



20th Sunday After Pentecost

Holy Hierarchs of Moscow

5 / 18 October

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 3: Let the heavens rejoice / let the earth be glad / for the Lord has shown strength with His arm! / He has trampled down death by death! / He has become the first-born of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell / and has granted the world great mercy.

Troparion of the Five Hierarchs tone 4: Russian Hierarchs, guardians of Apostolic tradition,/ firm pillars, guides of Orthodoxy, / Peter, Alexis, Jonas, Philip and Hermogenes,/ pray to the Lord of all/ to grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 3: On this day thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, / leading us from the gates of death / On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices. / With the prophets and the patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

Kontakion of the Five Hierarchs tone 3: You were holy as Hierarchs,/ you taught the people, and you were well-pleasing to God./ He has glorified you with incorruption and miracles/ as disciples of the grace of God.

Vespers: Prov. 10:7, 6, 3:13-16; Prov. 10:31-32, 11:1-12; Wisd. 4:7-15

Matins Gospel IX

Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19

But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

THE GOSPEL WHICH WAS PREACHED BY ME IS NOT ACCORDING TO MAN

Observe how diligently he affirms that he was taught of Christ, who Himself, without human intervention, condescended to reveal to him all knowledge. And if he were asked for his proof that God Himself thus immediately revealed to him these ineffable mysteries, he would instance his former manner of life, arguing that his conversion would not have been so sudden, had it not been by Divine revelation. For when men have been vehement and eager on the contrary side, their conviction, if it is effected by human means, requires much time and ingenuity ...For my violence even reached your ears, and the distance between Palestine and Galatia is so great, that the report would not have extended there, had not my acts exceeded all bounds and endurance ...Observe how he does not shrink from aggravating each point: not saying simply that he has 'persecuted' but 'beyond measure' and 'made havoc of it,' which signifies an attempt to extinguish, to pull down, to destroy, to annihilate the Church ...Here his object is to show that it was by some secret providence that he was left to himself for a time ...It is evident that God had some hidden reason for this delay. What this purpose was, you are eager to learn from me perhaps ...I must entreat your love not to require all things from me, but to search for it by yourselves and to beg of God to reveal it to you ...God indeed says that He called him on account of His excellent capacity, as He said to Ananias, 'for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings' (Acts 9:15).

St. John Chrysostom. Chapter I. Commentary on Galatians. B#57, pp. 9-10.

For the Fathers, Hebrews 13: 17-21

GOSPEL: LUKE 6:31-36

The Lord said, as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

"LOVE YE YOUR ENEMIES"

Although it is natural and usual to love those who love us and to do good to those who do good to us (Mt 5:46-47; Lk 6:32-33), to love our enemies is distasteful to our nature. One can say that it isn't in our power but is an attitude that can only be the fruit of grace, given by the Holy Spirit. This is why St. Silouan the Athonite writes, "The soul that has not known the Holy Spirit does not understand how one can love one's enemies, and does not accept it."

The Staretz repeatedly says that love of enemies is impossible without grace: "Lord, You have given the commandment to love enemies, but this is difficult for us sinners if Your grace is not with us"; "Without God's grace we cannot love enemies"; "He who does not love his enemies, does not have God's grace"; "He who has not learned to love from the Holy Spirit, will certainly not pray for his enemies." On the contrary, St. Silouan always teaches that this attitude is a gift of the Holy Spirit: "The Lord has commanded us to love our enemies, and the Holy Spirit reveals this love to us"; "One can only love one's enemies through the grace of the Holy Spirit"; "When you will love your enemies, know that a great divine grace will be living in you."

This grace does not suddenly erupt in the soul, but rather shows itself in a divine pedagogy, where taking into account the weakness and the difficulties of man, the Holy Spirit progressively teaches him to love and teaches him all the attitudes and ways which will allow him to do so. "The Holy Spirit teaches us to love even our enemies"; "The Holy Spirit teaches the soul a profound love for man and compassion for the lost. The Lord had pity for those who were lost. . . . The Holy Spirit teaches this same compassion for those who go to hell"; "I could not speak about it if the Holy Spirit had not taught me this love"; "The Lord taught me love of enemies. . . . The Holy Spirit taught [me] to love."

The grace of the Holy Spirit shows to him who possesses it the way to love his enemies. But it also reveals to him the foundation of this love: the love of God for all people and His will to save them: "No man can know by himself what divine love is if the Holy Spirit does not instruct him; but in our Church divine love is known through the Holy Spirit, and that is why we speak about it." Grace also "gives man the capacity and the strength to love his enemies, and the Spirit of God gives us the strength to love them."

Staretz Silouan insists that because love of enemies is a fruit of grace, it is essentially through prayer that it can be obtained. Several times he urges us to "ask the Lord with our whole being to give us the strength to love all men." He also advises to pray to the Mother of God and the Saints: "If we are incapable [of loving our enemies] and if we are without love, let us turn with ardent prayers to the Lord, to His Most Pure Mother, and to all the Saints, and the Lord will help us with everything, He whose love for us knows no bounds." The Staretz confesses that he himself constantly prays God for this: "I continuously beg the Lord to give me the love of enemies. . . . Day and night I ask the Lord for this love. The Lord gives me tears and I weep for the whole world." Wishing in his universal love for all men to receive such a gift, he links them to himself in his prayer: "Lord, teach us through Your Holy Spirit to love our enemies and to pray for them with tears . . . Lord, as you prayed for your enemies, so teach us also, through the Holy Spirit, to love our enemies."

Yet obtaining the grace to love one's enemies presupposes other conditions.

