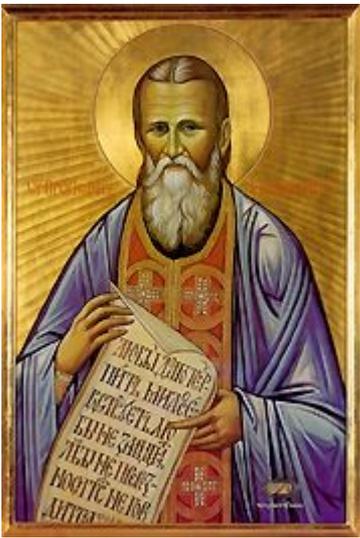


22nd Sunday After Pentecost

St John of Kronstadt

19 October / 1 November 2015



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

Troparion of St John of Kronstadt tone 4: With the Apostles thy message has gone out to the ends of the world, / and with the Confessors thou didst suffer for Christ; / thou art like the Hierarchs through thy preaching of the Word; / with the Righteous thou art radiant with God's grace. / The Lord has exalted thy humility above the heavens / and given us thy name

as a source of miracles. / O wonderworker living in Christ for ever, / have mercy on those in trouble / and hear us when we call to thee with faith, O our beloved shepherd John.

Another Troparion of St John of Kronstadt (composed by St John of Shanghai & San Francisco) tone 4: O

Wonderworker living in Christ for ever, / with love have mercy on those in danger; / hear thy children who call upon thee with faith; / be compassionate to those who hope for aid from thee, / O Father John of Kronstadt, our beloved shepherd.

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

Kontakion of St John of Kronstadt tone 4: Thou wast chosen by God in infancy / and in childhood received the gift of learning. / Thou wast called to the priesthood in a vision during sleep / and didst become a wonderful shepherd of Christ's Church. / Pray to Christ our God / that we may all be with thee in the Kingdom of heaven, / O Father John, namesake of grace.

Matins Gospel XI

EPISTLE: Galatians 6:11-18

See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU WITH MY OWN HAND!

He has written the whole letter himself, which was proof of great sincerity. In his other Epistles he himself only dictated, another wrote, as is plain from the Epistle to the Romans, for at its close it is said, 'I Tertius, who write the Epistle, salute you' (Rom. 16:22) ...And this he did by necessity, not merely from affectation, but in order to remove injurious suspicion ...What is the meaning of 'to make a fair show in the flesh?' It means to be esteemed by men. As they are reviled by the Jews for deserting the customs of their fathers, they desire, he says, to injure you, so they may not have this charged against them, but vindicate themselves by means of your flesh. His object here is to show that they did not act this way from respect to God.

St. John Chrysostom. Chapter VI Commentary on Galatians. B#57, pp. 45-46.

Second Epistle I John 4:7-11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE 8: 5-15

THE LORD SAID THIS PARABLE: "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold." When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?" And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.' "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the

devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

THE SOWER

Brothers and sisters! Did you know that there exists a psychological law by which under the influence of thought, a feeling, a desire is kindled; and from desire comes action. This law was discovered back in the first centuries by the Fathers of the Church, and then it passed on into secular life. In any sphere of life, there isn't a single action which is not provoked by feeling and desire. And in their turn, feeling and desire are kindled by thought; just as any flammable substance will catch fire if, for a sufficient length of time, one holds over it a magnifying glass through which a ray of sun is concentrated. And so: thought—feeling—action.

Both readings for this Sunday, the Apostle and the Gospel, are in a wonderful way connected with this law. Even more: without this law we wouldn't even be able to understand them in all their depth. The Gospel tells us about the Sower, the seed, and the ground. Different kinds of ground are mentioned: the ground by the wayside, the stony ground, the ground overgrown with weeds, and finally, good ground.

The Sower is the Lord, the seed is the Word of God, and the ground is the listener — you and I, our hearts. And this parable ends with the words: "But that on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Lk. 8:15). This means that the purpose is such: we must accept the Word of God with all our being, with all our mind, with a good and pure heart. And it is impossible to express this good, pure heart in stronger words than in the words of the Apostle Paul in today's reading: "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:19-20). This is what we should strive for; here is the purpose of our life.

But who among us can honestly repeat these words of the Apostle: "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"? And if we do not feel what the Apostle felt, it means that our life is not fully Christian, and we are not bearing those fruits which the Lord expects from us. What is the matter? The Word of God is as powerful today as in the days when the Saviour Himself was preaching it; and yet our lives do not reflect this His Word. For if our deeds would conform to the teaching of Christ, then the whole world would turn to Christ, because our lives would be more eloquent, more strong than any sermon.

But alas, they are not like this. Our deeds are not like this because our feelings are not the feelings of Christ; they have not yet died to the law of earthly life— futile, temporary—in order to live for God, as the Apostle says. And our feelings are not like this because our thoughts are busy with unnecessary things. Only rarely are they directed toward Christ, Who loved us and gave Himself for us. Are they not wandering more often on the highways of our futile earthly life? Do they not bring our hearts into a state of stoniness, absorbed only with the cares of our temporary, materialistic welfare? Do they not get stuck between our sinful desires, as between weeds?

Let us examine ourselves. And if this is so, let us bring about a revolution within ourselves. And let us start with our thoughts; because every sin passes through thought into our feeling, and through feeling into action. This means that our main struggle with sin goes on in the thoughts. This is where we have to destroy it; then it will not even touch our heart and will not pass into action. Yes, but our thought is already infected by sin. What are we to do? From a thought, as from a hole in the ground, little snakes are constantly darting out—sinful thoughts—and they bite and poison our feelings. But this is what we must do: run to Christ with repentance. He is our Saviour from sin. In His first appearance after His Resurrection, He said to His disciples: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit. Whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven" (Jn. 20: 22-23). Let us start with this. Let us take our sinful thoughts to confession, and we will receive absolution. And then new thoughts and new deeds will begin. A new life.

This is when we too will be able to say together with the Apostle: "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Then too the seed, the Word of God, will fall on good ground, and we will be able to keep it in a pure heart and bring forth fruit in patience. And in this "keeping" we will find a new life and a new joy.

Archbishop Andrei, The One Thing Needful

Second Gospel: Luke 6:31 – 36

Saints of the week

19 October / 1 November - St. John of Kronstadt, priest, wonderworker - A married priest, he served in the Cathedral of St. Andrew's in Kronstadt, a busy port near St. Petersburg. A great man of prayer, he served Divine Liturgy every day and read the entire cycle of daily services. He visited the poor and the sick, generously giving alms, himself often going without. He and his matushka lived as brother and sister. He taught and advised all those who came to him, young and old, rich and poor. Such was the love of the people for him throughout Russia that the Kronstadt post office had a special section just for St. John! Even during his lifetime hundreds were healed through his holy prayers. In 1906, he became very ill and suffered with this sickness until his death. Nevertheless, he continued to serve daily. On December 20, 1908, he quietly reposed in the Lord. A crowd of 60,000 attended his funeral, an unprecedented event in Russia. He was formally glorified as a saint by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad on June 3, 1964. Holy blessed Father John, pray to God for us!

The Holy Prophet Joel - The second in order of the Minor Prophets, Joel was the son of Phaniel, of the tribe of Reuben. He lived eight hundred years before Christ, and foretold the misfortunes of the Israelites and their captivity in Babylon for the sins that they had committed against God. He called the people to fasting and the priests to penitent and tearful prayer that God would have mercy on them: Sanctify ye a fast and cry unto the Lord' (1:14); 'Let the priests weep between the porch and the altar' (2:17). Joel also prophesied the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, and the outpouring of His grace on all the faithful (2:28). He foretold and described the Dreadful Judgement of God, and also the glory of God's holy Church; The Holy Martyr Varus; Our Holy Father Prochorus of Pchinja;

St. Frideswide of Oxford, abbess (c.735) - the daughter of Didian, a Mercian prince whose lands included the upper reaches of the River Thames. She took a vow of perpetual virginity. A local prince named Algar refused to accept that she would not marry him. He pursued the saint, only to be struck blind. His sight returned once he had renounced his plan to make her forsake her vow. Frideswide had hidden herself from Algar in a village near present-day Oxford called Binsey. Eventually she founded a nunnery there and became its first abbess. There she lived until her death around the year 735. The nunnery flourished and her name was not forgotten. In the twelfth century her nunnery was refounded, this time as a convent for Augustinian canons. In 1180 in the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury and King Henry II of England her remains were translated to a new shrine in the monastery church. A yet greater shrine was built nine years later. Countless pilgrims visited her relics. Twice a year the University of Oxford held a solemn feast in her honour and came to venerate her bones. In 1440 the Archbishop of Canterbury declared her patroness of the university. Then in 1525 Cardinal Wolsey suppressed St Frideswide's monastery. Two decades later the monastery church became the new cathedral of Oxford. But the shrine containing Frideswide's relics had been broken up by Protestant reformers. The stone was used for building; but happily some Catholics preserved the saint's bones. Meanwhile the wife of the Protestant professor Peter Martyr had been buried in the Cathedral. In 1561, in an extraordinary burst of fanaticism a canon dug up her bones and mixed them with those of Saint Frideswide, adding the epitaph *Hic jacet religio cum superstitione* ('Here lies religion with superstition'). Today the place where her remains finally rested is marked with four elegant candlesticks in Christ Church.

20 October / 2 November - The Holy and Great Martyr Artemius - This glorious saint was Egyptian by birth, and the commander-in-chief of the army of the Emperor Constantine the Great. When the victorious Cross, encircled by stars, appeared to the Emperor, Artemius also saw it, came to faith in Christ the Lord and was baptised. Later, in the time of the Emperor Constantius, Constantine's son, he was sent to Greece to take the relics of St Andrew and St Luke from Patras and Thebes respectively to Constantinople, which charge Artemius carried out with joy. After that, he was appointed governor and imperial representative in Egypt, in which appointment he remained throughout the reign of Constantius and for a certain time under Julian the Apostate. When this renegade Emperor went to war against the Persians, he stopped for a time in Antioch, and summoned Artemius and his army to join him there. Artemius went. At that time, the Emperor gave two Christian priests, Eugenius and Macarius, over to torture. Seeing this, St Artemius was profoundly alarmed, went to the Emperor and said to him: 'Why are you so inhumanly torturing these innocent and dedicated men, and why are you putting pressure on them to turn back from the Orthodox faith?' He also prophesied to the Emperor that his end was near. The furious Emperor sent the two priests into exile in Arabia, where they soon died, and stripped Artemius of his Military rank, ordering that he flogged and whipped. All wounded and covered with blood, Artemius was thrown into prison, where the Lord Christ Himself appeared to him, healing and comforting him. After that, the Emperor ordered that he laid on a flat stone and that another stone he put on him, so crushing his body like a board. Finally, he was beheaded (c. 362); The Emperor Julian then went out against the Persians and perished in a dishonourable way, as St Artemis had foretold. Our Holy Father Gerasim the New. Our Holy Father, the New Martyr Ignatius; **St. Acca, bishop of Hexham, England, (c. 740)** - From his youth he had been close to the great saints of the time, brought up in the household of Saint Bosa of York, accompanying Wilfrid to Rome (and there, says Bede, 'learning many valuable things about the organisation of the church which he could not have found out in his own country'). After serving for several years as chaplain to the redoubtable Saint Wilfrid, Bishop of Hexham in Northumbria, Acca succeeded to the bishopric on Wilfrid's death. Acca believed that the English church needed to include the beauties of the Roman liturgy rather than the Roman legal system. 'He invited a famous singer named Maban, who had been trained by the followers of Pope Gregory's disciples in Kent, to come and teach him and his clergy,' wrote the Venerable Bede. This man taught church music for twelve years - reviving old forgotten chants as well as bringing new ones. Acca also sang beautifully, says Bede (who knew him), and encouraged this revival by his own example. He loved and studied the Scriptures. He refurbished the churches with sacred vessels and lights. Above all he enlarged and beautified the cathedral of St Andrew at Hexham. He built up a fine library to which scholars and students were drawn, all of whom received the patronage of Bishop Acca. For some reason Acca was forced out of his diocese in the year 732. He was exiled to Withern, Galloway; but he returned before his death in 742 and was buried at Hexham.

21 October / 3 November - Our Holy Father Hilarion the Great - As a rose growing among thorns, so was this great saint born of pagan parents in the village of Tabatha near Gaza in Palestine. His parents sent him to study in Alexandria, where the gifted youngster

quickly assimilated both secular learning and spiritual wisdom. Coming to know Christ the Lord and receiving baptism, he desired to serve the Lord with his whole heart. With this desire, Hilarion visited St Antony the Great in the desert and became his disciple. He then returned to his homeland and lived in asceticism near Maiuma, not far from Gaza. Demons tried to frighten him with various terrors, but he, with prayer to God and the sign of the Cross, overcame them all and drove them away. A great many who were desirous of the spiritual life gathered around him, and St Hilarion became for Palestine what St Antony was for Egypt. A divine teacher, a strict ascetic, a marvellous wonderworker, Hilarion was revered not only by Christians but also by pagans. He, though, fearing the praise of men and crying out through his tears: 'Woe is me, for I am getting my reward in this life!', fled from place to place simply to hide from men and remain alone with his soul and God. He therefore settled and lived for a time in Egypt, Sicily, Dalmatia and finally in Cyprus, where his life of great toil came to an end in about 372, when he had reached the age of eighty. Hilarion's wonderworking relics were taken by Ezekiel, one of his disciples, to Palestine and laid in the monastery that he had founded; St Hilarion, Bishop of Meglin; Our Holy Father Philotheus.

22 October / 4 November - Fast Day - The Kazan Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos - commemorating the deliverance from the Poles in 1612. **St Abercius, Equal to the Apostles** - In the time of the Emperor Antoninus (138-161), St Abercius was bishop in the city of Hierapolis in Phrygia. The great majority of the town's inhabitants were pagans, and St Abercius governed his little flock with a heart greatly saddened by the great number of pagans and idolaters, and with fervent prayer to God that He would bring them to the true Light. At the time of a rowdy idolatrous festival, Abercius became inflamed with godly zeal and went into the temple, smashing all the idols. When the furious pagans tried to kill him, three young madmen fell down before the man of God, foaming at the mouth and bellowing. The man of God drove the demons out of them, and they were healed and became calm. Seeing this, the fury of the pagans turned to marvelling at Christ's wonderworker, and five hundred of them were immediately baptised. Little by little, everyone in the city of Hierapolis came to believe in Christ and was baptised. The proconsul of the region, Publius, had a blind mother whose sight Abercius restored by prayer, and both Publius and his mother came to faith in Christ, along with many other people. In old age, Abercius was summoned to Rome, where he healed the Emperor's mad daughter. The Lord Christ appeared to His faithful follower, St. Abercius, several times. People from far and near came to him for help in chronic sickness, and the demons not only feared him but were obedient to his commands. At the order of the Lord Himself, he preached the Gospel throughout Syria and Mesopotamia, and went to his beloved Lord in great old age, in the city of Hierapolis at the end of the second century; Our Holy Father Lot.

23 October / 5 November - The Holy Apostle James, the Brother of the Lord - He is called 'the Lord's brother' because he was the son of righteous Joseph, the betrothed of the most holy Mother of God. When Joseph was dying, he shared out his goods among his sons and wanted to leave a share to the Lord Jesus, the Son of the most holy Virgin Mary, but his sons opposed this, not reckoning Jesus to be a brother of theirs. James, though, loved Jesus greatly and announced that he would include Him in his share, counting himself to be indeed brother to the Lord. James was, from the first, devoted to the Lord Jesus. According to tradition, he went to Egypt with the most holy Virgin and Joseph when Herod tried to kill the new-born King. As soon as he heard Christ's teaching, he began to live by it. It is said that, during the whole of his life, he ate neither fat nor oil, but lived only on bread and water, and he was chaste to the end of his days. He often kept a vigil of prayer at night. The Lord included him among his Seventy apostles, appearing to him after His glorious Resurrection, as the Apostle Paul testifies (I Cor. 15:7). He was bishop in Jerusalem for thirty years, and governed the Church of God with zeal. On the Lord's instructions, he composed the first Liturgy, which was far too long for later Christians and was shortened by St Basil and St John Chrysostom. He brought many Jews and Greeks to the Christian faith, and even unbelieving Jews marvelled at his justice, nicknaming him James the Just. When Ananias became High Priest, he decided, along with other of the Jewish elders, to kill James as a preacher of Christ. One day, at Pascha, when many people were gathered in Jerusalem, the elders told him to climb up onto a roof and speak against Christ. St James climbed up there, and began to speak to the people about Christ as the Son of God and the true Messiah, and of His Resurrection and eternal glory in heaven. The infuriated priests and elders cast him down from the roof, and he was badly injured though still alive. A man then ran up and gave him such a vicious blow on the head that his brains spilled out. Thus this glorious apostle of Christ died a martyr's death and entered into the Kingdom of his Lord. James was sixty-three years old when he suffered for Christ. St Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople; The Holy Martyr James of Borovitz; St. Ethelfleda, abbess of Romsey; St. Oda of Amay, foundress of churches (Neth.).

