

4th Sunday After Pentecost

Heiromartyr Eusebius the Confessor

22 June / 5 July



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

Troparion of St Eusebius tone 4: Illumined by the Spirit's wisdom,/ thou didst reveal God's word, O glorious Eusebius;/ for as a Hierarchy of the Trinity,/ in thy holy contest thou didst destroy errors./ Holy Father pray that we all may be saved.

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

Kontakion of St Eusebius tone 8: Thou didst sow godly teachings and uproot the tares of Arius/ and wast adorned with the martyr's crown;/ thou didst proclaim God the Word to be of one Essence with the Father and the Spirit:/ wherefore we cry to thee: Rejoice, O Father Eusebius.

EPISTLE: St. Paul's Letter To The Romans 6: 18-23

And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH, BUT THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD

[In the Orthodox Church] sin is identified not with transgression and guilt, but with failure and “missing the mark.” The idea cultivated in western Christendom, which identified sin with legal transgression and salvation with individual justification and atonement, linked Christian ethics in people’s minds with a host of psychological complexes offering no way of escape. The striving for individual justification and atonement leaves man still enslaved to his autonomous individuality, separated from the possibility of life and existence ...The egocentric fear of transgression, and the tendency to gloss over sin or to reach an accommodation with it are extensions and consequences of the psychological guilt complex, and neither has any place in the spiritual climate of Orthodox ethics...

In man’s sin, in his failure to be what he is called to be, the Church sees an affirmation of the truth of the person: personhood is affirmed even in man’s capacity to say no even to life and existence itself, to say no to God, although relationship and communion with Him are all that makes existence into a hypostasis of life. In man’s sin, the Church sees the tragic adventure of human freedom ...Sin is the measure of our awareness of separation from God, of separation from life - it is the measure of our conscious recognition of death ...Thus sin becomes a starting point for repentance, metanoia. This word in Greek means “change of mind,” in other words a change in man’s whole attitude... Christ’s assumption of human nature is the event which brings the Church into being. What Christ has assumed is all of us who make up the body of the Church, burdened as we are with daily failure: and He shows us to be partakers in His life, in His own mode of existence ...Participation in the antropoc body of Christ, in the existential unity of the communion of saints, is not secured by individual merit or the objectively recognized “virtues” of the individual: it is secured by repentance, by the new attitude of trust in God...

Repentance is a change in our mode of existence: man ceases to trust in his own individuality. He realizes that existing as an individual, even a virtuous individual, does not save him from corruption and death, from his agonizing existential thirst for life. This is why he takes refuge in the Church, where he exists as someone loving and loved. He is loved by the Saints, who give him a “name” of personal distinctiveness and take him into the communion of their love despite his sinfulness; and he himself strives to love others despite their sinfulness, to live free from the necessities of his mortal nature. He struggles to overcome his individual resistances, his individual wishes and autonomous impulses, not in order to “improve himself” individually, but in order to measure up to the “frenzied love” of Christ and the saints, to the preconditions required for personal life as opposed to natural survival.

Christos Yannaras. The Freedom of Morality, B#81A, pp. 38-42.

GOSPEL - St. Matthew 8: 5-13

Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, Saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralysed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

THE ROMAN CENTURION

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Mt. 6:33). This is what last Sunday's Gospel left with us. On the day of Pentecost the Lord sent down upon His Church the Holy Spirit. Just as all of nature which, after it had been warmed up by the sun, began to grow flowers, plants, and fruits—so the Holy Church, upon receiving the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, began to grow spiritual flowers—her wonderful Saints.

All the Gospel readings since the coming down of the Holy Spirit have been telling us what we must do to obtain the Kingdom of Heaven; what all the Saints did, how they sought and how they found "the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." We were given the commandments of the Lord. But today we are not given commandments, or a teaching. No, but rather life itself, a living example. And as an example for us, the Gospel reading gives us a Roman centurion, a pagan. This is an example of the most profound humility. This example shows us how a master, out of love for his neighbour, becomes a slave. After all, according to his civic position, this Centurion was master not only over the hundred soldiers which he commanded, but also over all Jews, which meant even over Christ; because the Jews were enslaved by the Romans.

This Centurion had a servant. And this servant fell sick and was suffering terribly. And here the Centurion was told that among the Jews who were subject to him there was a remarkable man who had the supernatural power of healing. Now the Centurion was a pagan. He did not know Holy Scripture, he knew nothing about the Messianic expectations of the Jews. For him Christ was without doubt a great man, but nevertheless just a man, and subject to him besides. He could have sent for Him, summoned Him. But humility blots out all boundaries. His servant was in danger, and this man could help him.

