

18th Sunday After Pentecost

Leavetaking of the Exaltation of the Cross

21 September / 4 October

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

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



Vespers: Lord I have Cried, Tone 1, on 10: Octoechos 4; Feast: 6 (Raised on high, the Cross); G: Feast (Come, all ye nations); N: Sunday Dogmatic in the 1st tone .
Aposticha: Octoechos; G/N: Feast (To Thy precious Cross).

Matins Gospel VII

EPISTLE EXALTATION: Galatians 2:16-20

SUNDAY EPISTLE: Corinthians 9:6-11

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, While you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

**HE WHO SOWS SPARINGLY WILL ALSO REAP SPARINGLY,
AND HE WHO SOWS BOUNTIFULLY WILL ALSO REAP BOUNTIFULLY**

He called the thing sowing, so you might at once look into the recompense, and having in mind the harvest, you might feel that you receive more than you give. For this reason he did not say, 'he who gives,' but 'he who sows' ...A man when left to himself, does a thing more readily than when compelled. Therefore he dwells on this ...For if it is a work of virtue and yet all that is done is of necessity, it is shorn of its reward. So he labours at this point with reason. And he does not merely advise, he also adds a prayer ...By this prayer he waylays a thought which lay in wait against this liberality and which is now also a hindrance to many. For many persons are afraid to give alms, saying, 'Lest perchance I become poor' ...To do away with this fear then, he adds this prayer, saying, May 'He make all grace abound towards you.' Not merely fulfil, but 'make it abound.' 'Fill you,' he means, 'with such great things, that you may be able to abound in this liberality' ...He does not pray for riches, nor for abundance, but for all sufficiency...For in carnal things he asks for a sufficiency for them, but in spiritual things for abundance, not only in almsgiving, but in all others things as well, 'unto every good work.'

Then he brings the prophet forward as a counsellor for them, having sought out a testimony inviting them to bountifulness ...Let us not therefore nicely calculate, but sow with a profuse hand. Do you see how much others give to players and harlots? Give at any rate the half to Christ, of what they give to dancers ...For they clothe the persons of wantons with untold gold, but you do not cover even with a threadbare garment the flesh of Christ, and that though beholding it naked.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XIX on Il Corinthians IX, 2, 3. B#56, pp. 369-370.

GOSPEL EXALTATION: Mark 8:34 - 9:1

34: And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35: For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. 36: For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37: Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 38: Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. 9: 1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

Gospel: Matthew 18:23-35

Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But for as much as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. he servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So like wise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me

Before The Time of Christ, the cross was an instrument of punishment; it evoked fear and aversion. But after Christ's death on the Cross it became the instrument and sign of our salvation. Through the Cross, Christ destroyed the devil; from the Cross He descended into hades and, having liberated those languishing there, led them into the Kingdom of Heaven. The sign of the Cross is terrifying to demons and, as the sign of Christ, it is honored by Christians. The Lord manifested it in the sky to the Emperor Constantine as he was going to Rome to fight the tyrant who had seized power, and the Emperor, having fashioned a standard in the form of a cross, won a total victory. Having been aided by the Cross of the Lord, the Emperor Constantine asked his mother, the Empress Helen, to find the actual Life-giving Cross, and the devout Helen went to Jerusalem where, after much searching, she found it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

St. John Maximovich

Forgiveness of Debts.

A terrible picture is drawn for us by this Sunday's Gospel. It begins with the folio wing words: "Therefore the Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants" (Mt. 18:23). Among those servants was one who was indebted to the lord for a great amount. This amount was so great that in spite of his desire, he could never repay it. There was only one way out: the lord could sell him, his wife, his children, and everything he had. "The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt" (Mt. 18:26-27). Listen, he did not postpone payment of the debt, he did not reduce the amount, but he forgave everything, completely, forever. It was as if nothing had happened, everything remained as before. A new, quiet life as before began. And even better: now this servant knew his master. He saw in him a loving father, and to work for such a father is bliss.

Suddenly something terrible happened: that servant walked out and met one of his fellow servants who owed him an utterly insignificant amount; and grabbing him, started to choke him, saying, Give back everything you owe me. Learning of this, his lord was angry and gave him over to the torturers until he had paid the whole debt.

