

Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles

(Pentecost Sunday)

30 May / 12 June

Tropar Of Pentecost, Tone 8: Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast shown forth the fishermen as supremely wise, by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them, didst draw the world into Thy net. O Lover of mankind, glory be to Thee.

Kondak Of Pentecost, Tone 8: Once, when He descended and confounded the tongues, the Most High divided the nations; and when He divided the tongues of fire, He called all men into unity; and with one accord we glorify the All-Holy Spirit.

Vespers: Num. 11:16-17, 24-29; Joel 2:23-32; Ezek. 36:24-28

Matins Gospel St John 20: 19-23

EPISTLE - ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - 2: 1-11

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, people from Crete and Arabs--we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

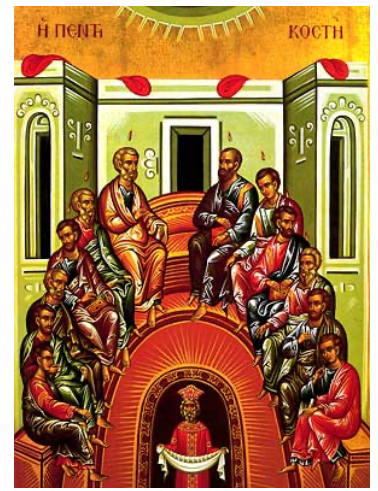
AND THERE APPEARED TO THEM DIVIDED TONGUES AS OF FIRE... AND THEY WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

So that by gradual increase ...and progress from glory to glory, the light of the Trinity might shine upon the more illuminated ...for this reason it was, I think, that He gradually came to dwell in the disciples. He measured Himself out to them according to their capacity to receive Him: at the beginning of the gospel, after the Passion, after the Ascension, making perfect their powers, being breathed upon them, and appearing in fiery tongues ...You see lights breaking upon us, gradually, and knowledge of such order of theology, as is better for us to maintain, neither proclaiming things too suddenly nor yet keeping them hidden to the end ...He said that all things should be taught us by the Spirit Himself, made clear at a later time, when such knowledge would be seasonable and capable of being received after our Saviour's restoration; when it would no longer be received with incredulity because of its marvellous character. For what greater thing than this did either He promise, or the Spirit teach ...If He is not to be worshiped, how can He deify me by baptism?... And indeed from the Spirit comes our new birth, and from the new birth our new creation, and from the new creation our deeper knowledge of the dignity of Him from whom it is derived ...Look at these facts: Christ is born; the Spirit is His forerunner. He leads Him up. He works miracles; the Spirit accompanies them. He ascends; the Spirit takes His place.

St. Gregory of Nazianzus. Fifth Theological Oration, 26, 27, 28, 29. B#7, pp. 210 -211.

GOSPEL - ST. JOHN 7:37-52 & 8:12

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" So there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him. Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."



IF ANYONE THIRSTS, LET HIM COME TO ME AND DRINK

Those who come to the divine preaching and give heed to the faith must manifest the desire of thirsty men for water, and kindle in themselves a similar longing; so they will be able, very carefully, to retain what is said...For to show that men ought ever to thirst and hunger, He said 'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness' (Matt.5:6) ... Elsewhere He calls it, 'eternal life,' but here, 'living water.' He calls that 'living' which ever works: for the grace of the Spirit, when It has entered into the mind and has been established, springs up more than any fountain, does not fail, never becomes empty ...He has represented its abundance by the expression 'springing' ...Consider the wisdom of Stephen, the tongue of Peter, the vehemence of Paul: how nothing bore, nothing withstood them, not the anger of multitudes, not the risings up of tyrants, not the plots of the devils, not daily deaths, but as rivers borne along with a great rushing sound, so they went on their way hurrying all things with them ...When He was about to send them (after the crucifixion) He said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (c.20:22) ...and then they wrought miracles.

St. John Chrysostom, Homily LI on John VII, 1. 2. B#58, p. 184.

O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. Because your loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips ...Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me. (Psalm 63:1-8).

On this Sunday the Kneeling prayers are said at Vespers which follows immediately after the Liturgy – the three long prayers are:

The First Prayer: Priest: O Lord most pure, spotless, who art from everlasting, invisible, ineffable, unsearchable, unchanging, unsurpassable, immeasurable, long-suffering, who alone hast immortality; who dwellest in light unapproachable, who hast made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that therein is; who grantest unto all men their petitions before they ask: We pray thee, and beseech thee, O Master who lovest mankind, the Father of our Lord, and God, and Saviour Jesus Christ, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of Mary the ever-virgin and exceeding-glorious birth-giver of God; who first did teach in words and afterwards did manifest himself in deeds, when he suffered his redeeming Passion; who hast given unto us, thy humble, and sinful, and unworthy servants, a command that we should offer supplications unto thee with bending; of the neck and of the knees, both for our own iniquities and for the ignorances of the people: Do thou, the same all-merciful God who lovest mankind, hear us in that day when we shall call upon thee, and more especially upon this day of Pentecost, whereon, after that our Lord Jesus Christ has ascended up into heaven, and had sat down at the right hand of thee, who art both his God and his Father, he did send down the Holy Spirit upon his holy disciples and apostles: which also did rest upon each one of them, so that they were all filled with its inexhaustible grace, and did declare thy majesty in divers unknown tongues, and did prophesy. Wherefore hearken now to us who pray unto thee, and remember us humble and condemned as we are, and turn again the captivity of our souls, exercising thy loving kindness toward us who now offer up our petitions unto thee. Accept us who fall down before thee, and who cry aloud unto thee, We have sinned! We have cloven unto thee even from our mother's womb: thou art our God. But because we have passed our days in vanity, we have stripped ourselves of thine aid, we have deprived ourselves of every valid defence. But confidently trusting in thy bounties, we call unto thee. Remember not the sins of our youth and our ignorances; and cleanse thou us from our secret sins; and forsake us not in the days of our old age, when our strength faileth us. Even until we return again into the earth, abandon us not, vouchsafe us grace to have recourse unto thee; and receive us, because of thy favour and graciousness. Measure our wickedness according to the measure of thy bounties. Set over against the multitude of our transgressions the abyss of thy compassions. Look down from thy holiness on high, O Lord, upon thy people now present before thee, who await thy rich mercies. Visit us with thy loving-kindness: deliver us from the assaults of the Devil. Establish our life in thy holy and sacred commandments. Commit thy people unto an Angel, a faithful guardian. Gather us all into thy kingdom. Grant pardon unto those who put their trust in thee. Put away from them and from us all sins. Purify us by the operation of thy Holy Spirit; bring to naught the machinations of the enemy against us.

