

# The Sunday of Orthodoxy / The First Sunday of Great Lent

28 February / 13 March 2011

**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.

**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.

**Kondak First Sunday of Great Lent, Tone 8:** The Uncircumscribable Word of the Father was circumscribed when he took flesh of thee, O Theotokos; and when He had restored the defiled image to its ancient state, He suffused it with divine beauty. As for us, confessing our salvation, we record it in deed and word.

## Matins Gospel IX

**Epistle: St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews 11: 24-26, 32 - 12:2**

24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. ... 32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

## WE ARE SURROUNDED BY SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

At all times, indeed, but specially then, when I reflect upon the achievements of the saints, it comes over me to feel despondency concerning my own condition, because we have not even in dreams experienced the things among which those men spent their whole lives, not paying the penalty of sins, but always doing rightly and yet always afflicted .. And having spoken of what befell the apostles (Cf. I Cor. 4:11, II Cor. 11:23-28, 12:7, Phil. 1:12, II Tim. 3:11) ...Elijah suffered the same thing with them (II Kings 1:8) and the Son of Man (Matt. 8:20) ...For God 'has provided some better thing for us.' In order that they might not seem to have the advantage of us from being crowned before us, He appointed one time for crowning for all ...Do you see His tender carefulness?

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXVIII on Hebrews XI, 1, 2. B#58, pp. 491, 492.*

## The Gospel According To St. John 1: 43-51

43 At that time, Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. 46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. 49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, 'Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel. 50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. 51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.



## THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

“The day following, Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow Me” (Jn. 1:43). So the Holy Gospel begins this Sunday, recounting the calling of the Holy Apostles. Centuries have passed, and the same call is audible today, but now refers directly to us, “Follow Me.” And we ask the Lord, “Where?” And the Church answers us by the very name of this Sunday, “into Orthodoxy!”

Just be attentive. Tonight, when this week comes to a close and a new week of Great Lent begins, the Holy Church will say for our edification: “Lord, Thou hast given abundant gifts to those who fear Thee!” And we cannot say that we did not receive these gifts. We received the Sacrament of Confession, the Sacrament of the Eucharist—the Body and Blood of Christ, the Tree of Life. Yes, we undoubtedly received them. But do we have the state of mind which is expressed in the second part of the prayer: “Lord, Thou hast given abundant gifts to those who fear Thee.” The gifts have been given, but are we those who fear God? Yet the fear of God is not an ordinary fear as before someone or something. No. This is the fear of losing what the Lord has given to our heart.

And at the same time, the Holy Church, while telling us that we have received the Grace and Gifts of God, reveals to us through the Apostle reading the states of mind we should possess. These are the states which should be possessed by those who have achieved everything which Christ gives. We know what these achievers have gone through: sufferings, beatings, bonds, prison; they were stoned, sawn asunder, exiled, died by the sword, wandered in the mountains. Those of whom the whole world was not worthy hid in ravines, in caves—they all bore witness to their faith, but they did not receive what had been promised. And this is because God provided for them something better, something worthy of them (Heb. 11:37-40).

Yes, as we see, God calls: “Follow Me! I will give you everything.” But at the same time, such sufferings, such experiences, such horrible things! Look around you, at our walls which are painted with the pictures of saints. All of them are now in the heavenly dwellings, and yet all of them experienced, as every one of us experiences, the way of our earthly existence. Look, among them were archbishops, bishops, priests, monks; there were farmers, nobles and princes, workers of all kinds; there were labourers, people of simple background; there were great scholars, there were illiterate people. And all of them experienced on earth every kind of suffering, grief, and horror. But they kept that which the Church requires. When the Church says through the words of Christ, “Follow Me,” she is showing us where to go: into Orthodoxy. In the Russian language, Orthodoxy means the Right Word, that word which is true, which we should not betray; the word which we too have given and are again giving every year.