The Centurion himself went to Christ. He went and asked: not for his wife, not for his son, not for his daughter, father or mother, but for a servant. And he asked a Jew, enslaved by Rome; a Roman citizen asked for mercy, as a slave would ask his master. And he said: "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented" (Mt. 8:6). He said nothing more. In these words trembled all his sorrow. And he brought his sorrow to Christ. Now he stood humbly and with bowed head waited for an answer. "I will come and heal him" (Mt. 8:7), Christ quickly answered. How very simple. But look what happened here, to what incredible height the Centurion's faith and humility rose. He stopped Christ: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof" (Mt. 8:8). Listen... "I am not worthy." Now this is repentance. This is the same as if he had said: I am a sinner and you are a righteous man. 'But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed' (Mt. 8: 8). Only a word. Even the Lord was surprised at such faith. "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Mt. 8:10). And indeed the Centurion's faith was so simple, so very humble. "I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh" (Mt. 8:9). What do these words express? This is what: Thou art Lord over sickness and health, over life and death. Only say the word! One word! And Christ said this word: "Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour" (Mt. 8:13). What a reward for humility! This is what humility can do! May the Lord grant us this humility of the Centurion.

The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei

Saints of the Week

22 June / 5 July — Apostles' Fast - The Hieromartyr Eusebius of Samosata - he was a major opponent of Arianism. When the patriarchal throne of Antioch became vacant, Meletius was elected Patriarch. This Meletius was a shining light in the Church, and deserved the great eulogy given by St John Chrysostom at his death. But the Arians soon drove Meletius from Antioch. When Constantius, Constantine's evil son, died, he was followed by Julian the Apostate, a man even worse than he, as ruler of the Empire. During Julian's persecution of Christians, St Eusebius took off his cassock, clad himself in soldier's garb and travelled around the persecuted churches of Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine, strengthening the Orthodox faith everywhere and creating the necessary priests, deacons and other clergy and raising some to the episcopate. After the news of Julian's death, St Eusebius advised Meletius to summon a Council of the Church in Antioch. This took place in 363, and the twenty-seven hierarchs present denounced Arianism once again and proclaimed the Orthodox faith as it was expressed at the First Ecumenical Council. Besides Meletius and Eusebius, St Pelagius of Laodicea, a man of great asceticism and chastity, made a great impact at this Council, which took place during the reign of the devout Emperor Jovian. But he died soon after, and the evil Valens took the throne, and the persecution of Orthodoxy began afresh. St Meletius was banished to Armenia, Eusebius to Thrace and Pelagius to Arabia. After Valens, the Emperor Gratian came to the throne and restored freedom to the Church, returning the exiled bishops to their rightful places: Meletius to Antioch, Eusebius to Samosata and Pelagius to Laodicea. Many dioceses were vacant at that time and Eusebius was quick to find canonical pastors for the people. But when he arrived at the city of Doliche with the newly-chosen bishop, Marinus, to install him as bishop and denounce the Arian heresy (which was strong in that city), a certain fanatical heretic threw a tile from the roof and gave him a mortal wound. This great zealot for Orthodoxy, this saint and martyr, died and entered into eternal life in the blessedness of Paradise in the year 379. The Holy Martyrs Xeno and Xenas;

St. Alban, protomartyr of Britain (c.305) - when the people of Britain began to follow our Saviour, Jesus Christ, many of them were killed by those who worshipped Satan. The first British Christian to be martyred was St. Alban. Alban lived in the city of Verulamium, which today is called Saint Albans. We do not know who his parents were, or what kind of work he did. But we do know that he was a very kind man. When the soldiers were looking for the local presbyter in order to kill him, Alban hid God's servant in his own house. Alban was not yet a Christian, but as he watched and spoke with the presbyter, and heard his prayers, he began to believe in Christ. The presbyter taught St. Alban about our Saviour and about the Christian Faith, and the saint believed with all his heart, and asked to be baptised. One day, the soldiers heard that the presbyter was hiding in Alban's house. They came to search the house and arrest God's servant. St. Alban, however, put on the presbyter's robes and the soldiers, thinking that he was the presbyter, arrested him and took him before the judge. The judge was very angry with Alban. "Why did you hide this presbyter?" he shouted. "Turn him over to my soldiers, or else you will be punished." at this, Saint Alban declared, "I am also a Christian and I adore the true, living God." The judge was furious. He cried out, "Renounce Christ and worship our idols, or I will have your head cut off!" The saint, however, gave glory to God. The judge ordered, "Take him to the hill and cut off his head." The holy martyr was very happy. He was joyful that he was going to give up his life for Christ. As the saint was being led to Holmhurst Hill to be killed, they came to the River Ver. The bridge over the river was crowded with people who had come to watch his martyrdom, and so the saint walked to the river, signed it with the Cross, and the river opened and left a path for the saint and the soldiers. When the executioner saw this, he fell at the saint's feet and confessed Christ. The soldiers quickly arrested this new Christian also. The two were taken to the top of the hill, where their heads were cut off, and they received the Martyr's Crown from Christ.