And so it is with us. We have received everything from the Lord but have proved to be unpaid debtors. And we have asked for forgiveness and have received it. And God has accepted us into His family, the Church of Christ, and in her we can sail over this stormy sea of life as in a safe ship. A ship has everything necessary to protect those sailing in it from the water: it has a strong foundation, a bottom, sides, sails, oars, a rudder. In the same way, the Church of Christ has a rudder by which it is guided by her Godly Pilot, our Lord Jesus Christ; also has sails, oars — these are the godly sacraments; also has a strong foundation — the commandments of Christ of which the main one is love. And if we keep this His main commandment, love, then we will be in His family, that is in the Church, and will rejoice. How much the Lord spoke about it in His farewell talk with His disciples: "This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (Jn.15:12). "These things I command you, that ye love one another" (Jn.15: 17). Yes, it is impossible to be in the Church and not to abide in His love. To be in the Church of Christ is possible only by keeping His main commandment, that commandment which has become the foundation of His entire Church, which is the fragrance of Christ — and this commandment is LOVE!

And so that unfortunate servant lost everything: the forgiveness of God, release from the whole debt, and the return to freedom of himself, his wife and his children. Everything that he had received, he lost in one moment, in that terrible moment when he did not forgive his debtor. And so we too can lose everything: forgiveness which we have received in the Sacrament of Confession, and the Grace which we have received in the Sacrament of Holy Communion — in one moment — in that moment when we will not forgive our debtors.

God grant that such a moment never come to us. And therefore, for the sake of our own salvation, our own well-being and the well-being of those close to us, let us wholeheartedly forgive our debtors. And let us rejoice that we have such debtors, because only by forgiving them their debts, can we prove to the Lord how much we value His forgiveness. And let us also rejoice, because our Lord forgives us enormous things, and all that we can forgive is so small and insignificant. Let us rejoice every time when we say in the Lord's Prayer: "and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

Archbishop Andrei, The One Thing Needful

Saints of the week

21 September / 4 October - Apodosis of the Exaltation of the Cross - The Holy Apostle Codratus. One of the Seventy, he was a disciple of the Great Apostles. He preached the Gospel in Athens, and was at first bishop in Athens after St Publius, and then in the city of Magnesia. He was very learned in the secular disciplines and rich with the grace of the Holy Spirit. His biographer says of him: 'He was as a morning star among clouds', the clouds being the darkness of Hellenic paganism, lacking the light of devotion, and the holy Apostle Codratus shone to them—the Hellenes—as a great light, illumining the darkness, casting down the foul sacrifices and destroying demonic temples by his prayers. But darkness always hates the light, and the pagans hated holy Codratus. They first stoned him, as the Jews had earlier stoned St Stephen, and then imprisoned him, leaving him without bread until his holy soul left his body and entered into the Kingdom of Christ his God. St Codratus wrote a defence of Christianity and gave it to the Emperor Hadrian. This defence acted so strongly upon the pagan Emperor that he decreed that Christians should not be persecuted without special cause. Holy Codratus suffered in about 130. He was buried in Magnesia, the place of his passion.

Uncovering of the relics of St. Demetrius, Metropolitan of Rostov - Sainted Dimitrii, Metropolitan of Rostov, arrived at the Rostov cathedral in 1702, and he first of all visited the monastery of Sainted Jakov, Bishop of Rostov (Comm. 27 November and 23 May). At the cathedral church in honour of the Conception of the Most Holy Mother of God he made liturgy, after which before all those present in the temple he pointed out on the right side the place of his future burial with the words: "Behold my repose, here settle I for eternity". Sainted Dimitrii reposed on 28 October 1709 (the account about his life is located under this day). Contrary to the wishes of the saint, expressed in his will, the clergy and people of Rostov requested the locum-tenens of the patriarchal throne, the Metropolitan of Ryazan Stefan Yavorsky, – who arrived for the funeral, to make the burial at the cathedral church of the city, alongside the predecessor of Saint Dimitrii, Sainted Joasaph. Metropolitan Stefan, keeping to the will of his deceased friend, insisted on burial of the body of Saint Dimitrii at the designated spot. However, until the arrival of Metropolitan Stefan the place of burial had not been prepared, although from the day of death about a month had elapsed. Owing to the urgent departure of Metropolitan Stefan from Rostov, into the dug-out grave was made an hastily constructed wooden frame, in which on 25 November the body of the saint was buried. This circumstance, foreseen by the Providence of God, led to a quick uncovering of the relics. In 1752 repairs were being done at the cathedral church of the monastery, and on 21 September during repair of the torn-up floor was discovered the undecayed body of Saint Dimitrii. The place of burial was affected by dampness, the oaken coffin and the writing on it were decayed, but the body of the saint, and even the omophor, sacchos, mitre and silken rosary were preserved uncorrupt. After the uncovering of the holy relics many healings were worked, about which report was made to the Synod, – by the order of which there arrived at Rostov the Suzdal' Metropolitan Sylvester and the Simonovsk archimandrite Gavriel for an examination of the relics of saint Dimitrii and the incidents of miraculous healings. There resulted an ukaz (decree) of the Synod of 29 April 1757 concerning the enumeration to the ranks of the saints of Sainted Dimitrii, Metropolitan of Rostov, and feast days established for 28 October (the day of repose) and 21 September (the day of uncovering of the relics).

