off all symptoms that were telling them that, after all, this was not theirs, that it belonged to the Lord; and you have to do what the Lord requires of you: cultivate the vineyard. Then you will receive in your heart that goodness with which you can depart from this vineyard and go to something much better and greater, to something which God has prepared for you. But they did not pay attention to these symptoms. The vineyard became for them such a temptation, as the earth is for us, in which we seem to have everything we need. On it we build our villas, and close by are lying Lazaruses—beggars, widows, unfortunate children who have to be raised. But we do not concern ourselves with them. We are busy with our fine clothes, our meals, with such matters that will remain here. And the person departs into eternal life hungry, without good deeds.

Now that we have analysed these two Gospels, we ask: Why did the Lord tell this parable, and why does the Holy Church offer it today for our attention? Everyone who knows the Gospel knows also that, in addition to the Evangelist Matthew whose Gospel was read today, the Evangelist Luke also refers to this parable in some detail (Lk. 14:15-24). It tells there how Christ was invited to the meal of Simon the Pharisee. At this meal Christ saw what the Jews did who accepted the law of Moses, how they changed the law of Moses into a means of their own greatness and pride. And Christ, seeing this and feeling sorry for Simon who had invited Him, started to teach him. This was heard by all who were present at the meal. And they were supposedly right-believing Jews, Pharisees of Pharisees. And when Christ began to speak, He was for them...who was He? Just a rabbi. Here one of the Jews could not contain himself. And when Christ said that people will receive for their good deeds the Kingdom of God, he exclaimed, "Blessed is He that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God!" (Lk.14: 15). Blessed! Because this blessedness belongs to the children of Abraham; what you are talking about belongs to us. Why bother with good deeds? The promise which was given to Moses is ours and we are using it—we, the Jews. This is our kingdom.

Then Christ, answering about this "kingdom," gave them this parable. Here He pointed out that the Jews were called by God for such a long time to receive blessedness, were called to a pure life; but they did not come. They were busy in the same way as that young man, as the workers in the vineyard—with earthly things. Apparently they were building for themselves palaces, buying unfortunate slaves, living in comfort, and they had no concern for anything else. And therefore, why bother with a king's feast? So their response to this feast was such that almost everyone refused to come. Then the Lord called his soldiers and through the soldiers called everyone, both evil and good, without discrimination: everyone had to come.

In the East when a feast was given, not only was food presented but also raiment. In this way, when garments were given to those who came—harlots, tax collectors, and other sinners—everyone was given an equal garment. But among them was also a Pharisee who entered. What he saw seemed horrible to him. Among those who were invited were great sinners, harlots, and tax collectors. He did not want to be on a level with them. His own garment, as it appeared to him, was much better. And he remained in it. The king entered to look at the guests and said to him: "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless" (Mt. 22:12). But in his soul one could imagine that he was rebelling. Rebelling, because those present at the wedding feast were all sinners. And he, as it seemed a righteous man, a son of Abraham, here he had to sit together with them. And the most degrading thing of all was that they wanted him to exchange his rich garment for the garment in which all the sinners were dressed, for this wedding garment. No...never.

So what happened—happened! The Lord ordered him to be bound for disrupting unity. What unity? The unity of the Church of Christ. See, brothers and sisters, how important this unity is, how precious the Church of Christ is in the eyes of the Lord. So let us obey the voice of the Church; let us fulfil with our whole soul whatever she requires of us; let us keep the garment which she has given us. And may it never happen to us what happened to him, who was not wearing a wedding garment.

Saints of the Week

24 August / 6 September - The Hieromartyr Eutyches - one of the lesser apostles, born in Sebastopol, he was a disciple and friend of the Apostles John the Theologian and Paul. Although he was not included in the Seventy, he was called an apostle by virtue of having been a disciple of the great apostles, and because he showed true apostolic zeal in the service of the Gospel. Consecrated as a missionary bishop, St Eutyches travelled widely, having an angel as a companion, and he also received heavenly bread from an angel while in prison. When his body was flayed with serrated iron rods, his blood ran down mingled with a sweet myrrh. He was thrown into the flames and before wild beasts, and was finally beheaded with the sword in Sebastopol; The Holy Martyr Tation; The Holy Martyr Syra; Our Holy Father Arsenius of Komel; St George Limniotes.

25 August / 7 September - The Holy Apostle Titus - One of the Seventy, he was born in Crete and educated in Greek philosophy and poetry. Led by a dream, he read the Prophet Isaiah and came to doubt all Hellenic learning. Hearing of Christ the Lord, he went to Jerusalem with some other Cretans, and himself heard the words of the Saviour and saw His mighty works. His youthful heart clave utterly to Christ. He was later baptised by the Apostle Paul, whom he served in the works of the Gospel as a son serves his father. Paul loved Titus so greatly that he sometimes called him his son (Titus 1:4), and sometimes his brother (II Cor. 12:18). Titus travelled widely with the great Apostle of the people, and was by him made Bishop of Crete. At the time of Paul's suffering in Rome, Titus was there, and buried the body of his teacher and spiritual father. He then returned to Crete, where he had great success in baptising the pagans, and wisely governed the Church to great old age. He entered into rest at the age of ninety-four; .The Holy Apostle Bartholomew - Today is the commemoration of the translation of St. Bartholomew's relics, while his main feast falls on June 11th. When this great Apostle was crucified in Ourbanopolis in Armenia, Christians took his body and buried it in a leaden coffin. When numerous miracles had been wrought over the Apostle's grave, especially healings of the sick—which led to an increase in the number of Christians—the pagans took the coffin containing Bartholomew's relics and cast it into the sea. At the same time, they threw in four other coffins with the relics of four martyrs: Papias, Lucian, Gregory and Acacius. By God's providence, the coffins did not sink, but floated, carried by the waves, to various places: Acacius's to the city of Askalon, Gregory's to Calabria, Lucian's to Messina, Papias's to another place in Sicily and Bartholomew's to the island of Lipara. By some mysterious revelation, the Bishop of Lipara, Agathon, learned of the approach to Lipara of the relics of St Bartholomew. Agathon, with his clergy and people, went out to the shore and awaited the coffin with great joy. On that occasion, many of the sick were healed by the holy Apostle's relics. They were placed in the church of St Bartholomew and lay there until the time of Theophilus the Iconoclast (about 839), then, when the Moslems threatened the Liparites, the Apostle's relics were taken to the town of Benevento. Thus God glorified His apostle by miracles, both during his lifetime and after his death; the Holy Confessors of Edessa; St. Menas, Patriarch of Constantinople; at York the translation of the relics of St. Hilda of Whitby (680).

26 August / 8 September - The Holy Martyr Adrian and his wife Natalia - Husband and wife, they were both of noble and wealthy families in Nicomedia. Adrian was the governor of the Praetorium and a pagan, and Natalia was a secret Christian. They were both young, and had lived in wedlock for thirteen months in all before their martyrdom. When the wicked Emperor Maximian visited Nicomedia, he ordered that the Christians be seized and put to torture. There were twenty-three Christians hidden in a cave near the city. Someone handed them over to the authorities and they were cruelly flogged with leather whips and staves, and thrown into prison. They were then taken from prison and brought before the Praetor for their names to be noted. Adrian looked at these people, tortured but unbowed, peaceful and meek, and he put them under oath to say what they hoped for from their God, that they should undergo such tortures. They spoke to him of the blessedness of the righteous in the Kingdom of God. Hearing this, and again looking at these people, Adrian suddenly turned to the scribe and said: 'Write my name along with those of these saints; I also am a Christian.' When the Emperor heard this, he asked him: 'Have you lost your mind?' Adrian replied: 'I haven't lost it, but found it!' Hearing this, Natalia rejoiced greatly, and, when Adrian sat chained with the others in prison, came and ministered to them all. When they flogged her husband and put him to various tortures, she encouraged him to endure to the end. After long torture and imprisonment, the Emperor ordered that they be taken to the prison anvil, for their arms and legs to be broken by hammers. This was done and Adrian, along with the twenty-three others, breathed his last under the vicious tortures. Natalia took their relics to Constantinople and there buried them. After several days, Adrian appeared to her, bathed in light and beauty and calling her to come to God, and she peacefully gave her soul into her Lord's hands.

Prayer to the Holy Martyrs of Christ - Adrian and Natalia: O sacred couple, holy martyrs of Christ Adrian and Natalia, blessed spouses and valiant athletes! Harken unto us who beseech you with tears, and send down upon us all that is profitable for our souls and bodies; and entreat Christ God, that He have mercy upon us and deal with us according to His mercy, that we not perish in our sins. Yea, O holy martyrs, accept ye our cry of supplication, and by your intercessions deliver us from famine, pestilence, earthquake, flood, fire, hail, the sword, invasion of aliens and civil strife, from sudden death and from all misfortune, grief and pain, that ever strengthened by your supplication and mediation, we may glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is due all glory, honour and worship, with his unoriginate Father and His all-holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen. Our Holy Father Tithoes: St Zer-Jacob; The Miracle of the Most Holy Mother of God in

The miraculous renewals of icons was first witnessed in the Convent in Harbin on the first Tuesday of Great Lent in 1925. A dark Icon of the Mother of God "of the Akathist" suddenly became light. A priest was asked to serve a Moleben before the renewed Icon, but when he expressed doubts as to whether the Icon had in fact been dark, it quickly became dark again. Abbess Moscow in 1395 Rufina commented that the Icon darkened again due to the "soot of unbelief," but she prophesied that before the renewal of Russia the Icon would once again be renewed. Another miracle of God's Mercy was manifested in the Convent on August 26, 1925 (o.s.), the Feast of the Icon of the Vladimir Mother of God. An Icon of the Vladimir Mother of God was miraculously renewed in Abbess Rufina's hands. In 1924 a pious and elderly lady gave the old and damaged Icon to the Convent, remarking to the novice who accepted it that she couldn't throw it away in spite of its condition. Abbess Rufina

accepted the Icon and placed it in a prominent place in the Church, which at that time had few icons. Because of its condition many people complained, and so the Icon was moved to a corner of the Altar. Even there, however, the presence of the Icon was criticized by the clergy. On the Feast day of the Icon, when several people were to be released from prison, Abbess Rufina decided to bless them with the Icon. She requested that the Icon be brought from the Altar and when Mother Ariadna handed it to her, it quickly began to lighten, the way that fog scatters in the sunlight, and became cleaned of the dust and dirt that time had settled upon it. Holding the Holy Icon in her hands, Abbess Rufina exclaimed, "Look, look, a miracle is taking place. The Icon is being restored!" After only a few minutes the Icon looked as though it had just been painted. The face of the Mother of God was lightened, the tin covering was brightened, and the halo above the face of the Virgin radiated a flowing light. This miracle occurred at 2 p.m. An hour later a Moleben was served by one of the hieromonks of the Convent, who only a few days earlier, had recommended that the Icon be burned and the ashes thrown into the river. With tears he begged forgiveness from the Mother of God. This miracle strengthened the Sisters in their faith that the Mother of God was Herself directing their lives invisibly, and was watching over their spiritual progress. Seeing in this miracle an indication from the Mother of God as to what the Convent should be called, Metropolitan Meletius blessed the changing of the name of the Convent to the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God. On April 26, 1926 there was a fire at the Convent and one Icon, that of God the Sabaoth, was miraculously preserved and renewed. A flow of miraculous healings began to occur from that Icon as well as from the Icon of the Vladimir Mother of God. The apparition of these obvious signs of God's Mercy, began to be widely known, not only among the Russian population, but among the Chinese as well, not only in the city of Harbin, but along the whole territory of the Chinese Eastern Railroad.