23 June / 6 July — Apostles' Fast - The Holy Martyr Agrippina - born and brought up in Rome. She trained herself from childhood to live by the Gospel, expelling the stench of the passions from her heart with the sweet-smelling perfume of purity and chastity. She was betrothed to Christ the Lord, and suffered as a bride of Christ in the reign of the Emperor Valerian. She endured beating with staves until her bones were crushed. An angel of the Lord appeared to her to strengthen her, until she surrendered her soul to God under fresh tortures. Her friends, Vassa, Paula and Agathonica, took her relics to the island of Sicily and buried them there. A church was later built there in her name, where countless miracles were wrought over her relics. She entered into eternal rest and was crowned with glory in the year 275. The Holy Martyrs Eustochius, Gaius and those with them; The Vladimir Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God; The Tale of Theophilus' Repentance ; **St. Etheldreda of Ely, England, (679)** - Twice Saint Etheldreda (who is also called Saint Audrey) married. released from these unwelcome ties first by the death of her husband after five years and secondly after she managed to persuade her second husband that they should live as brother and sister a relationship that led him to release the saint after twelve years. At last she was able to fulfil her life's desire. In between her two marriages she had lived in solitude for five years on the island of Ely. Now she founded a nunnery and a monastery about the year 672, ruling this double house as abbess. Etheldreda was a woman of noble birth, the daughter of King Anna of East Anglia. But from now on she ceased to wear clothing of fine linen and dressed only in woollen garments. Except at Easter, Pentecost and Epiphany, she washed only in cold water. Only when she was ill or on great church festivals did she eat more than one meal a day. Seven years after the foundation of the double monastery, she died of a plague. The year was 679. The Venerable Bede tells how the body of the saint was exhumed. When she died, she had a tumour on her neck. She attributed this to divine punishment because she was once vain enough to wear a costly necklace. When her coffin was opened sixteen years later, the tumour had healed. Thus Etheldreda became the patron saint of those suffering throat and neck ailments. He also wrote, "Now Etheldreda shines upon our days, Shedding the light of grace on all our ways. Born of a noble and a royal line, She brings to Christ her King a life more fine."

24 June / 7 July — Apostles Fast - The Nativity of St John the Forerunner - six months before his appearing to the most holy Virgin Mary in Nazareth, the great Gabriel, archangel of the Lord, appeared to Zacharias the High Priest in the Temple in Jerusalem. Before he revealed the miraculous conception by a virgin who had not known a man, the archangel revealed the wondrous conceiving by an old and barren woman. Zacharias was unable at once to believe the words of God's herald, and for this his tongue was bound in dumbness and remained thus until the eighth day after John's birth. The kinsfolk of Zacharias and Elisabeth gathered together on that day for the infant's circumcision and naming. When they enquired of the father how he wished the child to be called, he, being still dumb, wrote on a slate: 'John'. At that moment his tongue was loosed and he began to speak. Zacharias's house was on the heights between Bethlehem and Hebron. The news of the angel's appearing to Zacharias, of his dumbness and of the loosening of his tongue at the exact moment that he wrote 'John', was carried throughout all Israel, coming to Herod's ears. So, when he sent men to kill all the infants around Bethlehem, he sent men off to Zacharias's family house in the hills, to slay John also. But Elisabeth hid the child in good time. The king was enraged at this, and sent an executioner to the Temple to kill Zacharias (for it was then his turn to serve in the Temple again). Zacharias was killed between the court and the Temple, and his blood clotted and solidified on the paving slabs, and remained as an enduring witness against Herod. Elisabeth hid herself and the child in a cave, where she soon died. The young John remained in the wilderness alone, in the care of God and His angels. St Nikita, Bishop of Remesiana;