The love of enemies is completely bound to the love of God: we have seen that the principal foundation for the love of enemies is the love that God shows to all His creatures equally and His will that all people should be saved, and Christ gave us a perfect example of such love throughout his earthly life. The love of God leads man to accomplish His will and to imitate Him as much as possible, and so also to love his enemies. The Staretz also notes that he who does not love his enemies shows that he has not learned from the Holy Spirit to love God.

To love one's enemies is also tightly bound to humility. The Staretz often associate these two virtues. Almost all the difficulties we encounter in loving our enemies are linked with pride: it is from pride that flows the affliction that follows upon insults, hatred, bad temper, spite, the desire for revenge, contempt for one's neighbor, refusing to forgive him and to be reconciled with him.

Pride excludes the love of enemies and love of enemies excludes pride: "If we love our enemies, pride will have no place in our soul." The fact that humility goes hand in hand with love of enemies proves the presence of grace and the authenticity of love: "If you have compassion for all creatures and love your enemies, and if, at the same time, you judge yourself the worst of all people, this shows that the great grace of the Lord is in you."

Indeed humility is the indispensable condition to receive and keep the grace that teaches us to love our enemies and gives us the strength to do so. The Staretz advises: "Humiliate yourself, then grace will teach you." On the other hand, "pride makes us lose grace. . . . The soul is then tormented by bad thoughts and does not understand that one must humiliate oneself and love one's enemies, for without that one cannot please God."

The Staretz sometimes also stresses the role played by penitence in connection with humility. "Regard yourself the worst of men," he advises. This is an attitude of great humility that of its nature implies penitence. He who counts himself the worst of men necessarily thinks others better than himself; he will judge and blame himself, and not judge and criticize his enemies, for he tends to estimate them better than himself.

The Staretz also gives us the example of another penitential attitude -- asking God's forgiveness each time one has not loved one's enemy: "If I judge someone or look at him angrily, my tears dry up and I fall into

despondency; and again I start asking the Lord to forgive me, and the merciful Lord forgives me, a sinner. "Through such an attitude, by which the soul humbly recognizes before God its faults and shortcomings and obtains from Him forgiveness, an opening can be made that becomes bigger and bigger for grace and unceasing progress in love. As to a total absence of compassion for enemies, it shows the presence and the action of an evil spirit; sincere repentance is the only way to be freed from it."

The insistence on prayer, humility and penitence shows that, although St. Silouan recognizes a determining role to the action of grace in acquiring love of enemies, he does not neglect the role played by the efforts that man makes. The Staretz is very conscious of the importance of the initial action; this is why he says, "I beg you, try," and states, "In the beginning, force your heart to love your enemies." The efforts one makes must manifest themselves in a general way in a straight intention and constant good will, stretched toward the realization of God's command. God will not fail to respond.

For the person who feels discouraged by such a demanding task, St. Silouan reassures him: "Seeing your good intention, the Lord will help you in everything." The Staretz who felt in himself so acutely human powerlessness and weakness seems to think constantly of these words of the Apostle: "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength" (Phil 4:13) and witnesses in his own experience the mighty help that everyone can receive from God.

The Staretz would say that for Christ there are no enemies -- there are those who accept "the words of eternal life," there are those who reject and even crucify; but for the Creator of every living thing, there can be no enemy. So it should be for the Christian, too, who "in pity for all must strive for the salvation of all."

Wherein, then, lies the force of the commandment, "Love your enemies"? Why did the Lord say that those who keep His commandments would know from very experience whence the doctrine?

... God is love, in superabundance embracing all creatures. By allowing man to actually know this love the Holy Spirit reveals to him the path of fullness of being. To say "enemy" implies rejection. By such rejection a man falls from the plenitude of God. ... "The whole paradise of Saints lives by the Holy Spirit, and from the Holy Spirit nothing in creation is hid," writes the Staretz. "God is love and in the Saints the Holy Spirit is love. Dwelling in the Holy Spirit, the saints behold love and embrace it, too, in their love."

... [It] is possible to judge whether a given state of contemplation was a reality or an illusion only after the soul had returned to consciousness of the world; for then, as the Staretz pointed out, if there were no love for enemies and so for all creatures, it would be a true indication that the supposed contemplation had not been a real communion with God.

-- The Monk of Mount Athos (London: Mowbrays, 1973) by Archimandrite Sophrony; pp 70-71

[Second Gospel: Matthew 5: 14-19](#)

Saints of the week

5 / 18 October - Sts. Peter, Alexis, Jonah, Macarius, Philip, Job, Hermogenes (Germogen), Philaret, Innocent (Veniaminov), Macarius, Peter and Tikhon, wonderworkers of Moscow.

Depicted in the icon above are six of the Holy Hierarchs of Moscow and of All-Russia. They were all dedicated to Christ from their youth and became ascetic monks, merciful pastors, and great beacons of the Church. They taught many by their words and examples, and fought hard to preserve the True Faith intact. They were also known for healing the sick in their lifetime, and wonder-working after their deaths.

Consoling the grieving, teaching repentance, showing themselves as icons of steadfast pillars of Faith and practice, these six men are called upon to protect their land and their spiritual inheritance often in prayers of the Faithful, in Moscow, in Russia, and abroad. Those depicted holding and standing around the icon of the Theotokos in this icon are these six holy hierarchs of Moscow: Metropolitan Peter (from a.d. 1308 to 1328), Metropolitan Alexis (a.d. 1354 to 1376), Metropolitan Jonah (from a.d. 1448 to 1461), Metropolitan Philip (from a.d. 1567 to 1569), Patriarch Tikhon (from a.d. 1917 to 1925), and Patriarch Hermogenes (from a.d. 1606 to 1612). O Holy Hierarchs, pray to God for us!

