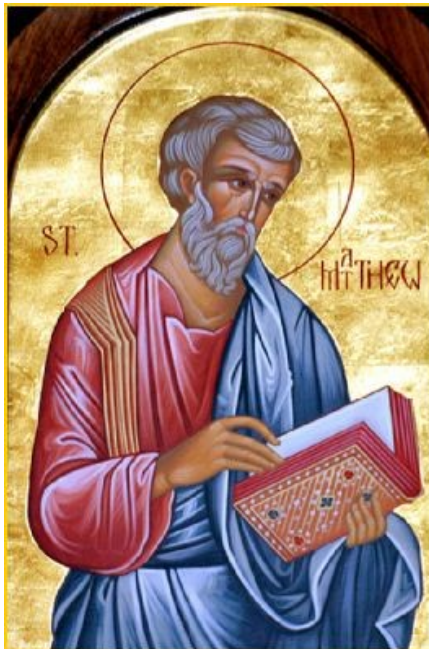




26th Sunday After Pentecost

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew

16 / 29 November

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

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

who praise thee may receive forgiveness and great mercy.

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

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

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

Matins Gospel IV

EPISTLE: Ephesians 5: 9-19

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

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

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

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

Second Epistle – I Cor. 4:9-16

THE GOSPEL: St Luke 10: 25-37

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

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

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

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

It is this moment which reveals today's Gospel to us. How do we walk? How do we hold onto the robe of Christ? How do we not let go of this robe during the whole way? And this way is long, very long. This is our life. This may mean years, and for some of us many years. Eighty years for some, ninety for others, and still longer. How many dangers there are on this long road that can tear us away from the robe of Christ! The storm of temptation is raging all around. Look at our family life. Influenced by some mental blindness a husband abandons his family. From constant nervous tension in the family, a wife cannot bear it any longer and makes life intolerable, and so on. And in our public life, all the political crises; and in our civic life, the terrible crimes. O God, where can we go? All we have to do is, like Jairus, cling to Christ, hold onto His robe. The main thing is not to let go. We must be steadfast. And today's Gospel gives us the secret of how to be steadfast. Be a Merciful Samaritan everywhere, always, and to everyone. Let us examine ourselves. Are we really like this? There were children around us — did we teach them good things? Or a man came to us who was on the verge of moral destruction. Did we support him in his fight against sin? Did we help him to get out of this swamp which was sucking him down? Maybe all we had to do was stretch out not even a hand, but just a finger, and he would have been saved. How many there were who needed just one word of encouragement, some attention. And we could have given all this. But did we give it, like the Merciful Samaritan? If to all these questions our conscience answers, no, we did not help — then, yes, we are in danger of being torn away from the robe of Christ. Let us hasten to mend this. Mercy alone can keep us with Christ.

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

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

Archbishop Andrei, The One Thing Needful

Second Gospel: Matthew 9: 9-13

Saints of the week

16 / 29 November - Nativity Fast - The Holy Apostle Matthew the Evangelist - the son of Alphaeus was at first a tax-collector, and it was as such that the Lord saw him in Capernaum and said to him: 'Follow Me!' Leaving everything, he followed Him (Matt. 9:9). After that, Matthew prepared a feast in his house, and there provided an opportunity for the Lord to voice some great truths about His coming to earth. After receiving the Holy Spirit, Matthew preached the Gospel among the Parthians and Medes and in Ethiopia, the land of the negroes. In Ethiopia, he consecrated as bishop one Plato, a follower of his, and himself withdrew to prayerful solitude on a mountain, where the Lord appeared to him. Matthew baptised the wife and son of the prince of that land, at which the prince was greatly enraged and sent a guard to bring Matthew before him for trial. The soldiers went off, but returned to the prince, saying that they had heard Matthew's voice, but had been unable to set eyes on him. The prince then sent a second guard. When this guard drew near to the Apostle, he shone with a heavenly radiance so brilliant that the soldiers were unable to look at him, but threw down their weapons in terror and returned home. The prince then went himself. When he approached Matthew, such radiance shone forth from the saint that the prince was blinded on the instant. But the Apostle had a kind heart: he prayed to God and the prince's sight was restored—unfortunately, only on the physical plane, his spiritual eyes remaining closed. He seized St Matthew and put him to harsh torture, twice lighting a fire on his chest, but the power of God kept him alive and unharmed. Then the Apostle prayed to God, and gave his spirit into His hands. The prince commanded that the martyr's body be put into a leaden coffin and cast into the sea. The saint appeared to Bishop Plato and told him where to find his body in its coffin, and the bishop went and brought them back. Seeing this new marvel, the prince was baptised and received the name Matthew. He then set aside all earthly vanity and

became a priest, serving the Church in a manner pleasing to God. When Plato died, the Apostle Matthew appeared to this Matthew and counselled him to accept the episcopate. So he became a bishop, and was a good shepherd for many years, until God took him to His immortal Kingdom. St Matthew the Apostle wrote his Gospel in Aramaic, and it was very soon translated into Greek. It has come down to us in Greek, the Aramaic original being lost. Of this Evangelist, it is said that he never ate meat, but fed only on vegetables and fruit.