The Holy Martyrs Orentius, Pharnacius, Eros, Firmus, Ferminus, Cyriacus and Longinus - During the reign of Maximian (284-305) the Scythians attacked the Greeks. St Orentius was ordered to fight against the Scythian champion Marothom, who was distinguished for his special strength of body. He was also a strong and brave warrior. Orentius was a Christian, as were his six brothers, who were also serving in the imperial army. Calling on the Lord for help, St Orentius defeated Marothom and so stopped the invasion of the Scythians. The emperor intended to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods for this victory and he invited the victor, St Orentius, to participate. The saint refused, explaining that he was a Christian, and said that he vanquished the enemy by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Neither the promise of honors and riches, nor threats of punishment could induce the saint to renounce Christ. The fierce and ungrateful emperor gave orders to banish both the saint and his six brothers to the Caucasus. During the journey all seven brothers died from hunger or torture. The first to die was St Eros on June 22 at Parembo; after him St Orentius suffered martyrdom. They tied a stone around his neck and cast him into the sea. The Archangel Raphael took him from the water to dry land at Riza, on the south shore of the Black Sea, where the holy martyr surrendered his soul to God. St Pharnacius went to the Lord on July 3 at Kordila. Sts Firmus and Ferminus died on July 7 at Aspara, on the eastern shore of the Black Sea. St Cyriacus departed this transitory life at Ziganeaia on July 14, and St Longinus died on the ship on July 28. Battered by a storm, the ship went aground at Pitindeia (Pitsunda), where the body of the holy martyr was buried.

25 June / 8 July — Apostles' Fast - Our Holy Mother, the Martyr Fevronia - the daughter of Prosporus, a Roman senator. In order to escape marriage with a mortal man, she betrothed herself to Christ and became a nun in the East, in Assyria, in a monastery where her aunt, Bryaena, was abbess. Lysimachus, a nobleman's son, was desirous of entering into marriage with Fevronia, but the Emperor Diocletian, suspecting him of being a secret Christian, sent him to the East with his uncle, Silenus, to seize and kill the Christians. Silenus was as ferocious as a wild beast and mercilessly exterminated the Christians wherever he could. Lysimachus, on the contrary, protected the Christians whenever possible and hid them from his bestial uncle. Having emptied Palmyra of Christians, Silenus came to the city of Nisibis, close to which there was the monastery of fifty ascetic virgins in which Fevronia was a nun. Although she was barely twenty years old, Fevronia was held in respect both in the monastery and in the city for her meekness, wisdom and restraint. The monastery followed the rule

of a former abbess, Blessed Platonida, and every Friday the nuns would spend their time in prayer and reading sacred books, with no other work. Bryaena had appointed Fevronia to read to the other sisters while standing behind a curtain, so that no-one would be distracted or captivated by the beauty of her face. When Silenus heard about Fevronia, he ordered that she be brought before him. When the holy maiden refused to renounce Christ and enter into marriage with a mortal man, he ordered them to whip her and then cut off her hands, breasts and feet and finally to slay her with the sword. But a fearful divine punishment came upon her tormentor that very day. A demon entered into him, and a fearful terror took hold of him. In his terror, he struck his head on a marble pillar and fell down dead. Lysimachus ordered that Fevronia's body be gathered together and brought to the monastery for solemn burial, and he, together with many of the soldiers, was baptised. Many healings were wrought through Fevronia's holy relics, and she herself appeared on the day of her Feast, standing in her usual place among the sisters. They beheld her with both fear and joy. St Fevronia suffered and went to eternal blessedness in the year 310, and her relics were translated to Constantinople in 363. Our Holy Father Dionysius.

26 June / 9 July — Apostles' Fast – Our Holy Father David - born in Salonica, where he at first lived the ascetic life in a shelter he had built in an almond tree, he later continued his asceticism in Thessaly. He purified himself so greatly by fasting, prayer and vigils that he was made worthy to receive great grace from God. Once he took a live coal in his hand, placed incense on it and censured the Emperor with no sort of protection for his hand. The Emperor, when he saw this, bowed down to the ground before David, who amazed the people by his countless miracles. He entered peacefully into rest in the blessedness of eternity in 540; The Tikhvin Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God; The Hodogitria Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God; The Icon of the Mother of God of Lydda or Rome; Translation of the relics of St. Brannock (Brynach) of Braunton, England.