27 August / 9 September – Fast Day - Our Holy Father Pimen the Great - an Egyptian by birth and a great Egyptian ascetic. As a boy, he visited various spiritual teachers and gathered proven experience as a bee gathers honey from flowers. Pimen once begged the elder Paul to take him to St Paisius. Seeing him, Paisius said: 'This child will save many; the hand of God is on him.' In time, Pimen became a monk and drew two of his brothers to monasticism. Their mother once came to see her sons, but Pimen would not allow her in, asking through the door: 'Which do you want more: to see us here and now, or in the other world in eternity?' Their mother went away joyfully, saying: 'If I will see you for certain there, I don't need to see you here.' In the monastery of these three brothers, governed by the eldest, Abba Anoub, the rule was as follows: at night, four hours were passed in manual work, four hours in sleep and four in reading the Psalter. The day was passed, from morning to noon, in alternate work and prayer, from mid-day to Vespers in reading and after Vespers they prepared their meal, the only one in the twenty-four hours, and this usually of some sort of cabbage. Pimen himself said about their life: 'We ate what was to hand. No-one ever said: "Give me something else", or "I won't eat that". In that way, we spent our whole life in silence and peace.' He lived in the fifth century, and entered peacefully into rest in great old age. The Holy Martyr Phanurius - who he was and when he lived is not known, but he is much venerated in Rhodes and Crete. In 1500, he appeared to some people on the island of Rhodes, where he also showed wonders of healing. There is found there an old icon of him, in which he is depicted as a young soldier holding a cross in his right hand and a burning candle in his left. St Phanurius is also much venerated in Egypt. There is a tradition that his mother was a great sinner, whom not even he could convert. But his filial love for his mother was great beyond measure, and he prayed more for his mother's salvation than his own. When the pagans stoned him to death for Christ, St Phanurius prayed to God: 'For the sake of these my sufferings, Lord, help all those who will pray to Thee for the salvation of Phanurius's sinful mother.' In Egypt, many Christians pray thus: 'O Lord, save Phanurius's mother and help me, a sinner' —and many receive help through this prayer. Our Holy Father Pimen of Palestine: St Hosius of Cordova: The Hieromartyr Kuksha, and Pimen the Faster; St. Caesarius, bishop of Arles (543).

28 August / 10 September - Our Holy Father Moses the Negro - An Ethiopian, he was at first a robber and the leader of a robber band, but he then became a penitent and a great ascetic. As a slave, Moses escaped from his owner and became a robber. Because of his great physical strength and recklessness, the robbers chose him as their leader. Suddenly his conscience was filled with remorse and repentance for the crimes he had committed. He left the band, went to a monastery and gave himself entirely to obedience to his spiritual father and to the rule of the monastery. He made great use of the teaching of Saints Macarius, Arsenius and Isidore. Later, he withdrew to solitude in a cell, where he gave himself utterly to physical labour, prayer, vigils and pondering on God. Tormented by the demon of lust, he confessed to his spiritual father, Isidore, and received from him the advice to fast as much as possible, and never to eat his fill. When this proved to be of no help, he, at the elder's advice, began to keep night-vigils and to pray standing; he then got into the way of carrying water from a distant well for the older monks. After six years of terrible striving, St Isidore finally healed him miraculously of the lustful thoughts, imaginings and dreams visited on him by the demon. He was ordained priest in old age. He founded a monastery of his own, and had seventy-five disciples, himself living to the age of seventy-five. He foresaw his own death, and one day told his disciples to flee, as barbarians were coming to attack the monastery. When his disciples urged him to flee as well, he told them that he must perish in the attack, for he had himself at one time done violence, according to the words: 'all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword' (Matt. 26:52). So he stayed, with six of his brethren. The barbarians came and ran them through. One of the brethren, hiding nearby, saw seven shining wreaths descend upon the seven martyrs. Abba Moses used to say, "Secret withdrawal (from work) maketh dark the mind, but or a man to endure and to persevere in his works maketh light the mind in our Lord, and it strengtheneth and fortifieth the soul." and " These four things lead to fornication: eating and drinking, oversleeping, negligence and decoration of clothes." "If you want to repent to God, beware of living in luxury, for this stimulates all passions and dispels the fear of God from the heart." The uncovering of the relics of St. Job of Pochaev; Our Holy Father Sava of Pskov and Krypetsk; The Assembly of all the Men of God of the Kiev Caves.

29 August / 11 September – Fast Day - The Beheading of the Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John - Herod Antipas, son of the Herod who slew the young children in Bethlehem at the time of the birth of the Lord Jesus, was ruler of Galilee when John the Baptist was preaching. This Herod was married to the daughter of Aretas, an Arabian prince. But Herod, an evil branch of evil stock, put away his lawful wife and took Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, to live with him while Philip was still alive. John the Baptist stood up against this lawlessness and strongly denounced Herod, at which Herod threw him into prison. At the time of some feast at his court in Sebastia in Galilee, Salome, the daughter of Herodias and Philip, danced for the guests. Herod, in his cups and carried away by her dancing, promised her whatever she asked, even to the half of his kingdom. Instructed by her mother, she asked for the head of John the Baptist. Herod commanded that John be beheaded in the prison and his head brought on a platter. John's disciples took the body of their teacher by night and buried it, but Herod tore out John's tongue with a needle and then buried his head in an unclean place. What later happened to John's head is recorded and can be read the Prologue under February 24th. God's punishment was quickly visited upon this group of evildoers. Prince Aretas, to avenge his daughter's honour, attacked Herod with his army and brought him to his knees. The defeated Herod was condemned by the Roman Caesar, Caligula, to exile first in Gaul and then in Spain. As exiles, Herod and Herodias lived in need and debasement until the earth opened and swallowed them up. Salome, Herodias's daughter, came to a bad end in the river Sikaris (Sula). The death of John took place before the Passover, but its commemoration on August 29th was instituted because it was on this day that a church, that had been built over his grave in Sebastia by the Emperor Constantine and the Empress Helena, was consecrated. In this church were also placed the relics of John's disciples, Eliseus and Audius. Our Holy Mother Theodora of Salonica; The Holy Martyr Vassilia; The Holy Martyr Anastasius;

St. Sebbi, king of the East Saxons (c.694), monk - he became the king of Essex (or the East Saxons) following the conversion of the kingdom by St. Cedd in 664. He ruled at a time when there was relative peace and the realm was under the domination of Mercia, a nearby kingdom. Sebbi abdicated after ruling thirty years and became a monk in London. He died there and was buried in the old St. Paul's.

30 August / 12 September - Afterfeast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist - Ss Alexander, John and Paul the New, Patriarchs of Constantinople - Alexander took part in the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, in place of the aged Patriarch Metrophanes, whom he then succeeded. When certain philosophers tried to dispute with him about faith, he said to one of them: 'In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, I command you to remain silent!', and the philosopher became dumb from that moment. By his prayers, also, Arius's life was shortened. Alexander died at the age of ninety-eight, in the year 340. St John the Faster governed the Church in the days of the wicked Emperor Anastasius, an Acephalite heretic. He entered into rest in 595. St Paul IV governed the Church for five years and eight months and renounced the throne to receive the Great Habit secretly, to repent of his sins when he first supported the iconoclasts. He was the predecessor of the great Tarasius, and entered into rest in the time of Irene and Constantine, in 784; The Assembly of the Enlighteners and Teachers of Serbia; Our Holy Father Christopher; St Eulalius, Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia; At Todi in Umbria, Ss. Terence & Flaccus, martyrs; Translation of the relics of St. Alexander Nevsky.

REFLECTION

If you were to ask many people why they do not go to Church to pray, they will generally answer you: I have no time, I have to work! Just look at those people who only work and do not go to Church, placing their trust only in their work and compare them with those who divide their time between work and prayer and you will quickly be convinced that the latter are more well off and, what is more important, they are more satisfied. It is said about two neighboring tailors how unequal they were according to their work and prayer and according to their wealth and satisfaction. One of them had a large family and the other was a bachelor. The first had the habit of going to church every morning for prayer and the bachelor never went to church. Not only did the first work less but was even less a skillful master than the other. He had enough of everything and the other lacked everything. The first one asked the other how is it that he has everything although he works less? The one who prays to God [Bogomoljac a devout person] responded that he attends church every day and, along the way, finds lost gold and he invited his neighbor, the bachelor, to go with him to prayer and they will share the discovered gold. Both neighbors began to attend church regularly and soon both became equal in abundance as well as in satisfaction. Naturally, they found no gold along the way but the blessing of God multiplies the abundance of true devout men. Those who: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" (St. Matthew 6:31), God adds and multiplies all that is necessary for their physical life.

CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the providence of God which protected David from falling into the hands of Saul (1 Samuel 23 1 Kings 23): 1. How Saul came to besiege the city of Keliath [Celia] where David was but God revealed this to David and David fled beforehand; 2. How Saul almost captured David in Maon but word came to Saul that the Philistines had attacked the land; 3. How the Lord always watches over the righteous and how He confounds the plans of the unrighteous.

15th Sunday After Pentecost

Placing of the Venerable Sash of the Most Holy Mother of God in Constantinople

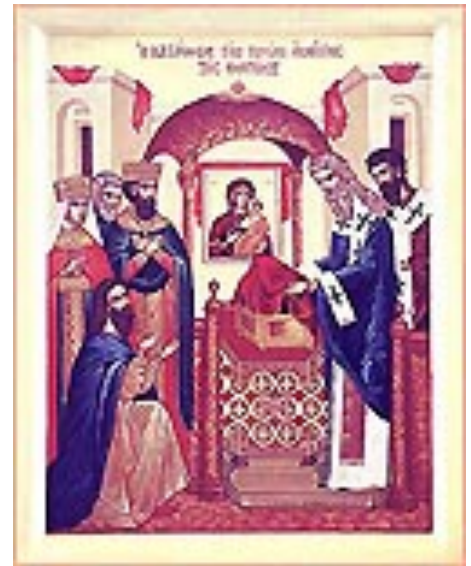
31 August / 13 September 2015

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

Troparion of the Mother of God tone 8: O ever-Virgin mother of God, shelter of mankind, / thou hast given a powerful legacy to thy people, / thine immaculate body's tunic and girdle which remain incorrupt through thy pure childbirth. / For in thee time and nature are renewed, / and we implore thee to obtain peace for the world and great mercy for our souls.

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

Kontakion of the Mother of God tone 2: Thy precious girdle, O Mother of God, which encircled the womb that held God/ is an invincible strength for thy flock/ and an unfailing treasury of grace, O Ever-Virgin Mother.



Matins Gospel IV

Epistle: II Corinthians 4: 6-15

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed-- Always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

WE HAVE THE SAME SPIRIT OF FAITH...KNOWING THAT HE WHO RAISED UP THE LORD JESUS WILL ALSO RAISE US UP

And where did He command light to shine out of darkness? In the beginning and in prelude to the Creation ...Now He said nothing, but Himself became Light for us ...We do not see sensible objects by the shining of this Light, but God Himself through Christ. Do you see the invariableness in the Trinity?...

And what is the 'dying of the Lord Jesus,' which they bore about? Their daily deaths by which also the resurrection was shown ...Do you see how he has discovered yet another reason for the trials?... That His life may also be manifested in our body ...We bear about His dying so the power of His life may be made manifest, who did not permit mortal flesh - even undergoing such great suffering - to be overcome by the blizzard of these calamities ...And he says in another place, 'If we die with Him, we will also live with Him' (II Tim. 2:11). For as we endure His dying now, and choose while living to die for His sake: so also He will choose, when we are dead, to beget us then into life. For if we come from life into death, He will also lead us by the hand from death into life.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily VIII, 3, & IX, 1, on II Corinthians IV. B#56, pp. 319, 321-322

[Epistle for Theotokos Hebrews 9:1-7](#)

Gospel for Sunday: Matthew 22: 35-46

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool?" "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT IN THE LAW

"Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" (Mt. 22:35).