The Monk Sergei of Malopinezh - The Monk Sergei of Malopinezh (in the world Simeon), was born in 1493. His father, Markian Stefanovich Nekliud, was descended from Novgorod boyar nobles. Together with other fellow citizens they left their native-place setting off "to the side of the icy sea", when Great Novgorod was finally subjugated to the power of Moscow by Ivan III. There in the northlands, Markian Stefanovich married Apollinaria, a maiden from a rich and nobleborn family. The pious spouses raised up their son Simeon in the fear of God, they gave him a fine education, and inculcated in him the love for "book-learning". Having grown old, Markian and Apollinaria by mutual agreement took monastic vows. Markian (in monasticism Matfei or Matthew) was afterwards hegumen of the Resurrection monastery in the city of Keurola. Apollinaria died a schema-monastic with the name Pelagia.

Simeon at age 30 was ordained presbyter to the churches of the Transfiguration of the Lord and of the GreatMartyr George in the Malopinezh district. The holy presbyter Simeon at age 62 with love finished his pastoral service. With apostolic zeal he laboured over the conversion of the pagan Chud' people. The rare personal qualities of the pastor contributed much to the success of his preaching. As the Chronicle notes, he possessed a kindly soul and pure mind, a courageous heart, humility and quiet strength, love for unhypocritical truth, and was merciful to the poor to the point of self-denial. In the final year of his life, the monk took the schema with the name Sergei and died on 16 November 1585. By the last-will of the saint, they buried him about the altar of the Transfiguration church. Over his grave was built a chapel. The old hand-written manuscript tells about the numerous miracles which occurred at the grave of the saint.

Also commemorated on this day: St. Anianus, patriarch of Alexandria (†84); St. Fulvianus (Matthew in baptism), prince of Ethiopia (1st C); St. Eucherius, bishop of Lyons (†449); New Hieromartyrs Theodore Kolierov, priest, Martyrs Ananias Boikov and Michael Boldakov (†1929); New Hieromartyrs Innocent, archbishop of Vinnitsky, John Tsvetkov, Nicholas Troitsky, Victor Voronov, Basil Sokolov, Makarius Soloviev, Michael Abramov, priests, Monk-martyr Panteleimon (Arzhanykh) (†1937); New Martyr Demetrius Spiridonov (†1938); New Hieromartyr Philoumenos of Jacob's Well (†1979).

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

St. Hilda, abbess & eldress, who convened the Council of Whitby and adopted the orthodox Pascha.- Daughter of Hereric. Sister of Saint Hereswitha. Grand-niece of King Saint Edwin. Baptized in 627 at age thirteen by Saint Paulinus of York. Lived as a lay woman until age 33 when she became a Benedictine nun at the monastery of Chelles in France. Abbess at Hartepool, Northumberland, England. Abbess of the double monastery of Whitby,

Streaneshalch. Abbess to Saint Wilfrid of York, Saint John of Beverley, and three other bishops. Patroness and supporter of learning and culture, including patronage of the poet Caedmon. Hilda and her houses followed the Celtic liturgy and rule, but many houses had adopted the continental Benedictine rule, and the Roman liturgy. Hilda convened a conference in 664 to help settle one a single rule. When the conference settled on the Roman and Benedictine, they were adopted throughout England, and Hilda insured the observance of her houses. Born 614 at Northumbria, England Died 680 of natural causes Representation - holding Whitby abbey in her hands with a crown on her head or at her feet; turning serpents into stone; stopping wild birds from stealing a corn crop; being carried to heaven by the angels.

The Monk Nikon, Hegumen of Radonezh - The Monk Nikon, Hegumen of Radonezh, a close student and successor of the Monk Sergei of Radonezh (+ 1392, Comm. 25 September and 5 July), was born at Yur'ev-Pol'sk. Having heard of the angelic life of the Radonezh Wonderworker, the lad came to the Monk Sergei and requested to take vows into the angelic form. The Monk Sergei discerned the purity and prudence of the lad and gave him a testing – he sent him to his disciple Athanasii the Eminent (+ post 1401, Comm. 12 September). But the Monk Athanasii would not accept him right away. Only after seeing the persistence of the lad did he vow him into the monastic form. The Monk Nikon in living with him worked at prayer, studied Holy Scripture and persevered in virtue and purity. When he reached the age of maturity, he was ordained to the dignity of priest. After a certain while the Monk Athanasii gave him blessing to go see the Monk Sergei. The Monk Sergei, joyfully catching sight of him, said: "It is fine that thou art come, my child Nikon" and happily received him. He gave orders for the Monk Nikon to serve the brethren. The disciple passed whole days at monastic matters, and nights – in prayerful talks with God. The Monk Sergei was comforted by his life. Having received a special insight concerning him, the Monk Sergei bid his disciple to dwell with him in his own cell, so that he might share in spiritual attainment. He fondly instructed him and explained much about the essence of spiritual life. The Monk Sergei at first assigned the Monk Nikon to the duty of assisting the monastery head, but six months before his repose, when he had committed himself to silence, he appointed the disciple as his successor.