The Holy Martyr Charitina of Amisus - Orphaned young, she was adopted by an eminent Christian man called Claudius, who brought her up as his own daughter. Charitina was meek, humble, obedient and silent. She studied the law of God day and night and vowed to live in perpetual virginity as a true bride of Christ. But, Charitina having brought others to the Christian faith, the Emperor Diocletian's governor, Dometius, heard of her and sent soldiers to take her from her foster-father for trial. The judge asked her: 'Is it true, little girl, that you are a Christian, and that you delude others by bringing them to this dishonourable faith?' Charitina courageously replied: 'It is true that I am a Christian, and a lie that I delude others. I lead those in error to the way of truth, bringing them to my Christ.' The wicked judge ordered that her hair be cut off and live coals put on her head, but the maiden was preserved by God's power. They threw her into the sea, but God delivered her from it. She was bound to a wheel which began to turn, but an angel of God stopped the wheel and Charitina remained unharmed. Then the wicked judge sent some dissolute youths to rape her. Fearing this dishonour, St Charitina prayed to God to receive her soul before these dissolute men could foul her virginal body and so, while she was kneeling in prayer, her soul went out from her body to the immortal Kingdom of Christ.

Also commemorated on this day: Hieromartyr Dionysius, archbishop of Alexandria (†265); Martyr Mamelta of Persia (†c.344); Venerable Gregory of Khandzta, Georgia (†861); Venerable Cosmas of Bithynia (10th C); Venerable Damian the healer (†1071), Jeremiah (†1070), and Matthew (†1085) clairvoyants of the Kiev Caves; St. John (Mavropos), bishop of Euchaita (†1100); Venerable Charitina, princess of Lithuania (†1281); Venerable Sabbas of Vatopedi (†1350); Venerable Eudocimus of Vatopedi (†1841); Venerable Varlaam, hermit of Chikoisk (†1846); Venerable Methodia of Cimola (†1908); Venerable Gabriele (Igoshkin), confessor of Melekess.

6 / 19 October - The Holy and Glorious Apostle Thomas - He was one of the twelve Great Apostles. Through his doubt of the Resurrection of the Lord Christ, a new confirmation was given of that wonderful and saving event, for the risen Lord appeared again to His disciples, to convince Thomas. The Lord said to Thomas: Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing', and Thomas cried: 'My Lord and my God! (John 20). After the descent of the Holy Spirit, when the apostles cast lots to see who would go where to preach the Gospel, it fell to Thomas to go to India. He was somewhat saddened at having to go so far away, but the Lord appeared to him and comforted him. In India, St Thomas converted many, both rich and poor, to the Christian faith, and founded a Church there, making priests and bishops. Among others, St Thomas converted two sisters, Tertiana and Mygdonia, wives of Indian princes. Both sisters were ill-treated for their faith by their husbands, who would not live with them after their baptism, and divorced them. Being freed from their marriages, they lived godly lives till their deaths. Dionysius and Pelagia, a couple at first betrothed to each other, heard the Apostle's teaching and did not live together, but devoted themselves to the ascetic life. Pelagia died a martyr for the Faith and Dionysius was made bishop by the Apostle. Prince Misdaeus, the husband of Tertiana, whose wife and son Iuzanes Thomas baptised, condemned the Apostle to death, and sent five soldiers who ran him through with their lances, and thus the holy Apostle Thomas gave his soul into the hands of his Christ. Before his death, he, with the other apostles, was miraculously borne to Jerusalem for the funeral of the most holy Mother of God. Arriving late, he grieved bitterly and, at his request, the tomb of the Most Pure was opened,

but the body was not there; the Lord had taken His Mother to His heavenly home. Thus St Thomas first, by his unbelief, confirmed the faith in the Resurrection of the Lord and then, by his late arrival, revealed to us the wondrous glorification of the Mother of God.

The Venerable New Martyr Macarius - Macarius was born in the town of Kios, in Bithynia. His parents, Peter and Anthusa, were Christians, and he was baptized with the name of Manuel. In his youth, he was sent to learn tailoring as a trade. In the meantime, his father embraced Islam and moved to Brussa. There came a time when Manuel came to Brussa on business, and his father found him and exerted great pressure on him to become a Moslem. Manuel resisted in vain: the Turks circumcised him by force. Manuel then fled to the Holy Mountain and was tonsured a monk in the Skete of St. Anna. His monastic name was Macarius. For twelve years he was an excellent monk, but he never had peace of soul. Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven (Matthew 10:33)-Christ's words continually echoed in Macarius's mind. Finally, with the blessing of his elder, he went to Brussa and openly confessed his Faith in Christ before the Turks, calling Mohammed a false prophet. After being flogged for 130 days and enduring other harsh tortures, he was beheaded there, on October 6, 1590. A part of his miracle-working relics is preserved in the Skete of St. Anna on Mount Athos.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyrs Tertiana and Migdonia of India (1st C); Hieromartyr Sagar, bishop of Laodicea (2nd C); New Hieromartyr John Rybin, priest (†1937); Virgin-martyr Eroteis; 'O All-Hymned Mother' Icon of the Mother of God.