And thereto is added the following Prayer: Blessed art thou, O Lord, Master Almighty, who hast illumined the day with the light of the sun, and hast made bright the night with the brilliant flashes of the lightning; who hast graciously enabled us to pass through the long day, and to draw near to the beginning of the night. Hear our petitions, and the petitions of all thy people, and granting pardon unto us for all our sins, both voluntary and involuntary, accept our evening prayers, and send down the multitude of thy mercy and thy bounties upon thine inheritance. Guard us with thy holy Angels. Arm us with the armour of thy righteousness. Encompass us round about with the ramparts of thy truth. Guard us by thy might. Deliver us from every assault, and from every treacherous plot of the adversary. And grant unto us that this present evening and the approaching night, and all the days of our life, may be perfect, holy, peaceful, sinless, without stumbling, untroubled of dreams; through the prayers of the holy Birth-giver of God, and of all the Saints, who, in all the ages, have been acceptable in thy sight.

The Second Prayer: Priest: O Lord Jesus Christ our God, who hast bestowed upon men thy peace and the gift of the Holy Spirit; who, while thou wast yet with us in the present life, didst give unto thy faithful people an inheritance which shall not be taken from them forever; who this day didst send down thy grace upon thy disciples and apostles, in manner most clear, and didst furnish their lips with fiery tongues; by whom now, we also, together with all mankind, having received, through the

hearing of our own ears divine knowledge in our own tongues, have been illumined with the light of the Spirit, and have put away the delusion of darkness by the distribution of the material and visible tongues of fire, as also by the marvellous operation of the same, whereby we have been inspired with faith toward thee, and to glorify thee, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit in one Godhead and might, and have been enlightened with power: Do thou who art the Brightness of the Father, of his Essence and his Nature the Express and Immutable Image, the Fountain of Wisdom and of Grace, open the lips of me, a sinner and teach me in what manner and for what needs I ought to pray; for thou knowest the great multitude of my sins, but thy loving-kindness shall overcome the enormity thereof. For lo! I stand in awe before thee, and have cast into the great deep of thy mercy the despair of my soul. Govern my life, O thou who governest all creation by a word, with the unutterable might of thy wisdom, O tranquil Haven of the storm-tossed; and make known unto me the way in which I should walk. Grant unto my understanding the spirit of thy wisdom, bestowing upon my ignorance the spirit of thy understanding. Overshadow my deeds with the spirit of thy fear, and renew a right spirit within me; and by thy sovereign Spirit make stable the instability of my thoughts. That being daily guided by thy good Spirit in that which is profitable for me, I may be enabled to keep thy statutes, and ever bear in mind thy glorious Coming-again, and those things worthy of torment which I have committed. And give me not over to be led astray by the corrupt pleasures of this present world, but strengthen in me the desire to strive for the treasures to come. For thou hast said, O Master: whatsoever a man shall ask in thy Name, that shall be freely received from thy God and father, who is from everlasting. Wherefore, I, also, a sinner, at this descent of thy Holy Spirit, do entreat thy goodness, that thou wilt grant me whatsoever things I have asked which are unto salvation. Yea, O Lord, the bounteous Giver of every benefit; and the Distributor of blessings,—for its thou who givest most bountifully unto those who ask of thee,—thou art pitiful and gracious, and also wast made a partaker of our flesh, yet without sin, and doest incline thine ear with infinite loving-kindness unto those who bow the knee before thee; who, also, wast made the Propitiation of our sins. Wherefore, O Lord, grant thy bounties unto thy people. Hearken unto us from thy holy heaven. Sanctify us by thy saving might of thy right hand. Cover us with the shelter of thy wings; and despite thou not the work of thy hands. Unto thee alone have we sinned, but thee alone so we serve. We know not to adore a strange god, neither have we stretched out our hands, O Lord, unto any other god. Pardon our iniquities, and accept this our prayer, which we make unto thee on bended knees. Extend unto us all the hand of thine aid. Receive our petitions of all men, as it were incense well-pleasing, acceptable before thine all-blessed kingdom. O Lord, Lord, who deliverest us from all the arrows that fly by day, deliver thou us, also, from all things that infest the darkness. Accept our evening sacrifice, even the lifting-up of our hands. Grant that we may pass through the course of the night without sin, untempted of evil things; and deliver us from every alarm and cowardice that cometh to us from the Devil. Grant unto our souls contrition, and unto our minds anxiety concerning that strict searching out of the thoughts which shall come in the dread and just Day of Judgment. Nail our flesh to the fear of thee, and mortify our earthly members: that, in the quietness of sleep, we may be illumined by the vision of thy judgments. Remove from us, also, every unseemly imagination and hurtful carnal passion. Raise us up again at the hour of prayer, fortified in the faith, and advancing in thy commandments.