If you were attentive to how the Holy Church, revealing to us the mystery of our salvation, gradually shows us in the Sunday Gospel readings the way of resurrection for the human soul, then you also noticed that starting from Easter until today there were several cycles. One of these cycles convinced us that the Lord is our Saviour, our Saviour from sin, and that He is All-powerful. And further we were shown the dispositions, the states of mind which should be in the soul of every Christian, in order to perceive that power which the Lord has given to us, establishing our salvation in the plan of eternal life. These Gospel readings opened to us the feeling of humility and devotion to God, in understanding the Word of God as acting in our life. And then these cycles changed into others, and we came to a cycle which revealed that all this which God gives us can be accomplished, but only within the limits of the Church. Like the boat in which the Apostles were sailing, it preserved the Apostles. And this boat was like the laws in which lived and lives the Church, which protects those who are in the boat from all the troubles that occur outside of it.

But this is possible only if, on our part, we are obedient to the Lord. And such obedience is connected with certain experiences, in the same way the Apostles experienced them: storm and fear. But if we presume upon the power of God, then we lose obedience and, instead of obedience, we receive boldness. And the same could happen to us which happened to the Apostle Peter, who in a transport of delight and daring, asked Christ for permission to walk to Him on the waves. And Christ in a way answered him: walk, if you want to. This was no longer obedience; this was not the will of Christ, but the will of Peter. And then Peter found himself alone in the water; the waves were so high that Christ was not even visible. Here Peter came to his senses: the law of nature took hold of him; he became frightened and started to drown. And only a strong faith in the Lord and the constant trust in the Almighty saved him (Mt. 14:24-31).

And further: in the Gospel about the filling of five thousand people with five loaves of bread, again the Lord seemed to be talking in a mysterious way about the Church. "Give ye them to eat!" He said to the Apostles, declining their attempt to let the people go into the neighbouring villages to buy food (Mt. 14:16). Does this not mean that He entrusted them, the Apostles and their successors, with feeding people the true food, His Body and Blood, in the Sacrament of the Divine Eucharist? And when He ordered the people to sit in groups, does it not symbolise the organisation of the Church?

The Sunday Gospel readings were convincing us more and more that Christian life is possible only within the Church, under the definite laws of the Church, along with the Divine Eucharist, which is the Tree of Life of the New Testament. So after having brought us to this understanding, the Church begins to show us, explains to us what the life is which surrounds us.

If you will remember, the Gospel before last told us about a certain young man who approached Christ (Mt. 19:16-23). And this young man asked Christ: what shall I do to receive the Kingdom of Heaven? He was like a materialist. He fulfilled accurately everything prescribed by the Law. He himself said, I have fulfilled the commandments. But he fulfilled them as a tradition, as an obligation. And the Lord saw this and said: Then reject everything that you have. In other words, reject the hope you have put in your riches. The young man froze. He could not understand how it is possible to reject this power, the power of the world. Why, through riches we can have everything we want. In such a way the enemy of the human race tempted man and perverted our understanding.

Following that, the last Gospel reading spoke about the workers in the vineyard (Mt. 21:33-42). This vineyard represents in a parable our whole world. The Lord owns this vineyard. And the workers in the vineyard are only servants, who receive everything necessary for their maintenance. And in the end, everything which the vineyard produces must be given back to their Lord. But the vineyard workers saw the beauty of the vineyard, the comfort of life, and decided that in this consists the whole meaning of life, is life itself. They would live. And therefore, when the Heir came, they killed Him. They said to themselves: What do we need Him for? The vineyard is ours. This is ours.

This is exactly what we are doing now. We say of the world and worldly goods: This is ours. And we cannot conceive leaving here. How are we going to part with all our comforts of life? How are we going to reject all our houses, our airplanes, all the inventions which seek to know the world and its mysteries, technology, everything that we are using? How are we going to leave?

And now today the Holy Church points out: we have to fulfil the commandments, and we have to participate in the life around us. Why? Well, because God has sent us here so that through these circumstances, as a means, we would obtain that which is needed. But what is needed? At the creation of man, God gave him the commandments: love for God and neighbour.

And these commandments we must fulfil. The Lord, Who came on earth, came to save man. But how? By fulfilling the commandments of love for God and neighbour, and by giving strength to fulfil these commandments. And in fulfilling these commandments, we receive blessedness.

During His whole evangelistic life Christ was tempted by Satan. In the beginning it was in the wilderness: the temptation was by bread, by miracle, and by kingdom. Rejecting all these temptations, Christ fulfilled the commandment of love for God. After that, the enemy did not approach Christ openly, but only through the hearts of men, hoping to stir up in Christ hatred towards neighbour. But Christ never became angry at a man, but only at the power of the enemy, by saying: "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Mk. 8 :33). In such a way the Lord Himself fulfilled this great commandment, and in His Sacraments gives even to us the forces to fulfil it.

So let us fulfil it! "Which is the great commandment?" asked the lawyer. And the Lord answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Mt. 22:36-40).

The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei.

Gospel for Nativity Luke 10: 38-42, 11: 27-28

Saints of the week

31 August / 13 September - The Feast of the Sash of the Most Holy Mother of God - At her Dormition, the most holy Mother of God left her girdle to the holy Apostle Thomas. This girdle was later taken to Constantinople and kept there in a sealed casket in the church of the Mother of God at Blachernae, founded by the Empress Pulcheria. This casket was never opened until the time of the Emperor Leo the Wise (886-912) . Leo's wife, the Empress Zoe, was taken sick in soul and, as the result of a mysterious vision, desired that the girdle of the holy Mother of God be placed upon her. The Emperor asked the Patriarch, and the casket was opened. The girdle was taken out and placed upon the sick Empress, who immediately recovered. This feast was instituted as a memorial of this wonder. One part of this girdle is to be found in Georgia, in Zugdid. This came about as follows: The daughter of the Emperor Romanus was healed by the aid of this girdle and, later, when her father gave her to King Abuchaz of Georgia, she took a part of this girdle with her. By order of the Russian Tsar Alexander I, a special church was built in Mingrelia in Zugdid, where this piece of the wonderworking raiment of the holy Mother of God is kept.; St Gennadius, Patriarch of Constantinople; The Hieromartyr Cyprian' St John, Metropolitan of Kiev; at Glastonbury, **St. Aidan, bishop of Lindisfarne, apostle of N. England who taught the Wednesday and Friday fasts (651)** - An Irish monk who had studied under St. Senan, at Iniscathay (Scattery Island). He is placed as Bishop of Clogher by Ware and Lynch, but he resigned that see and became a monk at Iona about 630. His virtues, however, shone so resplendently that he was selected (635) as first Bishop of Lindisfarne, and in time became apostle of Northumbria. St. Bede is lavish in praise of the episcopal rule of St. Aidan, and of his Irish co-workers in the ministry. Oswald, king of Northumbria, who had studied in Ireland, was a firm friend of St. Aidan, and did all he could for the Irish missionaries until his sad death at Maserfield near Oswestry, 5 August, 642. St. Aidan died at Bamborough on the last day of August, 651, and his remains were borne to Lindisfarne. Bede tells us that "he was a pontiff inspired with a passionate love of virtue, but at the same time full of a surpassing mildness and gentleness."

St. Eanswythe, abbess of Folkestone, grand-daughter of king St. Ethelbert of England, (c.640) - is remembered for the simple life in which she gave up all the pleasures of the World. Once, the King of Northumbria asked to marry Eanswythe. At that time her father was building an oratory for her and one of the beams to be used was three feet too short. Eanswythe set the King a task to complete in order to win her hand in marriage. If the Kings gods could, by his prayers, lengthen the beam then she would marry him. The King failed and went away filled with shame. Eanswythe however, approached the beam, made a prayer, and the beam lengthened to the required size. This was the first miracle. The nearest water to the oratory was a good distance away and had to be brought by hand. Eanswythe therefore went to the spring a mile or so away in the village of Sweeten. Using a stick she made the water follow her, up and down over cliffs and rocky summits, to her Oratory, where it delivered abundant water for men and animals. In the third miracle the young virgin placed an interdict that the birds should stop settling on the nearby fields and consuming the produce. So it was - the birds obeyed. She performed still further miracles. She restored a blind woman's sight, made a mad man sane and restored health in others from various diseases. King Eadbald consented to allowing her to found a monastery where she served as its abbess. Hers was the first convent in England. The Abbey was destroyed by the Danes; the church built in its place became an "alien" Priory of Lonlay l' Abbeye(Orne) in 1095; then about 1838 the Monks were moved by William de Avaranches to the site of the present church. Less than a century later a great rebuilding took place. It was finally rebuilt as we see it today between 1856 and 1874. In art, Saint Eanswythe is portrayed as a crowned abbess with a book and two fish.

1 / 14 September - The Beginning of the Church's Year - The First Ecumenical Council decreed that the Church's year should begin on September 1st. The month of September was, for the Jews, the beginning of the civil year (see Exodus 12:2), the month of the gathering of fruits and the bringing to God of sacrifices of thanksgiving. It was at the time of this feast that the Lord Jesus went into the synagogue in Nazareth, opened the Book of the Prophet Isaiah and read the words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance" (Is. 61:1-2; cf. Luke 4:16-21). This month of September is also noted in the history of Christianity because it was during September that Constantine the Great was victorious over Maxentius, the enemy of the

Christian faith, a victory followed by the granting of freedom of confession of the Christian faith through- out the whole Roman Empire. For a long time, the civil year in the Christian world was reckoned in the same way as the Church's year, from September 1st, but it was later changed to January 1st, first in western Europe and then also in Russia in the time of Peter the Great;

Our Holy Father Simeon Stylites (the Elder) and his mother St. Martha - born in Syria of peasant parents, he fled from them at the age of eighteen and became a monk. He gave himself to the strictest asceticism, sometimes fasting for forty days. After that, he followed a particular ascesis, until then unknown: standing day and night on a pillar in unceasing prayer. His pillar was at first three metres high, then one of six metres was built for him, then eleven, eighteen and finally twenty. His mother, Martha, came to see him twice, but he would not receive her, saying to her from his pillar: 'Don't disturb me now, Mother dear, if we are to be worthy to meet in the next world.' St Simeon endured innumerable assaults from demons, overcoming them all by prayer. He worked great miracles, healing the sick by his prayers and his words. People from all sides gathered around his pillar: rich and poor, kings and slaves. He helped them all, restoring bodily health to some, giving comfort and instruction to others and denouncing some for their heretical faith. The Empress Eudocia was thus turned from the Eutychian heresy back to Orthodoxy. Simeon lived in asceticism during the reigns of the Emperors Theodosius the Younger, Marcian and Leo the Great. This first Christian stylite and great wonderworker, St Simeon, lived for seventy years, and entered into rest in the Lord on September 1st, 459. His relics were taken to Antioch, to the church dedicated to his name; St. Joshua the Son of Nun.