After the Nativity of Christ (on the day of Circumcision), when the circumcision of our heart is accomplished, then we say, “We belong to Christ, we are Christian. Our will is His Will. Christ is our Life; Christ is our Goal; Christ is our Way.” And this way leads us into the Church. Bishop Theophan the Recluse shows us what to do in order to go the way of the Church. He addressed his flock (this was in the 1870’s) with the following words: “We know what technology teaches us, what mechanics teaches us, law, economics. But the Church teaches us about the movement of our heart. Learn and keep in your heart everything the Holy Church teaches, and receiving Godly forces through the sacraments, and quickening them through the holy services and prayers of the Church, go unswervingly the Way of Christ’s commandments under the guidance of lawful shepherds, and you will undoubtedly reach the Kingdom of Heaven and will be saved.”

And so, being zealous for salvation, all our attention should be directed to our heart, to inscribe on it Christian feelings and dispositions. Bishop Theophan reveals to us that the most important thing is in our heart, dispositions, those feelings which appear in the heart. External things are needed, but only in so far as they bear the spirit which spiritualises them. And social life will become true life only if into social relationships you bring spirit, which means heart, the heart of a true Christian. And family life will be true family life only if into all traditions of the external temporal family life we bring those relationships of the heart which God gives us in His Beatitudes: poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, peaceableness—out of this will come real family life. And this way, and only this way, into all phases of our life will come the Triumph of Orthodoxy.

*The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei*

On this day the Church commemorates the final ending of the Iconoclast controversy and the definitive restoration of the holy icons to the churches by the Empress Theodora, acting as Regent for her young son Michael III. This took place on the first Sunday in Lent, 11 March 843. There is, however, not only an historical link between the first Sunday and the restoration of the icons but also a spiritual affinity. If Orthodoxy triumphed in the epoch of the Iconoclast controversy, this was because so many of the faithful were prepared to undergo exile, torture, and even death, for the sake of the truth. The Feast of Orthodoxy is above all a celebration in honour of the martyrs and confessors who struggled and suffered for the faith: hence its appropriateness for the season of Lent, when we are striving to imitate the martyrs by means of our ascetic self-denial. The fixing of the Triumph of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday is therefore much more than the result of some chance historical conjunction.

The Triodion gives the text of a special ‘Office of the Triumph of Orthodoxy’, which is held at the end of Matins or, more commonly, at the end of the Divine Liturgy on this Sunday. The Office celebrates not only the restoration of the holy icons but, more generally, the victory of the true faith over all heresies and errors. A procession is made with the holy icons, and after this extracts are read from the synodical decree of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787). Then sixty anathemas are pronounced against various heretics dating from the third to the fourteenth century; ‘Eternal Memory’ is sung in honour of the

emperors, patriarchs and fathers who defended the Orthodox faith; and 'Many Years' is proclaimed in honour of our present rulers and bishops. Unfortunately in many parts of the Orthodox Church today this impressive service has fallen into disuse; elsewhere it is performed in a greatly abbreviated form. Before the Triumph of Orthodoxy came to be celebrated on the first Sunday, there was on this day a commemoration of Moses, Aaron, Samuel, and the prophets. Traces of this more ancient observance can still be seen in the choice of Epistle reading at the Liturgy (Hebrews 11: 24-6, 32-40), and in the Alleluia verse appointed before the Gospel: 'Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His Name'.

### Saints of the Week

**28 February / 13 March — The Hieromartyr Proterius** - This saint was a priest in Alexandria at the time that the Patriarch there was the heretic Dioscorus, one of the founders of the Monophysite heresy which holds that in Christ there are not two natures but one. At that time, Marcian and Pulcheria were on the imperial throne. Proterius, a holy and devout man, stood up against Dioscorus, as a result of which he endured much misery. Then the 4th Ecumenical Council was summoned at Chalcedon, at which the Monophysite heresy was condemned. Dioscorus was cast down from the patriarchal throne and sent into exile, and in his place the orthodox Proterius was chosen. He governed the Church with zeal and love, a true follower of Christ. But the followers of Dioscorus did not stop creating confusion in Alexandria. In the face of such bloody chaos, Proterius left the town with the intention of going away for a time, but the Prophet Isaiah appeared to him on the road and said: 'Return to the town; I am waiting to take you.' Proterius returned and went into the church. Hearing of this, the insolent heretics rushed into the church, seized the Patriarch and stabbed him. About six of the faithful perished along with Proterius. Thus this wonderful pastor of Christ's flock received the crown of martyrdom for the truth of Orthodoxy, in 457; St Basil the Confessor; The Hieromartyr Nestor, Bishop of Magydos; Blessed Nicolas the Fool for Christ of Pskov; Our Holy Father John Cassian; Our Holy Father Barsanuphius; St. Oswald, archbishop of York (992).