7 / 20 October - The Holy Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus - These holy and wonderful martyrs and heroes of the Christian faith were at first nobles at the court of the Emperor Maximian. The Emperor himself valued them greatly for their courage, wisdom and zeal, but, when he heard that these great nobles of his were Christians, his love for them turned to fury. And once, when there was a great offering of sacrifices to idols, the Emperor summoned Sergius and Bacchus to offer sacrifice together with him, and they openly refused to obey him in this. Beside himself with anger, the Emperor ordered that their robes, rings and marks of eminence be stripped from them and they be dressed in women's clothing. He then put iron yokes on their necks and led them thus through the streets of Rome, to be mocked by each and all. The Emperor then sent them to Asia, to Antiochus the governor, for torture. Antiochus had achieved his distinguished rank with the help of Sergius and Bacchus, who had at one time recommended him to the Emperor. When Antiochus began to urge them to deny Christ and save themselves from dishonourable suffering and death, the two saints replied: 'Both honour and dishonour, both life and death—all are one to him who seeks the heavenly Kingdom.' Antiochus threw Sergius into prison and ordered that Bacchus be tortured first. The servants took turns in beating holy Bacchus until his whole body was broken into fragments. His holy spirit went forth from his broken and bloodstained body and was borne to the Lord by angels. St Bacchus suffered in the town of Varvallis. Then holy Sergius was led out. Iron shoes studded with nails were put on his feet, and he was driven out into the Syrian town of Resapha, and there beheaded with the sword. His soul went to Paradise where, together with his friend Bacchus, he received the wreath of immortal glory from Christ his King and Lord. These two glorious knights suffered for the Christian faith in about 303.

St. Jonah, Bishop of Hankou Manchuria - The future St. Jonah was born on April 17, 1888 in Kaluga, Russia, with the name Vladimir (Volodya) Pokrovsky. He was orphaned at the age of 8 and was taken in by a kindly deacon, who ensured he received an education. He went on to attend, graduate, and eventually teach at the Kazan Theological Academy. While attending as a student, he was tonsured a monk of the Optina Brotherhood and given the name Jonah. He took a teaching position at the academy only out of obedience to the Elder Gabriel of Optina.

In 1918 the Revolution forced the young hieromonk to leave Kazan. He was arrested by the communists and suffered beatings to the point of loss of consciousness and imprisonment. Thus, sharing the fate of the New Confessors of Russia, by God's providence Hieromonk Jonah was freed by the White Army, which was situated beyond the Ural Mountains. Having been quickly raised to the rank of igumen, he was assigned as the senior priest of the southern volunteer troops. With the army of Ataman Alexander Dutov, Fr. Jonah withdrew to the borders of Western China, being subjected to all kinds of hardships while crossing the Pamir cliffs, often forced to grab on to jagged ledges and the sparse shrubbery of the ice covered cliffs with wounded hands. After crossing the Gobi Desert, they finally reached Beijing, where Fr. Jonah was received into the Ecclesiastical Mission there

and soon consecrated bishop of Manzhuria. (St. Jonah was officially the bishop of Hankou, in the Hubei province, but actually ministered and worked in the town of Manzhuria, the modern day border town of Manzhouli, not to be confused with the region of Manchuria, of which this town is a part.) During his short time as bishop, St. Jonah transformed the Orthodox community in Manzhuria. He established an orphanage, a school, and a dining hall for the poor. He worked tirelessly for his flock, and was deeply loved by them.

St. Jonah had been caring for a priest who died of typhoid fever. He subsequently contracted chronic tonsillitis and then, due to complications, developed blood poisoning. As he was dying, he wrote a final epistle to his flock, reminding them of the need to love one another, confessed one final time to Archbishop Methodius of Beijing, received Holy Communion, blessed those who were in his chamber, and then he then put on the epitachelion and cuffs which had belonged to Elder Ambrose of Optina and began, loudly and with prostrations, to read the canon for the departure of the soul. Finally overcome with weakness, he laid down on his bed and said, "God's will be done. Now I shall die," and he indeed died within minutes.

That same evening, a ten-year-old boy named Nicholas Dergachev, who was crippled, had been suffering from an inflammation of the knee joints. All medical efforts had proven fruitless. He was unable to walk, or even to stand. The boy had a dream. A hierarch vested in white appeared to him and said, "Here, take my legs. I don't need them anymore. And give me yours." He woke up and was miraculously healed. From a photograph he identified the hierarch in his dream as Bishop Jonah, who had died that very night, October 7/20, 1925. Though his life was short, his memory endured long after his repose. St. John (Maximovitch) said of St. Jonah: "Already here in the diaspora we have righteous ones in our time. Although they are not yet glorified, people receive wondrous signs from them. For example Bishop Jonah of Manchuria."

The Holy Martyr Polychronius - Polychronius was born in the district of Gamphanitus, of peasant parents. As a young man, he worked as a day-laborer in the vineyard of a certain Constantinopolitan. But even as a day-laborer Polychronius devoted himself to the ascetic life of prayer and fasting day and night. Seeing his life, angelic in its purity and abstinence, the vintner was amazed, and gave him much more money than he earned. St. Polychronius took the money and built a church. At the time of the Nicaean Council (325), Polychronius was a church reader. He showed such zeal in the defense of Orthodoxy against the Arians that he was ordained a priest. Later, these evil heretics sought revenge, and attacked St. Polychronius inside the church itself, and chopped him into pieces. Thus, this great defender of the truth and purity of Orthodoxy suffered and received a wreath of glory from his Most-glorious Lord.

Also commemorated on this day: St. Eumenius, bishop of Alexandria (†143); Martyrs Julian the priest and Caesarius the deacon, Eusebius the priest and Felix (†268); Martyr Pelagia of Tarsus (†287); St. Mark, pope of Rome (†336); Venerable Mark of Egypt (4th C); St. Dubthach, bishop of Armagh (†513); Martyr Osyth of Chich (†c.700); Venerable Sergius the Obedient of the Kiev Caves (13th C); Venerable Sergius of Nurma (†1421); Finding of the relics of Venerable Martinian of Belozersk (1514); Venerable Joseph Mokheve, wonderworker (†1763); New Hieromartyr Nicholas Kazansky, Priest (†1942).