Also commemorated on this day: Martyr Eusebius of Phoenicia (2nd C); Martyr Priscus of Phrygia (†260); Martyrs Eusebius, Nestabus, Zeno of Gaza (†361); Hieromartyrs Hypatius, bishop of Ephesus, and Andrew, his priest (†c.730); Venerable Jonah the Sabbaite (9th C); Venerable Daniel of Shuzhgorsk (16th C); Venerable Joseph of Zaonikiev (†1612); New Hieromartyrs Alexander Fedoseyev, Alexis Stabnikov, Constantine Shirokinsky, and John Flerov, priests (†1918); New Hieromartyrs Valentine Nikolsky, Alexander Belyakov, John Lazarev, Andrew Benedictov, Peter Sakharovsky, John Nikolsky, and Basil Nosov, priests, Monk-martyr Maurice (Poletaev), Martyrs Vladimir Pravdorjubov and Basil Kondratiev (†1937); New Hieromartyr John Bystrov, priest (†1938); New Hieromartyr Basil Krymkin, priest (†1942); Sts. Isaacius and Meletius, bishops of Cyprus. Movable feast on the Sunday nearest September 20th: Synaxis of the Saints who shone forth in the land of Germany. Movable feast on the Sunday after September 15th: Synaxis of the Saints of the Kuban Metropolis.

22 September / 5 October -The Hieromartyr Phocas, Bishop of Sinope. He exercised himself from his youth in all the Christian virtues. As bishop in his birthplace, the town of Sinope on the shore of the Black Sea, he strengthened the devout in their faith by his divine example and words, and brought many idol-worshippers to the true Faith. The stony-hearted pagans were filled with wrath against holy Phocas, and the Lord foreshowed to him in a vision his death by martyrdom. Phocas saw a shining dove fly down from heaven, carrying in its beak a beautiful wreath of flowers which it laid on his head, and a voice came from the dove: 'My cup is full, and it is for thee to drink it!' From this vision, the man of God learned that he must very soon suffer for Christ. He was not afraid, but, with thanksgiving to God, prepared himself for torture. Soon after this, the Governor, Africanus, took Phocas for interrogation and inflicted harsh tortures upon him: his whole body was beaten black and blue and torn with wounds, and, after imprisonment, he was thrown into boiling water, in which this courageous soldier of Christ finished his earthly course and entered into the joy of his Lord. He suffered in the time of the Emperor Trajan (98-117).

The Holy Prophet Jonah - Jonah lived more than eight hundred years before Christ. It is said that he was that son of the widow of Zarephath in Sidon whom the Prophet Elias had raised from the dead. By his three-day sojourn in the belly of the whale, he prefigured the three days that Christ lay in the tomb; and, by his deliverance from the belly of the whale, he prefigured the Lord's Resurrection from the dead. Everything else concerning this wonderful prophet can be read in the Book of Jonah.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Jonah the priest, father of St. Theophan the hymnographer and St. Theodore the Branded (9th C); Martyr Phocas the gardener (†c.320); Righteous Peter, tax collector (6th C); Hieromartyr Emmeram, bishop of Regensburg (†652); 26 Monk-martyrs of Zographou (13th C) [Eph. 6:10-17 (§233); Matt. 10:16-22 (§36)]; Venerable Cosmas, hermit of Zographou (†1323); Venerable Jonah of Yash Lake (†1592); Venerable Macarius of Zhabyn, wonderworker of Belev (†1623); Hieromartyr Theodosius, metropolitan of Brazsk (†1694); Blessed Parasceva of Diveyevo (†1915); New Hieromartyr Benjamin, bishop of Romanovsk (†1932); Synaxis of the saints of Tula.