After the death of the Monk Sergei (+ 25 September 1392), he attentively attended to everything that was directed him by the founder of the monastery. He had the habit to make the rounds of all the monastic services, and never did he forsake common tasks, working on a equal footing with all the brethren. But the burden of monastic head weighed down upon the Monk Nikon. Recalling his quiet life in the Serpukhov Visotsk monastery with the Monk Athanasii, and later with the Monk Sergei, he gave up the governance and retired into his own cell. For six years the monastery was guided by the Monk Savva of Storozhevsk (+ 1407, Comm. 3 December). In the year 1400 the Monk Savva founded his own monastery near Zvenigorod, and the brethren entreated the Monk Nikon to again take over the governance. He consented, but assigned himself a certain time each day for silence, so as to stand alone before God.

When reports began to spread about an invasion of the Russian land by khan Edigei (1408), the Monk Nikon zealously prayed to God for the sparing of the monastery. In the nuance of a dream there appeared to him the Moscow Sainted-hierarchs Peter (+ 1326, Comm. 21 December) and Alexei (+ 1378, Comm. 12 February) together with the Monk Sergei and said, that he should not grieve over the destruction of the monastery, since it would not become desolate, but rather grow all the more. The monks left the monastery, taking with them relics and cell-items, and when they returned they saw that their beloved place had been reduced to ashes. But the Monk Nikon did not despair, and the task of the brethren was renewed work. First of all was built a wooden church in the Name of the Most Holy LifeCreating Trinity and it was consecrated in the year 1411 on the day of repose of the Monk Sergei, 25 September. The monastery was restored, and the Monk Nikon undertook construction of a stone church over the grave of his spiritual father, the Monk Sergei. The work-crew digging at the time for the foundations uncovered on 5 July 1422 the undecayed relics of the Monk Sergei. Amidst universal rejoicing they placed the relics in a new reliquary and at the transferred-to new site a wooden church was built (now at this place is the church in honour of the Descent of the Holy Spirit). The Monk Nikon later erected a new stone church in the Name of the glorious God in Trinity, and in memory and praise to his spiritual father, he transferred the holy relics into this newly built church. For the embellishment of the temple the Monk Nikon brought in the finest iconographers, the Monks Saint Andrei (Rublev) and Daniel (Cherny). Then also the Monk Andrei wrote the Icon of the LifeCreating and Most Holy Trinity, embodying in it what was revealed to the Monk Sergei. The Monk Nikon was occupied with the construction of the Trinity church until the end of his life. The place of his future repose together with the Monk Sergei was revealed to him in a vision before his death. He summoned the brethren and gave them directives. Having communed the All-Pure Body of Christ and His

Precious Blood, the Monk Nikon gave the brethren a last blessing and said: "Let us go thither, my soul, whence it is prepared for thee to dwell; let us proceed with joy: for Christ doth summon thee". Having made the sign of the cross, the Monk Nikon died on 27 November 1426. He was buried near the reliquary of the Monk Sergei. Under Sainted-hierarch Jona (1448-1461), the priestmonk Pakhomii the Logothete wrote down the service and Life of the Monk Nikon, and in the year 1547 there was established a generally observed celebration to him. In the year 1548 a church in his name was built over the grave of the Monk Nikon, and in 1623 a new one was constructed in its place, in which the relics of the Monk Nikon rest under a crypt. In 1976 at the Trinity-Sergeev Lavra, the 500 year anniversary of the repose of the Monk Nikon was solemnly observed.

Also commemorated on this day: Hieromartyr Basil, Bishop of Hamah (†282); Martyrs Gregory, Victor, and Geminus (†304); Martyrs Acisclus and Victoria of Córdoba (4th C); Venerable Longinus of Egypt (4th C); St. Gregory, bishop of Tours (†594); Venerable Vulfolaic, stylite of Trier (†594); Righteous John and Zachariah the Cobbler (7th C); Venerable Lazarus the iconographer (†857); Martyr Gobron (Michael in baptism) and with him, 133 soldiers in Georgia (†914); Venerable Gennadius of Vatopedi (15th C); St. Maximus, patriarch of Constantinople (†1482); + Venerable Paisius (Velichkovsky) (†1794) transferred from November 15th; Venerable Sebastian (Dabovich) of Jackson (†1940).

18 November / 1 December — The Holy Martyr Platon — From the town of Ancyra in Galatia, he was born and brought up a Christian. Even in his youth, he showed great perfection in every virtue. Platon did not conceal his faith in Christ the Lord, but preached it openly, denouncing idolaters for their bowing down to dead creatures in place of the living Creator. For this, he was brought before the governor, Agrippinus, for trial, and was harshly tortured by him. When the governor began to urge him to escape death and save his life by worshipping idols, Platon replied: 'There are two deaths: the temporal and the eternal; and there are two lives: the one transitory and the other without end.' Then Agrippinus put him to harsher torture. Among other tortures, he commanded that red-hot cannon balls be placed on his naked body, and that his flesh be cut into strips. 'Torture me more harshly', cried the martyr to the torturers, 'that your inhumanity and my endurance may be the more clearly seen.' When the torturer spoke to the martyr about the philosopher Platon, saying that he was a pagan philosopher, he replied: 'I am not like Platon, nor he like me, except in our names. I learn and teach the wisdom that is of Christ, while he teaches the wisdom that is folly before God.' After that, Platon was thrown into prison, where he spent eighteen days without bread or water. When the warders marvelled that Platon could live without food for so long, he said to them: 'You are satiated by food, but I by holy prayer; you rejoice in wine, but I in Christ the true Vine.' He was finally beheaded with the sword in about 266, and received a wreath of eternal glory.