8 / 21 October - Our Holy Mother Pelagia -A repentant sinner, she was born a pagan in Antioch and endowed by God with great physical beauty, but she used this beauty to destroy her own soul and those of others, acquiring great wealth from her prostitution. One day, walking past the church of the holy martyr Julian, where Bishop Nonnus was preaching, she turned into the church and listened to the sermon, which was about the Dreadful Judgement and the punishment of sinners. These words so shook her, and wrought so great a change in her, that she was of a sudden filled with self-loathing and fear of God, and, repenting of all her filthy sins, fell down before St Nonnus, begging him to baptise her: 'Holy father, be merciful to me, a sinner; baptise me, and teach me repentance. I am a sea of iniquity, an abyss of destruction, a net and weapon of the devil.' Thus this penitent implored Christ's hierarch with tears. And he baptised her. Blessed Romana, a deaconess of that church, stood sponsor to her at her baptism and, after that, as her spiritual mother, grounded her well in the Christian faith. But Pelagia was not content just to be baptised. Feeling the weight of her many sins and the pricking of her conscience, she decided on a great asceticism. She gave away to the poor the enormous wealth she had amassed by her immorality and went secretly to Jerusalem, where, under a man's name as the monk Pelagius, she shut herself in a cell on the Mount of Olives and there began a strict asceticism of fasting, prayer and vigils. Three years later, St Nonnus's deacon, James, visited her and found her still alive, but when he went to her again a few days

later, he found her dead body and gave it burial. St Pelagia entered into rest in about 461. Thus that sometime great sinner, by repentance and striving, received the mercy of God, the forgiveness of her sins and sanctification, and her purified and sanctified soul was made worthy of the Kingdom of God.

The Venerable Thais - Thais was a repentant sinner. She was an Egyptian by birth. Like St. Pelagia, Thais also spent her youth in unrestrained fornication. Thais was directed in this evil way of life by her shameless mother. But the merciful God, Who does not desire the death of a sinner, but salvation, found a way in His wondrous providence to save the sinner Thais. One of the disciples of St. Anthony the Great, Paphnutius the Sindonite, heard of Thais's sinful life, and the spiritual poison with which she was poisoning the souls of many men. He decided to save her, with God's help. Clothed in secular clothing, St. Paphnutius took one gold coin and went to the city. He found Thais and gave her the gold coin. Thais, thinking that this man gave her the gold coin for an impure act, took Paphnutius into her room. Then Paphnutius opened his blessed mouth and denounced Thais's sins and called her to repentance. Thais's soul and conscience were both awakened, and she burst into tears of profound, sincere repentance. Distributing all her goods to the poor, she entered a convent at the instruction of St. Paphnutius, and remained there for about three years, closed off in a cell, living only on bread and water. St. Paphnutius visited her before her death, and brought her out of her cell against her will. She soon fell ill, and after a brief illness gave up her purified and sanctified soul to God. St. Paul the Simple, another disciple of St. Anthony, saw in a vision a most beautiful habitation in Paradise, prepared by God for St. Thais the penitent. This holy soul entered into rest in the year 340.

Also commemorated on this day: Virgin-martyr Reparata of Caesarea (†c.250); Martyr Pelagia of Antioch (†c.303); St. James, patriarch of Antioch (4th C); Venerable Dositheus of Verkneostrov (†1482); Venerable Tryphon of Vyatka (†1612); New Monk-martyr Ignatius the Bulgarian (†1814); New Hieromartyr Demetrius, archbishop of Mozhaishk, and with him Hieromartyrs John Khrenov, deacon, Monk-martyrs Ambrose (Astakhov), Pachomius (Turkevich), Nun-martyr Tatiana (Besfamilnov), Martyrs Nicholas Reyin, Maria Volnukhina, and Nadezhda Azhgerevich (†1937); New Hieromartyrs Jonah, bishop of Nevel, Basil Ozeretskovsky, Vladimir Speransky, Paul Preobrazhensky, Peter Nicotin, Peter Ozeretskovsky, priests, Monk-martyr Seraphim (Schelokov), Martyrs Victor Frolov, John Rybin, Nicholas Kuzmin, and Elizabeth Kuranov (†1937); New Monk-martyr Varlaam (Efimov) (†end of 1930s); Synaxis of the saints of Vyatka; 'Deliverer from Troubles' (Tashla) Icon of the Mother of God.

9 / 22 October - The Holy Apostle James - The son of Alphaeus and one of the twelve Great Apostles, he was the brother of the Apostle and Evangelist Matthew. He was a witness of the true words and miracles of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and a witness of His Passion, Resurrection and Ascension. After the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, it fell to the lot of the Apostle James to preach Christ's Gospel in Eleutheropolis and the surrounding area, and then in Egypt, where he suffered for his Saviour. With great power both in word and act, James spread abroad the saving news of the incarnate Word of God, rooting out idol worship, driving demons out of men, healing all manner of sickness and disease in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. His labours and his zeal were crowned with great success. Many pagans came to belief in Christ the Lord, churches were founded and set in order and priests and bishops were made. He suffered in Egypt in the town of Ostracina, being crucified by the pagans. Thus this great and wonderful apostle of Christ went to the heavenly Kingdom, to reign forever with the King of glory.