2 / 15 September - The Holy Martyr Mamas — He was born in Paphlagonia of eminent Christian parents, Theodotus and Rufina, who were thrown into prison for the name of Christ. In the prison, Theodotus was the first to die, and Rufina, after giving birth to a son, soon followed her husband, and the new-born child was left in the prison beside the bodies of his parents. God the Provider sent His holy angel to a noble widow, Ammia, whom the angel told in a dream to go to the prison and take the child. Ammia asked the city governor's permission to bury the dead and take the child into her own home. The child was dumb until the age of five, and then his first word was 'Mama', because of which he was given the name Mamas. At school, he showed an unusual brightness, and, being brought up at home in a Christian spirit, did not conceal his faith but confessed it before his contemporaries, mocking at the idols. In the time of the Emperor Aurelian, there was a vicious persecution of Christians, and the pagans did not spare even Christian children. Mamas was fifteen years old when he was taken before the Emperor. The Emperor told him to deny Christ only with his lips. To this Mamas replied: 'I shall not deny my God and King Jesus Christ either in my heart or with my lips.' The Emperor ordered that he be beaten, burned with torches and finally thrown into the sea, but an angel of God saved him and took him to a high mountain near Caesarea. There he lived in solitude and prayer, and fierce wild beasts were tamed by his holiness. He was eventually found there by the persecutors and put again to torture. Overcoming both the power of fire and the fierceness of wild beasts, holy Mamas was stabbed with a trident by a pagan priest. He thus gave his holy soul to the God to whom he had remained faithful in all his sufferings. Many of the sick have been healed by his relics. St John the Faster, Patriarch of Constantinople; St Eleazar; The Feast of the Kaluga Icon of the Mother of God.

3 / 16 September - Fast Day - The Hieromartyr Anthimus - Born in Nicomedia, he was brought up from childhood as a true Christian. 'His body was mortified, his spirit humble; jealousy was uprooted, anger tamed, sloth banished.... he had love for all and was at peace with all, had a good understanding with all, was filled with zeal for the glory of God and was open to all.' It is not surprising that a man of such virtues was made a bishop. St Anthimus worked as a bishop in Nicomedia at the time of a harsh persecution of Christians under the two wicked Emperors Diocletian and Maximian. Streams of Christian blood were spilled, especially in Nicomedia. One year, on the feast of the Nativity of Christ, twenty thousand martyrs were burned in one church (see Dec. 28th). This happened during Anthimus's episcopate. The persecution did not end with this, but continued, and many Christians were thrown into prison and kept there for torture and death. St Anthimus withdrew to a village, Omana, not to escape death but to be able thence to strengthen his flock in the path of martyrdom, that none should draw back through fear. One of his letters to the Christians in prison was seized and taken to the Emperor Maximian. The Emperor sent twenty soldiers to find Anthimus and take him. The grey-beard, discerning this, went out to meet the soldiers, brought them into his house as his guests and only then revealed that he was Anthimus. The soldiers, amazed at his kindness, urged him to hide, and said that they would tell the Emperor that they had been unable to find him, but Anthimus replied that he dared not allow God's Law to be violated by a lie in order to save his life. So he set out with the soldiers. On the way, all the soldiers came to faith in Christ and were baptised by Anthimus. Brought before the Emperor, Anthimus was submitted to harsh and long-drawn-out torture, and was finally beheaded with an axe. He glorified God and entered into rest in the Lord at the beginning of the fourth century. The Holy Martyr Vasilissa; St Joannicius, Archbishop and first Patriarch of Serbia; Our Holy Father Theoctistus.

4 / 17 September - The Hieromartyr Babylas - This 'great and wonderful man, if one can call him a man', as St John Chrysostom expresses it, was archbishop in Antioch in the time of the wicked Emperor Numerian. This Numerian made a peace-treaty with some barbarian king, who was of better character and a greater lover of peace than himself. As a sign of his sincere desire for a lasting peace, the king gave his little son to be brought up at Numerian's court. One day, Numerian butchered the boy and offered him as a sacrifice to the idols. Still hot from his wicked shedding of innocent blood, this evildoer went to a Christian church to see what was happening there. Holy Babylas was at prayer with the people. He heard that the Emperor was coming with his retinue and intended to enter the church. Babylas stopped the service, went out in front of the church and told the Emperor that, as an idolater, he was not permitted entry to the holy church where the one, true God was worshipped. Speaking of Babylas, Chrysostom says: 'Who else in the world would he fear, having with such authority withstood the Emperor? By this he taught kings not to spread their power further than the measure given them by God, and

also showed the clergy how to use their authority. ' The shamed Emperor turned back, but planned revenge. The following day, the Emperor summoned Babylas, and began to berate him and bid him offer sacrifice to idols, which the saint, naturally, steadfastly refused to do. The Emperor then bound him with chains and threw him into prison. He also tortured three children: Urban, aged twelve, Prilidian, aged nine and Hippolinus, aged seven. Babylas was their spiritual father and teacher, and they had stayed near him out of love for him. They were the sons of a Christian woman, Christodoula, who herself suffered for Christ. The Emperor first ordered that each child be beaten with the number of blows that totalled his age, and then had them thrown into prison. Babylas, in bonds, was present at the beheading of the children, giving them courage, and then laid his honoured head under the sword. He was buried by Christians in the chains in which he was bound at his death, in one grave with the three children. Their holy souls flew off to the company of heaven, and their wonderworking relics remained to be of support to the faithful, along with the enduring witness of their heroism in the Faith. They suffered in about 283. The Holy Prophet Moses; The Holy Martyrs Marcellus and Cassian; Translation of the relics of Ss. Cuthbert & Birinus, bb, to Durham, England

Icon of the Unburnt Bush - This beautiful Icon calls to mind the burning Bush which Moses saw, but which was not consumed by the flames. The Prophet Moses is also commemorated on this day. On the Icon is a representation of the Mother of God with Her Child. She holds a ladder on which is sometimes represented St John of the Ladder, the ascetic who wrote a great spiritual treatise called "The Ladder." This richly meaningful Icon depicts the Mother of God Who contained within Her Womb the Eternal God Who is Fire, and yet was unconsumed, like the Unburnt Bush. She is a true Ladder by which we ascend to Heaven, as the Son of God took His Body from Her. The Prophet David is also depicted in the Icon, as the Ancestor of the Most Holy Theotokos and of Christ. He foretold the coming of the Messiah, especially through his Psalms. Many Icons of the Feasts of the Orthodox Church have depictions of David for the fact that his Psalms are used throughout to celebrate the events of our salvation. This icon has been known for its miracles of preservation from fires in Churches and homes.

5/ 18 September - Fast Day - The Holy Prophet Zacharias - He was the father of St. John the Forerunner. Zacharias was the son of Barachias, from the lineage of Abia, of the sons of Aaron. Zacharias was a high priest who held the eighth degree of service in the Temple at Jerusalem. His wife Elizabeth was the daughter of Sophia and sister of St. Anna, who was the mother of the Holy Theotokos. During the reign of King Herod the child-slayer, Zacharias was serving one day at the Temple of Jerusalem according to his turn. An angel of God appeared to him in the sanctuary, and Zacharias had great fear. The angel said to him: Fear not, Zacharias (Luke 1:13), and announced that Elizabeth would bear a son, in answer to their prayers. But both Zacharias and Elizabeth were old. When Zacharias doubted the words of the heavenly herald, the angel said: I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God (Luke 1:19). Zacharias was struck dumb from that hour, and could not speak until his son was born and he had written on a tablet: His name is John (Luke 1:63). Then his speech returned, and he magnified God. Some time later, when the Lord Jesus had been born and Herod began to slaughter the children of Bethlehem, he sent men to find and kill the son of Zacharias-for Herod had heard all that had happened to Zacharias, and how John had been born. Upon seeing the soldiers coming, Elizabeth took John into her arms-he was a year and a half old at that time-fled from the house with him, and ran to a rocky and desolate place. When she saw the soldiers following her, she cried out to the mountain: "O mountain of God, receive a mother with her child!" and the rock opened and hid the mother and child. Then Herod, enraged that the child John had not been slain, ordered that Zacharias be slain before the altar. The blood of Zacharias was spilled on the marble and dried solid as stone, and remained as a witness to Herod's evil deed. In the place where Elizabeth hid with John a cave opened, water flowed out of it, and a fruit-bearing palm grew, all by the power of God. Forty days after the death of Zacharias, the blessed Elizabeth died. The child John remained in the wilderness, fed by an angel and protected by God's providence, until the day he appeared at the Jordan; The Holy Martyrs Juventius and Maximinus; Seventy Holy Martyrs; Venerable Athanasius

6 / 19 September - Commemoration of the Miracles of the Holy Archangel Michael - There was in Phrygia a place called Chonae (plunging), not far from Hierapolis, and in that place there was a miraculous spring of water. When the Apostle John the Theologian, together with Philip, was preaching the Gospel in Hierapolis, he looked at this place and foretold that a spring would gush forth in it, a spring of healing water from which many would be restored to health, and that the place would be visited by Michael, the great archangel of God. This prophecy was very soon fulfilled: a spring of water appeared, which became known far and wide for its miraculous power. A pagan in Laodicea had a dumb daughter, which caused him great grief, but the Archangel Michael appeared to him in a dream and urged him to take his daughter to this spring, that she might be restored to health. The father immediately obeyed, took his daughter and there encountered many people who had come to seek deliverance from various ills. They were all Christians. The man asked how he should seek healing, and the Christians told him: 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, you must beg the Archangel Michael.' The father made his petition accordingly and dipped his daughter in the water, and the girl began to speak. Then this pagan was baptised along with his daughter and his whole household, and built a church to the Archangel Michael over the spring. Later, a young man called Archippus settled there. Pagans did him much malicious harm, for they did not want such power to be felt from a Christian holy place and many people be drawn to it. In their wickedness, they altered the course of a nearby river, so that it inundated the church and the spring. But, at the prayers of Archippus, the Archangel Michael appeared and opened a fissure in the rock at the end of the church, through which the flooding river plunged. So the place was saved, and became known as Chonae — plunging — from the river's plunge through the opened fissure. St Archippus lived there in asceticism till the age of seventy, and entered peacefully into rest in the Lord. The Holy Martyr Romulus and the 11,000 soldiers; St Eudoxius; Our Holy Father David;

St. Bega, virgin, first abbess of Copeland in Cumbria – of Irish royalty. Her family arranged her marriage to the Prince of Norway. Bega wanted to devote her life and virginity to the Lord, refused the arrangement, and fled. It is said that she was carried across the sea to the coast of Cumberland by riding on a clod of earth. She lived as an anchoress in Cumberland for many years, being fed by the birds in the woods. Saint Oswald of Northumbria, on a raid to dispel some highwaymen, convinced her to enter a convent for her own safety. She agreed, and took the veil from Saint Aidan of Lindisfarne and founded a monastery which later was named after her. As Abbess she was known for her generosity to the poor and oppressed who came to the abbey for assistance.

REFLECTION

Christians do not believe in kismet, fate or destiny. Even if God determines the chief lines of our life, He, according to our prayers and merits, can change them. Thus, He prolonged King Hezekiah's life for fifteen years: "Go and say to Hezekiah, thus said the Lord, the God of David Your father, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears: behold I will add unto your days fifteen years" (Isaiah 38:5), and to the Venerable Dius (July 19) he likewise prolonged his life for fifteen years. God extended the life of St. Basil the Great, according to the prayer of the saint for one day until he baptized the Jew, Joseph, his physician. But, as God can, by prayer, prolong life, so He can shorten it because of sin. Emperor Anastasius adhered to the Severian heresy, so called the Acephalites (the headless ones), who spread the foolishness that the Church does not need bishops and priests but rather that everyone unto himself is a bishop and a priest and that everyone has the right, in his own way, to interpret Holy Scripture and to teach others as he understands and believes. In vain did St. John the Patriarch counsel the emperor to return to the truth of Orthodoxy, and not only did the emperor not accept the counsel but rather ill-treated the patriarch in various ways and contemplated to have him banished. One night, the emperor saw in a dream an awesome man on an exalted throne, who held a book in his hand. This man opened the book, found the name of Emperor Anastasius and said: "I have wanted to permit you to live for a while longer but, because of your heresy, behold, I am erasing fourteen years from your life." And he erased something from the book. Terrified, the emperor jumped up from his dream and related his dream to his followers. After a few days, thunder struck the emperor's place and killed Emperor Anastasius.