23 September / 6 October - The Conception of the Honourable, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John — On this day are celebrated God's mercy, His wondrous act and His wisdom: His mercy towards the devout and righteous parents of St John, the aged Zacharias and Elisabeth, who had all their lives begged a child of God; the wonder of the conception of John in Elisabeth's more-than-aged womb; and the wisdom of the dispensation of man's salvation. For John, God had a specially great plan: that he should be a prophet and the forerunner of Christ the Lord, the Saviour of the world. Through His angels, God revealed the birth of Isaac to the childless Sarah, and of Samson to the childless Manoah and his wife, and of John the Baptist to the childless Zacharias and Elisabeth. Through His angels, God revealed the birth of those for whom He had a special plan. How could children be born of aged parents? If someone is curious to find out, let him not ask men, for men do not know, nor does natural law (it being beyond natural law), but let him turn his gaze to the power of almighty God, who made the whole world from nothing and who, for the creation of Adam, the first man, used no parents, either young or old. Instead of being curious, let us thank God that He often reveals to us His power and mercy and wisdom beyond the natural law, by which we would otherwise be fettered and, without these special wonders of God, would fall into despair and forgetfulness of Him.

St. Adamnan, abbot of Iona and biographer of St. Columba (627-704) - he was born in Co. Donegal and became a monk in one of St. Columba's monasteries in Ireland. He was a biblical scholar and teacher. who moved to Iona under abbot Segene, whom he succeeded in 679. He became famous both as a writer and as a leading protagonist in Northern Ireland of the Roman system of calculating Easter. In 686 he came to Northumbria to obtain from his former pupil King Aldfrith the release of sixty Irish prisoners. captured during the reign of Egfrith (670-85). In 688 St Adamnan visited St. Ceolfrith of Wearmouth, who converted him from the Iona tradition of Easter calculation and other practices. In 692 he took part in Irish synods and conventions as the ruler of Iona's monasteries in Northern Ireland. Then and in 697 he met with considerable success, pleading for the acceptance of the Easter dates which were kept by Rome and virtually all the Church in the West. At the Synod of Birr (697) he persuaded leading clerics and laymen to adopt the Law of Adamnan (Cain Adamnan) which protected women by exempting them from going to battle and insisting that they be treated by all as non-combatants. Boys and clerics were similarly protected and provision was made for effective sanctuary. These rules the first example of their kind came to be accepted all over Ireland. St. Adamnan's principal work was the Life of his relative Columba, founder of Iona. This influential portrait of a charismatic pioneer is one of the most vivid Lives to be produced in its time. He also wrote a work on the Holy Places of Palestine, compiled from information provided by the French bishop Arculfus. who had been shipwrecked in western Britain. After Adamnan's death, Iona accepted the Roman Easter in 716.

The Holy martyr Iraida - In some places Iraida is called Rhais or Raida. She was a maiden from the town of Batan in Egypt, and was therefore probably an Egyptian. Once, Iraida went out to draw water from a well near the sea, and saw a ship laden with bound Christians: priests, deacons, monks, women and maidens. Inquiring, she learned that all of these people were being transported by the pagan persecutors to torture and death for the name of Jesus Christ. Young Iraida's heart suddenly flared up with the desire to suffer for the Lord. Leaving her pots by the well, she boarded the ship and confessed that she too was a Christian. They immediately bound her with the others and took them all to the Egyptian city of Antinopolis. After various tortures, Iraida was the first to be beheaded, followed by the others. She suffered honorably and was glorified at the beginning of the fourth century.

Hawaiian Myrrh-Streaming Iveron Icon of the Theotokos - The Miracleworking Hawaiian Myrrh-streaming Iveron Icon of the Theotokos appeared inexplicably giving myrrh in the home of a pious Orthodox Christian couple on Sep. 23 / Oct 6, 2007, in Honolulu, Hawaii. Since it's manifestation, it has been recognized by the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia as miraculous and genuine. This icon is well known to have cured many pious individuals of cancer, blindness, kidney and liver diseases, chronic pain, and demonic

possession. It currently resides at the Russian Orthodox Church in Honolulu, but frequently travels throughout the world bringing forth healings and cures to all who have shown faith and love to Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Most holy Mother.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Sts. Xanthippa and Polyxena (†109); Venerable Adomnán of Iona (†704); Martyrs Andrew, John, Peter, and Antoninus(†886); New Martyr Nicholas of Pentapolis (†1672); New Martyr John of Epirus (†1814); New Martyr Lev Kuntsevich (†1918); New Hieromartyr John Pankratovich, priest (†1937); ‘Slovenki Monastery’ Icon of the Mother of God; Synaxis of the Saints of Cyprus.