24 October / 6 November - Fast Day - The Holy Martyr Arethas - This holy martyr suffered for the Christian faith with more than four thousand other Christians: priests, monks and nuns, townsmen and women and children. Arethas was the local governor of the town of Negran, in the land of Omir in southern Arabia, and was ninety-five years old when he suffered. The land of Omir was governed by a Jew called Dunaan, a vicious persecutor of Christians. Resolving to exterminate Christianity completely in his land, he laid siege to the Christian town of Negran and told the citizens that, if they did not deny Christ, he would put them all to death. The citizens closed the gates, and Dunaan attacked the city wall for a long time without success. Then the iniquitous governor swore to the citizens that he would do nothing to them if they opened the gate for him to enter and take the tribute owing to him, saying that he would then go away at once. The Christians believed him, and opened the gates. Then the bloodthirsty Jew summoned the aged Arethas to him, along with his clergy and other eminent citizens, and slew them all with the sword, and then indulged in a riot of butchery through the town. Hearing of this, the Byzantine Emperor, Justin, was greatly distressed and wrote a letter to the Ethiopian Emperor Elesbaan, urging him to set out with an army against Dunaan and avenge the Christian blood that had been spilled. Elesbaan obeyed Justin, attacked the

governor of Omir, overcame him, slaughtered his entire army and put him to the sword. A devout man called Abramius was installed as ruler of Omir by God's revelation and, as archbishop, also by God's revelation, St Gregory (see Dec. 19th). In Negran, the Christians rebuilt the Church of the Holy Trinity that Dunaan had burned, and built a church to the holy martyr Arethas and the other martyrs of that city. They suffered and received wreaths of martyrdom from the Lord in 523.

The Icon of the Holy Theotokos, "Joy of All Who Sorrow": This name is given to one of the wonderworking icons of the Most-holy Theotokos. On this day the icon is celebrated for the miraculous healing in Moscow, of Euphemia, the sister of Patriarch Joachim, in the year 1688. Euphemia had a serious wound in the side and as the doctors failed in their treatments, she prayed with tears to the Most-holy Theotokos. Then, she heard a voice: "Euphemia, go to the Church of the Transfiguration of my Son; there you will find the icon, 'Joy of All Who Sorrow.' Have the priest pray for you before this icon and you will be healed." Euphemia did so, and was immediately made well.

HYMN OF PRAISE to the Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos, "Joy of All Who Sorrow" O Most-holy Mother of God, "Joy of All Who Sorrow," Grant thy mercy to us sinners. Thy Son now sits on the throne of the Eternal Kingdom, And all our troubles thou seest; thou knowest them as they occur. Thou hast always prayed to Christ God for the faithful, And hast relieved much pain and misery of the sorrowful. O Holy Virgin, never cease, to the end of time, To pray for the salvation of our race. God hast made thee even more glorious than the Seraphim: O hasten to us, O Joy of all who sorrow!

St. Maglorius, abbot of Sark - Died 586. Abbot Maglorius of Lammear, Brittany, was born in south Wales and educated under Saint Illtyd. He was a cousin of Saint Samson, with whom he crossed over to Brittany, where they became abbots of two monasteries. St. Samson became bishop of Dol, and on his death he is said to have been succeeded by St. Maglorius, who finally retired to the Channel Islands and built an abbey on Sark, where he died. He is represented in art giving Holy Communion to an angel and is sometimes shown with Saint Samson of Dol. Venerated at Sark; St. Elesbaan, Emperor of Ethiopia; The Icon: Joy of all who Sorrow; Our Holy Father Arethas of the Kiev Caves.

25 October / 7 November - The Holy Martyrs Marcian and Martyrius - These saints were clergy with Patriarch Paul of Constantinople in the time of the Emperor Constantius. After the death of the great Emperor Constantine, the Arian heresy, which had till then been kept under, sprang up again and began to spread, and the Emperor Constantius himself inclined towards it. There were two influential nobles at the imperial court, Eusebius and Philip, both ardent Arians. Through their influence, Patriarch Paul was dethroned and driven out to Armenia, where the Arians strangled him, and the patriarchal throne was seized by the dishonourable Macedonius. At that time, when Orthodoxy had two fierce struggles on hand, against both the pagans and the heretics, Marcian and Martyrius ranged themselves decisively and with all their strength on the side of Orthodoxy. Marcian was a reader and Martyrius a sub-deacon at the Cathedral, and had been secretaries to Patriarch Paul. The Arians first tried to bribe them, but, when the two holy men refused this with scorn, the heretics condemned them to death. When they were led to the scaffold, they raised their hands and prayed to God, thanking Him that they were finishing their lives as martyrs: 'Lord, we rejoice that we are leaving this world by such a death. Make us worthy to be partakers of eternal life, O Thou our Life!' They then laid their heads under the sword and were beheaded, in 355. A church was later built to them over their relics by St John Chrysostom. The Holy Martyr Anastasius; St Tabitha.

REFLECTION

An appearance of the Holy Martyr Varus: When the devout widow Cleopatra built a church to him, she summoned the bishop and priests to consecrate it. A large number of Christians gathered for this celebration, for the entire countryside venerated St. Varus as a great healer and miracle-worker. Following the divine services, this pious benefactress went before the relics of St. Varus and prayed: "I beseech you-you who endured much suffering for Christ-implore God for that which is pleasing to Him; and for me and my only son, ask that which is beneficial." Cleopatra's son John was ready for the army. Just as she left the church, John became ill. He was seized with a burning fever that grew steadily worse until, around midnight, John died. The grief-stricken, furious mother came before the tomb of St. Varus and spoke sharply: "O saint of God! Is this the way you help me?" and she said much more in her bitter lamentation until, utterly exhausted, she fell into a light sleep. St. Varus appeared to her with her son John. Both were radiant as the sun in garments whiter than snow, bound with golden girdles, and had magnificent wreaths on their heads. God's saint said to her: "Did you not pray to me to implore God for whatever was pleasing to Him, and beneficial to you and your son? I prayed to God and He, in His unspeakable goodness, took your son into His heavenly army. If you so desire, here he is: take him and place him in the army of the earthly king." Hearing this, the young John embraced St. Varus and said: "No, my Lord, do not listen to my mother and do not send me back into the world-full of unrighteousness and iniquity-from which you have delivered me." Awakening from the dream, Cleopatra felt great joy in her heart and left the church. She lived near the church for seven years, and St. Varus often appeared to her with John.

23rd Sunday After Pentecost
Holy Great-martyr Demetrius &
Commemoration of the Great Earthquake at
Constantinople
26 October / 8 November 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 tone 3: O victorious Demetrius, / thou wast a protection for the world and an invincible soldier of Christ. / Thou didst inspire Nestor to humble Lyaaios. / Intercede with Christ our God to save us.

Troparion — Tone 8: Christ our God, You look the earth and it trembles; / deliver us from the terrible threat of earthquakes; / and through the prayers of the Theotokos, send down upon us / Your abundant mercy and save us.

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 tone 2: God has give thee invincible strength, O Demetrius, / and hast tinged the Church with thy blood and kept thy city un-harmed, / for thou art its foundation.

Kontakion — Tone 6: Deliver us all from upheavals, and from terrible afflictions caused by our sins, O Lord, / and spare Your people whom You have purchased with Your blood, O Master. / Do not deliver Your city to destruction by terrible earthquakes, / for we know no other God than You; / and to those who cry out You respond: / "I am with you and no one will be against you."

Vespers: for the Earthquake: Isa. 63:15-19; 64:1-5,8-9; Jer. 2:2-12; **for the Great Martyr:** Wisd. 4:7-15

Matins Gospel I

Epistle: for the Earthquake: Heb. 12:6-13; 25-27

EPISTLE: Ephesians 2: 4-10

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, Even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), And raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES ...GOD MADE US ALIVE TOGETHER WITH CHRIST ...FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED

Again Christ is introduced, and it is a matter well worthy of our belief, because if the firstfruits live, so do we also. He has quickened both Him and us. Do you see that all this is said of Christ incarnate? ...Those who were dead. those who were children of wrath, those He has quickened. Do you behold 'the hope of His calling?' ...Do you behold the glory of His inheritance? ...As yet not one is actually raised, excepting that inasmuch as the Head has risen, we also are raised ...Truly there is need of the Spirit and of revelation, in order to understand the depth of these mysteries. And then so you may have no distrust about the matter, observe what he adds further ...Was faith then, you will say, enough to save us? No, but God, he says, has required this, lest He should save us, barren and without work at all. His expression is that faith saves, but it is because God so wills it that faith saves ...'We are His workmanship.' He here alludes to the regeneration which is in reality a second creation. We have been brought from non-existence into being. As to what we were before, that is, the old man, we are dead.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily IV on Ephesians II. B#57, pp. 66- 68.

Epistle for the Great Martyr: II Tim. 2:1-10

THE GOSPEL: LUKE 16:19-31

The Lord said this parable: "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, Desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, For I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' "

LAZARUS & THE RICH MAN

Brothers and sisters, have you noticed how the Holy Church for a long time now has been telling us about the Word of God? With His Word Christ calmed the storm, healed the servant of the centurion and the daughter of the Canaanite woman, raised the son of the widow of Nain, and filled five thousand people with five loaves of bread. By His Word, the miraculous catch of fish was accomplished. And even today's Gospel reading speaks about the Word of God. "There was a certain rich man," relates the Gospel, "which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores" (Lk. 16:19-21).

And further it reveals to us what is beyond the grave. Eternity: The rich man—in hell, in torments; and Lazarus—in the bosom of Abraham. This Gospel ends with the words: and Abraham said to the rich man, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets [that is, the Word of God] neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Lk. 16:31). See how important the Word of God is: our eternal fate depends on our attitude towards it. Although the rich man did nothing evil, he did not live according to the Word of God, and he perished. But Lazarus did live according to the Word of God, and was saved. The Word of God has the wonderful power to renew the soul of a sinner. I will not explain to you how this happens, but will simply tell you something that happened in St. Petersburg. Here it is: There lived a family—a grandmother and grandson. The grandson was an Imperial Guardsman. His parents had died when he was still young, and his grandmother took their place. They were magnates, incalculably rich, millionaires. Vladimir, as this officer was called, while still a young man become satiated with everything that only the life of wealthy Russians could provide at that time. Like the life of the rich man in today's parable, his life was spent in gaiety and carousing. He had a good heart and his friends loved him as a person from whom they could always get anything they wanted. The word "no" did not exist for him.

But once his grandmother called Vladimir and said: 'Vladimir, after my death, you will have no one. Your friends will strip you of everything, and you will perish a lonely, unfortunate man. Get married.' Vladimir answered, "All right, Grandmother, I will get married." The grandmother found a fiancée for him—a princess from an impoverished family. Vladimir danced with her two or three times at parties and proposed to her. And then, because the wedding was set for only after the Christmas season, and Vladimir's life went on in its routine way—in a fog of merry-making and revelry—he wouldn't even have been able to remember her name right away. And if he had met her on the street, he probably wouldn't have recognised her.

Yet the closer the wedding day approached, the more troubled his soul became. And finally came the second day after the Feast of the Baptism of Christ. He had to go to his army office in order to get his salary and his vacation for the honeymoon. This was the first time he had gone out in St. Petersburg at such an early hour and, moreover, in a sober state. Usually, when he was travelling in Petersburg at this hour or still earlier, it was after a night spent in extreme debauchery, and then he was usually dozing off, oblivious to his surroundings. But today, as if for the first time, he saw Petersburg during working hours. On everything lay the impression of the businesslike seriousness of a morning in a metropolitan city. And upon his soul there lay, like a heavy stone, something unusually businesslike and serious: marriage, family life, obligations which he never had, never knew.

Upon arrival at his office, he received his papers and money—his large purse was filled with gold coins. When he went out, he wanted to be alone and walk. He ordered the driver to follow him on the roadway, and he himself walked on foot. Without noticing it, he reached the cathedral of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God (celebrated this coming Monday, 22nd October/4th November). Just at that moment the bell rang. And for the first time, he felt drawn to enter church. Of course, he had been to church services, molebens and pannikhidas, but only because this was required by his social standing. But now, an inner need manifested itself. The cathedral was plunged in a cosy half-darkness. The Miraculous Icon was simply shining in brilliance. In spite of the winter season there were white lilies. The reading of the Akathist was still going on. There was a deep prayerful singing, a multitude of candles and devotion lamps, and more and more people—praying, weeping. Vladimir froze. He had not prayed for a long, long time. All he could say was: "O Mother of God! I am coming to a turning point in my life. If it has to be so, help me. But if all this is not necessary, stop it." And here, he himself thought that this was no way to pray, that he didn't even know how to pray. Suddenly someone tenderly touched his sleeve. It was a beggar woman with a child in her

arms. "Sir, help me," she whispered. He thrust his hand into his pocket, pulled out his large purse, and put it in her hand. Because of the weight of the purse, she almost dropped it.

"Sir," she exclaimed, "I cannot take it. People will say I have stolen it." "Don't be afraid, my card is in the purse. Say that I gave it to you." "Sir, and what about you? You are giving away everything...and yourself?" "Don't you understand, I have everything, I don't need anything." "All right, I will take it. But know this: you are saving two lives—mine and my child's. How can I repay your kindness?" "You know what? Yes, you can help me. I don't know how to pray; but I am in need of prayer, right now, for my soul. Otherwise I will perish." She looked at him with a long, compassionate look. She bowed and disappeared into the crowd. But then he saw her again. She approached the Miraculous Icon, put her baby on one of the steps before the Icon, and started praying and making prostrations. Tears were streaming down her pale face. A shiver ran down his spine. He understood. This was a prayer for him. He quickly walked out of the church, went one block until he reached Great Konushenna Street. After the semi-darkness of the cathedral, the bright sun on the white snow blinded him. He felt a sharp, sudden pain in his eyes, then in his head, and he lost consciousness.

When he recovered, he sensed that he was lying on a table in his full Guard's uniform. He had fallen into a lethargic sleep, (a comatose condition in which all bodily functions become undetectable and the person appears to be dead) and now he was starting to wake up. He still couldn't move, couldn't open his eyes, but he heard everything. Only he thought that he had died, and everything he heard he accepted as if he were dead. And everyone around him was sure that he was dead, and they prepared him for burial. And now he understood the reverse side of life. He heard two voices—male and female. The man's voice said: "At least for the sake of decency, put your handkerchief to your eyes. After all, he was your fiancé."

And the female voice said: "Papa, you know how I hated and despised him. Only your debts made me agree to this marriage. I cannot continue this comedy." And then his friends approached. All of them were in debt to him. "How wonderful that Vladimir died, and I don't have to pay back what he, good man that he was, loaned to me." And so more and more all the hypocrisy of the life he had been living was revealed to him. The tears of only one person were sincere. His nurse, who had taken the place of his father and mother, was sobbing.

Then they started to read the Psalter. Before, he had not understood them; but now, each word of the Psalms excited his awakening soul. All the depth of God's Mercy was revealed to him. God's Truth was revealed against the background of human lies. And then he heard a movement. He understood, the clergy had come and they were starting to serve the pannikhida. And when they began to sing: "With the Saints give rest . . ." and when they lifted his body to put it in the coffin, he caught his breath, recovered consciousness and began to move. Out of fear, the bearers dropped the coffin and ran out of the room. Vladimir remained alone. But by now he was not the same. In the middle of the empty room stood the renewed Vladimir.

When everything had calmed down, he divided all his property. Half he gave to his fiancé and all the rest to the poor. And he forgave all the debts. Soon afterwards, he became a monk and finished his ascetic life as archimandrite of the Kostroma Monastery. This is how the Word of God renews a man!

Archbishop Andrei, The One Thing Needful

Gospel for the Great Martyr: John 15:17-16:2

Saints of the week

26 October / 8 November - The Holy and Great Martyr Dimitrios, the Myrrh-gusher of Thessalonica - This glorious and wonder-working saint was born in the city of Salonica of well-born and devout parents. Begged of God by these childless parents, Dimitrios was their only son and was, because of this, most carefully cherished and educated. His father was the military commander of Salonica, and, when he died, the Emperor made Dimitrios commander in his place. In doing this, the Emperor Maximian, an opponent of Christ, particularly recommended him to persecute and exterminate the Christians in Salonica. Dimitrios not only disobeyed the Emperor: he openly confessed and preached Christ the Lord in the city. Hearing of this, the Emperor was furious with Dimitrios and, at one time, on his way back from a war against the Sarmathians, went to Salonica especially to look into the matter. The Emperor, therefore, summoned Dimitrios and questioned him about his faith. Dimitrios proclaimed openly before the Emperor that he was a Christian, and, furthermore, denounced the Emperor's idolatry. The enraged Emperor cast him into prison. Knowing what was awaiting him, Dimitrios gave his goods to his faithful servant, Lupus, to give away to the poor, and went off to prison, glad that suffering for Christ was to be his lot. In the prison, an angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: 'Peace be with thee, thou sufferer for Christ; be brave and strong!' After several days, the Emperor sent soldiers to the prison to kill Dimitrios. They came upon the saint of God at prayer, and ran him through with their spears. Christians secretly took his body and gave it burial, and there flowed from it a healing myrrh by which many of the sick were healed. A small church was very soon built over his relics. An Illyrian nobleman, Leontius, became sick of an incurable illness. He ran prayerfully up to the relics of St Dimitrios and was completely healed, and in gratitude built a much larger church in place of the old one. The saint appeared to him on two occasions. When the Emperor Justinian wanted to take the saint's relics from Salonica to Constantinople, a spark of fire leapt from the tomb and a voice was heard: 'Leave them there, and don't touch!', and thus the relics of St Dimitrios have remained for all time in Salonica. As the defender of Salonica, St Dimitrios has many times appeared and saved the city from calamity, and there is no way of counting his miracles. The Russians regarded St Dimitrios as the protector of Siberia, which was overcome and annexed by Russia on October 26th, 1581. Our Holy Father, the Martyr Joasaph; Commemoration of the Great Earthquake in Constantinople (740);

St. Cedd, bishop of the East Saxons - Cedd belonged to a family of brothers, and all six of them were chosen by King Oswald of Northumbria to be trained by St. Aidan to be monks and missionaries. This was in 635, when Aidan came from the monastery of Iona in Scotland to become bishop of King Oswald's kingdom. One of St. Cedd's brothers was St. Chad, who was the first bishop of York and then bishop of Lichfield. In 653, Peada, king of the Middle Angles, asked Aidan's successor at Lindisfarne for a bishop for his diocese, and St. Finan chose four monks from Lindisfarne to evangelize Peada's people. Later, the king of the East Saxons, whose chief city was London, also asked for a bishop, and Finan called Cedd to Lindisfarne and consecrated him bishop of London. Cedd founded three monasteries of his own, the best known being Lastingham, where he died of the plague in 664. St. Bede has a beautiful story of Cedd's founding of Lastingham: Cedd spent forty days in prayer and fasting in a remote spot given to him by King Ethelwald. In 664, Cedd was present at the Synod of Whitby and was a member of the Irish party, those wishing to retain the Irish date for Easter. But when the synod decided in favour of the Eastern date, Cedd accepted the decision, not wanting to cause any further disunity in the English churches. After the Synod of Whitby, a plague struck England, and Cedd was among those who died from the plague. At the news of his death, thirty monks came from London to spend their lives where their founder had died. But they, too, caught the plague and were buried near the little chapel that had been erected in Cedd's memory. Cedd was the second bishop of the city of London; the first was Mellitus, who came with St. Augustine and later became archbishop of Canterbury. Mellitus was driven from the see by the king of the East Saxons in 616, and London was without a bishop until Cedd's arrival about 654. Thought for the Day: St. Cedd was trained by a saint and he himself trained others to holiness. A good teacher teaches mostly by what he is; and, if he is a good teacher, the things that are important to him become important to those he teaches. Good teachers fashion the souls of others by contact with their own soul; S. Edfrith, bishop of Lindisfarne.