Hieromartyr Dionysius (Denis) of Paris, bishop (c. 258) - an Italian sent to Paris in the year 250 with six other missionaries, including two bold assistants, Eleutherius and Rusticus. The pagan citizens of the Roman city were disturbed by the success of the Christian Gospel, as a result of the labours of the missionaries. The Roman governor, Fescenninus Sisinnus, arrested the three and put them in prison. For a long time they suffered privations until they were beheaded and their corpses thrown into the River Seine. Montmatre, 'Martyr's Hill', marks the place of their death.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Andronicus and his wife Athanasia (5th C); Righteous Forefather Abraham and his nephew Lot (20th C. BC); St. Demetrius, patriarch of Alexandria; Martyrs Juveninus and Maximinus, soldiers (†c.361); Martyr Publia the confessor, deaconess of Antioch (†361); Venerable Peter of Galatia (9th C); Right-believing Stephen the Blind, despot of Serbia (†1476); New Hieromartyrs Constantine Aksenov and Peter Vyatkin, priests (†1918); New Hieromartyr Constantine Sukhov, priest (†1937); Finding of the relics of Venerable Job of Ugolka (1985); Finding of the relics of Venerable Sebastian (Fomin), confessor (1997); 'Korsun' Icon of the Mother of God.

10 / 23 October - Synaxis of the Holy Elders of Optina - Sts. Moses, Anthony, Leonid, Ambrose, Macarius, Hilarion, Isaac, Joseph, Anatole, Barsanuphius, Isaac the Younger, Anatole the Younger, Nectarius, and Hieromartyr Nikon; The Holy Martyrs Eulampius and Eulampia - They were brother and sister from Nicomedia. At the time of a vicious persecution of Christians by the Emperor Maximian (286- 305), some of the faithful of Nicomedia fled the city and hid. The young Eulampius was sent into the city for bread. Entering it, he saw the imperial decree on the persecution and killing of Christians stuck onto a wall, and, laughing at it, took it down and tore it up. He was immediately brought to trial for this. When the judge urged him to deny Christ, Eulampius began in return to urge the judge to deny the false idols and accept Christ as the one, living God. Then the judge ordered that he be flogged until the blood flowed, and tortured in other ways. Hearing of the torture of her brother, the maiden Eulampia ran to join him in suffering for Christ, and she was likewise beaten till the blood flowed from her nose and mouth. After that, they were thrown into boiling pitch then into a red-hot furnace, but they, by the power of the sign of the Cross and the name of Christ, rendered the fire harmless. Finally, St Eulampius was beheaded, but St Eulampia breathed her last before the same could be done to her. Two hundred other Christians, who had come to faith in Christ by seeing the power and miracles of St Eulampius and his sister, were slaughtered. All were crowned with wreaths of martyrdom and entered into their immortal, heavenly home.

The Holy Martyrs Eulampius and Eulampia - They were brother and sister from Nicomedia. During one of the terrible persecutions of Christians by Maximian some of the faithful fled Nicomedia and hid. The young Eulampius was sent into the city to buy bread. There he saw the imperial edict decreeing the persecution of Christians posted on a wall. He laughed at it, removed it, and tore it up. He was arrested and immediately brought before the judge. When the judge advised him to deny Christ, Eulampius counseled the judge to reject the false idols and to acknowledge Christ as the One Living God. The judge ordered that he be flogged for a long time until his blood flowed, and that he be tormented with other cruel tortures. Hearing of her brother's suffering, the virgin Eulampia came running, and she, together with her brother, suffered for Christ. She was flogged until blood flowed from her nose and mouth. After that, they were thrown into boiling pitch, and then into a red-hot furnace, but by the power of the sign of the Cross and the name of Christ, they rendered the fire harmless. Finally Eulampius was beheaded, but Eulampia died before being beheaded. Two hundred other Christians were also slain, who had come to believe in Christ upon witnessing the power and miracles of St. Eulampius and his sister. All were crowned with martyrs' wreaths, and passed over into their eternal heavenly homeland.

The Holy Martyrs of Zographou - When Emperor Michael Palaeologus contracted the infamous Union of Lyons with the pope, in order to obtain help from the West against the Bulgarians and Serbs, the monks of the Holy Mountain sent a protest to the emperor against this Union, imploring him to reject it and return to Orthodoxy. The pope dispatched an army to help the emperor. The Latin army entered the Holy Mountain and committed such barbarism as the Turks had never committed in five hundred years. Having hanged the Protaton, and having killed many monks in Vatopedi, Iveron and other monasteries, the Latins attacked Zographou. The blessed Abbot Thomas warned the brethren that whoever wished to be spared from the Latins should flee from the monastery, and that whoever desired a martyr's death should remain. And so, twenty-six men remained: the abbot, twenty-one monks, and four laymen who served as laborers for the monastery. They all closed themselves in the monastery's tower. When the Latins arrived, they set fire to the tower and these twenty-six heroes of Christ found a martyr's death in the fire. While the tower was burning, they chanted the Psalms and the Akathist to the Most-holy Mother of God. They gave their holy souls to God on October 10, 1283. In December of the same year, the dishonorable Emperor Michael died in poverty, when the Serbian King Milutin rose up against him in defense of Orthodoxy.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyr Theotecnus, soldier of Antioch (†c.305); Venerable Bassian of Constantinople (†c.458); St. Paulinus of York, bishop of York (†644); Venerable Theophilus of Tiberiopolis, confessor (†716); St. Amphilochius, bishop of Vladimir, Volhynia (†1122); Blessed Andrew of Totma, fool-for-Christ (†1693); St. Innocent, bishop of Penza (†1819); New Hieromartyr Theodore (Pozdnevsky), archbishop of Volokolamsk (†1937); Finding of the relics of St. Philaret, metropolitan of Kiev (1994); Commemoration of the return of the Pochaev Lavra to the Orthodox in 1831; Synaxis of the Saints of Volhynia.