The Third Prayer: Priest: O Fountain, ever-flowing, living, illumining; Power creative, coeternal with the Father, O Christ our God, who hast most excellently fulfilled all the plans for the salvation of mankind; who didst shatter the bonds indestructible of Death, and the bolts of Hell, and didst trample under foot a host of evil spirits; who didst offer thyself a blameless victim for us, giving thine all-holy Body for a sacrifice inviolate, and unassailed of every sin, and who, through that terrible and ineffable act of sacrifice, didst bestow upon us life eternal; who didst descend into Hell, and break the everlasting bars, and show a way up unto those who abode in the lower world; and having enticed, by divinely wise allurements, the origin of mischief and the serpent of the abyss, and bound him with cords of nethermost gloom and fire unquenchable in Tartarus, and confined him in outer darkness, by thine infinite and fettering might, O Wisdom greatly glorified by the Father, thou didst manifest thyself as a mighty helper of the assailed; and didst enlighten those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, Do thou, O Lord of the everlasting glory and Son beloved of the Father most high, Light Eternal of Light Eternal, the Sun of Righteousness, hear us, who now make our fervent supplications unto thee, and give rest to the souls of thy servants our fathers and brethren, and other kinsmen after the flesh, and of all of the household of faith, who have fallen asleep, and whom we now call to remembrance. For thou hast power over all things, and in thy hand thou upholdest all the ends of the earth. O Master Almighty, the God of our fathers and Lord of mercy, Creator of the race of mortals and immortals, and of every nature of man; of that which is brought together and is again put asunder; of life and death; of sojourn in the world that now is, and of translation to the world which is to come; thou meetest out the years of life, and appointest the time of death; thou bringest down to Hell, and again raisest up; thou bindest unto impotency and loosest unto power, ordering things present according to their necessity, and appointing things to come as is expedient, quickening with the hope of Resurrection those who were smitten with the sting of death. For thou art, of a truth, the Master of all men, O God our Saviour, the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of those who are afar off upon the sea; Who, on this last, and great, and redeeming day of the Pentecost feast, didst reveal unto us the mystery of the Holy Trinity, one in Essence, coeternal, undivided and unmingled; and didst pour out the indwelling and descent of thy holy and life-giving Spirit, in the form of tongues of fire, upon thy holy apostles; and didst appoint the same to be the heralds of the glad tidings of our holy faith; and didst make them confessors and teachers of the true divine knowledge; who, also, on this all-perfect and saving Feast, art graciously pleased to accept propitiatory prayers for those who are imprisoned in Hell, promising unto us who are held in bondage great hope of release from the vileness that doth hinder us and did hinder them; and that thou will send down thy consolation. Hear us, thy humble ones, who make our supplications unto thee, and give rest to the souls of thy servants who have fallen asleep, in a place of light, a place of verdure, a place of refreshment whence all sickness, sorrow and sighing have fled away: and establish thou their souls in the mansions of the Just; and graciously vouchsafe unto them peace and pardon; for the dead shall not praise thee, O Lord, neither shall they who are in Hell make bold to offer unto thee confession. But we who are living will bless thee, and will pray, and offer unto thee propitiatory prayers and sacrifices for their souls. O God great and eternal, who art holy and lovest mankind; who hast vouchsafed unto us at this present hour to stand before thine ineffable glory, and to sing and to praise thy wonders: Purify us,