HOMILY

About the power and the mission of Christ, as Isaiah prophesied

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance to our God" (Isaiah 61: 1-2).

This great and programmed prophecy, the Lord Jesus read at the beginning of His saving work before the Jews in Nazareth and having read this, He sat down and said: "Today is this scripture fulfilled" (St. Luke 4: 16-21). One of the darkest prophecies for the Jewish scribes and priests, He read, closed the book and said: "Today is this scripture fulfilled." None of the Jews dared to touch this prophecy for no one knew to whom this prophecy pertains. Seven centuries have passed since this prophecy was spoken and written and no one knew to whom it pertains. And when that one [Christ] came, upon whom this prophecy pertains, He read it and applied it to Himself. Thus our great Lord justified His prophet and presented Himself to the world.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me." Why does He speak so when He is equal to the Spirit as He is to the Father? As St. Chrysostom interprets, it is for the sake of witnessing to the people. He does not say the grace of the Spirit [is upon Me], for the grace of the Spirit is upon the faithful people but the Spirit Himself is upon Him as was manifested on the Jordan river. The Spirit is the witness of the Son and the Son was never without the Spirit for one moment. The Lord Jesus often mentions the Father and the Holy Spirit first out of infinite love, toward the Father and the Spirit and love always ascribes its own to others and second for the sake of instruction to proud men that they do not emphasize themselves but rather to give honor to others, equal to themselves.

Everything else that is said in this wonderful prophecy, the Lord fulfilled by His miraculous works, word for word. He came primarily to proclaim the mercy of God to men but at the same time, to proclaim the Dread Judgment to those who would despise and reject that mercy.

This is the vision of Isaiah, the son of Amos, the prophet of God, the true prophet.

Brethren, let us venerate Isaiah whose God-inspired mouth foretold the Savior and our salvation and let us worship without ceasing our wonderful Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We worship You our Lord and Savior and we give You thanks for Your All-wise plan for our salvation.

To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.

Available on the net at <http://www.saintjonah.org/bltn/> or at www.roq.org.au or, request your own copy from Father John Weir by emailing him at rev.john.weir@rocor.org.au



16th Sunday After Pentecost

Martyr Sozon &

Forefeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos

7 / 20 September 2015

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

Troparion of the Forefeast tone 4: From the root of Jesse and from David's loins the divine maiden Mary is born for us today, / and all things are filled with God and renewed. / Rejoice together, heaven and earth: Praise her, you countries of the nations: / Joachim rejoices and Anna keeps festival, crying: / The barren woman gives birth to the Mother of God and the nurse of our life.

Troparion of St Sozon tone 1: O Martyr Sozon, thou didst pledge thy life to God, / endure the contest and become a sharer in Christ's Passion. / Save from temptation those who cry to thee: / Glory to Him Who strengthened thee; / Glory to Him Who crowned thee; / Glory to Him Who through thee works healings for all.

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.

Kontakion of the Forefeast tone 3: Today the bridal chamber of the heavenly Bridegroom, / Mary the Virgin Mother of God, / by God's will is born of a barren woman, / and the chariot of the Word of God / is beautifully adorned. / She is the gate and the Mother of life: / for this God chose her.

Kontakion of St Sozon tone 2: Together let us praise with loud voices / Sozon the Athlete of piety, / vessel of grace and bestower of healings. / He prays to God for us all.

Matins Gospel V

Epistle for Sunday before Exaltation: Galatians 6: 11-18

Epistle Corinthians 6:1-10

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We give no offence in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in sleeplessness, in fastings; By purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

What is the 'acceptable time'?

The 'acceptable time', what is this? That of the Gift, that of the Grace, when it is appointed not that an account should be required of our sins, nor penalty exacted, but besides being delivered, that we should also enjoy ten thousand good things, righteousness, sanctification, and all the rest. For how much toil would it have behoved us to undergo in order to obtain this 'time!' But, behold, without our toiling at all it has come, bringing remission of all that was before. He also calls it 'acceptable,' because He accepted those who had transgressed in ten thousand things, and not merely accepted, but advanced them to the highest honour ...Let us, too, therefore strive for the mastery in the time of this gift. It is a day of grace, of grace divine; wherefore even we will obtain the crown with ease. For if, when laden with such great evils, He both received and delivered us, after being delivered from all and actually contributing our part, will He not accept us even more?...

He shows that afflictions are weapons which not only do not strike down, but do even fortify and make stronger ...And let us therefore, when we suffer anything for Christ's sake, not merely bear it nobly, but also rejoice. If we fast, let us leap for joy as if enjoying luxury; if we are insulted, let us dance as if praised; if we spend, let us feel as if gaining; if we bestow on the poor, let us count ourselves to receive: for he who does not give this way will not give readily. When therefore you have a mind to scatter abroad, do not look only at what you spend, but at the fact that you gain more. And not only in almsgiving, but also in every kind of virtue, compute not just the severity of the toils, but also the sweetness of the prizes, and before all the subject of this struggle: our Lord Jesus. And if you will readily enter upon the contest, you will love the whole time with pleasure.

For nothing is so apt to cause pleasure as a good conscience. Therefore Paul, though wounded every day, rejoiced indeed and exulted. But the men of this day, although they do not endure a shadow even of what he did, grieve and make lamentations from no other cause than that they do not have a mind full of heavenly philosophy.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XII on II Corinthians VI, 1, 3, 5. B#56, pp. 336-338, 340.

Second Reading: Eph. 6: 10-17

Gospel or the Sunday before Exaltation: John 3: 13-17

GOSPEL: ST. MATTHEW 25:14-30

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man travelling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

The reading of the Gospel, dearly beloved, would have us consider that those of us who receive more gifts than others in this world will be judged more strictly by its Creator. For according as the gifts increase, the account demanded will be more exacting; therefore a man should be more humble and use his gift more diligently in God's service ...Who is this man who sets out on a journey, but our Redeemer, who ascended into heaven in that same flesh which He had assumed? The earth is the proper home of the flesh, but it travels, as it were, to foreign lands, when our Redeemer ascends with it to heaven ...He left spiritual gifts to the faithful who believed in Him ...There are five senses of the body ...so the five talents represent the gift of the five senses: that is to say, external knowledge.

The gifts of understanding and action are signified by the two talents, and the single talent represents the understanding alone. But he who received the five talents gained another five, for there are some people who, although they cannot understand interior and mystical things, nevertheless, by their desire for their heavenly home, teach sound doctrine to all whom they meet, doctrine concerning those exterior matters which they can understand ...Likewise, there are some who ...have a good grasp of what refers to intellect and action: they understand the subtleties of the interior life ...When they teach others by their learning and example they derive, as it were, a double profit from their trading...

To hide one's talent in the earth is to occupy the intelligence God gives us in purely earthly matters, not to seek spiritual profit, never to lift our heart above worldly considerations. For there are some who received the gift of understanding, but who, nevertheless, understand only the flesh. Of these the prophet says, "They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (Jer.4:22)...

Paltry are the goods of this world, however great they may seem in comparison with that reward of eternal life. But the faithful servant ...is taken to that everlasting dwelling, to mingle with the assembly of the angels and to relish that joy in such a way that he can never more suffer the external pains of temporal distress ...The worthless servant ...is a figure of many in the church, who are afraid to lead a better life, but not afraid to continue in the quagmire of their inertia; because they consider themselves to be sinners, they tremble to approach the way of sanctity, but they are not afraid to persist in their vices ...

It will be given to him who already has and he shall abound, for everyone who has the gift of charity receives other gifts besides. But he who has not the gift of charity will lose even those gifts which he seemed to have. So it is necessary, brethren, that charity should be the motive of all your actions ...No idler is completely deprived of talent...One receives the gift of intelligence ...Another receives worldly wealth ...another ...the craft with which he learns his livelihood ...a fourth the friendship of a rich man.

St. Gregory the Great. Parables of the Gospel, IX. B#48, pp. 59-65.

Second Gospel: John 15:17 – 16:2

Saints of the week

7 / 20 September - Forefeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos - The Holy Martyr Sozon - Born in Lycaonia, Sozon was a shepherd and lived by the Law of God, teaching his brothers and sisters, and his friends, his devout faith. He learned in a vision that he would suffer martyrdom for Christ. At that time, there was a great persecution of Christians near the city of Pompeiopolis on the part of Maximian, the governor of Silicia. In the city, there was a golden idol which was worshipped by the pagans. Sozon left his sheep, went to the city, entered the pagan temple and knocked an arm off the golden idol, melting it down and giving the gold to the poor. There was a great outcry in the city because of this, and the pagans began to search for the guilty man. That no-one else should suffer for his action, Sozon went to the governor and declared himself to be a Christian and the performer of that act. The torturers first beat him, then chained him to a tree and flogged him with iron flails. When he was at his last breath, they cast him into the flames, where holy Sozon gave his soul to God. He suffered in about 304. His relics were found to be wonderworking, and a church dedicated to him was built over them. The Holy Apostles Euodius and Onesiphorus; The Holy Martyr Eupsychius; St John, Archbishop of Novgorod; One of the feasts of St. Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury.



8 / 21 September - The Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God - Epistle: Phil. 2:5-11 & Epistle: St. Luke: 10:28-42 & 11:27-28) The Holy Virgin Mary was born of her aged parents, Joachim and Anna. Her father was of the tribe of David and her mother of the tribe of Aaron, and so she was of royal blood from her father and priestly blood from her mother. By this, she foreshadowed Him who would be born of her as King and High Priest. Her parents were already old and had no children, and, because of this, were ashamed before men and humble before God. In their humility, they prayed with tears that God would bring joy to their old age with the gift of a child, as He had once given joy to the aged Abraham and Sarah, giving them their son Isaac. God, almighty and all-seeing, gave them a joy far exceeding all their expectations and their wildest dreams, for He gave them not just a daughter, but the Mother of God; He illumined them not only with temporal joy but with eternal. God gave them just one daughter, who later gave them just one grandson—but what a daughter and what a grandson! Mary full of grace, blessed among women, the temple of the Holy Spirit, altar of the living God, table of living bread, ark of God's holy things, tree of the most delicious fruits, glory of the human race, praise of

womanhood, fount of virginity and purity—this was the daughter given by God to Joachim and Anna. Born in Nazareth, she was after three years taken to the Temple in Jerusalem, whence she returned again to Nazareth and shortly afterwards heard the tidings of the holy Archangel Gabriel concerning the birth of the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, from her most pure and virginal body. The Feast of the Kalisto Icon of the Mother of God; The Feast of the Pochaev Icon of the Mother of God;

Troparion of the Mother of God tone 4: Thy birth, O Mother of God,/ has brought joy to all the world;/ for from thee arose the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God,/ Who, having dissolved the curse, has given His blessing,/ and having abolished death, has granted us life eternal.

Kontakion of the Mother of God tone 4: Joachim and Anna were freed from the reproach of childlessness/ and Adam and Eve from the corruption of death, O Immaculate One, by thy holy nativity./ And thy people, redeemed from the guilt of sin,/ celebrate thy birth by crying to thee:/ The barren woman gives birth to the Mother of God and the nurse of our life.