11 / 24 October - Fast Day - The Holy Apostle Philip - Born in Palestinian Caesarea, he was married and had four daughters, all four endowed by God with the gift of discernment and all four vowed virgins for the sake of Christ (Acts 21:8-9). When the holy apostles chose deacons, Philip was chosen along with Stephen and the others (6:5). Philip served the poor and the widows with great fervour. When persecution fell on the Christians in Jerusalem, he fled to Samaria and there preached the Gospel and witnessed to it by many miracles, driving out demons, healing the sick and so forth. Seeing the miracles of the holy apostle, Simon the Magician was baptised. St Philip also baptised the eunuch of Queen Candace. After that, an angel of God suddenly and invisibly bore him away to Azotus, where he taught and preached, bringing many to Christ (Acts 8). He was later made bishop in Tralles. He died peacefully in great old age, and entered into the joy of his Lord.

Remembrance of the Miracle from an Icon of Our Lord Jesus Christ in Beirut - At the fourth session of the Seventh OEcumenical Council (year 787) Sainted Peter, Bishop of Nicomedia, in evidence of the necessity of icon-veneration, presented an account of Saint Athanasias and about a miracle, which occurred in the city of Berit (now Beirut).

In this city lived a Christian near the Jewish synagogue. Having moved off to another place, he left behind at the house an icon of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jew, who moved into the house, paid no attention to the icon. One time his friend took note of the image of Jesus Christ on the wall, and said to the home-owner: "Why dost thou, a Jew, have in thy house an icon?" He then went to the synagogue and reported about this transgression of Jewish law. The Jews cast out from the synagogue the owner of the house, and they took the icon from the wall and began to scoff over it: "As once our fathers mocked at Him, so we also mock at Him". They spit at the face of the Lord, lashed at the icon, hurling abuses, they thrust thorns about the head, and put a sponge with vinegar to the mouth. Finally, they took a spear, and one of the Jews thrust with it into the side of the Saviour. Suddenly from the opening, pierced by the spear in the icon, flowed blood and water. The Jewish rabbis, seeing the miracle, decided: "The followers of Jesus Christ affirm, that He could heal the sick. We shall take this blood and water into the synagogue and we shall anoint those afflicted with infirmities, and then we shall see, whether this be spoken truly of Him".

A vessel with the blood was put in the synagogue. Having learned about the miracle, the inhabitants of Beirut began to bring and to lead into the synagogue those suffering from various illnesses, and they all were healed, having been anointed with the blood from the icon of the Saviour. All the high-priests, priests and Jewish people believed in Christ and exclaimed: "Glory to Thee, O Christ, Whom our fathers crucified, Whom we also crucified in the guise of Thine icon. Glory to Thee, O Son of God, for having worked such a miracle! We believe in Thee, wherefore be Thou merciful to us and receive us!" The Jews went to the bishop of Berit and, having shown him the wonderworking icon, the blood and water having flowed from it, they told about their misdeed. The bishop, seeing their sincere repentance, accepted them, chatechised them for many days and then baptised them, and then consecrated the synagogue into the church of our Saviour Jesus Christ. At the request of the Jews, he consecrated also other synagogues into churches, dedicated to the holy martyrs. And "there became great joy in that city, not only that many people were healed and quickened, but that many souls passed from the kingdom of the dead unto life eternal".

St. Ethelburga, abbess of Barking Monastery, England, sister of St. Erkonwald (c.676) - taught by Saint Hilda she was known for her meekness and humility and received many gifts of Grace from God, and miracles were worked through her holy prayers. Our holy mother Ethel had a great love for all people and she tried to help anyone who had a need. When a great epidemic came to Britain and hundreds of people were dying she received the sick and cared for them with her own hands. This holy saint lived a life of poverty and of love for God and neighbour for a very long time. At last, the time came for her to depart this life. As she lay dying, a great light suddenly filled her cell and God's angels took her soul to paradise.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Theophanes the Branded, confessor, hymnographer (†847); Martyrs Zenaida and Philonilla (1st C); Sts. Nectarius (†397), Arsacius (†425), and Sisinius (†427), patriarchs of Constantinople; Venerable Kenneth of Aghaboe (†600); Venerable Gummarus of Lier, Belgium (†774); Venerable Theophan of the Kiev Caves (12th C); Venerable Philotheus Kokkinos, patriarch of Constantinople (†1379); Venerable Leo of Optina (†1841); New Hieromartyr Philaret Velikanov and Alexander Grivsky, priests (†1918); New Hieromartyr Juvenaly, archbishop of Ryazan (†1937); 'Vododatelnitsa' Icon of the Mother of God.

† Daily Scripture Readings †

Monday – Epistle: for the 21st Monday: Phil. 4:10-23 (\$248); for the 21st Tuesday: Col. 1:1-2, 7-11 (\$249)
Gospel: for the 20th Monday: Luke 6:24-30 (\$25); for the 20th Tuesday: Luke 6:37-45 (\$27)

Tuesday – Vespers: Prov. 10:7, 6, 3:13-16; Prov. 10:31-32, 11:1-12; Wisd. 4:7-15
Matins Gospel: Matt. 5:14-19 (\$11); Epistle: Heb 13:17-21 (\$335)
Gospel: Luke 6:17-23 (\$24)

Wednesday – Epistle: for the 21st Wednesday: Col. 1:18-23 (\$251)
Gospel: for the 20th Wednesday: Luke 6:46-7:1 (\$28)

Thursday – Epistle: for the 21st Thursday: Col. 1:24-29 (\$252); for the 21st Friday: Col. 2:1-7 (\$253)
Gospel: for the 20th Thursday: Luke 7:17-30 (\$31); for the 20th Friday: Luke 7:31-35 (\$32)

Friday - Vespers: Wisd. 4:7-15; Prov. 10:7, 6, 3:13-16; Prov. 10:31-11:12
Matins Gospel: Matt. 11: 27-30 (\$43); Epistle: Gal. 5:22-6:2 (\$213)
Gospel: Luke 6:17-23 (\$24)

Saturday – Epistle: for the 21st Saturday: II Cor. 3:12-18 (\$174)
Gospel: for the 20th Saturday: Luke 5:27-32 (\$20)

Patriarchs in Times of Trouble.