thine unworthy servants, and grant us grace that, with a contrite heart, and without presumption, we may offer unto thee the Thrice-Holy hymn of praise and thanksgiving for thy great gifts, which thou hast bestowed and always dost bestow upon us. Remember, O Lord, our weakness, and destroy us not in our iniquity, but show great mercy upon our humility; that, fleeing from the darkness of sin, we may walk in the daylight of righteousness; and that, putting on the armour of light, we may remain unassailed by any despiteful attack of the Evil One, and with boldness may glorify in all things thee, the only true God, who also lovest mankind. For thine, O Lord and Creator of all men, is that great and veritable mystery, the dissolution of thy creatures for a season, and thereafter their restoration to wholeness and their rest forever. We acknowledge thy grace in all things; for our coming into this world and our going out of it; for our hopes of resurrection and of the life immortal faithfully pledged unto us through thine unfailing promises, the which we shall receive hereafter in thy Second Coming. For thou art the Chieftain of our Resurrection, and the Judge impartial and gracious to the dead, and the Master and Lord of recompense, who didst become a partaker, on equal terms, of our flesh and blood, because of thine exceeding great condescension; and when, of thine own will, that thou mightest place thyself under temptation, thou didst accept our congenital passions, because of thy compassion, and didst suffer through them, being thyself tempted thereby, thou didst become for us who are tempted the helper which thou thyself hadst promised; and thereby hast thou led us to thy passionlessness. Wherefore, O Master, receive thou our prayers and supplications, and give rest unto the fathers, mothers, children, brothers, and sisters, blood-relations and kinsfolk of each and all of us, and unto all souls which have fallen asleep before us; and establish their spirits in the hope of Resurrection unto life eternal, and inscribe their names in the Book of Life, in the bosom of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, and in the land of the living, in the kingdom of heaven, in the Paradise of sweetness; by thy radiant Angels guiding all into thy holy mansions; raising up with thee, also, our bodies, in that day which thou hast appointed by thy holy and faithful promise. Because there is no death, O Lord, for thy servants when we depart from the body and come unto thee, our God, but a change from things very sorrowful unto things most salutary and most sweet, and unto repose and gladness. If, therefore, we have in aught transgressed against thee, be merciful unto us and unto them; because there is no one pure from stain in thy sight, even for a single day of his life, save thou alone, who didst manifest thyself sinless upon earth, O our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we all trust to receive mercy and the remission of our sins. Wherefore, in that thou art a gracious God and lovest mankind, do thou, both to them and to us, pardon, remit, forgive our sins, both voluntary and involuntary, which we have committed whether wilfully or through ignorance; whether those which are manifest or those which have escaped our notice; whether of deed, or of thought, or of word, whatsoever they may be, in all our acts and lives. And unto the departed also grant thou release and pardon; and bless us who are here present, granting unto us, and to all thy people, a good and peaceful ending, and opening unto us the tenderness of thy mercy and love toward mankind at thy dread and terrible Coming-again; and make us worthy of thy kingdom. O great and most high God, who alone hast immortality, and dwellest in light unapproachable; who hast made all creation in wisdom; who hast divided the light from the darkness, and hast appointed the sun to rule the day, the moon and stars also to rule the night; who hast vouchsafed unto us sinners at this present hour also to come before thy presence with confession, and to offer unto thee our evening sacrifice of praise: Do thou thyself, who lovest mankind, direct our prayer as a censer before thee, and accept it for a savour of sweet incense; and grant that we may pass this present evening and the coming night in peace. Endue us with the armour of light. Deliver us from the terror of the night, and from everything that walketh in darkness; and grant that the sleep, which thou hast appointed for the repose of our weakness, may be free from every imagination of the Devil. Yea, O Master, Bestower of all good things, may we, being moved to compunction upon our beds, call to remembrance thy holy Name in the night season: that, enlightened by meditation on thy statutes, we may rise up in joyfulness of soul to glorify thy goodness, offering up prayers and supplications unto thy tender love for our own sins and for those of all thy people: whom do thou visit in mercy, through the intercessions of the holy Birth-giver of God. For thou art a gracious God, and lovest mankind, and unto thee do we ascribe glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Holy Spirit provides every gift: He inspires prophecy, perfects the priesthood, grants wisdom to the illiterate, makes simple fishermen to become wise theologians, and establishes perfect order in the organisation of the Church. Wherefore, O Comforter, equal in nature and majesty with the Father and the Son, glory to You...

In the days of old, pride brought confusion of tongues to the builders of the tower of Babel, but now the diversity of tongues enlightened the minds and gave knowledge for the glory of God. There, God punished infidels for their sin, while here Christ enlightened fishermen through the Spirit; there the confusion of tongues was for the sake of vengeance, while here there was variety so that voices could be joined in unison for the salvation of our souls.

Stichera of Pentecost for Vespers, B#10, pp. 891, 894.

Saints of the Week

Fast Free Week

May 30 / June 12 — Our Holy Father Isaac the Confessor - in the time of the Emperor Valens, the Arians persecuted Orthodoxy fiercely with the Emperor's encouragement. Isaac, a hermit somewhere in the East, heard of the persecution, left his desert and went to Constantinople to encourage the faithful and denounce the heretics. Valens arrived in the north at that very time with his army, to meet the Goths who had come down from the Danube into Thrace. Isaac went out and stood before him, saying: 'Open the churches to those of the true Faith, O Emperor, and God will bless thy path', but the Emperor turned a deaf ear to the elder and went on his way. Isaac spoke out before the Emperor on the next day also, repeating his warning, and the Emperor almost hearkened to him, but one of his advisors, a follower of the Arian heresy, thwarted him. Isaac spoke before the Emperor again on the third day, seizing the Emperor's horse by the reins and pleading with him to grant freedom

to the Church of God and to escape divine punishment by acceding to his request. The enraged Emperor ordered that the elder be thrown into a waste place full of thorns and mud, but three angels appeared and pulled him out of the swamp. St Isaac appeared before the Emperor on the fourth day, and foretold a terrible death if he did not give the Orthodox freedom: 'I tell thee, my Emperor, that thou shalt lead thy troops out upon the barbarians, but thou shalt not be able to withstand them. Thou shalt flee before them, but shalt thyself be taken captive and burned alive.' And so it all came to pass. The barbarians mowed the Greek force down like grass, and the Emperor fled with his Arian counsellor, and hid in a hamper. The barbarians arrived at the spot and realised where the Emperor was hiding. They surrounded the hamper and set fire to it, burning both the Emperor and his counsellor. The Emperor Theodosius the Great then came to the throne. He heard of Isaac and of the prophecy that had been fulfilled, and, sending for him, prostrated himself before him. And so peace came to reign in the Church and the Arians were banished. Isaac desired to return to his desert, but he was persuaded to remain in Constantinople. A certain influential citizen, Saturninus, built him a monastery where the elder laboured in asceticism until his death, performing many wonders. The community overflowed with monks and became a great monastery. Before his death, Isaac appointed a pupil of his, Dalmatus (after whom the monastery was later named), as abbot. The elder Isaac, who had found such favour with God, entered into eternity in the year 383, to rejoice forever in the vision of the face of God.;

St Macrina - the grandmother of St. Basil the Great. She was wonderful in mind and in her piety. She was a disciple of St. Gregory Neo-Caesarea the miracle worker. During the reign of Diocletian, Macrina abandoned her home and, with her husband Basil, hid themselves in the forests and wilderness. Their property was confiscated but they did not grieve over it. Deprived of everything except their love for God, they settled in a primeval forest where they spent seven years. By God's providence, goats descended from the mountains and offered themselves to them and so they were nourished. They both died peacefully in the fourth century following great suffering for the Faith of Christ.