Ss. Ina, king of Wessex, restorer of Glastonbury, & his queen Ethelburga. (8th c.) - He was a son of the underking Cenred and ascended the West-Saxon throne in 688, a year before the death of his predecessor Caedwalla. For thirty-seven years he ruled over a turbulent and war-like people, and by virtue of a varied genius was equally successful as a warrior and legislator. His first efforts were directed towards establishing internal peace, and in the fifth year of his reign he drew up a set of laws which regulated the administration of justice and fixed the legal status of the various elapses of his subjects. With the exception of the Kentish laws this code is the earliest extant specimen of Anglo-Saxon legislation, and for that reason is of particular interest. When matters in his own realm had been adjusted, Ina turned his attention to Withred, King of Kent, and at the head of a formidable army demanded weregild (compensation) for the death of Mul (for Mollo), brother of Caedwalla. Withred paid the full compensation—thirty thousand pounds of silver—and admitted the supremacy of the West-Saxon over all the country held by the English south of the Thames. By successive conquests, Ina added several districts to the western provinces of his domain, and after a bitter war conquered Geraint, King of Cornwall, and built a fortress on the Tone, at the site of the present Taunton. Throughout his entire reign was particularly solicitous for the welfare of religion and religious establishment, founding many monasteries and endowing those already in existence. The Abbey of Glastonbury was erected by him, with the funds, it is thought, which came from the weregild collected from Withred. Other monastic establishments which were recipients of his bounty were those at Malmesbury, Wimborne, Nursling, Tisbury, Waltham, and Sherborne. Worn out by his long rule, Ina determined to abdicate in favour of Æthelheard and Oswald, and to make his peace with God. In pursuance of this project, he convened the Witenagemot and formally announced his abdication. With his wife he proceeded to Rome, to watch and pray at the tomb of the Apostles in the guise of a poor and pious pilgrim. While there he founded a hospice or home for English pilgrims, in the district known as Burges Saxonum, the modern Borgo. Some historians trace the foundation of the English College at Rome back to this hospice. The memory of the hospice still lives in the Church of San Spirito in Sassia, formerly S. Maria in Saxia; it is thought that King Ina and his Queen Ethelburga, lie buried in this church or in the atrium of St. Peter's. They died blessing God that they had been allowed to lay their dust in the consecrated soil of Rome.

9 / 22 September - Afterfeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos — Ss Joachim and Anna - St Joachim was of the tribe of Judah, and a descendant of King David. Anna was the daughter of Matthan the priest, of the tribe of Levi as was Aaron the High Priest. This Matthan had three daughters: Mary, Zoia and Anna. Mary was married in Bethlehem and bore Salome; Zoia was

also married in Bethlehem and bore Elisabeth, the mother of St John the Forerunner; and Anna was married in Nazareth to Joachim, and in old age gave birth to Mary, the most holy Mother of God. Joachim and Anna had been married for fifty years, and were barren. They lived devoutly and quietly, using only a third of their income for themselves and giving a third to the poor and a third to the Temple, and they were well provided for. Once, when they were already old and were in Jerusalem to offer sacrifice to God, the High Priest, Issachar, upbraided Joachim: 'You are not worthy to offer sacrifice with those childless hands.' Others who had children jostled Joachim, thrusting him back as unworthy. This caused great grief to the two aged souls, and they went home with very heavy hearts. Then the two of them gave themselves to prayer to God that He would work in them the wonder that He had worked in Abraham and Sarah, and give them a child to comfort their old age. God sent them His angel, who gave them tidings of the birth of 'a daughter most blessed, by whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed, and through whom will come the salvation of the world.' Anna conceived at once, and in the ninth month gave birth to the holy Virgin Mary. St Joachim lived for eighty years and Anna for seventy-nine, and they both entered into the kingdom of God. Commemoration of the Third Ecumenical Council; The Holy Martyr Severian; St Theophanes, Confessor and Faster; St Nicetas the Man of God.;

St. Kieran (Ciaran) of Clonmacnois, Ireland (c.545) - The holy abbot Ciaran was the son of the wagonmaker, Beoit. Beoit was a very good and careful worker, and so he became rich. He and his wife Darerca had five sons and three daughters. Of these sons, four became presbyters and one, a deacon. All three daughters became nuns. This blessed family lived in the province of Meath, but because the local king was greedy and asked for too much tax money, the family moved to Roscommon in the province of Connaught. St Ciaran was born at Roscommon in the year 515. Like other boys his age, the young saint learned to work hard, helping his father, and also working for neighbouring farmers. One of his chores was to herd his family's sheep. Ciaran especially liked this duty, because he could be alone and pray to God in peace. The boy knew many of the psalms by heart, and he loved to chant them as he watched over the flock. The sheep were grazed in a plain called Ai. At that time, the wondrous old man, Saint Diarmat lived on this plain. This holy elder at once saw God's Grace in the young shepherd, and he taught the youth to read the psalms from the book for himself. The two spent many hours together, reading and praying. The elder taught the young saint many things about spiritual struggle, and how to keep himself clean and pure for Christ's sake. When he was old enough, St Ciaran wanted to go to school. In those days, there were no public schools, and the bishops and presbyters taught the students. St Findian had a school at Cluain. Here, he taught the Divine Scripture and the sciences. Saint Ciaran learned quickly, and grew in wisdom and in spirit under his elder. Some of the other students, however, were jealous of the young saint, and they used to torment him and shun him. Ciaran only prayed for them and tried to teach them love and mercy. The students of the school had to take turns working in a flour mill, to help pay for their needs. St Ciaran toiled with meekness and obedience. The saint loved beggars, and from his earliest youth he had sought to help them and give them money, food or clothing whenever possible. He even gave them some of the flour which he ground. As Saint Findian grew older, he called his monks together and announced that when he reposed, Ciaran should take his place as abbot. To this, they all agreed. Meanwhile, St Ciaran got a blessing from his elder to visit some of the holy places of Ireland. He went to Lake Erne to hear the holy words of St Ninned, and from there, the young man went to the sacred isle of Aran. On Aran Island, the monks lived in great poverty and worked very hard. The holy elder, St Enda, was abbot of Aran in those days, and he accepted St Ciaran with joy. The young saint joined the hard labour and prayers of the monks, and he daily grew in God's Grace. From Aran, the saint made his way to Scatterry Island to learn what he could from Saint Senan. The blessed one journeyed around the whole country, learning much from the holy elders, and working and praying with all the monks. Soon, however, many monks came desiring to have St Ciaran as their elder; The saint built a small monastery on Hare Island (called Inis Aingin in Irish language) which is in Lake Ree. Even though Ciaran was the abbot of this monastery, he served the brothers, and often when a visitor came, Saint Ciaran would wash his feet and serve him like a slave. God worked many miracles and healings through this young saint, and the faithful from all over Ireland began to come to Lake Ree as pilgrims. The saint was sorrowful because of the attention and praises he was receiving, and so after a while, he appointed the holy presbyter Donnan as abbot, and he himself departed to the wilderness of Clonmachnoise. In those days, the elder Diarmat was living in this wilderness in a poor cell. The saint came to this cell and built himself one nearby. He lived here with his old friend and teacher for a long time, and a brotherhood soon grew up around him. St Ciaran became a father of saints, for many of his monks later became wonderworkers. The saint spent many years in struggle and prayer. He travelled throughout Ireland preaching and teaching the rulers and people alike to be merciful and charitable. This holy elder and wonderworker reposed in the Lord on 9 September, in the year of our Lord 550. He was about thirty-five years old; St. Wulfhilda, abbess of Barking, St. Bettelin, hermit of Crowland.

10 / 23 September - Fast Day - Afterfeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos — The Holy Martyrs Menodora, Metrodora and Nymphodora - They were three sisters from some place in Asian Bithynia. Brought up in a Christian spirit, they withdrew from the city into the desert, desiring to lift up their minds to God and free themselves from the illusory world, and thus to live their lives in purity and virginity as true brides of Christ. They gave themselves to fasting, prayer and toil, and God adorned them with the gift of wonderworking. When people began to bring the sick to them for healing, they became known against their will. A certain governor, Fronton, heard of them and brought them to trial. Seeing them, the governor was amazed at their beauty, for, although they were nuns and their bodies were withered, their faces were radiant, illumined by an inner peace and the grace of God. The governor at first flattered them and promised to send them to the Emperor, who would give them in marriage to his nobles, but, when he realised that his flattery and promises were having no effect on these brides of Christ the Lord, he ordered that Menodora be put to torture and her sisters be thrown into prison. After harsh torture, the governor cried to Menodora, all wounded and covered in blood: 'Offer sacrifice to the gods!' To this the holy martyr replied: 'Don't you see that I am doing nothing but offer myself in sacrifice to my God?' When she expired under torture, the governor brought out her two sisters and stood them beside Menodora's dead body, and, pointing to it, urged them to deny Christ. As they remained steadfast, he tortured them to death. At that, a thunderbolt fell from the sky and killed the soul-less Fronton

and his servants. Christians buried the bodies of these holy martyrs, who suffered some time between 305 and 311, in the time of Galerius, and entered into rest in the Kingdom of Christ. St Pulcheria the Empress; The Holy Apostles Apollos, Lucius and Clement; The Three Holy Women of Constantinople; St. Salvius, bishop of Albi (Gaul); Translation of the relics of Sts Egwin, bishop of Worcester and Ethelwold, bishop of Winchester; St. Frithestan, bishop of Winchester.

11 / 24 September - Afterfeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos — Canonisation of St. Xenia of St. Petersburg (1978) - Prayer to the Holy Blessed Xenia of Petersburg: O most simple in thy way of life, homeless on earth but an inheritor of the Heavenly Father, blessed wanderer Xenia! Just as earlier those who fell down before the inscription over thy grave, so now we also, hastening to thee, entreat thee to pray that our steps might be directed, according to the word of the Lord, in the doing of His commandments, and that the soul-corrupting lawlessness sowed by the godless might not prevail over our people, but that we all might yet behold the deliverance of thy city and thy beloved Russian land from the present cruel affliction. O thou who didst hide thyself from the wise of this world, but wast known to God, entreat for us humility, a pledge of meekness and love in our hearts, in prayer faith, in repentance hope, in labours firmness, in afflictions the mercy of healing, and the renewal of our whole life, at least from this time forth; so that glorifying thee, with contrition we may confess the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Trinity One in essence and undivided, unto the ages of ages. Amen. Our Holy Mother Theodora; St Paphnutius the Confessor; Our Holy Father Ephrosynus the Cook; The Holy Martyr Ia; The Holy Martyrs Diodore, Didymus and Diomedes;

St. Deinol (Daniel), first bishop of Bangor, Wales (584) - Dismissal Hymn (Tone 4): By thy teaching and pious life thou didst shine forth in the age of Saints, O Hierarchy Deinol, and becoming Bangor's first bishop thou wast an instrument of God's grace, leading many to salvation. Pray, O Saint, that we may be led into the Way of Truth that our souls may be saved

12 / 25 September - Fast Day - Apodosis of the Nativity of the Theotokos - The Hieromartyr Autonomus - A bishop, he left Italy for Bithynia in Asia during Diocletian's persecution, going to a place called Soreoi, where he brought many to the Christian faith and built them a church dedicated to the Archangel Michael. He stayed in the house of a devout Christian, Cornelius, whom Autonomus ordained priest and then consecrated bishop. Not far from the town of Soreoi was a place called Limnae, entirely inhabited by pagans. St Autonomus went to this place and quickly brought many to the light by the Gospel of Christ. This roused the pagans, and they hurried one day to the church of the Archangel Michael in Soreoi and, during divine service, slew Autonomus in the altar, killing also many other Christians in the church. In the time of the Emperor Constantine, a noble courtier, Severian, built a church over St Autonomus's grave. Two hundred years after his death, St Autonomus appeared to a soldier called John. This soldier dug up the saint's relics and found them to be completely uncorrupt, and many of the sick received healing from them. Thus God glorified him who glorified Him while in the body. The Hieromartyr Cornutus, Bishop of Iconium; The Holy Martyr Julian with his 40 Companions; Our Holy Father Daniel of Thasos; The Holy Martyrs Macedonius, Tatianus and Theodulus.