**1 / 14 March — Our Holy Mother, the Martyr Eudocia** - Living in Heliopolis, a city of Phoenicia, during the reign of Trajan, she was at first a great harlot, then a penitent, a nun and finally a martyr. She gained great wealth from her harlotry. The reversal of her life was brought about, through the providence of God, by an elderly monk, Germanus, and that unintentionally. Coming to Heliopolis in the course of his work, he stayed at the house of a Christian woman whose home abutted onto Eudocia's. When at night he began, as was his monastic custom, to read the Psalter and a book on the Dreadful Judgement, Eudocia heard him and stood listening attentively to his every word until the end. Fear and dread took such hold on her that she remained awake until daybreak. As soon as it was dawn, she sent a servant to beg that monk to come to her. Germanus came, and they began a long conversation on that which the old monk had been reading the previous night, and especially on faith and salvation. The result of these discussions was that Eudocia asked the local bishop to baptise her. After her baptism, she gave all her goods to the church, to be distributed to the poor, dismissed her servants and slaves and retired to a women's monastery. She so devoted herself to the monastic life—to obedience, patience, vigils, prayer and fasting—that after thirteen months she was chosen as abbess. She lived fifty-six years in the monastery and was worthy in the eyes of God to be given the gift of raising the dead. When a persecution of Christians arose under the governor, Vincent, holy Eudocia was beheaded. Here is a wonderful example of how a vessel of uncleanness can be purified, sanctified and filled with a precious, heavenly fragrance by the grace of the Holy Spirit; Our Holy Father Agapius; The Holy Martyr Antonina;

**St. David of Wales, bishop (542 - 601)** - of Welsh royalty. Son of King Sant of South Wales and Saint Non. Grandson of Ceredig, Prince of Cardigan. Uncle of King Arthur. Priest. Studied under Saint Paulinus. Collaborated with Saint Columba, Saint Gildas, and Saint Finnigan. Missionary and founder of monasteries. Following his contribution to the synod of Brevi in Cardiganshire, he was chosen primate of the Cambrian Church. Archbishop of Caerleon on Usk; moved the see to Menevia. Presided at the Synod of Brevi which condemned the Pelagian heresy. Encouraged and founded monasteries. First to build a chancel to Saint Joseph of Arimathea's wattle church at Glastonbury. After a vision in his monastery in the Rhos Valley, he set out next day with two monks to Jerusalem to aid the Patriarch. While there his preaching converted anti-Christians. It is said that once while he was preaching, a dove descended to his shoulder to show he had the blessings of the Spirit, and that the earth rose to lift him high above the people so that he could be heard by them all. Born at Menevia (now Saint David's), Wales. Died 601 at Mynyw, Wales. Name means beloved one.

**2 / 15 March — The Hieromartyr Theodotus, Bishop of Cyrenia** - He was chosen for his wisdom and virtue as bishop, and governed the Church of God with love and zeal. When a persecution of Christians arose in the time of the wicked Emperor Licinius, this man of God was taken before the judge and put to various tortures. When the torturer, Sabinus, urged him to deny Christ and worship pagan idols, Theodotus replied: 'If you knew the goodness of my God, who, it is my hope, will by these brief tortures make me worthy of eternal life, you would wish to suffer for Him as I do!' They hammered nails into his body, and he thanked God; then, believing that the end was near, he counselled and instructed the Christians that were around him. But, by the providence of God, there came at that moment an order from the Emperor Constantine to free all Christians who had been brought to trial for the sake of Christ. Then this saint also was freed, returned thus tortured to his see in Cyrenia and lived for a further two years. He then entered into rest in the Lord whom he had served faithfully and for whom he had suffered greatly. He finished his earthly course in 302, and went to the courts of the Lord; The Holy Martyr Troadius; The Four Hundred and Forty Martyrs of Lombardy; Our Holy Father Agathon; The Holy Martyr Euthalia.