May 31 / June 13 — The Holy Apostle Hermes - one of the Seventy, he is mentioned in the Epistle of St Paul to the Romans (16:14). A Greek by birth, he spent a long time in Rome. He was bishop in Philippoupolis, and finished his life a martyr. He compiled the very instructive book 'The Shepherd' through revelations from the angels of God. Hermes was a rich man, but fell into extreme poverty through his own sins and those of his sons. A man appeared to him, clad in white and with a staff in his hand, and told him that he was the angel of repentance, sent to him before the end of his life. The angel gave him twelve commandments: 1. To believe in God. 2. To live in simplicity and innocence. 3. To love truth and flee from falsehood. 4. To guard his thoughts in chastity. 5. To learn patience and magnanimity of soul. 6. To know that a good and an evil spirit attend every man. 7. To fear God, but not the devil. 8. To perform every good deed and to restrain himself from every evil one. 9. To pray to God in faith from the depths of his heart, so that his prayer might be heard. 10. To preserve himself from melancholy, the daughter of doubt, and from anger. 11. To try true and false prophecies. 12. To preserve himself from every evil desire;

The Holy Martyr Hermeas - Hermeas grew old as an imperial soldier and in his old age suffered for Christ the King. Since the evil judge tried in vain to dissuade him from the Faith of Christ and counseling him to offer sacrifices to the idols, the judge then gave orders that his teeth be knocked out with a stone and the skin peeled from his face with a knife. After that they threw him into a fiery furnace but, by the Grace of God, he was saved and stood up. Following that, by order of the judge he drank a bitter poison which was given to him by a magician, but the poison did him no harm. Witnessing this, the magician was so amazed that he openly confessed Christ for which he was immediately beheaded. Afterwards, they gouged out both of Hermeas' eyes but he did not grieve and cried out to the judge: "Take for yourself these bodily eyes that gaze upon the vanity of the world. I have eyes of the heart by which I clearly see the light of the truth." He was hung then by the feet upside down and those who did this to him were blinded and staggered around him. St. Hermeas beckoned them to come to him, laid his hands on them and, by prayer to the Lord, restored their sight. Witnessing all of this, the judge became as enraged as a lion, drew a knife and severed the head of this godly-man. Christians secretly removed the body of Hermeas and honorably buried it. His relics gave healing to all the sick and to the afflicted. St. Hermeas suffered in the year 166 A.D., during the reign of Emperor Antoninus;

The Holy Martyr Philosophus - This martyr of Christ was born in the vicinity of Alexandria. During the time of the persecution of Christians, St. Philosophus did not want to deny Christ the Lord before the pagan princes and judges. For that, the pagans subjected him to violent tortures. Since he was tortured in various ways, they finally placed him on a soft bed, tied his legs and hands and permitted an immoral woman to come to him and to lure him into sin. When St. Philosophus sensed that the sin of passion was being aroused in him from the touch of the woman's hand, he placed his tongue between his teeth, bit it off and spit it in the face of the depraved one. Because of that, the passion subsided in him and the immoral woman was so horrified that she immediately fled from him. He was beheaded after that about the year 252 A.D. in his youth and took up habitation in the kingdom of eternal youth.

1 / 14 June — The Holy Martyr Justin the Philosopher - He was born of Greek parents in the Samaritan town of Shechem (formerly called Nablus), about a hundred and five years after Christ. He sought wisdom and philosophy with his whole heart, first with the Stoics, then with the Peripatetics, the Pythagoreans and finally with the Platonists. Although Platonic philosophy did not content him, it held him the longest, until he found something higher to attract him. By God's providence, he encountered a remarkable old man who began to undermine his Platonic philosophy, reminding him that a man cannot fully know the truth about God till God reveals it to him, and telling him that God had revealed the truth about Himself in the books of Holy Scripture. Justin began to read the Scriptures, and became an utterly convinced Christian, but he would not be baptised or call himself a Christian until he had convinced himself of the falseness of the accusations that pagans found to bring against Christians. Going to Rome for a philosophical gathering, he quickly gained much respect there, and many followers. He witnessed the martyrdom of St Ptolemy and St Lucian, and, seeing the tortures of these innocent Christians, wrote an Apologia for Christians and Christian teaching and gave it to the Emperor Antoninus and the Senate. The Emperor read it carefully and ordered that the persecution of Christians cease. Justin took a copy of the Emperor's decree and went off to Asia, where he saved many persecuted Christians by its aid. After that, he returned again to Rome. When a persecution

arose under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, he wrote a second Apologia and addressed it to the Emperor. Some disreputable philosopher, Crescens, a Cynic, denounced him as a Christian because Justin was getting the better of him in every dispute, and Justin was thrown into prison. Desiring his death, and fearing that judgement would not be given against him, Crescens took the opportunity to administer poison to him in the prison. Thus this great defender of the Christian faith finished his earthly course and went to the blessedness of eternity, in the year 166. The Holy Martyrs Justin, Chariton, Charity, Euelepistus, Hierax, Peon, Liverianus and Justus.