27 October / 9 November - The Holy Martyr Nestor - At the time of the martyrdom of St Dimitrios the Outpourer of Myrrh, there was in Constantinople a young man, Nestor, who had learned the Christian faith from St Dimitrios himself. At that time, the Emperor Maximian, an opponent of Christ, ordered various games and amusements for the people. The Emperor's favourite was a Vandal called Lyaeus, a man of Goliath-like size and strength. As the imperial gladiator, Lyaeus challenged men every day to a duel and slew them, and this blood-letting of his delighted the blood-lust of the idolatrous Emperor. He built a special arena, like a terrace on pillars, for Lyaeus's duels. Underneath this terrace were planted spears with sharp cutting-edges pointing upwards. When Lyaeus had overcome someone in the duel, he would push him from the terrace above onto the whole forest of prepared spears. The pagans stood around with their Emperor, and were delighted when some poor wretch writhed in torment on the spears until he died. Among Lyaeus's innocent victims were a large number of Christians, for, when there was a day when no-one came forward voluntarily to duel with Lyaeus, then, by the Emperor's orders, Christians were compelled to fight with him. Seeing this horrifying enjoyment of the pagan world, Nestor's heart swelled with pain and he resolved to go himself to the arena of the gigantic Lyaeus. He first went to the prison where St Dimitrios was kept, and asked his blessing to do this. St Dimitrios blessed him, signed him with the sign of the Cross on forehead and breast, and said to him: 'You will overcome him, but you will suffer for Christ.' The young Nestor then went to Lyaeus's arena. The Emperor was there with a large crowd, and they all bewailed the probable death of the young Nestor, trying to dissuade him from fighting Lyaeus, but Nestor crossed himself and said: 'O God of Dimitrios, help me!' With God's help, Nestor overcame Lyaeus, felled him and threw him down onto the sharp spears, where the heavy giant soon found death. Then the whole people shouted: 'Great is the God of Dimitrios!' But the Emperor had lost face before the people, and, mourning his favourite, became filled with wrath against Nestor and Dimitrios, and the wicked Emperor ordered that Nestor be beheaded with the sword and Dimitrios run through with spears. Thus this glorious Christian hero, Nestor, left behind his young, earthly life in 306, and entered into the Kingdom of his Lord.; Our Holy Father Nestor the Chronicler; St. Andrew, Prince of Smolensk; St. Odran, monk of Iona, **St. Ia, virgin of Cornwall** - the sister of Saints Ercus (or Euny) and Herygh, Saint Ia, was a holy maiden who came from Ireland to Cornwall—it is said that she sailed on a leaf that grew to accommodate her--and landed and settled at the mouth of the Hayle River where Saint Ives, formerly called Porth Ia, now stands. In Cornwall she erected a cell where she lived the life of prayer and austerities. This version relates that Ia suffered martyrdom in Cornwall at the mouth of the Hayle River.

28 October / 10 November - The Holy Martyr Terence - a Syrian, he suffered for the Christian faith together with his wife, Neonilla, and their seven children - Sarbelus, Photus, Theodulus, Hierax, Nitus, Bele, and Eunice. After many tortures, during which the power of God was shown, they were all beheaded with the sword. The Holy Martyr Paraskeva—Petka; St Arsenius, Archbishop of Pec; St Stephen of St Sava's; St Athanasius, Patriarch of Constantinople; St Dimitri, Bishop of Rostov; **Blessed Hieroschemamonk Feofil, Fool-for-Christ's-Sake, Ascetic & Visionary of the Kiev-Caves Lavra.**

Hieroschemamonk Feofil, in the world Foma Andreyevich Gorenkovsky, the son of a village priest, was born in a town near Kiev in 1788. He was set apart by God even from his birth, and suffered much in his youth, thereby acquiring great humility. He entered a monastery in 1812, labouring in prayer & obedience for many years. He was tonsured with the name Feodorit in 1821 and in 1822, because of his exemplary monastic life, he was ordained hierodeacon. In 1827 he was ordained hieromonk and appointed steward of the monastery. The demands of this obedience were not in accordance with the desires of Feodorit's heart and he asked to be released from the stewardship. He then took upon himself the great podvig of foolishness-for-Christ's-sake. He took the great schema in 1834 and was renamed Feofil. Feofil always carried with him a Psalter and provisions to give to the poor & needy. He dressed in rags, and his cell was unkempt and full of rubbish. When questioned about this, the blessed one replied that he allowed it "so that everything surrounding me will constantly remind me of the disorder of my soul". He was often ill-treated by his brethren but bore all patiently. In the refectory, he would mix all his food together, both bitter and sweet. "It's the same in life", he would say, "both bitter and sour and salty mixed with sweet and all this must be digested". Later in his life, Feofil received a gift of a small bullock who could be tamed by no-one. Meek & gentle in Feofil's presence, the blessed one had a cart made for it and the creature carried him everywhere. He was found worthy to receive the gift of clairvoyancy & foretold many things which indeed came to pass. As a spiritual father, he could see into the hearts of his spiritual children. He worked many wonders during his life and foretold the time of his death. Having referred to

himself in his life as "smelly Feofil", his cell was filled with a beautiful fragrance after his repose in 1853. Many pannikhidas were served at his graveside after his repose and much has been granted by God through his prayers. Blessed Hieroschemamonk Feofil, pray for us!

Saint Job, Abbot and Wonderworker of Pochaev (in the world named Ivan Zhelezo), was born around 1551 in Pokutia in Galicia. At age ten he came to the Transfiguration Ugornits monastery, and at age twelve he received monastic tonsure with the name Job. The venerable Job from his youth was known for his great piety and strict ascetic life, and he was accounted worthy of the priestly office. Around the year 1580, at the request of the renowned champion of Orthodoxy Prince Constantine Ostrozhsy, St Job was appointed the head of the Exaltation of the Cross monastery near the city of Dubno, and for more than twenty years he governed the monastery amidst the growing persecution of Orthodoxy on the part of the Catholics and Uniates. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, St Job withdrew to Pochaev hill and settled in a cave not far from the ancient Dormition monastery, famed for its wonderworking Pochaev Icon of the Mother of God (July 23). The holy hermit, beloved by the brethren of the monastery, was chosen as their Igumen. St Job zealously fulfilled his duty as head of the monastery, kind and gentle with the brethren, he did much of the work himself, planting trees in the garden, and strengthening the waterworks at the monastery.

St Job was an ardent defender of the Orthodox Faith against the persecution of the Catholics. Following the Union of Brest (1596), many Orthodox living in Poland were deprived of their rights, and attempts were made to force them to convert to Catholicism. Many Orthodox hierarchs became apostates to Uniatism, but St Job and others defended Orthodoxy by copying and disseminating Orthodox books. Prince Ostrozhsy was also responsible for the first printed edition of the Orthodox Bible (1581). In taking an active part in the defense of Orthodoxy and the Russian people, St Job was present at the 1628 Kiev Council, convened against the Unia. After 1642, he accepted the great schema with the name John. Sometimes he completely secluded himself within the cave for three days or even a whole week. The Jesus Prayer was an unceasing prayer in gentle heart. According to the testimony of his disciple Dositheus, and author of the Life of St Job, once while praying in his cave, the saint was illumined by a heavenly light. St Job reposed in the year 1651. He was more than 100 years old, and had directed the Pochaev monastery for more than fifty years. The uncovering of St Job's relics took place on August 28, 1659. There was a second uncovering of the relics on August 27-28, 1833.

29 October / 11 November - Fast Day - Our Holy Mother, the Martyr Anastasia the Roman - She was born in Rome of well-born parents and left an orphan at the age of three. As an orphan, she was taken into a women's monastery near Rome, where the abbess was one Sophia, a nun of a high level of perfection. After seventeen years, Anastasia was known in the whole neighbourhood, to the Christians as a great ascetic and to the pagans as a rare beauty. The pagan administrator of the city, Probus, heard of her and sent soldiers to bring her to him. The good Abbess Sophia counselled Anastasia for two hours on how to keep the Faith, how to resist flattering delusion and how to endure torture. Anastasia said to her: 'My heart is ready to suffer for Christ; my soul is ready to die for my beloved Jesus.' Brought before the governor, Anastasia openly proclaimed her faith in Christ the Lord and, when the governor tried to dissuade her from the Faith, first with promises and then with threats, the holy maiden said to him: 'I am ready to die for my Lord, not once but—oh, if it were only possible!—a thousand times.' When they stripped her naked, to humiliate her, she cried to the judge: 'Whip me and cut at me and beat me; my naked body will be hidden by wounds, and my shame will be covered by my blood!' She was whipped and beaten and cut about. She twice felt a great thirst and asked for water, and a Christian, Cyril, gave her a drink, for which he was blessed by the martyr and beheaded by the pagans. Then her breasts and tongue were cut off, and an angel of God appeared to her and upheld her. She was finally beheaded with the sword outside the city. Blessed Sophia found her body and buried it, and Anastasia was crowned with the wreath of martyrdom under the Emperor Decius (249-251). Our Holy Father Abraham the Recluse and his niece Maria; Our Holy Father, the Martyr Timothy of Esphigmenou; St. Kea, bishop of Devon & Cornwall, St. Odrada, nun (7th c.)

30 October / 12 November - The Hieromartyr Zenobius and his sister Zenobia - From the town of Aegae in Cilicia, they inherited the true Faith and great material wealth from their parents. Inflamed with zeal for the Faith, they, with great love, gave away their riches to the poor. Because they were so open-handed, God shielded these hands from every evil intent by men or demons. The merciful hands of Zenobius, which gave to the poor, were endowed by God with the gift of wonderworking, so that Zenobius was able to heal the sick of every sort of infirmity simply by the touch of his hand, and he was made Bishop of Aegae. At a time of persecution, the judge Licus seized him and said: 'I offer you the two: life and death—life if you bow down to the gods, and death if you do not.' Holy Zenobius replied: 'Life without Christ is not life, but death; and death for Christ's sake is not death, but life.' When Zenobius was put to harsh torture, his sister presented herself before the judge and said: 'I also want to drink this cup of suffering and be crowned with that wreath.' After torture by fire and in boiling pitch, they were both beheaded with the sword in about 285, and thus brother and sister entered into the immortal Kingdom of Christ the King. The Holy Apostles Cleopas, Tertius, Mark, Justus and Artemas; The Holy King Milutin.

31 October / 13 November - Fast Day - The Holy Apostles Stachys, Amplias, Urban, Narcissus, Apelles and Aristobulus - They were of the Seventy. St Stachys was a helper of St Andrew the First-Called, who made him bishop of Byzantium. He built a church in Argyropolis, and governed his flock with faithfulness and zeal. After sixteen years as bishop, he entered peacefully into rest in the Lord. Amplias and Urban were also fellow-workers with St Andrew, and were made bishop by him, Amplias in Lydda and Urban in Macedonia. They both died as martyrs for Christ the Lord. Narcissus was made Bishop of Athens by the Apostle Philip, and holy Apelles was Bishop of Heraklion in Trachis.

Aristobulus - Born in Cyprus, Aristobulus was the brother of the Apostle Barnabas. He followed the Apostle Paul, who mentions him in his Epistle to the Romans saying, "Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus" (Romans 16:10).

When the great apostle appointed many bishops throughout the various parts of the world, he appointed Aristobulus as bishop for the British, that is, England. In Britain the people were savages, heathen and wicked. Aristobulus endured many indescribable tortures, misfortunes and evil among them. They struck and beat him mercilessly, dragged him about the streets, ridiculed and mocked him. Finally this holy man succeeded by the power of the Grace of God. He enlightened the people, baptized them in the name of Christ the Lord, built churches, ordained priests and deacons and, in the end, died there peacefully and entered into the Kingdom of the Lord, Whom he faithfully served.

The Holy Martyr Epimachus – born in Egypt, he lived there in asceticism, and there finished his earthly course a martyr. In imitation of St John the Baptist, he went off as a young man into the desert. In response to his great love for God, the Spirit of God instructed him in all truth and, with no other teacher, taught him how to live the ascetic life. Epimachus discovered how the pagans were torturing and slaughtering the Christians in Alexandria, so, all afire with zeal for the Faith, he went to the city and knocked down the idol. When the pagans began to torture him for this, he cried out: 'Smite me, spit on me, put a crown of thorns on my head and a reed in my hand; give me gall to drink, crucify me and pierce me with a spear. The Lord endured all that, and I want to endure it!' In the vast crowd that was watching the martyrdom of holy Epimachus, there was one woman with a blind eye. She wept bitterly on witnessing the soul-less torture of the man of God, and, when the torturers flayed his holy body, blood spurted from it and a drop fell on her eye. Suddenly she could see, and her blind eye became as whole as the other. Then the woman cried out: 'Great is the God in whom this sufferer believes!' After that, St Epimachus was beheaded and his soul entered into eternal joy, in about 250. ; The Holy Martyr Nicolas of Chios; Our Holy Fathers Spiridon and Nicodemus;

St. Begu, nun of Harkness - reputed by St. Bede to have seen in a vision the death of St. Hilda, the foundress of both Whitby and Harkness.

1 / 14 November - Ss Cosmas and Damian - Unmercenaries and wonderworkers, they were brothers in the flesh and in the spirit, born somewhere in Asia of a pagan father and a Christian mother. After their father's death, their mother Theodota devoted all her time and energy to the bringing-up of her sons as true Christians. God helped her, and her sons grew as two choice fruits and as two holy lamps. They were skilled in medicine and ministered to the sick without payment, and so fulfilled Christ's command: 'Freely have ye received; freely give' (Matt. 10:8). They were so strict in their unpaid ministry to men that Cosmas became greatly enraged with his brother Damian when he took three eggs from a woman, Palladia, and gave orders that, after his death, he should not be buried with his brother. In fact, holy Damian had not taken those eggs as a reward for healing Palladia's sickness, but because she had sworn by the Most Holy Trinity that he should have them. However, after their death in Fereman, they were buried together in obedience to a revelation from God. These two holy brothers were great wonderworkers both during their lifetime and after their death. A farm labourer, on lying down to sleep at one time, was attacked by a snake, which entwined itself around his mouth and stomach. This poor man would have breathed his last in the greatest torment had he not at the last moment invoked the help of Saints Cosmas and Damian. Thus the Lord glorified forever by miracles those who glorified Him here on earth by their faith, purity and mercy. The Holy Martyr Hermenegild the Heir; Our Holy Father, the Martyr James with his disciples James and Dionysius; St Ethelnoth of Canterbury, Holy First Hierarch of the English Church.

REFLECTION

A miracle of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica: Demetrius was a commander of Thessalonica during his life and remained so after his repose. People have felt his presence in Thessalonica, especially in times of great calamities. He protects the city, wards off misfortunes, repels invaders, and helps all who invoke his name. Here is a wonderful example of his unusual aid to people in need. Once, the barbarians attacked Thessalonica and were unable to overtake it. Infuriated at this, they pillaged the countryside and bound and carried off two beautiful maidens whom they gave as a gift to their prince. These maidens knew how to embroider well. When the prince saw their handiwork, he said to them: "I hear that there is a great god in your land, Demetrius, and that he works great miracles. Embroider his face on this linen." The maidens told him that St. Demetrius was not a god but rather God's servant and the helper of Christians. At first, they refused to embroider the face of the saint, but when the prince threatened them with death, they carried out the command and completed the task by St. Demetrius's Day. On the eve of the feast, they looked at their embroidery and wept sorrowfully, as they had to spend the feast day in slavery and had to give that embroidered image of their beloved saint to an impious barbarian. Both maidens prayed to St. Demetrius to forgive them. Then St. Demetrius appeared to them and took them both away, as an angel had once taken the Prophet Habakkuk. He brought them to Thessalonica and set them in his church. A solemn all-night vigil was being celebrated, and many people were there. When they learned of the miraculous rescue of these Christian maidens, all glorified God and St. Demetrius, His great servant and commander.