When Patriarch Tikhon was at the head of the Russian Church, it was undermined by the Renovationist schism. Just as it was 300 years ago, a number of bishops betrayed the Church and even sunk to fiercely condemning the Patriarch. Some of the homilies and articles written by the Renovationist hierarchs have been preserved until today. On February 17, 1924, Bishop Antonin (ordained before the Revolution) wrote in Izvestia newspaper, “Tikhon is a big priestly effigy, full of witchcraft, mediocrity, magic, cunning and gold coins. At every service, he creates smaller effigies; they put on brocade robes and golden pots, they bellow, whirl around and flail.” Then follows his blasphemy against the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist...

As the renovationist was writing his discourses for Izvestia, Patriarch Tikhon was imprisoned, and the holy martyrs, the bishops loyal to Orthodoxy, were suffering excruciating tortures and prosecution.

However, God not only fortified the Russian people through their patriarchates when the country was on the brink of times of troubles, but also supported the nation through the intercession of the Theotokos. The Kazan Icon appeared shortly before St. Job was elected patriarch. The Reigning Icon was miraculously found in the village of Kolomenskoye on March 2, 1917, the day that Tsar Nicolas abdicated, and several months before St. Tikhon was elected patriarch. It is evident that these two images are key not for just some particular city or region, but for the whole Church, for the whole country. Patriarch Job and Patriarch Tikhon were the only Russian primates to anathematize the revolutionary authorities, because those authorities were treating the Church and the nation contemptuously.

Both patriarchs were held in custody: His Holiness Patriarch Job was held in Staritsa Monastery, and Patriarch Tikhon was held in Lubyanka prison and Donskoy Monastery.

Both patriarchs had to face the phenomenon of impostors. The deception of False Dmitry is well known to everyone. We know the methods he used to seize power and how his life ended. The filthy treachery of those commanders who pledged allegiance to False Dmitry is also well known. It's hardly possible to imagine how difficult it was for Patriarch Job, when almost all of the bishops, his brothers in Christ, were trying to persuade him to succumb to pressure for the sake of a utopian Church peace, and for the sake of their personal security. The Patriarch was able to resist this temptation, although when brought to Moscow, the tsarevich's mother, Nun Martha, publicly recognized False Dmitry as the true tsar; her fear made her pronounce that lie. Patriarch Job remained resolute; he preferred persecution and exile to false testimony.

History with its false tsars repeated itself in the lifetime of St. Tikhon.

When we fight evil, our success is defined not by the victory itself but by the struggle for truth till the end. Patriarch Tikhon never hoped for outward success; such hopes are not characteristic of a Christian. He who endures to the end shall be saved (Mk. 13:13). Following the example of patience set by the holy patriarchs, Russian people have gained patience; and as we can see, patience and standing for the Orthodox truth are what have been placed in the foundation of our salvation. It is the Russian destiny, the cross placed on our country a thousand years ago.

I'd like to say a few words about St. Tikhon's pastoral speeches. They possess a quality typical of the words of prophets, inspired by God; they are imbued with life and wisdom not only for the author's contemporaries, but for the whole Church in all times. Here are two small citations: "A terrible exhausting night is still wearing on in Russia, and no joyful dawn penetrates it. Russia is in grave torment, and there's no one to heal it... Sin has scattered around our land, and weakened the spiritual and physical strength of the Russian people. Sin, according to the prophet, made God take away the stock and the store, the whole supply of bread, the mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, and the diviner and the elder (Isaiah 3:1-2). That poisonous source of sin produced the great temptation of gaining sensual earthly pressures, to which our people yielded, forgetting about the one thing needful" (1918).

"All this devastation and shortages are a consequence of our willingness to build the Russian state without God. Have we ever heard our leaders mention the name of God in their multitudinous meetings, conferences, parliaments and councils? Never. They rely exclusively on themselves; they wish to make a name for themselves, unlike our righteous ancestors, who brought the glory not to their names, but to the name of God. Therefore He who sits in Heaven shall laugh at our plans and hold us in derision. The Lord is righteous, for we rebelled against his commandment (Lamentations 1:18)" (1918).

The patriarchs' care for the people of the Church is another part of their highest ministry. The obligation was imposed on the patriarch in the sixteenth century and reaffirmed during the Council of 1917, as a specific article among many other obligations the primate was to fulfill. Often persecuted and incarcerated for this, the two patriarchs honored this obligation to the full. Their fatherly love, prevailed over all, "For you, the people of Russia, deluded and unhappy, my heart is full of mortal sympathy," Patriarch Tikhon said.

The two patriarchs' lives are interwoven, as well as the fates of their times, and the fates of our time and today's Church; which, by the word of God, called these two saints for the ministry. In the rite of ordination are the following words: "God's grace always heals the feeble and fills those who become poor..." When our earthly Church becomes poor, when the Church is no longer in peace due to our weaknesses, God gives us saints who are able to support us with their ministry and prayers. And today seems to be such a time.

If, by the Providence of God and for our sins we must experience the ordeals Sts. Job and Tikhon had, we know that by God's Providence and for our salvation, we have our heavenly intercessors in times of trouble—St. Job and St. Tikhon. Today we pray to them for His Holiness the Patriarch that God would grant that he "rightly teach the word of Christ's truth", strengthen him in his prayers, and care for God's people; give him power to bear the cross of his ministry and repeat the words of Patriarch Tikhon, "Henceforth, I am entrusted with the care for all the Russian churches, and what awaits me is the gradual dying for them all my days."

Metropolitan Tikhon (Shevkunov) of Pskov and Porkhov

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