Our Holy Father Agapitus of the Kiev Caves - a doctor who practiced medicine by using natural remedies. He was a disciple of St. Anthony of the Caves. He cured people through prayer and by giving them vegetables from which he prepared bread for himself. In this manner he cured Prince Vladimir Monomachus for which Agapitus became known throughout. Being envious of this the prince's physician, an Armenian, began to slander Agapitus. When Agapitus became ill, the Armenian came to him and looking at him said that he [Agapitus] would die within three days and that if he [Agapitus] did not die, he [the Armenian physician] would become a monk. Agapitus said that it had been revealed to him by the Lord that he would not die within three days but within three months. And so it happened. After the death of Agapitus, the Armenian came to the Abbot of the Caves and begged him to tonsure him a monk for, he said, Agapitus appeared to him from the other world and reminded him of his promise. Thus, the once envious one became a humble monk by the Providence of God Who wishes that all men be saved. St. Agapitus died about the year 1095 A.D.

2 / 15 June — St Nicephorus the Confessor - a nobleman of Constantinople. His father Theodore, a wealthy and devout man, was a high-ranking official at the Emperor's court. Nicephorus served several years at court in the same capacity as his father but then, seeing all the vanity of the world, he withdrew to the shore of the Bosphorus and built a monastery there. This monastery rapidly became filled with monks and he administered it; not, however, himself becoming a monk from a conviction of his unworthiness. He was, in this, an example to all. He had earlier, as a layman, taken part in the Seventh Ecumenical Council, at the request of the Emperor and the Patriarch, and was of great assistance there with his intimate knowledge of Holy Scripture. When Patriarch Tarasius died, Nicephorus, much against his will, was chosen to succeed him. He was immediately professed a monk and received the priestly orders in succession, being enthroned as Patriarch in St Sophia's in 806. This was in the time of the Emperor Nicephorus, who went off to war against the Bulgars very shortly after this and was killed in battle there. His son Stauracius reigned for only two months before he died. After this, the good Emperor Michael, called Rangabe, came to the throne, but he reigned only two years before Leo the Armenian attacked him and drove him into exile. When this Emperor began his reign, the Patriarch sent him a book on the Confession of the Orthodox faith for him to sign (this being according to the custom obtaining for all Byzantine Emperors, who were regarded as sworn to uphold and defend the true Faith). The Emperor did not sign it, but set it aside until his coronation. When the Patriarch crowned him, he still refused to sign the book, and revealed himself to be an iconoclast heretic. The Patriarch attempted to remonstrate with him and bring him back to the true Faith, but in vain. The Emperor exiled him by force to the island of Proconnesus, where he spent several years in want and privation before going to eternity in the year 829. He governed the Church as Patriarch for nine years. The Holy New Martyr Constantine;

The Holy Martyr John the New of Sochava - A nobleman of Trebizond, he was denounced by some envious Latin and suffered for Christ in the town of Akerman. After being tortured for not accepting the Persian religion (for the governor of the town was of that faith), St John was tied to a horse's legs and dragged round the town. Some wicked Jews, seeing him thus, ran up and butchered him. That night, a burning column was seen by many people above his body, and three men bathed in light standing around it. Later the Moldavian commander, Joalexander, took his honoured body and buried it in the metropolitanical church, where it remains to this day and miraculously saves men from various pains and sicknesses. He suffered with honour and was glorified on June 2nd, 1492; The Hieromartyr Erazmo of Ochrid.

3 / 16 June — Holy Martyr Lucillian and those with him: Claudius, Hypatius, Paul, Dionysius and the Virgin Paula - Lucillian grew to old age as a pagan priest. Only as a grizzled old man did he learn the truth of Christianity and receive baptism. His conversion to Christianity caused great excitement among the pagans of Nicomedia, and he was brought to trial for refusing to deny his new faith. He was harshly whipped and, all black and blue, thrown into prison. In the prison were four young men: Claudius, Hypatius, Paul and Dionysius, who had likewise been imprisoned for the Faith. The old man rejoiced in the company of these young men, and they in his, and they spent their time together in spiritual converse, prayer and the singing of psalms. When they were taken from the prison, they were tortured in various ways and then taken to Byzantium, where the young men were beheaded with the sword by the soldiers, and Lucillian crucified by the Jews. The wicked Jews pierced his body all over with nails. A maiden, Paula, openly took the martyrs' bodies and gave them burial. She was denounced for this and, after torture, was beheaded, receiving a twofold wreath: of virginity and of martyrdom. Their martyrdom took place in the time of the Emperor Aurelian, between 270 and 275. The Hieromartyr Lucian; The Holy Martyr Dimitri, Tsarevitch of Russia;

St. Kevin - Abbot of Glendalough, Ireland, b. about 498, the date being very obscure; d. 3 June, 618; son of Coemlog and Coemell. His name signifies fair-begotten. He was baptized by St. Cronan and educated by St. Petroc, a Briton. From his twelfth year he studied under monks, and eventually embraced the monastic state. Subsequently he founded the famous monastery of Glendalough (the Valley of the Two Lakes), the parent of several other monastic foundations. After visiting Sts. Columba, Comgall, and Cannich at Usneach (Usny Hill) in Westmeath, he proceeded to Clonmacnoise, where St. Cieran had died three days before, in 544. Having firmly established his community, he retired into solitude for four years, and only returned to Glendalough at the earnest entreaty of his monks. He belonged to the second order of Irish saints and probably was never a bishop. So numerous were his followers that Glendalough became a veritable city in the desert. His festival is kept throughout Ireland. St. Kevin's house and St. Kevin's bed of rock are still to be seen: and the Seven Churches of Glendalough have for centuries been visited by pilgrims.