The Holy Martyrs Romanus and Barulas - St. Romanus was a deacon of the church in Caesarea and zealously preached the Gospel in Antioch. One day, there was an idolatrous feast. The Eparch of Antioch, Asclapiades, went to enter a pagan temple to offer sacrifices, but Romanus stood in the way and said: "You sin, O Governor, when you go to the idols. The idols are not gods—Christ is the only true God." The enraged eparch subjected Romanus to tortures and had him flogged and scraped without mercy. During this, St. Romanus saw a child by the name of Barulas, and said to Asclapiades: "Even this small child has more understanding than you, old man, for he knows the true God and you do not." The eparch questioned Barulas about his faith, and he confessed Christ the Lord as the One True God, contrary to false idolatry. Asclapiades commanded that young Barulas be beheaded, and St. Romanus be strangled in prison. Thus, both of these martyrs inherited the Kingdom of Christ in the year 303.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyrs Zaccheaus the deacon of Gadara and Alphaeus the reader (†303); Martyr Romanus of Antioch (†305); Blessed Magna of Ancyra (†c.425); Martyr Anastasius of Epirus (†1750); Venerable Daniel of Corfu (†1764); Venerable Helen, abbess of Novodevichy Monastery (†1547); Righteous Nicholas Vinogradov, confessor, priest (†1948); Synaxis of the saints of Estonia.

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

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

The Venerable Barlaam and Ioasaph the Heir- Barlaam and Ioasaph were Indian ascetics. Ioasaph was son and heir to King Abenner. By God's providence, elder Barlaam visited him, taught him the Christian Faith and baptized him. After that, the elder withdrew to a mountain to live a life of asceticism, but Ioasaph remained to struggle with many temptations in the world, and by God's grace, to overcome them. Ioasaph finally succeeded in bringing his father to Christ. After he was baptized, King Abenner lived four years in deep repentance-for he had committed grave sins in persecuting Christians-and then ended his earthly existence and went to the better life. The young Ioasaph turned over the rule of the kingdom to his friend Barachias, and entered the wilderness to live a life of asceticism for the sake of Christ. His one desire on earth was to see his spiritual father, elder Barlaam, once again. The merciful God fulfilled his desire, and one day Ioasaph stood before Barlaam's cave and cried out: "Bless me, father!" Elder Barlaam labored in asceticism in the wilderness for seventy years and lived one hundred years in all. St. Ioasaph himself left his kingdom at the age of twenty-five, and went into the wilderness where he lived for thirty-five years. They both had great love for the Lord Jesus, brought many to the true Faith and entered into the eternal joy of their Lord.

St. Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow - Born of a priestly family near Moscow in 1782, he entered seminary at a young age and soon distinguished himself for his piety and his scholarship of ancient languages. He was tonsured a monk, but was made a professor at the seminary in Moscow, where his expositions of the Faith, spoken and written, caused him to be regarded as a Father of the Church in his own time; many called him "the new Chrysostom."

In 1817, at the age of thirty-five, he was consecrated bishop, and in only a few years rose to the rank of Metropolitan of Moscow, the highest office in the Russian Church since Peter the Great abolished the Patriarchate. He remained Metropolitan for the rest of his life. Saint Philaret seemed literally tireless in his labors for the Church: no-one knew when he slept, and his servant, no matter when he came to the Metropolitan's quarters, would always find him working at his desk. He worked to restore moral standards among the clergy, which had fallen into laxity. Whenever he was forced to depose a cleric, he would secretly contribute to the family's needs out of his own resources. Similarly, he used up all of his financial resources in charitable works, always taking care that his donations were kept secret. He funded the building of a large hospice for orphans and children of poor clergy families.

St Philaret gave his full support to the fifty-year project of translating the Bible into Russian, and translated several Old Testament books himself, though the project was opposed by the Tsar and by some powerful groups in the Church. He supported the work of the fathers of Optina Monastery to publish translations of the Fathers of the Church; these translations, when they appeared, contributed to a great spiritual awakening in Russia.

He reposed in peace in 1867 at the age of eighty-five. The well-loved "Morning Prayer of Philaret of Moscow" which begins "Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace..." was brought into Orthodox piety by St Philaret but seems originally to have been written by Francois Fenelon, the French Quietist writer. The prayer also came to be used by the Optina Elders and is sometimes referred to as the "Morning Prayer of the Optina Elders." The prayer appears in several similar versions.

O Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace. Help me in all things to rely upon Your holy will. In every hour of the day reveal Your will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me. Teach me to treat all that comes to me throughout the day with peace of soul, and with the firm conviction that Your will governs all. In all my deeds and words guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events let me not forget that all are sent by You. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering or embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of this coming day with all that it will bring. Direct my will, teach me to pray, pray You Yourself in me. Amen.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyr Heliodorus of Pamphylia (†c.273); Martyr Azes and with him 150 soldiers (†284-305); Venerable Patroclus of Bourges (†576); St. Egbert, bishop of York (†766); Venerable Hilarion of Thessalonica, wonderworker (†875); Venerable Simon of Calabria (10th C); Venerable Barlaam, the first abbot of Kiev Caves (†1065); Finding of the relics of Monk-martyr Adrian of Poshekhonye (1625); New Hieromartyr John Vishnevsky, priest (†1920); New Hieromartyr Porphirius, bishop of Simferopol, Ioasaph, bishop of Chistopol, Alexander Mishutin, Alexander Serebrov, Demetrius Kuklin, Ignatius Teslin, Jacob Brilliantov, Jacob Peredery, John Malinovsky, John Piramidin, John Florovsky, Constantine Mikhailovsky, Michael Dmitriev, Sergius Mikhaev, Simeon Krivosheev, priest, Monk-martyrs Benjamin (Szykov); Gennady (Rebeza), Gerasim (Sukhov), Ioasaph (Krimzin), Michael (Kvanin), Peter (Mamontov), Martyrs Valentine Kornienko, Peter Antonov, Leonid Salkov, and Timothy Kucherov (†1937); Venerable Alexis of Carpatho-Russia (†1947); Venerable Porphyrios of Kavsokalyvia (†1991).

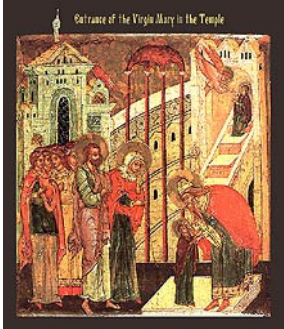
20 November / 3 December — Forefeast of the Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos —

Nativity Fast — Our Holy Father Gregory of Decapolis — He was born in Isaurian Decapolis of eminent and devout parents, Sergius and Maria. When he had finished his schooling, his parents desired him to marry, but he fled to the desert and became a monk. He lived in various places: in Byzantium and Rome, and on Mount Olympus. Wherever he found himself, he made men marvel by his asceticism and miracles. It happened at times that his face was lit up with heavenly light, and that angels of God appeared to him; he looked upon the beauty of the angels and heard their blessed singing. He lived a long and godly life, and died peacefully in Constantinople in the ninth century, his soul entering into the joy of his Lord.

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

St Proclus, Patriarch of Constantinople - Proclus was a disciple of St. John Chrysostom. In the year 426 he was consecrated Bishop of Cyzicus, and in 435 was chosen Patriarch of Constantinople. He governed the Church of God as a prudent hierarch. During his tenure, two significant events occurred. The first was the translation of the relics of St. John Chrysostom from Comana to Constantinople, at the desire of both the emperor and the patriarch. Emperor Theodosius the Younger was then reigning with his sister, Pulcheria. The second event was the great earthquake in Constantinople and the surrounding countryside. Many of the largest and most beautiful buildings were destroyed by this terrible earthquake. Then the patriarch, with the emperor, many of the clergy, nobles and people, came out in a procession of supplication. As they were praying to God, a child was miraculously lifted high in the air, until he was out of sight. Then he returned and was lowered gently to the ground. Asked where he had been, the child replied that he had been lifted up to heaven among the angels and that he had heard the angels sing: "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us!" Upon hearing this, all the people in the procession began to sing it and the earthquake ceased immediately. From that time on, this beautiful hymn was adopted by the Church. The child soon reposed, and was interred in the Church of St. Irene. In all, St. Proclus served as a hierarch for twenty years and reposed peacefully in the Lord in the year 446.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyr Dasius of Dorostolum (†303); Martyrs Eustace, Thespesius, and Anatolius (†312); Hieromartyr Nerses, bishop, and his disciples: Joseph, John, Shapur, Isaac, and Hypatios, bishops of Persia (†343); Martyrs Azat the eunuch, Sasan, Thekla, and Anna (†343); Venerable Isidore of Alexandria (4th C); St. Isaac, bishop of Armenia (†440); St. Theoctistus the confessor (†855); Venerable Diodorus of Yuregorsk (†1633); New Hieromartyr Macarius, bishop of Dnepropetrovsk, Alexander Sakharov, Alexis Amanov, Alexis Nikatov, Anatoly Zhurakovsky, Basil Kandelabrov, Vladimir Medvediuk, Emilian Panasevich, John Zabolotny, John Sarva, Nicholas Zelenov, Nicholas Pokrovsky, priests, Monk-martyrs Arsenius (Dmitriev), Eutychiuss (Kachur), Hilarion (Pisarets), and Nun-martyr Ioannikia (Kozhevnikova) (†1937); New Nun-martyr Tatiana (Fomicheva) (†after 1937); ‘Olonets, Karelia’ Icon of the Mother of God.