24th Sunday After Pentecost

Martyr Acyndinus and those with him

2 / 15 November 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 Martyrs tone 2: Blessed is the earth which drank your blood,/ holy the abode which received your spirits./ You conquered the enemy in the stadium and preached Christ with boldness./ Beseech Him to save our souls,/ for He is good, O victorious Martyrs.

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 Martyrs tone 4: Thou didst receive the God-bearing Martyrs Acindynus,/ Pegasus, Anempodistus, Aphthonius and Elpidephorus, into the enjoyment of Thy goodness and repose,/ for they abandoned all things on earth for Thee, O only Good One.

Matins Gospel II

EPISTLE: Ephesians 2: 14-22

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, And that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, In whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

YOU ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS, BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

Is this then the great privilege, it may be said, that we are admitted into the commonwealth of the Jews? ...What is this, 'both one?' He does not mean that He has raised us to that high heritage of theirs, but that he has raised both us and them to a yet higher. However, the blessing to us is greater, because to the Jews it had been promised, and they were nearer than we ...For this reason he says, 'And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy ' (Rom. 15:9). The promise He gave indeed to the Israelites, but they were unworthy; to us He gave no promise, no, we were even strangers. We had nothing in common with them, yet He has made us oneHe calls 'the enmity in the flesh,' a middle wall, in that it is a common barrier, cutting us off alike from God. As the Prophet says, 'Your iniquities separate between you and Me' (Isa. 54:2) ...And this, while the law existed, was not only not abolished, but rather was strengthened; 'for the law,' says the Apostle, 'works wrath' (Rom. 4:15) ...The law was a hedge ...Listen again to the Prophet, where he says, 'I made a trench about it' (Isa. 5:2). And again, 'You have broken down her hedges, so that all who pass by the way pluck her fruit' (Ps. 80:12) ...It became a middle wall, no longer establishing them in security, but cutting them off from God ...His death, says the Apostle, has 'slain' the enmity ...How then is it that it does rise again? From our exceeding depravity. For as long as we abide in the body of Christ, as long as we are united, it does not rise again, but lies dead ...He calls those acts which the soul performs of herself 'natural,' and those which the body performs of itself 'carnal' ...The virtue of the flesh is her subjection to the soul. It is her vice to govern the soul ...He did not send Angels or Archangels on the mission, because to repair so many and such vast mischiefs and to declare what had been wrought was in the power of none other, but required His own coming. The Lord then took upon Himself the rank of a servant, no, almost of a minister.

St. John Chrysostom. Homilies V and VI on Ephesians II. B#57, pp. 71-74.

Second Epistle: Ephesians 6: 10-17

THE GOSPEL: LUKE 8: 26-39

Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!" For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned. Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

JESUS ASKED..."WHAT IS YOUR NAME?"AND HE SAID,"LEGION," BECAUSE MANY DEMONS HAD ENTERED HIM

So, brothers and sisters, ends today's Gospel reading where, as you heard, the Lord tells the healed man to reveal the mystery of his healing before all the Gadarene people. And this is what he did. The Gospel does not tell us how he related what had happened to him; but according to the meaning of the Gospel narrative, we can fully imagine what he must have said and what he most likely did say. Here is what he must have said:

"You Gadarenes have known me from my childhood. I was born among you and grew up among you, in your Gadarene land, a land of transgression. You have seen what happened. You lived not according to the Law which God revealed to you, but according to your lawlessness. In your desire for riches and comfort you engaged in a sinful trade, a trade which was not blessed by God. You raised pigs. You had whole herds of them, and yet according to the Law, they are unclean animals. God punished you and gave you over to the power of the devil.

And by the incomprehensible Providence of God, all this demonic power lodged in me alone—I bore your punishment. I was changed from a human being into a beast. I couldn't live in houses—I lived in a desert place, in a cave where the dead were buried. You bound me with chains, and I broke them. There wasn't just one devil within me but a whole legion of devils; as you saw in reality when He Who healed me permitted the demons to enter your herd of pigs, which threw itself from the precipice into the lake and drowned. Yes, now you can truly imagine why I caused so much evil and trouble. There was a terrible power in me. The devils took possession of all my human passions and brought them to a monstrous state. That is why I hated you so savagely, why I wanted to torment you, destroy you.

And now this force has left me. I am asking you to forgive me. I love you now as a brother—I want to become your fellow citizen. And how grateful I am to Him Who freed me - He is my Saviour—He is my God! And I am calling all of you to Him. Everything you are looking for: peace, happiness, joy—everything you will find in Him. All of you who weep, go to Him. He will wipe away your tears. He will give you what no earthly riches can give."

This is what the formerly possessed man told the Gadarenes. He could also say the same to us. And we would not be surprised, because the very same thing is going on right now. All our newspapers tell us about such horrors which cannot be explained without the participation of the power of evil. And against the background of this nightmare we seem to hear the voice of this man healed by Christ: "I have peace and quiet in my soul. This was given to me by Christ. He will give it to you, too. Hasten to Him. My heart is filled with sweet compunction." But our sceptical mind will ask: Is this so? And even if it is so, how long will this sweet compunction last? Here we are given an answer in today's reading from the Apostle: "But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the GIFT OF GOD" (Eph. 2:4-5, 8). In these words of the Apostle we have a whole revelation. We have heard about the sufferings of the possessed one and how the Grace of God delivered him from them. This same Grace can do the very same for us. But Grace is given through faith. What is faith? In answer to this question I will tell you one incident from my student life.

I studied at the Polytechnic Institute. At the same time I was a member of a Christian student society. Once, we students decided to invite to our meeting our teacher, Father John Egorov, a famous professor of theology. He would have to travel to Lesnoye, a suburb of St. Petersburg, where our polytechnic institute was located. We asked him to come visit us, but he answered: "I have never been there, and I don't know how to go."

Our friend who had come to invite him said: "Father, it is very simple. First, go to the railroad station, and there you will find the street car. Wait until number 20 comes and take it. Without asking anyone, go to the very end. The conductor will say: 'Polytechnic Institute—last stop.' Walk out, stand with your back to the street car and before you will be a lane. Here, look for number 6 and before you will be a courtyard, and in the courtyard a house. Go up to the second floor, and you will find us there."

Father John said: "A week passed and Sunday came. I took my notebook, looked at what I had written, and knew at once what I had to do. I remembered everything that your friend told me, and accepted it within myself as if I had already done it. I did all this in reality, and here I am with you." This is what faith means: to accept within oneself what was said, and put what was said into action.

Here in the Holy Gospel promises are given to us, and also instructions of what we must do to receive these promises. Let us accept them with faith. Let us perform everything that we are instructed to do in our lives, and we will receive the same Grace, the same peace, the same joy. We will receive everything that was received by the possessed man healed by Christ. Then the words of Christ will also refer to us. "Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee."

Archbishop Andrei, The One Thing Needful

Second Gospel: Luke 8:16-21

Saints of the week

2 / 15 November - The Holy Martyrs Acyndinus, Pegasus, Anempodistus, Aphthonius, Elpidophorus and others with them - They were Persian Christians, and suffered in the time of King Sapor, in 355. The first three were servants at the court of this king, but secretly served Christ their Lord. When they were arrested and brought to trial before the king, he asked them whence they came. To this they replied: 'Our paternity and life is the most holy Trinity, consubstantial and undivided, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God.' The king gave them over to harsh torture, and they endured it all courageously, singing psalms and with prayer on their lips. At the time of their torture and imprisonment, angels of God appeared to them several times, and once the Lord Christ Himself, as a man 'with a face radiant as the sun'. When one of the torturers, Aphthonius, saw with wonder that boiling lead did no harm to the martyrs, he believed in Christ and cried out: 'Great is the Christian God!' He was then immediately beheaded, and many others saw and believed. Then the King commanded that Acyndinus, Pegasus and Anempodistus be sewn into goat-skins and thrown into the sea. Then St Aphthonius appeared from the other world with three shining angels, and they bore the martyrs to dry land and set them free. Elpidophorus was a courtier. When he revealed that he was a Christian, and denounced the king for his slaughter of innocent Christians, the king condemned him to death, and Elpidophorus was beheaded along with about seven thousand other Christians. Then the three first-named martyrs were finally thrown into a burning furnace, along with twenty-eight soldiers and the king's mother, who had also come to faith in Christ. And so, in the flames, they gave their righteous souls into the hands of the Lord. Our Holy Father Marcian of Cyrus; The Hieromartyr Victorinus, Bishop of Patav.

St. Cadfan, abbot of Bardsey Island - Breton in origin he migrated to Wales, gathered numerous disciples and founded the church of Towyn (Gwynedd) and the large famous monastery of Bardsey Island, both of which claimed to be the place of his death.

3 / 16 November - The Hieromartyr Aicepsimas, Bishop of Naeson - The eighty-year-old Aicepsimas, filled with every Christian virtue, was sitting one day in his house with his guests when a child, filled with the Spirit of God, ran up to the aged bishop, kissed him on the head, and said: 'Blessed is this head, for it will be martyred for Christ!' This prophecy was soon fulfilled. King Sapor raised a fierce persecution of Christians throughout Persia, and St Aicepsimas was seized and taken before a prince who was also a pagan priest. When the bishop had been arrested and bound, he was approached by one of his household, who asked him what he wanted done about his house. The saint replied: 'It's no longer my house; I'm going to a higher home, and shall not return.' After long interrogation, he was thrown into prison, whence, the next day, were brought a seventy-year-old priest called Joseph and a deacon, Aeithalas. After three years' imprisonment and many sufferings, Aicepsimas was beheaded, and Joseph and Aeithalas were buried up to the waist in the ground, being stoned by a group of men who were without mercy towards Christians. Joseph's body, by God's providence, disappeared that night, and above Aeithalas's body there grew a tree, which healed all manner of disease and pain. Five years passed, then the wicked and jealous pagans cut down this tree. These soldiers of Christ suffered in Persia in the fourth century, in the time of the pagan King Sapor. The Holy and Great Martyr George; Our Holy Father Elias of Egypt; Elevation of the relics of St. Edith, abbess of Wilton, by St. Dunstan;

St. Winifred of Holywell, abbess of Denbighshire in England, m (630) - Daughter to Trevith, a member of the Welsh landed class and advisor to the king. Spiritual student of her maternal uncle Saint Beuno. Physically beautiful, she made a private vow of chastity, becoming a bride of Christ. Murdered when she rejected the amorous advances of a chieftain named Caradog of Hawarden; she had escaped from him, and was seeking shelter in a church when he caught and killed her. Legend says that where her head fell, a well sprang up which became a place of pilgrimage, and whose waters were reported to heal leprosy, skin diseases, and other ailments. Saint Beuno raised her back to life; he cursed Caradog who was promptly swallowed by the earth. Winifred became a nun, and later abbess at Cwytherin, Denbighshire. Name Meaning - friend of peace (Celtic / Gaelic) . Patronage: incest victims, martyrs.

4 / 17 November - Our Holy Father Joannicius the Great - This great spiritual light was born in the village of Marykata in the province of Bithynia, of his father Myrtrices and his mother Anastasia. He was a shepherd as a youth. Whilst tending his sheep at pasture, he would often retreat into solitude and remain in prayer the whole day, having encircled his flock with the sign of the Cross so that it should not wander off and get lost. After that, he was called into the army, and caused men to marvel at his courage, particularly in the wars against the Bulgarians. After his military service, Joannicius withdrew to Olympus in Asia Minor, where he became a monk and gave himself entirely over to asceticism, persevering in it till his death in great old age. He laboured in the ascetic life for over fifty years in various places, and had from God most abundant gifts of

wonderworking: he healed all sicknesses and pains, drove out demons, tamed wild beasts, possessing a particular power over snakes; he walked dryfoot through water, became invisible to men when he so desired and foretold future events. He was distinguished by an outstanding humility and meekness. In outward appearance, he was like a giant, huge and strong. He took an active part in the destiny of God's Church, for, during the iconoclast period he was at first deluded, but then tore himself away and became an ardent defender of reverence towards the icons. He had a great friendship with Patriarch Methodius of Constantinople. Joannicius lived for ninety-four years, and entered peacefully into rest in the Lord in 846. He was a great wonderworker both during his lifetime and after his death. The Hieromartyrs Nicander, Bishop of Myra, and Hermas the Priest.

St. Clether, hermit of Cornwall - probably of Welsh origin and of the family of St. Brychan. After living in Wales by the river Never, he settled in North Cornwall in later life in the remote and beautiful Inny valley at the place which still bears his name.

St. Birstan, bishop of Winchester (931-4) - known for his personal service to the poor; his devotion to the dead evidenced by his frequent prayers for them in the cemetery (to which the departed souls once answered "Amen").

5 / 18 November - Fast Day - Our Holy Father Galacteon and our Mother Epistemis, Martyrs - They were born in the city of Edessa in Phoenicia, both of pagan parents. Galacteon's mother was barren until she was baptised. After her baptism, she brought her husband also to the true Faith and baptised her son Galacteon, bringing him up a Christian. When the time came for Galacteon to marry, his devout mother Leucippe died, and his father betrothed him to a maiden called Epistemis. Galacteon did not wish to enter into marriage at all, and he quickly urged Epistemis to be baptised and then to become a nun at the same time as he became a monk. Both went away to the mountain of Publion, Galacteon to a men's monastery and Epistemis to a women's, and each of them became a true light in the monastery. They were first in labours, in prayer, in humility and obedience, and first in love. They did not leave their monasteries, and neither saw the other until the time of their death. A fierce persecution arose, and they were both brought to trial. While they were mercilessly whipping Galacteon, Epistemis was weeping, and they then whipped her also. They cut off their hands and feet, and finally their heads. One Eutolius, a man who had been a servant of Epistemis's parents and then a monk together with Galacteon, took their bodies and buried them. He also wrote the Lives of these two wonderful martyrs for Christ, who suffered and received their heavenly crowns in 253. The Holy Apostles Patrobus, Hermes, Linus, Gaius and Philologus; St. Jonah, Archbishop of Novgorod;

St. Cybi, abbot in Cornwall and Wales (550) - a Cornish saint who travelled by sea and river, living as a hermit and/or evangelist in various places which bear his name before settling on Anglesey, where his most important work was achieved. This was his founding of a monastery at Holyhead (called in Welsh *Caer Gybi*, 'Cybi's Fort') in Anglesey, the small island on which it stands being called Holy Island or *Ynys Gybi*.

6 / 19 November - St Paul the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople - When the blessed Patriarch Alexander was lying on his deathbed, the lamenting faithful asked him whom he would leave to follow him as chief pastor of the flock of Christ. Then the sick Patriarch said to them: 'If you want to have a shepherd who will teach you and whose virtues will illumine you, choose Paul; but, if you want a suitable man as a figurehead, choose Macedonius.' The people chose Paul. This was not acceptable to the Arian heretics, nor to the Emperor Constantius, who was at that time in Antioch, and so Paul was quickly deposed and fled to Rome together with St Athanasius the Great. There, both Pope Julian and the Emperor Constans gave them a warm welcome and upheld them in their Orthodoxy. The Emperor and the Pope sent letters which restored Paul to his episcopal throne, but, after the death of Constans, the Arians raised their heads again and drove the Orthodox Patriarch off to Cucus in Armenia. While Paul was celebrating the Liturgy one day in exile, he was set on by the Arians and strangled with his pallium. This was in the year 351. In the time of the Emperor Theodosius, in 381, his relics were translated to Constantinople, and, in 1236, to Venice, where they still lie. (A small piece of their relics is kept at the Russian Cathedral in London). Our Holy Father Varlaam of Chutinsk, the Wonderworker; Commemoration of the falling of ash from the air;