24 September / 7 October - The Holy Protomartyr Thecla, Equal to the Apostles — Thecla was born in Iconium of eminent pagan parents. She was betrothed at the age of eighteen to a young man, at the time that the Apostle Paul came to Iconium with Barnabas to preach the Gospel. Listening to Paul for three days and nights, Thecla turned utterly to the Christian faith and vowed to live in virginity. Her mother, seeing that she shunned her betrothed and thought no more of marriage, first talked to her and then beat her and starved her. Finally, she gave her over to the judges and demanded, wicked mother that she was, that Thecla be burned. The judge threw her into the flames, but God preserved her unharmed. Thecla then became a follower of the Apostle Paul, and went with him to Antioch. Attracted by Thecla's beauty, an elder of the city attempted to take her by force, but Thecla tore herself out of his grasp . The elder denounced her to the governor as a Christian who was averse to marriage. The governor condemned her to death and threw her to the wild beasts, but the animals would not touch the body of this holy virgin. Amazed at this, the governor asked: 'Who are you, and what is the power that you have in you, that nothing can do you harm?' Thecla replied: 'I am a servant of the living God.' Then the governor let her go free, and she began to preach the Gospel and succeeded in bringing many to the true Faith, among whom was an eminent and honoured widow, Tryphena. After this, St Thecla, with the blessing of the Apostle Paul, withdrew to a solitary place near Seleucia. She lived a long time there in asceticism, healing the sick with miraculous power and in this way bringing many to Christianity. The doctors in Seleucia were jealous of her and sent some young men to assault her, hoping that, in losing her virginity, she would lose also her miraculous power. Thecla fled from these insolent young men and, when she saw that they would catch her, prayed to God for help in front of a rock, and the rock opened and hid the holy maiden and bride of Christ. This rock was her hiding-place and her tomb. St Chrysostom says of this wonderful Christian heroine and saint: 'I seem to see this blessed virgin going to Christ with virginity in one hand and martyrdom in the other.'

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Coprius of Palestine (†530); Venerable Abramius of Mirozh (†1158); Holy Kings Stephen (Simon in monasticism) (†1224), David (13th C), and Vladislav (†after 1267) of Serbia; Venerable Nicander of Pskov (†1581); Venerable Galacteon of Vologda (†1612); Venerable Theodosius, abbot of Maniav (†1629); Venerable Dorothea of Kashin (†1629); Venerable Gabriel of Seven Lakes Monastery, Kazan (†1915); New Hieromartyr Basil Voskresensky, deacon (†1918); New Hieromartyrs Andrew Bistrov and Paul Berezin, priests, Monk-martyr Vitaly (Kokorev), Martyrs Basil Vinogradov, Sergius Mikhailov and Spiridon Saveliev (†1937); ‘Mirozh’ Icon of the Mother of God.

25 September / 8 October - The Repose of Our Holy Father Sergius of Radonezh — A great ascetic and light of the Russian Church, he was born in 1313 in Rostov of devout parents, Kiril and Maria. After the death of his parents, Barthlomew —for that was his baptismal name —became a monk and founded the community of the Holy Trinity in the forest of Radonezh. A gentle and meek servant of God, occupied only with labour and prayer, he was made worthy of the gifts of wonder-working for the purity of his heart, raising the dead in the name of Christ. The holy Mother of God appeared to him a number of times. Princes and bishops came to him for counsel, and he gave his blessing to Prince Dimitri of the Don and foretold his victory in Russia's war of liberation against the Tartars. He had insight into men's hearts and into distant events. His community became filled with monks during his lifetime, and has served through the ages as one of the chief centres of spiritual life and of God's miracles. St Sergius entered into rest in 1392. After his death, he appeared a number of times to various people.