4 / 17 June — Metrophanes of Constantinople - His father Dometius, brother of the Roman Emperor Probus, fled from Rome as a Christian during a persecution and went to Byzantium. The Bishop of Byzantium, Titus, ordained Dometius priest and, after Titus's death, Dometius became Bishop of Byzantium. After Dometius's death, his elder son Probus occupied the episcopal throne (Dometius had children from his earlier, pagan days), and Metrophanes succeeded him on his death. When the Emperor Constantine first set eyes on Metrophanes, he loved him as a father. At the time of the First Ecumenical Council, Metrophanes was a very old man and, being unable to take a full part in the Council's deliberations, appointed his assistant bishop, Alexander, as his representative. The Emperor had Metrophanes raised to the rank of Patriarch by the Council, and he thus became the first Patriarch of Constantinople. The Emperor further invited the whole Council to visit the sick and aged hierarch. When the Emperor asked him who he wished to succeed him on the patriarchal throne, Metrophanes named Alexander of Alexandria, after which he said to him: 'My brother, you are my chosen successor!' He also took Archdeacon Athanasius (later Athanasius the Great, Patriarch of Alexandria) by the hand and praised him before them all. After this prophetic act, he took leave of them all and, ten days later, gave his soul to God, in 325. The Holy Martyr Concordius; The Holy Martyrs Frontasius, Severinus, Severian and Silanus; Our Holy Father Zossima, Bishop of New Babylon; The Hieromartyr Astius, Bishop of Dyrrachium; Ss Martha and Mary, the Sisters of Lazarus;

New Martyr Archbishop Andronicus of Perm - an outspoken critic of the Communist decree which ordered the separation of Church and State. Upon reading the Moscow Overland Assembly's instructions on the matter, Archbishop Andronicus ordered his archdeacon to anathematize the Communists. The Archbishop was arrested, shot by two members of the Perm CHEKA, then buried on the road from Perm to Motoviliha. Bishop Theophanes, an assistant to Archbishop Andronicus, was also arrested about this time. He was then drowned in the River Kama. When they learned of the execution of the Perm bishops, the Moscow Church Assembly sent a special commission, headed by Bishop Basil of Chernigov, to investigate their murder. The Communists, however, took steps to conceal the facts from the investigators. As the members of the commission were on their way back to Moscow, their train was attacked by Red soldiers somewhere between Perm and Viatka. Bishop Basil and the others were killed, and their bodies were thrown from the coach. The bodies were buried by peasants, but were later dug up and burned by the Communists when pilgrims began flocking to the graves;

New Martyr Basil of Chernigov, and those with them (1918) - Archbishop Basil (Bogoyavlensky) was born on February 1, 1867, into the family of a priest in Tambov diocese. Brought up in strict church piety, Basil was filled from early childhood with love for the Church and his earthly homeland, and for that reason, on attaining adulthood, he never had any hesitation in following in the steps of his father and devoting himself to the service of the Church. In 1888 he finished his studies at Tambov seminary, and in the same year was ordained to the diaconate. Two years later, on March 11, he was ordained to the priesthood and appointed to serve in the church of the village of Ovsyanki, Kirsanvosky uyezd, Tambov province. The incurable illness of his wife forced Fr. Basil to think of other conditions of service to the Holy Church. In 1896 he entered the Kazan Theological Academy, where he became friendly with the rector, Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky). In 1900 Fr. Basil graduated from the academy, and accepted the suggestion of his abba that he stay on to serve as a teacher there. After the death of his wife, Fr. Basil took the advice of Bishop Anthony and entered the Holy Trinity Alexander Nevsky Lavra, where on August 14, 1908 he was tonsured into monasticism. On October 15 of the same year he was appointed rector of the Chernigov theological seminary with promotion to the rank of archimandrite. On July 26, 1909 (May 12, 1911, according to another source), he was consecrated Bishop of Sumsk, a vicariate of the Kharkov diocese, in St. Petersburg. On March 4, 1911, he was transferred to the see of Novgorod-Seversk, a vicariate of the Chernigov diocese, and on May 12 - to the see of Chernigov and Nezhin. Bishop Basil's period of service in Chernigov was marked by the successful completion of many projects: the construction of two large houses for pilgrims coming to venerate the relics of St. Theodosius, and a sanatorium for the students at the seminary; the opening of the second women's school in the diocese with funds given from the state treasury by Tsar Nicholas; a large increase in the sphere of activity of the Orthodox Brotherhood of St. Michael, Prince of Chernigov; the publication of the journal Faith and Life by the same Brotherhood (in 1912); the creation in Chernigov of a yedinovertsy deanery in whose administration were numbered twelve churches. Vladyka also devoted much attention to charitable work, supporting the existing charitable institutions and organizing the collection of alms for the starving peasants of the eastern provinces during years of bad harvests. On July 6, 1916 he was appointed president of the Publishing Council attached to the Holy Synod. On October 5, 1916, in recognition of his services to the diocese, Vladyka was raised to the rank of Archbishop of Chernigov and Nezhin. On May 6/19, 1917 he was retired, and was appointed administrator of the Nikolayevsky Terebensky Desert in Tver diocese. From August 11 (or 14), 1917 he was placed in charge of the Moscow Zaikonospassky monastery. In 1917 Vladyka Basil was called to Moscow to participate in the Preconciliar Commission which was preparing for the Council of the Russian Orthodox Church. When Archbishop Andronicus of Perm was killed by the Bolsheviks in 1918, the Moscow Church Council sent a special commission, headed by Archbishop Basil, who had a high reputation as an administrator, to investigate the circumstances of the murder. The Soviet government consented to an investigation and even provided a private coach for the use of the commission. (During the early days of the Soviet government, the Church Assembly addressed it several times with requests, declarations and protests). But the activity of the investigating committee in Perm aroused the indignation of the communists, especially those who were guilty of the crime, and they took measures to conceal information from the Moscow Assembly. After concluding its investigation, the commission was on its way back when a band of Red soldiers broke into the coach, between the towns of Perm and Viatka. On May 6, 1919, according to one account, Archbishop Basil, Archimandrite Matthew, rector of the Perm seminary (who is called a bishop in one account) and a layman, all the members of the commission, were killed, and their bodies thrown out of the moving train into the water from the Kama bridge. They were buried by local peasants, but as their graves began to attract pilgrims, and miracles were recorded, the communists dug up the bodies and burned them. According to another version, Archbishop Basil was arrested and after a short imprisonment was shot together with other members of the commission.