All Saints of Ireland - This day's feast is not only a celebration of the great multitude of Irish and Celtic Saints, many of whom were missionaries throughout Europe, but is also a celebration of the many contributions of Celtic culture to the world. A number of centuries ago, a family from a Central European tribe met with a tribe from the Carpathian mountains. The result was the beginning of Celtic civilization, especially with respect to the La Tene and Hallstadt cultures. The "Keltoi" as the Greeks called them were described vividly by Julius Caesar in Gaul. The Iberian Peninsula was once called "Celtiberia." Macbeth, High King of Scots, on his way to Rome by ship, visited these people and could carry on a conversation with them, no problem! The Celtic language of these people, "Galiz" from Galizia, has survived and they are one of the seven nations of the Celts (the others being: Irish, Highland Scots, Manx, Cornish, Breton and Welsh). Paris was named for the Celtic tribe that settled there, the "Parisii." Notre Dame Cathedral with its hanging heads calls to mind the way in which Celtic warriors would celebrate a military victory . . . Everything that had the prefix "Wal" in front of it was of Celtic origin. "Wales" and "Cornwall" and even "Wallachia" in Roumania. Sevastopol in Crimea was originally built by the Celts who settled there very early. "Walnuts" are also named for the Celts who developed them. St Peter Mohyla, Metropolitan of Kyiv, is also of Wallachian and therefore Celtic, descent. The Celtic Christian missionaries were intrepid travelers. They would cross vast areas in their little boats known as "birinns." Even Christopher Columbus visited Ireland to read the log books of St Brendan the Navigator who was said to have crossed over to the Eastern Coast of what is now Canada. There is evidence of early Christian settlements in Newfoundland and also in Baffin Island! Celtic missionaries came down through the Baltic Sea into Kyivan Rus/Ukraine and St Olha the Great greeted Celtic men of God at her court. The Celtic Rite is actually one of the most "Eastern" of those in the West. The Celts had strong ties with Coptic Egypt and its tradition of the Thebaid through the Ukrainian Saint, John Cassian. There are still mentioned in Celtic liturgical sources a veneration for "Seven Coptic Monks" buried in Ireland. The Irish Rite has many connections to the Egyptian liturgy. For example, following the Rule of St Pachomios, the Irish Celtic Office has groups of 12 Psalms. So, depending on the Feast, the Morning Office will have 12, 24, 36, 60 or 72 Psalms. In many cases, the entire Psalter is read in a single day. Prostrations to the ground, familiar in the East, were also practiced by the Celts. It was the Celts who

invented the tradition of saying 150 Our Fathers and Hail Mary's for the Psalms. They devised strands of beads and knotted cords as prayer counters, the Celtic Rosary. The great asceticism of the Celtic saints is patterned after that of the Eastern Church Fathers. Saying the Psalter while standing in cold running water, among other things, required a hardy sort of person. . . The Celts had their own tonsure, the tonsure of Simon Magus, which was in front of the head, rather than on top in the Roman fashion. The Abbot, rather than the Bishop, was the administrator of the Celtic communities, built around the monasteries or "cashels" as they were. Their calculation of Easter was their own and varied from that of the rest of the Church at the time. The Celts inherited much from their druidic ancestors. Like the Eastern Slavs, they worshipped the Sun. After becoming Christian, the Sun symbol still figured prominently in their Christian faith. St Ninian of Galloway in Scotland and St Colum mac Felim O'Neill of Isle of Hy (Iona) and their missionary companions worshipped within stone circles and adapted other Sun imagery in their Christianised traditions. The haloed Celtic Cross is also popular in Ukraine. There is one marking the grave of Taras Shevchenko, the national poet and bard. It refers to the fact that Christ is our "Sun." It is also said to be a Celtic form of the "Chi Rho" or "XP" Greek symbol for the first two letters of Christ's Name, also called the "Cross of St Constantine." The term "Celtic," as some have argued, may be connected to "Chaldea." It is also a play on the monastic notion of "cell." Another explanation is that it refers to the monastic Order of the Celi De or the "Friends of God." Celtic spirituality is very popular these days. Those who should probably know better are presenting it within a type of "New Age" context. Closeness to animals and nature are also stimulants to interest in this version of "Celtic spirituality." In fact, while Celtic monks and nuns lived very simply, their asceticism runs in the face of modern, easy-going spiritual orientations. Their lives were rather exhausting. In addition to daily Divine Liturgy and their Horologion, they recited the full 150 Psalms of David. One could always rest in the after-life, the old Irish spiritual teachers said . . . During the Irish Penal Times when it was against the law to be Catholic and a priest, Irish priests would roam the countryside incognito, just like during the Roman times of persecution. Irish families would light candles in their windows as a sign that this was where the priests could receive a meal and shelter for the night. When Cromwell's Puritan soldiers asked the people what the candles signified, the people said they were "lighting the way of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem." This interpretation has remained and is why, today, so many homes are decorated with Christmas lights! The Celtic Thebaid was a school for Saints and it is this great Choir that we celebrate today. We are heirs to the rich Celtic Christian culture they produced. The Celtic missionaries were experts at spreading the Gospel and inculturating it with local traditions which they "baptized" as they said. This is why Celtic Christianity became so deeply rooted among the Celtic peoples. Presbyterianism, although Protestant, sees itself as an heir to this tradition as well. Certainly, the Celtic nations had long harboured resentment towards Rome for imposing its Rite on their ancient ways. There is renewed interest in the Celtic Rite today among Orthodox, Roman Catholics and Anglicans. What characterizes the Celtic Rite is its focus on the worship of the Holy Trinity, its spirit of simplicity and asceticism, devotion to the Psalms, the Horologion and the reading of the Gospel, a positive relationship to God's creation in nature, and community in monastic life. The ancient Celtic Rite exemplifies the spiritual richness of the undivided Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ. A missionary Church, the Celtic Rite was practiced throughout Western Europe at one time, reaching out to the shores of North America itself. The Saints of Eire and all Celtic Saints remind us of our calling to preach Christ to all nations, while inculturating the Gospel in every national tradition. All ye Holy Saints of Eire and the Celtic nations, pray unto God for us!

7 / 20 November - Fast Day - The Holy Martyr Hieron and his 32 companions(The 33 Martyrs of Melitene) - He was born in the Cappadocian city of Tijane of a good and God-fearing mother, Stratonica, who was blind. Hieron was a very zealous Christian, and cared for his blind mother with a truly filial love. Because of both his faith and his mother, he refused to go into the army, and fended off and drove away those who were sent to take him, for he was loathe to leave his helpless, blind mother and be forced as a soldier to bow down and offer sacrifice to idols. Finally, Hieron was seized and taken before the governor of the city of Melitene, along with other Christians. While they were on the road, a man in white apparel appeared one night to Hieron and said to him: 'Behold, Hieron, I reveal to thee thy salvation: thou shalt not wage war for any earthly king, but shalt engage in a battle for the King of heaven, and quickly shalt thou come to Him and receive from Him both honour and glory.' Hieron's heart was filled with ineffable joy at these words. When they reached Melitene, they were all thrown into prison, where Hieron strengthened them all in their faith with great ardour, exhorting them that not one should fall away but that all should freely give their bodies over to torment and death for Christ. To a man, they all confessed their faith in Christ the Lord before the judge, except for one kinsman of Hieron's called Victor, who repudiated his faith. Hieron's hands were cut off, then he was flogged and tortured in various ways, until he was finally beheaded with the sword together with the others. Going out to the place of execution, the thirty-three martyrs sang the psalm: 'Blessed are those that are undefiled in the way, and walk in the Law of the Lord' (Ps. 1:1). Let us remember by name these honourable martyrs, who are inscribed in the Book of Life: Hesychnus, Nicander, Athanasius, Mamas, Barachus, Callinicus, Theogenes, Nikon, Longinus, Theodore, Valerius, Xanticus, Theodulus, Callimachus, Eugene, Theodochus, Ostrichius, Epiphanius, Maximian, Ducitius, Claudian, Theophilus, Gigantius, Dorotheus, Theodotus, Castrichius, Anicetas, Themilius, Eutychnus, Hilarion, Diodotus and Amonitus. A certain man called Chrysanthus found Hieron's severed head and gave it burial, and he later built over it a church in honour of St Hieron. One of the martyr's hands was taken to his blind mother. St Hieron suffered with his companions in 298, and entered into the glory of Christ. The Holy Martyr Thessalonica, with Auctus and Taurion;

Our Holy Father Lazarus of Mount Galesius - A pillar of light appeared above the house where he was born. Lazarus left his village of Magnesia And went to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage to the holy places. There, he was tonsured a monk in the Monastery of St. Sava the Sanctified. After ten years, he settled on Mount Galesius and lived a life of asceticism on a pillar as a stylite. Lazarus was a miracle-worker both during his lifetime and after death. Emperor Constantine Monomachus had great respect for him. Attaining old age, St. Lazarus entered into eternity toward the end of the eleventh century; The Holy Martyr Thessalonica; St. Willibrord (Clement), archbishop of Utrecht and enlightener of Holland (d..739).

8 / 21 November - Synaxis of the Archangels, SS Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Salaphiel, Juggediel & Barachiel - The angels of God have been commemorated by men from the earliest times, but this commemoration often degenerates into the divinisation of angels (IV Kings 23:5; A.V. II Kings). Heretics always wove fantasies round the angels. Some of them saw the angels as gods and others, if they did not so regard them, took them to be the creators of the whole visible world. The local Council in Laodicea, that was held in the fourth century, rejected in its 35th Canon the worship of angels as gods, and established the proper veneration of them. In the time of Pope Sylvester of Rome and the Alexandrian Patriarch Alexander, in the fourth century, this Feast of the Archangel Michael and the other heavenly powers was instituted, to be celebrated in November. Why in November? Because November is the ninth month after March, and it is thought that the world was created in the month of March. The ninth month after March was chosen because of the nine orders of angels that were the first created beings. St Dionysius the Areopagite, a disciple of the Apostle Paul (that Apostle who was caught up to the third heaven), writes of these nine orders in his book: 'Celestial Hierarchies'. These orders are as follows: six-winged Seraphim, many-eyed Cherubim, godly Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels and Angels. The leader of the whole angelic army is the Archangel Michael. When Satan, Lucifer, fell away from God, and carried half the angels with him to destruction, then Michael arose and cried to the unfallen angels: 'Let us give heed! Let us stand aright; let us stand with fear!', and the whole angelic army sang aloud: 'Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!' (See on the Archangel Michael: Joshua 5:13-15 and Jude v.9). Among the angels there rules a perfect unity of mind, of soul and of love; of total obedience of the lesser powers to the greater and of all to the holy will of God. Each nation has its guardian angel, as does each individual Christian. We must keep in mind that, whatever we do, openly or in secret, we do in the presence of our guardian angel and that, on the Day of Judgement, a great multitude of the holy angels of heaven will be gathered around the throne of Christ, and the thoughts, words and deeds of every man will be laid bare before them. May God have mercy on us and save us at the prayers of the holy Archangel Michael and all the bodiless powers of heaven. Amen; St. Tysilio, abbot of Meifod; St. Willehad, bishop of Bremen.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the wondrous power of the apostles' words (Acts 16): 1. How a certain slave girl with an unclean spirit of divination cried out after Paul and Silas; 2. How Paul turned and said to the spirit, *I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her*; 3. How the unclean spirit at that same hour came out of the slave girl.

HOMILY

on the will of God that all Christians should be holy

According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Ephesians 1:4).

Only the Church teaches and demonstrates that first there was a plan for the world and then the world was created. That plan was in the wisdom and will and power of God. And we Christians, as the Church of God, are in this plan. According to this plan, God chose us *before the foundation of the world* for holiness and righteousness and love. God chose us beforehand and adopted us through Him-through Whom? Through the Lord Jesus Christ. For all that we are to God, we are to Him through Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus Christ man has no other bond, no other relationship, no other kinship with God, and therefore our choosing and adoption was through our Lord Jesus Christ. He chose us, His Holy Church, *according to the good pleasure of His will* (Ephesians 1:5), as He had once chosen Israel from among all the nations on earth. Let no one say that this choosing of God destroys man's free will, so that neither does a Christian have merit because he is a Christian, nor is a pagan condemned because he is a pagan. No, this is a totally erroneous interpretation. For at one time God also chose Israel and some in Israel perished while some were saved. He also chose His Holy Church, calling all nations and peoples to it. But the salvation of those among the chosen does not depend on God's choice alone, but also on man's will and effort.

O eternal God, our Creator, Who chose us for salvation before Thou hadst even created us, have mercy on us and save us.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen



25th Sunday After Pentecost

Martyrs Onesiphorus and Porphyrius & St Matrona

9 / 22 November 2015

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

Troparion of Ss Onesiphorus and Porphyrius tone 3: You sought the delights of heaven/ and became martyrs of the Lord,/ O renowned Onesiphorus and Porphyrius./ Wherefore you drove God's golden chariot on the heavenly course./ O divine Martyrs, entreat Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.

Troparion — Tone 8: The image of God was truly preserved in you, O Mother, / for you took up the Cross and followed Christ. / By so doing, you taught us to disregard the flesh, for it passes away; / but to care instead for the soul, since it is immortal. / Therefore your spirit, O holy Mother Matróna, rejoices with the angels.

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

Kontakion of Ss Onesiphorus and Porphyrius tone 2: The glorious martyrs Onesiphorus and Porphyrius together contested valiantly./ They humbled the enemy's arrogance to the earth/ and shone with the grace of the uncreated Trinity./ Together with the Angels they now intercede for us all.

Kontakion — Tone 8: You passed through the storm of life without faltering, chosen and godly Mother Matróna, / guided to the harbor of life, where you sing hymns to the Deliverer. / You ever pray that Christ may grant us grace and mercy; / you preserve the flock which you painstakingly gathered!

Matins Gospel III

EPISTLE: Ephesians 4: 1-6

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

I BESEECH YOU TO HAVE A WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING WITH WHICH YOU WERE CALLED

Great has the power of Paul's chain been shown to be, and more glorious than miracles. It is not in vain then, as it would seem, nor without an object, that he here holds it forward ...It is not merely being a prisoner that is honourable, but being so for Christ's sake ...Nothing is equal to this ...But what is this calling? You were called as His body, it is said...You have Christ as your head; and though you were 'enemies,' and had committed misdeed out of number, yet 'He has raised you up with Him and made you sit with Him' (Eph. 2:6) ...But how is it possible to 'walk worthily' of it? 'With all lowliness.' Such a one walks worthily. This is the basis of all virtue. If you are lowly, and realise what you are, and how you were saved, and will take this recollection as a motive to all virtue ...The lowly-minded man is able to be at once generous and a grateful servant. 'For what do you have,' he says, 'that you did not receive?' (I Cor.4:7) ...Even in your good deeds be lowly; for hear what Christ says, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit' (Matt.5:3), and He places this in first order ...How is it possible to forbear, if a man is passionate or censorious? ...If you, he would say, are not forbearing to your neighbour, how shall God be forbearing to you? ...Wherever there is love all things are to be borne ...

THERE IS ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT

The love which Paul requires of us is no common love, but that which cements us together, and makes us cleave inseparably to one another, and effects as great and as perfect a union as though it were between limb and limb. For this is that love which produces great and glorious fruits. Hence he says, there is 'one body;' one, both by sympathy, and by not opposing the good of others, and by sharing their joy, having expressed all at once by this figure. He then beautifully adds, 'and one Spirit,' showing that from the one body there will be one Spirit ...God has called you all on the same terms. He has bestowed nothing upon one more than upon another. To all He has freely given immortality, to all eternal life, to all immortal glory, to all brotherhood, to all inheritance. He is the common Head of all; 'He has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Jesus Christ' (Eph. 2:6). You then, who in the spiritual world have such great equality of privileges, how is it that you are high-minded?

St. John Chrysostom. Homilies IX, X, XI on Ephesians IV. B#57, pp. 94, 96, 97, 99, 102.

THE GOSPEL: LUKE 8: 41-56

And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, For he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, Came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me." Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace." While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher." But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well." When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Little girl, arise." Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat. And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.

RESURRECTION OF THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS

Last Sunday's reading from the Apostle told us that we are saved by Grace, and that Grace is received through faith, and this is the gift of God. And we were shown what faith is in a striking example.

And here, even today's Gospel speaks about faith. To some degree we all possess it. But because it is imperfect, our faith is often subject to temptations. And the most terrible, the strongest of such temptations, is the death of a person near and dear to us. I think that the majority of those present here have already lived through, or are now living through, this incurable grief. But if not, it is something which will inevitably come. Today's Gospel gives us a classic example of how, in spite of all the difficulty of such an experience, it is possible to endure it. And at the same time it shows us again how much we need faith. For only through faith does God give us and will give us His power of Grace not to fall spiritually in such a terrible moment.

Jairus approached Christ; his daughter was near death. He fell at the feet of Jesus and asked Him to enter his house. Christ agreed, but the people were crowding Him. On the way, the woman with an issue of blood was healed. The whole time there were delays. Christ moved slowly, very slowly. Imagine what Jairus was going through. Here he had asked Christ to hurry. After all, this was a matter of life and death for his daughter. If Christ were one minute late, it might be too late—his daughter could die. And this is exactly what happened. Someone came from the house of the ruler of the synagogue and said to him: "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master" (Lk. 8:49).

Yes, according to human understanding it was all over. Why trouble the Master? Anything is possible to mend, but not death. Death alone is irreparable. Before it even the Teacher is powerless. Yes, this is so according to human understanding, but not according to God's understanding. And Jesus, after He heard this, said to Jairus: "Fear not: Believe only, and she shall be made whole" (Lk. 8:50). And in this moment Jairus rejected human understanding and accepted God's understanding. Now before him stood not just a Teacher, but the Saviour of the world, the Son of God—God Himself. Because God alone has power over life and death.

Jairus accepted within himself His words: "Fear not: believe only!" From this very moment he lived only by these words and continued following after Christ. They entered the house. And again two sides: the human side—"All wept and bewailed her." And Christ said, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." And again the human. "And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead." But in the soul of Jairus there was an unspeakable calm. He had faith. And faith conquered. "Maid, arise!" exclaimed Christ, and her spirit returned into her and she immediately got up and was united with her father (Lk. 8:52-55).

Yes, but you may say this is a miracle of resurrection, and such miracles do not happen now. True. But the same miracle has been promised to all of us. Every day in our Confession of Faith we read, "I look for the resurrection of the dead." And this will happen, it will! Not as soon as it happened for Jairus, but it will happen! Pay attention to the following moment. Jairus already knew that his daughter was dead, but all the same he followed Christ, believing His words. How long this walk in faith lasted is not important; but what is important is that it took place.

Let us also believe in the words of the Gospel that the dead will rise; and like Jairus, let us follow Christ in faith. Mystically, this walk of Jairus after Christ did not end and will never end. It goes on even now, and we can all participate in it. Let us hasten to join Jairus. Then the words of Christ, "Fear not: Believe only, and she shall be made whole," will refer also to us. But for this to happen, like Jairus, we must hold fast to the robe of Christ and endure everything that God sends to us on the road of our life. The way of Jairus was comparatively short. Ours might be long, very long. It will go to the end of our life. But let us believe that there will be the resurrection of the dead and that we will be united with those dear to us who are already with the Lord. May God grant us the faith and the patience of Jairus!