21 November / 4 December —The Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos — Nativity Fast

— **Nativity Fast** — When the most holy Virgin Mary had reached the age of three, her parents, holy Joachim and Anna, took her from Nazareth to Jerusalem, to give her to the service of God in fulfilment of their promise. It was three days' journey to Jerusalem, but, going as they were on God's work, they did not find the journey difficult. Many of Joachim and Anna's kinsmen gathered to take part in this celebration, in which the invisible angels of God also took part. Maidens went ahead with lighted candles in their hands, followed by the most holy Virgin, led on either side by her father and mother.

The Virgin was clad in royal and beautiful garments, like those of the 'king's daughter', the Bride of God (Ps. 44:9,10). Behind them walked many of their kinsfolk and friends, all bearing lighted candles. There were fifteen steps leading to the Temple. Her parents stood the Virgin on the first step, and she ran quickly to the top on her own, where the High Priest, Zacharias, the father of St John the Forerunner, met her and, taking her by the hand, led her not only into the Temple but into the Holy of Holies, the holiest place of all, into which none could enter except the High Priest, and that once a year. St Theophylact of Ochrid says that Zacharias was 'out of himself, and moved by God' when he led the Virgin into the chief place in the Temple, beyond the second curtain—otherwise there could be no explanation of his action. Her parents then offered sacrifices to God, according to the Law, received the priest's blessing and returned home, leaving the most holy Virgin in the Temple. She dwelt in the Temple for nine whole years. While her parents were alive, they visited her often. When they departed this life, the holy Virgin was left an orphan, and longed to remain in the Temple for the rest of her days, without entering into marriage. This being contrary both to the Law and Israelite custom, she was confided at the age of twelve to St Joseph, a kinsman of hers in Nazareth, so that she might, under the protection of betrothal, live in virginity and thus fulfil both her desire and the demands of the Law, for it was unknown in Israel at that time for a girl to vow perpetual virginity. The holy Virgin Mary was the first to do this, and was later followed by thousand upon thousand of virgin men and women in the Church of Christ.

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

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

St. Columbanus, abbot and founder of Luxeuil Abbey, France (615) - Born 543 at West Leinster, Ireland, handsome and educated, Columbanus was torn between a desire for God and easy access to the pleasures of the world. Acting on advice of a holy anchoress, he decided to withdraw from the world; his family opposed the choice, his mother going so far as to block the door. Monk at Lough Erne. He studied Scripture extensively, and wrote a commentary on the Psalms. Monk at Bangor under abbot Saint Comgall. In middle age, Columbanus felt a call to missionary life. With twelve companions (Saint Attala, Columbanus the Younger, Cummain, Domgal, Eogain, Eunan, Saint Gall, Gurgano, Libran, Lua, Sigisbert and Waldoleno) he travelled to Scotland, England, and then to France in 585. The area, though nominally Christian, had fallen far from the faith, but were ready for missionaries, and they had some success. They were warmly greeted at the court of Gontram, and king of Burgundy invited the band to stay. They chose the half-ruined Roman fortress of Annegray in the Vosges Mountains for their new home with Columbanus as their abbot. The simple lives and obvious holiness of the group drew disciples to join them, and the sick to be healed by their prayers. Columbanus, to find solitude for