**St. Chad of Mercia (672)** - Our holy father Chad was tonsured in Ireland while still in his teens. When he came to Great Britain, we do not know, but in about 655, he became abbot of a monastery in Yorkshire where he was known as a great struggler. St Aiden had been his elder, and St Chad followed his example in everything. St Chad became well known throughout Britain for his holiness, meekness and patient love. In 664, the Bishop of York reposed in the Lord, and Saint Chad was chosen as the new bishop. The saint was filled with love for his flock, and he wanted to teach them all about Christ. The holy bishop began to walk through the whole diocese, teaching the Gospel everywhere. He celebrated the Divine Liturgy in

every village and town, and preached from the town squares, where he set up crosses. Moreover, St Chad stopped to teach at every cottage, farm, castle and cross-road, and his diocese became one of the most enlightened in Britain. When blessed Theodore of Tarsus, a Greek bishop, was made Archbishop of Britain in 669, he soon heard of St Chad. When the blessed Theodore visited York, he commanded the holy bishop to travel by horse, rather than on foot, for he saw that St Chad was already old and frail. The saint did not want to fulfil this, for he wanted to come to his people as a minister and servant, as Christ had done, and not like a lord on horseback. Nevertheless, the meek saint obeyed. In this same year, 669, St Chad was appointed as bishop of the Kingdom of Mercia. At that time, Mercia was ruled by King Wulfer. Wulfer had been baptised many years before, but later, he supported the worship of demons in his land, and his chief adviser was a cruel pagan. The king's wife, Erminhilda, was a fervent Christian, however, and tried to teach her children about Christ and His Holy church. St Chad began his long, hard work of teaching the people of Mercia the way of salvation. Again, the holy bishop travelled from town to town, preaching, baptising and celebrating the Divine Liturgy. The saint often preached standing near one of the great stone crosses left behind by the Celtic Christians who had long before been driven out of the country by the invading Angles and Saxons. More than anything else, St Chad liked to go alone into the forest, and pray to God for his flock, and for his own soul. He built a small cell and chapel in the woods, and went there to pray and struggle as often as he could. Once, while St Chad was in his cell praying, he heard a loud crashing sound outside. He went out and saw a large stag, collapsed from exhaustion, by the side of the pool, drinking. Making the sign of the Cross, the saint went to the poor animal and stroked it. He knew that hunters must be chasing the stag to kill it, so the saint hid the animal. Soon, the sound of a hunter's horn was heard, and a richly dressed young man on horseback came galloping into the clearing. He reverently greeted the bishop, and asked if he had seen the deer. "I do not tend the deers, nor the beasts of the forest, nor the birds of the air, but this deer, perhaps, has led you to salvation," the bishop replied. The young man was Prince Wulfade, the eldest son of the King. The saint's words opened the heart of the young prince, and he asked the holy bishop to explain the path of salvation to him. St Chad began to tell the prince about how the world was created by Christ our God and how Christ died on the Cross and rose again to save us. He explained about the Church and how everyone who wants to be saved must be born again in Holy Baptism and be united to Christ's Holy Church. The young prince heard all this, and then begged St Chad to baptise him. The saint took Prince Wulfade to the pond, and entering the deep water, baptised him in the name the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. He then taught the prince many more things. Later, Prince Wulfade brought his younger brother Rufine to the saint to be taught and baptised. After this time, the young princes came often to the holy bishop to be taught how to struggle and pray. The evil pagan counsellor of the king found out about the new, holy life of the two young princes, and he feared that he might lose his power because of them. For this reason, and because he hated the two princes, he began to slander them to the king. "Your two sons have disobeyed you. They have become Christians, even though you forbade it. They no longer obey your law, and they are now plotting against you to take over your throne." The evil counsellor convinced the king that he had to kill the two princes before they killed him. One day, the king and the counsellor followed the two princes into the forest, to the cell of St Chad. The holy bishop was away, and the two young men stood alone in prayer. Suddenly, the king burst through the door and cried out: "Why do you disobey my commands and follow this religion of Christ. You know my law, that the old gods must be worshipped by my sons and nobles. I command you to renounce Christ and give honour to the old gods." "We belong to Christ's Holy Church, and we will never turn from Him. But you yourself were once a Christian. We beg you, father, to return to the Holy Church and save your soul." At these words, the king became enraged, and, drawing his sword, furiously cut the two princes to pieces. Thus, the two holy princes received the crown of martyrdom. When the queen learned of this evil deed, she and her daughter immediately went and buried the relics of the two martyrs, and then went to live in the women's monastery at Sheppey. Soon after this, the king's evil counsellor fell ill and died. Suddenly, the king was left all alone: he had killed his two sons; his wife and daughter had fled from him and become nuns, and his counsellor was dead. Now, the king began to feel sorrow for his evil deed. He realised that his sons were innocent, and he remembered his own baptism, and the last words of his sons, begging him to return to Christ's Holy Church. Finally, overcome by sorrow and repentance, the king set out at dawn to the cell of Saint Chad, to ask his help and prayers. As King Wulfer entered the chapel, the holy bishop was celebrating the Divine Liturgy. The king, feeling his guilt, stood at the door and watched. When the bishop reached that part of the Liturgy in which the great mystery takes place, the sanctuary was suddenly filled with a great light. The king was amazed, and fell to the floor in prostration, looking up with fear. He saw that the great light stayed around the Holy Table and filled the sanctuary until the saint had finished communion. The king remained on the floor until the Liturgy ended, and the saint came to him. After this, the king listened to everything Saint Chad taught him, and then he confessed his faith in Christ, and returned to His Holy Orthodox Church. King Wulfer struggled to completely change his life. He helped Saint Chad and his presbyters to lead the people of the kingdom to Christ's Church, and he became merciful and gentle. St Chad chose the town of Lichfield for his cathedral, as in earlier days, St Arnphibale and nearly a thousand other Christians had been martyred there. King Wulfer helped to build the new Church. St Chad continued his life of holy struggle, teaching the Gospel of Christ's Church everywhere in the Kingdom of Mercia. At length, God called the holy bishop to Himself, and Saint Chad gave up his holy soul to the Saviour on 2 March, 672. Through the prayers of our God-bearing father, St Chad, may we find repentance, and save our souls, glorifying the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