St. Ailbe of Emly - He was the child of a clandestine union. The father, fearing King Cronan, fled before the child was born. The King ordered that the baby be killed but his servants left him near a rock where, it is said, a wolf nursed him. The child was later found by a passerby - Lochan - who gave him to some Britons in the neighbourhood. A tradition held that he went to Rome and was ordained bishop by the Pope. He preached throughout Ireland, and made people "not only Christians but saints." He founded the monastery of Emly which became very important in Munster. A ninth century Rule bears his name. And the wolf? Ailbe was able to save the wolf when he was present at a run at which she was to be killed. She ate from his table from then on.

Tropar of St. Ailbe Tone 4: When Ireland's Enlightener returned to his native land,/ he found thee, O holy Ailbe, preaching the Faith at Emly,/ where at the bidding of an Angel thou hadst built a church./ O wise shepherd of souls and glorious ascetic,/ O friend of animals, and fellow missionary with the illustrious Patrick,/ pray to Christ our God that we might also become bastions of Orthodoxy/ and a shining example to our fellow countrymen,/ drawing them away from ignorance and error/ and into the true Faith that all our souls may be saved.

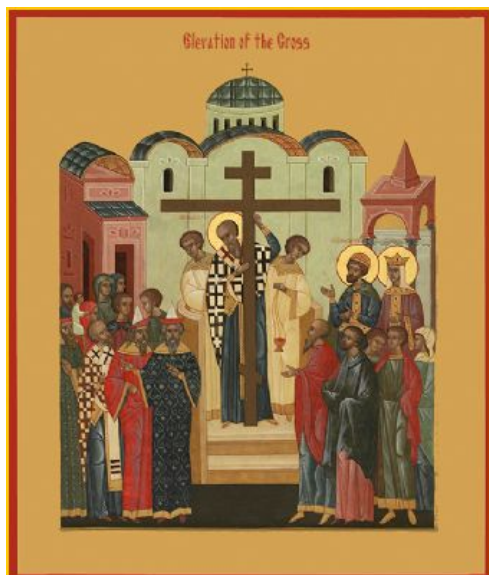
13 / 26 September - Forefeast of the Exaltation of the Cross - The Consecration of the Church of the Resurrection.

When the holy Empress Helena found the Lord's Cross in Jerusalem, she stayed longer in the city and built churches in Gethsemane, in Bethlehem, on the Mount of Olives and in other places that commemorated the life and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. On Golgotha, where she found the Precious Cross, she began to build an enormous church, under whose roof would be the places both where the Lord was crucified and where He was buried, the holy Empress wanting to bring under one roof the places of His suffering and His glory. But Helena went to the Lord before this magnificent church was completed. It was finished in the same year in which Constantine completed thirty years on the throne, and so the consecration of the church and the Emperor's Jubilee were fixed for the same day, September 13th, 335. At that time, a local Council of bishops was meeting in Tyre. These bishops, with many others, made their way to Jerusalem, to the solemn consecration of the Church of the Resurrection of the Lord. It was then instituted that this day, as a day of victory and triumph for the Church of Christ, should be celebrated every year. The Hieromartyr Cornelius the Centurion; The Holy Martyrs Macrobius and Gordian; The Holy Martyr Ketevana, Queen of Georgia; Our Holy Father Hierotheos.

17th Sunday After Pentecost

The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross

14 / 27 September



Troparion tone 1: O Lord, save Thy people/ and bless Thine inheritance./ Grant victory over their enemies to Orthodox Christians,/ and protect Thy people with Thy Cross.

Kontakion tone 4: O Christ our God Who wast voluntarily lifted up on the Cross,/ grant Thy mercies to Thy new people named after Thee./ Gladden with Thy power Orthodox Christians/ and give them victory over their enemies./ May they have as an ally that invincible trophy, Thy weapon of peace.

Vespers: Ex. 15:22-27; 16:1-2; Prov. 3:11-18; Isa. 60:11-16

Matins: John 12:28-36

Epistle: I Corinthians 1: 18-24

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Gospel: John 19: 6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30-35

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away. And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!"

So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.

HOMILY

Before The Time of Christ, the cross was an instrument of punishment; it evoked fear and aversion. But after Christ's death on the Cross it became the instrument and sign of our salvation. Through the Cross, Christ destroyed the devil; from the Cross He descended into hades and, having liberated those languishing there, led them into the Kingdom of Heaven. The sign of the Cross is terrifying to demons and, as the sign of Christ, it is honored by Christians. The Lord manifested it in the sky to the Emperor Constantine as he was going to Rome to fight the tyrant who had seized power, and the Emperor, having

fashioned a standard in the form of a cross, won a total victory. Having been aided by the Cross of the Lord, the Emperor Constantine asked his mother, the Empress Helen, to find the actual Life-giving Cross, and the devout Helen went to Jerusalem where, after much searching, she found it.

Many healings and other miracles were wrought and continue to be wrought by the Life-giving Cross and also by its depiction. Through it the Lord preserves His people from all enemies visible and invisible. The Orthodox Church solemnly celebrates the finding of the Cross of the Lord, recalling at the same time the appearance of the Cross in the sky to the Emperor Constantine. On that and other days dedicated to the Holy Cross, we beseech God that He grant His mercies not only to individual people, but to all Christendom, to the whole Church. This is well expressed by the Troparion to the Cross of the Lord, composed in the eighth century, when Saint Cosmas, Bishop of Maiuma, a friend of St. John Damascene, wrote the service to the Exaltation of the Cross of the Lord.

“Save, O Lord, Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance, granting victory to (right-believing) kings over adversaries, and by Thy Cross preserving Thy community.”

The beginning of this prayer is taken from the twenty-seventh Psalm. In the Old Testament the word “people” designated only those who confessed the true faith, people faithful to God. “Inheritance” referred to everything which properly belonged to God, God’s property, which in the New Testament is the Church of Christ. In praying for the salvation of God’s people (the Christians), both from eternal torments and from earthly calamities, we beseech the Lord to bless, to send down grace, His good gifts upon the whole Church as well, and inwardly strengthen her.

The petition for granting “victory to kings,” i.e., to the bearers of supreme authority, has its basis in Psalm 143, verse 10, and recalls the victories King David achieved by God’s power, and likewise the victories granted Emperor Constantine through the Cross of the Lord. This appearance of the Cross made emperors who had formerly persecuted Christians into defenders of the Church from her external enemies, into “external bishops,” to use the expression of the holy Emperor Constantine.

The Church, inwardly strong by God’s grace and protected outwardly, is, for Orthodox Christians, “the city of God,” God’s community, His commonwealth, where the path to the Heavenly Jerusalem has its beginning. Various calamities have shaken the world, entire peoples have disappeared, cities and states have perished, but the Church, in spite of persecutions and even internal conflicts, stands invincible; for the gates of hell shall not prevail against her (Matt. 16:18). Today, when world leaders try in vain to establish order on earth, the only dependable instrument of peace is that about which the Church sings:

The Cross is the guardian of the whole world;
the Cross is the beauty of the Church,
the Cross is the might of kings;
the Cross is the confirmation of the faithful,
the Cross is the glory of angels and the wounding of demons.
(Exapostilarion of the Exaltation of the Cross)

St John of Shanghai and San Francisco

Saints of the week

14 / 27 September - Fast Day - Wine & Oil allowed - The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross - Epistle 1 Cor. 1:18-24 & Gospel St. John 19: 6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30-35 - On this day are commemorated two events connected with the Precious Cross of Christ: the first, the finding of the Cross on Golgotha and the second the returning of the Cross to Jerusalem from Persia. Staying in the Holy Land, the holy Empress Helena decided to look for the Precious Cross of the Lord. An old Jew called Judah was the only person who knew the whereabouts of the Cross, and, under pressure from the Empress, he revealed that the Cross was buried under the Temple of Venus that the Emperor Hadrian had built on Golgotha. The Empress ordered that this idolatrous temple be pulled down, and then, digging deep below it, she found three crosses. While the Empress was in uncertainty about how to recognise which cross was the Lord’s, a funeral procession passed by. Then Patriarch Macarius told them to place the crosses one by one on the dead man. When they placed the first and second on him, the dead man remained unchanged, but when they placed the third on him, he was restored to life. By this, they knew that this was the Precious and life-giving Cross of Christ. After that, they placed it on a sick woman, and she recovered. Then the Patriarch raised the Cross aloft for all to see, and the people sang with tears: ‘Lord, have mercy!’ The Empress Helena had a silver casing made, and placed the precious Cross in it. Later, King Chozroes conquered Jerusalem, took the people into slavery and carried the Lord’s Cross off to Persia, where it remained for fourteen years. In 628, the Greek Emperor Heraclius was victorious over Chozroes and brought the Cross back to Jerusalem with great ceremony. Entering the city, Heraclius was carrying the Cross on his back, but suddenly the aged Emperor was unable to take another step. Patriarch Zacharias saw an angel directing the Emperor to take off his imperial robes and walk beneath the Cross along the way that Christ had walked, barefoot and humiliated as He had been. He passed this vision on to the Emperor, who stripped himself of his raiment and, in poor clothing and barefoot, took up the Cross, carried it to Golgotha and placed it in the Church of the Resurrection, to the joy and consolation of the whole Christian world. St Placilla the Empress; Our Holy Father, the Martyr Macarius of Salonica; Our Holy Mother Maria of Tarsus.

15 / 28 September - Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross – The Holy Martyr Nicetas - Nicetas was a Goth by birth, and a disciple of Bishop Theophilus of the Goths, who took part in the First Ecumenical Council. When Athenarik, Prince of the Goths, began to persecute the Christians, St Nicetas stood before the prince and denounced him for his paganism and inhumanity. Tormented by terrible tortures, Nicetas the more strongly confessed his faith in Christ, and prayed to God with thanksgiving. His mind was unceasingly lifted up to God and immersed in Him, and in his hand beneath his robe he held an icon of the holy Mother of God with the pre-eternal Christ Child standing and holding the Cross in His hands. St Nicetas carried this icon because the holy

Mother of God had appeared to him and comforted him. Finally, the torturer threw Christ's martyr into the flames, in which St Nicetas breathed his last; but his body remained untouched by the fire. His friend Marianus took his body from the land of the Goths (Wallachia and Bessarabia) to Cilicia, to the town of Mopsuestia, where he built a church dedicated to St Nicetas and placed the wonderworking relics of the martyr in it. Nicetas suffered and was glorified in 372. Our Holy Father Philotheus; The Holy Martyr Porphyrius; The Holy Martyrs Theodotus, Asclepidote and Maximus; St. Vissarion, Archbishop of Larissa; The Holy New Martyr John of Crete; St. Joseph of Alaverdsk.