27 June / 10 July — Apostles Fast - St Sampson the Hospitable - born of rich and eminent parents in ancient Rome, where he studied all the secular wisdom of that time, devoting himself in particular to the study of medicine. Sampson was a compassionate and liberal physician, and gave the sick medicine for both soul and body, counselling each man to fulfil the requirements of the Christian faith. He moved to Constantinople, where he lived in a tiny house from which he distributed alms, comfort, advice, hope, medicine and all possible aid to those suffering in spirit and in body. The Patriarch heard of Sampson's great virtue and ordained him priest. At that time the Emperor Justinian the Great became ill with what his doctors believed to be an incurable disease. The Emperor prayed with great fervour, and God revealed to him in his sleep that Sampson would heal him. When the Emperor summoned Sampson to court, the old man had only to put his hand on the diseased place and the Emperor was healed. When Justinian offered him an immense sum of money, Sampson thanked him but would accept nothing, saying to the Emperor: 'O Emperor, I had silver and gold and other riches, but I left it all for the sake of Christ, that I might gain heavenly and eternal wealth.' When the Emperor insisted on doing something for him, Sampson asked him to build a home for the poor. In that home, Sampson cared for the poor as a father cares for his children. His compassion for the poor and weak was second nature to him. This holy man, filled with heavenly power and goodness, entered peacefully into rest on June 27th, 530. He was buried in the Church of the Holy Martyr Mocius, his kinsman. After his death, Sampson appeared many times to those who called upon him for aid; St Severus the Priest; St Joanna the Myrrh-Bearer.

28 June / 11 July — Apostles Fast - The Holy Martyrs Cyrus and John - these holy martyrs are commemorated on January 31st, and their lives and sufferings are described under that date. Today we commemorate the translation of their relics from Canopus to Menuthis, and the numerous miracles associated with them. St Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria, prayed fervently for the extermination of the abominable idolatrous practices at Menuthis, where there was a temple and where the demonic powers held sway. An angel of God appeared to the Patriarch and told him that Menuthis would be cleansed of its impurity if he brought the relics of Ss Cyrus and John to the town. The Patriarch did this at once. He brought the relics of the holy martyrs to Menuthis and had a church built there in their honour. Ammonius, the son of the governor of Alexandria, Julian, was healed of scrofula through the martyrs' relics, and a certain Theodore was healed of blindness. Isidore of Maium was healed of a wasting disease of the liver, Theodore's wife of the effects of poison, a certain Eugenia of dropsy and a great many others of various diseases and torments. All this took place in the year 412.

Our Holy Father Sennuphius the Standard-Bearer - Sennuphius was a great ascetic and miracle-worker of the Egyptian desert. He was a contemporary of Patriarch Theophilus and Emperor Theodosius the Great. He is called the "Standard-bearer" because by his prayers he once helped Emperor Theodosius to gain a victory over the army of his adversaries. When the emperor summoned Sennuphius to Constantinople, Sennuphius replied that he was unable to do so but sent him his tattered monastic habit and staff. Setting out to battle the emperor donned Sennuphius' monastic habit and carried the staff and returned victorious from battle;

Our Holy Father Paul the Physician - a Corinthian by birth. Completing his schooling, Paul withdrew to a monastery and was tonsured a monk. He had a difficult struggle with the impure spirit of fornication. However, when with the power of the cross he drove the impure spirit of fornication away from himself, that spirit created a malicious falsehood, i.e., [the spirit] gave approval to a depraved woman to say that she had given birth to a child by Paul. The heretics then dragged him from the monastery, placed the child in his arms and forced him to walk throughout the town for the people to spit on him. The baby was only a few days old. St. Paul prayed fervently to God and said to the people: "Behold, let the child himself say who is his father." The child stretched out its hand from the swaddling clothes and pointed to a blacksmith and said: "That man is my father and not Paul the monk!" The adversaries of Paul became ashamed and God granted great healing powers to Paul so that when he placed his hand on the sick, they became whole. Paul reposed peacefully in old age pleasing God by his life on earth. He lived in the seventh century;

St. Austol of Cornwall (6th c.) - Tropar of St Austol, Tone 7: Light of Cornwall and pillar of the Faith,/ holy Austol, disciple of Samson:/ thou wast a fellow-labourer with Saint Mewan,/ in such companionship that thou didst die with him and share his grave./ Pray to Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.