Archbishop Andrei, The One Thing Needful

Saints of the week

9 / 22 November - The Holy Martyrs Onesiphorus and Prophyrius - These two wonderful men were martyred for the name of Christ in the time of the Emperor Diocletian (284-305). They were harshly beaten, and then burned in iron coffins, and after that tied to horses' tails and dragged over stones and thistles. They were thus broken to pieces and gave their holy souls into God's hands. Their relics were buried in Pentapolis. Our Holy Father John the Dwarf; Our Holy Mother Matrona of Constantinople; Our Holy Father Euthymius of Docheiariou and his disciple, Neophytus; St. Simon Metaphrastes; Our Holy Mother Theoctista of Paros.

Saint Matrona, Abbess of Constantinople was born in the city of Perge Pamphylia (Asia Minor) in the fifth century. They gave her in marriage to a wealthy man named Dometian. When her daughter Theodota was born, they resettled in Constantinople. The twenty-five-year-old Matrona loved to walk to the temple of God. She spent entire days there, ardently praying to the Lord and weeping for her sins.

At the church the saint met two pious Eldresses, Eugenia and Susanna, who from their youth lived there in asceticism, work and prayer. Matrona began to imitate the God-pleasing life of an ascetic, humbling her flesh by abstinence and fasting, for which she had to endure criticism by her husband. Her soul yearned for a full renunciation of the world. After long hesitation, St Matrona decided to leave her family and entreated the Lord to reveal whether her intent was pleasing to Him. The Lord heard the prayer of His servant. Once, during a light sleep, she had a dream that she had fled from her husband, who was in pursuit of her. The saint concealed herself in a crowd of monks approaching her, and her husband did not notice her. Matrona accepted this dream as a divine directive to enter a men's monastery, where her husband would not think to look for her. She gave her fifteen-year-old daughter to be raised by the Eldress Susanna, and having cut her own hair and disguised herself in men's attire, she went to the monastery of St Bassion (October 10). There the Nun Matrona passed herself off as the eunuch Babylos and was accepted as one of the brethren. Apprehensive lest the monks learn that she was a woman, the saint passed her time in constant quietude and much work. The brethren marveled at the great virtue of Babylos. One time the saint was working in the monastery vineyard with the other monks. The novice monk Barnabas noted that her ear-lobe was pierced and asked about it. "It is necessary, brother, to till the soil and not watch other people, which is not proper for a monk," answered the saint. After a certain while it was revealed in a dream to St Bassion, the igumen of the monastery, that the eunuch Babylos was a woman. It was also revealed to Acacius, igumen of the nearby Abraham monastery. St Bassion summoned St Matrona and asked in a threatening voice why she had entered the monastery, to corrupt the monks, or to shame the monastery. With tears the saint told the igumen about all her past life, about her husband, hostile to her efforts and prayers, and about the vision directing her to go to the men's monastery. Convinced that her intent was pure and chaste, St Bassion sent St Matrona to a women's monastery in the city of Emesa. In this monastery the saint dwelt for many years, inspiring the sisters by her high monastic achievement. When the Abbess died, by the unanimous wish of the nuns the Nun Matrona became head of the convent. The fame of her virtuous activities, and miraculous gift of healing, which she acquired from the Lord, spread far beyond the walls of the monastery. Dometian also heard about the deeds of the nun. When St Matrona learned that her husband was coming to the monastery and wanted to see her, she secretly went off to Jerusalem, and then to Mount Sinai, and from there to Beirut, where she settled in an abandoned pagan temple. The local inhabitants learned of her seclusion, and began to come to her. The holy ascetic turned many from their pagan impiety and converted them to Christ. Women and girls began to settle by the dwelling of the nun and soon a new monastery was formed. Having fulfilled the will of God, revealed to her in a dream, the saint left Beirut and journeyed to Constantinople where she learned that her husband had died. With the blessing of her spiritual Father, St Bassion, the ascetic founded a women's monastery in Constantinople, to which sisters from the Beirut convent she founded also transferred. The Constantinople monastery of St Matrona was known for its strict monastic rule and the virtuous life of its sisters. In extreme old age St Matrona had a vision of the heavenly Paradise and the place prepared for her there after 75 years of monastic labor. At the age of one hundred, St Matrona blessed the sisters, and quietly fell asleep in the Lord.

St. Nectarios (Anastasios Kaphalas), metropolitan of Pentapolis - born in Greece in 1846. His family was very poor, so he left home at the age of 14 to seek work. He found a job in Constantinople, but he received very low wages and ate poorly and only wore rags. Seeing that his master received many things by mail, he decided to write a letter for help. He had no friends in the world, and the post did not go to his mother's village. In his childlike faith, he decided to write to Christ to tell him his needs, writing on the envelope: "To the Lord Jesus Christ in Heaven". On his way to post it a merchant who knew him saw him and offered to post his letter. Reading the address and being overcome by curiosity, the merchant opened the letter and read the boy's plea to God for help. Greatly moved, he put money in an envelope and sent it anonymously to the boy, who gave thanks to God. Young Anastasios visited the Holy Places when he was very young. On the way he calmed a terrible storm through his prayers. Then, in his twenties, he entered a monastery, being tonsured in 1875 with the names Lazarus. Because of his virtues and piety he soon became a deacon and then a priest. He left his monastery because of Moslem rule and went to Egypt where he was elected the Metropolitan of Pentapolis. He lived a holy life and because of this was slandered by others, even his brother-bishops in the See of Alexandria. Thus, he was suspended from his diocese. Nevertheless, the saint bore this slandering humbly. When the people, greatly upset by his suspension, began to grow restless, he secretly left for Greece so as not to be the cause of dissension. He found there, however, that the slanders had travelled ahead of him, and that the Church authorities would not give him a position. Some people who had come to love the Saint very much used their influence to have him appointed Dean of a seminary in Athens. The busy city life was not pleasing to the saint and he looked for a quiet place where he could dedicate himself to prayer. Finding a disused convent on the island of Aegina he rebuilt the church and gathered a few nuns around him. Many came to confess their sins and receive wise counsel. He lived here until his death in 1920. On the day of his repose, the hospital in which he died was filled with a beautiful fragrance. An item of the saint's clothing, placed by a nurse on the bed of a sick man while they prepared the saint's body for burial, was a source of healing. His relics were incorrupt for many years after his repose, even after the impious Archbishop of Athens, Chrysostom, ordered

that the relics be exposed to the elements for two days so they would dissolve. A friend of the saint's, a doctor, opened the relics in 1934 and was surprised to find the saint was easily recognisable to any who knew him during his life.

10 / 23 November - The Holy Apostles Olympas, Erastus, Quartus, Herodion, Sosipater and Tertius - They were all among the Seventy. The last three are also commemorated elsewhere: Herodion on April 8th, Sosipater on April 28th and Tertius on October 30th. Ss Olympas and Herodion were followers of the Apostle Peter and, when Peter suffered, they suffered too, being beheaded at Nero's command. Erastus was steward of the Church in Jerusalem, and later became Bishop of Paneas in Palestine. Quartus was bishop in Beirut; he suffered greatly and brought many to the Christian faith. Sosipater was bishop in Iconium, and Tertius followed him as bishop there. They strove in spirit, became victors and were crowned with wreaths of glory. The Holy Martyr Orestes; St. Nonnus, Bishop of Heliopolis.

11 / 24 November - The Holy and Great Martyr Menas - An Egyptian by birth and a soldier by profession, St Menas, as a true Christian, could not bear to look upon the foul offering of sacrifice to idols, so he left the army and the town, the society of men and everything else, and went to a deserted mountain. It was easier for Menas to live with the wild beasts than with pagans. One day, Menas looked from afar in spirit at a pagan festival in the town of Cotyaeus, then went to the town and, before them all, confessed his faith in Christ the living God, denouncing idolatry and paganism as falsehood and darkness. The governor of that town, one Pyrrhus, asked who and what he was. The saint replied: 'My fatherland is Egypt; my name is Menas. I was an officer, but, seeing the worship of idols, I rejected your honours. I have come now to proclaim my Christ before you all as the living God, that He may reveal me as His servant in the Kingdom of God.' Hearing this, Pyrrhus put holy Menas to harsh torture. He was flogged, flayed with iron flails, burned with torches and tortured in many other ways, finally being beheaded. His body was burned to prevent Christians taking it, but they did succeed in rescuing some bits from the flames. They buried these remains with care, and they were later taken to Alexandria and buried there, a church being built over them. St Menas suffered in about 304, and entered into the Kingdom of Christ. He was and remains a great wonderworker in both lives: both on earth and in heaven. Whoever has glorified Menas or invoked his aid with faith in time of need has received help. He has often appeared as a soldier on horseback, to help the faithful or punish the faithless. The Holy Martyr Stephen of Decani, King of Serbia; The Holy Martyrs Victor and Stephanis; The Holy Martyr Vincent the Deacon; Our Holy Father Theodore the Studite; St Urosica, Prince of Serbia; St. Martin the Merciful, bishop of Tours.

12 / 25 November - Fast Day - St John the Merciful - Born on the island of Cyprus of a princely family, his father, Epiphanius, being the governor, he was brought up from childhood as a true Christian. Under pressure from his parents, he married and had children. But, by the providence of God, both his wife and children went from this world to the next. Famed for his compassion and devotion, John was chosen as Patriarch of Alexandria in the time of the Emperor Heraclius. He governed the Church in Alexandria for ten years as a true pastor, guarding it from pagans and heretics, and was a model of meekness, compassion and love for his fellow-men. 'If you seek nobility', he said, 'seek it not in blood but in virtue, for in virtue lies true nobility.' All the saints are distinguished by compassion, but St John was utterly dedicated to this great virtue. Celebrating the Liturgy one day, the words of Christ: 'If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath aught against thee ...' (Matt. 5:23), came into the Patriarch's mind, and he remembered that one of the clergy in the church there had a grudge against him. He left the holy gifts, went up to the priest, fell before his feet and begged his forgiveness. As soon as he had made his peace with that man, he returned to the Table of Preparation. Another time, on the way to the Church of Ss Cyrus and John, it happened that he was met by a poor widow, who started speaking to him of her poverty. The Patriarch's companions were bored by the woman's lengthy lamenting, and urged the bishop to hurry to the church for the service, and listen to the woman when it was over. St John replied: 'And how will God obey me, if I don't obey Him?', and he would not move from the spot until he had heard the widow out. When the Persians invaded Egypt, Patriarch John took ship to flee from the assault. He fell ill on the voyage and, arriving in Cyprus, died at his birthplace in 620, entering into the immortal kingdom of his Lord. His wonderworking relics were first taken to Constantinople, then to Budapest and finally came to rest in Presburg. The Holy Prophet Ahijah; Our Holy Father Nilus of Sinai; Our Holy Father Nilus the Outpourer of Myrrh; St. Lebuin, monk of Deventer (d.777); St. Machan, bishop of Aberdeenshire.

13 / 26 November - St John Chrysostom - the Golden-Tongued - He was born in Antioch in the year 347, his father's name being Secundus and his mother's Anthusa. Studying Greek philosophy, John became disgusted with Hellenic paganism and turned to the Christian faith as the one and all-embracing truth. John was baptised by Meletius, Patriarch of Antioch, and, after that, his parents were also baptised. After their death, John became a monk and began to live in strict asceticism. He wrote a book: 'On the Priesthood', after which the holy Apostles John and Peter appeared to him, prophesying for him great service, great grace and also great suffering. When the time came for him to be ordained priest, an angel of God appeared at the same time to Patriarch Flavian (Meletius's successor) and to John himself. When the Patriarch ordained him, a shining white dove was seen above John's head. Renowned for his wisdom, his asceticism and the power of his words, John was, at the desire of Emperor Arcadius, chosen as Patriarch of Constantinople. He governed the Church for six years as Patriarch with unequalled zeal and wisdom, sending missionaries to the pagan Celts and Scythians and purging the Church of simony, deposing many bishops who were given to this vice. He extended the Church's charitable works, wrote a rite for the Holy Liturgy, put heretics to shame, denounced the Empress Eudoxia, interpreted the Scriptures with his golden mind and tongue and left to the Church many precious books of sermons. The people glorified him; the jealous loathed him; the Empress twice had him sent into exile. He spent three years in exile, and died on Holy Cross Day, September 14th, 407, in a place called Comana in Armenia. The holy Apostles John and Peter again appeared to him at the time of his death, and also the holy martyr Basiliscus (see May 22nd), in whose church he received Communion for the last time. 'Glory to God for everything!' were his last words, and with them the

soul of Chrysostom the Patriarch entered into Paradise. Of his relics, the head is preserved in the Church of the Dormition in Moscow, and the body in the Vatican in Rome.

Tropar to St. John Chrysostom, Tone 8: Grace shining forth from thy mouth like a beacon hath illumined the universe, and disclosed to the world treasures of uncovetousness, and shown us the heights of humility; but while instructing by thy words, O Father John Chrysostom, intercede with the Word, Christ our God, to save our souls.

Kondak for St. John Chrysostom, Tone 6: From the heavens hast thou received divine grace and by thy lips thou dost teach all to worship the One God in Trinity, O John Chrysostom, all-blessed righteous one. Rightly do we acclaim thee, for thou art a teacher revealing things divine. The Holy Martyrs Antoninus, Nicephorus, Herman and Manetha; Our Holy Father, the Martyr Damascene; St. Quintianus & St. Euprasius, bishops of Clermont, Gaul.

14 / 27 November – Fast Day - The Holy Apostle Philip - He was born in Bethsaida near the Sea of Galilee, as were Peter and Andrew. Instructed in the Holy Scriptures from his youth, Philip immediately responded to the call of Christ and followed Him (John 1:43). After the descent of the Holy Spirit, Philip preached the Gospel with zeal in many regions of Asia and in Greece, where the Jews sought to kill him but the Lord saved him by the might of His wonders. The Jewish leaders, whose aim it was to kill Philip, were suddenly blinded, and found themselves in total darkness. There was a great earthquake, and the earth opened and swallowed up Philip's wicked persecutors. Many other wonders were wrought, especially the healing of the sick, by which many of the pagans came to faith in Christ. In the Phrygian town of Hierapolis, St Philip worked for the Gospel with John the Theologian, his own sister Mariamna and the Apostle Bartholomew. There was in that place a dangerous snake, which the pagans fed with care and worshipped as a god. God's Apostle destroyed the snake with prayer as though with a spear. This called forth the fury of the benighted people, and the wicked pagans seized Philip and crucified him upside-down on a tree, and then crucified Bartholomew also. At this, the earth opened and swallowed up the judge and many others with him. The terrified people ran to take the crucified apostles down, but they succeeded only in taking Bartholomew down alive; Philip had already breathed his last. Bartholomew made Stachys bishop for those baptised in the city. Stachys had been cured of blindness and baptised by Philip, having been blind for forty years. St Philip's relics were later taken to Rome. This wonderful Apostle suffered in the year 86, in the time of the Emperor Domitian; St Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Salonica; St Justinian, Emperor of Byzantium;

St Dyfrig, bishop in Hereford & Gwent, hermit of Bardsey Island (c.550).- St. Dyfrig was the son of the unmarried Princess Efrddyl, daughter of King Peibio Clafrog (the Leprous) of Eryng. The King was furious when he discovered his daughter was pregnant, some say and he tried to destroy her by casting her into the River. He failed and Dyfrig was born at Chilstone (Child's Stone) in the parish of Madley (Herefords), traditionally in the mid-6th century. When the baby Dyfrig kissed his grandfather, he cured him of his leprosy and the King Peibio quickly grew to love him. He gave him the whole area around Madley called Ynys Efrddyl. Here, Dyfrig, who had grown up a Christian, founded a monastery at Henllann (Hentland) where he entered the religious life. After seven years, he founded a second establishment at Moccas and, at these two places, he became the tutor of many saints: Teilo, Samson, Ufelfyw, Merchwyn, Elwredd, Gwnwyn, Cynwal, Arthfoddw, Cynnwr, Arwystl, Inabwy, Cynfran, Gwrfan, Elhaern, Iddneu, Gwrddogwy, Gwernabwy, Ieuan, Aeddau and Cynfarch amongst them. Dyfrig became Bishop of Eryng, probably from Caer-Eryng (Weston-under-Penyard) and then Bishop of the whole of Glywysing & Gwent. Later, he was supposedly, raised to be Archbishop of Wales by St. Germanus, with his base at Caerleon. In this capacity, he is said have consecrated St. Deiniol as Bishop of Bangor Fawr and to have crowned the High-King Arthur at Caer Vudi (variously thought to be Silchester or Woodchester). Dyfrig was a great friend of St. Illtud and supported him in the foundation of Llanilltud Fawr Abbey (Llantwit Major) which he often visited. He would always spend lent on Ynys Byr (Caldy Island) nearby and consecrated St. Samson as Bishop of Dol there in AD 521. He also liked to call upon St. Cadog at Llancarfan and had a small cell built a mile away where the Fynnon Ddyfrig still survives. In AD 545, Archbishop Dyfrig attended the Synod of Llandewi Brefi in order to condemn the Pelagian Heresy and, with St. Deiniol, persuaded St. Dewi to also attend. The latter spoke so eloquently that Dyfrig resigned his Archiepiscopate in Dewi's favour. Dewi moved the Archiepiscopal See to Mynyw (St. Davids) while Dyfrig retired to the Abbey on Ynys Enlli (Bardsey). He was not there long before he died (on 14th November) and was buried within the monastic confines. His body was later translated to Llandaff Cathedral, in 1120, where his shrine can still be seen today. St. Dyfrig is amongst the most important of early Welsh saints, despite the fact that the area in which he was active is now part of the English county of Herefordshire.