**3 / 16 March —The Holy Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus and Basiliscus** - They were comrades of St Theodore the Tyro. When glorious Theodore gloriously laid down his life, they remained behind in prison, and were not condemned for a long time because of the courage of the imperial governor of the town of Amasea. When a new governor arrived, more inhuman than his predecessor, he ordered these three to be brought before him. All three were young men; Eutropius and Cleonicus were brothers and Basiliscus a kinsman of Theodore's. But all three were, through their brotherly love, as blood-brothers. And they therefore said to the governor: 'As the Holy Trinity is indivisible, so are we indivisible in faith and inseparable in love.' All flattery on the governor's part was in vain, as were all his efforts to bribe Eutropius. He first invited him to dine with him, which Eutropius refused with a quotation from the Psalms: 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsels of the ungodly', after which he offered him vast wealth—150 litres of silver—which Eutropius likewise refused, reminding the

governor that Judas lost his soul for silver. After all these attempts, followed by interrogation and torture, the first two were condemned to be crucified, for which they gave thanks to Christ that He had counted them worthy to die the death He had died; and the third, Basiliscus, was beheaded. They all entered into the Kingdom of joy, where their commander, Theodore, was waiting for them, glorified before Christ the Lord and Victor. They suffered with honour in 308. St Piama of Egypt; An Unknown Girl in Alexandria;

St. Non – also known as Nonna; Nonnita - Nobility, possibly of a royal house. A widow, it is said she was the unwed mother of Saint David of Wales. Lived in convents in Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany.