5 / 18 June — The Hieromartyr Dorotheus, Bishop of Tyre - He was Bishop of Tyre from the time of Diocletian right up to the time of Julian the Apostate, under whom he was tortured and suffered for the Orthodox faith. He lived on earth to the age of 107, and, being pleasing to God, entered into eternal life in 361. He was a great scholar and wrote many learned books both in Greek and Latin. Our Holy Father Theodore the Hermit; Our Holy Father Anoub; Blessed Igor, Prince of Chernigov and Kiev; Our Holy Father Peter of Korisa; Blessed Constantine, Metropolitan of Kiev;

Hieromartyr Boniface (Wynfrith) of Crediton, England (754), archbishop of Mainz, Germany - born around the year 680 at Crediton in Devonshire, England. Educated at monastery schools near Exeter and at Winchester, he decided to become a missionary to the continent. Pope Gregory II made him a regional bishop in Germany. Boniface started a monastery at Ohrdruf in Thuringia. He brought English monks there as missionaries. Then he moved to Bavaria, founding missionary monasteries at Reichenau, Murbach and Fritzlar. In the year 735 he and his disciple Sturmius founded the most famous of all these monasteries, at Fulda. In 747 he was made supreme bishop of Germany. On the peak of Mount Gudenberg at Geismar in Germany, grew a huge oak, which the heathen venerated as sacred to the god Thor. Boniface arrived at Geismar and announced that he was about to cut it down. A huge crowd of pagans gathered, in the belief that their god would strike him dead. But Boniface had hardly begun to strike at the tree with his axe when it split into four and crashed to the ground. The pagans were astonished. Many of them became Christians; and Boniface built a chapel dedicated to Saint Peter out of the wood of Thor's tree.

Tropar (Tone 8): Thou hast shown thyself, O God-inspired Boniface, as a guide to the orthodox faith, a teacher of true worship and purity, O star of the universe and companion of the bishops, O wise one. Through thy light thou hast enlightened all, O harp of the Spirit. Therefore, intercede with Christ to save our souls.

REFLECTION

Do not ever violate the fast on Wednesday and Friday. This fast is commanded by the Church and is well explained. If you have ever in your life violated this fast, pray to God that He forgives you and sin no more. The holy and pious men do not consider themselves dispensed from this fast either during a journey, much less even in sickness. St. Pachomius met some men carrying a corpse and he saw two angels in the funeral procession. He prayed to God to reveal to him the mystery of the presence of the angels at the burial of this man. What good did this man do that the holy angels of God accompanied him in procession to the grave? According to God's Providence, both angels approached Pachomius and, in this manner, explained to him: "One of the angels is the angel of Wednesday and the other is the angel of Friday. Seeing how this man always, even until death, fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays so we are honorably accompanying his body. As he, until death, kept the fast, so we are glorifying him."

HOMILY

About the justification of almsgiving

"Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do it" (Proverbs 3:27).

The Lord does not deny you that which you need, neither should you deny the man whom the Lord has sent to encounter you in order to test your heart. If a beggar extends his hand to you for help once in your life, give to him and do not refuse. Remember how many there are in your life and how many are the hours in a day and how many are the minutes in an hour-every minute of so many, many thousands of days you extend your hand to the Lord and the Lord gives and does not refuse. Remember the mercy of God and your lack of mercy will burn you as a live coal and it will never give you any peace until you repent and soften your heart.

Do not ever say: "These beggars annoy me!" So many millions of men live on earth and all are beggars before the Lord; emperors as well as laborers, the wealthy as well as servants, all are beggars before the Lord and the Lord never said: "These beggars annoy me!" O man, give thanksgiving to God that someone seeks something good from you, be it material, or spiritual! This means that you are a man of God's trust: God has entrusted some of His goods to you because all goods belong to God. Show yourself worthy of this trust, show yourself worthy in lesser things so that you may be entrusted with greater things.

O Lord, most rich, soften our hearts and enlighten our understanding that we may be merciful in the goods which You, the All-merciful, have entrusted to us.

To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.