prayer, often lived for long periods in a cave seven miles from the monastery, using a messenger to stay in touch with his brothers. When the number of new monks over-crowded the old fortress, King Gontram gave them the old castle of Luxeuil to found a new house in 590. Soon after, a third house was founded at Fontaines. Columbanus served as master of them all, and wrote a Rule for them; it incorporated many Celtic practices, was approved by the Council of Macon in 627, but was superseded by the Benedictine. Problems arose early in the 7th century. Many Frankish bishops objected to a foreign missionary with so much influence, to the Celtic practices he brought, especially those related to Easter, and his independence from them. In 602 he was summoned to appear before them for judgment; instead of appearing, he sent a letter advising them to hold more synods, and to concern themselves with more important things than which rite he used to celebrate Easter. The dispute over Easter continued to years, with Columbanus appealing to multiple popes for help, but was only settled with Columbanus abandoned the Celtic calendar when he moved to Italy and adopted Eastern Orthodox Pascha.. In addition to his problems with the bishops, Columbanus spoke out against vice and corruption in the royal household and court, which was in the midst of a series of complex power grabs. Brunehaut stirred up the bishops and nobility against the abbot; Thierry ordered him to conform to the local ways, and shut up. Columbanus refused, and was briefly imprisoned at Besançon, but he escaped and returned to Luxeuil. Thierry and Brunehaut sent an armed force to force him and his foreign monks back to Ireland. As soon as his ship set sail, a storm drove them back to shore; the captain took it as a sign, and set the monks free. They made their way to King Clothaire at Soissons, Neustria and then the court of King Theodebert of Austrasia in 611. He travelled to Metz, then Mainz, Suevi, Alamanni, and finally Lake Zurich. Their evangelization work there was unsuccessful, and the group passed on to Arbon, then Bregenz, and then Lake Constance. Saint Gall, who knew the local language best, took the lead in this region; many were converted to the faith, and the group founded a new monastery as their home and base. However, a year later political upheaval caused Columbanus to cross the Alps into Italy, arriving in Milan in 612. The Christian royal family treated him well, and he preached and wrote against Arianism and Nestorianism. In gratitude, the Lombard king gave him a track of land call Bobbio between Milan and Genoa. There he rebuilt a half-ruined church of Saint Peter, and around it he founded an abbey that was to be the source for evangelization throughout northern Italy for centuries to come. Columbanus always enjoyed being in the forests and caves, and as he walked through the woods birds and squirrels would ride on his shoulders. Toward the end of his life came word that his old enemies were dead, and his brothers wanted him to come back north, but he declined. Knowing that his time was almost done, he retired to a cave for solitude, and died as he had predicted. His influence continued for centuries as those he converted handed on the faith, the brothers he taught evangelised untold numbers more, and his brother monks founded over one hundred monasteries to protect learning and spread the faith. Miracles ascribed to Columbanus include: to obtain food for a sick brother monk, he cured the wife of the donor; once when he was surrounded by wolves, he simply walked through them; at one point he needed a cave for his solitary prayers; a bear lived there; when Columbanus asked, the bear left; when he needed water in order to live in the cave, a spring appeared nearby; when the Luxeuil monastery granary ran empty, he prayed over it and it refilled; he multiplied bread and beer for his community; he cured several sick monks, who then got straight out of bed to reap the monastery's harvest; gave sight to a blind man at Orleans; he destroyed a vat of beer being prepared for a pagan festival by breathing on it; when the monastery needed help in the fields, he tamed a bear, and yoked it to a plough.

22 November / 5 December — Afterfeast of the Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos —

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

to rejoice with him in eternity. St Cecilia suffered with the others in about the year 230. Her relics are preserved in the church dedicated to her name in Rome. In the Western Church, St Cecilia is regarded as the patron of Church Music.

Martyrdom of St. Michael, prince of Tver - Holy Nobleborn Prince Michael of Tver was born in the year 1272, already after the death of his father Greatprince Yaroslav Yaroslavich, – a brother by birth of holy Nobleborn Prince Alexander Nevsky. On the journey to the Horde prince Yaroslav had fallen ill, and having taken monastic vows with the name Athanasii (Afanasii), he died. Michael's mother, Xenia (Ksenia), raised her son in fervent love towards God. Michael was educated and studied under the guidance of the Novgorod archbishop (probably Kliment). He took the place of his older brother Svyatoslav in the Tver principality. In 1285 he built a stone church in honour of the Saviour's Transfiguration in place of the wooden church of Saints Cosmas and Damian. Upon the death of Greatprince Andrei Alexandrovich (1305), Michael – through right of seniority, received at the Horde the *yarlyk*-grant to the greatprincely throne. But the Moscow prince Yurii Danilovich would not submit to this, since he sought the greatprincely rule for himself. He was often at the Golden Horde of the new khan Uzbek, who had accepted Mahometanism and was distinguished by his cruelty and fanaticism. Prince Yurii knew how to please the khan, and he married his sister Konchaka and became greatprince. And even with this he did not quiet down, but instead began an internecine war with Tver. In the army of Yurii was also a detachment of Tatars sent by Uzbek, with Kavgadi at the head. But the men of Tver, with holy Prince Michael at the head, on 22 December 1317 defeated Yurii in a route. Many captives were taken, in which number were Kavgadi – whom Saint Michael released, and the Moscow prince's wife Konchaka, who unexpectedly died at Tver. Prince Yurii slandered Saint Michael afront the khan, accusing him of poisoning Konchaka. The khan became enraged, threatening to destroy the princely *votchina*-holding of Saint Michael, and demanded that he appear to render an answering. Not wishing to spill Russian blood in an unequal struggle with the khan, Saint Michael humbly set out to the Horde, realising that this meant death for him. He took his farewell from his family and from the Tver people, and received blessing for his exploit of martyrdom from his spiritual father hegumen John. "Father, – said the saint, – I was much concerned about the peace of Christians, but through my sins, I was not able to stop internecine war. Now give me blessing, if it should hold having my blood spilled for them, that they might have some respite, and that for me the Lord forgive my sins".

At the Horde an unjust trial was held over the saint, which pronounced him guilty in disobedience to the khan and sentenced him to death. They removed him under guard and put him in an heavy wooden stock. As was his habit, in prison Saint Michael constantly read the Psalter and blessed the Lord for granting him to suffer. He asked not to be abandoned in his present torments. Since the hands of the holy sufferer were secured in the stock, a boy sat before him and turned the pages of the Psalter. The holy prince-captive long languished at the Horde, enduring beatings and ridicule. They suggested that he flee, but the saint bravely answered: "In all my life I never fled an enemy, and if in saving myself my people remained in peril, what glory is it to me? No, let it be as the Lord doth will". Through the mercy of God, he was not deprived of Christian solace: Orthodox priests attended to him, – the hegumens Aleksandr and Mark, and he each week made confession and communed the Holy Mysteries of Christ, receiving before his death a Christian preparation. At the instigation of prince Yurii and Kavgadi, who took revenge on the holy prince for their defeat, assassins rushed into the encampment where the captive was held. They fiercely beat the martyr and kicked at him with their feet, after which one of them stabbed Saint Michael with a knife (1318).