**4 / 17 March — St James the Faster** - lived in the sixth century. He was so perfected in godliness that he was able to heal the gravest illnesses by his prayers. But the enemy of the human race brought a heavy temptation on him. There was once sent to him a woman who had been corrupted by some mockers. She pretended to weep before him, but enticed him to sin. Seeing that he would fall into sin, James put his left hand into the fire and held it there until it was completely burned. Seeing this, the woman was filled with fear and horror, repented and reformed her life. But on a second occasion he did not resist and fell with a young girl whom her parents had brought to him to be healed of her madness. He indeed healed her, but then sinned with her and, in order to conceal the sin, killed her and threw her into a river. As always, the path from lust to murder was not very long. James spent ten years after that as a penitent, living in a grave. He learned after that that God had forgiven him, because, when he at one time prayed for rain in a time of great drought from which both men and cattle were suffering, it fell. Here is an example, similar to that of David, of how wicked the evil demon is; how, by the permission of God, the greatest spiritual giants can topple, and how again, by sincere repentance, God in His compassion will forgive the greatest sins and does not punish those who punish themselves.; Our Holy Father Gerasim.

**5 / 18 March — Saint Nikolai, (Velimirovic) of Ochrid** - Saint Nikolai was internationally known in the religious literary world. He was born to very religious parents in 1880 in Lelic, Yugoslavia. After finishing high school, he applied to a military academy and was rejected because he did not possess the physical requirements. Small in body but high in spirit, he decided to be a soldier for the Kingdom of Heaven. He applied to a theological seminary in Belgrade, where he was accepted. He graduated from theology in 1902. For a while he was teaching, but as he was an outstanding student, he was sent to enrich his education in France, Switzerland, Germany, England, and sometime later in Russia. He was fascinated by the firm beliefs of the Russian Orthodox people. In 1908, he received his doctorate of theology in Bern. The school year of 1908-09, he spent at Oxford University and earned his doctorate in philosophy. After a serious illness, he decided to serve the Lord who had spared his life. On December 20, 1909, he became a hieromonk in the Rakovica Monastery and put to work his knowledge and ability to serve God and the Serbian people. He lived and worked for God and the Serbian people as well as working in and for the Church, but it was not without serious criticism. From 1915-1919, he lived in America and England where he worked for his church and his government. In 1919, he returned to Serbia and was ordained Bishop of Zica. He worked very hard teaching religion, helping the poor, and opening orphanages. He earned the nickname "Grandpa". He was a zealous reader of the Holy Fathers. In 1941, the Germans arrested him. He was in confinement with Serbian Patriarch Gavrilo in the Ljuboslir Vojlovica Monastery for the greater part of the second world war where he wrote his "Prayer Canon" and a prayer to the Holy Mother of God of Vojlovica. In January 1945, he wrote three prayers which are on the cover of the Gospel in the Serbian Church in Vienna. In September of 1944, Saint Nikolai and Patriarch Gavrilo were taken from Vojlovica to the concentration camp Daxay, where they were subjected to abuse and torture until May 8, 1945, when they were rescued by Americans. Some time later Patriarch Gavrilo returned to Serbia but Nikolai decided to emigrate with one wish: to be buried in his fatherland. He came to America in 1946. Poor in health, he still had a lot of strength for his missionary and church work. He travelled extensively through America and Canada. He was a zealous writer and good teacher, often being referred to as the "New Chrysostom" because of his eloquence. He left a legacy of work both in English and in Serbian. One of these works is Missionary Letters. He died on the eighteenth of May in 1956 in the Monastery of Saint Tikhon in Pennsylvania and was buried in the Monastery of Saint Sava in Libertyville, Illinois. However his relics has since been translated to his homeland.

Tropar of Saint Nikolai (Tone 4): Thy righteous acts have revealed thee to thy flock as a model of faith, a reflection of humility and a teacher of abstinence, O Holy Father Nikolai; therefore, through humility thou hast obtained exaltation and through poverty, riches; pray to Christ God to save our souls; The Holy Martyr Conon of Isauria; The Holy Martyr Conon the Gardener; Our Holy Father Hesychius the Faster; Our Holy Father Mark the Ascetic; St. Kieran of Saigher, Munster, Ireland (5th-6th c.)