16 / 29 September - Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross - The Holy and Great Martyr Euphemia - Born in Chalcedon, her father was the senator Philophronus and her mother's name was Theodorisia, both devout Christians. Euphemia was a girl beautiful in both body and soul. When the Proconsul, Priscus, celebrated a festival of sacrifice to Ares in Chalcedon, forty-nine Christians absented themselves from the festivities and hid themselves. But they were discovered and brought before Priscus, holy Euphemia being among them. When the furious Priscus asked them why they had not carried out the imperial command, they replied: 'Both the Emperor's commands and yours must be obeyed if they are not contrary to the God of heaven. If they are, they must not only not be obeyed; they must be resisted.' Then Priscus put them to various tortures for nineteen days, from day to day. On the twelfth day, he held Euphemia apart from the others and began to flatter her beauty, hoping to bring her thus to idolatry. When all his flattery proved fruitless, he ordered that she be tortured. First, she was put on a wheel, but an angel of God appeared and broke it. Then he had her thrown into a fiery furnace, but she was preserved by God's power. Seeing this, two soldiers, Victor and Sosthenes, came to faith in Christ, for which they were thrown to the wild beasts and thus finished their earthly course with glory. After that, Euphemia was thrown into a pit filled with water and all kinds of poisonous reptiles, but she made the sign of the Cross over the water as she went into the pit, and remained unharmed. She was finally thrown to the wild beasts and, with a prayer of thanksgiving, gave her soul into God's hands. Her parents buried her body. She suffered in the year 303, and entered into eternal joy. (St Euphemia is also commemorated on July 11th.) Our Holy Father Dorotheus; St Cyprian, Metropolitan of Kiev; The Holy Martyr Ludmilla;

St. Ninian, b of Whithorn (apostle of the E. Picts) (Galloway, c.432) - Ninian's father was a Cumbrian chief. When his son embraced Christianity, he decided to visit Rome, where for many years he advanced in holy virtue and self-discipline. But Ninian never forgot the fellow-Britons who still did not know the Gospel. He decided to return home. In 394 Ninian was consecrated bishop by Pope Siricius. On his way back to Britain Ninian was befriended by Saint Martin of Tours. He founded his see at Whithorn, and there built a stone church which became renowned as the 'White House'. When Ninian heard of Martin's death he dedicated the church to his friend. Almost certainly this White House was the oldest Christian foundation in Scotland. Ninian founded a monastery close by, and from here he and his monks persuaded the southern Picts inhabiting the Grampians to 'abandon the errors of idolatry' (as the Venerable Bede put it 'and accept the true Faith'. Saint Ninian travelled tirelessly. His diocese was huge, stretching from near present-day Glasgow as far as Westmoreland. Although later pagan invaders undid much of his work, his memory lingered; and his success in converting the rulers of Wales was considerable;

St. Edith, abbess of Wilton, England (984) - Daughter of King Edgar and St Wilfrida. She became a nun at Wilton in England at the age of fifteen. She reposed at the age of twenty-two, famous for her generosity to the poor and her familiarity with wild animals.

17 / 30 September - Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross - The Holy Martyrs Vera, Nada and Lubov (Faith, Hope and Love), and their Mother, Sophia - They lived and suffered in Rome in the time of the Emperor Hadrian. The wise Sophia (as her name—Sophia—wisdom, indicates) was left a widow and, as a Christian, steeped herself and her daughters in the Christian faith. At the time that Hadrian's persecuting hand stretched out over the virtuous house of Sophia, Vera was twelve, Nada ten and Lubov nine. The four of them were brought before the Emperor, with their arms entwined 'like a woven wreath', humbly but firmly confessing their faith in Christ the Lord and refusing to offer sacrifice to the goddess Artemis. At the moment of their passion, the mother urged her valiant daughters to endure to the end: 'Your heavenly Lover, Jesus Christ, is eternal health, inexpressible beauty and life eternal. When your bodies are slain by torture, He will clothe you in incorruption and the wounds on your bodies will shine in heaven like the stars.' The torturers inflicted harsh torture on Vera, Nada and Lubov one by one. They beat them, stabbed them and threw them into fire and boiling pitch, and finally beheaded them one after the other. Sophia took the dead bodies of her daughters out of the town and buried them, and stayed by their grave in prayer for three days and nights, then gave her soul to God, hastening to the heavenly company where the blessed souls of her daughters awaited her. The Holy Martyr Agathocleia; The 156 Holy Martyrs of Egypt; The Holy Martyr Theodota.

18 September / 1 October - Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross - St Eumenius, Bishop of Gortyna - He gave himself to Christ with his whole heart from his youth, freeing himself of two heavy burdens: the burden of riches and the burden of the flesh. He freed himself from the first by giving away all his goods to the poor and needy, and from the latter by strict fasting. He thus healed himself and was able to heal others. Passionless and filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, Eumenius shone with a radiance that could not be hidden, as it is written: 'A city set on a hill cannot be hid' (Matt. 5:14), and so holy Eumenius could not be hidden from the world. Seeing him, the people chose him as their bishop in Gortyna. As a bishop, he governed Christ's flock as a good shepherd. He was a father to the poor, riches to the needy, consolation to the sad, healing to the sick and a marvellous wonder-worker. He worked many miracles by his prayers: he killed a poisonous snake, drove out demons, healed many of the sick, and did this not only in his home city but in Rome and in the Thebaid. In the Thebaid, he brought rain from God in a time of drought, and there finally finished his earthly course and entered into the eternal presence of his Lord. He lived and worked in the seventh century. The Holy Martyr Ariadne; The Holy Martyr Bidzini, Prince of Georgia.

19 September / 2 October - Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross - The Holy Martyrs Trophimus, Sabbatius and Dorymedon. In the time of the Emperor Probus, in the third century, when Atticus was governing Antioch, two Christians, Trophimus and Sabbatius, both eminent and honoured men, came to that city. Just at that time, there was a pagan festival and offerings to the idol of Apollo in Daphne near Antioch. Atticus made a special effort to ensure that all the citizens took part in the festivities. When someone saw Trophimus and Sabbatius, and told Atticus that these two old men were not taking part, Atticus summoned them for trial, and, when they refused to deny Christ, put them to torture one by one. After beating and torturing Trophimus, he sent him to Phrygia to Dionysius, a yet harsher torturer of Christians, himself taking Sabbatius from prison and trying him. When the torturer asked Sabbatius who he was and what was his rank, he replied: 'My rank and dignity, my homeland, my glory and my riches are Christ the Son of God, who is alive for ever and by whose providence the whole universe is held in being.' He was

therefore beaten and flogged with iron flails until his bones showed through his flesh, and he died under these tortures. The torturer put Trophimus to harsh torture, and held him in prison to inflict yet greater torture on him. Then a certain senator, Dorymedon, a secret Christian, came to the prison and ministered to Trophimus. When the torturer discovered this, he put them both to torture and finally threw them to the wild beasts. But the animals would not touch them. Holy Dorymedon even shouted into the ear of a she-bear to eat him up, but the bear only became even more docile. The torturer ordered, in consequence of this, that St Trophimus and Dorymedon be beheaded. The souls of these holy martyrs now reign in heaven. The Holy Martyr Zossima the Hermit; St Theodore, Prince of Yaroslavl;

St. Theodore of Taurus, archbishop of Canterbury (602-690) - probably the most important archbishop of Canterbury between St. Augustine and St. Lanfranc both for his organisation of the Church in England and as a scholar and teacher. The Venerable Bede tells us he was Greek by birth from Tarsus in Cilicia and had been educated in Constantinople and was a monk. Before his appointment he lived in Rome and was famous for his contribution to the bitter monothelite controversy. He was recommended by St. Adrian, an African bishop to Pope Vitalin, who was then looking for a suitable archbishop of Canterbury in 666. This followed the death in Rome of Wighard, the archbishop elect, and the choice of the kings of Northumbria and Kent in the crisis following the Synod of Whitby and an outbreak of the plague. St Adrian himself had been the pope's choice, but he had refused. Vitalin asked him instead to accompany and help St Theodore. He left Rome with St. Adrian and St Benedict Biscop, consulted St. Agilbert, bishop of Paris and former bishop of Wessex on the way, and reached England in 669. He made a visitation of most of the country, filled vacant sees, set up an important school at Canterbury with St. Adrian, which soon became the source of several future bishops and attracted students even from Ireland, and held the first synod of the Anglo-Saxon church at Hertford in 672. Its ten decrees were based on canons approved by the Council of Chalcedon, widely adopted in the West. But they dealt admirably with the legacy of division in England between bishops trained by Roman and those trained by Irish masters; they also dealt with the respective rights of bishops and monasteries. A further decision was taken to create more dioceses, which was later implemented by Theodore in Northumbria (at the expense of St. Wilfrid), in Mercia, East Anglia, and Wessex. Theodore's work was the unification of disparate elements in the Church, fusing the elements from Rome, Gaul, and Ireland into a single cohesive whole. Although he was highhanded in his division of the Northumbrian diocese. and the papacy upheld St. Wilfrid against him. his policy. if not the way of implementing it, was sound. In pursuing it, he rightly respected the territorial limits of the regional kings' power by creating a second (or third) diocese within the kingdom, but avoided setting up dioceses with territory in different kingdoms. Towards the end of his long life he sought a reconciliation with St. Wilfrid and helped towards his partial restoration. According to St. Wilfrid's biographer alone, he also expressed a desire that St. Wilfrid should succeed him at Canterbury. This was never realised. St. Theodore's second synod, at Hatfield, produced a declaration of orthodoxy by the Church in England in the monothelite controversy. The synods later held at Clovesho were the direct result of St. Theodore inaugurating the series at Hertford which decreed that such yearly synods should be held. St. Theodore's school at Canterbury taught not only Latin and Greek (very rare at this time), but also Roman Law, the rules of metre, computistics, music and biblical exegesis on the Pentateuch and the Gospels of the literal school of Antioch. Theodore is also known to have been interested in medicine. But the Penitential ascribed to him cannot be his work as it stands: some elements (e.g. on remarriage after divorce) are in plain contradiction to his known teaching, while others date from after Theodore's death. It is possible that certain elements may go back to Theodore's oral teaching, but the whole work had at least two editors and the original cannot be recovered. Some of his exegesis has been recently studied afresh. St. Theodore died on 19 September at the age of about eighty-seven; he was buried close to St. Augustine in the monastery of SS. Peter and Paul, Canterbury. In 1091 his incorrupt body was translated; St. Seguanus of Gaul (580).

20 September / 3 October - Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross - The Holy and great Martyr Eustace (Placidus). He was a great Roman military leader in the time of the Emperors Titus and Trajan. Although a pagan, Placidus (for that was his pagan name) was a righteous and merciful man, like the centurion Cornelius, who was baptised by the Apostle Peter (Acts 10). Going hunting one day, he found a stag. By the providence of God, a shining Cross appeared among the stag's antlers and the voice of God came to Placidus, telling him to go to a Christian priest and be baptised. Placidus was baptised, along with his wife and two sons. At his baptism, he received the name Eustace, his wife the name Theopiste and their sons the names Agapius and Theopistus. After his baptism, Eustace went back to the very place where the revelation through the stag had occurred, and thanked God on his knees that he had brought him to the truth. At that, the voice of God came to him again, foretelling suffering for His name and strengthening him. Then Eustace secretly left Rome with his family, with the intention of hiding among simple people and serving God in an unknown and humble way. Arriving in Egypt, he was immediately beset by trials. Some wicked barbarian carried off his wife, and his two sons were seized by wild beasts. But the barbarian quickly came to a bad end, and a herdsman saved the boys from the wild beasts. Eustace settled in the Egyptian village of Vadisis, and there lived as a village hireling for fifteen years. After this, the barbarians descended on the Roman Empire, and the Emperor Trajan was sorry that his brave commander Placidus, who had been victorious wherever he had fought, was not with him. The Emperor sent two of his officers to seek the great general throughout the Empire. By God's providence, these officers, who had been friends of Eustace, came to this village of Vadisis, found him and took him to the Emperor. Eustace gathered the army together and defeated the barbarians. On the way back to Rome, Eustace went and found his wife and sons. When he arrived in Rome, the Emperor Trajan had died and the Emperor Hadrian was on the throne. When Hadrian summoned Eustace to offer sacrifice to idols, Eustace told him that he was a Christian. The Emperor put him to torture, together with his wife and sons. When the wild beasts did them no harm, he threw them into a white-hot metal ox. On the third day, they took out their bodies, dead but untouched by the fire. Thus this glorious general gave to Caesar that which is Caesar's, and to God that which is God's, and entered into the eternal Kingdom of Christ our God. The Holy Prince Michael and his Counsellor Theodore; Our Holy Father, the Martyr Hilarion.

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