Our Holy Mother Euphrosyne — The daughter of a rich and eminent man, Paphnutius, from Alexandria, she was besought of God by her childless parents, who brought their daughter up in the Christian faith. Not wishing to marry, the young Euphrosyne, in order to hide from her father, dressed herself in men's clothing and presented herself to the abbot of a monastery as a eunuch of the Emperor Theodosius with the name of Smaragdus. The abbot received her and placed her under the guidance of the monk Agapetus as spiritual father. By her fasting and prayers, Smaragdus quickly outstripped the other monks in the monastery. When she had spent thirty-eight years in strict asceticism, Paphnutius visited the monastery and the abbot placed him in

Smaragdus's care for prayer and counsel. Smaragdus recognised Paphnutius, but Paphnutius did not recognise her. When her father confessed his grief for his lost daughter, Smaragdus told him not to lose hope, for he would see his daughter again once more in this life, and asked him to come again in three days' time. When Paphnutius returned, Smaragdus was on her deathbed. Then the dying monk said to Paphnutius: 'I am Euphrosyne your daughter; you are my father.' Her father could not for a long time collect himself, for sheer astonishment. Then Euphrosyne breathed her last and her father wept over her. After burying his daughter, Paphnutius remained in the monastery and settled in the cell of his departed, holy daughter. After ten years of asceticism, holy Paphnutius entered into rest in the Lord.

Commemoration of the earthquake in Constantinople in 447, when a boy was lifted to heaven and heard the "Trisagion" - During the reign of the Emperor Theophilus, the city of Constantinople was visited by earthquakes for almost four months. The Emperor, the Patriarch Proclus, and the people joined in a barefoot procession to make prayer to God for their safety. While they were gathered, the tremors increased dramatically, and a young boy was taken up into the sky in the sight of the people, who fearfully cried out Kyrie eleison! When the boy came down from the heavens, he said that he had been among choirs of Angels who sang Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us! and that a voice had commanded him to tell the Patriarch that the people should make supplication to God in this way. The Patriarch instructed the people to chant this hymn, whereupon the ground stopped shaking and the child died.

The Empress Pulcheria (September 10) asked the Patriarch to order that this hymn be chanted henceforth in the Divine Liturgy, as it still is today.

St. Finbar (Barry) bishop of Cork, Ireland (c.633) - Son of an artisan named Amergin and a lady of the Irish royal court. Educated at Kilmacahil monastery, Kilkenny, Ireland. Very light hair, which led to the nickname Fionnbharr, "white hair". Made multiple pilgrims to Rome, visiting Saint David of Wales on one trip. Preached throughout southern Ireland, and possibly in Scotland. Hermit on a small island at Lough Eiroe and at Gougane Barra. Founded a school at Eirce. Founded a monastery on the river Lee; it developed into the city of Cork, Ireland. First bishop of Cork. Extravagant miracles were attributed to him. It is said that the sun did not set for two weeks after his death.

Also commemorated on this day: Monk-martyr Paphnutius in Egypt and 546 martyrs with him (†c.303); St. Lupus, bishop of Lyons (†542); Hieromartyr Cadoc, bishop of Wales (†580); Venerable Ceolfrith of Wearmouth-Jarrow (†716); St. Arsenius, Catholicos of Georgia (†887); Venerable Euphrosyne of Suzdal (†1250); Translation of the relics of St. Herman, archbishop of Kazan (1595); Venerable Dosithea, recluse of Kiev (†1777); Righteous Nicholas Rozov, confessor, priest (†1941); Finding of the relics of Hieromartyrs Alexander Smirnov and Theodore Remizov, priest (1985).

26 September / 9 October - The repose of St John the Theologian, Apostle and Evangelist — the son of Zebedee the fisherman and Salome the daughter of Joseph, the betrothed of the holy Mother of God. Called by the Lord Jesus, John immediately left his father and the fishing nets and followed Christ with his brother James. From that time, he was not parted from his Lord until the end. With Peter and James, he was present at the raising of Jairus's daughter and at the Lord's Transfiguration, and laid his head on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper. When all the others had forsaken the crucified Lord, John stayed beneath the Cross with the holy Mother of God. In obedience to the Lord's wish, he was as a son to the holy Virgin Mary, caring for her and serving her, looking after her right up to her falling-asleep. After her Dormition, John went off with his disciple Prochorus to preach the Gospel in Asia Minor, and mainly lived and worked in Ephesus. By his inspired preaching and miracles, he brought many to Christianity and undermined the foundations of paganism. The vexed pagans bound him and sent him to Rome to the Emperor Domitian. He was tortured and flogged before the Emperor, but, when he was unharmed either by the strong poison that he was given to drink or the boiling oil into which he was put, the Emperor was afraid and, thinking he was immortal, sent him into exile on the island of Patmos. On this island, St John brought many to Christianity by his words and miracles, and strengthened the Church of God. He wrote his Gospel and the Revelation there. In the time of the Emperor Nerva, who gave liberty to all the captives, John returned to Ephesus, where he lived for some time, confirming the work that he had earlier begun. He was over a hundred years old when he went to the Lord. When his disciples later opened his grave, they found that his body was not there. Every year, on May 8th, a fine, fragrant dust endowed with healing