15 / 28 November - Beginning of Nativity Fast - Repose of St. Herman, wonderworker of Alaska; The Holy Martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Abibus - Gurias and Samonas were eminent citizens of Edessa. At the time of a persecution of Christians, they hid outside the city and lived in fasting and prayer, giving courage to the faithful who came to them for counsel. They were seized and taken before the judge, who threatened them with death if they refused to observe the imperial decree on the worship of idols. Christ's holy martyrs replied: 'If we observe the imperial decree, we shall be lost even if you do not kill us.' They were thrown into prison after harsh torture, and were there confined from August 1st to November 10th, enduring hunger, darkness and great hardship. They were then brought out again and tortured afresh, and, as they remained steadfast in the Christian faith, were condemned to death and beheaded with the sword in the year 322, under the wicked Emperor Licinius (who ruled the eastern half of the Empire until 324). Later Abibus, a deacon in Edessa, was tortured for Christ his Lord and, in the flames, gave his spirit into God's hands. His mother took his unharmed body from the fire and buried it together with those of Gurias and Samonas. When the persecution had ended, Christians built a church in honour of these three martyrs, and placed their wonderworking relics in one coffin. Of the manifold miracles of these wonderful saints of God, one is specially remembered: A widow in Edessa had a young daughter, who was to marry a Goth serving in the Greek army. As the mother was concerned at the thought of sending her daughter to a distant land, the Goth swore over the grave of the martyrs that he would do no ill to the girl, but take her as his legal wife. He was, though, in fact, already married. When he took the girl back to his own land, he treated her, not as his wife, but as a slave, until his lawful wife died. He then agreed with

his kinsman that he should bury his living slave along with his dead wife. The slave implored the holy martyrs with tears to save her, and they appeared to her in the grave, took hold of her and, in an instant, carried her from the land of the Goths to Edessa, to their church. On the following day, when the church was opened, the girl was found by the tomb of the saints, and the story of her miraculous deliverance was heard. The Holy Martyrs Elpidius, Marcellus and Eustochius; The Feast of the Icon of the Mother of God of Kupyatich;

St. Maughold, apostle to the Isle of Man (d.488) - an Irish prince and reputedly a captain of robbers who was converted by Patrick. Upon his conversion, he became a new man by putting on the spirit of Christ. One version of the legend says that Patrick told him to put to sea in a coracle without oars as a penance for his evil deeds. Another says that he set sail in order to avoid the temptations of the world. In both stories, he retired to the Isle of Man (Eubonia) off the coast of Lancashire, England. Earlier Patrick had sent his nephew, Saint Germanus, as bishop to plant the Church on the island. Germanus was succeeded by Saints Romulus and Conindrus during whose time Maughold arrived on the island and began to live an austere, penitential life in the mountainous area now named after him Saint Maughold. After their deaths, Maughold was unanimously chosen as bishop by the Monks. In one of the 18 parish churchyards on the island can be found Saint Maughold's well. The very clear water of the well is received in a large stone coffin. Those seeking cures of various ailments, particularly poisoning, are seated in the saint's chair just above the well and given a glass of well-water to drink. Maughold's shrine was here until the relics were scattered during the Reformation. Maughold, commemorated in both the British and Irish calendars, is described in the Martyrology of Oengus as "a rod of gold, a vast ingot, the great bishop MacCaille." Many topological features on the Isle of Man, which he divided into 25 parishes, bear Maughold's name.

HYMN OF PRAISE - To the Most-holy Theotokos

O Most-holy Mother of God, Bride of God, Thou wast the Bodily Throne of Christ God, Thou didst bear the King of Glory in thy body, Thou gavest birth to Him Who gavest life to a dead world. By His Blood, His holy Blood, He redeemed the world, Gloriously glorifying Himself and thee, O Virgin. But thy true glory shines in heaven, Where thou sittest on the right hand of Christ Himself. And the rays of thy glory descend to earth, And shine at night on the path of the sojourners. Glory to thee, Mother of God, throughout the ages, The first Temple, the wonderful Temple of the glory of Christ!

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the wondrous creation of the world (Genesis 1): 1. How God said: *Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters*; 2. How He divided the waters under the firmament from the waters above the firmament; 3. How He called the firmament heaven.

HOMILY

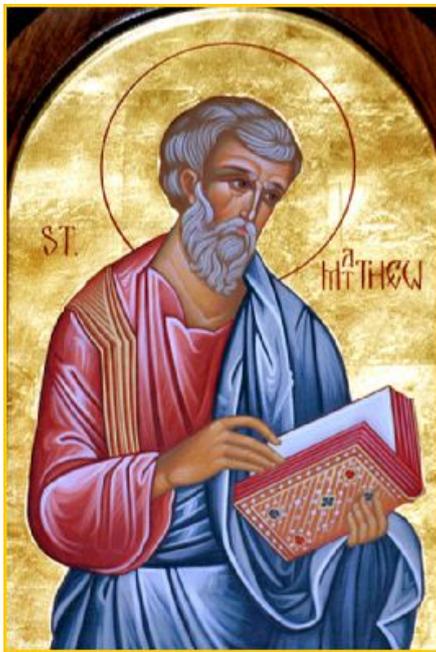
on the revelation of the wisdom of God to the heavenly powers

... *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God* (Ephesians 3:10).

Brethren, are the angels all-knowing? They are not; for if they were all-knowing, they would be gods. God is one, brethren, and the angels are God's beautiful servants. The mystery of the Incarnation was not known to the angels before it took place. And all the other mysteries connected with the mystery of the Incarnation were also unknown to the angels until they saw them revealed in the Church. Therefore the Church is a new revelation, even for the holy angels. The Church is a new revelation of the wisdom and power of God and of His love for man. On the other hand, it is also a new revelation of man's love for God, and man's struggle. Even the angels themselves did not foresee how much God would humble Himself or how much man would be uplifted. This was shown in the Church, and through the Church it was proclaimed to the angels. The Apostle speaks of this to the Ephesians in the words quoted above: *the principalities and powers*-in other words, not even to the chiefs of the angels was everything known beforehand. *The manifold wisdom of God* is that wisdom that was not revealed earlier, and was unknown to the angels and now, in the Church, is shown in countless forms, situations and circumstances.

O my brethren, the two greatest works of God that have been revealed up to now are the creation of the world and the creation of the Church. In both works, brethren, man is the main object of God's love. Let us be thankful with our every breath to the Most-gracious God.

O Gracious God, O Compassionate God, **to Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.**



26th Sunday After Pentecost

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew

16 / 29 November 2015

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

Troparion of St Matthew tone 3: O Apostle Matthew, thou didst hear the Voice of the Word/ and receive the light of faith./ Thou didst abandon the office of publican/ and proclaim Christ God's Self-emptying./ Ask that those who praise thee may receive forgiveness and great mercy.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 1: As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, / Raising the world with Thyself. / Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished. / Adam exults O Master, Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage, and cries to Thee; / Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ.

Kontakion of St Matthew tone 4: When thou didst cast away the publican's balance/ thou didst take the yoke of righteousness/ and become a merchant rich in wisdom./ Thou didst preach the Word of truth/ and rouse the slothful by describing the Last Judgment.

Vespers: I Pet. 1:1-2:6; I Pet. 2:21-3:9; I Pet. 4:1-11

Matins Gospel IV

EPISTLE: Ephesians 5: 9-19

Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), Finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light." See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

NOT AS FOOLS, BUT AS WISE, REDEEMING THE TIME, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL

The acquisition of God's Spirit is also capital, but grace-given and eternal, and it is gained in very similar ways, almost the same ways as monetary, social and temporal capital. God the Word, the God-Man, our Lord Jesus Christ, likens our life to a market, and the work of our life on earth He calls buying, and says to us all: Buy till I come, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. That is to say, economize the time for receiving heavenly blessings through earthly goods. Earthly goods are virtuous acts performed for Christ's sake and conferring on us the grace of the Holy Spirit, without whom there is not and cannot be any salvation; for it is written: 'By the Holy Spirit is every soul quickened and by purity exalted, yea, is made bright by the Three in One in holy mystery' [from Orthodox Matins hymn]. The Holy Spirit Itself enters our souls, and this entrance into our souls of Him the Almighty ...is only granted to us through our own assiduous acquisition of the Holy Spirit, which prepares in our soul and body a throne for the all-creative presence of God with our spirit according to His irrevocable word: I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people (Lev. 26:12) ...Most of all it is given through prayer; for prayer is somehow always in our hands as an instrument for acquiring the grace of the Spirit ...prayer is always possible for everyone, rich and poor, noble and simple. strong and weak. healthy and suffering, righteous and sinful ...Trade thus spiritually in virtue. Distribute the gifts of the grace of the Holy Spirit to them that ask, as a candle, burning with earthly fire, lights other candles for the illumining of all in other places, but diminishes not its own light.

St. Seraphim of Sarov, Conversation with Nicholas Motovilov Concerning the Aim of the Christian Life. B#26, pp. 269-270.

Second Epistle – I Cor. 4:9-16

THE GOSPEL: St Luke 10: 25-37

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbour as yourself.'" And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbour to him who fell among the thieves?" And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Remember, brothers and sisters, how the Holy Church brought us to this passage in the Gospel narrative. Remember last Sunday how Jairus, a Jewish prince, came to Christ. His daughter was dying and he could find help nowhere. She was dying. And so he ran to Christ, fell at His feet and asked for help. She was dying — his only daughter. Christ went with him and Jairus walked with Christ. Maybe this was not long, but in the mind of Jairus it was the way of his whole life. He should be close by his dying daughter...but he hoped. He hoped because he believed that Christ could perform something great, could perform a healing which no one else could do. And this is like away of life.

It is the same with us. A certain moment comes and we are made aware that there will be a departure, there will be a grave, a person will die. I will, and after me, you. Each of us has to expect this moment. But if you hope in God and, like Jairus, hold onto the robe of Christ and do not fall away from Him in spite of all the temptations, then you will undoubtedly arrive... arrive where? Well, today's Gospel tells us where in the question of the lawyer: 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' This is where — into Eternal Life.

It is this moment which reveals today's Gospel to us. How do we walk? How do we hold onto the robe of Christ? How do we not let go of this robe during the whole way? And this way is long, very long. This is our life. This may mean years, and for some of us many years. Eighty years for some, ninety for others, and still longer. How many dangers there are on this long road that can tear us away from the robe of Christ! The storm of temptation is raging all around. Look at our family life. Influenced by some mental blindness a husband abandons his family. From constant nervous tension in the family, a wife cannot bear it any longer and makes life intolerable, and so on. And in our public life, all the political crises; and in our civic life, the terrible crimes. O God, where can we go? All we have to do is, like Jairus, cling to Christ, hold onto His robe. The main thing is not to let go. We must be steadfast.

And today's Gospel gives us the secret of how to be steadfast. Be a Merciful Samaritan everywhere, always, and to everyone. Let us examine ourselves. Are we really like this? There were children around us — did we teach them good things? Or a man came to us who was on the verge of moral destruction. Did we support him in his fight against sin? Did we help him to get out of this swamp which was sucking him down? Maybe all we had to do was stretch out not even a hand, but just a finger, and he would have been saved. How many there were who needed just one word of encouragement, some attention. And we could have given all this. But did we give it, like the Merciful Samaritan? If to all these questions our conscience answers, no, we did not help — then, yes, we are in danger of being torn away from the robe of Christ. Let us hasten to mend this. Mercy alone can keep us with Christ.

Our children have so-called "baby-teeth" which fall out by themselves, and in their place other teeth grow — real ones. In the same way we have a heart. But this is a coarse, carnal heart — a selfish one. With such a heart you cannot enter Eternal Life. And it will not fall out by itself. We have to cast it out and replace it with a new heart — not ours, but Christ's. And any time we help our neighbor and make an effort, we are as if tearing off a piece of our heart and giving it away to our neighbor. And in place of this piece of carnal, sinful heart, the Lord puts in us a similar piece of His heart — Christ's heart.

So during our life we are changing our heart into a new one, a real one, into the heart of Christ. And only then will Eternal Life open for us. Then no one will be able to tear us away from the robe of Christ; and we will receive what the lawyer was asking Christ about — Eternal Life.

Archbishop Andrei, The One Thing Needful

Second Gospel: Matthew 9: 9-13

Saints of the week

16 / 29 November - Nativity Fast - The Holy Apostle Matthew the Evangelist - the son of Alphaeus was at first a tax-collector, and it was as such that the Lord saw him in Capernaum and said to him: 'Follow Me!' Leaving everything, he followed Him (Matt. 9:9). After that, Matthew prepared a feast in his house, and there provided an opportunity for the Lord to voice some great truths about His coming to earth. After receiving the Holy Spirit, Matthew preached the Gospel among the Parthians and Medes and in Ethiopia, the land of the negroes. In Ethiopia, he consecrated as bishop one Plato, a follower of his, and himself withdrew to prayerful solitude on a mountain, where the Lord appeared to him. Matthew baptised the wife and son of the prince of that land, at which the prince was greatly enraged and sent a guard to bring Matthew before him for trial. The soldiers went off, but returned to the prince, saying that they had heard Matthew's voice, but had been unable to set eyes on him. The prince then sent a second guard. When this guard drew near to the Apostle, he shone with a heavenly radiance so brilliant that the soldiers were unable to look at him, but threw down their weapons in terror and returned home. The prince then went himself. When he approached Matthew, such radiance shone forth from the saint that the prince was blinded on the instant. But the Apostle had a kind heart: he prayed to God and the prince's sight was restored—unfortunately, only on the physical plane, his spiritual eyes remaining closed. He seized St Matthew and put him to harsh torture, twice lighting a fire on his chest, but the power of God kept him alive and unharmed. Then the Apostle prayed to God, and gave his spirit into His hands. The prince commanded that the martyr's body be put into a leaden coffin and cast into the sea. The saint appeared to Bishop Plato and told him where to find his body in its coffin, and the bishop went and brought them back. Seeing this new marvel, the prince was baptised and received the name Matthew. He then set aside all earthly vanity and became a priest, serving the Church in a manner pleasing to God. When Plato died, the Apostle Matthew appeared to this Matthew and counselled him to accept the episcopate. So he became a bishop, and was a good shepherd for many years, until God took him to His immortal Kingdom. St Matthew the Apostle wrote his Gospel in Aramaic, and it was very soon translated into Greek. It has come down to us in Greek, the Aramaic original being lost. Of this Evangelist, it is said that he never ate meat, but fed only on vegetables and fruit; Our Holy Father Sergius of Malopinega.

17 / 30 November — Nativity Fast — St Gregory the Wonder-worker, Bishop of Neocaesarea - Here is a man of God and a mighty wonderworker, who was called a second Moses! Born of wealthy and eminent pagan parents, Gregory at first studied Hellenic and Egyptian philosophy, but, seeing its barrenness and insufficiency, he turned to Christian teachers, particularly Origen of Alexandria, with whom he studied for several years and by whom he was baptised. Pure in soul and body, he desired to consecrate himself utterly to Christ, to which end he withdrew to the desert, where, in painful asceticism, he spent many years. His fame spread abroad everywhere, and Phaedimus, the bishop of Amasea, wanted to make him Bishop of Caesarea. The discerning Gregory was warned of Phaedimus's intention, and hid in the wilderness from those sent to find him, so that they failed in their quest. Finally, Phaedimus consecrated him by devious means, and Gregory had to accept the work of a shepherd. The most holy Mother of God appeared to him, together with St John the Theologian, and, at her command, St John gave him the Creed that is known by Gregory's name. (The Nicene Creed, that Gregory was instrumental in establishing at the Second Ecumenical Council in 381). Who can enumerate the miracles of this second Moses? He commanded evil spirits, commanded mountains and waters, healed every sort of pain and ill, became invisible to his persecutors and had insight into both distant events and men's thoughts. He finished his earthly course in the year 270, in great old age. When he arrived in Caesarea as bishop, the whole town was composed of pagans, with just seventeen Christians. When he departed this life, the whole town was Christian, with just seventeen pagans. He therefore received a wreath of glory from his Lord in the heavenly Kingdom. Our Holy Father Nikon of Radonezh' Our Holy Father Gennadius of Vatopedi;

St. Hilda, abs & eldress, who convened the Council of Whitby and adopted the orthodox Pascha.- Daughter of Hereric. Sister of Saint Hereswitha. Grand-niece of King Saint Edwin. Baptized in 627 at age thirteen by Saint Paulinus of York. Lived as a lay woman until age 33 when she became a Benedictine nun at the monastery of Chelles in France. Abbess at Hartepool, Northumberland, England. Abbess of the double monastery of Whitby, Streaneshalch. Abbess to Saint Wilfrid of York, Saint John of Beverley, and three other bishops. Patroness and supporter of learning and culture, including patronage of the poet Caedmon. Hilda and her houses followed the Celtic liturgy and rule, but many houses had adopted the continental Benedictine rule, and the Roman liturgy. Hilda convened a conference in 664 to help settle one a single rule. When the conference settled on the Roman and Benedictine, they were adopted throughout England, and Hilda insured the observance of her houses. Born 614 at Northumbria, England Died 680 of natural causes Representation - holding Whitby abbey in her hands with a crown on her head or at her feet; turning serpents into stone; stopping wild birds from stealing a corn crop; being carried to heaven by the angels

18 November / 1 December — The Holy Martyr Platon — From the town of Ancyra in Galatia, he was born and brought up a Christian. Even in his youth, he showed great perfection in every virtue. Platon did not conceal his faith in Christ the Lord, but preached it openly, denouncing idolaters for their bowing down to dead creatures in place of the living Creator. For this, he was brought before the governor, Agrippinus, for trial, and was harshly tortured by him. When the governor began to urge him to escape death and save his life by worshipping idols, Platon replied: 'There are two deaths: the temporal and the eternal; and there are two lives: the one transitory and the other without end.' Then Agrippinus put him to harsher torture. Among other tortures, he commanded that red-hot cannon balls be placed on his naked body, and that his flesh be cut into strips. 'Torture me more harshly', cried the martyr to the torturers, 'that your inhumanity and my endurance may be the more clearly seen. 'When the torturer spoke to the martyr about the philosopher Platon, saying that he was a pagan philosopher, he replied: 'I am not like Platon, nor he like me, except in our names. I learn and teach the wisdom that is of Christ, while he teaches the wisdom that is folly before God.' After that, Platon was thrown into prison, where he spent eighteen days without bread or water. When the warders marvelled that Platon could live without food for so long, he said to them: 'You are satiated by food, but I by holy prayer; you rejoice in wine, but I in Christ the true Vine.' He was finally beheaded with the sword in

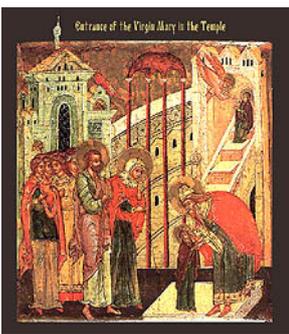
about 266, and received a wreath of eternal glory. The Holy Martyrs Romanus and Barulas; St. Mawes, bishop in Cornwall & Brittany (5th c.).