**6 / 19 March — The Forty Two Holy Martyrs of Ammoria** - these were all generals under the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus. When the Emperor lost the struggle against the Saracens around the town of Ammoria, the Saracens took the town and enslaved many Christians, with these generals among them. The remaining Christians they either killed or sold into slavery, but threw these generals into prison, where they remained for seven years. Moslem leaders came many times, urging them to accept the Mohammedan faith, but the generals refused to do so. When the Saracens told the generals that Mahomet was a true prophet and Christ was not, the generals asked them: 'If two men were to quarrel about a field, with one saying: "It's mine!", and the other saying: "No; it's mine!", and one had many witnesses that it was his field and the other had not a single witness but himself, what would you say—whose field was it?' The Saracens replied: 'His, of course, who had the many witnesses.' 'You have judged right', the generals answered them. 'So it is with Christ and Mahomet. Christ has many witnesses: the ancient prophets, whom you also recognise, from Moses to John the Baptist, witnessed to Him, But Mahomet only witnesses to himself that he is a prophet, and has no other witness.' The Saracens were confounded, but attempted then to defend their faith thus: 'That our faith is better than Christianity is seen in this: that God has given us victory over you, that He gives us the best lands on earth and an empire much greater than the Christian.' To this the generals replied: 'If that were so, then the idol-worship of Egypt and Babylon, and of Greece and Rome, and the fire-worship of Persia, would have been true faiths, for at some time each of these peoples has conquered others and governed them. It is obvious that your victory and power and wealth do not prove the truth of your faith. We know that God sometimes gives victory to Christians, and

sometimes leaves them in torture and suffering to correct them and bring them to repentance and cleansing from sin.' After seven years they were beheaded, in 845. Their bodies were cast into the Euphrates, but they floated to the other bank where Christians collected them and gave them burial. Blessed Job; The Holy Martyrs Conon, Father and Son;

**St. Fridolin, enlightener of the Upper Rhine** - c 540. Born in Ireland, he became a monk at Luxeuil in France. Later he founded the monastery of Sackingen and is venerated as the Apostle of the Upper Rhine in Germany.

**Translation of the relics of Saints Cyneswitha and Cyneburga, abbesses of Caistor** (Daughter of Pendra of Mercia, a fierce opponent of Christianity. Sister of Saint Cyneburga. Relative of Saint Tibba. Benedictine nun. Abbess at Dormancaster (now Castor) abbey in Northamptonshire, England) and Saint Tibba (Benedictine nun at Dormancaster abbey, Northamptonshire, England), nun of Rynall.

## The Sunday of Orthodoxy

St John Maximovich

**Great Lent** — all of its services are united by the idea of preparing for Holy Pascha, to meet the risen Christ with a clean heart. Why do we prepare in this manner? What is Pascha? Pascha is a taste of the joy of paradise! What is this joy? It is that we see God and His glory! The Church loves the glory of the Lord! When she celebrates the Feast of Orthodoxy, she keeps the festival of the day of the reestablishment of the veneration of icons. An icon is simply a reminder of Christ the God-Man on earth. Icons of the saints are reminders of all those who followed Christ, who were faithful and devoted to Him, and burned with love for Him. The veneration of the holy icons is the veneration of the glory of the Lord. He Who rejoices in the glory of God and in everything that reminds him of it in this life will also rejoice in the age to come. He who in this life strove toward God will rush to Him joyfully when he hears the words, "Come unto Me, ye blessed..." at the dread judgment. All those who do not know how to rejoice in the glory of God, in whom the divine realm and its laws call forth a state of unhappiness, who love gloom or semi-gloom, who do not love the light, will not answer to the call of "Come unto Me." They will shrink back in indignation, unhappiness, in jealousy and anger, from the humble and the meek who will go toward the light, from God Himself, Whom they will begin to blame for being in their state. They will even shrink from themselves, though they will not want to admit their guilt. Such a state is true suffering. Hades is not a place, no, but a state of the soul. It begins here on earth. Just so, paradise begins in the soul of a man here in the earthly life. Here we already have contact with the divine, on the day of the Bright Resurrection and when we worthily receive Holy Communion. It is necessary to prepare for confession: All of a splinter must be removed, for if there is any left, infection will begin. It is necessary to pray for repentance and for the joy of purification, so that a ray of light will touch our soul and it will come to love the light... It is necessary to pray to meet the Risen Christ with a clean heart, to taste of the joy of the kingdom of heaven at least in the smallest degree.