power rose from his grave. After a long and fruitful life of labour upon earth, this beloved disciple of Christ and pillar of the Church entered into the joy of his Lord, to peace and eternal rejoicing.

St. Colman Elo - He was founder and first Abbot of Muckamore, and from the fact of being styled "Coarb of MacNisse", is regarded as Bishop of Connor. He was born c. 555 in Glenelly, in the present County Tyrone, and died at Lynally in 611, 26 September, on which day his feast is celebrated. He studied under his maternal uncle, St. Columcille (Columba), who procured for him the site of a monastery now known as Lynally (Lann Elo). Hence his designation of Colmanellus or Colman Elo. Tropar of St. Colman Elo, Tone 8: Following in the footsteps of thy renowned kinsman Columba, O Father Colman Elo,/ thou didst bring many in the Celtic lands to Christ by thy preaching and virtuous life./ Pray that we who hymn thee may be given grace to follow in thy footsteps that our souls may be saved.

Glorification (in Russia) of St. Tikhon, patriarch of Moscow and all Russia - On September 26/October 9, 1989, the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church glorified Patriarch Tikhon and numbered him among the saints. For nearly seventy years, Saint Tikhon's relics were believed lost, but in February 1992, they were discovered in a concealed place in the Donskoy Monastery.

It would be difficult to imagine the Russian Orthodox Church without Patriarch Tikhon during those years. He did so much for the Church and for the strengthening of the Faith itself during those difficult years of trial. Perhaps the saint's own words can best sum up his life: "May God teach every one of us to strive for His truth, and for the good of the Holy Church, rather than something for our own sake."

Also commemorated on this day: Righteous Gideon, judge of Israel (14th C. BC); Venerable Nilus of Calabria (†1014) and his disciple Bartholomew (†1040); Venerable Ephraim of Perekom (†1492); Right-believing prince Neagoe Basarab (†1521); New Hieromartyrs Alexander Levitsky, Athanasius Dokukin, Dimitry Rozanov, priests, Martyrs John Zolotov and Nicholas Gusev (†1937); New Hieromartyr Vladimir Viatsky, priest (†1939); New Hieromartyr Dimitry (Kryuchkov), priest (†1952).

27 September / 10 October - The Holy Martyr Callistratus — Born in Carthage, he was a Christian from his birth, as his father and grandfather were. One of his forbears, Neochorus, served as a soldier in Jerusalem under Pontius Pilate at the time of the Passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Seeing the many miracles that were wrought at the time of Christ's death, Neochorus came to believe in Him, and was taught the Faith and baptised by the apostles. Returning home, Neochorus took his Christian faith to his own people, like a precious pearl. So, in time, St Callistratus was born, baptised and brought up a Christian. When he went into the army, there was no other Christian in his regiment. One of his companions, seeing holy Callistratus get up at night and pray to God, reported him to the commander, Persentinus, as a Christian —and Persentinus was a harsh torturer of Christians. When he was convinced that Callistratus was indeed a Christian, the commander ordered him to offer sacrifice to idols, which Callistratus immediately refused to do. Then Callistratus was harshly beaten and thrown into the sea, but God's power preserved him, and he emerged from the sea unharmed. Seeing Callistratus's endurance and his miracles, forty-nine soldiers came to believe in Christ the Lord, and they were beaten and thrown into prison along with him. In prison, St Callistratus instructed his companions in the Faith and encouraged them. They showed great courage in suffering, and the Lord showed great power through them. The wicked torturer sent soldiers to the prison at night, and they slew Callistratus and the other forty-nine. They suffered for the truth in 304, and a church was later built over their relics.

St. Barrog - Disciple of St. Cadoc, in Wales, also called Barroq and Barnoc. He was a hermit who lived on Barry Island, off the coast of Glamorgan.