19 November / 2 December — The Holy Prophet Obadiah — Obadiah lived at the court of King Ahab, but, when the king turned away from true worship and bowed down to idols, Obadiah did not follow the king's example, but continued to serve the one, true God. When the wicked Queen Jezebel, because of her feud with Elias, hunted down all the prophets of God, Obadiah took a hundred of them and hid them in two caves, feeding them till the persecution was over (I Kings 18:4). A contemporary of the great Prophet Elias, Obadiah revered him greatly and hearkened to him in all things, being a follower and pupil of his. He lived nine hundred years before Christ, and entered peacefully into rest. The Holy Martyr Barlaam; Our Holy Fathers Barlaam and Joasaph the Heir; The Holy Martyr Heliodorus;

St. Egbert, archbishop of York (766) - He was son of Eata and brother of Eadbert, King of Northumbria. Having received deacon's Orders at Rome he returned to Northumbria and was appointed to the See of York in 732. He received the pallium in 735, thus becoming second Archbishop of York, the title having been lost to that church since the flight of Saint Paulinus to Kent. He was thus placed in a position to carry out many needed reforms in which he proved himself a strict disciplinarian, but was at the same time remarkable for sweetness and gentleness. One of his greatest works was the foundation of the famous School of York and its celebrated library. Alcuin was among his pupils. Eadbert resigned his throne to enter the monastery, and the two men spent their last years in retirement and prayer. Egbert's best known work is a collection of canonical regulations.

20 November / 3 December — Forefeast of the Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos — Nativity Fast — Our Holy Father Gregory of Decapolis — He was born in Isaurian Decapolis of eminent and devout parents, Sergius and Maria. When he had finished his schooling, his parents desired him to marry, but he fled to the desert and became a monk. He lived in various places: in Byzantium and Rome, and on Mount Olympus. Wherever he found himself, he made men marvel by his asceticism and miracles. It happened at times that his face was lit up with heavenly light, and that angels of God appeared to him; he looked upon the beauty of the angels and heard their blessed singing. He lived a long and godly life, and died peacefully in Constantinople in the ninth century, his soul entering into the joy of his Lord. St Proclus, Patriarch of Constantinople; The Holy Martyrs Eustace, Thespesius and Anatolius; St Isaac, Archbishop of Armenia; The Three Holy Persian Maidens;

At Bury St. Edmund in Suffolk, St. Edmund, king of E. Anglia, martyr (869) - On Christmas Day 855 a young man aged fourteen was acclaimed King of Norfolk by the ruling men and clergy of that county. The following year the leaders of Suffolk also made him their king. For fifteen years Edmund ruled over the East Angles with what all acknowledged as Christian dignity and justice. He himself seems to have modelled his piety on that of King David in the Old Testament, becoming especially proficient at reciting the psalms in public worship. From the year 866 his kingdom was increasingly threatened by Danish invasions. For four years the East Angles managed to keep a shaky, often broken peace with them. Then the invaders burned Thetford. King Edmund's army attacked them there but could not defeat the marauders. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that the Danes 'killed the king and overcame all the land', adding that 'they destroyed all the churches that they came to, and at the same time reaching Peterborough, killed the abbot and monks and burned and broke everything they found there'. He thus remains the only English sovereign until the time of King Charles I to die for religious beliefs as well as the defence of his throne. For centuries the holy relics of King Edmund remained incorrupt, and innumerable miracles were wrought through his intercession. The skull of St. Edmund is at present in the basilica of St. Sernin in Toulouse, while his holy bones are in the private chapel of the Duke of Norfolk in Arundel Castle.



21 November / 4 December — The Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos — Nativity Fast — When the most holy Virgin Mary had reached the age of three, her parents, holy Joachim and Anna, took her from Nazareth to Jerusalem, to give her to the service of God in fulfilment of their promise. It was three days' journey to Jerusalem, but, going as they were on God's work, they did not find the journey difficult. Many of Joachim and Anna's kinsmen gathered to take part in this celebration, in which the invisible angels of God also took part. Maidens went ahead with lighted candles in their hands, followed by the most holy Virgin, led on either side by her father and mother. The Virgin was clad in royal and beautiful garments, like those of the 'king's daughter', the Bride of God (Ps. 44:9,10). Behind them walked many of their kinsfolk and friends, all bearing lighted candles. There were fifteen steps leading to the Temple. Her parents stood the Virgin on the first step, and she ran quickly to the top on her own, where the High Priest,

Zacharias, the father of St John the Forerunner, met her and, taking her by the hand, led her not only into the Temple but into the Holy of Holies, the holiest place of all, into which none could enter except the High Priest, and that once a year. St Theophylact of Ochrid says that Zacharias was 'out of himself, and moved by God' when he led the Virgin into the chief place in the Temple, beyond the second curtain—otherwise there could be no explanation of his action. Her parents then offered sacrifices to God, according to the Law, received the priest's blessing and returned home, leaving the most holy Virgin in the Temple. She dwelt in the Temple for nine whole years. While her parents were alive, they visited her often. When they departed this life, the holy Virgin was left an orphan, and longed to remain in the Temple for the rest of her days, without entering into marriage. This being contrary both to the Law and Israelite custom, she was confided at the age of twelve to St Joseph, a kinsman of hers in Nazareth, so that she might, under the protection of betrothal, live in virginity and thus fulfil both her desire and the demands of the Law, for it was unknown in Israel at that time for a girl to vow perpetual virginity. The holy Virgin Mary was the first to do this, and was later followed by thousand upon thousand of virgin men and women in the Church of Christ.

Troparion — Tone 4: Today is the prelude of the good will of God, / of the preaching of the salvation of mankind. / The Virgin appears in the temple of God, / in anticipation proclaiming Christ to all. / Let us rejoice / and sing to her: / "Rejoice, O Fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation."

Kontakion — Tone 4: The most pure Temple of the Savior; / the precious Chamber and Virgin; / the sacred Treasure of the glory of God, / is presented today to the house of the Lord. / She brings with her the grace of the Spirit, / therefore, the angels of God praise her: / "Truly this woman is the abode of heaven."

St. Columbanus, abbot and founder of Luxeuil Abbey, France (615) - Born 543 at West Leinster, Ireland, handsome and educated, Columbanus was torn between a desire for God and easy access to the pleasures of the world. Acting on advice of a holy anchoress, he decided to withdraw from the world; his family opposed the choice, his mother going so far as to block the door. Monk at Lough Erne. He studied Scripture extensively, and wrote a commentary on the Psalms. Monk at Bangor under abbot Saint Comgall. In middle age, Columbanus felt a call to missionary life. With twelve companions (Saint Attala, Columbanus the Younger, Cummain, Domgal, Eogain, Eunan, Saint Gall, Gurgano, Libran, Lua, Sigisbert and Waldoleno) he travelled to Scotland, England, and then to France in 585. The area, though nominally Christian, had fallen far from the faith, but were ready for missionaries, and they had some success. They were warmly greeted at the court of Gontram, and king of Burgundy invited the band to stay. They chose the half-ruined Roman fortress of Annegray in the Vosges Mountains for their new home with Columbanus as their abbot. The simple lives and obvious holiness of the group drew disciples to join them, and the sick to be healed by their prayers. Columbanus, to find solitude for prayer, often lived for long periods in a cave seven miles from the monastery, using a messenger to stay in touch with his brothers. When the number of new monks overcrowded the old fortress, King Gontram gave them the old castle of Luxeuil to found a new house in 590. Soon after, a third house was founded at Fontaines. Columbanus served as master of them all, and wrote a Rule for them; it incorporated many Celtic practices, was approved by the Council of Macon in 627, but was superseded by the Benedictine. Problems arose early in the 7th century. Many Frankish bishops objected to a foreign missionary with so much influence, to the Celtic practices he brought, especially those related to Easter, and his independence from them. In 602 he was summoned to appear before them for judgment; instead of appearing, he sent a letter advising them to hold more synods, and to concern themselves with more important things than which rite he used to celebrate Easter. The dispute over Easter continued to years, with Columbanus appealing to multiple popes for help, but was only settled with Columbanus abandoned the Celtic calendar when he moved to Italy and adopted Eastern Orthodox Pascha. In addition to his problems with the bishops, Columbanus spoke out against vice and corruption in the royal household and court, which was in the midst of a series of complex power grabs. Brunehault stirred up the bishops and nobility against the abbot; Thierry ordered him to conform to the local ways, and shut up. Columbanus refused, and was briefly imprisoned at Besançon, but he escaped and returned to Luxeuil. Thierry and Brunehault sent an armed force to force him and his foreign monks back to Ireland. As soon as his ship set sail, a storm drove them back to shore; the captain took it as a sign, and set the monks free. They made their way to King Clothaire at Soissons, Neustria and then the court of King Theodebert of Austrasia in 611. He travelled to Metz, then Mainz, Suevi, Alamanni, and finally Lake Zurich. Their evangelization work there was unsuccessful, and the group passed on to Arbon, then Bregenz, and then Lake Constance. Saint Gall, who knew the local language best, took the lead in this region; many were converted to the faith, and the group founded a new monastery as their home and base. However, a year later political upheaval caused Columbanus to cross the Alps into Italy, arriving in Milan in 612. The Christian royal family treated him well, and he preached and wrote against Arianism and Nestorianism. In gratitude, the Lombard king gave him a track of land call Bobbio between Milan and Genoa. There he rebuilt a half-ruined church of Saint Peter, and around it he founded an abbey that was to be the source for evangelization throughout northern Italy for centuries to come. Columbanus always enjoyed being in the forests and caves, and as he walked through the woods birds and squirrels would ride on his shoulders. Toward the end of his life came word that his old enemies were dead, and his brothers wanted him to come back north, but he declined. Knowing that his time was almost done, he retired to a cave for solitude, and died as he had predicted. His influence continued for centuries as those he converted handed on the faith, the brothers he taught evangelised untold numbers more, and his brother monks founded over one hundred monasteries to protect learning and spread the faith. Miracles ascribed to Columbanus include: to obtain food for a sick brother monk, he cured the wife of the donor; once when he was surrounded by wolves, he simply walked through them; at one point he needed a cave for his solitary prayers; a bear lived there; when Columbanus asked, the bear left; when he needed water in order to live in the cave, a spring appeared nearby; when the Luxeuil monastery granary ran empty, he prayed over it and it refilled; he multiplied bread and beer for his community; he cured several sick monks, who then got straight out of bed to reap the monastery's harvest; gave sight to a blind man at Orleans; he destroyed a vat of beer being prepared for a pagan festival by breathing on it; when the monastery needed help in the fields, he tamed a bear, and yoked it to a plough

22 November / 5 December — Afterfeast of the Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos — Nativity Fast — The Holy Martyr Cecilia — Born in Rome of rich and eminent parents, she had a firm faith in Christ the Lord and a great zeal for the Faith. Vowing life-long virginity to God, holy Cecilia wore a rough hair-shirt underneath the costly raiment that her parents gave her. When they forced her into marriage with a pagan, Valerian, she spent the first night urging her new-wedded bridegroom to go to Bishop Urban for baptism, and then himself to live a life of virginity. Embracing the Christian faith, Valerian also brought his brother Tibertius to it. Both brothers were very soon condemned to death for their faith, but their zeal did not falter in the face of death itself. Taken to the scaffold, these two brothers succeeded in bringing the captain of the guard, Maximus, to the Faith, and they all three suffered together for Christ the Lord. St Cecilia buried their bodies together and was then herself taken for trial, having unwearyingly won over many pagans to the Christian faith. In one evening, she had won over four hundred souls. When the judge asked her whence came her daring, she answered: 'From a pure conscience and an unquestioning faith'. After harsh torture, she was condemned to be beheaded with the sword. The executioner brought the sword down on her neck three times, but failed to kill her; he only wounded her and the blood ran down from her wounds, being caught in kerchiefs and bowls by the faithful to use for healing. Three days later, Christ's martyr and virgin gave her

spirit into the hands of her Lord, to rejoice with him in eternity. St Cecilia suffered with the others in about the year 230. Her relics are preserved in the church dedicated to her name in Rome. In the Western Church, St Cecilia is regarded as the patron of Church Music. St Kallistos, Patriarch of Constantinople; The Holy Martyr Menignus; Holy and Righteous Michael the Soldier; The Holy Apostles Philemon, Archippus and Apphia.

HYMN OF PRAISE - Saints Joachim and Anna

The parents of the Holy Virgin Lead her to the holy Temple, And according to their promise They give her to the Lord. They lead the Temple to the Temple, While angels chant, And chant with joy To the young Virgin in purest attire.

The virgins accompany our Virgin, With hymns and tapers; Zacharias leads her To the Holy of Holies; And into the Holy Place he takes her, Where the awesome mystery is hidden.

Where the Ark of the Covenant is, Where the golden lampstand is, Where the staff and the manna are, Into the guarding place of all mysteries; There the pure Virgin is led-The Mystical Ark of the Living Christ.

REFLECTION

Submit yourself to the will of God and do not pry too closely into God's judgments, for you can lose your mind. The judgments of God are innumerable and unfathomable. A monk in the wilderness, imagining that he had attained perfection, prayed to God that He would reveal to him His various judgments in the lives of men. God put the thought in his mind to go to a distant place to inquire of a spiritual elder concerning this. However, while the monk was on his way, an angel of God in the form of an ordinary man joined him, saying that he too wanted to go to that elder. Thus travelling together, they came upon the house of a God-fearing man, who treated them well, giving them to eat from a silver platter. When they had eaten, the angel took the platter and threw it into the sea. The monk found this both amazing and unjust, but he remained silent. The second day they came upon the house of another hospitable man who cordially received and treated them as kinsmen. Before leaving, that man brought out his only son for the travelers to bless. The angel of God then took the child by the throat and strangled him. The monk was greatly angered and asked the angel who he was, and why he had committed such misdeeds. The angel meekly replied to him: "The first man was pleasing to God in all things and had nothing in his house that was attained by injustice except that silver platter. By God's judgment, I threw that stolen platter away, so that the man would be righteous before God in all things. The other man was pleasing to God and had nothing in his house that would bring down the wrath of God except his son, who had he matured-would have become a great criminal and a demonic vessel. Therefore, by God's judgment, I strangled that child in time to save his soul, for the sake of his father's goodness, and to save the father from many miseries. Behold, such are the mysteries and the unfathomable judgments of God. And you, elder, should return to your cell and not strive vainly by inquiring into that which is in the authority of the One God."

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the wondrous creation of the world (Genesis 2): 1. How God created man from the dust of the earth; 2. How He breathed the spirit of life into his nostrils; 3. How man became a living soul.

HOMILY - on the faithful as one body and one spirit

...*There is one body and one spirit* (Ephesians 4:4).

The Holy Apostle counsels the faithful to strive to be *one body and one spirit*. By *one body* is understood "one Faith," without divisions, without heresies and without self-will: the whole Church is *one body* of which Christ is the Head. By *one spirit* is understood "love," the ardent love of all the faithful for Christ, from which proceeds mutual love. The many become as one; many men become as one man. This is the miracle of the Christian Faith and Christian love. There is no power in the world which can be a stronger bond among men: not the same blood, or the same language, or the same hearth, or the same parents, or any type of common material interests. None of these is even nearly as powerful a bond as Christian faith and love. By this powerful, irresistible bond, all the members of the Church are bound to each other. The Church of God stands as one man, in time and in eternity-*one body and one spirit*. There is nothing more contradictory to this wondrous unity than the pride of individual men. Pride distorts faith, cools love, creates heresies, divides the Church, and sacrifices the good of the whole for individual satisfaction. Pride, in essence, is the absence of both faith and love. Brethren, may God save us from pride, the primal infirmity of the human race, that we may always be *one body and one spirit* in our Lord Jesus Christ.

To Thee, O Lord Jesus; to Thee, the Head of the Church, be glory and praise forever. Amen.