The stripped body of the holy martyr was exposed for abuse, and later they covered him with a cloth and placed him on a large board, attached to a cart. By night two guards were set to watch the body, but fear seized them and they fled. In the morning his body was not on the board. On the previous night many, not only Orthodox by also Tatars, had seen how two radiant clouds did shine over the place where lay the body of the martyr, and although many wild animals roamed the steppes, not one of them had touched him. In the morning everyone said: "Prince Michael is a saint, and innocently murdered". From the Horde the body of the prince was transferred to Moscow, where they buried him in the church of the Saviour-Wood in the Kremlin. It was only a year later in 1319 that at Tver they learned about the fate of their prince. At the wish of his spouse, Princess Anna (Comm. 2 October), and at the request of the Tver people, the relics of Saint Michael of Tver were transferred to his native city and on 6 September 1320 were placed in the church built by him in honour of the Transfiguration of the Lord. Local festal celebration of the holy nobleborn prince began soon after the transfer of his relics to Tver, and at a 1549 Sobor (Council) there took place the general Church glorification of the saint. On 24 November 1632 the undecayed relics of Saint Michael were uncovered. The holy prince has often

rendered graced help to the Russian land. In 1606 the Polish and Lithuanians besieging Tver saw repeatedly, how from the city there rode out a wondrous horseman upon a white horse with sword in hand, turning them to flight. Later viewing an icon of holy nobleborn Prince Michael, they affirmed with an oath to the Tver archbishop Theoktist, that the horseman was indeed Saint Michael himself.

Also commemorated on this day: Holy Apostles of the Seventy Philemon and Archippus, and Equal-to-the-Apostles Martyr Apphia (1st C); Martyrs Procopius the reader (†303); Martyrs Agapios and Agapion (†304); Martyrs Stephen, Mark, and another Mark (4th C); Venerable Agabbas of Syria (5th C); Righteous soldier Michael of Bulgaria (†866); Venerable Germanus of Eikosiphinissa (9th C); St. Clement, bishop of Ochrid (†916); Right-believing Prince Yaropolk (Peter in baptism) of Vladimir in Volhynia (†1086); Venerable Callistus, patriarch of Constantinople (15th C); New Hieromartyr Vladimir Ryasensky, priest (†1932); New Hieromartyr Joasaph, bishop of Mogilev, Elias Gromoglasov, Jacob Sokolov, Theodore Gusev, John Baranov, Basil Bov, Paul Evdokimov, John Smirnov, Athanasius Milov, Alexis Benemansky, priests, Monk-martyrs Gerasimus (Mochalov), Eutychius (Didenko), Abner (Sinitsyn), Sava (Suslov), Mark (Makhrov), and Martyr Boris Kozlov (†1937); Venerable Paraskeva (Matieshina), confessor (†1953).

† Daily Scripture Readings †

Monday – Epistle: for the 27th Monday: I Tim. 5:1-10 (\$285 mid)
Gospel: for the 26th Monday: Luke 14:12-15 (\$75)

Tuesday – Epistle: for the 27th Tuesday: I Tim. 5:11-21 (\$286); for the 27th Wednesday: I Tim. 5:22-6:11 (\$287)
Gospel: for the 26th Tuesday: Luke 14:25-35 (\$77); for the 26th Wednesday: Luke 15:1-10 (\$78)

Wednesday – Vespers: II Tim. 3:16-4:8; Eph. 6:10-17; Eph. 6:1-9
Matins Gospel: John 10:1-9 (\$35 mid)
Epistle: Eph. 6:10-17 (\$233)
Gospel: Matt. 5:14-20 (\$11)

Thursday – Epistle: for the 27th Thursday: I Tim. 6:17-21 (\$289); for the 27th Friday: II Tim. 1:1-2, 8-18 (\$290)
Gospel: for the 26th Thursday: Luke 16:1-9 (\$80); for the 26th Friday: Luke 16:15-18, 17:1-4 (\$82)

Friday - Vespers: Ex. 40:1-5, 9, 10b, 16, 34-35; III Kings 7:51, 8:1, 3-7, 9-11; Ezek. 43:27, 44:1-4
Matins Gospel: Luke 1:39-49, 56 (\$4) Epistle: Heb. 9:1-7 (\$320)
Gospel: Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28 (\$54)

Saturday – Epistle: for the 27th Saturday: Gal. 5:22-6:2 (\$213)
Gospel: for the 26th Saturday: Luke 9:57-62 (\$49)

HYMN OF PRAISE - Saints Joachim and Anna

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

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

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

REFLECTION

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