Tropar of St. Barrog, Tone 8: Light of the West, inspirer of monastics and boast of ascetics,/ thy radiant life was pleasing to God, O Father Barrog./ Do not reject us in our pitiable state but pray, O Saint,/ that repenting and weeping we may be found worthy of a place in Christ's holy Kingdom.

Venerable Sabbatius - He lived for many years as a monk at the Monastery of St Cyril of White Lake, where his ascetic struggles won him the respect of his brethren. To flee from the admiration of men he moved further north to Valaam Monastery. But he still attracted the good opinion of his community, so he secretly headed still further north, planning to reach the uninhabited Solovki Island in the White Sea (a large bay of the Arctic Ocean). When he reached the coast, everyone who might take him tried to dissuade him from living in such a harsh place. He answered 'My children, I have a Master who has the power to renew the strength of the old and

to enfeeble the young if He so wills. He makes the poor rich, clothes the naked, provides for the destitute and satisfies the starving with a measure of food as he fed five thousand men in the desert.' While waiting for seasonable sailing weather he met St Germanus who lived nearby as a hermit. Together they found a fishing boat and, casting all their trust on the Lord, made the dangerous two-day voyage and set up a hermitage on the island. It became known as a holy place, and thenceforth those living in the world knew not to settle on Solovki, or even to set foot there without good reason. After six years, St Germanus departed, and Sabbatius was left alone. When he was old, he began to fear that he would die without receiving the life-giving Mysteries, of which he had not partaken since he left Valaam. So he returned to the mainland where he met an abbot Nathanael just as he was taking Holy Communion to a sick man. Sabbatius persuaded the abbot to hear his confession and grant him the priceless gift of Holy Communion. He then settled in a nearby chapel and made ready for his departure from this life. A wealthy merchant from Novgorod visited him to ask for his blessing. The Saint said to him, 'Spend the night here and you will see the grace of God.' The next morning the merchant came to Sabbatius' cell and found that he had reposed during the night; his cell was suffused with a beautiful scent. The following year, St Germanus, along with St Zosimas (April 17), returned to Solovki island and founded a monastery there, which proved to be the nurturing ground of many Saints.

Also commemorated on this day: Holy Apostles of the Seventy Mark, Aristarchus, and Zenas (1st C); Martyr Epicharis of Rome (†c.305); St. Flavian, archbishop of Antioch (†404); Venerable Ignatius, abbot (10th C); Hieromartyr Anthimus the Georgian, Metropolitan of Wallachia (†1716); Martyr Aquilina of Adrianopole (†1764); New Hieromartyr Demetrius Shishokin, priest (†1918); New Hieromartyrs Herman, bishop of Volsk, and Michael Platonov, priest (†1919); Venerable Rachel of Borodino Convent (†1928); New Hieromartyr Peter (Poliansky), metropolitan of Krutitsa (†1937); New Hieromartyr Theodore Bogoyavlensky, priest (†1937).

† Daily Scripture Readings †

Monday – Epistle: for the 19th Monday: Phil. 1:1-7 (\$235)
Gospel: for the 18th Monday: Luke 3:19-22 (\$10)

Tuesday – Epistle: for the 19th Tuesday: Phil. 1:8-14 (\$236)
Gospel: for the 18th Tuesday: Luke 3:23-4:1 (\$11)

Wednesday – Epistle: for the 19th Wednesday: Phil. 1:12-20 (\$237); for the 19th Thursday: Phil. 1:20-27 (\$238); for the 19th Friday: Phil. 1:27-2:4 (\$239) Gospel: for the 18th Wednesday: Luke 4:1-15 (\$12); for the 18th Thursday: Luke 4:16-22 (\$13); for the 18th Friday: Luke 4:22-30 (\$14)

Thursday – Matins Gospel: Matt. 11:27-30 (\$43); Epistle: Gal. 5:22-6:2 (\$213)
Gospel: Luke 6:17-23 (\$24)

Friday - Vespers: I John 3:21-4:6; I John 4:11-16; I John 4:20-5:5; Matins Gospel: John 21:15-25 (\$67)
Epistle: I John 4:12-19 (\$73 mid); Gospel: John 19:25-27, 21:24-25 (\$61)

Saturday – Epistle: for the 19th Saturday: I Cor. 15:58-16:3 (\$164)
Gospel: for the 18th Saturday: Luke 4:31-36 (\$15)

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